

A Roundtable on Seth Jacobs, *Rogue Diplomats*: The Proud Tradition of Disobedience in American Foreign Policy

Dustin Walcher, Lindsay M. Chervinsky, James F. Siekmeier, Kathryn C. Statler, Brian Etheridge, and Seth Jacobs

Roundtable Introduction

Dustin Walcher

Seth Jacobs can write. *Rogue Diplomats* is a book that specialists and educated general readers will enjoy, and the reviewers agree with my assessment. It is, in Kathryn Statler's words, "an absolute page-turner." Lindsay Chervinsky writes that it "... is a serious diplomatic history that contributes to our understanding of the field and U.S. history, but is also fun—a quality that isn't always associated with historical scholarship, but should be welcome." Brian Etheridge finds that Jacobs' "vignettes are beautifully told," and that he "has an eye for the telling quote and writes with a verve and sense of irony that captivates." He is "a master storyteller at the top of his game." In sum, Jacobs elucidates important episodes of U.S. diplomacy and entertains in the process. That alone is a substantial accomplishment.

Readers of *Rogue Diplomats* will learn that while it may not have been routine, it has not been uncommon for U.S. diplomats to ignore their instructions and operate on the basis of their own assessments of the national interest and of the situation at hand. Violating direct orders, Jacobs explains, is for all practical purposes a practice unique to U.S. diplomats. Notably, he also finds that more often than not diplomatic insubordination has worked out to the advantage of the United States. Many times, there appears to be something to the notion of empowering the official on the ground, who is in direct contact with foreign counterparts. Of course, this advice must be tempered with the most notable counterexample of U.S. success: that of an ambassador conspiring with Nazis before and during World War II.

Rogue diplomats, Nazi-appeasers and all, are intriguing diplomats. Jacobs examines episodes that span from the American Revolution through the Vietnam War. But the stories are less about the episodes themselves than they are about the people who managed them. Those men—and they are all men—included John Adams, John Jay, and Benjamin Franklin; Robert Livingston and James Monroe; Nicholas Trist; Walter Hines Page; Joseph P. Kennedy; and Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.

Although Jacobs holds that the phenomenon of accredited diplomats ignoring instructions and making policy on their own is unique to the United States, the book is not a study of comparative diplomatic practice. Rather, the case studies illustrate critical junctures in U.S. foreign relations in which diplomats made and at least attempted to implement substantive policy decisions on their own. The incidents chosen—the diplomacy of independence,

the Louisiana Purchase, negotiations bringing an end to the U.S.-Mexican War, Anglo-American diplomacy surrounding the potential U.S. entry into World War I, then again with respect to World War II, and support for the coup that toppled Ngo Dinh Diem's government in South Vietnam—were all of considerable importance at the highest levels of the U.S. government. U.S. diplomats weren't able to ignore their superiors while forging their own paths because the issues they worked on were of secondary or tertiary importance, permitting them to fly under the radar. Rather, in the chosen cases the rogue diplomats made policy, or attempted to, on the leading international questions of the day.

Jacobs suggests that rogue diplomats generally shared important characteristics providing them with the political and psychological space necessary to operate independently. With the notable and extraordinarily entertaining exception of Trist, Jacobs' diplomats were well-endowed with either wealth or political prominence in their own right; consequently, they did not see themselves as ordinary government functionaries. To the contrary, they saw themselves less as instruments of policy and more as policymakers, engaged in a (sometimes) collaborative enterprise where they necessarily played a leading role. Generally, this is not the approach taken by career foreign service officers who rose through the State Department ranks until they were finally rewarded with an ambassadorship.

In addition to the high quality of the writing, the reviewers appreciate the detailed narratives presented in the case studies. Siekmeier observes that the ambassador "often gets left out of the picture" in foreign relations histories. Jacobs brings the ambassador back in as a major political actor, deserving of serious study. His observation resonates. In my own scholarship, I can think of particular ambassadors who were either colorful, or better connected politically than most. It's worth considering more seriously the degree to which ambassadorial appointments have made and can make notable differences in foreign policy construction and implementation.

Reviewers also identified important limitations in Jacobs' work, beginning most notably with the thesis. The notion that U.S. diplomats have been uniquely inclined to disobey orders, and most often experienced success when doing so, is intriguing, but requires further investigation. This is not a slight toward Jacobs—only an acknowledgement that the support he brings to bear in this single volume featuring six case studies can necessarily only serve as the starting point for a larger conversation. As Etheridge explains, "if we want to interrogate Jacobs' thesis we first need a broader landscape of American diplomatic behavior

to see, if indeed, there is a proud tradition of disobedience.” These cases could simply be intriguing episodes that are nonetheless outliers even in the U.S. experience, or, as Jacobs suggests, they could point to something more deeply engrained in U.S. diplomatic practice.

The reviewers raise additional critiques. Statler is not fully convinced by some of the case studies, most notably but not exclusively the first on the diplomacy of independence, suggesting that Franklin, Jay, and Adams did not deviate as far from their instructions—at least in their negotiations with France—as Jacobs portrays. She would also like to see the conclusion more fully developed. Statler, Chervinsky, and Siekmeier each ask if it became more difficult in more recent years for diplomats to ignore instructions from Washington. Siekmeier notes that the case studies all center around issues of war and peace. Does it follow that rogue diplomacy was unique to periods before, during, or immediately following armed conflict, involving either the United States directly or the countries with which U.S. diplomats were negotiating? Finally, Siekmeier asks why the cases of unauthorized diplomatic behavior seemed so honorable. Rogue diplomats violated instructions in the service of their conception of the national interest, not their own personal interests. Most suffered no ill effects professionally (Trist and Kennedy were the most notable counterexamples, though for different reasons).

Although Jacobs categorizes each case study as either a success or a failure, Chervinsky suggests that there exists a great deal more grey area. Trist, for instance, may have secured all of the objectives he was handed when dispatched, but that success nonetheless set the stage for the U.S. Civil War. Statler plows similar ground when writing about the Diem case – questioning Jacobs’ conclusion that because Diem was hopelessly in over his head supporting a coup was necessarily in the United States’ best interest. Additionally, Chervinsky asks why it matters that U.S. diplomats have a propensity to go their own way, commenting “I’m not completely sure what that information tells me.”

Ultimately, *Rogue Diplomats* is a very good book. If you teach, consider assigning it; your students may actually thank you! At a minimum, mine the book for colorful stories easily dropped during lectures, class discussions, and cocktail parties. Etheredge is right; it is nice to see an established teacher-scholar bring to fruition a major research project that originated in the classroom. With results like this, perhaps it will become less unusual.

Rogue Diplomats are Fun Diplomats

Lindsay M. Chervinsky

In the introduction to *Rogue Diplomats*, Seth Jacobs explains that he came up with the idea for this book after noticing that his students were always drawn to the stories of rogue diplomats. They sat up straighter in their chairs, booed diplomats who acted in ways that were contrary to the nation’s best interests, and even cheered the spectacular character that is Nicholas Philip Trist (ix). It is easy to understand why Jacobs’ students enjoyed hearing these stories, since the book he wrote about them is equally enjoyable to read. *Rogue Diplomats* is a serious diplomatic history that contributes to our understanding of the field and U.S. history, but it is also *fun*—a quality that isn’t always associated with historical scholarship but should be welcome.

Rogue Diplomats offers an overview of American diplomacy from 1778 to the present through six case studies. Taken together, the case studies demonstrate that some American diplomats share a tendency to break the rules or disregard explicit orders from their superiors. This obstreperousness (a word Jacobs utilizes quite effectively) was not shared by diplomats from European, Latin American, or African nations. Rather, defiance is a characteristic that appears to define the American diplomat.

Jacobs starts with the American delegation tasked with negotiating the end of the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay anchor this chapter and offer lively details of disobedience in their correspondence. The Confederation Congress had issued instructions requiring the peace commissioners to “undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace or truce without their [France’s] knowledge . . . and ultimately to govern yourselves by their advice and opinion” (41). While Franklin, Adams, and Jay differed on their feelings toward France—Franklin adored the French, while Adams and Jay abhorred the diplomatic customs at Versailles and distrusted French motives—they all worked together to flout Congress’s directions. In fact, before Jay and Adams had arrived in Paris, Franklin had already opened secret channels to discuss peace terms with British representatives, away from the prying eyes of the French. The final product of the negotiations between the U.S. and British delegations was an overwhelming success. The Treaty of Paris, officially signed in September 1783,

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recognized American independence, secured important access to Atlantic fisheries for American fishermen, and ceded all territory east of the Mississippi River to the United States (71).

While negotiating these terms, Franklin, Jay, and Adams kept their conversations secret from Congress and the French foreign minister, Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes. After the terms of the treaty were released, Vergennes accepted the result as a *fait accompli*. Some American congressmen objected to the commissioners' betrayal of their French allies, but Congress quickly understood the value offered by the treaty and ratified it. Franklin, Jay, and Adams suffered no consequences for their disobedience and served in additional public offices, thus establishing a precedent that American diplomats could carve their own paths with little punishment (77).

It did not take long for American ministers to use this precedent to their advantage. Ever since the Treaty of Paris granted the United States the territory east of the Mississippi River, Americans had struggled to obtain access to the river. In March 1801, the Jefferson administration learned that Spain had ceded Louisiana territory to France. Spain had granted Americans access to the river in 1795, but most Americans doubted Napoleonic France would be so generous. President Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of State James Madison tasked Robert Livingston, the new American minister to France, with acquiring access to the river and the critical port of New Orleans. By late 1802, Jefferson was convinced that more ammunition was necessary, and he appointed James Monroe as a special minister. He also authorized about \$11.5 million to purchase New Orleans and as much of East and West Florida as possible (101).

Unlike Franklin, Adams, and Jay, who defied their orders outright, Monroe and Livingston just went *beyond* their stated authority. When Napoleon offered to part with the entire Louisiana territory for \$15 million, Monroe and Livingston leapt at the chance to double American territory and secure permanent access to the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans. They left it to the Jefferson administration and Congress to raise the additional funds and answer the constitutional questions raised by the purchase.

Monroe was so confident that the administration would approve of the deal that he offered a down payment of \$2 million before Congress had ratified the treaty (115). He was right. The Louisiana Purchase was widely celebrated, and Congress ratified it within days of convening an emergency session. While Livingston did not receive additional government positions, he did not face any consequences for straying outside the boundaries of his instructions. Monroe went on to serve as secretary of state and president of the United States.

The third case study is certainly the most outlandish, and I suspect it is Jacobs' favorite. In 1847, President James K. Polk appointed Nicholas Trist as special envoy to accompany the U.S. Army, under the command of General Winfield Scott, to Mexico City. Polk and Secretary of State James Buchanan instructed Trist to negotiate a treaty to end the war with the following conditions: "Mexico must acknowledge the Rio Grande as the southern boundary of Texas and yield upper California and New Mexican territory to the United States" (129). Polk authorized Trist to offer up to \$30 million for this enormous swath of territory.

Ironically, when Trist signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, he obtained every single one of those concessions from the Mexican government for just

\$15 million. Yet between the time of his appointment and when he was escorted home under armed guard, Trist had alienated all of his friends in the State Department and had been fired by the president—a message he chose to disregard. Thus, although his mission was an unqualified success, Congress ratified the treaty, and Polk received credit for acquiring new territory, Trist did not return home to a hero's welcome. As Jacobs colorfully narrates, Trist made matters worse by writing screed after screed, causing his remaining supporters to distance themselves and others to question his mental stability. Of all the diplomats in *Rogue Diplomats*, Trist was the only one who suffered significant economic harm and had trouble finding stable employment after his mission.

The next two case studies present an interesting parallel. Both Walter Hines Page and Joseph Kennedy Sr. served as ambassadors to Great Britain on the eve of a world war, both demonstrated the critical importance of the London Embassy to American interests abroad and the Anglo-American relationship, and both incurred the wrath of their presidents over their attitudes toward Germany. Neither Page nor Kennedy held high office after their stints as ambassador, and neither has been treated particularly well by historians. But there is one key difference. Page urged President Woodrow Wilson to enter the war and oppose the German menace, while Kennedy pleaded with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to stay out of the war and appease Nazi Germany.

Page initially approved of Wilson's neutral policy toward the war in Europe. By September 1914, however, he had become convinced that neutrality was immoral. He spent the next several years haranguing Wilson and Secretaries of State William Jennings Bryan and Robert Lansing, insisting that the United States respond with strength to increasing German provocations. Page was particularly outraged at Wilson's tendency to treat Germany and the Allied powers as equally responsible for instigating conflict. He demonstrated his displeasure when he delivered official messages from Wilson to the British government, once adding "I have now read the dispatch, but I do not agree with it; let us consider how it should be answered" (219). While Wilson wanted to fire Page for this insubordination, he feared it would further damage Anglo-American relations and harm his own reputation in Europe. Page finally achieved his goals when the United States declared war on Germany on April 2, 1917. Absolutely spent from his years abroad, he died on December 21, 1918, a little over a month after the war ended.

Jacobs does not have much positive to say about Kennedy's tenure as ambassador to Great Britain. When Kennedy wasn't on vacation and away from his post, he was meeting with Nazi officials and Nazi sympathizers, and he pushed both Britain and the United States to appease Hitler. He refused to believe that the Allies could win the war, and Jacobs concludes that he was disappointed that the Royal Air Force served so well in the Battle of Britain (292). FDR demonstrated his own disgust with Kennedy by sending several fact-finding missions to Britain and Europe to report back on the state of the war, indicating that he did not trust his ambassador to supply accurate information. Nonetheless, FDR recognized Kennedy's significant political clout and kept the ambassador busy abroad until after he won reelection to his third term. Only then did he accept Kennedy's resignation. Upon returning home, Kennedy quickly tarnished his reputation with anti-Semitic and pro-German rants to newspapers and film studios.

Two decades later, Kennedy's son was the in White House. He appointed Henry Cabot Lodge II as minister to South Vietnam. From the very beginning of his appointment, Lodge was convinced that Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem was an obstacle to American interests in the region. While in office, he ran a one-man operation in Saigon, refusing to delegate to staff or to work with a team. As a result, Jacobs says, he was largely "responsible for the deposal and assassination of Diem and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu" (305).

Lodge's relationship with Kennedy and his role in the coup that overthrew Diem are slightly more complex than the outright insubordination of previous rogue diplomats. Lodge saw himself as a *policymaker*, rather than a tool for diplomacy. As a result, he frequently disobeyed orders and ignored at least five commands from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to meet with Diem. On the other hand, Kennedy sent murky, often contradictory commands about his Vietnamese policy, and he never explicitly ruled against a coup. But the president was horrified when learned of Diem's assassination, and he quickly urged the State Department to describe the coup "as an expression of national will" (352). Lodge faced no consequences for encouraging extra-legal violence and regime change.

Rogue Diplomats offers a number of really excellent observations about American culture and diplomacy. First, American exceptionalism is baked into the very fabric of the nation and into many of its institutions, and the diplomatic corps is no exception. From the very beginning, Americans distrusted diplomats and saw large armies of foreign ministers as a sign of monarchical corruption—a model they refused to follow. Eighteenth-century American administrations appointed only a few ministers to serve abroad and insisted on relatively short missions for them to ensure that European cities didn't corrupt their republican virtue. Until the late nineteenth century, Americans expressed disdain for professional, trained diplomats, preferring instead to use amateurs who often didn't speak the host nation's language. Congress also refused to provide funds for the lavish entertaining required by diplomacy, forcing ministers to use their own funds while abroad.

This arrangement privileged the white, independently wealthy families that wielded disproportionate power over politics anyway. These diplomats rarely depended on the federal government for income or employment opportunities, so they were more prone to rogue behavior because they could easily shrug off whatever consequences might ensue. Independent means and elite social status also tended to foster an increased sense of self-worth. American diplomats styled themselves as experts—even if their policy recommendations differed from those of the administrations they served. This system differed from that of European nations, which demanded lengthy training and education for their ministers, promoted based on merit, and offered employment to men from diverse backgrounds. As a result, European ministers were much less likely to disregard orders, because their careers depended on good behavior.

While the federal government has adopted foreign service reform that has opened diplomatic careers to more American citizens, many ambassadors are still selected because of large campaign donations or political connections. Additionally, Jacobs acknowledges that the current administration has largely returned to the nineteenth-century disdain for expertise. The Trump administration has also seen frequent rogue behavior, as officials undermine the president's wishes to protect the

United States against his whims.

To be frank, as an early Americanist, I was not expecting to learn much about the Treaty of Paris and the Louisiana Purchase. I have often taught these subjects and have included both in my own scholarship. The ministers' disregard for orders or negotiations beyond their authority were a given, and I accepted them as a matter of fact. I assumed that most disobedience stemmed from the delay in correspondence caused by travel across the Atlantic, but I never viewed the ministers' flexible relationship with the rules as part of a broader cultural trend. I am not yet sure how that realization will affect my future work, but it will be on my mind. That is a sure sign of a useful read.

Although I have many positive take-aways from *Rogue Diplomats*, I have a few remaining questions and points on which I remained unconvinced. First, the delay in communications between ministers and the seat of government in the United States played such an important role in the first three case studies, often giving the diplomats sufficient wiggle room to feign ignorance. Yet by World War I, technological advances had largely eliminated that delay. I would have liked to see a more explicit discussion of how the telegram and the telephone altered rogue diplomacy.

Second, in the introduction Jacobs tells the reader that he selected case studies in which the diplomats' rogue behavior benefited the nation—with the one extreme

exception of Joseph Kennedy, whose coziness with the Nazis helped no one but Hitler. But history frequently defies categorization as purely good or bad, and that complexity challenges Jacobs' conclusions in a few chapters. For example, Trist's victorious negotiations transferred significant—and much-desired—territory to the United States. But as many students and historians of antebellum America know, those new states exacerbated tensions between

the North and South and reignited the debate over the expansion of slavery. So how should we account for Trist's victory likely contributing to the Civil War?

The national "good" secured by Lodge is even more problematic. Jacobs argues that the Vietnam War was not winnable under Diem and that Lodge's actions "bought Washington time in Vietnam, and perhaps a second chance" (307). While I am not a twentieth-century military historian and thus can't argue in good faith about American chances for victory under Diem's rule, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations clearly didn't take advantage of the second chance. The war in Vietnam was a failure.

Finally, I would have liked a clearer articulation of the full implications of diplomatic rule-breaking. I am convinced that American diplomats have a penchant for rule-breaking that clearly distinguishes our foreign policy process from that of other nations, but I am not completely sure what that information tells me.

Despite these lingering questions, *Rogue Diplomats* is very accessible and would make an excellent contribution to any U.S. history survey or diplomatic history course. I also really enjoyed reading the book and would encourage more historians to follow Jacobs' example. He doesn't take himself or the work too seriously, and his joy in teaching this material and writing this book radiates from the page and makes *Rogue Diplomats* a pleasure to read.

American exceptionalism is baked into the very fabric of the nation and into many of its institutions, and the diplomatic corps is no exception. From the very beginning, Americans distrusted diplomats and saw large armies of foreign ministers as a sign of monarchical corruption—a model they refused to follow.

Review of Seth Jacobs, *Rogue Diplomats*

James F. Siekmeier

What skills must diplomats have to do their jobs really well? What are a diplomat's most important duties? It would be hard for any one book to answer those questions, but Seth Jacobs's excellently researched and well-written book, *Rogue Diplomats*, does a very good job of grappling with them.

Unfortunately, all too often U.S. foreign relations historians leave U.S. ambassadors out of the picture or do not carefully and closely analyze their terms in office. Perhaps there is an unstated assumption that such diplomats are only carrying out Washington's orders. It seems most historians of U.S. foreign policy focus their gaze on the bureaucratic process in Washington, D.C., and in foreign capitals; not ruminating much on the actions of ambassadors. Thankfully, Jacobs's book puts U.S. ambassadors at the center of the story, giving the reader a much fuller picture of how they both carry out and make U.S. foreign policy.

As a way of analyzing Jacobs's book, I would like to introduce my own humble paradigm for answering the question about what skills great diplomats should have. Basically, they must operate well on three levels. First, they must deal with the day-to-day tug-of-war with "headquarters," that is, the State Department. In particular, ambassadors must be able to explain clearly to higher-ups that Washington's vision, or even its policy, cannot be fully implemented in country x for reasons a, b, and c. Of course, politicians are elected if they have a compelling vision and are re-elected if they can convince more than half the voters that they have generally been successful in implementing that vision. But given the realities on the ground, it is nearly always the case that the U.S. goals for country x cannot be fully realized, at least not in the short-to-medium term. Successful diplomats need to be able to articulate to their bosses *why* U.S. policy can't be fully implemented at this time in the host nation, even as they continue to implement U.S. policy for that particular country.

Second, diplomats must be able, in subtle ways, to get inside the political space or, more specifically, the political culture of the foreign policy of country x in order to ensure that at least part of Washington's vision is put in place. Or, in cases where country x is anti-United States, U.S. diplomats have to network enough in the host nation's political community to contain and, if they're lucky, minimize the host nation's attempts to sabotage U.S. policy or to publicly embarrass the United States.

Third, diplomats need to be able to "make the big call" in advance that country x is on the verge of a major upheaval or a major policy change. The United States must be able to pivot quickly and nimbly to dealing with a very different regime or policy. Since predicting the future is extremely difficult, diplomats who flub this third aspect of diplomacy are not generally treated too harshly (by their bosses and by history). Maybe their next posting is not their first choice, but it's not Siberia either.

Jacobs does an excellent job of discussing how rogue diplomats, by performing one or more of the important duties I outline above, have been successful, sometimes stunningly so. My main criticism of his book has to do with framing. He could have done a better job, either in the introduction to the book or in the first chapters, of laying out what he sees as the key skills of a good diplomat, rogue

or not. Had he done so it would have been easier for scholars to evaluate diplomats and assess how well they achieved what was required of them.

Jacobs's case study method works well for both well-known and lesser-known diplomats. I am impressed that he chose people from the twentieth century as well as previous eras. It seems that some historians of U.S. foreign relations assume that pre-twentieth-century diplomats had the leeway to disobey instructions, but twentieth-century diplomats do not. Jacobs's book puts the lie to this assumption. Active-duty ambassadors may find that there are lessons to be learned here. In the current U.S. political environment, some U.S. ambassadors may not share the worldviews of their bosses in the executive branch. Are there situations in which they may feel compelled to go rogue, even if it means violating orders from Washington? Put another way, could going rogue better serve U.S. interests in the long run? More on that point later.

With regard to my three-pronged description of the main duties of a diplomat, I think that Jacobs clearly shows that the diplomats he analyzed were very skilled at dealing with the State Department and at recognizing opportunities. That is, they did a good job of explaining what could be implemented of Washington's vision and what could not; and when they saw significant changes in the host nation's foreign policy—for example, when England was willing

to concede significant territory to the young United States in 1783, or when Napoleon was interested in selling his entire Louisiana holdings to the United States—they seized the moment.

However, Jacobs might have provided more details about how U.S. diplomats managed to "get inside" the political cultures of their host nations. Benjamin Franklin's success in this regard in France in the 1770s and 1780s is legendary, and Jacobs could have made more of it. Nicholas Trist, in his protracted negotiations with Mexican

diplomats, might have picked up enough of the culture of Mexican diplomacy to help himself in his negotiations. Walter Hines Page managed to learn the ways of British cultural diplomacy and probably increased his effectiveness as a diplomat as a result.

Jacobs's book also considers U.S. domestic politics, which play a crucial role in some of the case studies. Nicholas Trist probably would not have managed to convince President Polk to submit the treaty ending the war between the United States and Mexico in 1848 to the Senate for confirmation if it had not been an election year. Polk knew that the Democratic party's fortunes rode on whether he could bring the increasingly unpopular Mexican-American War to an end before the election. Jacobs shows how Walter Hines Page's pro-British stance fell on deaf ears before January 1917 in part because U.S. leaders knew that the public had no stomach for a European war. But Page's viewpoints became acceptable in Washington once Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare—and President Wilson had been safely re-elected. Page's ideas may also have helped Wilson build a pro-war consensus. The president could in effect inform his officials that "our ambassador in London has been telling us for quite some time about the importance of supporting Great Britain in the Great War." Finally, Joseph Kennedy's anti-war isolationist sentiment in the late 1930s reflected the views of at least half the U.S. public before December 7, 1941.

Jacobs deftly weaves the domestic politics side of the story into his overall narrative. Domestic politics are essential to the story, as some of the rogue diplomats were chosen for domestic political reasons. For example, FDR rewarded Joseph Kennedy with a plum posting for making

large contributions to his campaign. In contrast, President John F. Kennedy clipped the wings of a potential competitor for the presidency (Henry Cabot Lodge) by sending him halfway around the world to preside over a situation in South Vietnam that could blow up in Lodge's face, to his political detriment.

By way of conclusion, I have three questions. I don't think it's fair to "ding" Jacobs for not grappling with these questions, because of page constraints. But since this is a roundtable, I will bring them up anyway.

First, the rogues were, in nearly all cases, operating in a pre-war or wartime situation. That raises a question: were they especially "tuned in" to the issue of how to calibrate the use of force and diplomacy? At the very least, as the war clouds gathered, a potentially rogue diplomat might have concluded that since the stakes were so high, if ever there was a time to go rogue, it would be when the United States was contemplating the use of force.

Second, was it the case in the United States that as the national government slowly became more powerful over time, diplomats had less ability to "go rogue"? It seems reasonable to assume that a more powerful state in Washington, DC, would be more effective over time at reining in diplomats who were tempted to go rogue. The ratio of rogue diplomats relative to all U.S. diplomats overseas was fairly high before 1865. But as we headed into the twentieth century, there were fewer rogue diplomats relative to the total number of U.S. diplomats sent abroad.

Why was that the case? The American state was certainly more powerful in the twentieth century, perhaps intimidating some diplomats into following orders, but the Foreign Service was also more professionalized and thus better able to weed out potential rogues. And it is important to point out that the reach of the state increased with improvements in technology in the late nineteenth century, in particular the telegraph. The telegraph allowed the State Department to keep overseas diplomats on a tighter leash—much to their chagrin.

Third, why were the American rogues in nearly all cases ultimately pursuing U.S. interests and not their own? Since Talleyrand plays a role in the second case study, I think it is important to raise a counterfactual question: why did U.S. rogue diplomats *not* simply pursue their own personal interests, in Talleyrand fashion? After all, as Jacobs points out, in many cases the U.S. diplomats posted overseas saw themselves as policymakers who were equal to their "bosses" in Washington. U.S. diplomats' egos might have gotten the best of them, and they might have fallen into self-serving behavior. But they did not.

One tantalizing possibility brings me to the issue of American exceptionalism. Maybe the U.S. diplomats saw themselves "in service," in effect, to a great anti-colonial, republican experiment: the United States of America. Since the United States was the first successful anti-colonial experiment in national self-government, and the first polyglot, physically large country that had a republican form of government, the U.S. diplomats were probably proud to represent that (young) tradition overseas and in all likelihood very much wanted it to succeed. They were "serving" that goal or vision in tandem with serving the U.S. government. I realize this contention works better for U.S. diplomats who served early on in U.S. history, when the U.S. republican experiment was new—and fragile. In addition, it is hard to measure just how devoted U.S. diplomats were to the U.S. republican experiment. Still, I think this is an intriguing idea.

It is obvious that the U.S. government leadership (the

"politicals," in today's parlance) demands loyalty above all else from its officials. But loyalty to whom, or to what? For most U.S. officials, it's obvious: the president. But rogue diplomats were "serving" different things: a particular president (presidents, not the State Department, appoint ambassadors) and an idea. As Lincoln said at Gettysburg: the United States is dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal. The idea was that the United States needed to do more than survive; it needed to thrive in order to keep the republican experiment alive.

Did the presidents whom these diplomats served have some sense that their rogue subordinates had this "dual loyalty"? It is very difficult, if not impossible, to say. The diplomats themselves, however, do imply that they thought they had to go against what their superiors told them to do, because they wanted instead to do what they thought was

best for the American public. (And considering that the sitting U.S. president has shown little regard for the well-being of the American republican experiment, perhaps this rogue disregard for orders may be a good thing.)

At the end of the day, there is an irony about the word "rogue." I agree that all of the diplomats analyzed in this study disobeyed policies from Washington, DC. But if a diplomat manages to achieve

beneficial results for his country without advising the use of force, that is a plus. Moreover, if a diplomat advocates for what he sees as the careful application of military force to achieve national interests, all the better. All the diplomats in this study fall into the above two categories. So, given that the connotation of the word "rogue" is negative, perhaps we could agree that in a broad sense, attaching the word "rogue" to them is unfair.

The pre-twentieth-century diplomats analyzed in this study used skillful diplomacy to achieve impressive results. Considering the military weakness of the United States at the time, avoiding the use of force was important. However, once the United States became a major world power, it would make sense for diplomats to counsel the careful use of force (e.g., against Germany in the run-up to World War I) to punish a leader who violated international law. In the late 1930s Joseph Kennedy counselled that the United States should not directly or militarily confront the German war machine because it would be a disaster for the United States. Although his moral obtuseness can and should be criticized, he was counselling for the careful application of U.S. force to achieve U.S. interests.

I admire any historian who can, like Jacobs, do an excellent compare-and-contrast analysis across time and space. Overall, this well-researched book will find—as it should—a wide audience with students, academics, and the general reading public.

For the Greater Good: Six Case Studies on How U.S. Diplomats Changed, Ignored, or Refused Their Orders: a Review of Seth Jacobs, *Rogue Diplomats*

Kathryn C. Statler

Seth Jacobs provides a welcome argument in *Rogue Diplomats*, namely, that officials appointed by an administration to represent the country abroad will sometimes take matters into their own hands to ensure the best outcome for the United States. The catch? They do so by deflecting, dismissing, or even disobeying the government's direct orders.

Jacobs picks six of the most clear-cut examples of this kind of behavior, spanning the years from the nation's birth to the Kennedy administration. Of particular importance, he says, is that many of these diplomats were amateurs, often wealthy in their own right, or of the opposite political party, all factors making them more likely to challenge orders. As Jacobs writes, "the rich and prominent American lawyers, soldiers, politicians, journalists, educators, or businessmen who lent prestige to an administration by performing important diplomatic duties often concluded that their principal obligation was to their country rather than to the president. They therefore ignored directives that, in their view, ran counter to the national interest" (6). Exceptions existed, but Jacobs argues that most often the diplomat's vision tended to prevail, and, as a result, this non-professional wayward corps made the United States stronger, larger, richer, and more secure.

In his first case study Jacobs examines the diplomatic miracle that John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay achieved—the 1783 Paris Peace Treaty granting Americans their independence. This case study is probably unique, as the diplomats are beholden both to a divided Congress and to the French government. It is also the study I find most problematic in supporting Jacobs' overall argument.

Jacobs claims the Americans blithely ignored the congressional order to consult with the French before coming to terms with the British, as stipulated in the 1778 Franco-American military alliance. He writes that "the diplomats had not consulted Vergennes or any other French official before drawing up and signing preliminary articles of peace; indeed they had not even informed their ally that negotiations toward that end were underway" (25). But the man with the final say over the treaty, French Foreign Minister Comte de Vergennes, opposed a separate peace, not separate negotiations. Indeed, the French were also negotiating privately with the British.

Moreover, both Franklin and Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs Joseph-Mathias Gérard de Rayneval kept Vergennes apprised of Adams and Jay's discussions with the British in the summer of 1782. Vergennes wanted a quick conclusion to the resource-draining war and was eager to disassociate France from its Spanish ally's claims to Gibraltar. Certainly, the three Americans disobeyed Congress in not telling the French about the early negotiations, but Franklin had Vergennes' approval for the final treaty, which gave Vergennes everything he wanted—a humiliated Britain slinking out of America, a new trading partner, and diminished British military power.

Jacobs continues to play up Franco-American discord the while ignoring the tremendous collaboration that occurred. For example, when discussing France's defeat and subsequent loss of territory at the end of the Seven Years' War, Jacobs notes that "no French statesman could forget that the rustics extolled by Lafayette had helped Britain to its greatest victory to date and enabled their then mother country to achieve a position of unprecedented political supremacy at France's expense" (32). The whole point of diplomacy is to make deals and support allies, compromise with enemies, and forget past grievances. The French were masters at this.

Jacobs also misrepresents American views of their alliance: "So keenly did Americans resent the obligations imposed upon them by the Faustian bargain of 1778 that they did not become party to another formal alliance for a century and a half" (37). But without that Faustian bargain there would be no United States, as American officials at the time were well aware. Thus, in contrast to the other chapters, I submit that the first chapter overplays the rogue

nature of the revolutionary diplomats' behavior—not so much toward Congress, but toward France, the more important player at the time. But Franklin, Adams, and Jay did set a precedent of defying their own government, which made it "likelier that future diplomats would step out of line" (31).

Chapter 2 focuses on Robert Livingston and James Monroe's purchase of Louisiana. Here much of the discussion about and ultimate purchase of the territory might have less to do with disobeying orders and more to do with the intense rivalry between the two diplomats. Jacobs points out that they viewed themselves less as subordinates and more "as policymakers on a more or less equal footing with the president" (81). Livingston took the lead, trying to persuade Napoleon that he would be much better off ceding New Orleans to the United States. When Napoleon offered up the entire Louisiana territory, and Livingston accepted, Livingston exceeded his instructions as opposed to disobeying them. Jacobs astutely highlights the key moment of Livingston's midnight negotiations with the French finance minister, François de Barbe-Marbois, which resulted in an actual sticker price for the whole region.

While at first irritated with Livingston's deal, Monroe quickly understood its significance. He then used the \$2 million appropriation from Congress to buy New Orleans as a down payment on the entire territory. So both men were indeed rogue diplomats. The fun of this chapter lies in how well Jacobs captures the rancor Livingston and Monroe displayed toward each other throughout the negotiations, as both sought the glory of achieving such a coup for the United States.

Perhaps the most fascinating and most rogue diplomat in the book is Nicholas Trist. In chapter 3, Jacobs brings to life Trist's ego, foibles, and outright rejection of Polk's orders to return to the United States in the middle of negotiations with Mexico to bring to a close the Mexican-American War and execute the greatest land heist in American history. As he labored to bring all parties to an agreement, Trist decided to reject Polk's direct order to return home on the grounds that Polk simply did not understand events on the ground and how close Trist was to bringing off a massive territorial coup for the United States. For a president who valued loyalty above all else, Trist's disobedience was unacceptable.

Interestingly, Trist was not a man of independent means, which makes his defiance all the more remarkable. Equally remarkable was his ability to beguile General Winfield Scott, who lent his support to Trist's efforts. As Jacobs writes, "both [Trist and Scott] were prepared to ignore orders that conflicted with their judgment. Over the next eight months, their increasingly insubordinate course, while not free of blunders and false starts, resulted in Mexico giving up half its territory to the United States for half of what Polk was willing to pay" (148). Ultimately, Trist left Mexico City under armed escort like a criminal and had to struggle to make ends meet for the rest of his life. However, he had pulled off an extraordinary coup: getting the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo signed and thereby adding to the United States some 55 percent of the territory of Mexico.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine two remarkable U.S. ambassadors to the London, Walter Hines Page for WWI and Joseph Kennedy for WWII. I use the word remarkable on purpose, as Page ignores his orders for what he sees as the greater good of salvaging the Anglo-American special relationship by pushing for U.S. entry into WWI; while Kennedy ignores his orders and stretches the Anglo-American relationship to the breaking point to keep the United States out of WWII. Page did not have the deep

pockets that Kennedy and other rogue diplomats did, so Wilson subsidized him. He repeatedly appealed to Wilson to support the British cause, whether that meant begging him to give up on enforcing the London Declaration (which defined "contraband" and "blockade" in ways more favorable to neutrals than belligerents) or halfheartedly presenting Wilson's proposals about compromise with the Germans to British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey. Page even went so far as to read a dispatch from Washington about British acts of stopping contraband and then announce he disagreed with it (219).

Page became increasingly incensed at American neutrality, and Wilson increasingly considered whether it was necessary to replace his ambassador, who was clearly unneutral in thought and action. Page remained highly critical of what he considered to be Wilson's mistake in presuming equivalence between Britain and Germany. When the United States finally entered the war Page wrote his son, "I cannot conceal nor can I express my gratification that we are in the war at last. . . . I have accomplished something" (238). And indeed, as Jacobs points out, in the years and decades that followed, the public and many historians laid the blame for U.S. entry into WWI at Page's feet.

At the other extreme stood Joseph P. Kennedy, FDR's pick for ambassador to London as WWII approached. Kennedy lacked foreign policy experience, which is not always a bad thing, but as Jacobs writes, he was also "intellectually and temperamentally unfitted for his new job" (241). As a businessman who viewed the world through dollar-sign lenses and saw all interactions as transactional, Kennedy despaired of Britain's chances against German power and thought the British should throw in the towel. He thus misrepresented FDR's positions to the British government, arranged unauthorized meetings with Nazi officials, and kowtowed to the German ambassador to Britain, Herbert von Dirksen, exaggerating both American and British willingness to compromise with the Nazis. Moreover, Kennedy saw nothing wrong with his actions, believing he was impervious to orders coming from his superiors. He is perhaps the most egregious case of a rogue diplomat in the book. In addition to all his other sins, Kennedy disappeared from his post for long periods of time. Jacobs estimates a third of his time as ambassador was spent far from London, which did not endear him to the British government or people.

Kennedy's appeasement provoked an increasingly hostile response from FDR. Still, FDR wanted to keep Kennedy in London, far away from home, to avoid his throwing a wrench into FDR's unprecedented run for a third presidential term. Happily, this time the rogue diplomat was outmaneuvered by the president, which is not true for the other cases in the book. A bit more analysis of why this was so would be most welcome, as it is FDR, not Kennedy, who preserves the greater good by sending various "fact-finding" missions to London and dealing with Churchill directly in the bases for destroyers deal, essentially rendering Kennedy irrelevant. Jacobs' description of Kennedy's growing rage as FDR deliberately leaves him out of important negotiations is absolutely enthralling. Kennedy fled London during the blitz and demanded to be recalled. FDR agreed but stipulated that Kennedy had to support his re-election bid. Kennedy's attempt to ensure that the United States stayed out of WWII ultimately backfired.

Jacobs' final chapter focuses on Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge's role in creating the coup that would topple South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem from power. Jacobs likens Lodge to Robert Livingston. Both had families with long histories of service to the United States;

both had a sense of entitlement. Lodge was inclined "by birth and breeding to follow his own judgment and have that judgment respected" (303). Jacobs, like many other historians, credits Lodge with the coup's success and downplays the role of the South Vietnamese generals involved in the plotting. He notes that Lodge, in pushing for Diem's ouster, was able to ignore the commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, General Paul Harkins, as well as some of the more pro-Diem elements in the government, as he was convinced that Diem's brutal repression of the Buddhist population (which prompted a series of self-immolations) and college and high school students who were protesting his rule demonstrated his inability to lead.

Jacobs is also persuasive in highlighting how both Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu had become increasingly mentally unstable as the controversy convulsing the streets of Saigon took its toll. He also details Lodge's refusal to respond to Secretary of State Dean Rusk's pleas to meet with Diem in the period leading up to the coup and his misleading comments to South Vietnamese generals about Washington's support of the coup, which was hesitant at best. Lodge's last contact with and comments to Diem remain at least a partial mystery, with various accounts contradicting whether Lodge promised Diem safe passage out of the country or not. What is not in doubt is that ultimately Lodge let the coup play out without U.S. interference, resulting in Diem and Nhu's assassinations on November 2, 1963.

Jacobs seems to suggest here that Lodge made the right call, that Diem was unsalvageable and that the United States could try again with new leadership. Should we therefore agree that Lodge also served the greater good? I struggle a bit with this conclusion. It is hard to think of a single instance where U.S. meddling in the toppling of a government ever worked out well in the long run during the Cold War.

A final word about the conclusion. I loved what there was of it. But Jacobs devotes a mere five pages to wrapping up, and the last few paragraphs are downright abrupt. I was looking for some serious connecting of the dots. To be fair, Jacobs does that periodically throughout the book, but I had expected to see a more thorough analysis here. The book clocks in at 358 pages; perhaps ten of those could have been devoted to analysis at the end. I would like to know if we can draw larger conclusions about certain types of rogue diplomats. Are they most likely to be rogue if they are well off? Is inexperience a factor? Ego? Party affiliation? For me, Trist remains the outlier. How do we explain him?

One of the more interesting avenues to explore would be to look at what happens when the diplomatic corps becomes more professionalized after WWI. Certainly, with the exception of Lodge, no other diplomat sent to Vietnam from 1950 to 1975 sees his vision prevail. Only two of the six case studies examine rogue diplomacy after WWI. A few more examples would have been welcome. Are there simply fewer rogue diplomats after professionalization? For example, I wanted to hear more about William Watts, who gets three sentences in the final paragraph.

Ultimately, what we have is six fascinating, exceedingly well-crafted case studies (almost like chapters in an edited compilation) that needed a longer conclusion to tie all the disparate threads together. To be clear, however, this is a fabulous book, one of the best-written, most engaging books I have ever read in our field. It illuminates key diplomatic moments, advances a clear and persuasive argument about rogue diplomacy, and is downright fun to read.

Jacobs is persuasive in highlighting how both Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu had become increasingly mentally unstable as the controversy convulsing the streets of Saigon took its toll.

Rogue Diplomatic Historian

Brian Etheridge

It is a staple question of every academic job interview, and yet it's one that many nervous, sweaty candidates flub: What is the relationship between your research and teaching? To the extent that it has been answered well, almost all respondents address the question by explaining how their research passions and questions inform their teaching. And truth be told, most respondents usually frame their answers by describing how their research findings make their way into their lectures. Rarely does anyone try to show the opposite: how their teaching shapes their research. For the most part this makes sense, because historically, the majority of interviewees have been graduate students or recently minted PhDs, and the vast bulk of their graduate training (again, historically speaking) involved research. They had very little training or experience in teaching.

In *Rogue Diplomats*, Seth Jacobs shows the value of considering the relationship between teaching and research by illustrating how a reflective teaching practice can lead to a robust and provocative research project. Jacobs is unabashedly proud that this book emerged from his course on American diplomacy at Boston College. (And as someone who has always thought of Jacobs's presentations at the SHAFR annual meeting as must-see TV—they are often dramatic, entertaining, funny, and yet thought-provoking—I suspect his students at BC are a lucky lot indeed).

In teaching his class, Jacobs noted that the students perked up during discussions of moments when ambassadors disobeyed orders. As he thought on the matter, he realized that these fits of rebelliousness often redounded to America's benefit. Ongoing conversations with his students led him to take up a more systematic investigation of this phenomenon, and this investigation in turn generated the thesis of the book. He argues that there is a deeply ingrained culture of disobedience among America's top diplomats, a tradition borne of uniquely American factors that sets it apart from the diplomatic practices of other nations.

The origin of Jacobs' book is somewhat unusual, but using his teaching practice as the inspiration for his research question isn't the only way in which Jacobs has gone rogue in this book. (And here, and in the title of this essay, I use "rogue," following OED definitions, not to suggest that Jacobs is "dishonest" or "unprincipled," but rather "unpredictable," "unmanageable," and, most especially, "mischievous"). This book, in both its subject matter and its approach, is resolutely iconoclastic and unapologetically traditional. In his introduction, Jacobs notes the longstanding criticisms of diplomatic history that led to its diminished prestige in a broader field that was rapidly evolving to incorporate more voices (see G.M. Young's infamous dismissal of the discipline as "the record of what one clerk said to another clerk" [16]). And while he champions the flourishing response that has led to a renaissance of American foreign relations history (a response that he was no small part of), Jacobs gleefully frames his work—with a cheeky grin, one might imagine—in a traditional framework that Samuel Flagg Bemis would have welcomed. (In this hearty defense of old-school diplomatic history, one can almost hear the traditional wing of the discipline cheering him on).

It should come as no surprise to those familiar with Jacobs that he pulls it off with wit and aplomb. What follows is a series of finely drawn and deeply engaging

stories about diplomatic insolence. The first three deal with the early period (if we adopt the 1890s as the traditional dividing line). These stories cohere well, as they all involve high-stakes negotiations that determined the eventual shape and contour of the continental United States. Two are peace treaties (the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo), while the other is a negotiated land acquisition (the Louisiana Purchase). All represent the most consequential territorial expansions in American history. And all were cases in which American representatives exceeded or ignored the instructions of their superiors back home to great effect.

The second half of the book is more eclectic. These chapters cover incidents in the twentieth century and deal with American responses to hostility and war abroad. Perhaps reflecting America's ambivalent attitude to engagement overseas, these stories seem more scattershot. One deals with Walter Hines Page and his tortured efforts to get the United States involved in World War I on behalf of Great Britain. Another addresses Henry Cabot Lodge's efforts to assert control of Vietnamese policy and overthrow Diem in the 1960s.

If we want to interrogate Jacobs's thesis we first need a broader landscape of American diplomatic behavior to see if there is indeed a proud tradition of disobedience. The second step would be to have a better handle on the diplomatic practices of other nations.

The most unusual choice is Joseph Kennedy, who tried to align the United States with Nazi Germany in the lead-up to American involvement in World War II. Like those rogue diplomats treated in the first half of the work, Page and Lodge are praised for their stubbornness and congratulated for the righteousness of their actions. But Kennedy, unsurprisingly and justifiably, comes in for extreme censure. While certainly roguish, Kennedy's story

doesn't fit the arc of the others as well.

The vignettes are beautifully told. Even as a committed diplomatic historian, I confess that it is rare to find works in our field that are as irresistible as this one. Jacobs has an eye for the telling quote and writes with a verve and sense of irony that captivates. As one whose prose does not often sparkle, I admire the economy and dexterity of his language. Evocative phrases like "scenery-chewing harangue" (26) and "brave old world of British etiquette" (201) effortlessly enveloped me in the narrative Jacobs was spinning. This book shows a master storyteller at the top of his game.

But like any great book, it raises as many questions as it answers. In particular, I found the stories so compelling and the thesis so intriguing that I wanted more. I wanted to know more about the other incidents of insubordination, and if there was indeed enough material to demonstrate the existence of more than just a pattern but a tradition or culture of diplomatic rebelliousness. And this would require (and here the very happy publisher of a dramatic narrative of diplomats gone wild needs to cover his or her ears) the construction of a dataset of diplomatic behavior.

Jacobs mentions episodes such as the negotiations to end America's Quasi-War with France in 1800, the negotiations over the Treaty of Ghent, ambassadorial misconduct in Mexico and Nicaragua in the nineteenth century, and Josephus Daniels in Mexico in the 1930s, but these don't help us understand how typical or atypical this kind of behavior is. Where are the diplomats not behaving badly? Where are the dogs, to use Sherlock Holmes's reasoning, that aren't barking? Wouldn't they be significant in trying to discern if there is a unique way of doing American diplomacy? (And here, with the suggestion of a research project conceivably focused on gathering tales of diplomats quietly following orders and behaving appropriately, the very happy publisher covering his/her ears likely starts humming loudly to make it go away).

Thus, if we want to interrogate Jacobs's thesis we first need a broader landscape of American diplomatic behavior

to see if there is indeed a proud tradition of disobedience. The second step would be to have a better handle on the diplomatic practices of other nations. Jacobs offers the fantastic quote from a nineteenth-century British official who whined that “we consider ourselves as little more than pens in the hands of the government at home” (7), but he later goes on to acknowledge that diplomats did go rogue in other countries, although not as frequently or as celebratedly (14).

In this sense, even though he eschews it forcefully, Jacobs could benefit from an international or comparative perspective to make the case for his fascinating manifestation of American exceptionalism. In his acknowledgments, he points out that a student’s question about other nations’ diplomatic traditions prompted him to put the question to H-Diplo, the listserve of diplomatic historians. He said he received a flood of responses suggesting that American diplomatic practices were indeed unique. In this context, I would argue that establishing America’s rogue diplomatic tradition requires more than just grappling with what one diplomat says to another; it also requires wrestling with what one diplomatic historian said to another. We need to know more about these different traditions.

These questions aimed at contextualizing Jacobs’s absorbing stories are nothing more than an attempt to participate in the ongoing conversation that he has been having with his students about American diplomacy for two decades, a dialogue that has clearly been engaging, enriching, and entertaining. And just as with any great class, I didn’t want it to end. Like his subjects, Jacobs has bucked prevailing approaches in crafting this book; and like the country that his subjects served, we have benefited from his mischief.

Author’s Response

Seth Jacobs

This is the kind of roundtable scholars yearn for and almost never receive. The reviewers clearly read *Rogue Diplomats* with great care. They are sympathetic to the book’s purposes and astute about where—perhaps—it fails to meet them. They leaven their criticisms with fulsome praise. My thanks to all four.

Let me begin with Kathryn Statler’s review, which is so generous that I feel like a churl for saying anything beyond “thank you.” Nonetheless, Statler advances a number of objections, most relating to chapter one, and I will try to answer them.

She claims that the 1783 treaty between Britain and the fledgling United States “gave [Charles Gravier, comte de] Vergennes everything he wanted—a humiliated Britain slinking out of America, a new trading partner, and diminished British military power.” I disagree. The famous *mémoire* in which Vergennes urged Louis XVI to support the rebelling American colonists spelled out the benefits that the French foreign minister expected to result from American independence: “First, it will diminish the power of England and proportionally raise that of France. Second, it will cause irreparable loss to English trade, while it will considerably extend ours. Third, it presents to us as very probable the recovery of a part of the possessions which the English have taken from us.”¹

Yet France recovered none of the territory seized by Britain in the Seven Years’ War. As far as trade was concerned, the liberal terms granted by London to America seemed to presage friendly relations between them—and, indeed, Americans continued to buy a lot of British goods after the Revolution. This was partly because British merchants extended long-term credits, but principally because of lifelong practices; before independence, almost

all colonial trade had been with the mother country, and, after Parliament voted to set the colonies free, U.S. commerce reflexively sought the old, familiar channels. By 1789, Britain’s trade with the United States was actually greater than it had been before the war, a classic case of getting the eggs without having to feed and house the hens. Finally, while George III did lose his important North American colonies, England was not humbled or rendered powerless. France, on the other hand, was bankrupt, its army and navy exhausted, its citizenry ripe for rebellion. American diplomacy succeeded brilliantly in 1783, but French diplomacy did not.

Statler also takes issue with my assertion that Americans “[s]o keenly . . . resent[ed] the obligations imposed upon them by the Faustian bargain of 1778 that they did not become party to another formal alliance for a century and a half” (37). She notes, “Without that Faustian bargain there would be no United States, as American officials at the time were well aware.” True enough. Still, that did not prevent those officials from resenting the 1778 Franco-American treaty, especially its stipulation that “Neither of the two Parties shall conclude either Truce or Peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other first obtain’d.”² I believe I demonstrate that key policymakers like John Jay and John Adams were deeply dismayed by that clause, recognizing that, even if the United States succeeded in breaking from Britain and securing independent nationhood, Americans would have to keep fighting until Paris’s aims were achieved. Dismay turned to panic after Charles III of Spain signed the Convention of Aranjuez with his cousin Louis in early 1779. While this treaty added Spain to the ranks of Britain’s adversaries, which was advantageous to the rebels, it also bound France—and, by extension, America—to do battle until the Spanish recovered Gibraltar, an unlikely prospect that could have led to years of warfare over a rock on Spain’s south coast possessing no strategic or economic significance for the United States. Small wonder Jay, Adams, and Benjamin Franklin drew up and signed preliminary articles of peace with the British behind French backs!

It is significant, I think, that Americans spent much of the next two decades trying to worm out of their alliance with France. After the French Revolution took an ugly turn in 1793 and Louis XVI was guillotined, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton urged President George Washington to adopt the position that the 1778 treaty was no longer in force. The treaty, Hamilton observed, had been negotiated with the French monarchy under Louis, and both the monarchy and Louis were dead. That meant the treaty was dead too.

Although Washington rejected this argument, it found favor among many Americans, and it became U.S. policy during the Quasi-War of 1798–1800, when the American Congress proclaimed all French treaties null and void. In the deliberations to end that undeclared conflict, the Adams administration agreed to drop financial claims against France for the seizure of American merchant ships if the French would consent to a mutual abrogation of the 1778 treaty. The price tag for the U.S. government’s assumption of the claims of its own citizens was \$20 million, a huge sum for the time. “In effect,” Thomas Bailey writes, “America agreed to pay \$20 million in alimony in order to secure a divorce from the twenty-two-year-old French marriage of (in) convenience.”³ And, as I note, there would not be another such diplomatic betrothal for the United States until the early 1940s. Given these facts, I submit that Statler is wrong in her assertion that “Jacobs . . . misrepresents American views of their alliance.”

Statler has fewer problems with chapter two, which deals with the Louisiana Purchase, but she observes, “[Minister to France Robert] Livingston exceeded his instructions as opposed to disobeying them.” (Lindsay Chervinsky says

more or less the same thing: “Unlike Franklin, Adams, and Jay, who outright defied their orders, [Envoy Extraordinary James] Monroe and Livingston just went beyond their stated authority.”) I think this is a distinction without a difference. When Secretary of State James Madison gave Livingston his marching orders before the latter’s departure for France in late 1801, he provided the new minister virtually nothing to bargain with. Livingston was not authorized to offer Napoleon Bonaparte’s government money for the territories Washington craved, namely New Orleans and the Floridas, because President Thomas Jefferson was convinced that the threat of an Anglo-American alliance would be sufficient to win the United States’s objectives. The most Livingston could do was promise Napoleon that the Jefferson administration would forgive roughly \$3,500,000 in debt owed by Frenchmen to Americans. In light of Napoleon’s extravagant plans for empire in the Old and New Worlds, this scanty recompense seemed a joke.

For Livingston—and, later, Monroe—to move from such modest enticements to offering \$15 million for the colossal area from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains was, I contend, more than a mere exceeding of their orders. As I write, “They had pledged more money than they had been authorized to spend for a province they had not been instructed to purchase” (112). Washington’s territorial demands had been confined to the eastern bank of the Mississippi, and yet the two diplomats agreed to buy New Orleans and a trackless expanse that lay entirely west of that river. (The Floridas were not included in the treaty.) Moreover, they foisted this compact on a president who they knew had long advocated strict construction of the Constitution and who had pledged his administration to a policy of rigid economy. Nowhere in the Constitution was there any provision giving the chief executive the power to buy land, and the Purchase price would increase the national debt, not reduce it. Livingston and Monroe were understandably worried that Jefferson would reject their handiwork, which is why they assumed an almost penitent tone when they informed the State Department about what they had done.

Statler raises an important point in her assessment of chapter six, my account of Henry Cabot Lodge’s ambassadorship to South Vietnam in mid- to late 1963. While I do indeed believe that Lodge “made the right call” in orchestrating the overthrow of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu—both brothers were, I hold, not only incompetent but mentally unbalanced—Statler appropriately notes, “It’s hard to think of a single instance where U.S. meddling in the toppling of a government ever worked out well in the long run during the Cold War.” She is right. The names of the toppled compose a familiar hit list: Mossadegh, Arbenz, Lumumba, Allende, Sukarno . . . we can all rattle it off. And it is true that ultimately the United States lost the Vietnam War, and that most historians, as I observe, argue that “America’s military effort would have come a cropper no matter who was in charge in Saigon” (308). Some days I count myself among those historians; other days I am not so certain. But the long-term benefits of Lodge’s insurgentism are, without question, less manifest than in the case of Livingston and Monroe.

Still, given the political impossibility of an outright American abandonment of South Vietnam in the Kennedy years, I think I am on safe ground in asserting that Lodge “bought Washington time in Vietnam, and perhaps a second chance” (307). The safeguarding “perhaps” is key.

There was nothing inevitable about the path America followed in the wake of Diem’s death. John F. Kennedy—and, later, Lyndon Johnson—might have explored a diplomatic settlement with Hanoi more earnestly; General William Westmoreland might have adopted a strategy that relied on village pacification rather than search-and-destroy; American troops might have been permitted the right of “hot pursuit” into Laos and Cambodia before 1970; and the tally of counterfactual scenarios goes on. Vietnam War revisionism is, as we know, a cottage industry. I think I establish, though, that the war was not being won under Diem—that the Viet Cong were gaining in strength and the South Vietnamese Army was plagued by defeatism and factionalism—and that something new had to be tried. Lodge’s insubordination created the opportunity for that something new. Whether it could have been an approach that led to a less disastrous outcome for South Vietnam and the United States is, of course, speculative and irresolvable.

Finally, Statler finds the conclusion too brief, noting, “I needed at least ten more pages of analysis at the end.” Here I must lay down my arms, because I agree with her.

Like several of the men I examine—in particular Franklin, Lodge, and Joseph P. Kennedy—Carter enjoyed a measure of celebrity and financial security that left him less beholden to the government he served than the career diplomats of other nations. He therefore felt free to pursue initiatives that no non-American envoy would have attempted, such as ignoring Clinton’s instruction to break off negotiations and remaining in Haiti long after the president’s publicly-proclaimed deadline for an end to the conflict.

The conclusion is definitely a problem, and if there is a second edition of *Rogue Diplomats* (fingers crossed) I will address the questions she raises, especially whether there were “simply fewer rogue diplomats after [the] professionalization” of the U.S. foreign service during the 1920s. In a word, no. I discuss the rogue diplomacy of Josephus Daniels, William Wilson, and Andrew Young in the introduction, and I ought to have spent at least a few paragraphs of the conclusion

talking about Jimmy Carter, whose special mission to Haiti in 1994 saw him repeatedly defy President Bill Clinton as he brokered a settlement to that nation’s civil war.

Like several of the men I examine—in particular Franklin, Lodge, and Joseph P. Kennedy—Carter enjoyed a measure of celebrity and financial security that left him less beholden to the government he served than the career diplomats of other nations. He therefore felt free to pursue initiatives that no non-American envoy would have attempted, such as ignoring Clinton’s instruction to break off negotiations and remaining in Haiti long after the president’s publicly-proclaimed deadline for an end to the conflict. Clinton, convinced that his administration had exhausted all diplomatic means of relieving Haiti’s torment, ordered the largest U.S. airborne invasion fleet assembled since World War II to occupy the island country and impose peace by force. The planes were already in the sky when Carter reported that ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristede and rebel general Raoul Cédras had agreed to a deal whereby Aristede would be reinstated as president in exchange for amnesty for Cédras and his followers. Clinton, caught short, called off the invasion. The fleet did a U-turn over the Caribbean and returned to base.

In his memoirs, Clinton boasts of having “restor[ed] democracy to Haiti,” exulting that a “combination of dogged diplomacy and imminent force had avoided bloodshed.”⁴ These claims are misleading. Haiti under Aristede was no one’s idea of a democracy, although conditions were better than during the civil war. Moreover, the crucial diplomatic moves took place in spite of Clinton, not because of him, and it was Carter who, by overstepping his authority, ensured that Washington’s sword remained sheathed and unstained. Had the former president not disobeyed orders, Clinton would have shared the dismal fates of Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover, who oversaw a long, brutal, unpopular military

occupation of Haiti that brought little honor to the United States.

Lindsay Chervinsky's review, like Statler's, is immensely complimentary but not free of criticism. She would like "a more explicit discussion of how the telegram and telephone altered rogue diplomacy," observing that "the delay in communications between ministers and the seat of government in the U.S. played . . . an important role in the first three case studies, often giving the diplomats significant wiggle room." I believe I address this issue in my introduction when I cite Bradford Perkins's claim that "[p]robably no other Western diplomatic corps has ever been so disobedient" as America's pre-Civil War ministers. Perkins ascribes this obstreperousness to "the breadth of the Atlantic." Dispatches took as long as eight weeks to cross the ocean in the days of sail, he argues, and U.S. diplomats frequently did not have time to press their government for fresh instructions if breaking developments called for a new approach. They were therefore compelled to exercise greater freedom of action than would have been the case had communication been more rapid.⁵

I acknowledge that Perkins has a point, but, in my view, there are two defects in his argument. First, U.S. diplomats continued to flout their orders after the advent of the telegraph, telephone, and even email. Lodge's ambassadorship in South Vietnam is a useful case study, as thousands of cables flew back and forth between Washington and Saigon in October and early November of 1963, generating a mass of archival documents so voluminous as to intimidate the most Stakhanovite researcher. The fact that JFK and his national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, remained in virtually minute-by-minute contact with their wayward ambassador made no difference. Lodge still hijacked U.S. policy toward the Diem regime.

Second, European ambassadors, ministers, and consuls posted to the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were nowhere near as rebellious as their American counterparts, despite facing the same obstacles in corresponding with their bosses on the Continent. "U.S. diplomatic indiscipline," I contend, "arose from factors other than technological primitivism. It was a consequence of American diplomats' deep-rooted beliefs about the role they played in managing U.S. relations with the wider world" (15).

Chervinsky also challenges my claim that my subjects—with the exception of Joseph Kennedy—benefited the United States by their indiscipline. She correctly notes, "[H]istory frequently defies categorization as purely good or bad." While Nicholas Trist's rogue diplomacy in the winter of 1847-1848 may have secured huge swathes of land that enlarged the United States by almost one-third, the treaty he all but single-handedly wrought rekindled the national debate over slavery and helped bring on the Civil War. Is it therefore intellectually responsible to conclude that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was advantageous to America? I take Chervinsky's point. None of the diplomatic exploits I examine resulted in an unmixed blessing. Even the pact that secured U.S. independence in 1783 is susceptible to a non-triumphalist interpretation, particularly from the perspective of those Native Americans who found themselves threatened by the establishment of the United States. Chervinsky has identified inescapable features of our discipline: the complexity and ambiguity of the historical record and the fact that scholars can look at the same set of circumstances and arrive at radically different conclusions.

More troubling is Chervinsky's posing of the "so what"

question. "I'm convinced American diplomats have a penchant for rule-breaking that clearly distinguishes our foreign policy from other nations," she writes, "but I'm not completely sure what that information tells me." It tells readers a great deal, as James Siekmeier pungently affirms in his incisive and thought-provoking review. Siekmeier notes that "all too often, foreign-relations historians do not systematically analyze U.S. ambassadors posted overseas." Why? Because "there is an unstated assumption that these diplomats are only carrying out Washington's orders." So historians focus on presidents, secretaries of state, national security advisers, and other key figures in the stateside policymaking bureaucracy, while "the ambassador gets left out of the picture."

Yet, as I demonstrate, U.S. diplomats at pivotal junctures in their nation's history considered themselves policy-makers, not passive conduits executing plans fashioned in the White House or State Department. Although Harry Truman famously had a sign on his Oval Office desk proclaiming "The Buck Stops Here," that oft-invoked catchphrase was sometimes illusory. The buck did not stop with James

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K. Polk when Trist drew up and signed his map-changing treaty, any more than it stopped with Woodrow Wilson when Walter Hines Page headed Embassy London. I believe that *Rogue Diplomats* shines a light on a hitherto-neglected but nonetheless essential part of U.S. statecraft, and that future historians will have to reckon with the role of ambassadors, envoys, and other diplomatic representatives in explaining, to cite my introduction, "why the

United States followed the course that it did" (18).

Siekmeier's three-pronged template for assessing diplomatic effectiveness strikes me as inspired, and I agree with him that my book would have been strengthened by a clearer articulation of what I consider the qualities of a good diplomat. He is correct to observe that I "might have fleshed out a bit more aspect #2—how U.S. diplomats managed to 'get inside' the political culture of their host nation." Certainly, Franklin's mastery of the complex etiquette of Versailles was a sterling example of this cultural accommodation, as was Page's ready adjustment to British high society. (The historian Harry Elmer Barnes, one of Page's fiercest critics in the interwar years, called the ambassador "more English than the English."⁶) Wallace Oehrt's underrated biography of Trist notes that Mexican negotiators "trusted him because of his dark, almost Latin looks, his impeccable Spanish, and his unflinching courtesy. One could almost forget that he was a *gringo!*"⁷

The glaring exception when it came to fulfilling "aspect #2" was Lodge. Apart from speaking fluent French, which enabled him to converse directly with Diem rather than through an interpreter, the stiff-necked Brahmin made no attempt to understand or ingratiate himself into Vietnamese life. He had a condescending, frankly racist opinion of the Vietnamese, memorably expressed in his 30 October 1963 cable to Secretary of State Dean Rusk: "My general view is that the U.S. is trying to bring this medieval country into the 20th century, and that we have made considerable progress in military and economic ways, but to gain victory we must bring them into the 20th century politically."⁸ Indeed, it is difficult to name any American diplomat posted to South Vietnam from Dien Bien Phu through the fall of Saigon who displayed interest in Vietnamese culture or history or who treated the Vietnamese as equals. This attitude doubtless contributed to the United States's defeat.

To be honest, it never occurred to me that, as Siekmeier observes, all of my rogue diplomats were "operating in a prewar or wartime situation." He is probably right that the urgency of the circumstances caused men like Jay, Livings-

ton, Trist, and Page to step out of line. Had they been representing the United States in time of peace, they might have been more compliant. Certainly, Trist's correspondence from the field reiterated dozens of times that he was defying Polk's instructions only because obedience would result in military disaster, with the United States drawn into a long, ugly, inconclusive guerrilla war against the essentially leaderless Mexicans. As he wrote his wife the day he chose to fling down the president's orders, "Knowing it to be the very last chance, and impressed with the dreadful consequence to our country which cannot fail to attend the loss of that chance, I will make a treaty, if it can be done."⁹ And, of course, it would be hard to top the blood and thunder of Joseph Kennedy's messages to Washington in the days before Adolf Hitler sent sixty divisions across the Polish border, thereby inaugurating World War II in Europe. Faced with the fact that his rogue diplomacy had failed, that the Franklin Roosevelt administration had abandoned appeasement in spite of its ambassador's numerous warnings, Kennedy wailed over the transatlantic line to a disgusted FDR, "It's the end of the world, the end of everything."¹⁰ These diplomats were positive that they alone stood between their nation and catastrophe, and such views likely reinforced their already strong-willed dispositions.

Siekmeier makes another valuable point when he notes that my actors rarely "pursue[d] their own personal interests, in [Charles Maurice de] Talleyrand[-Périgord] fashion." If Franklin, Monroe, Lodge, and the others felt, as I assert, that they were co-equal with presidents and secretaries of state in the crafting of policy, then why did they not, like the Machiavellian French foreign minister, use the opportunity presented by their overseas posting to line their pockets or otherwise benefit themselves rather than their country? Siekmeier detects an absence of "self-serving narcissism" among the rogue diplomats I analyze and ventures that elevated patriotism might have motivated them, a conviction that they were "'in service' . . . to a great anti-colonial, republican experiment." By flouting their superiors' orders, they were doing what they thought was necessary for "the republican project that was the United States to succeed."

There is something to that hypothesis, especially, as Siekmeier observes, when it comes to the "diplomats early on in U.S. history." When Henry Laurens, one of the American commissioners who hammered out the peace of 1783, stated that "John Adams & Co. may be hanged" as traitors for violating the Continental Congress's instructions to consult with Vergennes, Adams serenely replied that if Congress were foolish enough to "get J. A. hanged," he was "pretty well prepared for this, or to be recalled, or censured, . . . or slandered, just as they please."¹¹ He knew he had done what was best for the infant United States. Trist, for his part, was aware that he was cutting his professional throat by ignoring Polk's recall order, but he did it anyway to spare his country hardship. This behavior is in keeping with the self-denying altruism Siekmeier perceives.

Still, several rogue diplomats had considerably less noble reasons for their actions. Livingston and Monroe each saw their Paris assignments as springboards for high political office (only Monroe was correct in that forecast), and it was an open secret on both sides of the Atlantic that Joseph P. Kennedy hoped to emulate five previous U.S. ambassadors to Great Britain by riding Embassy London into the White House. In addition, Lodge may have been positioning himself to become the Republican nominee for president in 1964, assuming that his high-profile resolution of a seemingly intractable foreign-policy problem would give him the edge over candidates like Barry Goldwater.

Perhaps the most egregious case of an American rogue diplomat acting "in Talleyrand fashion" was that of William Wilson, who, as I note above, plays a role in my introduction. Appointed special envoy to the Vatican by Ronald Reagan in 1981, Wilson did not relinquish his seat on the Pennzoil Petroleum Company's board of directors, apparently believing that there was no conflict of interest in this arrangement. In 1985, after terrorists bankrolled by Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi carried out attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports and Reagan tried to get the governments of Western Europe to join the United States in imposing sanctions on Libya, Wilson disobeyed a White House travel ban and clandestinely met with Qaddafi in Tripoli. The story broke, and reporters confronted Wilson with questions about the purpose of the meeting. Had the two men discussed business dealings between Libya and Pennzoil? Wilson blandly denied any impropriety, but no one believed him—except his longtime friend Reagan, who refused to reprimand the envoy and stymied Secretary of State George Schultz's efforts to have him fired. Clearly, one could be a rogue diplomat and an all-around rogue at the same time.

I conclude with Brian Etheridge's review, one of the kindest I have ever gotten. He calls *Rogue Diplomats* "a great book" that "demonstrates a master storyteller at the top of his game." The six case studies, he writes, are "beautifully told," "finely drawn and deeply engaging," and "irresistible." He puts the book down hungry for more: "[A]s with any great class, I didn't want it to end." What author wouldn't be ecstatic to receive such a notice? I must therefore preface my response to Etheridge's criticisms with heartfelt gratitude. His review reassures this eternally self-conscious academic that the seven years I spent researching and writing *Rogue Diplomats* were worth the effort.

Etheridge is correct to point out that my approach to my subject is somewhat unsystematic and even anecdotal. Do I provide "enough material to demonstrate the existence of more than a pattern, but a tradition or culture, of diplomatic rebelliousness"? I believe I do—there are, by my count, twenty-four rogue diplomats identified in my book, and their roguishness spans the entire stretch from Yorktown to TrumpWorld—but I understand the call for greater methodological rigor. While compilation of "a dataset of diplomatic behavior," which Etheridge recommends, might be pushing things, I could furnish more evidence of America's overseas representatives stepping out of line, and I could definitely provide readers with a fuller picture of "the diplomatic practices of other nations." As Etheridge observes, I give a shout-out in my acknowledgements to those scholars who educated me via the invaluable listserv H-Diplo on how French, German, Canadian, Pakistani, and other diplomats have acted, but I do not name those scholars or summarize their tutorials anywhere in *Rogue Diplomats*. "We need to know more about these different traditions," Etheridge insists, and I am inclined to agree.

Thus it would have strengthened my book to move beyond the blanket statement: "Whereas candidates for diplomatic work in Europe and elsewhere had to pass competitive examinations, entered their countries' services at the lowest grade, were promoted on a merit basis, and continued practicing statecraft in some capacity until reaching retirement age, American diplomats were, on balance, novices" (5). Although that claim is correct as far as it goes, it cries out for qualification.

For instance, I might have cited Peter Layton's assertion that Australia reserves nearly all of its top ambassadorships for professional civil servants, and noted that Rogério de

Souza Farias says the same thing about Brazil. Comparable conditions obtain in Poland and the Czech Republic, or so reports Marinko Raos. Israel, Gideon Remez declares, relies almost entirely on career diplomats. So does Turkey, writes Sinan Kunalalp. David Javier Garcia Cantalapiedra affirms that Spain rarely designates nonprofessionals to head its embassies. Sung-Yoon Lee informs me that South Korea's diplomatic corps includes a few non-foreign-service personnel, but not many political appointees; instead, Seoul tends to tap professors, probably a legacy of Korea's Confucian culture. According to James Cameron, the United Kingdom used to select amateurs for its important posts—for example, Edward Wood, David Ormsby-Gore, and Peter Jay became ambassadors to the United States on the basis of family or political ties—but this practice stopped in the 1970s. Mark Stout states that, during the Soviet Union's seventy-year history, Moscow assigned mid- and top-level diplomatic positions almost exclusively to trained professionals. Zambia appoints political candidates, but for a different reason than the United States does; as Andy DeRoche notes, Lusaka designates opposition politicians to get them out of the country. And, Ken Weisbrode reveals, the Philippines chooses almost as many politicians and campaign contributors as the United States to head its embassies—although, of course, Manila does not rival Washington in wealth and power.¹² In all, my H-Diplo instructors covered over thirty countries, a testament to the admirable degree of collaboration and collegiality in the Society for Historians of Foreign Relations.

Did diplomats from those thirty-plus countries ever go rogue? Very infrequently. I give three instances in my book: British ambassadors David Erskine and Craig Murray and French “inspector of indigenous affairs” for Indochina Francis Garnier. Two others might have been included: Eliahu Sasson, Israel's ambassador to Italy and “back door” conduit to Turkey, who refused to carry out Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's instructions to explore a secret alliance between Tel Aviv and Ankara in 1956 and thereby short-circuited his career; and Heinrich von Lutzow, Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Italy, who tried to arrest the slide toward war in 1914 and earned a dressing-down from Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold. (Sean McMeekin pulls no punches, calling von Lutzow's disclosure of Vienna's confidential war plans to a British official “an act of gross insubordination.”¹³) Apart from these men, there just aren't many cases of non-Americans breaking ranks—and, as I note in the introduction, “non-American governments tend to be much less indulgent of the maverick diplomat's actions than is Washington.” Whereas Erskine, Murray, Garnier, Sasson, and von Lutzow all suffered professionally for their misconduct, only two of my U.S. rogue diplomats, Trist and Kennedy, sustained any punishment. “The rest either completed their missions undamaged or with reputations enhanced” (14-15). I do not think Etheridge overstates matters when he calls this a “manifestation of American exceptionalism.”

Etheridge would also like me to pay more attention to those U.S. “diplomats quietly following orders and behaving appropriately.” That would certainly be useful as a point of contrast, especially if I were to single out statesmen and -women who, by their conformity to rule, injured American interests. Fortunately, I analyze the career of just such an individual in my third book: J. Graham Parsons, U.S. ambassador to Laos from 1956 to 1958. Parsons's lack of imagination and obsession with protocol led to a catastrophic situation in which Washington found itself supporting the ruthless, inept rightist Phoumi Nosavan in

a three-sided civil war that devastated the Lao capital of Vientiane and alienated most Lao from the so-called free world. Because Parsons refused to buck the Eisenhower administration's line that neutralism was immoral, he could not recognize that Prince Souvanna Phouma was, as I put it, “that phenomenon the poet Saxon White Kessinger famously declared did not exist: an indispensable man, the only Lao politician acceptable to right, left, and center.”¹⁴ Despite pleas from area specialists in the United States Operations Mission like the brilliant anthropologist Joel Halpern, Parsons never considered shifting American support from Phoumi to Souvanna. His lectures and memoranda to embassy subordinates read as though ghostwritten by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Nearly two years in Laos left Parsons's stateside impression of the country intact: that it was a domino, indistinguishable from its neighbors, and that its only salvation lay in rigid anticommunism. No amount of evidence or experience could dent this cold war orthodoxy. Parsons hewed to Dulles's playbook until Washington belatedly summoned him home. He had done irreparable harm to his nation's image, and he departed Vientiane with his reputation in tatters, but he had the bureaucrat's excuse—which he was not reluctant to invoke in later years—that he had just followed orders.

I believe I have addressed all of the reviewers' questions and criticisms. When I asked Andy Johns what length he would set for this author's response, he graciously gave me *carte blanche*—a decision he may now regret, as I have no doubt overstayed my welcome. Readers will, I trust, forgive me. My prolixity grows out of appreciativeness. I thank Statler, Chervinsky, Siekmeier, and Etheridge again for their efforts, insight, and generosity of spirit.

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