

2009



H-Diplo Roundtable Review

www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables

Volume X, No. 27 (2009)

31 July 2009; 5 August 2009

(reissued to correct Knock response)

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable Web Editor: George Fujii

Introduction by Thomas Maddux

Reviewers: John M. Cooper, Michael C. Desch, Walter Hixson, Erez Manela, Robert W. Tucker

G. John Ikenberry, Thomas J. Knock, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Tony Smith. *The Crisis in American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-first Century*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-X-27.pdf>

Contents

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge.....	2
Review by John M. Cooper, University of Wisconsin-Madison	8
Review by Michael C. Desch, University of Notre Dame	13
Review by Walter Hixson, University of Akron	21
Response by Erez Manela, Harvard University.....	25
Review by Robert W. Tucker, Professor Emeritus, The Johns Hopkins University.....	29
Response by Thomas J. Knock, Southern Methodist University	33
Response by Tony Smith, Cornelia M. Jackson Professor of Political Science, Tufts University ..	37

Copyright © 2009 H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online.

H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for non-profit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author(s), web location, date of publication, H-Diplo, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For other uses, contact the H-Diplo editorial staff at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

The legacy of Woodrow Wilson on American foreign policy has ebbed and flowed, with both pro and con assessments. Wilson has always influenced American attitudes, policy-makers, and foreign policy specialists in the twentieth century. President Wilson's meteor-like ascent during WWI and the Versailles peace conference led too quickly to the demise of his glowing presence and promise in the power politics of the Allied powers at Versailles and at the hands of the U.S. Senate.¹ Within a few years Wilson became the "great villain" for revisionist historians and remained a highly contested figure until Franklin D. Roosevelt used the appeal of Wilsonian ideas in the context of WWII and attempted, with some success, to avoid Wilson's mistakes with Congress and the American public even as he modified Wilsonian ideals with the United Nations. Roosevelt's blending of ideals and realism, however, soon gave way to more of the latter and less of the former as the Cold War brought realism, global competition and interference in nations everywhere. With the end of the Cold War the Wilsonian legacy regained appeal in liberal internationalism, President William Clinton's pursuit of liberal multilateralism, and optimistic expectations that Wilson's time had finally arrived. Ethnic strife in the Balkans and Africa, continuing conflict in the Middle East, and, most dramatically, the September 11th challenge to Wilsonian ideals, American security, and confidence dashed hopes that democracy, modernization, and the spread of global capitalism would finally bring fruition to Wilson's dream.²

When President George W. Bush abandoned realism in the wake of September 11th and adopted some Wilsonian ideas as he encountered unanticipated problems in the Iraq war, the ghost of Wilson must have stirred and mobilized the faithful. In 2006 Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs hosted a conference to mark the sesquicentennial of Wilson's birth. The authors of *Crisis in American Foreign Policy* participated in a session on Wilson's legacy in American foreign policy and, shortly afterwards, John Ikenberry and Anne-Marie Slaughter, as co-directors of a three year Princeton Project on National Security, brought out its final report, "Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century."

In his introduction Ikenberry suggests a number of questions that the essays focus on and the reviewers respond to these questions below. Thomas Knock and Slaughter advance the most positive assessments of Wilsonianism and its applicability to today's challenges whereas Tony Smith critically emphasizes a convergence between neoliberal

¹ For a recent account of Wilson's global influence, see Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the Intercolonial Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) which was featured in an H-Diplo Roundtable and accessible at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-X-7.pdf>

² John Ikenberry reviews the Wilsonian tradition in his introduction to the *The Crisis in American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-first Century*, 10-24.

internationalists and neoconservatives in support of Bush's war on terror and the Iraq war.³

- 1) What was Wilsonianism with respect to Wilson's views and practices? Ikenberry proposes six ideas from Wilson's Fourteen Points speech including: a new, peaceful world order based on a democratic states; free trade; international law; collective security through the League of Nations; an emerging new world; and, finally, U.S. leadership without hegemony (pp. 11-13). Knock, Slaughter and John Cooper note the evolution in Wilson's views and practices from 1913 through 1919, particularly with respect to self-determination. Knock and Slaughter, for example, suggest that Wilson learned from dealing with revolutionary movements in China, Mexico and Russia to back off from military intervention and to articulate self-determination as a central principle. (pp. 31-34, 92-94). John Cooper favorably notes this assessment, but Walter Hixson and Michael Desch are less convinced concerning Wilson's commitment to self-determination. "Wilson's penchant for Caribbean intervention gets little play," Hixson notes, (1-2) and Michael Desch points to the "power position of the United States" as the determining factor rather than Wilson's beliefs. "In the Western Hemisphere, where the United States was preeminent, Wilson employed force unilaterally to effect regime change," Desch concludes, but "... in Europe, where the United States was not so predominant, Wilson opted for more multilateral approaches, and was much more circumspect in his goals." (4-5)
- 2) The relationship between Wilson's advocacy of self-determination and his views on the spread of democracy is contested by the authors and reviewers. Smith emphasizes Wilson's enthusiasm for free market democracies and their expansion as central to advancing the new order, peace, and American security. (pp. 53-57) Desch and Hixson agree with Smith whereas Robert Tucker, Cooper, Slaughter, and Erez Manela disagree to some extent. Tucker notes the extent to which Wilson affirmed the belief since Thomas Jefferson that freedom would require a world safe for democracy and that Wilson did not "change the American commitment to the promotion of freedom from the role of exemplar to that of crusader." Wilson's "world made safe for democracy was, in the last analysis," for Tucker, "almost indistinguishable from a democratic world. With Wilson the commitment to the promotion of freedom had taken its first, and uncertain step, from a passive to an active phase." (2-3) Cooper supports Slaughter's rejection of Smith's emphasis on Wilson as hegemonic and a progressive imperialist. With emphasis on the influence of Edmund Burke on Wilson concerning the relationship of political institutions to different cultures, Cooper quotes Wilson on April 18, 1918 that "there isn't any one kind of government under which all nations ought to live. There isn't any one kind

³ For a full development of Smith's assessment and responses to it, see Smith's *A Pact With The Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (2007), and the H-Diplo roundtable on this book at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/APactWithTheDevil-Roundtable.pdf>

of government which we have the right to impose on any nation.” (5-6) Instead of attempting to impose democracy on other nations, Cooper’s Wilson sought security for existing democracies and those who wished to join. Slaughter and Knock also emphasize that multilateralism as enshrined in the League of Nations remained a central tenet of Wilsonianism that opposed imposing democracy from the outside. In comparing Wilson with his Republican opponents in the Senate, Manela emphasizes that Wilson rejected a Republican emphasis on a unilateral pursuit of national interest and the retention of American sovereign prerogatives. “Wilson believed that the United States must work to promote the institutionalization of multilateralism and common counsel in international affairs,” Manela emphasizes in his endorsement of Knock’s assessment. (2)

- 3) The most intense disagreement among the authors and reviewers emerges over whether or not the evolution of Wilsonianism in the Cold War and its aftermath made a significant contribution to Bush’s strategic doctrine and the Iraq war. Smith points to contributions from liberal internationalists, whom he refers to as neoliberals, to the Bush doctrine’s “call to democratize the world and open its markets”, and argues that Wilson and his adherents provided the intellectual rationale for Bush with the exception of the Wilsonian emphasis on multilateralism. (pp. 56-59) Knock and Slaughter reject Smith’s advocacy of convergence between liberal internationalism, neoconservatives, and Bush policy rationales. Wilson did not “go abroad in search of monsters to destroy in the manner in which the Bush Administration has done,” Knock emphasizes, (p. 35), and Slaughter responds with a developed explication of the differences between neoconservatism and Wilsonianism in the twenty-first century. (pp. 90-97). Hixson appreciates Smith’s emphasis on convergence between neoliberals and neoconservatives behind the Bush doctrine and war, but he does agree that the commitment of Slaughter and other liberal internationalists to a multilateral order is a significant difference. Desch stands closer to Smith, although he agrees that “Wilson’s partisans are right to deny that there is a direct line between him and George W. Bush. But Smith is also correct to claim that Wilsonianism is nonetheless deeply implicated in the Iraq War.” (7) Cooper and Tucker reject the linkage of Wilson with Bush from different perspectives. In focusing on Wilson in the context of 1918, Cooper rejects “Wilson’s alleged hegemonic pretensions” as “Wilson recognized that his nation might be the first among a group of equals but it was no actual or potential hegemon.” (5) Cooper focuses on means, which he considers a more important area of differences over U.S. foreign policy. He notes similarity between the Wilsonian tradition and the “pillar of purpose” of the Bush doctrine on the spread of democracy, but considers the “pillar of power,” the means to achieve purpose as most significant, and concludes that the “Bush Doctrine reflected neither Wilsonianism nor, for that matter, the liberal internationalism of the Cold War.” (3-4) Manela endorses Cooper’s consideration of Wilson in the context of WWI and emphasizes that the “Bush administration’s outlook was a lot like that of Wilson’s opponents in 1919” rather than similar to Wilson. (4) In his response Knock summarizes the challenge and danger of removing Wilson and Wilsonianism from a “meaningful historical context.” (1)

- 4) The area of greatest consensus among the authors and reviewers focuses on the question of alternatives to the Bush doctrine and policies. As Ikenberry points out in his introduction, liberal internationalism is in a crisis, challenged both by domestic and foreign criticism over Bush policies and by Bush's wrapping of himself in "Wilsonian clothing" and drawing criticism to Wilsonian ideas. Ikenberry, Slaughter and Manela also note persisting dilemmas for liberal internationalists over how to "distinguish between enlightened and legitimate interventions and liberal imperialism." (p. 4) "It is a vexing issue," Manela stresses, "which is precisely why it could only be legitimately addressed through broadly participatory, institutionalized, multilateral processes rather than through the military fiat of a single power of ad hoc 'coalition of the willing'." (4) Ikenberry and Slaughter point to the need to rebuild a liberal world order through multilateralism rather than U.S. hegemony. (pp. 5, 110-117) Smith is not optimistic about the prospects for liberal internationalism as "Humpty Dumpty will not be put back together again." In his response Smith warns that the "virus" of "'progressive' interventions ... remains alive, waiting to return to harm us ... [as a] doctrine of progressive imperialism that is little more than a self-righteous camouflage of an American bid for power over others." (6) Yet Smith notes the absence of an "alternative framework for America in world politics" and that a selective embrace of some Wilsonian traditions might be appropriate. (pp. 87-88) Hixson would welcome an "American embrace of a genuine multilateral order" with a renunciation of the American mission to spread its version of democracy. (3-4) In his conclusion on "Liberal Internationalism and Obama," Desch is more skeptical that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will bring much change from Bush given similarities between President Clinton's policies in the 1990s and Bush policies. Desch does hold out some hope that Realism rather than Wilsonianism will shape President Obama's policies.⁴

Participants:

G. John Ikenberry is Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs in the Politics Department and Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. Among his books are *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major War* (Princeton, 2001), and *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition* (Polity, 2006).

Thomas J. Knock teaches courses on the history of twentieth-century American politics and foreign policy at Southern Methodist University. In addition to numerous articles in

⁴ For different perspectives written before President Obama's election on what strategy the next administration should or would pursue, see Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), and Timothy J. Lynch and Robert S. Singh, *After Bush: The Case for Continuity in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). H-Diplo roundtables on both books are available at <http://www.h-diplo.org/~diplo/roundtables/>

leading scholarly journals, he is the author of *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Oxford, 1992) which won the Warren F. Kuehl Prize awarded by the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations. He is currently writing a biography of George McGovern.

Anne-Marie Slaughter is on leave as Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and the Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. She is currently serving as the Director of the Department of State Policy Planning Staff. She is the author of *A New World Order* (Princeton University Press, 2004) and *The Idea That Is America: Keeping Faith with Our Values in a Dangerous World* (Basic Books, 2007). She is also the co-director, with John Ikenberry, of the Princeton Project on National Security and co-author of its final report, "Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century."

Tony Smith earned a B.A. at the University of Texas, an M.A. from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1965, received his doctorate in political science from Harvard University in 1971 and he has been a Senior Fellow at the Center for European Studies at Harvard since 1979. He is the Cornelia M. Jackson Professor of Political Science at Tufts University where these days he gives courses on U.S. Foreign Policy. He is the author of six books, including *The French Stake in Algeria* (1978), *The Pattern of Imperialism* (1981), *Thinking Like a Communist* (1987), *America's Mission: The U.S. and the Global Struggle for Democracy in the 20th Century* (1994), *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*, (2000), and *A Pact With The Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (2007). Smith has also published a dozen articles on the history of Wilsonianism, understood as a perspective making the promotion of democratic government abroad a central focus of American foreign policy.

John Milton Cooper is the E. Gordon Fox Professor of American Institutions at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He earned his AB at Princeton in 1961 and his PhD at Columbia University in 1968. His books include *The Vanity of Power: American Isolationism and the First World War, 1914-1917* (1969); *Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American, 1855-1918* (1977); *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (1983); *Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900-1920* (1990); and *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (2001). Professor Cooper is currently writing a biography of Woodrow Wilson.

Michael Desch received his B.A. (With honors) in Political Science (1982) from Marquette University and his A.M. in International Relations (1984) and Ph.D. in Political Science (1988) from the University of Chicago. He is Professor of Political Science and Fellow of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author, most recently, of *Power and Military Effectiveness: The Fallacy of Democratic Triumphalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). He is beginning a new research project exploring when and how social science theory influences national security policy.

Walter L. Hixson is Distinguished Professor of history at the University of Akron. Hixson received a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in 1981. He is currently teaching on a Fulbright lectureship at the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing. His books include *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2008), featured in a H-Diplo roundtable in June 2008, *Murder, Culture, and Injustice: Four Sensational Cases in American History* (2000); *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (1997); *Charles A. Lindbergh, Lone Eagle* (Longman, 3rd ed., 2006); *Witness to Disintegration: Provincial Life in the Last Year of the USSR* (1993); *George F. Kennan, Cold War Iconoclast* (1989.) which received the Bernath Prize, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. Among his recent articles and review essays are "Empire As a Way of Life," *Diplomatic History*, 31 (April 2007): 331-34; "Leffler Takes a Linguistic Turn," *Diplomatic History*, (June 2005): 419-421; and "The Vindication of 'X'? Reassessing Kennan After the Cold War," *The Historian*, 59 (Summer 1997): 849-58.

Erez Manela is the Dunwalke Associate Professor of American history at Harvard University. He received his Ph.D. in 2003 from Yale University, winning the John Addison Porter Prize and the Mary & Arthur Wright Prize for his dissertation. He has published a number of articles and essays in the *American Historical Review*, *International Journal*, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, and *Middle Eastern Studies*, and in a number of edited volumes. His *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (2007) was the subject of a H-Diplo Roundtable in March and may be accessed at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-X-7.pdf> Manela is currently working on a history of the global campaign to eradicate smallpox in the twentieth century.

Robert W. Tucker is Professor Emeritus of American Diplomacy at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. He is a member of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences and the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Tucker is the author of *The Nuclear Debate: Deterrence and the Lapse of Faith* (Holmes and Meier, 1985); *The Inequality of Nations* (Basic Books, 1977), *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Johns Hopkins, 1971), *Nation or Empire? The Debate over American Foreign Policy* (Johns Hopkins, 1968), *The Just War* (Johns Hopkins, 1960); and three books with Dr. David C. Hendrickson: *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and America's Purpose* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1992); *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford University Press, 1990), and *The Fall of the First British Empire: Origins of the War of American Independence* (Johns Hopkins, 1982). He was co-editor of *The National Interest* from 1985 to 1990, and president of the Lehrman Institute from 1982 to 1987. He has published essays in *Foreign Affairs*, *World Policy Journal*, *The National Interest*, *Harpers*, and *The New Republic*. Dr. Tucker received his B.S. from the United States Naval Academy in 1945 and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1949.

Marx famously said, “I am not a Marxist, just Karl Marx.” Given the way his name, ideas, and legacy have been invoked since his death eighty-five-years ago, Wilson’s ghost could say the same thing, “I am not a Wilsonian, just Woodrow Wilson.” True as that may be, the question of what to make of his posthumous influence remains central to the study and conduct of American foreign policy. Emerson once said, “An institution is only the lengthened shadow of one man.” The question then becomes, how much of what the United States has done and failed to do in the world, particularly since 1945, has come from the lengthened shadow of this man?

This volume of essays offers the best attempt I have seen to render sophisticated judgment on the impact of the Wilsonian legacy on recent foreign policy, particularly that conducted by the recently departed administration of George W. Bush. Before launching into an assessment of the essays and the volume as a whole, it might be well for me to say something about its origins and my connection with it and its participants.

This volume grew out of a session at the conference held at Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs in April 2006, marking of the sesquicentennial of Wilson’s birth. I was a participant in that conference, in a different session, on Wilson’s domestic political achievements. The conference also included sessions on his educational leadership, which featured four college and university presidents, and one on his governorship, which featured two sitting governors. At that conference, I met three of authors of essays in this volume, John Ikenberry, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Tony Smith. I had known and worked with the other author, Thomas Knock, for many years and count him among my closest friends. I have since had other interactions with Anne-Marie Slaughter, who was then dean of the Wilson School, and I should note that in this volume she calls me “perhaps the world’s leading authority on Wilson.” (92) Readers of this review should bear these facts in mind when reading what I have to say about these authors’ contributions.

This volume has many virtues. All the essays are unfailingly clear and lively. Anyone who reads them can learn much both about Wilson and about recent American foreign policy. The essays are also succinct and to the point, but, unlike most journal articles, they allow their authors to express their thoughts fully. Again, let me commend this volume as the best effort yet to probe the nature of “Wilsonianism” and its legacy in foreign policy.

This is also a somewhat odd volume, although its oddity does not detract much from its quality. The essays fall into three categories. The first of them, Ikenberry’s “Introduction: Woodrow Wilson, the Bush Administration, and the Future of Liberal Internationalism,” is just what the title states. It provides a useful opener by offering definitions and identifying central questions, the most important being whether the policies of the second Bush administration grew out of the Wilsonian tradition or represented an aberration from it. As corollaries, he raises five other questions: 1) did Wilson’s policies seek to spread democracy or mask an imperial spread of American global rule? 2) what was Wilson’s

vision, and did it seek to spread democracy? 3) how has liberal internationalism evolved since Wilson? 4) does liberal internationalism contain within itself safeguards to prevent imperialism? 5) what is the relevance of the Wilsonian tradition to the twenty-first century?

Ikenberry also identifies six ideas as the core of Wilsonianism: that a community of democratic nations is less likely to engage in wars; that free trade is a modernizing and civilizing influence; that international law should be upheld and extended; that there should be a “community of nations,” i.e., what later came to be called “collective security”; that the world is moving in a progressive direction and American should lead in that movement; and that the United States has special responsibilities to extend its influence, but without seeking hegemony. Despite this generally upbeat characterization, however, Ikenberry is critical of Wilson and his influence. Like other interpreters, he sees Wilson’s comprehensive internationalism as “a bridge too far” (15) for his time and later, and he believes that Wilson engaged in “liberal imperialism,” particularly early in his presidency. He sees the decade after the end of the Cold War as a time of excessive hopes, and he believes that the most serious new problems involve how to deal with weak states.

The second essay, Knock’s “‘Playing for a Hundred Years Hence’: Woodrow Wilson’s Internationalism and His Would-Be Heirs” is a crisp and thoughtful exposition of Wilson’s foreign policy in thought and action and an assessment of its real and reputed legacies. The only historian among the contributors, Knock brings to this essay the virtues of our discipline. As the author of *To End All Wars*, one of the two best books on Wilson’s foreign policy (the other being Arthur Link’s *Woodrow Wilson: War, Peace and Revolution*) he brings rich erudition and long-matured thought to the first part of his subject. Likewise, as the author of a forthcoming biography of George McGovern and a well-practiced scholar and teacher of the history of American foreign relations, he writes with insight and authority on the second part of his subject. On Wilson himself, Knock depicts and analyzes the president’s Mexican ventures, noting that they taught him not to rely on unilateral intervention as a way to promote political change in other countries. He does an equally fine job with Wilson’s later Russian ventures, although this account comes in an endnote (125, n. 31). As in his book, Knock explicates the evolution of Wilson’s thinking about international organization and delineates how he believed the League of Nations would work as a growing, evolving instrument to foster international order and peace. As he aptly puts it, “For Wilson, therefore, what the League offered was a compass rather than a final destination.” (41-42) Anyone who wishes to understand the main tenets of Wilson’s foreign policy should read this part of Knock’s essay.

The essay is equally good on the real and usurped legacies of that foreign policy. Knock has no patience with such claims as the one voiced by Walter Russell Mead that the Bush Doctrine was “Wilsonianism on steroids.” He argues, rather, that not just in that doctrine but more generally after World War II the United States established a pattern of “anti-Wilsonian interventionism” (47). He maintains that such incursions as the ones into Iran and Guatemala were products of Cold War “realism” rather than Wilsonianism, and he notes that one of Wilson’s fiercest critics of the 1940s and ‘50s, George Kennan, recanted his earlier attacks and came to a new appreciation of him. Finally, Knock notes that the

three Ks of latter-day Republican interventionism -- Henry Kissinger, Robert Kagan, and William Kristol -- all tout the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt as a muscular, unilateralist alternative to Wilsonianism. This is a point that deserves further analysis and elaboration, because whoever seeks the roots of "liberal imperialism" would do well to search in the garden of this greatest and least repentant of American imperialists, along with his sidekick Henry Cabot Lodge, rather than among the flowers of the man they hated and fought tooth and nail.

The last two essays in this book, Smith's "Wilsonianism after Iraq: The End of Liberal Internationalism?" and Slaughter's "Wilsonianism in the Twenty-First Century," are two halves of a debate. They are sharply argued and enjoyable to read, although there is a structural problem with the debate. Earlier in the book, Ikenberry and, to a lesser degree, Knock refer to this debate between Smith and Slaughter -- before the reader has a chance to see what the debate is about. Then, Smith repeatedly raises his points of disagreement with Slaughter -- again, before the reader has a chance to see what she has to say. This is occasionally confusing and a bit annoying, but it is hard to see how this debate could have been presented without having produced a longer, different, and less readable book. The contributor who suffers most from this format is Smith. He presents an argument that agrees with the "Wilsonianism on steroids" proposition after a thoroughly versed historian has fatally undermined that proposition and before a highly skilled lawyer blasts his position to bits. Even as hardened and unreconstructed a Wilsonian as myself could not help feeling sorry for this underdog in the debate.

Having shown my true colors, let me say that I think Smith does a fine job of arguing a wrongheaded case. He believes that the Bush Doctrine was eminently a bit of Wilsonianism, which he characterizes as the quest to spread liberal democratic governments, open international markets, establish multilateral institutions, and assert American leadership. Although Smith calls Wilson's thinking "hegemonic, not imperialist," he believes that it boiled down to "progressive imperialism" (58-59), and he notes that the Bush Doctrine embraces all facets of Wilsonianism except multilateralism. Further, he argues that such thinking extended far beyond Bush and his neoconservative mentors, who merely co-opted neoliberals' "internationalist hegemonism" of the 1990s, which harkened back to Wilson's original "progressive imperialism" (73). Smith likewise rejects Knock's and Slaughter's assertions that multilateralism lay at the heart of Wilson's thinking, and he sees current liberal internationalist thinking as the Bush Doctrine spiced with a few sprinkles of multilateralism. For his part, Smith finds such thinking futile: "Humpty Dumpty will not be put back together again. A renewed American bid for world supremacy lacks credibility." (87)

Enjoying the advantage of rebuttal, Slaughter joyfully presents herself as a spokesperson for liberal internationalism and charges that Smith "twists Wilson and his legacy beyond recognition." (90) As a good lawyer, she bases her argument on the facts of the case. One set of facts is the Fourteen Points, which she examines in some detail and notes that they never mention the word "democracy." (Nor "self-determination" either, for that matter -- the phrase was coined by Lloyd George and later used by Wilson rarely and sparingly.) Another set of facts is the League of Nations, which was not intended to be and did not

operate as what she calls “a democracy-promoting institution per se.” (95-96) She also rejects Smith’s contention that Wilson’s multilateralism was just a cover for American hegemony. Slaughter warms even more to an attack on Smith’s characterization of neoliberal internationalist thinking, in which she has been a participant, and she calls his version of this thinking “an artificial and often polemical construct.” (104) She readily admits that advocates of human rights and self-determination must confront the question of when and how to justify intervention on behalf of those aims, always fearing opening a Pandora’s box of entanglements and moral compromises. To Slaughter, however, those dangers are no reason to throw the baby of revised and updated liberal internationalism out with the bathwater of botched and duplicitous interventions such as those justified by the Bush Doctrine. Finally, she acknowledges the need to reform the United Nations but calls for the U. S. to strengthen and support it and other international organizations.

In all, this is a fine, lively volume of essays. It stands now and is likely to stand for a long time as the best exposition and critique of the Wilsonian legacy in American foreign policy. For myself, I would like to conclude with two points. One is to introduce a few more bits of evidence, and the other is to raise and suggest an answer to a question. The bits of evidence are threefold. First, on the matter of Wilson’s alleged hegemonic pretensions, he did not approach the world with the same assumptions about America’s standing as either of the Bushes or Bill Clinton. 1918 was not 1945, much less 1989. America’s position at the end of World War I was one of temporary primacy in a group of great powers. That primacy rested on defeat and demoralization in Germany, civil strife and turmoil in Russia, and exhaustion of France and Britain. The first and second of those conditions would be reversed in due time, while the third would be more lasting but not immediately crippling. Wilson recognized that his nation might be first among a group of equals but it was no actual or potential hegemon. The post-World War II situation left the U. S. as one of two superpowers, but it has always struck me that the policy makers of the first decade and a half of that era moved cautiously and uncertainly and with few notions of hegemony.

A second set of facts involves the way Wilson approached the question of fostering democracy in other countries. It surprised me that Edmund Burke is never mentioned in this volume. The two most profound influences on Wilson political thought were Burke and Walter Bagehot, and, of the two, Burke exerted a deeper, long hold on him. Contrary to some scholars’ assertions, Wilson’s devotion to Burke did not make him a conservative on domestic issues before he entered politics, but it did repeatedly shape his approaches and arguments. Early on, he grasped the essence of Burke’s anti-theoretical, anti-ideological viewpoint and seconded Burke’s insistence that political institutions must grow “organically” (one of his favorite words) from the cultures and experiences of different nations. Wilson could modify his thinking, such as when he favorably compared the Mexican Revolution to the French Revolution, and when he sprang the League of Nations on the peace conference and the world in 1919. But he never believed he was abandoning his basic viewpoint.

Wilson left unmistakable evidence of how much of a Burkean he remained and how much that allegiance shaped foreign policy when he spoke to a group of foreign reporters at the White House on April 8, 1918. His rambling remarks included this statement: “I have all

my reading days been fond of quoting a sentiment of Burke, but I can't quote the language as he said it: 'If any man ask me what is a free government, I reply, "A government which those living under it will guard." . . . Now, there isn't any one kind of government under which all nations ought to live. There isn't any one kind of government which we have the right to impose upon any nation. So that I am not fighting for democracy except for the peoples that want democracy. If they want it, then I am ready to fight until they get it. If the don't want it, then it is none of my business.'" (Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* [Princeton, 1984], vol. 47, p. 288)

Could Wilson have made his views about spreading democracy any plainer than that? Unfortunately, this statement came in an off-the-record talk and not a public speech. Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd did not discover and include it in their *Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* in 1927, and it did not see the light of print until Link and his associates published it six decades after Wilson's death. If these words had been circulated earlier, much of the ascription of "progressive imperialism" to Wilson might have been blunted. These words would make a nice addition to Slaughter's rebuttal to Smith's assertions.

The question I want to raise is, why does this linkage of Wilson to global hegemony persist? Why, when the evidence points so strongly against this linkage, do able scholars such as Smith persist in making it? I think the answer lies in the way liberal internationalism gained ascendancy during World War II. Wilson underwent a posthumous war-time apotheosis, which included, as Knock observes, an outpouring of books and magazine articles and the longest, biggest-budget Hollywood movie up to that time (longer and more expensive than "Gone with the Wind"). Yet this latter-day triumph of Wilsonianism was more apparent than real. As Knock also points out, Franklin Roosevelt's concept of the "Four Policemen" maintaining international order harked back to his wife's "Uncle Ted" rather than to his erstwhile presidential boss. The blending of T. Rooseveltian designs with Wilsonian rhetoric came naturally to FDR, who was uniquely positioned to be the political and ideological heir to both men. With his temperamental inclination---which some would call ecumenical and practical and others would call muddled and intellectually shallow---FDR cheerfully mixed up those lines of thought and never bothered to make distinctions. Likewise, internationalists of both persuasions felt so grateful to him for besting the isolationists that most of them masked their differences in a show of unity behind a larger, more involved, more lasting American role in world politics.

The post-war surge of harsh criticism of Wilsonianism by such men as Kennan, Walter Lippmann, and Hans Morgenthau shattered that unity, but those critics misread the source of the clumsy, ill-conceived globalism that they deplored so deeply. That kind of misreading has persisted down to the present with the linkage of the Wilsonian heritage to unwise, unbounded interventionism purportedly in the name of democracy. This volume goes a long way toward setting the record straight. As a good Christian, Woodrow Wilson knew he had lots of sins to answer for, and those who have claimed his mantle and believed they were fulfilling his legacy have plenty more. But the Bush doctrine and "progressive imperialism" have not been not among those sins. "Wilsonianism on steroids" R.I.P.

One would think that the discrediting of George W. Bush's Iraq policies would be manna from heaven for liberal internationalists, particularly on the heels of the election of a new Democratic President who won, in part, on a platform repudiating those policies. After eight years of a militarized and unilateralist foreign policy that dismissed the Kyoto Protocols and held in contempt the International Court of Justice, you would think that Bush's failure would open the door for them to turn the ship of state around 180 degrees and implement a new foreign policy. But rather than a sense of eager anticipation, there is instead the distinct aroma of panic emanating from liberal internationalist precincts. As G. John Ikenberry, the co-author, along with Thomas J. Knock, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Tony Smith, of a slim new volume soberly entitled *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-First Century* admits, "the crisis of the Bush foreign policy has become the crisis of liberal internationalism." (Ikenberry, et al., p. 4)

This candid admission in a book featuring three prominent liberal internationalists (Smith is a trenchant critic of that position) not only explains the sour mood among the philosophical heirs of Woodrow Wilson, but also represents something of a puzzle if we accept their repeated protestations -- perhaps too much like the Queen in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* -- that the liberal internationalism of America's 28th President is in no way implicated in the 43rd President's Iraq debacle.

And yet, this proposition needs to be vigorously advanced, apparently, because prominent members of the Bush Administration, including the President himself have rationalized and defended their policies in decidedly Wilsonian terms. Even distinguished historians like Ronald Steel, David Kennedy, and most recently George Herring, all implicate Wilsonian liberal internationalism to a greater or lesser extent in the calamity of the last eight years.² Given that, it is not at all surprising that liberal internationalists would feel the need to save WW from W.

Ikenberry begins his chapter with the key question: "was George Bush the heir of Woodrow Wilson?" He and Slaughter, coincidentally a professor and the Dean at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School but on leave serving as the Director of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's Policy Planning Staff, along with Knock, a diplomatic historian at Southern Methodist University, who raised questions about his university becoming the home to the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Freedom Institute, answer a resounding "no." While Wilson

¹This is a slightly up-dated version of my "Woodrow Wilson's War," *The National Interest*, No. 99 (January/February 2009): 87-96 (<http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id'20494>) and is reprinted here with the kind permission of that journal.

²Ronald Steel, "The Missionary," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 50, No. 18 (November 20, 2003), at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16797>; David M. Kennedy, "What 'W' Owes to 'WW,'" *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 295, No. 2 (March 2005), pp. 36-40; and George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 938-51.

himself may have suffered one momentary lapse in Mexico in 1914, they insist that the majority of his foreign policy was conducted in accord with that form of liberal internationalism we now refer to now as “Wilsonianism.”

Collectively, they make two arguments: First, Wilsonian liberal internationalism can in no way be implicated in the Bush Administration’s unilateral efforts to topple dictators and plant the seed of democracy in their place. Ikenberry argues that Bush cynically invoked Wilsonian themes only when the original *realpolitik* rationales for the Iraq war turned out to be bogus. Second, they insist that Wilsonian liberal internationalism represents a dramatic and welcome departure from the policies of the last eight years and commend it to the new Obama Administration.

Smith rejects both of these arguments. He argues that the link between Wilsonian liberal internationalism and the failed policies of the last eight years is clear and direct. Wilson was part of the larger tradition of American Liberal exceptionalism: the idea that America was uniquely virtuous due to its liberal democratic political system. And George Herring documents in his magisterial history of American foreign relations how from the very beginning of the Republic through the Bush Administration, this belief in exceptionalism has become, in political scientist Jack Snyder’s words, a potent “myth of empire.” It does so, in my view, by overstating threats from non-liberal states and underestimating the difficulty of transforming the world in the American image.³ Given that, Smith’s skepticism that Wilsonian liberal internationalism constitutes much of a break with the Bush Administration’s policies and his doubts that it represents a sound intellectual foundation upon which the new Obama Administration should base its foreign policy are justified.

One major problem with answering Ikenberry’s initial question is the lack of clarity regarding what Wilson’s legacy for contemporary liberal internationalism actually is. This murkiness is a function, in part, of Wilson’s own style. As H.L. Mencken put it in a searing portrait of the late President’s soaring rhetoric, “reading [Wilson’s] speeches in cold blood offer[s] a curious experience. It is difficult to believe that even idiots ever succumbed to such transparent contradictions, to such gaudy processions of mere counter-words, to so vast and obvious a nonsensicality.”⁴ Even Wilson’s ardent defenders in *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy* concede the Aprozian nature of *Wilsonianism*” which is fraught with “tensions and ambiguities” (Ikenberry et al., pp. 14 and 30). This debate about what are the central propositions of Wilsonianism is important because liberal internationalists derive different policy implications from it: promoting multilateral institutions and international law versus spreading democracy around the world.

Knock and Slaughter argue that the heart of the Wilsonian edifice is the promotion of international law and institutions. Knock quotes Senator J. William Fulbright to the effect

³See my “America’s Liberal Illiberalism: The Ideological Origins of Overreaction in U.S. Foreign Policy,” *International Security* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 7-43.

⁴H.L. Mencken, “The Archangel Woodrow” in *A Mencken Chrestomathy: His Own Selection of His Choicest Writings* (New York: Vintage, 1982), 250-51.

that the late President's contribution was "the one great new idea of the [twentieth] century in the field of international relations, the idea of an international organization with permanent processes for the peaceful settlement of international disputes." (Ikenberry et al., p. 35. Also see p. 23)

In contrast, both Ikenberry and Smith argue that the core tenet of Wilsonianism is the belief in the transformative effect of democracy on international relations. As Ikenberry puts it, "the entering intellectual wedge of Wilson's liberal vision was the conviction -- felt most emphatically about Germany -- that the internal characteristics of states are decisive in matters of war and peace. Autocratic and militarist states make war; democracies make peace. In retrospect, this is the cornerstone of Wilsonianism and, more generally, the liberal international tradition." (Ikenberry et al., p. 10. Also see p. 20) Smith concurs, explaining that "where ever democratic government appears, American security interests are likely to be served." (Ikenberry et al., pp. 53-54) In addition to democracy, Smith identifies three other pillars of Wilsonianism: free markets, multi-lateral institutions, and American leadership. But Smith insists that democratization remains the heart of Wilsonianism because for these multi-lateral organizations to work as Wilson hoped, their members all needed to be democratic.

Because Smith rejects Slaughter's and Knock's claim that the theoretical heart of Wilsonianism is multilateralism and international law, he sees the Bush Doctrine, with its emphasis on regime change, as being a legitimate off-shoot of liberal internationalism. In doing so, he traces the roots of what he calls "progressive imperialism" to three intellectual developments that preceded the Bush Administration in the 1990s. These include the formulation of democratic peace theory, which maintains that the spread of democracy will reduce war; the belief that the end of the Cold War demonstrated that democracy could take root even in very inhospitable soil; and the international community's backing away from an absolute commitment to state sovereignty in international law in favor of a "duty to protect" individual citizens from abuses by their own governments. (Ikenberry et al., pp. 66-72)

Slaughter herself points to the link between "duty to protect" and intervention to democratize a country. In her view, grave human rights abuses indicate the lack of Madisonian checks and balances, the absence of which raises the prospect for even more dangerous behavior in the future. Contradicting her previous claim that the heart of Wilsonianism is multilateralism, she here characterizes the linking of a state's international behavior with the nature of its domestic regime as "a deeply Wilsonian claim." It turns out, after all, that democracy assumes a much more central place in liberal internationalism than we were first led to believe. And if democracy is the key to making international institutions work, then efforts to promote democracy are the logical policy implication of Wilsonianism. In other words, given that domestic democracy and effective multilateral organizations and international law are inextricably linked in Wilsonianism, W's link to WW was not at all tenuous.

The second problem for Wilson's defenders is that the late President's actual behavior was more than a little embarrassing to their effort to separate him from George W. Bush. They have, for example, great difficulty explaining Wilson's unilateral use of military force to spread democracy in Latin America. They try to reconcile this behavior with their enlightened image of Wilson by arguing that his 1914 intervention in Mexico was an aberration which he soon came to regret. Knock makes this case by pointing to Wilson's scholarly writings in which he concluded that democracy could not be imposed from outside. "All in all," Knock concludes, "the professor who had set out 'to teach the South American Republics to elect good men' ended up the wiser pupil." (Ikenberry et al., p. 35)

Slaughter takes a slightly different tack, contrasting the early Wilson, who was willing to use military force to impose democracy, with the mature Wilson, who supposedly realized that democracy could not be imposed from outside or that U.S. leadership could not substitute for multilateral cooperation. As evidence, she quotes Wilson in 1914 arguing that "There are in my judgement no conceivable circumstances which would make it right for us to direct by force or by threat of force the internal processes of what is a profound revolution, a revolution as profound as that which occurred in France. All the world has been shocked ever since the time of that revolution in France that Europe should have undertaken to nullify what was done there, no matter what excesses then committed." (Ikenberry et al., p. 93)

Both of these defenses of Wilson fall short when we consider the larger sweep of his career. The aberration argument fails inasmuch as Wilson's intervention in Mexico was hardly unique. As Herring recounts, even before he became President, Wilson supported the Spanish-American War and the occupation of the Philippines on the grounds that they were likely to raise the level of "civilization" in these benighted places. And even though his first Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan proposed the Pan American Pact in 1913, the multilateral institution that would become the model for the League of Nations, Wilson nonetheless ignored it in 1914, unilaterally invading Mexico. Finally, the notion that Wilson "learned his lesson" in Mexico is dubious given that Wilson continued to unilaterally use force in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, and pursued regime change, albeit multilaterally, in Bolshevik Russia.

The only way to make sense of Wilson's behavior is to distinguish between cases where the United States was hegemonic and where it was not. In the Western Hemisphere, where the United States was preeminent, Wilson employed force unilaterally to effect regime change. In effect, he acted this way when he could. Conversely, in Europe, where the United States was not so predominant, Wilson opted for more multilateral approaches, and was much more circumspect in his goals. Wilson's seemingly inconsistent behavior, is, in fact, easily explained by variations in the power position of the United States, though this is not an explanation they are likely to embrace because it leads directly to the discomfiting connection of Wilsonianism with the Iraq War.

The combination of Wilsonianism and hegemony is critical for understanding recent U.S. foreign policy, particularly the Iraq War. The defining feature of the post-Cold War world is the unparalleled power of the United States. As with Wilson in the Western Hemisphere,

recent American presidents beginning with Bill Clinton took the helm of a global hegemonic power. That hegemony, in combination with the fact that a large segment of the American political elite embraced key features of Wilsonianism, led the United States to launch the Iraq War in response to the attacks of the United States on September 11, 2001.

Understandably, the Neo-Wilsonians are anxious to distance him from the Iraq War. Knock denies that Wilson went “abroad in search of monsters to destroy in the manner in which the Bush Administration has done, causing the deaths of hundreds if thousands of innocent people and inflicting mass destruction upon a modern state located in the center of the most volatile region of the world.” (Ikenberry et al., p. 35) Slaughter, an early supporter of the war, curiously rejects the notion that it could have been justified on humanitarian grounds, and echoes Ikenberry’s line that the Bush Administration only embraced the Wilsonian rationale after their failure to find weapons of mass destruction or meaningful links to *al Qaeda*.

In fact, Slaughter justifies her own early support of the war on liberal internationalist grounds. She explains that “many strong supporters of the responsibility to protect, including me, saw Saddam Hussein through the lens of his human rights violations, a view that in turn may have led us to be more willing to believe that he had nuclear or biological weapons without scrutinizing the available evidence. We were wrong.” (Ikenberry et al., p. 109) This admission, of course, actually highlights the link between Wilsonianism and overreaction to threats. And so it is unclear why, then, she thinks that this same thinking did not also color the Bush Administration’s view of the nature of the threat from Iraq (lack of democracy made it more dangerous for them to acquire WMD) and point to the optimal solution to it (regime change).

Moreover, it is wrong to argue that liberal internationalist considerations such as protecting the Iraqi population from Saddam’s depredations or spreading democracy were not part of the Bush Administration’s original rationale for the war. President Bush confided to *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward before the war, that “as we think through Iraq, we may or may not attack. I have no idea. But it will be for the objective of making the world peaceful.”⁵ Likewise, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz explained to *Vanity Fair* on May 10, 2003, well before the war had gone south or the speciousness of the original public rationales was evident, that “the truth is that for reasons that have a lot to do with the U.S. government bureaucracy we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason, but there have always been three fundamental concerns. One is weapons of mass destruction, the second is support for terrorism, the third is the criminal treatment of the Iraqi people.”⁶

⁵Bob Woodward, *Bush At War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 340.

⁶ Interview with Sam Tannenhaus of *Vanity Fair*, May 10, 2003 at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid'2594>.

To be sure, the Bush Administration played down the role of Wilsonianism in its public rationale for the war, but it was always there, and was not something that was cooked up as a place-holder for the original security rationales. Indeed, the infamous Downing St. Memorandum of the summer of 2002, which revealed that ‘the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy,’ raises the possibility that it was the WMD and links to al Qaeda rationales that were added on at the last minute once the Bush Administration had decided upon war on other grounds such as the imperative of regional transformation.⁷

To be sure, Wilson’s partisans are right to deny that there is a direct line between him and George W. Bush. But Smith is also correct to claim that Wilsonianism is nonetheless deeply implicated in the Iraq War. In addition to both exaggerating the threat from Saddam’s tin-pot dictatorship and underestimating the difficulty in substituting democracy for it, the bridge between Wilsonianism and the Bush Doctrine is the post-Holocaust development of international law to include “duty to protect,” which justified the violation of Iraqi sovereignty on human rights grounds. A major part of the story of the Iraq War is the broad domestic Acoalition of the willing” the Bush Administration assembled, including many Democrats in Congress and the chattering classes. The fact that this war could also be seen as a humanitarian operation undoubtedly contributed to the flock of liberal hawks who roosted with the Bush Administration on the pro-war perch.

Smith makes the provocative claim that “to the extent that there was an organized caucus on foreign affairs within the Democratic Party, its members supported the terms of the Bush Doctrine as their own, modified only by their invocation of multilateralism.” (Ikenberry et al., 78) This might seem counterintuitive at first glance, but upon closer examination it is entirely plausible since on two key elements of the Bush Doctrine -- the imperative of the spread of democracy and the potentially benign role of U.S. hegemony -- there was actually a fair amount of continuity between the Clinton and Bush Administrations.

On the former, Wolfowitz points out that the Clinton Administration embraced his recommendation to expand NATO contained in the controversial 1992 Defense Policy Guidance he drafted for the first Bush Administration. While the first Bush Administration rejected Wolfowitz’s DPG, it was widely regarded as the intellectual foundation for the second Bush Administration’s strategy. On the latter, Secretary of State Madeline Albright’s famous characterization of the United States as “the indispensable nation” was widely interpreted abroad as indicating that the Clinton Administration was taking up the mantle of global hegemon. In Smith’s view, the major difference between the Clinton and second Bush Administrations was therefore one of tactics, not strategy.” (Ikenberry et al., p. 77)

Despite eschewing “sterile debates” about who got us into Iraq in the first place, the *gestalt* of *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy* is nonetheless defensive. The beleaguered tone of the book reinforces Smith’s suspicions that, their repeated protests to the contrary, the link

⁷Mark Danner, “The Secret Way to War,” *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 52, No. 10 (June 10, 2005): at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/18034>.

between Wilson and Bush is less tenuous than Wilson's defenders would have us believe. The Neo-Wilsonians cling to the life raft of multilateralism so tenaciously because that is all that separates them from the Bush Administration's disastrous war in Iraq. Though even there, the differences are not as great as they would have us believe. Wolfowitz assured *Vanity Fair* that "I'm not a unilateralist by any means. In fact, I don't think you can get much done in this world if you do it alone." In Iraq, the Bush Administration at least tipped its hat toward multilateralism with its "coalition of the willing."

Slaughter presents herself as the repentant hawk, who like Wilson, learned her lesson after the disastrous unilateral intervention into Iraq. Unfortunately, Wilson was a recidivist who, rather than consistently embracing multilateralism and international law after 1914, continued his unilateral interventions. And one suspects that given her support for the Clinton Administration's humanitarian interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo, which even though conducted under the rubric of NATO were widely regarded in Europe as unilateral, Slaughter would not be averse to the Obama Administration doing the same in Darfur, particularly if it was also conducted behind the fig-leaf of an international organization.

Of course, this debate is about more than just the historical questions of what constitutes Wilsonianism and whether it got the United States into Iraq. Equally pressing for all concerned is the policy question of whether Wilsonian liberal internationalism represents the best guide for American foreign policy under the new Obama Administration. Wilson's heirs clearly think that it does, and given that their paladin Hillary Clinton is now Secretary of State, it is likely that they will have a sympathetic ear in Foggy Bottom,

What will Clinton's foreign policy look like? In a phrase, it will be Clinton *redux*. And given the continuities between Clinton I and Bush, that means that there is also likely to be less difference between Bush and Clinton II than many would expect. Slaughter recommends, for example, "maintaining a balance of power in favor of liberal democracies," (Ikenberry et al., p. 91) that sounds a lot like Bush's 2002 *National Security Strategy* advocating "a balance of power that favors human freedom." She also proposes a "Community of Democracies" that is reminiscent of the Neoconservative pundit Robert Kagan's "League of Democracies," which Senator John McCain embraced in the 2008 campaign. Finally, Slaughter avers that despite the failures of the Bush Administration, "American power [can still] be used for good in the world." And Ikenberry assures us that this power will be used only for "enlightened and legitimate interventions." (Ikenberry et al., pp. 4 and 97) To be sure, there will be more rhetorical commitment to multilateralism under Clinton II, but overall the more things change, the more they stay the same.

It is, of course, not a foregone conclusion that this Neo-Wilsonian foreign policy will be President Obama's foreign policy. Hopeful signs include the appointment of General James Jones as National Security Advisor and the retention of Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense, both of whom seem less committed to Wilsonianism and more squarely planted in the Realist tradition in American foreign policy. Nonetheless, the broad outlines of the debate in the Obama Administration are becoming clear.

Moreover, despite Bush's channeling of Wilson, which led to failure in Iraq, it would not be prudent to bet that the 28th President's ghost has been exorcized completely. As Herring reminds us, "Wilson towers above the landscape of modern American foreign policy like no other individual, the dominant personality, the seminal figure." Given that, his heirs in both political parties will continue to shape American foreign policy for years to come. It will therefore be a real challenge for Americans to "disenthrall' themselves, to borrow Lincoln's word, from deeply entrenched ideas about their country and its place in the world," as Herring wisely advises.⁸

⁸Herring, 379 and 963.

This is a small book (only 117 pages of text) on a large subject. It is also a book that addresses a large subject in small ways. The book on Wilson and his relevance and the “crisis of American foreign policy” is provocative, and that’s always good because the work stimulates analysis and helps us move forward intellectually. However, the frames of analysis offered in the book are narrow, make unstated assumptions, and leave too much unsaid, and that’s not so good.

In the likely event that all of this sounds cryptic, allow me to expand upon these themes. Following the appropriate table setting by John Ikenberry, Thomas J. Knock offers a vigorous defense of Woodrow Wilson and his legacy by focusing on Wilson’s advocacy of multilateralism. This sympathetic treatment credits Wilson for his sincere conversion to internationalism and his tireless efforts to promote a world organization to create and keep the peace. Fair enough, though for this we might just as well use the term Carnegieism, or Addamsism, or WILPFism. Knock, at least, acknowledges that these peace progressives existed as a powerful force, though I would recommend a thorough reading of the late Alan Dawley’s exemplary Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution. It’s also telling that Wilson alienated these peace internationalists, as well the Roosevelt-Lodge clique, as well as the Princeton community, and eventually the American public, which ultimately thoroughly repudiated him.

The larger point is that the very trope of Wilsonianism is deeply problematic, as it tends to reify great man theory, a top down approach to diplomacy, and the separation of domestic politics and foreign policy, which is a major conceptual problem for the field of diplomatic history. I think some scholars admire Wilson because he was an academic who had the capacity to learn on the job, which in the wake of eight years of George W. is indeed refreshing. So Wilson learned from the Mexican intervention — and then intervened there twice more, both disastrous, as Knock admits. These blatant contradictions aside, Wilson’s comments about recognizing the Mexicans’ need and right to have a revolution are both genuine and important and again separate him from the likes of the learning-impaired Bush. Knock mentions but tends to gloss over other Wilsonian contradictions, however, including the campaign of “One Hundred Percent Americanism” by the champion of multilateralism.

Other conceptual problems, un-interrogated assumptions, and elisions come to mind with respect to this volume. Wilson took the country to war after saying he would not but the unstated assumption of all the authors is that this was a good and noble thing to do, though it left a wreck of American society, trampled civil liberties, and ensured that Wilson’s indeed noble quest to advance international order would fail with a disillusioned public. Moreover, things didn’t work out so well in Germany either. I’m not saying that the intervention was wrong -- not here anyway -- just following up on the pledge to point out the presumptions so often at work but unstated. This is how hegemonic discourse works; certain things are discussed and certain ones are not.

All of the authors write sparingly of the non-western world, which is a serious problem for a book that purports to be on multilateralism. Wilson's penchant for Caribbean intervention gets little play. The Dominican Republic and Nicaragua receive a passing nod but the authors virtually ignore the Haitian intervention (with one passing mention by Ikenberry), which Wilson initiated and lasted twenty years. I don't recall any analysis of the terms "mandates" or "colonialism" (much less post-colonialism), which Wilson and the Big Three sanctioned. Then there's the issue of the Russian intervention and Wilson's perfervid anti-Bolshevism, virtually ignored. But these are history problems; let's move closer to the present and the heart of the debate, the comparison between Wilson and Bush.

To his enormous credit Tony Smith challenges liberal discourse (which invariably upsets liberals) by arguing that Bushism was Wilsonianism. His most telling argument, one that Knock and Anne-Marie Slaughter can't fend off, is to challenge the notion "that multilateralism should be selected out as the chief or defining, element of Wilsonianism." (60) Ikenberry might be presumed to agree, as he lays out six broad themes of Wilsonianism rather than the more narrow focus of Knock and Slaughter on multilateralism. Smith offers substantial evidence of "convergence" between neo-liberals and neo-conservatives and argues in essence that a discourse of multilateralism obscures a foreign policy of intervention and American hegemony. He points out that to many liberals as well as conservatives the problem with Iraq was that the United States "botched the job"--a frame reminiscent of Vietnam revisionism—not that it intervened in the first place.

I think Smith wins the convergence argument but I don't blame the liberals for being prickly about too close an association with the neo-cons. Major differences exist yet liberals and neo-cons often end up at the same place (that is, at war), as Smith suggests and as Slaughter, to her enormous credit, confesses in acknowledging her initial support for going to war in Iraq. Paul Wolfowitz exemplifies the difference, however, with his oh so rich comment, "Unilateralism is the high road to multilateralism."

The major difference between the liberals and the neo-cons is that Slaughter and the authors of the Princeton project are genuine advocates of multi-lateral order whereas Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and the like gloried in manly assertions of American power for its own cathartic affirmation of U.S. supremacy, under God, for corporate profit, and for the final added bonus of a Viagra-like kick for themselves. I am guilty with this last comment of bringing gender into the discussion, which is another mode of analysis in which these authors have no interest. The same is true of religion. Bush's invocation of good and evil is acknowledged but largely unanalyzed. Moreover, we have here a book on Woodrow Wilson that ignores, virtually if not completely, his religiosity. This, frankly, is also a serious conceptual problem. The general issue of the conflation of God and America -- the sort of thing that so upsets us when it comes to Muslims and their societies -- is all but ignored in American culture yet we have much to learn from it.

I could not agree more with Slaughter in renouncing war and advocating an American embrace of a genuine multilateral order. There is no other way out and it is coming whether the various "cons" like it or not. While I admire her sincerity and agree with her

completely on the end in view, I perceive some serious contradictions. I also have some questions for her and other liberals should they care to respond.

The Princeton project wants to promote an international environment in which nations “bandwagon with the United States rather than balance against us.” Smith might argue that such statements are not very far removed from building a coalition of the willing; that is, you are either with us or against us. Or, as Noam Chomsky puts it in the title of one of his slender volumes, “What We Say Goes!”

We must, Slaughter avers, “find ways to forge partnership *with Europe and like-minded countries across the globe*.(117) [my emphasis]. And then there’s this unabashed Wilsonian pronouncement. “The twenty-first century, like the twentieth century, must be made safe for democracy.”(109) These comments help us understand where liberals often go wrong, terribly wrong (though few unlike Slaughter and Robert McNamara ever admit as much). To just mention one of many rather obvious problems, as I write this I am sitting in Beijing, where the neo-Confucian attitude about democracy in the minds of hundreds of millions of people and certainly of those in power is considerably different from that which prevails in God’s blessed America. Yet just as Wilson sought to teach the South Americans to elect good men and Bush to democratize Iraq, liberals are more than reluctant to let go of the mythical American mission to do it for the world.

To be fair Slaughter emphasizes multilateral cooperation, including some excellent suggestions for reform of the UN, especially the Security Council. What I think she misses is that intellectuals like her may not always have charge of the situation. Most of the States remain red and after the passage of time they can be easily primed for a vigorous and violent defense of national identity such as has occurred with remarkable continuity throughout American history and in the name of democracy. In short, with a nod to Thomas Frank, there is still a lot the matter with Kansas. Even as she insightfully locates “the origins of international conflict” within “individual societies,”(105) Slaughter fails to appreciate that crusading pronouncements of America, Europe and “like-minded” countries leading the world to democracy can rapidly and with devastating effect become a militant discourse, as in the Iraq War.

Once again I couldn’t agree more with Slaughter’s comment, “In the twenty-first century both the substance and style of American leadership in world affairs will have to change.”(111) But now, in the spirit of academe, I offer a “global test” for like-minded liberals to see how deeply they actually embrace democracy and multilateralism. Here are the questions:

1. Do you support the regime of Hugo Chavez, which came to power and has been affirmed by repeated popular and free elections?
2. Do you support the unilateral dismantling of the vast majority of the more than 100 U.S. military bases overseas?
3. Would you favor severe limitations on the American world-leading cultivation and sale of advanced weaponry and support a unilateral and dramatic reduction in the U.S. military budget, by far the largest in the world?

4. Do you advocate that the United States side with the Palestinians along with virtually the entire rest of the world, aside from Israel, in UN votes pertaining to the illegal and ongoing occupation?

When liberals can answer, “Yes” to these and many other such questions, it is at that point that we can take up a serious discussion about genuine multilateral order.

Response by Erez Manela, Harvard University

There is always a risk in writing a book that takes on a central debate in current affairs. By the time the book comes out, the issues that seemed so timely and pressing when the book was conceived might already be, well, passé. One can hardly avoid this reflection when commenting on a book that opens with the question, “Was George Bush the heir of Woodrow Wilson?” This reviewer can still recall a time, not so long ago, when this question, with which G. John Ikenberry opens his introductory essay to this volume, seemed urgent. Now, it may well now strike some readers as quaint. Though George W. Bush left office only a few months ago, he already seems to be a distant, fading memory. And the recent economic crises have relegated not just Bush but also the Iraq War and foreign affairs more generally to the back burner for the moment.

Readers, however, should resist the urge to treat this book as an antiquarian exercise. Tempting as it may be to put George Bush out of mind, the strategic issues his administration dealt with in foreign affairs, from terrorism and rogue states to nuclear proliferation and biological weapons are here to stay, and the consequences of his decisions will be with us for a long time. The economy may be foremost on our minds now, but sooner or later the problems of global security will return to center stage. U.S. forces, after all, are still on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan; Pakistan grows increasingly unstable; Iran and North Korea are as unpredictable as ever; the strategic postures of China, India, and Russia remain in flux; and, as the recent events in Sri Lanka must remind us, tensions between competing claims to self-determination and questions about international responsibility for the protection of human rights remain as pressing and as vexing as ever in international society. This, therefore, is an important book, whose shelf life may well be quite a bit longer than its opening line suggests.

This slim volume, 117 pages of text in all, is a collection of four essays, which emerged from a debate among the four authors launched at a colloquium held at Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School in April 2006, as part of that school’s seventy-fifth anniversary celebration. Ikenberry’s introductory essay is followed by essays by Knock, Smith, and Slaughter respectively. The essays center on two distinct if related debates. The first debate is a historical one about the precise meaning of “Wilsonianism” as Woodrow Wilson himself envisioned it, with the central disagreement revolving around the relative importance of democracy promotion versus multilateralism in Wilson’s vision for the postwar international order. The second debate is a more contemporary one, focusing not on 1919 but on the 1990s and beyond. It revolves around the question of whether the Bush Doctrine and neoconservatism in general are natural, even inevitable, outgrowths of Wilsonian liberal internationalism, or its antithesis.

The authors all engage both debates, though to differing extents and from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Knock, a historian who has written one of the most important

books on Wilson's plans for international order,¹ makes the most significant contribution to the first, historical debate. His essay, "Playing for a Hundred Years Hence," begins by noting the great variety of meanings that have recently attached to Wilson's legacy. It then proceeds to offer a careful analysis of the evolution of Wilson's views on foreign affairs and international order in their historical contexts. Eschewing the common tendency, occasionally apparent even among careful historians, to reduce Wilson's views to a handful of (in)famous snippets—"making the world safe for democracy", "teaching Latin Americans to elect good men"—he makes a compelling case that by 1918 it was the establishment and nurturing of multilateral international institutions that stood at the center of Wilson's vision. Wilson, of course, saw democracy, understood as government by consent, as preferable to autocracy, but he also thought that such government evolves gradually and within specific historical and cultural contexts.

Encapsulating what is perhaps the central insight of his book, Knock also makes it plain that Wilson's main disagreement with his Republican opponents was not about the U.S. need to engage the world but rather about the terms of that engagement. Wilson believed that the United States must work to promote the institutionalization of multilateralism and common counsel in international affairs. He was convinced, moreover, that to build such a world order the United States would have to give up a measure of its sovereignty. His Republican opponents, on the other hand, advocated a posture that was unilateral, guided by a conception of the national interest narrowly construed, and characterized by a jealous attachment to America's sovereign prerogatives. Knock's answer to Ikenberry's opening question, then, is clear: A resounding no.

Tony Smith's essay, titled "Wilsonianism after Iraq," disagrees with Knock on this point. Instead, he argues that Wilson prioritized the spread of democracy over multilateralism and that he saw international institutions as little more than vessels for extending U.S. hegemony. Smith, a political scientist by training, is not particularly convincing on this question, but it is not one that stands at the center of his essay. The "Wilsonianism" in its title is not really about Wilson's original vision but rather about the core principles of American liberal internationalism post-1945 in general and in the post-Cold War period in particular. Smith characterizes this worldview—he calls it, at least in reference to the 1990s, "neoliberalism"—as focused on the promotion of democracy ("democratic enlargement"), and he sees a straight line that leads from Wilson to the muscular, anticommunist liberalism of the Cold War and thence to Bill Clinton's interventionism of the 1990s, as in the U.S. military involvement in Somalia, Bosnia, and elsewhere.

The main contention of Smith's essay, which it makes emphatically, is that the triumphalist, interventionist liberal internationalism of the 1990s prepared the groundwork for Bush and the neoconservatives, with whom it shared core belief and assumptions. Smith acknowledges that the former may have talked more about multilateralism while the latter were more forthrightly unilateralist, but he contends that the liberals' multilateralism was

¹ Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Oxford University Press, 1992).

little more than a cloak for U.S. hegemony and that in any case this principle was far less important in the “neolib” universe than the trinity, as he sees it, that define its core beliefs: First, democratic peace theory; second, faith in the universal appeal of democracy to all people everywhere; and third, the international community’s “responsibility to protect” individuals everywhere against the violation of their human rights by their own governments. Thus, he concludes, did the liberal interventionists of the 1990s lay the groundwork for the Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War.

For Smith, of course, the point of making such connections between 1990s liberal internationalism and the Bush Doctrine is to suggest that both approaches are equally to blame for the current predicament of the United States and that neither is therefore a useful guide for tackling future challenges in world affairs. But then, just as one expects Smith to lay out the alternative approach he favors, his essay takes a curious twist. He admits that “no alternative framework for America in world politics has yet emerged” and declares that though “Wilsonians contributed to the current imbroglio” they might also “contribute to righting the mistakes of the past.” (88) But if the liberal internationalist creed is as fully culpable in the current mess as Smith’s essay argues, how could it be expected to right the mistakes of the past? His conclusion appears to suggest that there is, at least theoretically, a version of internationalism that Smith approves of, though his essay offers no clues as to what it might be.

Is it perhaps the one offered by Anne-Marie Slaughter in the essay that concludes the book, “Wilsonianism in the Twenty-first Century”? Slaughter, a scholar of international law and the dean of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, agrees with Knock on the historical point that multilateralism stood at the center of Wilson’s vision—Smith, she points out, provides no citations to back up his claim that democracy promotion was at the center of Wilson vision for the new world order. But the main purpose of her essay is not to argue the historical case about Wilson’s vision but rather to refute Smith’s characterization of the beliefs and impact of modern day liberal internationalists, of which she is a prominent representative. One by one, Slaughter rejects Smith’s claims as to the core belief of “neoliberals,” challenging even the term itself as an invention that does not represent any single, discernable intellectual or policy approach. Democratic peace theory, she points out, is highly contested and indeed seems not to work when applied to societies in the process of democratizing rather than to longstanding democracies. Few liberals, she notes, believe that democratic transitions can be quick, or uncomplicated, or imposed from the outside by military force. And the emergence of the doctrine of “responsibility to protect,” far from being a tool of U.S. hegemony, has been led by the United Nations and other international organizations. Even the most expansive interpretation of that doctrine, she notes, would not have sanctioned the Iraq invasion in 2003, nor did the Bush administration invoke it for that purpose.

Slaughter admits that the promotion of a doctrine that allows the multilateral use of force against sovereign governments that abuse their citizens does carry its risks: “Is it in fact possible,” she asks, “to legitimize the offensive use of force in any situation, however carefully hedged and limited and however well intentioned, without opening Pandora’s box?” It is a vexing issue, which is precisely why it could only be legitimately addressed

through broadly participatory, institutionalized, multilateral processes rather than through the military fiat of a single power or ad hoc “coalitions of the willing.” It is here that the historical analogy to 1919 is most compelling. The Bush administration’s outlook was a lot like that of Wilson’s opponents in 1919, characterized by an internationalism that was unilateral and jealous of American sovereignty. The liberal internationalist alternative instead seeks, as Wilson did, to foster habits of global governance through institutionalized processes of common counsel and evinces a willingness to accept genuine restrictions on U.S. sovereignty in return for the benefits of cooperation, as the members of the European Union already do as a matter of course.

For this reviewer, there are clear winners in both of the debates at the center of this volume. On the historical debate, Knock’s essay is convincing about the centrality of promoting multilateralism, rather than the aggressive expansion of democracy, in Wilson’s own program. And in the debate over more recent U.S. foreign policy, Slaughter’s chapter makes a compelling case that, though liberal internationalists and neoconservatives do share some common premises—most obviously a faith that the United States can and should be a force in world affairs—they do in fact represent two quite distinct approaches to the U.S. role in the twenty-first century.

Still, the central question around which this book revolves remains as important as it is unresolved. The tensions between the claims of sovereignty and the national interest on the one hand and the pursuit of multilateralism, human rights, and global governance on the other—tensions that in the end felled Wilson and more than a few of his successors—continue to vex the United States well into this century. One might hope that, *pace* Smith, the Bush Doctrine is, in fact, dead. But if it is, what will follow it? The current president of the United States likes to present himself as the heir of Lincoln, but in foreign affairs, at least, his tendency toward multilateral institutions and his support for the nurturing of global governance may mean that he will turn out to be the heir of yet another tall, gaunt, deep thinking president. To paraphrase Ikenberry’s opening question, then: Will Barack Obama prove to be the heir of Woodrow Wilson? And if so, will his effort at making the United States a force for good in the world prove more successful? More likely than not, *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy, Volume II*, is already in the works.

It was only yesterday that the triumph of Wilsonianism seemed almost at hand. The world that emerged from the cold war was widely considered to be a striking vindication of Woodrow Wilson's vision. An international order made up of democratic states appeared within reach. The Gulf War was hailed as a demonstration that the United Nations was at long last becoming an effective institution. So too, the international order had been transformed from a balance of power into a community of power; one in which America enjoyed a position of undisputed leadership. The view Arthur Link took during the cold war, that Wilson's vision represented the "higher realism", appeared to have been right after all.

Today we are no longer so sure. A benign future that once beckoned no longer seems so promising. Wilson's stock, long a metric of the nation's experience in the world, has retreated. The prospects of an international order in which America retains a position of leadership is increasingly questioned, not least for the reason that the latest president to claim the mantle of Wilsonianism was George W. Bush.

In fact, Bush only implicitly laid claim to be an epigone of Wilson; it is the president's neoconservative supporters who have been explicit in so contending. Is their contention justified? "Was George Bush the heir of Woodrow Wilson...Did Bush's foreign policy reflect continuity with America's liberal international past or a radical break with it?" These are the questions put by John Ikenberry at the outset of *The Crisis in American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-first Century*, a volume of essays written by G. John Ikenberry, Thomas J. Knock, Anne-Marie Slaughter and Tony Smith. The questions are of "some importance", Ikenberry adds and his colleagues agree. But here agreement ends and a stimulating debate begins, largely between Smith and his co-authors, over American policy and the meaning of Wilsonianism and liberal internationalism.

What is Wilsonianism according to the prophet? Wilson's vision was his response to an old dilemma, one that Jefferson had faced a century earlier and had failed to resolve: how to make the world safe for American participation. His answer, first given to the League to Enforce Peace in May 1916, and repeated in subsequent speeches, was a new world order based on the principles that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, that great nations and small enjoy an equality of rights, and that no nation should henceforth extend its polity over another nation or people.

A global concert of power would secure the new order, a concert over which America would enjoy a position of leadership. America would exercise this position not simply because it was the world's greatest power, but because it was the world's only disinterested power. "We entered the war as the disinterested champions of right," Wilson informed the

Senate in July 1919, when submitting the Versailles peace treaty to the Senate, “and we interested ourselves in the terms of the peace treaty in no other capacity.”¹

International order and America's leadership in this order were not seen as the accidental product of transient circumstances that would change when the structure of international power changed. They were instead seen, for all practical purposes, as inseparable. America's participation in the post-World War I order was conditioned as much on American leadership in that order as it was on the principles that were to form its foundation. Wilson's acceptance of liberal internationalism (“The interests of all nations are our own also,” he declared in his May 1916 address. “We are partners with the rest.”²), with its corollary of multilateralism, was nevertheless by our ability, bordering on a right, to act unilaterally when necessity so dictated. The benefits of isolation, with its corollary of unilateralism (the free hand), were thus joined to the advantages of an internationalism that assumed American leadership.

Wilson's legacy has regularly been identified with the relationship he drew between a democratic world and a peaceful one. Ikenberry goes so far as to say that this relationship “is the cornerstone of Wilsonianism and, more generally, the liberal internationalist tradition.” Yet it was only in his war message to Congress that he declared that “a steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants.”³ Prior to April 1917, it had been others – particularly his Secretary of State, Robert Lansing – who had urged the view upon a then skeptical president that the war was a struggle between democracy and autocracy and that a democratic world was the only true guarantee of a lasting peace.

In finally embracing this view, Wilson did not strike out on a novel course. The belief that the institutions of freedom could not be entirely safe until the world was made safe for democracy – until the world was able to emulate the American example – goes back again to Jefferson. Nor did Wilson change the American commitment to the promotion of freedom from the role of exemplar to that of crusader. During the period of neutrality, in 1915, the president said with respect to Mexico: “I hold it as a fundamental principle that every people has a right to determine its own form of government.”⁴ This was the lesson he took from his intervention in Mexico, although, unfortunately, it was observed in the breach in the case of other and smaller states of the hemisphere. It is true that the norm of regime change was applied to Germany during American participation in the war, but the German case was not generalized. Quite the contrary, in remarks to foreign correspondent in March 1918, the President observed that “there isn't any one government under which

¹ House Diary, 10 July, 1919, in Arthur S. Link, et al, eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton University Press, 1966-1994), 61:427. Hereafter cited as *PWW*.

² Address to League to Enforce Peace, 27 May 1916, *PWW* 37:113-16.

³ Address to joint session of Congress, 2 April 1917, *PWW*, 41:523.

⁴ Jackson Day Address, 8 January, 1915, *PWW*, 32:38-39.

all nations ought to live. There isn't anyone kind of government which we have the right to impose upon any nation.”⁵

Still, Wilson did give a much more ambitious and active expression to the vision of a world made safe for democracy. He initiated the practice of considering governments legitimate only to the extent they were democratic. His world made safe for democracy was, in the last analysis, almost indistinguishable from a democratic world. With Wilson the American commitment to the promotion of freedom had taken its first, and uncertain step, from a passive to an active phase. At the time, that step failed since it required a degree of power beyond the nation's capabilities and beyond the nation's will to use such powers it did possess.

Even if it is granted that Wilson was ambivalent about the American role in the promotion of freedom, there remains the issue of the means by which this goal was to be pursued. The change from the role of exemplar to that of crusader is, in effect, primarily a change of means, no small matter. The most persistent differences Americans have had over foreign policy, after all, have been over means and not ends. There is little basis in American history for the view that a necessary relationship has existed between commitment to role and commitment to a particular foreign policy, that a policy of either isolation or intervention must follow from the United States' self-assigned role as promoter of freedom. Given Wilson's attitudes toward force, there seems little warrant in making him an (armed) crusader of democracy.

If this is a reasonably accurate summary of Wilsonianism, what may be said of Tony Smith's contention that the Bush foreign policy represented continuity with Wilsonianism rather than a break from it as Ikenberry, Knock and Slaughter contend? Dividing the Bush Doctrine into two pillars, the one of power and the other of purpose, he disassociates Wilsonianism from the first though not from the second. “The aspect of the Bush Doctrine that asserts the imperative of American military supremacy in world affairs is difficult to reconcile with traditional Wilsonianism.... Where the Wilsonian tradition contributed fundamentally to the Bush Doctrine was in its pillar of purpose, with its assertion that with the expansion of 'free market democracies', the United States possessed a blueprint capable of fostering global freedom, prosperity, and peace.”

Yet those who reject the contention that George Bush was the heir of Woodrow Wilson do not do so on grounds that Bush's “pillar of purpose” was the spread of “freedom, prosperity, and peace.” Many who are otherwise critics of the Bush Doctrine agree with Smith that the Wilsonian tradition contributed to the Bush Doctrine's pillar of purpose. Whether that contribution was “fundamental” as Smith claims is another matter. It seems to me that what is fundamental in the Bush Doctrine was not the pillar of purpose at all but the pillar of power, that is, the means by which purpose was to be realized. After all, there is nothing particularly novel about wanting the American blueprint for achieving freedom

⁵ Remarks to foreign correspondents, 8 April, 1918, *PWW*, 47:238.

and prosperity copied elsewhere. There was novelty in doing so unilaterally if necessary and by fire and sword.

Wilsonianism and liberal internationalism were in the beginning one and the same. They did not stay the same for long; with the beginning of the Cold War a separation began. Whatever else may be said of the United Nations, in design it was a far cry from Wilsonianism. The same, though for different reasons, must be said of the policy of containment that soon took the place of the UN in American policy. The international order that American power created, and that was readily identified as liberal internationalist in spirit, did not afford equal protection to the security and independence of all the states that comprised it. This order rested quite clearly on what Wilson so detested – “force, force, always force”. Even more, it rested in large measure on a particularly odious threat of force: nuclear deterrence. Understandably, Thomas Knock – a good Wilsonian – says of this order: “If Wilson was the father of American internationalism, then a fair number of his children – those who fashioned Cold War Globalism – were, to put it politely, illegitimate. What triumphed in the postwar period was a mutant form of Wilson’s internationalism, and Wilson almost certainly would have denied paternity.”

In the period that succeeded the Cold War, the identification of American foreign policy with even this “mutant” form of Wilson’s internationalism can only be rejected, devoid as it has been of the plea – necessity – on which containment ultimately rested. That plea can have no persuasive justification in a period of American military supremacy. The Bush Doctrine reflected neither Wilsonianism nor, for that matter, the liberal internationalism of the Cold War.

Response by Thomas J. Knock, Southern Methodist University

To begin, I would like to express my thanks to Thomas Maddox and H-Diplo for the compliment of featuring our volume on the Roundtable, and especially with reviews from such distinguished scholars as John Cooper, Michael Desch, Walter Hixson, Erez Manela, and Robert Tucker. I must say, given how well they seemed to like my essay, I found particularly gratifying the reviews by John Cooper, Erez Manela, and Robert Tucker, all of whom are outstanding experts on the subject of Woodrow Wilson and his times. But I appreciate the point of view of Michael Desch and Walter Hixson, too, who both offer a range of criticism while emphasizing inconsistencies in Wilson's conduct and diplomacy in Latin America (especially Mexico) as against his advocacy of progressive internationalism; they also see a real kinship between Wilson and George W. Bush. For my part, what mainly follows here is something of an expository response, rather than a rejoinder, *per se*.

In my contribution to our volume, I attempt to put Wilsonian internationalism in historical context in light of the war in Iraq and of the growing number of pundits who have compared George W. Bush to Woodrow Wilson or have invoked the latter's name in connection with the broader crisis in American foreign policy in the new century. Their commentaries are the latest in a series of writings reflecting on Wilson's centrality that stretch back to the period between the world wars. Like others before them, they are informed by some degree of ideology and partisanship and are freighted in the context of the times in which they were written.

But there's a problem of interpretation here, which is one of the major themes of the debate in our essays (particularly the one between Anne-Marie Slaughter and Tony Smith). The term "Wilsonianism," I suggest, is in danger of becoming what literary critics call a "free-floating signifier"—that is, a term constantly deployed, yet stripped of meaningful historical context. ("Nuclear Wilsonianism," "Realistic Wilsonianism," "Wilsonianism on steroids," are but a few examples.) And it had struck me that virtually all of the authors and foreign-policy practitioners who had apparently re-discovered the subject in the early-to-mid 2000s had pretty much declined to engage that crucial element of "Wilsonianism" to which Wilson himself attached the supreme importance. Whatever Wilson's claim to historical greatness, I myself would argue that, in the end, it rests upon his having set in motion what J. William Fulbright once characterized as "the one great new idea of [the 20th] century in the field of international relations, the idea of an international organization with permanent processes for the peaceful settlement of international disputes."¹ And so, given the current debate, I explore what Wilson himself had to say about these matters. For the things that worried him the most, worry us, too—questions about proliferating armaments and the avoidance of war, about sovereignty as it relates to unilateralism and multilateralism, and, one way or another, the future of the United Nations and the United States' disposition toward it.

¹ Fulbright quoted in Randall Bennett Woods, *Fulbright, A Biography* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 647.

Wilson realized that such a fundamental restructuring of international relations could not be accomplished overnight. His view was that “the League must grow and not be made,” by stages, on a case-by-case basis. One should begin, then, with simple covenants—for example, the obligation to submit disputes to arbitration. Then, as he explained to Ambassador Jusserand of France, “in the very process of carrying out these covenant . . . a machinery and practice of cooperation would naturally spring up which would . . . produce . . . a regularly constituted and employed concert of nations.”² As for military sanctions, Wilson did not believe that they would come into play very often in the postwar period, for several reasons. The deterrent manifest within the threat of collective force, the “cooling-off” provisions in the arbitration features of the League, and, especially, disarmament together would help to eliminate most potential problems from the start. (That was how he sometimes explained Article X on his western tour, incidentally, and by pointing out that about two-thirds of the Covenant’s provisions dealt with what today we would call conflict resolution.) If the League would not prevent conflict in *every* instance, it could at least bring about some measure of tranquility for a few years in order to explore the potential for rationality and enlightened self-interest—that is, to see whether collective security, in tandem with arbitration and disarmament, stood a reasonable chance of acceptance in the conduct of international relations.

Very few of the Republican opponents of the Covenant of the League were isolationists, strictly speaking. Certainly, their leader, Henry Cabot Lodge, was not. But most of them believed that Wilson had consigned (or would consign) too many vital national interests to the will of an international authority. “[S]ome of our sovereignty would be surrendered,” he had frankly told thirty-four members of the House and Senate, on February 24, 1919, during a momentous four-hour meeting in the White House. “[It is] inconceivable that any concert of action of the nations . . . [of] the world could be taken without some sacrifice.” Wilson made several statements along these lines before the Senate voted on the treaty as the ratification fight played itself out; and it is likely that, for most Republicans, sovereignty was the single gravest issue involved.³

In the struggle of 1919-1920, then, two competing approaches to internationalism were at stake. As one Democratic Senator Gilbert Hitchcock said at the start of the parliamentary debate: “Internationalism has come, and we must choose what form the internationalism shall take.”⁴ Indeed, this was a struggle between Wilson’s and a more conservative (or Lodgean) form of internationalism. And therein lies the wedge in our own more recent foreign-policy politics. (In 1999, William Kristol and Robert Kagan put it this way, when

² See, in Arthur S. Link *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-1996), Wilson to Edward Mandell House, March 22, 1918, *PWW*, XLVII, 105; J. J. Jusserand to French Foreign Ministry, March 7, 1917, in *PWW*, XLI, 356; and F. L. Polk to Jusserand, Aug. 3, 1917, *PWW*, XLIII, 362.

³ Quoted in Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 232-233.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

they observed about the then forthcoming presidential election, “The real debate in the coming year will be: What brand of internationalism? This is the debate between the internationalism of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.”⁵

Of course, Woodrow Wilson was far from perfect, and no one could accuse him of absolute consistency. Michael Desch and Walter Hixson are right to suggest that there is acute irony in the fact that Wilson interfered in the internal affairs of neighboring states (Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic) on a scale to rival Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. Moreover, the U. S. incursion into Mexico in 1916, in response to Villa’s attack, all but extinguished the light of a year-and-half’s labor to promulgate the Pan-American Pact, a conception that Wilson regarded as a means of removing the causes of those problems that, in his thinking, compelled him to do violence to his own words.

Even so, there is the element proportion to keep in mind. I cannot see how these depredations can sustain reasonable comparison with President Bush’s war in Iraq; or, for that matter, with any other feature of the latter’s foreign policy, in light of the administration’s fundamental hostility to the United Nations and to such things as the Kyoto Accords, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and so on. With regard to Iraq, one must recall the set of false propositions for war that the Bush administration foisted upon the Congress and the American people; then, once there proved to be no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, that the administration began to emphasize a different rationalization for the war—that its purpose was to bring democracy to the Middle East. Woodrow Wilson, even as he led the United States into the worst armed conflict theretofore in history, had declared simply (and deliberately in the passive voice), “The world must be made safe for democracy.” Nor in any other circumstances did he go abroad in search of monsters to destroy in the manner in which the Bush administration has done, causing the deaths of thousands upon thousands of innocent people and inflicting mass destruction upon a modern state located in the center of the most volatile region in the world. Let us hope that this is not what Wilsonianism, after all, has come to mean; but if it is, then perhaps the time has come to abandon the term and invent another.

Postscript. I would like respectfully to set the record straight on two different matters that Michael Desch and Walter Hixson raise in their essays.

First, in his review, Professor Desch describes me as “a diplomatic historian at Southern Methodist University who raised questions about his university becoming the home to the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Freedom Institute.” Actually, not all of that is true. I believe that a presidential library is a great thing for a university to host. And, starting in 2001, I served actively for several years on our university president’s academic advisory committee that, among other things, helped to formulate SMU’s bid for the Bush Library. Then, in late 2006, a controversy of several months’ duration ensued on the campus after the White House indicated that the Library must be accompanied by a Freedom Institute--that is, a partisan institute (in the minds of many, a right-wing think tank), neither accountable nor academically beholden to the university or any entity other

⁵ Quoted in Knock, “Playing for a Hundred Years Hence,” in *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy*, 50.

than the Bush Family Foundation. It was the Institute - -not the Bush Presidential Library - - about which I raised serious questions. A significant number of SMU faculty did likewise. (See James Traub, "The Academic Freedom Agenda," *The New York Times Magazine*, March 15, 2009.)

Second, at two junctures in his review, Professor Hixson refers to the peace progressives of the World War I era, noting that they exercised considerable influence and that Wilson ultimately alienated them; then, so that I might get on top of this subject, he recommends "a thorough reading of the late Alan Dawley's exemplary *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*." A little further down, Professor Hixson suggests that one should not gloss over "the campaign of 'One Hundred Percent Americanism' by the champion of multilateralism," either. In fact, about half of my book, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*, is about all of those subjects—about the rise of what I call "progressive internationalism" in the United States and its contention with "conservative internationalism." It is probably the first book that ever explored precisely those subjects within the context of Wilson and the League of Nations. In considerable detail it explicates the origins and evolution of the important relationship between Wilson and the progressive internationalists as well as the regrettable role that the Wilson administration's "One Hundred Percent Americanism" played in the dissolution of progressive internationalism and the failure of the United States to enter the League of Nations. (I discuss these issues in my essay, in three pages or so, and cite in footnotes the extensive coverage in *To End All Wars*.) Moreover, in his book, Alan Dawley adopts my terminology and refers readers to my book for "the most illuminating account of progressive internationalism." He also cites it several times in his discussion and thanks me in his acknowledgments (and he privately expressed his gratitude as well) for the feedback on the manuscript that I provided at his request before it was published.

Response by Tony Smith, Cornelia M. Jackson Professor of Political Science, Tufts University

I appreciate the efforts of five distinguished professors--Michael Desch, Walter Hixson, Robert Tucker, Erez Manela, and John M. Cooper--who wrote their reactions to the book John Ikenberry, Thomas Knock, Anne-Marie Slaughter and I published with Princeton this January. Professor Thomas Maddux is especially to be thanked for organizing this exchange. Our purpose, as all five reviewers note, was to answer the question Ikenberry put on the book's first line, "was George Bush the heir of Woodrow Wilson?" in framing the decision to invade Iraq in 2003?

Knock and Slaughter forthrightly deny any connection. For them, the commitment to multilateralism is the soul of Wilsonianism, so that Bush's unilateralism (whatever the rhetorical bows to multilateralism by some like Paul Wolfowitz or in the September 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States, NSS) clearly puts him outside the liberal internationalist camp. Bush was no Wilsonian. By contrast, I insist on democracy promotion as the center of gravity of Wilsonianism, maintain that the emphasis on regime change in Iraq (and indeed throughout what was styled by the administration as "the Broader Middle East") was evident not only in the NSS but as well in a raft of speeches given by President Bush in the nine months before the invasion. This conviction, in turn, can be traced back to the ideas of Robert Kagan and William Kristol in the mid 1990s, or indeed further back to the patron saint of the Bush administration, Ronald Reagan (as in the Westminster address of June 1982). In other publications, I have shown the roots of this thinking ultimately lie with Wilson. In short, I see the invasion of Iraq as justified in terms linked to Wilson's views on remaking world order. For his part, Ikenberry appears equivocal on the matter of whether he privileges multilateralism over democracy as the centerpiece of liberalism. The result is that the core of the debate pits Slaughter and Knock against me.

The debate is not simply academic. To be sure, the question of the logic of Wilsonianism, or liberal internationalism, is well worthy of scholarly analysis. But as Manela, Desch, and Hixson suggest, the major question for today is how the United States got itself into the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and what may be learned from this misadventure to guide policy in the future. For Knock and Slaughter, and I believe Ikenberry, the United States must stand firmly by liberal internationalist thinking, which means a return to multilateralism. With that I have no quarrel. However, they do not denounce democracy promotion, even of a forcible nature, nor think it links Wilson to Bush. The fact that so many senior foreign policy makers in the Obama administration were at one time advocates for the invasion and invoked democratizing regime change as their ambition is a reason for special concern, for they have not recanted (Slaughter only to a point) their earlier positions. Like so many, what they blame is how the invasion was botched, but *not* the invasion itself. Because they identify Wilsonianism with multilateralism, they proclaim that liberal thinking was not implicated in the Iraq War. What they steadfastly deny is that democracy promotion was central to Wilson's thinking, thus saving their *maître à penser* from being linked to the Iraq War where it was regularly invoked. In short, the importance of the issue dividing my analysis from that of my colleagues is not just that it has to do with the thinking of a man

who left the presidency nearly ninety years ago, but it has also to do with the way his message has evolved over these past nine decades, and particularly since the end of the Cold War, in shaping policy today.

The reason I insist on democracy promotion as the key active ingredient of liberal internationalism is that in theory and in practice it alone makes the efficient working of the other aspects of Wilsonianism possible—an open, integrated international economic system and multilateral institutions. Of course, one can see that a reciprocal effect is underway whereby each feature of the liberal order reinforces the other, but as Wilson repeatedly indicated, and as Robert Tucker (although not consistently), Walter Hixson (I think), and Michael Desch (without question) understand, indeed as Ikenberry as well as Slaughter at one point each concede, the spread of the institutions of constitutional liberal democracy is the primary engine for replacing the anarchic order of world affairs as understood by Thomas Hobbes with the peaceful order of Immanuel Kant—that is for changing in a fundamental fashion the way international politics is conducted.

John Milton Cooper objects, pointing out that the Fourteen Points do not include the word “democracy.” I fail to see the importance of this point. A look at the evolution of Wilson’s thinking before he became president is illuminating. Cooper invokes Edmund Burke to explain the restraint at the base of Wilson’s thinking: that Wilson had an “organic” understanding of the origins of democratic government and would not have thought democracy could forcibly be implanted. But the Wilson of the 1885 *Modern Democratic Government* evolved in his thinking by the time he got to publishing *The State* four years later. Here the promise of democracy becomes more universal. Wilson supported the Spanish-American War, feeling that though it would take time, in due course the United States might democratize the Philippines. As he put it in a well-known phrase in 1902 in “The Ideals of America,” “we are the apostles of liberty and self-government.” For the Philippines, America’s mission was to bring them freedom, but, “Discipline must precede it—if necessary the discipline of being under masters...we are old in this learning and must be their tutors...they must obey as those who are in tutelage. They are children and we are men in these deep matters of government and justice.” Cooper objects to using the term “progressive imperialism” to describe Wilson’s policy. But if his attitude toward the Philippines and Latin America is not that, then what can the term possibly mean? Could a better example be offered?

Once in the White House, the importance of democracy promotion was evident at every step in President Wilson’s positions on foreign policy, from his “non-recognition doctrine” of governments that came to power by force in Latin America in 1913, to his initial drafts of a Pan American Treaty (which he saw as a model later to be used to quell conflict in Europe), to his invasions of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua before American entry into the Great War “so as to teach the South American republics to elect good men,” as he famously put it, to his war address to the Congress in April 1917, to his insistence that the Kaiser abdicate and that democracy come to Germany in 1918, to his initial Paris drafts of the Covenant of the League of Nations in January/February 1919 including his first positions on how Mandates should be handled.

What seems apparent, unlikely as it might at first sound, is that Wilson intuited what today is called “democratic peace theory”: that democratic governments are much more likely to keep the peace among themselves, far more than is the case with autocracies, and that the spread of this form of government, under American auspices where possible, should be a guiding principle of United States foreign policy. Subsequent events may be said to embody his convictions. When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright created an organization she baptized the “Community of Democracies” in the late 1990s; when Ikenberry and Slaughter in their “Princeton Report” of 2006 called for the creation of a “Concert of Democracies,” the core notion being that the United Nations was unable to take aggressive steps for the promotion of human rights and democracy promotion (to which later weapons of mass destruction were added thanks to Slaughter’s thinking) because of the opposition from autocratic countries; when John McCain called in 2007 for the creation of a “League of Democracies,” were they not all in the Wilsonian tradition? The United Nations was not to be abandoned, to be sure, but with such a Community, or Concert, or League the ideas Wilson had expressed between 1913 and 1919 from his ideas for the Pan American Union to his initial concept of the League of Nations could finally be born. America could work most successfully in a multilateral setting only with other democracies; authoritarian governments were intrinsically unreliable. And in doing the Lord’s work, the aim would be democracy promotion to which end force might well be needed.

In a word, Wilson was far more committed to democracy promotion than Cooper allows, and his descendants were true to his message. Yet Cooper launches another objection, not denying that Wilson hoped to see democracy spread worldwide so much as arguing that the president never expected for it to be done forcibly. He invokes the lessons Wilson learned when he intervened in Mexico. Here, Michael Desch is quite right to observe that circumstances change and patterns of thought evolve. Desch thus points out that Wilson was more forcible in democracy promotion in the Philippines and the Western hemisphere than elsewhere (Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic) because of the relative power position of the United States, but that in other theaters Wilson was more restrained—but only for the moment. With the Cold War ended on American terms between 1989 and 1991, seventy years after Wilson left office, a window of historical opportunity suddenly opened for Wilsonians of a later day to take his message further afield.

Cooper asks in his opening paragraph, “how much of what the United States has done and failed to do in the world, particularly since 1945, has come from the lengthened shadow of this man?” To this correct question he gives the wrong answer. Cooper disputes Walter Russell Mead’s description of the invasion of Iraq as “Wilsonianism on steroids” by contrasting the relatively mild bid at dominating world events that President Wilson displayed between 1913 and 1921 to the far more robust bid at world supremacy President Bush displayed once in office. The problem here is one of historical methodology.

Cooper’s logic is similar to those who would save Marx from any responsibility for the crimes of Lenin (or, even more absurdly, Lenin from the crimes of Stalin). It is quite true, of course, as the Mensheviks pointed out as early as 1902, and as the Social Democrats of Western Europe insisted after 1921, that one can argue that Lenin was not an orthodox

Marxist. The idea that a revolution could succeed in bringing about communism worldwide by starting in an agrarian setting had precious little to do with Marxism as they understood its terms. Nevertheless, Lenin, and those who followed him in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and elsewhere, most certainly thought they were Marxists, and the arguments they formulated to make their case were kosher. As I pointed out in a book published in 1987 [*Thinking Like a Communist: State and Legitimacy in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba*], the set of concepts under-girding Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat" was fluid enough to allow exactly the kind of reformulation of Marxism that made Leninism a possibility. Thanks to privileging the party over the proletariat at a certain stage of economic development, and waiting to strike for a historic moment when the ruling classes were weak, communists could "hasten history." Leninism was very much "Marxism on steroids," and there is equally good reason to agree with Mead that the arguments Bush used to invade Iraq was indeed "Wilsonianism on steroids." Marx died in 1883, thirty four years before the Bolshevik Revolution and with evident differences between himself and Lenin. Some may conclude these differences were so great that Lenin was not a Marxist; others conclude that he was. Cooper compares two slices of history and concludes they are distinct. Of course they are. But what happened during the intervening eighty years?

At a minimum, scholars must bear in mind the changes in academic thinking that began in the late 1980s. What it meant to be liberal after the collapse of the Soviet empire and Union then underwent a sea change. Consider such amazing documents as Francis Fukuyama's thesis on "the end of history;" or the changes in the understanding about how easily the "transition to democracy" might come about, seeing it now as historically far more possible after the collapse of the Soviet Union; or arguments from liberal international jurists behind "the right to intervene" that became "the responsibility to protect" in 2001 thanks to a UN- and Canadian- sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty giving democracies legal sanction to invade authoritarian countries in certain circumstances in order to democratize them; or the jewel in the crown of neo-Wilsonianism, "democratic peace theory," which has assured us that a world of democracies would be the embodiment of Kant's "perpetual peace." Of course, we must concede that it is unlikely that a scholar like Cooper who calls himself a "hardened and unreconstructed Wilsonian" will ever see things any differently than he does currently. In *Reconsidering Woodrow Wilson*, a book he edited last year, Cooper's own chapter "Making the Case for Woodrow Wilson" contains no hint of how a proper thinking Wilsonian could possibly go wrong. The idea that Wilson's ideas could be connected with what I call "progressive imperialism," Cooper dismisses with levity. So he wittily concludes his essay, "'Wilsonianism on steroids,' R.I.P.," when we would be better served had he asked how Wilson's intellectual grandchildren got hold of the steroids and from whom.

Given that a historian and political scientist as distinguished as Robert Tucker essentially agrees with Cooper's assessment, the question of how we think about how an ideology evolves over time in such a fashion that new concepts are generated corresponding to changed political circumstances deserves to be invigorated. So to return to my comparison: was Lenin a Marxist? There are two sides to the debate and reasonable people may disagree; but a debate it most surely is. Since professors Cooper and Tucker cannot seem to see that this far from trivial, observation applies to Wilsonianism as well, and

since they look at features of Wilson's thought eighty or ninety years ago, then contrast it to the thinking behind the invasion of Iraq in 2003 as if that were the whole of the story, their comparisons can be dismissed out of hand. By contrast, because he does observe that historical circumstance changes and that ideologies evolve, Michael Desch's contribution to our discussion strikes me as exactly right. My reading of Hixson's contribution would put him in this camp as well.

Erez Manela's position is a real surprise. He seems to recognize that liberal internationalism may have changed with circumstance and the evolution of thinking — he mentions democratic peace theory and the like—only to deny it mattered. Thus he seconds Slaughter's contention that neoliberals of the sort I describe do not in fact exist, despite references to a whole flock of them in my book *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (Routledge, 2007, chapters 4-7). Given the relative lengths of our chapters, I could not provide the list Slaughter says does not exist, but I did refer to my publications where I name names — including hers. I suggest that scholars look more closely at thinkers identifying themselves as being in the Wilsonian tradition since the early 1990s, Slaughter near the top of the list. The seed-bed for the entry of these ideas into the Democratic Party is the Progressive Policy Institute of the Democratic Leadership Council. Let me also suggest those interested take a closer look get a copy *With All Our Might*, edited by PPI president Will Marshall and including essays by Slaughter, Larry Diamond, Michael McFaul, Kenneth Pollack and others. Why does Manela take unexamined Slaughter's word for it that no such neo-Wilsonian tradition with teeth exists when he nonetheless refers to some of its tenets? Once again, I labor under constraints of length. But anyone interested should start with democratic peace theory, an altogether extraordinary reworking of Wilson's vision that began in the early 1980s but only came into its own during the 1990s with concepts shared by both neoconservatives and neoliberals. If scholars don't think that this is Wilsonianism then I wonder what it is. I also wonder if it has not been consequential. Most surely it has, as the rhetoric surrounding the invasion of Iraq quite vividly demonstrates.

In conclusion, let me make three brief points that derive from the foregoing. First, Wilson was far more aggressive in his thinking about the necessity of forcible democracy promotion in his own time than Cooper or Tucker allows. To speak of him simply as a Burkean conservative after 1898 is not fair to the record of his thinking in the fifteen years prior to his presidency, much less to the positions he took once in office. Progressive imperialism, the worm in the fruit that led the United States into Iraq, was put there by none other than Wilson himself.

Second, a comparison of a way of thinking that typified Wilson between 1898 and 1919 to the way Bush thought between 2002 and 2008 that does not allow for changed circumstances and the evolution of a political ideology is unacceptable on the face of it. Of course we may agree the two periods are different; there was change as well as continuity. But if one does not allow for novel circumstances and the metamorphosis of a conceptual approach, the essence of historical task to see change in continuity is at risk. Manela, as well as Tucker and Cooper, all fail to pass muster here.

Third, as Manela, Desch, and Hixson suggest, this debate matters for practical politics today. With people like Michael McFaul, Ivo Daalder, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Philip Gordon, and James Lindsay in policy making roles, not to speak of past positions adopted by Hillary Clinton and Joseph Biden, we have a group of individuals who know each other and think in remarkably similar terms, using concepts that correspond alarmingly well to those the neoconservatives helped to popularize, even if these neo-Wilsonian Democrats would work multilaterally rather than unilaterally. To say as Knock and Slaughter do that multilateralism is the heart of Wilsonianism and that liberalism thus still has a leading role to play in the formulation of foreign policy avoids the greater issue of forcible democracy promotion having a legitimate part in Washington's calculations. (Presumably Knock would oppose it on the grounds of Wilson's Burkean thinking, but Slaughter has always supported it.) If for the moment, with defeat in Iraq being apparent and the financial crisis upon us, such "progressive" interventions appear unlikely, the virus nonetheless remains alive, waiting to return to harm the U.S. if once and for all its logic is not exposed for what it is: a concept open to being made into a doctrine of progressive imperialism that is little more than a self-righteous camouflage of an American bid for power over others.

Manela asks what I would propose as an alternative for American foreign policy. In a book I published with Princeton in 1994, *America's Mission: The United States and the World-Wide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century*, I suggested that liberals be selective in democracy promotion. In that book and in two articles I published in 2000 (one in *Diplomatic History*, the other in *American Democracy Promotion*, from Oxford edited by Michael Cox), I warned against forcible efforts at democracy promotion in the Muslim world, China, Russia, and sub-Saharan Africa for the simple reason that liberal democracy was unlikely to materialize at all soon, if ever, in these places. In short, I was an old fashioned Wilsonian of the kind Cooper approves, appreciating that the limits of American power, and the realities of politics in these parts of the world, meant we had to get along with these peoples as they were, for better or for worse. I warned against a democracy crusade of the kind we saw emerge in the late 1990s among neoconservatives and neoliberals based on new concepts that had only then been formulated but—like Lenin's adaptations of Marx—were unnervingly Wilsonian in inspiration. Put differently, I was a Menshevik (or an old fashioned Wilsonian) opposed to the Leninists, "Marxists on steroids" who brought revolution to Russia, China, and, Cuba (or in my case the neo-Wilsonians who did so much to shape the justifications for the invasion of Iraq by the changes they wrought in traditional liberal thinking).

In short, I am not hostile to the Wilsonian agenda so long as it remains balanced and realistic. I consider the democratization of Germany and Japan after 1945, and the creation of what we today call the European Union at the behest of Washington with the Marshall Plan to be the finest days in the history of American foreign policy and quite clearly the product of a liberal agenda. I applaud multilateralism. I confess to being a member of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as well as Americans for Peace Now. Still, we must understand where we have come from if we are to avoid the kind of megalomaniac mistakes that Reinhold Niebuhr warned us against some sixty years ago, as in the concluding sentence of *The Irony of American History*: "if we should perish the ruthlessness of the foe would be only the secondary cause of the disaster. The primary

cause would be that the strength of a giant nation was directed by eyes too blind to see all the hazards of the struggle; and the blindness would be induced not by some accident of nature or history but by hatred and vainglory.” When it is prudent and realistic, liberalism can contribute to America’s national security and, dare I say it, to the well-being of others; but when it has an exaggerated sense of self-confidence and self-righteousness so identifying the sponsorship by force if necessary of democratic government with Messianic intent, then it becomes dangerous.

Two contemporary cases illustrate my point. First, recall how easily all the outrage about the Russian invasion of Georgia last summer based itself on the former being authoritarian and the latter democratic. If the argument was most stridently broadcast by Robert Kagan, witness Joseph Biden’s visit to Georgia that August and Michael McFaul’s influence on Barack Obama’s condemnation of Russia. The idea that Georgia and Ukraine should be invited into NATO on liberal grounds is one traditional liberals of the sort Cooper endorses should reject out of hand, but that a raft of unrealistic neo-Wilsonians last year endorsed. (My understanding is that McFaul is now head of the Russian section of the National Security Council.) Here Cooper, Tucker, and I may well agree.

The second case has to do with Israel and its treatment of the Palestinians. Israel, we hear from some liberals ad nauseam, is democratic whereas the Palestinians, if not all Arabs, indeed all Muslims (perhaps an allowance made for this or that regime) are not. Hence a blank check should be extended to Israel to do whatever it will because it shares our values and institutions whereas the Palestinians/Arabs/Muslims today do not and probably never will. Traditional Wilsonians should oppose neo-Wilsonianism here too.

I could go on with other examples to answer Manela’s challenge, but I have already exceeded what I can expect of even a generous reader. I thank again the reviewers for their efforts for there were indeed points that needed clarification. I look forward to spending the coming year working more on the Wilson years (1885-1919) and appreciate the stimulating exchanges that will give me insight and energy to move ahead. And again, I thank Tom Maddux for his efforts with this exchange.

Copyright © 2009 H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, H-Diplo, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the H-Diplo Editors at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.
