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By Mackubin T. Owens

In These Pages

O*rbis* is honored to publish a special issue devoted to the idea of “conservative internationalism,” the name given to a particular understanding of U.S. foreign policy by Henry Nau of George Washington University. The articles featured here are the product of a one-day colloquium organized by Charlie Laderman at the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas Austin in May 2017.

Charlie Laderman provides an overview of the topic and the papers. He shows “conservative internationalist” principles are distinct from those associated with “liberal internationalism,” which emerged in U.S. foreign policy over the past century.

Professor Henry Nau lays out the fundamentals of conservative internationalism, stressing how it differs from the dominant academic paradigms of realism and liberal internationalism. The subsequent papers look at particular instances of conservative internationalism. First, Kori Schake, no stranger to the pages of *Orbis*, looks at the administration of Grover Cleveland, whom, she argues, meets the criteria for

conservative internationalism, set out by Henry Nau, more assiduously than do some of the Republican presidents that Nau examines.

William Inboden addresses Ronald Reagan’s prominence in the pantheon of the American presidency and notes that among Republicans and conservatives, Reagan has attained a particularly mythic status as an exemplar of conservative internationalism. Next, Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin explores George H.W. Bush’s foreign policy for what it can tell us about the successes and weakness of conservative internationalism as a world view and as an analytic construct for scholars of international relations

Hal Brands and Peter Feaver argue that despite harsh contemporary appraisals of the foreign policy of George W. Bush, the forty-third president will benefit from at least a moderate revisionism as scholars take a more dispassionate look at his achievements in global affairs and the difficult circumstances under which his administration labored.

Ionut Popescu outlines the principles of a new conservative

internationalism for the Trump era, and discusses how well the administration's actions and words fit this paradigm. He contends that a year into the Trump presidency, there are signs that his administration is indeed attempting to adjust slightly rather than replace the traditional principles of conservative Republican foreign policy.

Paul D. Miller concludes this section by taking issue with Professor Popescu, contending that so far the Trump administration has not embraced conservative internationalism, but that the approach is likely to endure as America's preferred approach to the world long past the Trump administration. The mix of American idealism and American strength is too potent for policymakers to ignore.

Although not part of the University of Texas colloquium on conservative internationalism, the article by FPRI Senior Fellow Adam Garfinkle complements those essays, arguing that U.S. foreign policy thinking is based ultimately on the particular historical experience and cultural legacy of the American founding, at the very base of which is the preeminence of Anglo-Protestantism. Garfinkle contends that the religious heritage of the United States, a sixteenth century blend of a theological reformation and the rise of modernity in the Enlightenment, has endowed American politics with a predisposition for egalitarian, anti-hierarchical, and contractual forms, which applies as well to foreign affairs. He offers six examples from the post-World War II period to illustrate his case.

Finally, James Golby and Mara Karlin examine the origins and meaning—such as it is—of the recent construct called “Best Military Advice.” The authors contend that “best military advice” is a problematic construct for

both the military and civilians alike. As “best military advice” infuses the U.S. military, it will become increasingly normalized and held up as desirable, particularly among a younger generation. Short of serious near-term steps to neutralize this construct, its deleterious influence will swell.

This issue of *Orbis* concludes with two review essays, the first examining U.S. foreign policy in Asia and the second looking at how “exporting security” helps both the United States and the recipients of U.S. security assistance.

Readers will notice a new cover design for our journal. The directional compass signifies the navigational guidance on world affairs that *Orbis* hopes to provide in 2018 and beyond.

Impromptus and Asides: A Century-Old Crime Against Humanity

We do not know very much of the future
 Except that from generation to generation
 The same things happen again and again
 Men learn little from others' experience.

T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*

The October Revolution of 1917 unleashed a century of evil, a virus that has claimed an unprecedented human toll. It is hard to comprehend the number of its victims, enslaved, oppressed, and killed in the name of a malignant ideology. Let us tally up the body count: 20 million deaths in the Soviet Union; 65 million in China; 2 million in Cambodia; one million each in Eastern Europe and Vietnam; 2 million each in North Korea and across Africa;

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