



Applied History Project Newsletter

October 2025

The October 2025 issue of the Applied History Network Newsletter spotlights member-contributed news items for more than 500 leaders in the Applied History movement across 50 institutions.

This newsletter is prepared by the Applied History Project at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center and edited by Jason Walter, Ivana Hoàng Giang, and Aristotle Vainikos.

If you would like to submit an item for next month's issue, please email it to aristotle_vainikos@hks.harvard.edu with the subject "November Applied History Update" before Thursday, December 4.

Special Announcements

Sarotte to Lead Grand Strategy at Yale University's Jackson School of Global Affairs and School of Management

Congratulations to our colleague **Mary Elise Sarotte** (Visiting Fellow, Harvard's Applied History Project; Distinguished Professor of Historical Studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS) for her new appointment at Yale. From the [announcement](#), "At Jackson, Sarotte will lead the seminar in Grand Strategy Studies, a year-long course for undergraduates and graduate students focusing on large-scale strategic challenges in politics and statecraft. She will also serve as the director in charge of

the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy, which hosts events with policymakers and practitioners, funds postdoctoral fellows, and supports student research.”

Application for the Ernest May Fellowship in History and Policy at Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center Open Until December 1

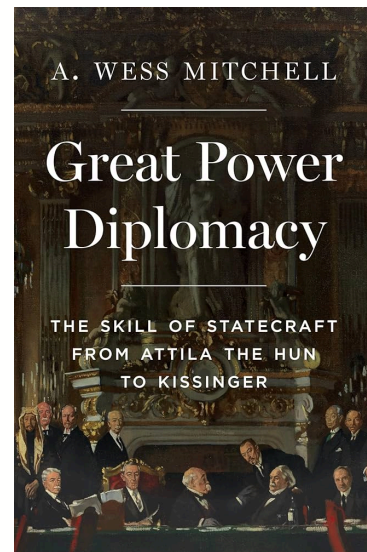
The Ernest May Fellowship aims to help build the next generation of scholars who will bring professional history to bear on strategic studies and major issues of international affairs. It honors Ernest R. May, Charles Warren Professor of American History, a member of the Belfer Center’s board of directors, and a faculty affiliate of the Center’s International Security Program, who passed away in June 2009. The program supports resident pre- and post-doctoral historians, who are expected to complete a book, monograph, or other significant publication during their period of residence. **Fredrik Logevall** (Faculty Mentor, Harvard’s Applied History Project; Professor of International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School) and **Niall Ferguson** (Co-Chair, Harvard’s Applied History Project; Senior Fellow, Stanford’s Hoover Institution) serve as the points of contact and mentors for the fellows. Fellows are expected to devote some portion of their time to collaborative endeavors, as arranged by the project director. The Ernest May Fellows are housed within the [International Security Program](#) and participate in the activities of the Belfer Center as part of the Program, while also taking part in the life of the Center’s Applied History Project. Preference will be given to History Ph.D. students or postdoctoral researchers, but scholars in other fields whose research projects have a strong historical focus will receive consideration. For more information, click [here](#). To apply, click [here](#).

Recent History Books Illuminating Today’s Headline Challenges and Choices*

Mitchell Demonstrates the Power of Diplomacy in Significant Contribution to Applied History

Great Power Diplomacy: The Skill of Statecraft from Attila the Hun to Kissinger by **A. Wess Mitchell** (Fellow, Harvard’s Applied History Project; Principal and Co-Founder,

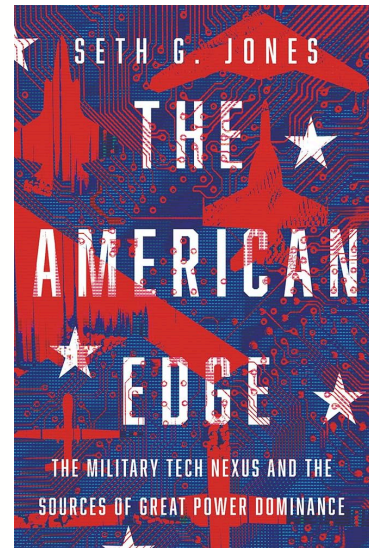
The Marathon Initiative) “offers a compelling argument for diplomacy as a strategic tool when challenges outstrip the resources available to meet them.” Using case studies across centuries from the conflict between Athens and Sparta in 432 B.C. to Nixon’s opening to China in 1972, Mitchell “shows how statesmen have managed security problems... and distills the principles for effective practice.” More broadly, Mitchell brings attention to the reformulation of diplomacy in recent decades from “the art of negotiating, recruiting allies, and avoiding great-power war” to “a science of administration’ to manage peace.” Assessing the costs of this change, **William Anthony Hay** (Associate Director, School of Civic and Economic Thought, Arizona State University) [writes](#) in *The Wall Street Journal* , “Ironically, this conception of diplomacy as administration has the same unilateral thrust as imposing policies by military force. It misses how strategy is supposed to align ends with means while adapting to shifting circumstances; such an error thereby limits options when policies fail or are met with inevitable resistance.” Mitchell demonstrates that with creative application the tactics of buying time and gathering political intelligence offer utility, while building winning coalitions, dividing opponents, and favorably reshuffling alignments are proven methods of achieving strategic advantage. Mitchell also “underscores the value that case studies have for applying historical precedent to strategic practice.” More than theoretical models, “tracing what has worked in the past, to understand how and why, provides better guidance.” Hay concludes, “Mr. Mitchell deftly presents strategy as a way to solve critical problems, often under extreme pressure and at high stakes, with diplomacy a means to pace challenges and gain leverage.” In combining the analysis of diplomacy’s historical precedents with a framework that can illuminate current strategic challenges and choices, Mitchell’s work advances the discipline of Applied History.



Jones Issues a Clarion Call to Rebuild the US Defense Industrial Base, Using the Lessons of History

The American Edge: The Military Tech Nexus and the Sources of Great Power Dominance by **Seth G. Jones** (President, Defense and Security Department and Harold Brown Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies) has a clear mission: “Getting the nation back to an industrial base ready for war” to address the China challenge and competition. He describes America’s current position as a

“tragedy” in that “the United States is in a wartime environment, but its defense industrial base is operating on a peacetime footing.” **Arthur Herman** (author and historian) [reviews](#) the book in *The Wall Street Journal* and writes, “The key, in Mr. Jones’s view, is to harness the innovation and productivity of the private sector and tackle the most pressing challenges facing the public sector.” His account, which covers “every phase of defense industrial policy since World War II,” presents the materiel and mobilization surge of World War II and the early Cold War technological advances as the historical precedents for success, marked by the involvement of William Knudsen of General Motors,

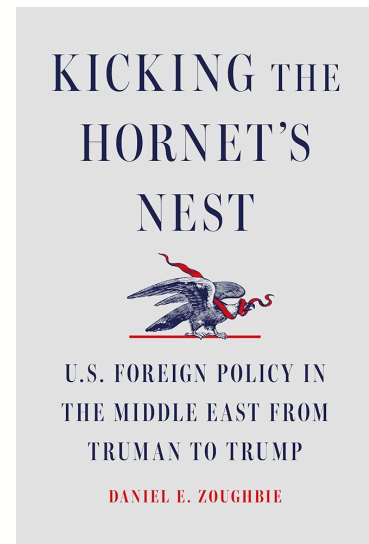


Lockheed engineer Kelly Johnson, and other private sector thought leaders. In the decades since, the Pentagon has lagged in both new technologies and in the use of those technologies to achieve victories. Apart from the “Second Offset” in the Carter Administration, which gave the United States “a decisive technological advantage the Kremlin couldn’t reach,” the effects of underinvestment, the Vietnam War, the Clinton Administration’s decision to cash in on the peace dividend, and the distractions of Iraq and Afghanistan, which prioritized the use of existing weapons over the production of new capabilities, have left the US in a significantly disadvantaged position. Herman writes, “Meanwhile, China was surging ahead in military spending and adopting those same advanced technologies, many of them stolen from America’s own defense industry... China, Mr. Jones writes, has become ‘a major competitor in emerging technologies, and its broader defense industrial base was able to churn out weapons systems at mass and scale.’” For Jones, the US imperative is to “mobilize a World War II-style, bottom up strategy to rearm and restore its defense capabilities including making full use of AI and drone technologies.” Today’s high-tech business founders and entrepreneurs, like their predecessors, are essential to restoring America’s strategic advantage and to securing its future “against the most formidable foe it has yet faced.” Herman concludes, “The private sector has the answers. It is up to the public sector to catch up.”

Zoughbie Urges “Fundamental Shift” in Failed Military Focus of US Middle East Policy

Kicking the Hornet’s Nest: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East from Truman to Trump by **Daniel E. Zoughbie** (Associate Project Scientist, Institute of International

Studies, University of California, Berkeley) “offers a sweeping and often scathing assessment of America’s long history in the Middle East.” Although the book was written before recent developments in the region’s geopolitics and in US diplomacy that suggest the possibility of a more peaceful future, the question it raises, “Have U.S. policies fomented the region’s crises – or simply failed to remedy deep-rooted conflicts already in motion?” remains relevant. In his *Washington Post* review, **Clifford Krauss** (former foreign correspondent, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*) [writes](#), “The book criticizes the American tendency to rely on military solutions, arguing that Washington has repeatedly tried – and failed – to ‘manage history through cynical militarism’ and ‘crusading moralism.’” Using the record of presidential decisions, starting with Truman, and claiming “‘eighty years of bungling’ in the region,” Zoughbie portrays “U.S. foreign policy as shortsighted, reactive and often self-defeating.” His recommendation is to use hard power “sparingly,” while letting “‘other nations solve their own problems.’” Krauss, in turn, questions Zoughbie’s argument “that better diplomacy might have prevented wars in 1948, 1967, 1991 and beyond,” given the entrenched tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, the rise of Arab nationalism, and the divide between Sunnis and Shias and other factors that “would have shaped the region’s fate regardless of Washington’s involvement.” He concludes, “Whether readers agree with Zoughbie’s conclusions or not, his book will force them to reconsider whether decades of intervention have done more harm than good.” On recent developments, Applied Historians may wish to join Krauss in asking whether “Washington’s engagement in the region is finally paying some political dividends? Or will any turn of fortunes be as durable as a mirage in the Saudi desert?”



**This section, currently written by Anne Karalekas, was inspired by Paul Kennedy and his wide experience in writing book reviews.*

Applied History Analyses of the Month

Marc Trachtenberg, “[The Rules-Based International Order: A Historical Analysis](#),” *International Security*, October 28, 2025.

Noting the frequent criticism of President Trump’s rejection of a “rules-based international order,” **Marc Trachtenberg** (Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles) asks: “should protecting and extending the rules-based order be a fundamental goal not just for the United States but for the Western world as a whole?” Rather than analyze the liberal order’s current pros and cons, or adopt a theoretical approach, Trachtenberg maps the relevant history of the issue at hand, a core Applied History technique. Specifically, he assesses historical assumptions that proponents of a rules-based order have made—asking the historian’s key question, “Is that true?” Trachtenberg traces how the rules-based order came into being, describes the roles of NATO and Bretton Woods institutions in its maintenance, and assesses whether there were any possible alternatives. He ultimately finds that “a good deal of what is said about the origins of the liberal international order is not supported by the historical evidence” and “the liberal system that did come into being in the Western world did not in itself produce a relatively peaceful world.” He points out that this has immediate policy implications on a strategic level. Assuming that postwar leaders intended to set up a liberal international order “implies that that policy has such deep roots that it can never be changed or even questioned.” However, once one understands that leaders “were not actually thinking in those terms, one is bound to approach even contemporary issues in an entirely different way.” For clearly isolating the relevant historical assumptions behind a current policy debate, assessing their validity, and explaining the implications of these findings for policymakers today, Trachtenberg’s article is an Analysis of the Month.

Renata Keller, “[A Key Lesson of the Cuban Missile Crisis? The U.S. Needs Allies](#),” *TIME*, October 28, 2025.

Reemphasizing the Cuban Missile Crisis as a rich analogy by which present challenges facing the US can be illuminated, **Renata Keller** (Associate Professor of History, University of Nevada, Reno) asserts that “Today, the nation’s leaders have forgotten the most vital lesson of the crisis, even as we face new crises.” That is, “At America and the world’s moment of greatest peril, allies helped the United States prevent nuclear war.” Keller argues that coordinated multilateral actions that isolate adversaries—both with their physical boats and planes and in the court of world

opinion—are key to overcoming global crises. Latin American allies jointly participated in the naval quarantine around Cuba and gave it legal legitimacy through a unanimous vote of the Organization of American States. US diplomacy with West African leaders ensured Soviet planes could not refuel in Guinea or Senegal if they tried to fly over the naval quarantine to deliver atomic warheads into Cuba. If the US's current security challenges—Keller cites shared dangers of transnational drug trafficking, territorial expansion by great power adversaries, and risks of new epidemics—are no more existential than nuclear Armageddon, and it was alliances that helped save the world in 1962, then the US should reappraise its undervaluation of allies today. For assessing how current US policies differ from successful policies in a relevant historical analogy, Keller's timely reminder "of how critical allies small and large can be" is an Applied History Analysis of the Month.

Publications of Note

[“Xi-Trump Summit: What’s Changed Since Their Last Meeting”](#) by Rana Mitter (Chair and Professor of US-Asia Relations, Harvard Kennedy School) for *Asia Times*

Analyzing the similarities and differences between the 2019 Trump-Xi meeting and the lead-up to their recent South Korea meeting, Mitter asserts that “the biggest variable that has changed is whether the U.S. has softened its position on Taiwan.” He contrasts Mike Pompeo’s hawkishness, for example, with the “wider sense that this hawkish approach isn’t dominant in the second Trump administration,” demonstrating that very contemporary history still offers lessons for immediate challenges. For example, “The Chinese government has traditionally pushed a maximalist line on Taiwan before meetings and then scaled back rhetoric during negotiations.”

[“The Coming Storm: Learning from the Past to Prevent Great Power War Today”](#) by Odd Arne Westad (Professor of History, Yale University) for The Aspen Strategy Group

Previewing his 2026 book *The Coming Storm*, Westad describes the multiple parallels between the present and the period before WWI. He also examines the differences, such as today's unique levels of "mutual demonization" between states, which should increase alarm about conflict. By recalling the flaws in the "specific, sequential decisions by leaders who feared weakness more than war" in 1914, he offers several recommendations for escaping what could be an even greater catastrophe than WWI, such as moving toward strategic clarity over Taiwan and "disaggregating issues" to balance competition with cooperation.

"Wonder and Worry: Dealing with Uncertainty in Contemporary History" by Frank Gavin (Distinguished Professor, Johns Hopkins SAIS) in *Engelsberg Ideas*

A week after the release of his recent book, *Thinking Historically: A Guide to Statecraft and Strategy*, Gavin [published](#) the complementary *Wonder and Worry: Contemporary History in an Age of Uncertainty*. "How can history be applied to our current moment," he asks, "and what is the promise and peril of pursuing this kind of contemporary history?" Gavin argues that both Applied History—"examining examples from the past to shed light on our present and future challenges"—and contemporary history—employing "the skills of a historian in our current circumstances to provide a better understanding of where we are today"—are necessary. What encourages Gavin to lean more on wonder than worry? "The virtues of applying history to understanding our contemporary world are being rediscovered and bigger, broader thinking encouraged."

A Grand Strategy of Peace: Britain and the Creation of the United Nations Organization, 1939-1945* by Andrew Ehrhardt (Lecturer in Foreign Policy and Director of Research & Programmes, Centre for Statecraft and National Security, King's College London; Fellow, Harvard's Belfer Center) with *Manchester University Press

Ehrhardt's diplomatic history is "the first detailed account of Britain's role in the creation of the United Nations Organization during the Second World War." Given that today "many scholars and analysts have returned to the origins of the post-1945

international system, this book offers an exhaustive account of how the statesmen and more importantly, the officials working below the statesmen, actually conceived of and worked to establish a post-war world order.” Ehrhardt also recently received support from the Smith Richardson Foundation Strategy and Policy Fellows Program for a book project that will be the first intellectual history of Samuel Huntington.

[“Trump and the Presidency That Wouldn’t Shut Up”](#) by Jill Lepore (Professor of American History, Harvard University; Professor of Law, Harvard Law School) in *The New Yorker*

Lepore puts Trump’s continuous tweeting and posting in the historical context of presidents who sought to communicate directly with the American public via partisan newspapers, radio, and TV. Yet Trump breaks all norms of “presidential” behavior, Lepore concludes, fulfilling the Founding Fathers’ fears that such contact between president and public could open the door to demagoguery. The famous populists and “strongmen” of other countries offer better historical analogs for Trump than his own predecessors do, in her assessment.

[“Restoring the Academic Social Contract”](#) by William Inboden (Executive Vice President and Provost, University of Texas at Austin) in *National Affairs*

Inboden grounds his vision for a renewal of liberal arts education in an historical assessment of the “social contract” into which universities knowingly entered during the first decades of the 20th century. Recovering the mission of the university, he argues, begins with remembering the promise that modern American universities made when they transitioned into research hubs on the German model: to conduct “research that [produces] original discoveries” and to offer “education that [helps] form students into honorable, productive citizens,” in return for federal funding, tax exemptions, and the public’s trust, above all.

[“China’s Lending to Developing Countries: From Boom to Bust”](#) by **Sebastian Horn** (Professor of Economics, University of Hamburg), **Carmen M. Reinhart** (Professor of the International Financial System, Harvard Kennedy School), and **Christoph Trebesch** (Professor of Economics and Director of the Research Center on International Finance, Kiel Institute) for National Bureau of Economic Research

What lies ahead for all the developing countries that borrowed from China during its rise over the last two decades to become the world’s largest state creditor? Horn, Reinhart, and Trebesch use the analogy of the 1970s lending “boom,” led by Western banks, which then “bust” into the debt crisis of the 1980s. Resolving international debt negotiations relies on creditors to accept losses, a reality that took US banks one decade to acknowledge in the ‘80s. The authors anticipate that “the wait for China’s banks to acknowledge losses is poised again to be long.”

[“What Trump Could Learn From Ulysses S. Grant”](#) by **Kori Schake** (Director of Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute) in *The Atlantic*

In an essay adapted from her new book, *The State and the Soldier: A History of Civil-Military Relations in the United States*, Schake argues, “Now, as in Grant’s day, the military cannot save the American people from the politicians they elected, or from the officials the Senate has consented to appoint.” She explains that “The Constitution asserts civilian control over the military, divided between the executive and legislative branches, as a means of preventing the military from becoming a partisan force of domestic oppression.” Schake concludes: “the only appropriate role for the armed forces in a political crisis is none at all—a verity that Grant came to appreciate only too well.”

[“This Is What Autocrats Dread”](#) by **David Shimer** (former Director for Eastern Europe and Ukraine, White House National Security Council) for *The New York Times*

Summarizing several historical instances of authoritarians losing elections, Shimer posits that “These cases, while they have distinct national contexts, can also help provide a road map for democratic movements today.” For example, focusing on Indira Gandhi’s “power grab” in the form of her 1975 state of emergency declaration “helped to unify the opposition and shape its message during the 1977 election” in India, which Gandhi lost. The lesson? “Skilled opposition movements leverage authoritarian misbehavior to mobilize voters.”

**[“Americans Have Always Argued About Presidential Term Limits”](#)
by Jeffrey Rosen (president and CEO, National Constitution Center) in *The Wall Street Journal***

As President Trump muses publicly about pursuing a third term in office, Rosen revisits the historical debate about term limits. He takes aim at the Supreme Court’s seeming embrace of the “unitary executive theory” by showing that even Hamilton—at one point a supporter of a life term—feared a “demagogic president.” Three previous presidents sought third terms (FDR successfully, Grant and Theodore Roosevelt unsuccessfully), but Rosen affirms that this time truly is different: the 22nd Amendment forecloses another Trump campaign. After FDR, Americans rejected unlimited four-year terms.

[“The Era of Dark Passions”](#) by David Brooks (columnist) in *The New York Times*

Recommending **William Galston’s** (senior fellow and Chair in Governance Studies, Brookings Institution) recent book, *Anger, Fear, Domination: Dark Passions and the Power of Political Speech*, Brooks reflects on how declining religiosity and an increasingly career-focused education system may have made Americans more susceptible to political appeals that arouse “dark passions,” versus the “bright passions” of hope and care. Turning to history as a guide, Brooks urges political leaders to “interrupt the process” by showing kindness to enemies—as demonstrated by Abraham Lincoln in his second Inaugural Address, Martin Luther King Jr., or Nelson Mandela.

[“What America’s Founders Can Teach Trump about Liberty”](#) by **Simon Schama (historian; contributing editor) in *The Financial Times***

Relaying the history of opposition to John Adams’ Sedition Acts, which made it illegal to write “false, scandalous, and malicious” material about the US government and president, Schama reminds us that the “criminalizing of disrespect does have a precedent.” He reviews the arguments that James Madison and Thomas Jefferson made in defense of free speech to show that rereading reflections from those who came before us, and thoughtfully faced similar issues, can better prepare us for today’s challenges.

[“Here Are the Real Chances of Militants Giving Up their Guns”](#) by **Keith B. Richburg (contributing columnist) in *The Washington Post***

Richburg casts doubt on peace efforts in two international hotspots—Gaza and Haiti—because disarming militant groups, as both the Gaza ceasefire and the UN’s Haiti mission aim to do, has a poor historical track record. For example, despite agreeing to disarm during negotiations, warlords in Somalia and Khmer Rouge splinter groups in Cambodia resisted peacekeepers sent to retrieve weapons in the 1990s. Rare successes, such as an Australian-led campaign in East Timor in 1999, teach that disarmament succeeds “when it’s part of a broader deal that will give the ex-fighters a future role in the army or in government.”

Interviews and Speeches

Ferguson, Kotkin, and Hanson Debate Impact of Trump Era on *Uncommon Knowledge*

Asked by host **Peter Robinson** to weigh Trump's "consequentiality," historians **Niall Ferguson**, **Stephen Kotkin** (Visiting Scholar, Harvard's Applied History Project; Senior Fellow, Stanford's Hoover Institution), and **Victor Davis Hanson** (Senior Fellow, Stanford's Hoover Institution) compare and contrast Trump to presidents such as Reagan and Nixon to put his "transformative" effect on the Republican Party, American culture, and the world order into perspective. The trio [characterizes](#) China and the US debt burden as the two greatest challenges that Trump faces. The history of China's nationalist anxiety over Taiwan, and the history of Reagan's Trump-like promise that economic "growth" will cure the debt problem, show that neither challenge will be easily solved. Separately, Ferguson also [writes](#) about America's plummeting literacy rates, tracing the evolution of writing from as early as ancient Mesopotamia to reiterate writing's virtues and to forecast the trajectory of the current "civilizational crisis."

Kennedy Balances Individual Agency vs. Structural Forces in History at Kansas State University

For the 18th biennial Eisenhower Lecture in War and Peace, **Paul Kennedy** (Professor of History, Yale University) [addresses](#) "a problem which has teased historians for so many years": "trying to explain the role of the individual in history." Taking, for example, the event's namesake and his success on D-Day in WWII, Kennedy concludes: "Eisenhower did not by himself lead a successful campaign through Europe. What he did do was to give the leadership to a conjunction of incredible armed services, technologies, background forces, new ways of thinking about war, new ways of conducting war."

Kurtz-Phelan Discusses 75 Years of US-China Relations on *Sinica* Podcast

Daniel Kurtz-Phelan (editor, *Foreign Affairs*) [joins](#) host **Kaiser Kuo** to reflect on how debates about China have evolved within America's strategic class. Kurtz-Phelan observes a "pronounced shift" from the post-Cold War consensus, noting that today's China debate is "at the center of American foreign policy." He warns that history shows how severed dialogue—like post-1949 US-China estrangement—can

distort policymaking, urging that “anything we can do to encourage more people literally having those conversations” is vital for avoiding past mistakes.

Taubmans Investigate “The Double Life of Robert S. McNamara” at Harvard’s Belfer Center

Chairing the book talk for *McNamara at War: A New History*, **Fredrik Logevall** asked the authors how often former senior officials grapple with their past decisions, as Robert McNamara did with the Vietnam War. **Philip Taubman** (Lecturer, Stanford’s Center for International Security and Cooperation) and **William Taubman** (Professor of Political Science Emeritus, Amherst College) [answered](#) that they could not think of another senior official who “spent as much time with his mistakes” as McNamara. Discussing the origins of the Vietnam War, the authors argued that an historical analogy contributed to McNamara’s support for escalation: “the right wing in America will punish us for losing Vietnam the way Truman lost China.” McNamara’s mistake, they argued, was then “exporting our domestic politics, turning it into a reason to fight a foreign war in which the president does not fully believe.”

Kearns Goodwin Contemplates US “Leadership in Turbulent Times” with *NPR Network’s WGLT*

Following her presentation for the Adlai E. Stevenson Memorial Lecture Series, co-hosted by Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State University, **Doris Kearns Goodwin** (Pulitzer Prize-winning author and presidential historian) [said](#) in a local news interview that “History definitely gives me hope about our present moment.” She elaborates that “The reason people need to study history, and it makes me so sad that history is diminishing in various places, is that it gives us that perspective of seeing that our ancestors led through these hard times.” Kearns Goodwin calls on Americans “to look forward to what can we as citizens do. Every great change in social life, in social justice, came from people from the ground up.”

Gage Considers: “Is the FBI’s Secret War on American Activists Back?” for CBC

On *CBC News* podcast *Front Burner*, **Beverly Gage** (Professor of History, Yale University) [draws](#) on her research from *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century* to reflect: “I think Hoover’s era is a great cautionary tale about the ways that the FBI can be used, in fact, to go after political enemies, to go after activist organizations that those in power don’t like.” Responding to host **Jayme Poisson** regarding US Homeland Security Advisor Stephen Miller’s use of the words “identify, disrupt, dismantle, destroy” today, Gage says that “we’re hearing, I think, very direct echoes” of the FBI’s COINTELPRO and its mandate from the 1950s to “discredit, disrupt and otherwise neutralize civil rights and other organizations and their leaders.”

Scheidel Encourages “Reenvisioning the Study of Ancient History” on *unSILoed* with Greg LaBlanc

“Deep down, people face similar challenges, and they should be studied accordingly,” [argues](#) **Walter Scheidel** (Professor of Classics and History, Stanford University). “The world we inhabit today is like a supercharged version of what people set up in this formative period” of ancient history. People across the globe generally discovered similar trends and found similar solutions over thousands of years, “and those are the underpinnings of the world that we inhabit today, and we can’t very easily escape.” Scheidel warns in conclusion: “Unless we understand this, we have no chance of understanding how the world has come to be the way it is. So that kind of ancient history to my mind is the exact opposite of the colloquial, proverbial ‘ancient history.’ Nothing could be less obsolete or irrelevant. It’s really essential to our understanding of who we are, who we got to be.”

Applied History Quote of the Month

“We must hold onto the inspirational moments of our history, and use them to light our path forward.”

– David Gergen

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