

Word count: 12,647 (exc. abstract and author bio)

US-Foreign Relations Under Harding, Coolidge and Hoover: Power and Constraint

Alex Goodall

Abstract: In the aftermath of World War II, scholarly studies of interwar US foreign relations described an era of isolationism and insularity, a time when the United States failed to rise to its emerging global responsibilities. If this view still retains a degree of purchase in the public mind, half a century later contemporary historians can draw upon several generations of detailed research to offer a more nuanced synthesis of events. Unilateralism, anti-interventionism and the pursuit of peace were influential forces in American life, but they competed with, and interacted with, a variety of other internationalist, expansionist and transnational tendencies. US foreign relations in the twenties were shaped by both the tremendous cultural, economic and political power accrued in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the constraints of domestic politics and a comparatively weak apparatus for overseas power projection. Republican leaders focused on various forms of indirect politics to promote their interests overseas. Relying on bankers, businessmen and other private groups, they enjoyed no small success, enlarging the global economic and cultural influence of the United States even as other Americans sought to challenge these developments through activism and transnational affiliations of their own. Nevertheless, despite this increasingly complex picture of US interwar engagement with the world, in at least one respect the traditionalists were right: absent any sustained politico-military commitment to restrain rival great power aggression, the United States was unable to respond to the crises of the early depression years, and this failure ultimately set the scene for the larger catastrophes of the decade to come.

Keywords: foreign relations, diplomacy, Charles Evans Hughes, Frank Kellogg, Henry Stimson, Herbert Hoover, foreign economic policy, isolationism, Americanization, globalization, transnationalism, peace movement, disarmament

US-Foreign Relations Under Harding, Coolidge and Hoover: Power and Constraint

The United States and the World

Begun in hope, the presidency of Woodrow Wilson bequeathed to its Republican successors only confusion and division. The First World War had established the United States as the dominant economic power in the modern world, one of only a handful of nations with a truly global reach. Wilson's rhetoric of peace, democracy and self-determination had earned the nation unprecedented prestige. But the president had been unable to persuade his own citizens of the merits of multilateral engagement. In 1919 and 1920, liberal internationalists were pushed back by nationalists, nativists and conservative antiradicals, defeated over the League of Nations, and forced to watch the Wilsonian coalition splinter and fall to electoral defeat. In its wake, the leaders of the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations were forced to encompass a contradiction. The nation's growing power and influence offered great opportunities for expansion, enlightenment, and enrichment, but embroiled the country in foreign policy questions it was not always willing to address. The era thus turned out to be one of dynamism and experimentation, yet also of disability, in foreign affairs: a time when politicians, diplomats, activists and everyday citizens helped create a web of new relationships with the rest of the world, but struggled to reconcile the ideal of American exceptionalism with new issues of global power and interest.

The most pressing imperative was to stabilize a Europe devastated by war and divided over the Peace of Paris. Despite the destruction, Europe was home to the United States' most important partners and rivals, and the nation could ill afford to disentangle itself from continental affairs. But this was far from the only issue. Closer to home, the continued integration of Latin America and Canada into the United States' economic sphere gave rise to tensions born of economic dislocation, compounded by the bad feelings that followed the numerous Central American and Caribbean interventions of the previous two decades, several of which were ongoing and were open sores in regional politics. Although partially constrained by imperial boundaries in other parts of the world, the United States also sought to expand its influence in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, seeking new sources of

strategic primary materials and new destinations for capital investment and manufactured goods. In the Asia-Pacific region, this was particularly fraught, due to the precarious balance of power between the European empires, a rising Japan, a temporarily-incapacitated Russia, and a China struggling to cope with multiple crises of governance.

Rather than operating as discrete theaters, each region was interconnected by complex patterns of geopolitics, economics, and culture. Fears of Bolshevik expansion in Europe, for example, had receded in the face of Soviet domestic crisis, but diplomats remained sensitive to the possibility that radical movements in Asia and Latin America might be sponsored or co-opted by the Communist International (Little 1983). Nearly all of the issues that politicians sought to address in the 1920s – arms control, territorial disputes, negotiations over access to markets, tariffs and protection, and efforts to manage the movements of peoples – tended to involve a diverse range of actors from multiple regions, whose divergent interests were not always easily reconciled, and produced often unpredictable outcomes.

The scope and variety of these challenges were matched only by the constraints at home. As always, foreign affairs were subsumed to the more immediate requirements to deliver prosperity to voters and satisfy powerful domestic interests. This perennial problem was compounded by the revitalization of a deep cultural hostility to entangling alliances and European power politics. After World War One, leaders found themselves with little freedom to take bold steps toward global cooperation. Even comparatively small multilateral commitments, such as qualified participation in the World Court (a policy favored by Harding, Coolidge and Hoover), stalled in the face of public suspicion and resistance in the Senate (Dunne 1988). Led by Senator William E. Borah, the anti-interventionist wing of the Republican party saw foreign military interventionism, anti-Bolshevik crusading and Wilsonian multilateralism as equally likely to lead to militarism, financial imprudence, and the centralization of power in Washington. Indeed, they often functioned as a more significant barrier to administration foreign policy objectives than the Republicans' supposed rivals in the Democratic Party (Miller 1999).

Institutional capacity for global power projection also remained underdeveloped. The diplomatic service was still relatively small, poorly remunerated (making it the preserve of wealthy individuals capable of supporting themselves overseas), and not always trusted by its superiors. Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, the first institution to offer professional training for diplomats, had only been established in 1919. Advances in transport and communications helped bind the service to the State Department and White House, and the 1924 Foreign Service Act imposed a widespread administrative reorganization, merging the diplomatic and consular services and introducing competitive examinations for personnel, merit-based promotion, and fixed retirement ages. Nevertheless, parts of the service continued to operate as an old boy's club, with many matters of state shaped by the proclivities and prejudices of unqualified and semi-autonomous officials.

In short, the nation's global interests far outstripped its political capacity. For this reason, it is tempting to see the United States in the 1920s as a Gulliver, staked to the ground by a web of parochial and nationalistic threads. Particularly in the decades immediately following World War Two, historians pictured the era in these terms, emphasizing the narrowness of US foreign policy and the destructive influence of isolationism, which turned leaders and the public away from the vital geopolitical issues of the day. This they ascribed to a range of factors, including regionalism and ethnicity (Billington 1945), agrarianism and anti-federalism (Cole 1962), and traditional economic self-sufficiency and oceanic security (Adler 1957). In the shadow of Munich, such a stance seemed dangerous and naïve.

Offering a sharp early dissent, as well as a defense of the interwar anti-interventionists, William Appleman Williams argued that the idea of an isolationist America in the 1920s was "nothing more than a legend" (Williams 1954; Williams 1962). He instead pointed to continuities in US foreign policy dating back at least to the turn of the century, based upon a desire to seek out new markets and new opportunities for capital investment. Rather than a passive and conservative policy, Republican elites sought to promote capitalism by radical means if necessary, and struggled to balance this agenda with a sometimes contradictory commitment to democracy and the rule of law. Williams' argument was important in precipitating a reevaluation of interwar isolationism. In its wake, scholars

began to offer more complex interpretations of isolationism, a term that held strong pejorative connotations and was rarely used in self-description, challenging the simplistic characterization of individual isolationists as “ignorant and reactionary Babbitts, living blindly in a self-created shell” (Doenecke 1997, viii). While in 1952 Ferrell had described the interwar peace movement as “unsophisticated” and “benighted,” from the 1960s onwards historians accepted isolationism was a more or less coherent ideological alternative to liberal internationalism, built from various strands of unilateralism, hostility to war, and suspicion of federal power (Jonas 1966; Guinsberg 1982; Johnson 1995).

Moreover, few modern advocates of the isolationist interpretation of interwar history would argue that opposition to political multilateralism and collective security arrangements required a total rejection of overseas engagement. As early as 1957, Selig Adler described a “new isolationism” of the 1920s, balancing the nineteenth-century refusal to participate militarily in Europe against an increasingly active economic and informal political program. The anti-interventionist movement became more vocal in the interwar years precisely because its foundational claims no longer seemed to represent the natural order of things. In a world where the pathways of global trade were increasingly policed by the great powers, a decision to stay at home required active and explicit justification. Nevertheless, according to this view the isolationist tradition remained dominant until World War II, as shown in the continuing refusal to join the League of Nations, the passage of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the weak response to Japan in Manchuria and the neutrality laws of the 1930s (Jonas in DeConde 1978, 496-502).

The differences between a more nuanced view of isolationism and Williams’ focus on economic expansion thus became attenuated over time. Interest in the relationship between American foreign policy and global capitalism emerged as a point of shared interest among historians of all political stripes. In the 1970s and 1980s, some scholars even described the interwar commercial expansion of the United States in comparatively positive terms, seeing the 1920s as a time “when the American dominion was more restrained and less militaristic” than it would later become (Costigliola 1984, 9), but where the vibrancy of the United States’ culture and economy nevertheless reshaped global

politics in profound ways. The flowering of traditional diplomatic history over the last two decades to include questions of culture, ideas, race, gender, transnationalism, and consumption – topics discussed at length in this chapter – has further exposed processes that, despite the setbacks of the Great Depression and the carnage of World War Two, would set the stage for the globalization of American power later in the century. Thus, even while they continue to emphasize the limits of American foreign policy, contemporary scholars such as Louria (2001), Rhodes (2001) and Clavin (2013) also describe an energetic and cosmopolitan America, engaging widely with the world, building treaty systems and even participating in loose multilateral arrangements through League of Nations affiliates in a way that would be almost unrecognizable from the traditionalist interpretation. Even among those who continue to study anti-interventionism and the interwar peace movement, there is a broad recognition that “narrow binaries of ‘isolation versus internationalism’ ... blind us to the reality of the far more complicated and interesting history” (Nichols 2011, 1). As a result, a period once characterized by stagnancy and moral abdication now seems pregnant with significance. In this sense, it was not the United States that was tied down in the 1920s, but the world that was bound up by the United States.

The Foundations of Republican Foreign Policy

Politicians are to be judged on results, and given the ultimate failure of Republican foreign policy it is perhaps unsurprising that many of its leading members have received equivocal historical report cards. Presidents Harding and Coolidge have been criticized for their comparative lack of engagement, leaving foreign policy to their respective secretaries of state, Charles Evans Hughes and Frank Kellogg. Meanwhile, Glad (1966) depicted Hughes as rigid and constrained by outdated thinking, though Perkins (1956) considered him more capable and adaptable. L. Ethan Ellis (1961) dismissed Kellogg as a “busy mediocrity,” and Adler (1965) condemned the Republican leadership more generally for failing to escape the limited political vision of their supporters and the times. Opinions have been most strongly divided over Herbert Hoover and his Secretary of State, Henry Stimson. Few have been as hagiographic as Elting E. Morison, who called Stimson “a forthright gentleman, a great trial lawyer, a courageous soldier, a dedicated public servant, a statesman who

would live in grateful hearts” (Morison 1960, 654), or as critical as Current (1954) and Rappaport (1963), who blamed Stimson for accelerating the path to war with Japan. More temperate analysts have noted their considerable personal capacities, even as they also highlight their short-sightedness (Brandes 1962; Hoff 1975; Nash 2012). They also generally accept the continuities between the moderate internationalism of Hughes, Hoover and Stimson, and of the Wilsonians who came before them. The Wilsonian persuasion – a complex combination of democratic universalism and nationalist exceptionalism – was never the preserve of a single politician. It drew upon and fortified widely held ideas about the United States’ distinctive mission to spread capitalism, individualism and democracy, and these notions continued to influence many leaders in the 1920s. There were important differences between Wilsonian Democrats and their Republican successors, especially in the turn away from military force and the abandonment of institutional multilateralism. But rather than a matter of personal limitations, these might better be explained through reference to geopolitical and institutional factors, and culture and ideology. With severe domestic constraints, a comparatively weak bureaucratic structure, and a strong desire to cut spending, the Republican leadership turned to quiet diplomacy, private sector activism, and foreign economic policy as their preferred mechanisms for influencing global affairs. They eschewed belligerent posturing, sought gradually to disengage from existing military occupations, and opted for arbitration, the extension of legal norms, and building economic ties with other nations, believing that private sector cooperation would bring the world together in a peace born of mutual self-interest.

Given their particular emphasis on global trade, it would seem logical to stress the influence of business on Republican strategy, and commercial interests did indeed have a strong voice in Washington. Nevertheless, their opinions were not always determinative. Businessmen were often divided amongst themselves, and this gave scope to other interests to influence policy. As Hoff (1971) argues, the American Federation of Labor, professional patriotic organizations, and religious organizations were critical in sustaining the policy of non-recognition toward the Soviet Union, although, as Siegel (1996) points out, big exporters, who supported the relaxation of tensions and opening Russia as a market, made substantial progress toward loosening trade and commercial

restrictions well before official recognition in 1933. Similarly, less competitive domestic businesses combined with the powerful farm bloc to outmaneuver the free trade instincts of internationalist businessmen and sustain a consistently high tariff policy.

Nor was foreign policy solely a balance of competing economic interests. Republican diplomacy was conditioned by a loose ideological framework that linked goals of economic stability, national prosperity and international peace to more amorphous conceptions of civilization, self-restraint, racial supremacy, manliness, religiosity and professionalism that had been developing over decades. It was a pro-business culture as much as specific business interests that shaped the foreign policy thinking of the time, producing beliefs that war was a tool of states, not peoples; that private relations were competitive, not confrontational; and that new methods of sales, marketing and mass production could deliver an elevated standard of living to people around the world and, by extension, eliminate the underlying bases for conflict (Rosenberg 1999; de Grazia 2005).

Living in a society that was being transformed by commercial capitalism, it was hard for many Americans not to imagine its potential overseas. However, paradoxically, many of the nation's leaders also held to a hierarchical vision of global politics that saw certain races as not fully capable of engaging with the liberal, commercial order they sought to promote. Whether in the reconstruction of Europe, private-sector interventions in China, or nation-building in Haiti and the Philippines, American foreign policy specialists combined the missionary ideals of evangelical Protestantism with early visions of development to create a prototypical form of modernization theory, revolving around a distinctively American enthusiasm for technology as a solution to social problems and a deep distrust for "backward" local traditions that seemed to hamper cultural and economic progress (Renda 2001; Engerman 2003; Walker 2006; Tyrrell 2010; Ekbladh 2010).

Since Republican leaders were almost entirely lawyers by training, their thinking also tended to be shaped by a contractual vision of interpersonal and interstate relations that stressed the importance of norms, rules and standards in providing a framework in which individuals, companies and countries could compete. They tended to downplay the importance of culture, and operated as if international

law could itself be a guarantor of peace even in the absence of consent or force. Rather than coldly commercial, these beliefs that law would constrain the darker instincts of mankind and that business could salve all tensions between peoples would turn out to be almost absurdly idealistic. Jonathan Zasloff (2003, 243) has argued that, by concentrating on international law and ignoring deeper questions of power, foreign policy specialists “unwittingly contributed to global catastrophe.” At the time, though, free market and legalistic thinking formed a knowledge regime that was not only dominant in the foreign policy arena, but was also largely unquestioned by its adherents. It permeated the highest echelons of all three administrations, giving shape to a vision of public-private cooperation in foreign policy that paralleled the voluntarist project at home, and came to both a crescendo and collapse during the presidency of its most passionate and capable advocate, Herbert Hoover, at the end of the decade.

Foreign Economic Policy

In practical terms, three core elements characterized the US relationship with the world in the twenties: administration efforts to build a stable global economic order; private sector activism in foreign affairs; and campaigns both inside and outside government to reduce the threat of war by negotiating reductions in global armaments.

In respect to the first of these, the principles of Republican foreign economic policy were derived from a combination of orthodox economic thought and the experience of a series of what were effectively structural adjustment programs *avant la lettre* in early-twentieth-century Latin America (Brandes 1962; Drake 1989; O’Brien 1996). Unlike before the war, though, the US generally avoided taking a direct role in restructuring other states. Powerful private bankers instead came to serve as crypto-diplomats. The State Department worked behind the scenes with preferred Wall Street lenders and the New York Federal Reserve to put in place credit agreements with foreign powers that were linked to economic policies which favored US trade. The United States also worked through the League of Nations to promote international reconstruction on liberal capitalist terms (Clavin 2013). In Europe, House of Morgan loans helped to stabilize the struggling Austrian economy in 1921 and, in

the wake of the French occupation of the Ruhr and the hyperinflationary crisis of 1923, the US-orchestrated Dawes Plan of 1924 restructured German reparations payments, stabilizing the country and opening the door to the massive US investments that would keep the wheels of the economy turning for the next half decade.

At the same time, led by the indefatigable Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Department increased its budget and staff five-fold and launched a crusade to spread the gospel of trade (Eckes and Zeiler 2003, 66). Negotiators sought agreements with dozens of nations to promote universal most favored nation status – an “open door” policy that required equalized tariffs for all foreign powers seeking to trade with a particular nation. Staff passed on market intelligence to American businesses. And other countries were encouraged to return to the gold standard abandoned during World War One.

Ultimately, more than twenty nations did so. In the case of Britain, which readopted the gold standard in 1925, the pound was strongly overvalued against the dollar and this further aided US export growth.

In its efforts to establish favorable conditions for US trade, the chronic indebtedness of much of the world and the growing addiction many had for American manufactured products were the government’s strongest assets. Because of the war, Europeans owed the United States around \$10 billion (Iriye, 1993, 89). Critics argued that it would have been both politically advantageous and more conducive to global trade to have foregone repayments entirely. The French, in particular, were outraged by the policies adopted by the United States. Debts had been accrued during a common struggle for democracy, they felt, paid for “in blood at Verdun and the battles of the Marne” (cited in Rhodes 2001, 67). Nevertheless, orthodox thinking won the day in Washington and New York, and despite revisions to schedules and rates the fundamental principle of holding debtors to account stood firmly in place until the depression crisis brought the whole system down.

Republican policies did not always promote a liberal economic order, though. Local patterns of power, opportunity and interest produced inconsistent outcomes in different parts of the world. For instance, the need to diversify petroleum sources saw the United States conclude good neighborly

negotiations with Colombia in the hope of healing the wounds inflicted by Theodore Roosevelt during the Panama crisis of 1903. Later in the decade, astute changes in embassy personnel helped resolve a persistent conflict with post-revolutionary government in Mexico, and careful political engagement in Venezuela helped US companies establish a dominant presence there, too. By contrast, in the Middle East, the United States almost entirely disregarded local political feelings. Forced to accept the reality of European imperial dominance, the Coolidge administration signed up to the imperialistic “Red Line” agreement in 1928, dividing oil concessions in Iraq between the US, Britain, France and the Netherlands by fiat. Similarly, although Hoover vehemently attacked Brazilian coffee monopolies and German potash cartels, in Liberia and Honduras the US was content to see American companies – Firestone rubber and United Fruit respectively – dominate local politics through a combination of commercial pressure and corruption. Indeed, Emily Rosenberg (1999) has suggested that the result of US foreign economic policy was less to promote a free concert of productive nations, and more to accelerate the division of the globe into “developed” consumer societies and “underdeveloped” suppliers of raw materials.

When the ideal of free trade came into tension with commercial interest, the latter generally came first. Racism also continued to encourage the application of less liberal standards to “backward” peoples than to Europeans or North Americans (Rosenberg 1999, 133-4, 136). Even as they sought to disentangle themselves from occupied nations such as Haiti and the Philippines, the US made it clear that occupations would not come to an end until institutions had been built that were capable of sustaining pro-American policies on their own. Meanwhile, despite forcing its way into overseas markets, the United States resolutely defended its own high tariff policy, and efforts to accelerate global capital flows contrasted with an insistence upon artificially controlling the international movement of labor through new immigration acts, which dramatically reduced overall immigration numbers as well as fixing them at ethnically-determined rates to favor northern and western Europeans over others. Closed borders caused resentment not just because of their discriminatory nature, but also because of their financial implications. In some cases, the remittances that immigrants sent back to families at home could substantially offset the overall trade deficit with the United States

(Rhodes 2001, 86). “As many foreigners correctly charged,” Rosenberg (1999, 135) concludes, “Americans’ love for free international markets was highly selective.”

Scholars have criticized the contradiction between Republican commitments to commercial growth and capital investment overseas, on the one hand, and domestic protectionism, on the other, noting that the gradual return to prosperity in the middle years of the decade allowed leaders to ignore “grave systemic weaknesses in the world economy” (Keylor 1984, 100). Indeed, rather than saving the nation from collapse, McNeil argues that American loans helped Germans avoid the problematic question of who should bear the costs of war (McNeil 1986). When Germany ultimately stopped paying its reparations bills at the end of the decade, the United States found itself picking up the tab (Schuker 1988).

In contrast, Iriye (1993, 100) has questioned whether the transatlantic reparations, trade and loans triangle built up in the early 1920s was really so unsustainable. Even if true, though, Republican foreign economic policy had settled upon a constricted approach to policymaking that was highly likely to cause problems in the future. The successes the Republicans enjoyed in stabilizing Europe through an informal, public-private approach, limited the likelihood that more ambitious interventions would be considered in the future. Thus, rather than a first step toward a more dramatic form of European hegemony, Cohrs argues that the Dawes Plan thus offered a vision of the “maximal extent to which the administration could throw its weight into Europe’s political balance, at least for the foreseeable future” (Cohrs 2006, 192).

Despite these problems, in the short term credit agreements, trade surpluses and a favorable currency regime helped US exports boom. During the 1920s, the value of US world trade nearly doubled (Iriye 1993, 93). Foreign loans trebled to more than \$7 billion, while overseas direct investment grew to nearly \$8 billion (Eckes and Zeiler 2005, 63, 73). US corporations engorged foreign assets and prized their way into tightly-protected markets. Alongside rubber and oil, American companies took control of sugar plantations and refineries, mines, factories, public utilities, ranches, farms and forests. Elsewhere, local plants and joint ventures were used to sneak round protectionist barriers. The effect

was overwhelming. Globalizing corporations like Radio Corporation of America, United Fruit, International Telegraph and Telephone (ITT), Ford Motor Company, Dow and Du Pont chemical corporations, Western Union, General Electric, and Standard Oil earned millions and came to employ hundreds of thousands of people globally. American corporate acronyms were heard in the farthest corners of the planet. By 1930, ITT had nearly a hundred thousand workers worldwide (Eckes and Zeiler 2005, 66). Two-thirds of all films shown outside the US were American (Bjork 2000, 575). Even in the Amazon basin, US corporate power made its presence felt, as Henry Ford began constructing his ill-fated Conradian venture, “Fordlandia”: a vast rubber plantation roughly the size of “a midranged US state” (Grandin 2010, 3) that, Ford believed, would jump-start the industrialization of Brazil’s jungle interior.

Foreign imports also surged. American consumers continued to develop their taste for exotic foods and luxury goods, just as American industry did for foreign raw materials. As Kristen Hoganson (2006, 574-5) notes, from 1925 onwards US imports of foods, beers and beverages exceeded exports, and the nation remained a net importer of foodstuffs for all but eleven of the next forty-five years. By Hoover’s presidency, the value of imports had reached \$4.4 billion annually.

The complexity of these emerging global connections should not be understated. To give just one illustration, American architects substantially expanded their overseas operations after World War One, bringing innovative new approaches to construction to the world, including the reinforced concrete and steel-framed building techniques that had (literally) underpinned the skyscraper and factory boom in the United States. In so doing, they constructed physical manifestations of US power that had often previously been understood only through gunboats and diplomats. Their expansion was facilitated by many factors, both public and private: technological innovation, of course, but also growing collaboration within the industry; efforts by the Department of Commerce to educate businessmen about foreign regulations and tender opportunities; commissions from American overseas organizations; and orders for new diplomatic buildings in the wake of the 1926 Foreign Service Buildings Act (Loeffler, 1998). Growth was even supported by constructive interactions with other industries, as when architects used cinema screens to sell the superiority of American

construction techniques to the European public. In some cases, architectural projects were given distinctive inflections by local actors, some of whom had previously lived or been educated in the United States but retained a sensitivity for domestic approaches. Sometimes architectural companies carefully sought to integrate their building methods into local styles, as when a multinational team working for Boston's First National Bank designed its Buenos Aires branch "to be respectful of Spanish traditions and yet distinctively up-to-date" (Cody 2003, 64). In other cases, architects overrode "backward" local practices wholesale. Such high-handedness could generate tensions among local rivals struggling to cope with foreign competition and contributed to anti-American feelings in societies that were increasingly understanding their external relations in the language of economic imperialism. In other circumstances, though, locals cooperated enthusiastically in the stripping back of tradition. In one extreme case, after Henry Ford's preferred architect, Albert Kahn, was invited to Nizhny Novgorod to design a new automobile plant as part of Stalin's first Five Year Plan, he was commissioned to design a series of factories and plants across the country. Blueprints for one building were taken and rebuilt to identical specifications in other regions, sometimes several times over. As a result, this Prussian-born architect who had done more than any other to shape the aesthetic of twentieth-century Detroit was, by the end of World War Two, contingently responsible for industrial buildings in the Soviet Union that would contribute to future generations' understanding of Stalinist monolithic architecture (Hildebrand 1974; Bucci 1993).

In such contexts, the meaning of terms such as "Americanization" and "globalization" must remain open to analysis. Unpacking them is an intricate and painstaking process, and historians have much still to do to make sense of them. However, what is clear is that this dense network of international connections placed American businesses increasingly centrally in global economic activity, and the efforts of the Harding, Coolidge and Hoover administrations played a major part in facilitating this developing capitalist order.

Non-State Actors and Transnational Networks

Just as American businesses were often able to reach places that diplomats could not, many other private organizations also expanded abroad in the twenties. Private-sector overseas activism was not new, but its character changed in these years as new groups became involved and new ways of thinking emerged. Committed to the voluntarist ideal at home, Republican administrations were generally, as long as private actions supported larger national objectives. The emergence of more radical ideas, both among traditional organizations and emerging players, however, was a disquieting experience.

The most well-known groups had been in operation since the Gilded Age, sometimes longer. They included missionary groups, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Rotary Club, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the World Council of Churches, and the Red Cross. Drawing upon traditions of elite public service, most had a strong religious component to them: focusing either on Social Gospel-inspired uplift or more evangelical efforts to convert non-Christian (and sometimes non-Protestant) communities to the reformed faith and the American way of life (Hutchinson 1987). The social, political and moral campaigns they launched – for temperance, education, and good government, and against prostitution – were similar to the progressive crusades in the Anglo-American world, and had many of their ambiguities. Protestant elites implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) associated “uncivilized” societies in Asia, Africa and Latin America with poor, inner-city slums as analogous sites for reformist colonization, and ideas were often taken from both foreign and domestic spheres and mixed together. In this way, the supposedly reformist vision of “Americanization” as developed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and China was used by anti-reformist groups at home – corporations, professional patriots, and ultranationalist groups such as the second Ku Klux Klan – to justify the exclusion or punishment of people who challenged the established social order. Domestic “un-Americans” and overseas “anti-Americans” were co-identified as enemies of progress, their criticisms of American structures of power taken as attacks on liberal values in general, while their racial and ethnic attributes were used to justify their exclusion from supposedly universal democratic norms (Grandin 2006).

Nevertheless, not all Progressive Era reformers uncritically endorsed early twentieth century military expansion. The WCTU launched campaigns against the armed forces' apparent tolerance for prostitution and drinking in occupied territories. Similarly, a Protestant missionary in Haiti, L. Ton Evans, spoke out about the violence and corruption that the occupation had enabled. For his efforts, he was targeted by the State Department and "arrested, tormented and jailed by Marine officers in Haiti" (Olsen 1993, 24). Still, his campaigns helped force Harding to order an investigation into atrocities committed by occupation forces.

By the 1920s new pressures were further complicating the overseas engagement of traditional Protestant groups. Universities took on an increasingly prominent role in reform coalitions, while private foundations established by US plutocrats pumped money into development, education, and intellectual and cultural exchange. These institutions tended to place greater emphasis on secular ideals of professionalization, expertise, and social scientific method, and gradually their thinking began to permeate more traditional organizations (Rosenberg 1999, 110). Although some older groups responded positively to these influences, for others the transition proved difficult. The Red Cross was unable to maintain its activity levels after the Armistice, as private donations fell off and European nations sought to reassert control over their own national health policies (Irwin, 2013). The Y found itself struggling to manage tensions between the increasingly radical ideas of its staff and the more conservative priorities of its financial backers.

In the 1920s, a growing number of non-elite Americans also began to play an active and energetic part in foreign policy debates. Not all were explicitly religious or racial in orientation, but faith, race and ethnicity offered important points of contact across national boundaries. Through sponsored exchanges and lecture tours, Irish Americans voiced their support for Irish independence (Eickhacker 2003), Italian Americans established pro-Mussolini fascist clubs in many American cities (Diggins 1972), and an array of American Catholics were drawn into transnational anticommunist campaigns organized through the Vatican (Chamedes 2013). While the vast majority of refugees from the Russian civil war went to Europe, several thousand travelled to the United States, where they

established organizations for refugee relief, orthodox churches, and anti-Bolshevik associations (Huntington 1933).

Few such groups tried to influence policy directly. Most sought instead to shape public opinion. As such, even as they developed transnational communities of solidarity, new foreign policy activists played up distinctively American inflections to their arguments. For instance, Catholicism was in many countries associated with elite groups, conservatism and religious establishmentarianism. Catholics in the United States, by contrast, campaigned against the anticlerical Mexican revolutionary regime by appealing to “a truth that lay at the core of their identity as *American* Catholics, the right to worship freely, as an inalienable and universal liberty” (Redinger 2005, ix-x).

Just as white groups understood their reform projects at home and abroad in interlinked terms, so black activists developed approaches to foreign policy conditioned by their domestic experience of racism and segregation. Historians have typically pointed to the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935-6 as the first clear instance of sustained, large-scale African American activism in foreign affairs (Scott 1993; Harris 1994; Plummer 1996; Von Eschen 1997). Nevertheless, a loose set of black internationalist proclivities can be uncovered in the 1920s, and indeed earlier. A systematic critique of US foreign policy as compromised by the racism of its practitioners had emerged in opposition to US expansion in the Philippines, Haiti, and elsewhere early in the century (Plummer 1988). Links between Africans, African Americans, and black Europeans had been strengthened through Pan-African Congresses in London and Paris in 1900 and 1919 (Ledwidge 2011). These were followed up by many more international gatherings in the twenties. As Marc Gallichio (2000) has shown, after its triumph in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, African Americans also began looking to Japan as an ally, hoping that it would use its growing presence on the world’s stage to question white supremacy, and ignoring in the process Japan’s own virulent racism. A further set of transnational affiliations can be traced to Marcus Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which, through its “Back to Africa” campaign, sought to transform the diasporic ideal into something more than sympathetic affiliation (Lewis 1988; Grant 2008; Spady et. al. 2011). As Lara Putnam (2013) has shown most recently,

outward migration had by the 1920s produced extensive networks of kinship and transnational affinity stretching from the islands of the Caribbean to the United States, Central America, and beyond.

While not yet a coherent mass movement, these connections would have significant implications not only for the development of African Americans' international concerns, but also for the emerging civil rights struggle. Sudarshan Kapur (1992) has studied how black activists from Garvey onwards looked to the experience of Indian anticolonialism to make sense of their own position within the orbit of Anglo-Saxon empire, and sought to adopt his non-violent methods as an effective method of protest against a powerful enemy. The links between black anticolonial sentiment and civil rights activism were deep and abiding.

Nevertheless, there were substantial divisions among those groups actively interested in foreign policy, just as there were in domestic affairs. Radical internationalists operating within the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) briefly allied with the UNIA, but grew increasingly critical of Garvey. Leftists were also among the first to question the popular enthusiasm for Japan. Eventually, many internationalists, including the ABB wholesale, affiliated with the Communist Party USA. This seemed to be an appropriate institutional home for a burgeoning black internationalist movement – indeed, many members felt they had “not so much joined ‘the American Party, they had joined the Comintern’” (Makalani 2011, 5) – and the CPUSA would become an increasingly significant voice of anti-racist anticolonialism in the 1930s. At the same time, however, these links would allow opponents to present black internationalist sentiment as fundamentally subversive. By the Cold War era, black internationalists were regularly adopting positions that “were perceived in Washington to be on the wrong side of the Cold War divide” (Horne 1995, 159).

Ultimately, the success or failure of private efforts to influence foreign policy depended on the domestic influence of each particular group, and the degree their goals intersected with others in the patchwork quilt of American ethnic politics. Thus, despite the fact that African American intellectuals went further than most in developing a global vision of political solidarity, their domestic political exclusion ensured that there would be severe limits to the influence of diasporic thought. Revealingly,

territory in Liberia that had been originally reserved for Garveyites was instead given over to Firestone's rubber plantations, a decision which starkly demonstrated the vastly different political influence of the two groups (Rosenberg 1999, 134). It was therefore at the grassroots, and among a coterie of intellectuals developing increasingly sophisticated critiques of colonialism, that black internationalism had its most significant impact.

Not all foreign affairs were driven by sub-group identity. Individual tourism, already substantial before World War One, swelled in the twenties as Americans sought new outlets for their wealth and new opportunities for conspicuous consumption. By the end of the decade, a third of a million Americans were visiting Europe and the Mediterranean alone each year. Tourists spent more than \$600 million a year overseas, creating complex new person-to-person networks of exchange. While American women assiduously followed Paris fashions, Europeans observed the high-quality American goods brought over by tourists, and began to seek them out (Iriye 1993, 100; Endy 1998, 94; Eckes and Zeiler 2003, 77; Merrill 2009). Thanks to the movies, the seductive power of celebrity culture also began to shape US relations with other countries. Hollywood stars became household names around the world. Explorers, businessmen and inventors also took on an increasingly prominent role in foreign perceptions of the United States. Recognizing the value of such soft power, the state looked to take advantage when it could, as with the goodwill tours organized by the aviator, Charles Lindbergh, which were used as precursors for more traditional diplomacy.

The Pursuit of Peace

Although necessarily impressionistic, this survey of public and private engagement overseas shows the extent to which recent historical scholarship has undermined perceptions of the 1920s as an insular decade. In so doing, the literature raises questions about the viability of strict analytical separations between foreign and domestic history, and of the relationship between state and non-state actors. It also asks us to think about how to make sense of complexity. Patterns of communication and exchange were so variegated that terms such as "Americanization" and "globalization" struggle to

accommodate themselves to the diverse contexts, events, groups and individuals involved in the United States' turn toward the world.

If there was one ideal that united more Americans than any other, it was a belief that the destiny of the United States lay in promoting a universal democratic peace. Groups across the political spectrum and from all social backgrounds shared a faith in the redemptive potential of American power, even if they differed profoundly over how to realize it. As a result, the 1920s witnessed a remarkable and sustained effort by both the Republican administrations and their strongest critics to campaign for global arms reduction. This began with the 1921 Washington Naval Conference, when Secretary of State Hughes engineered an agreement limiting battleship tonnage in the largest navies. As Dingman (1976), Hall (1987), Fanning (1995) and others have argued, the achievements of 1921 were a product of the unique circumstances of the aftermath of the war, in particular a domestic desire for economy, combined with internal political competition. Harding's and Hughes' efforts to outflank Borah, for example, were important in explaining their enthusiasm for arms control. Later in the decade, the Coolidge Administration sought to expand upon these agreements to include smaller vessels, and while these negotiations failed in 1927 due to lack of preparation further progress was made at the London Naval Treaty of 1930 under Hoover (O'Connor 1962; McKercher 2007). The pacific spirit was revealed elsewhere, too, in efforts to strengthen pan-American cooperation and to downplay the United States' traditional interventionism in the Western hemisphere.

The culminating triumph was undoubtedly the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact "outlawing" war. Signed by thirty-three nations, the agreement passed into history as either a milestone in the twentieth century's long global rights revolution and a legal precursor to the Nuremberg Trials, or a perfect example of interwar political naïveté, depending on one's political inclinations. A curious confluence of groups mobilized in behalf of the pact: the "irreconcilable" block under Borah; left-of-center peace progressives, including feminists, socialists, preachers, and pacifists; Wilsonian internationalists, especially within elite associations such as the World Peace Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the Council on Foreign Relations; intellectuals such as Columbia's James T. Shotwell and Nicholas Murray Butler, working through the Carnegie Endowment for International

Peace; and Republican conservatives, led by a Peace Prize-hungry secretary of state, Frank Kellogg (Josephson 1975; DeBenedetti 1978; Alonso 1989; Zeiger 1990; Johnson 1995; Winn 2006; Nash 2010; Gwinn 2010). Their campaigns in the mid-twenties saw the importance of preparedness gradually downgraded and disarmament increasingly conceived of as a good in itself, to be sought even in the absence of broader political conciliation (not least because, it was believed, successful talks would themselves generate a spirit of cooperation that would make warfare less likely). In his recent examination of the peace movement, Nichols (2011, 284) perhaps goes too far in suggesting that the transitory cooperation between figures like Borah and the feminist and pacifist Emily Balch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom represented a "landmark development for American political thought." Such figures differed on at least as many things as they agreed upon. Nevertheless, the diversity of the movement was evidence of the breadth of the appeal of its animating ideals.

The success of ambitious disarmament negotiations and a utopian peace pact might seem strange, given the limited ambition revealed elsewhere in these years. However, it was precisely this appeal to multiple constituencies that made peace politics viable. Internationalists saw disarmament "as a way to bring the United States into close cooperation with the League", while nationalists "viewed it as a way to avoid entanglement with Europe" (Kneeshaw 1991, 5). Kellogg-Briand was seen as a step forward by liberal internationalists frustrated over the League and World Court, but was equally useful to figures such as Borah who had assiduously opposed any binding limits to American sovereignty but wanted to show critics they had an alternative strategy.

Scholars have nevertheless differed, both over the sincerity of the anti-interventionist commitment to a treaty they knew to be toothless, and the role of popular sentiment in shaping the pact. Maddox (1969) is among those who struggle to take Borah's high-minded statements seriously. By contrast, Vinson states that, even if time comes to question Borah's wisdom, it "will not cavil at his sincerity" (Vinson 1957, 182). DeBenedetti has suggested that "there is little reason to believe that American popular opinion was more successful in initiating substantive negotiations toward the peace pact than it was in realizing other peace ideals during the postwar years" (DeBenedetti 1972, 22). Ferrell (1952)

argues that the final shape of the treaty was a product of the way the “unsophisticated popular enthusiasm for peace” and a French desire for a bilateral military alliance was deftly transformed by the State Department into a non-binding multilateral political commitment. By contrast, Nichols (2011, 302) has re-emphasized the importance of the broad, multiparty popular campaign for ratification, particularly in terms of ensuring Borah’s enthusiasm.

As Iriye (1993, 78) points out, the 1920s are thus the only decade before the 1980s that witnessed substantial moves toward global disarmament. The problem was that peace had to be based on more than controlling the growth of armaments and passing high-minded treaties. Indeed, a cynic might suggest that these deals only reinforced the minimalist tendencies that undermined Republican foreign policy elsewhere. Enduring positive relations could only be founded upon a coalescence of interest, without which disarmament could be swiftly abandoned. Early in the decade this appeared to take hold, as the great powers sought to cut back military spending and focused their attentions on domestic recovery and imperial reconstruction. By the end of the decade, when global rivalries became increasingly acute and domestic nationalism increasingly virulent, the fragile progress began to unravel.

In this sense, the successes and failures of the peace movement can only really be understood within a wider political context. Neither the great achievement nor the signal failure of the Washington Conference, for instance, was directly related to the specific terms of the naval agreement at all. The success, from a US perspective, came from the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese treaty and its replacement with a Four-Power Treaty (between Britain, France, the US and Japan), which provided a more solid foundation for Pacific entente than had previously existed. Scholars such as Griswold (1938) traditionally saw the Washington agreements as serving to contain Japanese aggression. But, as Asada (2006) notes, the treaty was in practice contingent upon the United States’ continued acceptance of Japan’s “special interest” in Manchuria, a point previously acceded to in the Root-Takahira and Lansing-Ishii Agreements of 1908 and 1917 respectively, but starkly contradicted by the commitments to China’s territorial integrity expressed in the parallel Nine-Power Treaty. Hughes’ quiet diplomacy secured the return of Shandong to China, but Manchuria remained firmly within the

Japanese orbit. The negotiations thus failed to assuage Chinese anti-imperial sentiment nor challenge Japanese predominance in Manchuria.

There was little the US could have done about this on its own. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that the Washington agreements failed to resolve the primary potential flashpoint in the region, and the one which would ultimately lead to war. Given this, the specific terms of the naval reductions would turn out to be irrelevant, or even counterproductive, since they limited the United States' ability to fortify its regional possessions against the Japanese attack that would come in 1941 (Kaufman 1990).

Similarly, efforts to reconstruct the German economy made the latter's continued military incapacity more or less endurable, but did little to address the stain of the Versailles humiliation. While some historians continue to see Versailles in the harsh terms first laid out by John Maynard Keynes (1920), many scholars of Asian and European diplomacy have argued that the treaty was far from "Carthaginian" in its economic and political consequences (Marks 2013, 633). Indeed, because of its eventual default on US loans, the cost of German reparations was ultimately borne by the United States (Schuker 1988). Nevertheless, the Dolschtoss ("stab in the back") legend of a nation defeated by its leaders rather than on the battlefield combined with popular resentment over the formal attribution of responsibility for the war to Germany and were exploited by ambitious politicians to legitimize authoritarianism and renewed military expansion. As with the incipient conflict in Asia, the United States was never able to find a way of reconciling the German desire to rebuild with the French need for security, not least because it profoundly underestimated the German hostility to the very principle of reparations, not just their terms (Jonas 1984). Even before Hitler came to power German leaders were conspiring to put the nation back on the path toward military and imperial might: a process that, as with Japan, would ultimately set the world aflame (Leffler 1979).

The Depression Crisis

None of this was clear at the time. Indeed, an overview of world conditions in the late-1920s offered many grounds for optimism, which Republican administrations could (and did) use to congratulate themselves. Thanks to the Dawes Plan and its successor, the Young Plan of 1927, Europe seemed

stable. Germany was keeping up with its reparations and France and Britain were paying their debts. The gold standard had re-emerged as the central tool of global currency management. Relations between the US and Latin America had improved. The US would remain in Haiti until 1934, and many politicians and diplomats continued to antagonize Latin Americans with arrogant and patronizing language, but the United States had removed its troops from the Dominican Republic and offered \$25 million to Colombia to settle the lingering dispute over Panama. Secretary of State Hughes had been praised for his leadership at the Washington Conference, and Kellogg gained plaudits for Kellogg-Briand. As Secretary of Commerce, Hoover won acclaim for his promotion of American business overseas, even if his relentless defense of national interests was sometimes rather stage-managed (O'Brien 2011). In the process, he became a shoo-in for the Republican nomination in 1928, and won for the Republicans a third term in November of that year. One of the most internationally savvy of politicians ever to occupy the White House, with a stellar reputation as businessman, relief administrator, and cabinet official, there was much to hope for.

Above all, Americans were enjoying the fruits of prosperity, much of which was contingent upon the nation's growing ties with the world. Although inevitably there were losers as well as winners, especially among industrial workers who remained largely unrepresented politically and unorganized industrially, Republican policies and processes undeniably coincided with a period of extraordinary growth in American wealth for many, and for its elites in particular.

However, at the same time, the Republican administrations were presiding over the development of strategic commitments – to open markets, regional trade regimes, and global supply chains – that would require a sustained political, and military, commitment to defend. This was the central problem that emerged as the United States stretched outwards: the implicit belief that one could acquire global economic power without also assuming political responsibilities. Unfortunately, the path toward a new world order had been so haphazard that few realized how fragile it was, nor how sustained the commitment to maintain it would have to be.

An analogy here can perhaps be drawn to the sociology of everyday life at home. As Robert and Helen Lynd observed in *Middletown* (1929), their path-breaking study of life in middle America, people tended to accept new goods, products and technologies more easily than the cultural and social reorientations that followed from their adoption. Indeed, if anything, they grew more anxious to defend “traditions” as new technologies placed them under threat. Similarly, while Americans grew accustomed to the higher standard of living associated with global economic expansion, enjoying the fine imported foodstuffs that enriched their diet and the opportunities for foreign travel and aesthetic and cultural appropriation that came with wealth, they struggled to recognize that these changes would produce a new set of political relations with the rest of the world. Indeed, many became more concerned with defending the “traditional” ideal of political autonomy than ever before. As a result, when the global depression produced an interlocked and cascading set of economic crises that quickly transformed into political catastrophes, the nation was incapable of responding.

Even before the crisis struck, a revealing pre-quake tremor could be seen in the United States’ relations with Nicaragua, a relatively tiny part of the US sphere of interest and yet one that, not for the last time, would take on disproportionate significance as a venue in which the problems of American foreign policy played out. As part of a convoluted set of regional rivalries, the US had facilitated the ouster of the Liberal dictator José Santos Zelaya in 1909. Subsequently, it backed a series of administrations led by the rival Conservative Party, who agreed to implement the standard Washington prescription of Wall Street loans, currency stabilization, and fiscal retrenchment. The program was coordinated by the State Department, and the relatively peaceful decade and a half that followed was a result of Liberals’ belief that any effort to unseat the government would result in a swift US military response, symbolized by a small delegation of Marines permanently stationed in the capital, Managua. Eager to end an overseas “occupation” that, however small, seemed a holdover from a less enlightened era, and confident that law could replace war, in 1923 the United States pressed the nations of Central America into signing a “General Treaty of Peace and Amity,” in which they committed themselves to not recognizing any government in the region that came to power illegitimately. Then, in 1925, they triumphantly withdrew the Marines. Less than a month later, a

leading Conservative launched a coup and seized power. The Liberal Party responded, kick-starting a brutal civil war that by 1927 forced the United States to send in a far larger force to re-establish order than it had removed two years earlier. Although the political solution engineered by Henry Stimson was hailed as a diplomatic triumph – the US committed itself to building an independent national guard, overseeing free and fair elections, and implicitly shifted its patronage from the Conservatives to the Liberal majority – the first expansion of US military involvement in the region for a decade antagonized locals and produced a protracted guerrilla insurgency under the revolutionary nationalist Augusto César Sandino. Moreover, the National Guard that the United States constructed would eventually seize power themselves, establishing an authoritarian dictatorship that would persist until a new generation of Sandinistas took power in 1979. The contribution of the US to growing anti-colonial sentiment after 1927 is a matter of historical consensus, whether its actions are viewed sympathetically (Boot 2002) or not (Macaulay 1967; Selser 1981; Langley 1985; Schoultz 1998). Indeed, Michel Gobat has noted that support for Sandino developed not only among Liberals and Leftists, but even from disaffected elements within the Conservative movement, who were as nationalistic as their enemies and alienated by the increasingly overt US support for Liberalism. The shift from traditional dollar diplomacy to a more expansionist policy of democracy promotion “not only failed to produce deep and durable democratization ... [but] paved the way for authoritarian rule” (Gobat 2005, 206).

Despite having made a tour of Latin America just before taking office as part of an effort to stake out a new, more respectful relationship, and publishing the Clark Memorandum in 1930, disavowing past interventionism, Hoover would have to deal with this Nicaraguan headache for the duration of his administration. The lesson was clear: international legal niceties, stabilized currencies and carefully balanced budgets could not guarantee stability without either political conciliation or overwhelming military force; and without a political solution, force was as likely to generate opposition as it was to defuse it. The US role in Latin American politics more generally showed that successful arbitration depended not only on the United States’ good offices, but also on contexts that were independently conducive to settlement. Kellogg was able to facilitate an agreement over the Tacna-Arica boundary

dispute in 1928-29 because Chile and Peru were willing to compromise at the expense of Bolivia. By contrast, negotiations over the disputed Leticia region between Peru and Colombia came to naught, and efforts to settle the lingering disputes over the Chaco region between Bolivia and Paraguay (fuelled by rival petroleum companies) failed to avert a vicious three-year war that began in 1932 (Rhodes 2001, 78-79).

Despite such mixed results, Americans seemed unable to recognize the limits of law and commerce as tools of diplomacy. As the economic crisis hit and the foundations of the global order began to fracture, rather than defending the system of fixed exchange rates and international commerce, the Senate in June 1930 passed the Smoot-Hawley tariffs, raising protectionist walls to their highest levels for a century. American banks withdrew their overseas investments, setting off new crises. In Germany, the banking sector effectively collapsed, which in turn shattered the fragile reparations regime of the Dawes and Young Plans. This was only temporary at first, as Hoover negotiated a short term moratorium on German payments in 1931, but as US policies exacerbated the vicious cycle of economic contraction and fiscal retrenchment it soon turned into a permanent repudiation of the long-hated post-war peace terms. Once reparations stopped, Britain and France were forced to call for a halt to debt repayments in order to stave off their own looming budgetary disaster. Britain fell off the gold standard in 1932, and this set off the tit-for-tat process of currency devaluation and protectionism that characterized the move toward autarky and, ultimately, the Second World War (Clavin 1996).

Hoover's well-meaning but weak efforts to develop a concerted multilateral response to the crisis, stymied by protectionist tendencies the world over as well as his own growing political impotence, achieved little. The Republicans believed that global peace would be a natural concomitant of global economic order; now the opposite was also shown to be true, as the resurgence of national economic interests swiftly produced political conflict. Rather than working in concert with other powers to raise the cost of military aggression, the United States signally failed to stop the Japanese from invading Manchuria or halt the rising influence of fascism in Europe. Hoover and Stimson had hoped that good relations with Japan could be maintained despite the Manchurian crisis, and at first resisted calls for a hard line response. As the crisis intensified, Stimson was forced to declare that the US would not

accept the dismemberment of China and refused to recognize the Japanese assumption of sovereignty. But it was an empty warning, and was duly ignored by Japan.

Given its failure to halt the establishment of the puppet state in Manchuria, it is unsurprising that the Stimson Doctrine has been widely criticized. But historians have disagreed over their reasons for doing so. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Smith (1948) suggested that the failure of the policy lay in the United States' reluctance to move assertively and in concert with the League of Nations early on in the crisis, at a point when Japan might still have been deterred. By contrast, Current (1954) saw Stimson's policy as too aggressive: the first step on the path to a war with Japan that the Secretary of State believed inevitable but Hoover was unprepared to countenance. Ferrell (1957) downplayed the idea of a division between Stimson and Hoover, arguing that both saw non-recognition as a tool for moral suasion. But, arguably, the problem with the Stimson Doctrine was that it was neither fish nor fowl: lacking the bite needed to force a change in Japanese policy yet wrecking a relationship that had been carefully nurtured for more than a generation. "All Stimson really handed on to his successor," writes Rappaport (1963, 203), "was the implacable enmity of the Japanese."

Stimson does not deserve all the blame, for he was constrained by the political and geopolitical climate as much as his convictions. As Thorne (1972) points out, in the absence of substantial public or international support for a more risky venture, there was little that the United States could do. Non-recognition policy had been deployed a generation earlier by Wilson in Mexico and Russia, to little effect. But moralizing escapism offered a lowest-common-denominator appeal to a public, and a political leadership, outraged by Japanese aggression yet unprepared to put American security on the line. As Doenecke (1984) observed in his studies of foreign policy opinion-formers during the crisis, it enjoyed a broad popularity that more assertive policies of economic or military coercion entirely lacked. For this reason, the pop-gun was returned to the American diplomatic arsenal. Japan, however, continued on its path toward war in China.

It is difficult to know exactly what any individual, even a president, could have done to hold back the global political whirlwind that emerged during the depression crisis. Events were proceeding too

rapidly for a more activist response to have even been conceivable, let alone practical. Nevertheless, the fact remained that after a decade of transformation the United States' fundamental interests now lay with a global order that was rapidly falling apart. There was little recognition of this, either among the nation's leaders or its citizens. Eventually, in the greatest of ironies, the torch of Wilsonianism, kept alive by Wilson's notional enemies throughout the previous decade, would under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, temporarily go out.

In the absence of new thinking, the Hoover administration found itself continuing the policies of the previous decade. The different context, of crisis and brinkmanship rather than opportunity and growth, ensured that approaches that had succeeded before now failed dramatically. Arms talks broke down and agreements were abandoned, attempts to develop beneficial trade regimes stalled, and tariffs and imperial boundaries were raised. Attempts to use moralistic rhetoric and appeals to law to constrain international aggression not only failed but discredited the very idea of global order.

American power seemed elusive at the moment it was needed most. And each failure only encouraged domestic anti-interventionists to further seek to restrict the state in its efforts to promote global stability. In this sense, the traditionalists were right to suggest that the Republican administrations ultimately failed in their most fundamental responsibility to the global world order, although historians today would point to a broader social, political and cultural context to explain these actions.

As historians such as Akira Iriye have argued, many precedents for the kind of globalism promoted by the United States after the Second World War can be seen in the 1920s. Had they not been overwhelmed by the failures of the 1930s, these policies would no doubt receive greater attention.

Nevertheless, at root the vision of global peace and exchange promoted by the Republican administrations of the era was constrained by a persistently conservative vision that was unable to step beyond a limited idea of government activism and a narrow conception of the national interest. Only through a more fundamental reorientation of American foreign policy during the third Roosevelt term would the United States begin to link its global economic power to global political commitments to development and collective security. Whatever their merits, the policies pursued by the Republican

administrations of Harding, Hoover and Coolidge would therefore be cast adrift by history. And for this reason, despite its achievements, the era still offers, at most, an ambivalent legacy.

References

Adler, Selig. 1957. *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction*. New York: Abelard-Schuman.

--- 1965. *The Uncertain Giant, 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars*. New York: Macmillan.

Alonso, Harriet. 1989. *The Women's Peace Union and the Outlawry of War, 1921-1942*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Asada, Sadao. 2006. "Between the Old Diplomacy and the New, 1918-1922: The Washington System and the Origins of Japanese-American Rapprochement." *Diplomatic History* 30: 211-230.

Billington, Ray Allen. 1945. "The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism". *Political Science Quarterly* 60, no. 1: 44-64.

Bjork, Ulf Jonas. 2000. "The U.S. Commerce Department Aids Hollywood Exports, 1921-1933." *The Historian* 62: 575-588.

Boot, Max. 2002. *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.

Brandes, Joseph. 1962. *Herbert Hoover and Economic Diplomacy: Department of Commerce Policy, 1921-1928*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Bucci, Federico. 1993. *Albert Kahn: Architect of Ford*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Buckingham, Peter. 1983. *International Normalcy: The Open Door Peace with the Frontier Central Powers, 1921-29*. Wilmington, DE:, Scholarly Resources, 1983.

Chamedes, Giuliana. 2013. "The Vatican and the Making of the Atlantic Order, 1920-1960." PhD dissertation, Columbia University.

Clavin, Patricia. 1996. *The Failure of Economic Diplomacy: Britain, German, France, and the USA, 1931-36*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

--- 2013. *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Cody, Jeffrey W. 2003. *Exporting American Architecture, 1870-2000*. New York: Routledge.

Cohrs, Patrick O. 2006. *The Unfinished Peace after World War I: America, Britain and the Stabilisation of Europe, 1919-1932*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Cole, Wayne S. 1962. *Senator Gerald P. Nye and American Foreign Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Costigliola, Frank. 1984. *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

DeBenedetti, Charles. 1972. "Borah and the Kellogg-Briand Pact". *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 63, no. 1: 22-29.

--- 1978. *Origins of the Modern American Peace Movement, 1915-1929*. Millwood, NY: KTO Press.

DeConde, Alexander, ed. 1978. *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy: Studies of the Principal Movements*, 3 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Diggins, John P. 1972. *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Drake, Paul. 1989. *The Money Doctor in the Andes: The Kemmerer Missions, 1923-1933*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Dingman, Roger. 1976. *Power in the Pacific: The Origins of Naval Arms Limitation, 1914-1922*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Doenecke, Justus. 1984. *When the Wicked Rise: American Opinion Makers and the Manchurian Crisis of 1931-1933*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press.

--- 1997. *The Battle Against Intervention, 1939-1941*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.

Dunne, Michael. 1988. *The United States and the World Court, 1920-1935*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Eickhacker, Joanne Mooney. *Irish Republican Women in America: Lecture Tours, 1916-1925*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003.

Eckes, Jr., Alfred E. and Thomas W. Zeiler. 2003. *Globalization and the American Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Ekbladh, David. 2010. *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Ellis, L. Ethan. 1961. *Frank B. Kellogg and American Foreign Relations, 1925-1929*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Endy, Christopher. 1998. "Travel and World Power: Americans in Europe, 1890-1917." *Diplomatic History* 22: 565-94.

Engerman, David C. 2003. *From the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fanning, Richard W. 1995. *Peace and Disarmament: Naval Rivalry and Arms Control, 1922-1933*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Ferrell, Robert H. 1952. *Peace in their Time: The Origins of the Kellogg-Briand Pact*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

--- 1957. *American Diplomacy in the Great Depression: Hoover-Stimson Foreign Policy, 1929-1933*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gallichio, Marc. 2000. *The African-American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Glad, Betty. 1966. *Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence: A Study in American Diplomacy*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Gobat, Michel. 2005. *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua Under U.S. Imperial Rule*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Grandin, Greg. 2006. "Your Americanism and Mine: Americanism and Anti-Americanism in the Americas." *American Historical Review* 111: 1042-1066.

--- 2010. *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle Empire*. London: Icon.

Grant, Colin. 2008. *Negro With a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

de Grazia, Victoria. 2005. *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Griswold, A. Whitney. 1983. *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Guinsberg, Thomas N. 1982. *The Pursuit of Isolationism in the United States Senate from Versailles to Pearl Harbor*. New York, Garland.

- Gwinn, Kristen. 2010. *Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Hall, Christopher. 1987. *Britain, America and Arms Control, 1921-37*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harris, Joseph E. 1994. *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936-1941*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.
- Hildebrand, Grant. 1974. *Designing for Industry: The Architecture of Albert Kahn*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hoff, Joan. 1971. *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920-1933*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- 1975. *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Hogan, Michael J. 1977. *Informal Entente: The Private Structure of Cooperation in Anglo-American Economic Diplomacy, 1918-1928*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977.
- Hoganson, Kristin. 2006. "Stuff It: Domestic Consumption and the Americanization of the World Paradigm." *Diplomatic History* 30: 571-594.
- Horne, Gerald. 1995. "Race for the Planet: African-Americans and U.S. Foreign Policy Reconsidered". *Diplomatic History* 19: 159-65.
- Huntington, W. Chapin. 1933. *The Homesick Million: Russia-out-of-Russia*. Boston: Stratford Company.
- Hutchinson, William R. 1987. *Errand into the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Iriye, Akira. 1993. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Volume III: The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

- Irwin, Julia. 2013. *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, Robert David. 1995. *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jonas, Manfred. 1966. *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- 1984. *The United States and Germany*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Josephson, Harold. 1975. *James T. Shotwell and the Rise of Internationalism in America*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Kapur, Sudarshan. 1992. *Raising Up a Prophet: The African-American Encounter with Gandhi*. Boston: Beacon.
- Kaufman, Robert Gordon. 1990. *Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era: The United States and Naval Limitation Between the Two World Wars*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Keylor, William R. 1984. *The Twentieth-Century World: An International History*. New York: Oxford.
- Keynes, John Maynard. 1920. *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Kneeshaw, Stephen. 1991. *In Pursuit of Peace: The American Reaction to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928-1929*. New York: Garland.
- Langley, Lester D. 1985. *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Ledwidge, Mark. 2011. *Race and US Foreign Policy: The African-American Foreign Affairs Network*. New York: Routledge.
- Leffler, Melvyn. 1979. *The Elusive Quest: America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security, 1919-1933*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

- Lewis, Rupert. 1988. *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Little, Douglas. 1983. "Antibolshevism and American Foreign Policy, 1919- 1939: The Diplomacy of Self-Delusion". *American Quarterly* 35, no. 4: 376-390.
- Loeffler, Jane C. 1998. *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Lynd, Robert Staughton and Helen Lynd. 1929. *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Maddox, Robert. 1969. *William E. Borah and American Foreign Policy*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Makalani, Minkah. 2011. *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- McKercher, B. J. C. 2007. "'A Certain Irritation': The White House, the State Department, and the Desire for a Naval Settlement with Great Britain, 1927-1930." *Diplomatic History* 31: 829-863.
- McNeil, William C. 1986. *American Money and the Weimar Republic: Economics and Politics on the Eve of the Great Depression*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Merrill, Dennis. 2009. *Negotiating Paradise: US Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*. Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press.
- Miller, Karen. *Populist Nationalism: Republican Insurgency and American Foreign Policy Making, 1918-1925*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Morison, Elting E. 1960. *Turmoil and Tradition: The Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Nash, Lee, ed. 2012. *Herbert Hoover and World Peace*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2012.
- Myers, William. 1940. *The Foreign Policies of Herbert Hoover, 1929-1933*. New York: Garland.

- Nichols, Christopher McKnight. 2011. *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- O'Brien, Phillips Payson. 2011. "Herbert Hoover, Anglo-American Relations and Republican Party Politics in the 1920s." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22: 200-218.
- O'Brien, Thomas. 1996. *The Revolutionary Mission: American Enterprise in Latin America, 1900-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Connor, Raymond. 1962. *Perilous Equilibrium: The United States and the London Disarmament Conference of 1930*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.
- Olsen, Scott H. 1993. "Reverend L. Ton Evans and the United States Occupation of Haiti." *Caribbean Studies* 26: 23-48.
- Perkins, Dexter. 1956. *Charles Evans Hughes and American Democratic Statesmanship*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Plummer, Brenda Gayle. 1988. *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902-1915*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- 1996. *A Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Putnam, Lara. 2013. *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rappaport, Armin. 1963. *Henry L. Stimson and Japan, 1931-33*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Redinger, Matthew. 2005. *American Catholics and the Mexican Revolution, 1924-1936*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

- Renda, Mary. 2001. *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rhodes, Benjamin D. 2001. *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1941: The Golden Age of American Diplomatic and Military Complacency*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Rosenberg, Emily. 1999. *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schmitz, David. 2001. *Henry L. Stimson: The First Wise Man*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Schultz, Lars. 1998. *Beneath The United States: A History of US Policy Toward Latin America*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Schuker, Stephen. 1976. *The End of French Predominance in Europe: The Financial Crisis and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- 1988. *American "Reparations" to Germany, 1919-33: Implications for the Third-World Debt Crisis*. Princeton: Princeton Studies in International Finance, 1988.
- Scott, William R. 1993. *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1941*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Selser, Gregorio. 1981. *Sandino*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Siegel, Katherine A. S. 1996. *Loans and Legitimacy: The Evolution of Soviet-American Relations, 1919-1933*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Smith, Sara R. 1948. *The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1932: A Tragedy in International Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Spady, James G. et. al., eds. 2011. *New Perspectives on the History of Marcus Garvey, the UNIA and the African Diaspora*. Philadelphia: Marcus Garvey Foundation Publishers.

Thorne, Christopher. 1972. *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933*. London: Hamilton.

Tyrrell, Ian. 2010. *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Vinson, John Chalmers. 1957. *William E. Borah and the Outlawry of War*, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Von Eschen, Penny M. 1997. *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Walker III, William O. 2006. "Crucible for Peace: Herbert Hoover, Modernization, and Economic Growth in Latin America." *Diplomatic History* 30: 83-117.

Williams, William Appleman. 1954. "The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920s" *Science & Society* 18, no. 1: 1-20.

--- 1962. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. New York: Dell.

Winn, Joseph W. 2006. "Nicholas Murray Butler, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Search for Reconciliation in Europe, 1919-1933." *Peace & Change* 31: 555-584.

Zasloff, Jonathan. 2003. "Law and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy: From the Gilded Age to the New Era". *NYU Law Review* 78: 239-373.

Zeiger, Susan. 1990. "Finding a Cure for War: Women's Politics and the Peace Movement in the 1920s". *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 1: 69-86.

Further Reading

Adler, Selig. 1965. *The Uncertain Giant, 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars*. New York: Macmillan.

Cohen, Warren. 1987. *Empire Without Tears: American Foreign Policy, 1921-1933*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Eckes, Jr., Alfred E. and Thomas W. Zeiler. 2003. *Globalization and the American Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, L. Ethan. 1968. *Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Iriye, Akira. 1993. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Volume III: The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945*.

Louria, Margot. 2001. *Triumph and Downfall: America's Pursuit of Peace and Prosperity, 1921-1933*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Macaulay, Neill. 1967. *The Sandino Affair*. Chicago: Quadrangle.

McKercher, Brian. 2000. "Reaching for the Brass Ring: The Recent Historiography of Interwar American Foreign Relations." In *Paths to Power: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations to 1941*, edited by Michael J. Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nevins, Allen. 1950. *The United States in a Chaotic World, 1918-1933*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rhodes, Benjamin D. 2001. *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1941: The Golden Age of American Diplomatic and Military Complacency*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Rosenberg, Emily. *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Biographical Note

Alex Goodall teaches History at the University of York. His research primarily focuses on the early twentieth century history of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary politics in the United States and Latin America, considered in both national and transnational contexts. *Loyalty and Liberty: American Countersubversion from World War One to the McCarthy Era* was published by University of Illinois Press in 2013.