From Artifacts to People Facts:
Archaeologists, World War II, and the Origins of Middle East Area Studies

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Dedication

To Sarah and Ben. For everything, for always.

Acknowledgments

More than four years ago, I left my comfortable graduate student home in Washington, DC, for what was supposed to be a one-year psychology job for my wife in Madison, WI. One year turned into two; we had a child; I worked non-dissertation jobs; and I grew increasingly uncertain when I would be able to dedicate enough time to this project to see it through to completion. That I was able to finish is a testament to a strong support network. It is a pleasure to be able to thank some of those people here.

The geographic distance between my dissertation committee and me required an extra level of dedication on their part. I am grateful to them for their patience and thoughtful comments along the way. Melani McAlister has been a generous reader throughout this process. I am continually in awe of her efforts on behalf of her students. Whether over the phone, on Skype, or in a diesel Mercedes taxi as we were driven across Beirut, she has always been engaged with what I have been trying to do. Tom Guglielmo and Andrew Zimmerman have been immensely helpful and supportive. They offered incisive and, importantly, doable suggestions. The example they both set as educators and scholars is extraordinary. Jamie Cohen-Cole and Dina Khoury were ideal readers. It was a pleasure to have their thoughts on this project. Of course, any errors that remain are my own. Although she was not on my committee, in an earlier stage at GW Melinda Knight taught me an enormous amount about teaching.

A number of professors at Northwestern University were instrumental in shaping my post-undergraduate path. Brian Edwards stands out as a generous person, an invaluable advisor, and a mind-bogglingly entertaining writer. He first recommended Melani's

book to me more than a decade ago, and has been a touchstone since that time. Scott Curtis, David Tolchinsky, and Paul McEwan all provided guidance and served as references at different points. I deeply appreciate their help.

My recent trip to Washington, DC reminded me of what a great group of graduate students I was lucky enough to study with. Jeremy Hill, Katie Brian, and Megan Black were particularly helpful during challenging times. Having been a part of such a great cohort of students, I am forever spoiled by the experience.

A number of grants supported this research. The Loughran Foundation, the Cosmos Club, and the American Studies Department of the Columbian College of Arts & Sciences at GW provided travel and writing funds. A Rockefeller Archive Center Grant-in-Aid allowed me to see Rockefeller Foundation documents in person, and Mary Ann Quinn was invaluable as an archivist. Many other archivists made this research possible: Cory Czajkowski at the University of Miami; John Larson at the Oriental Institute; Armand Esai at the Field Museum; Philip Grover and Chris Morton at the Pitt Rivers Museum; Jack Green at the Ashmolean Museum; Scott Taylor at Georgetown University; and numerous staff members at the larger archives. The Center for American Studies and Research at the American University of Beirut, the Institute for Constitutional History, and The George Washington University all provided funds for conference travel.

Graham, Missy, Eli, and Logan Davis; Briana Wilson and Juan Carlos Camacho Sofrony; Rob and Parvathy Paymer; Negar Tekeei and Nikhil and Aydin Waingankar; Aneel and Dorissa Gursahaney; Nathan and Stephanie Crowe; and Pete, Cat, Emma, and Maggie Reynolds all provided shelter and company during various return trips to DC and

research trips elsewhere. I hope I can provide the same gracious hospitality to them some day. Many years ago, a group of friends – Brian Battle, Justin Elkow, Ian Slaughter, and Karl Scharnweber – were patient with me as I did graduate student stuff during what was supposed to be a football weekend. I hope we can plan a similar outing soon, and drag along Brian Sabella and Jim Adamczyk, too. I plan on being more fun the next time.

After moving to Madison, WI, I have had a couple jobs to support my (growing) family. I am thankful to Epic Systems and the College of Letters & Science Honors Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for providing interesting challenges at work. Sissel Schroeder, Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler, Jacqui Guthrie, Jon Iftikar, Colin Rohm, and Laura Bradley all expressed interest in my dissertation, and were patient with my scheduling. The student workers have been delightful to work with as well.

Both my in-laws and my own family have been extraordinarily supportive, even as this process stretched beyond its original, intended timeline. It is a joy to be a part of the Skopek family. My son, Benjamin, has five wonderful cousins, Finn, Orion, Nico, Carmen, and Rafa. I can't wait to see what kind of trouble they can all get into. My siblings-in-law, Jeff Skopek, Laura Diaz Anadon, Matt Skopek, and Melanie Brussat, are great holiday companions (or any time of the year, for that matter). Marilyn and John Skopek are incredibly supportive in every possible way.

My own family has always emphasized education. My paternal great-grandfather once hitched the local one-room schoolhouse to a team of horses and dragged it closer to his own house and brood. My paternal grandmother, Deloris Kohlstedt, got her GED in her seventies. Now approaching 98, she just recently told me that she used to read our set

of encyclopedias after she put us to bed. In addition to being an inspiration for her love of learning, she has continued to be the kindest person I have ever met. Her husband, Gus, died when I was three, but left me with a number of cherished memories. My maternal grandparents, Duaine and Kathy Lang, were smart and funny. They paid for a significant portion of my undergraduate education. But I'm just as grateful for the memories of their annual pig roasts. Aunts and uncles, cousins and second cousins — I'm lucky to have such a great extended family.

My three siblings and their partners, Katie Kohlstedt and Paco Portillo Rangel; Lindsey and Devin Meyer; and Kevin Kohlstedt and Karly Chisholm, continue to impress me with their accomplishments and aptitude for their chosen professions and paths. Whether providing spirulina, children's books, or microbrews, they all helped me complete this project. Ben's cousins on that side, Kai and Teo, have made such a strong impression on Ben that he will wake up in the morning and ask where they are. But, as a bonus, now he knows where Mexico is! My parents, Jim and Pat, have always been supportive of my ideas and directions. Words fail to capture my gratitude to them.

As for Sarah, Benjamin, and the soon-to-be baby, what can I possibly write that could express the depth of my love for you? If I wasn't a sentimental wreck before having kids, I am one now. Sarah is the best partner, in every sense of the word, that I could have ever imagined. Ben makes me laugh every day, starting with exclaiming, when he awakes, "I'm all done sleeping!" He has been very patient as I spent long hours at the computer instead of with him. Ben, good news — I'm all done dissertating!

Abstract of Dissertation

From Artifacts to People Facts:
Archaeologists, World War II, and the Origins of Middle East Area Studies

This dissertation traces the complex factors that influenced the World War II-era transition of some archaeologists and physical anthropologists who studied the ancient Middle East into roles that impacted U.S. policy towards the Middle East. The first chapter focuses on the archaeological expeditions and disciplinary practices that first exposed these social scientists to the inhabitants of the region that came to be known as the Middle East. Their experiences during the 1920s and 1930s influenced the opinions they formed and would later put to political use. The second chapter traces the various roles they took on in service of the U.S. government during the Second World War. Although many academics performed a variety of duties during the war, they were all united by a common belief: that academic knowledge of foreign peoples was going to be necessary in the postwar world. The third chapter analyzes two attempts, at the University of Chicago and Princeton University, to institutionalize the teaching of knowledge about the modern Middle East. Both efforts failed to fully implement the visions of their founding scholars, who each attempted to modulate the impact of some of the negative practices they had witnessed during their wartime government work. The fourth chapter argues that one archaeologist who worked for the Central Intelligence Agency during the Cold War exemplifies the cozy manner in which scholars and the U.S. government collaborated during the postwar period. That chapter analyzes the modifications the scholar made to his published work on Iran, changes that were made in light of his government activities there.

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Introduction

This dissertation traces the complex political, pedagogical, and cultural developments of a cohort of U.S.-based archaeologists, physical anthropologists, and a historian who studied the Middle East from 1919 to 1953, and who came to play a role in the structure of U.S. academic knowledge about the Middle East. From a larger group of archaeologists, physical anthropologists, and historians who studied the Middle East during that time period, I have selected a handful who were connected through a series of common experiences, and whose impact was significant because of their work at the intersections of scholarship and policymaking. For the four social scientists (two archaeologists and two physical anthropologists, all born in the United States), the experiences they held in common included making the arduous and lengthy journey to practice archaeology in the Middle East during the 1920s, the heyday of American activity in that region. They also all worked to maintain professional contacts and relevance during the 1930s, when the effects of the Great Depression, as well as growing independence movements in the Middle East, served to curtail archaeological activity there. During the first half of the 1940s, all five men (including the Lebanon-born historian who had become a U.S. citizen) served the U.S. effort in World War II in some capacity, using their previous academic experience in the Middle East as an entrée to increasingly complex and policy-centric roles with the government of the United States. Their final salient commonality was that they all demobilized from wartime work having been changed by the experience of formulating policy towards and knowledge about the Middle East, a region with which the United States had relatively little formalized

contact, but which was quickly becoming vital and contested.

Even though the common backgrounds of this group of men would indicate a relative uniformity of experience, each individual reacted differently to his own personal circumstances. Each individual's path was representative in some way of a larger prevailing trend, either in higher education or in government work. Indeed, all five of the scholars I examine – Carleton Coon, Henry Field, Philip Hitti, Donald Wilber, and John Wilson – operated, in some fashion, at the increasingly significant nexus between formal political work and scholarship. By examining the roles that these scholars played in transforming the study of the Middle East from an esoteric academic field to a geopolitically sensitive field whose practitioners' opinions could carry global ramifications, I reveal the process by which some scholars became American Orientalists. American Orientalists were able to claim expertise and authority over the broad swath of the world that we refer to today as the Middle East. Examined together, they show the multiple ways that the government mobilized scholars, and scholars mobilized their government experience, to produce knowledge about the region that played a role in underwriting the dangerous logic that shaped official U.S. policy and scholarly frameworks.

This is a dissertation that examines the relationship between scholars and the U.S. government in producing knowledge about the Middle East during the early Cold War. In particular, this project examines the way in which knowledge about foreign peoples – in this case, the disparate populations that inhabited the region of the world that came to be known as the Middle East – was created and disseminated. This project traces multiple stages in the institutionalization and mobilization of knowledge. The earliest stage in this

case was the conception that an individual scholar could become an expert on the peoples of an entire region. The genesis moment for the perceived need for what would become Middle East area studies was the crisis of World War II, and the attendant concern that the United States and its allies could lose the war not because of a lack of military strength, but because of a lack of propagandistic persuasiveness. In other words, there was a perception that permeated the U.S. government that one key aspect to winning the way, and, later, to establishing a U.S.-led postwar order, was to better understand the peoples of the world. As a pragmatic concession to trying the understand the various populations of the world, continents were subdivided into regions, and populations within those regions were grouped by common characteristics. This reductive logic was forged in the cauldron of war, when expedience was key. But it carried over into the postwar period as well. The idea of wartime area studies came with two undergirding assumptions that were military and diplomatic in nature. The structure of the military was divided into theaters, which governed the distribution of troops and war materiel. That regional model also structured the various information agencies that were formed alongside the military. And while those information agencies may have served as useful adjuncts to the military during the war, they were ultimately ancillary to the tremendous strength of the U.S. war machine. Once the war was over, the areal structure to world study remained. But so did the militaristic notion that knowledge had to be actionable (usable for military or geopolitical purposes, as opposed to more esoteric knowledge) in order for it to be of service to the U.S. government. For scholars who demobilized from the academic war machine, it was not always a simple transition to return to the academy. Charged (either

by their government, their university, their affiliated foundation, or their own patriotism) with maintaining some of the geopolitical relevance that area knowledge had gained during the war, these demobilized scholars brought back aspects of the academic war machine to their universities. The most significant aspects, and the ones that will receive the most attention in this dissertation, were the regional structure of area studies, and the idea that knowledge was most useful when it was actionable – that knowledge needed a definite purpose in order to be made legible to the governmental interests that were then permeating area studies.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu wrote "every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness."[1] Members of a field such as archaeology can come to see the field that they inhabit as so natural that they do not realize that the field also inhabits them. Bourdieu called this concept *doxa*. The American archaeologists who traveled to the Middle East during the 1920s and 1930s formed and were formed by a *doxa*, so that things became normal to them when on their digs that were in fact otherwise anomalous experiences when compared to their upbringings. They had to be normalized as archaeologists. Bourdieu added that "schemes of thoughts and perception can produce the objectivity that they do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible, thereby founding immediate adherence, in the doxic mode, to the world of tradition experienced as a 'natural world' and taken for granted."[2]

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1. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 164.
2. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 164.

Significantly, Bourdieu argued that social scientists *could* provide insights into cultures outside of the practitioner's own culture, but only if they they provided self-reflective commentary that critiqued the observer's own assumptions. As he put it, "I believe that if the sociology I propose differs in any significant way from the other sociologies of the past and of the present, it is above all in that it continually turns back onto itself the scientific weapons it produces."[3]

In this dissertation, I aim to denormalize some of the practices of archaeologists and physical anthropologists to demonstrate how working on archaeological digs influenced social scientists' impressions of Middle Easterners. In other words, how the study of artifacts in the Middle East influenced the creation of people facts about the inhabitants of the Middle East. In turn, putting those people facts to work for the U.S. government during WWII altered the doxa of scholars who had that experience. Their changed outlook then influenced postwar developments in Middle East area studies. The postwar shift towards Middle East area studies also included scholars from different fields, which is why Philip Hitti, a Princeton historian, played a prominent role in the early postwar period. He shared similarities with the social scientists, but also had important differences. More will be said of his involvement later. It is only by examining these various alterations that we can understand that the history of Middle East area studies cannot be unraveled without attending to key events that transformed, not interupted, its development. We need to examine the central role of a group of scholars

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3. Loic J.D. Wacquant, "Toward a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop With Pierre Boudieu," *Sociological Theory* 7, no. I (1989), 55, quoted in David Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 11.

who were mobilized during WWII to do intelligence, were changed by the experience, and went on to try to craft new forms of knowledge as a result.

The fact that archaeologists and physical anthropologists played prominent roles in this process is intriguing, in part because archaeologists and physical anthropologists have not embraced introspection to the same extent that sociologists and cultural anthropologists have. Anthropology in particular is replete with anthropologists who also have theorized about their own role in the study they were creating. In archaeology and physical anthropology, there has not been a Marshall Sahlins-like figure to interrogate the basis of the field.[4] Regardless of the reason why, there seems to have been a relatively lower level of *doxa*-awareness among those social scientists who have studied the physical remains of past societies (archaeologists and physical anthropologists) rather than the cultural meaning-making practices of current societies (cultural anthropologists). Because there is relatively little introspection in the writings of archaeologists and physical anthropologists, particularly in those individuals who studied the Middle East during the 1920s-1950s, my analysis of archaeologists and physical anthropologists is dependent on reading between the lines of their own writings to gain insights into how archaeological and physical anthropological practices influenced their conclusions about Middle Easterners.

American archaeologists and physical anthropologists were political actors in the

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4. The choice of Sahlins as an example is admittedly arbitrary. The field of anthropology has a long tradition of introspection and self-criticism. Archaeologists, perhaps because its practitioners typically study non-living peoples, has produced fewer reflexive analyses. Marshall David Sahlins, *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays* (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

Middle East. On the most basic level they were engaged in the politics of everyday life as they interacted with peoples of different ethnic, national, and class backgrounds than their own. They were also engaged in more explicitly political work at the governmental level. After World War I, the war's victors, Great Britain and France, dismantled the defeated Ottoman Empire and divided it amongst themselves. With the exception of Turkey and Iran, the countries of North Africa and the Middle East came under direct Western control. This arrangement, done without negotiating or working with local administrators, meant that British and French mandate governments determined who had access to most of the Middle East, including the archaeological sites therein.[5]

American archaeology and physical anthropology in the Middle East were, in 1920, fields in transition. Prior to 1880, Americans had performed very little of what we would recognize as archaeology or physical anthropology in the Middle East. The region itself was felt to be too distant; expeditions were too expensive; and archaeological and physical anthropological methods had not yet been refined into systematized practices. Most American activity in the Middle East prior to 1880 was either missionary or education-related, with the former category accounting for most of the activity. There was, nevertheless, significant American interest, both academic and lay, in the Middle East, as evidenced by numerous works of fiction, travelogue, and, later, film.[6] American

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5. For an analysis of the implications of the Treaty of Versailles on archaeological practices, see James F. Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).
6. A number of books have examined the 19th-century American obsession with Middle Eastern cultural references, including Bruce Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880-1930* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996); Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University

archaeology and physical anthropology changed the dynamic of interactions between Middle Easterners and Americans, but not in the way that most scholars have asserted. Some scholars have claimed that archaeologists and physical anthropologists were impartial observers, in contrast to their main predecessors, missionaries and educators, who explicitly aimed to reform Middle Easterners in a Western model.[7] Other scholars have argued that archaeologists were indeed situated, political actors, but have mostly confined their analyses of effects of that politicization to Middle Eastern nationalism and/ or the field of archaeology itself.[8] I will argue that these ways of understanding archaeologists and physical anthropologists elide the way in which some social scientists

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Press, 2008); Timothy Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Hilton Obenzinger, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999); Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). For histories of Middle Eastern exotica in film, see Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer, eds., *The Silent Cinema Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Gaylyn Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

7. John Wilson, who is a prominent subject in this dissertation, wrote a history of American Egyptology that is still widely considered to be authoritative. It is even-handed, but it also elides the power relationships that scholars now take for granted as being inherent in colonized nations. John Albert Wilson, *Signs & Wonders Upon Pharaoh; a History of American Egyptology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

8. Magnus Thorkell Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*; Donald M. Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity From Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Neil Asher Silberman, *Digging for God and Country: Exploration, Archeology, and the Secret Struggle for the Holy Land, 1799-1917* (New York: Knopf, 1982); Neil Asher Silberman, *Between Past and Present: Archaeology, Ideology, and Nationalism in the Modern Middle East* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).

who studied the Middle East were able to broaden the purview of their academic inquiry to more formally study populations of Middle Easterners, not just Middle Eastern artifacts or history. Abetted by the need that arose in WWII for experts on foreign populations, American archaeologists and physical anthropologists parlayed their *experience in* the Middle East between WWI and WWII into *expertise on* the Middle East. Their work operated under the guise of impartiality that has long been granted to (and sought by) social scientists. But their assertions of impartiality should not be mistaken for its actual existence.

Instead of taking American archaeologists and physical anthropologists at their word, this study seeks to examine the interaction between the supposed impartiality of social scientific observation with the necessary political machinations to gain access to the Middle East. In other words, some social scientists were quick to espouse their disinterestedness in Middle Easterners, but their very presence in the Middle East was dependent on their success as political actors. Some recent scholars have taken archaeologists at their word, perpetuating their own early emphasis on their scientific impartiality.[9]

While there are some scholars today who uncritically celebrate the American expeditions of the 1920s and 1930s, there are others who have gone to great lengths to demonstrate how deeply embroiled archaeologists were in the politics of the countries

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9. Bernhardsson, more than many historians of archaeology, seems to be in the thrall of early archaeologists, which, at some points of his analysis, prevents him from reckoning with some of the more insidious connections between the colonial state and archaeological practices. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq*.

where they studied. Elliot Colla, for instance, has deftly examined the complex interplay between Western scholars and Egyptians from the early 1800s through the 1940s. Colla demonstrates that some Egyptians resisted Western efforts at archaeology, while others cooperated fully and participated in expeditions. Still others appropriated Western findings in ways that were not anticipated by archaeologists, for instance in promoting modern Egyptian nationalism. Colla convincingly argues that the process by which objects became artifacts altered broader perceptions of modern Egypt:

> The artifact brought into being a new relation to the material world of modern Egypt and its inhabitants. This aspect was not lost on travelers, politicians, and archaeologists of the period, who recognized that to know ancient Egypt, one needed to gain control of as many artifacts as possible. To reach this end, they might need to control modern Egypt.[10]

Colla makes clear that some of the colonial impulse of Great Britain in Egypt originated with the urge to collect its antiquities. Knowledge of the past thereby necessitated knowledge of the present.

Colla's account of early Egyptology deepens our understanding of the ways in which the collection of antiquities affected colonialists' perceptions of modern Egypt. But Colla's focus is on what he calls "artifaction," which is his word for the transformation of "things into artifacts."[11] Colla's book does not spend much time discussing the ways in which the practice of archaeology altered the archaeologists' perceptions of modern *Egyptians*. This project seeks to move the discussion on the relationship between American archaeologists and the sites they studied in two significant ways. First, I want to refocus analysis on the Americans who performed these

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10. Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*, 9-10.
11. Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*, 174.

studies. This I not because I do not value the Middle Eastern perspective and, as Colla ably describes, the ways that Egyptians shaped (and continue to shape) Egyptology. This work is greatly indebted to that perspective. But I argue that returning a critical focus to the American archaeologists' roles allows us to more fully reckon with the logistics of becoming American Orientalists.

Second, despite the usefulness that science studies has shown as an analytic lens by taking seriously the role that non-humans have played as historical agents of change, I insist here that it is also necessary to fully understand how humans shape the world through their understandings of other humans, particularly in the post-WWII era, and particularly with regard to the American role in the Middle East. While the Western obsession with antiquities still has significance for us today, as a visit to any American museum will attest, this obsession reached its apogee during the 1920s. Changing antiquities laws, as well as growing political autonomy in the Middle East, greatly accelerated the shift away from physical objects/antiquities as the principle focus of study by Americans in the Middle East. Digs are still important, but what this dissertation examines is the shift from Americans studying antiquities to more prominently studying *peoples*.

Part of this shift occurred at the institutional level. Funding for archaeological projects fell off sharply during the 1930s. The effects of the Great Depression weighed even on rich donors like the Rockefeller family, who greatly curtailed their generous annual funding of the Oriental Institute in Chicago in late 1935. But funding also shifted because of new antiquities laws that prevented the exportation of the great museum

showpieces that attracted the museum-going public to blockbuster exhibitions, as well as the attention of those same rich donors. When the Rockefeller Foundation began to fund scholarly programs again, their funding followed what was then in vogue, which was, by late in WWII and the early postwar period, area studies. This great reorientation of funding also affected individual scholars. Some also shifted their focus from archaeology to something resembling area studies. But the individuals who made that transition were not born anew as area studies scholars. They brought their predilections from their days as archaeologists – in fact, that on-the-ground experience bolstered their scholarly bona fides. This great transformation in how Americans studied the Middle East is what I term the archaeological origins of Middle East area studies. How this shift occurred, and what implications it carried to have archaeologists become experts on peoples, is the subject of this dissertation. Scholars have studied archaeology's importance to Middle Easterners as they fought off colonial oppression.[12] Scholars have also examined the ways in which the circulation of Middle Eastern paraphernalia has determined how Westerners have viewed the Middle East.[13] This dissertation is a study of the way in which a small group of scholars adapted to changing political circumstances by altering their mode of practice, as well as by altering their mode of thinking.

The question of what American archaeologists and physical anthropologists

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12. Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*; Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*; Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity From Napoleon to World War I*.
13. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*; Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania*.

thought about their contemporaries (then-modern-day Middle Easterners) is a fraught one. To some extent, their impressions of Middle Easterners were as variable as the scholars themselves. Even among such a small group of people, there was remarkable variation in what individual Americans thought about the people who happened to live where they wanted to dig. To some scholars, modern Middle Easterners were an afterthought. To some, they were a necessary adjunct to their excavations. To others, they were a fascinating conversation piece, worthy of discussion but not of formal study. Still others saw them as pivotal figures in the emerging world order. In the wake of the work of Edward Said, it has become commonplace to conceptualize Western conceptions of Middle Easterners as part of a totalizing discourse.[14] Taken to an extreme, a reading of Said, especially in his earliest work on the Orientalism thesis, could lead a casual reader to assume that all Westerners adhered to monolithic, negative view of Middle Easterners.[15] To be sure, there were many baldly racist opinions about Middle Easterners that were put forward as factual. There were, however, many cracks in that supposed

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14. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani, *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
15. Many scholars, including Said himself, have added a great deal of nuance to the Orientalism thesis since the original publication of Orientalism in 1979. The present work addresses a small but vital core of would-be Orientalists who both confirm and confound the Orientalist thesis. Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1994); Carol Appadurai Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique* 1 (1985); Mohammad R. Salama, *Islam, Orientalism and Intellectual History: Modernity and the Politics of Exclusion Since Ibn Khaldun* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2011); William V. Spanos, *The Legacy of Edward W. Said* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

monolith, including among the U.S.-based scholars who are the subjects of this dissertation. Understanding the variation among their views, and the efforts of some people to push back against denigrating opinions that were being masqueraded as facts, is essential to understanding this era of U.S.-Middle East relations.

But before going into greater detail about the content of the American perspectives, it is worth addressing the issue of why it matters what American archaeologists and physical anthropologists thought about then-modern-day Middle Easterners. They were not cultural anthropologists, sent abroad to study the current cultural mores of Middle Eastern society. Archaeologists were studying the history and physical remnants of the ancient past. Physical anthropologists studied either excavated skeletal remains, or took measurements of living peoples in a way that minimized interpersonal interaction. The historian did not study the modern Middle East, but instead studied ancient civilizations and languages. Although some attempted to recreate the way that those ancient peoples lived on a day-to-day basis, for the most part archaeologists were more concerned with 'macro' issues – the reigns of kings, construction dates of major structures, and, if possible, any way to anchor such occurrences to Biblical references. Furthermore, despite the fact that most archaeologists and physical anthropologists who traveled to the Middle East kept assiduous notes about their expeditions, for the most part they were concerned with the minutiae of their digs or the details of their cranial measurements. Details that mattered to them were things like burial depth and tool usage. They rarely kept records of their opinions of Middle Easterners in their official logbooks and journals. Such things were outside the purview of their scientific inquiry. Accordingly, it is only more recently that archaeologists have

been subjected to the same type of critical inquiry to which anthropologists have long been subjected. In addition, the archaeologists and physical anthropologists at the center of this dissertation formed a special case. During WWII, they were given the opportunity to comment explicitly about Middle Easterners, becoming de facto cultural anthropologists. These aspects of archaeologists' experiences have been studied in isolation — the pre-war rise of Middle Eastern nationalism; the WWII-era use of American social scientists in the U.S. Information Services; and the ways in which they put their scholarly knowledge to use for the U.S. government after the war. This dissertation demonstrates the continuity between these three formative eras.

During the 1920s and 1930s, archaeologists and physical anthropologists were one of the principle groups of Americans that interacted with Middle Easterners. Their expeditions put them into contact with Middle Easterners of different social and economic strata. From the level of cross-cultural contacts, it matters what kinds of things they thought about Middle Easterners, even if they did not formally study them.[16] Archaeologists' opinions attained an additional level of importance based on how they put their opinions to use after they returned from their expeditions. During World War II, the U.S. government needed people with experience in the Middle East to help formulate American policy towards that region.[17] Social scientists such as archaeologists were

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16. Middle Easterners were undoubtedly forming opinions about Americans based on their interactions with these archaeologists. Although such opinions are not extant in any Western records (for linguistic and cultural reasons), such opinions mattered for their ability to shape later relations. Despite my interest in the scholarship of postcolonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, among others, this dissertation focuses on the writings of Western archaeologists about Middle Easterners, rather than the other way around.

17. Several scholars have examined the participation of U.S. social scientists in WWII.

looked upon as more reliable because they were supposedly not tainted by ideology or religion, the way a missionary might have been. Despite the fact that archaeologists had not studied Middle Easterners in any formal way, they became de facto cultural anthropologists during the war. Equipped with the armor of their scientific expertise, they made sweeping generalizations about the peoples of the Middle East, often extrapolating their limited experience with peoples in one area to apply their opinions to all the citizens of that country, or indeed to all Arabs, all Muslims, or all Middle Easterners. Such generalizations were not only condoned, they were encouraged and acted upon. The United States crafted its propaganda and policy towards the Middle East based in large part on the opinions of a small group of archaeologists' experiences and predilections.

Later, when the postwar period saw the growth of area studies, scholars of the Middle East, regardless of their previous disciplinary homes, were among the best positioned to become Middle East area studies experts. There was already an established tradition of 'Orientalists,' mainly from Britain and France, scholars who claimed expertise about all aspects of a society, from literature to geography to economics to group psychology. American social scientists were aware of these scholarly predecessors,

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The two most oft-cited examples are anthropologists Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, whose careers are examined in the joint biography by historian Lois Banner. Lois W. Banner, *Intertwined Lives: Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Their Circle* (New York: Knopf, 2003). Despite the long and visible history of archaeologists-turned-political actors (with T.E. Lawrence being the most prominent example) there has been relatively little scholarship about American archaeologists who worked for the U.S. government during WWII. Scholar David Price has written about anthropologists' work for the government during the war. However, because there had been almost no cultural anthropologists working in the Middle East prior to the war (only physical anthropologists), few of the scholars who he focused on were experts on the Middle East. David H. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

and some were able to shape their careers in a similar manner. Perceptions of the region itself also played a role in the ability of American social scientists to generalize about all aspects of the society. No social scientist would ever presume to declare himself an expert on Europe, for instance, to choose one counter-example. Yet the Middle East was seen as eligible for such conclusions because it was made up of societies that were perceived to be less complex than Western ones. The combination of a lack of other social scientists working in the region, the longstanding tradition of Orientalism, and the perceived simplicity of Middle Eastern societies combined to create a fertile field for prognosticators.[18]

Three points are key for understanding the impact of these scholars. First, although much of the Middle East was not a prominent military battlefield during World War II, the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were tasked with conquering a psychological battlefield: convincing Middle Easterners to join the Allied, rather than Nazi, side. Those archaeologists and other scholars who joined the U.S. war effort put their previous experience to work. As they sought the most effective means to accomplish this assignment, they exchanged memoranda that debated the content, purpose, and audience of their propaganda. These memos indicate that Americans were thinking critically about the U.S. position vis-à-vis the Middle East during World War II, including how best to approach and attract Middle Easterners to the

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18. Among intellectual historians that focus on U.S.-Middle East relations, Timothy Mitchell and Zachary Lockman have contributed substantially to the literature, in these and other works. Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

American (as sometimes differentiated from Allied) side.[19] These propaganda memos are unique and revealing articulations of the OWI and OSS positions.

Second, when formulating propaganda, these scholars drew from the experiences they had had on scholarly expeditions, even though their work had been to study artifacts, not living peoples. In other words, in the context of the war, an archaeologist who might have studied ancient burial practices at Kish in Mesopotamia made pronouncements about the current peoples of Iraq, despite not having formally studied anything about the contemporary societies of the area. The positions they adopted were circumscribed by their previous experiences.[20]

Third, during and shortly after World War II, the movement that had been building in the United States towards a version of American Orientalism changed into a nascent version of what became Middle East area studies. In a practice that resonates with what many scholars, including Edward Said, Zachary Lockman, and Timothy Mitchell, have said about Orientalists and area studies scholars, social scientists (in this case, archaeologists and physical anthropologists) moved outside of their home

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19. Given the French and British legacy of colonialism in the Middle East, some Americans advocated capitalizing on the relatively more positive reputation of the United States.

20. Based on the negative assessments that scholars have made of National Character anthropologists who worked for the government during the war, it would be difficult to claim that trained cultural anthropologists would have made better recommendations. However, one could argue that they might have made different mistakes. David G. Mandelbaum, "On the Study of National Character," *American Anthropologist* 55, no. 2 (1953); Federico Neiburg and Marcio Goldman, "Anthropology and Politics in Studies of National Character," trans. Peter Gow, *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no. 1 (1998); Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, "Science, Democracy, and Ethics: Mobilizing Culture and Personality for World War II" in *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict, and Others : Essays on Culture and Personality*, ed. George W. Stocking (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 184-217.

disciplines during this period and became generalists who claimed expertise about geography, anthropology, history, sociology, and religion.[21] This same type of disciplinary overreach was true of the historian, Philip Hitti, as well. Such scholars pursued what Mitchell has called "an unachieved American project of universal social science."[22] This trend coalesced during World War II, establishing the basis of the field of Middle East area studies.

Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms Middle East and Middle Easterners to refer to a geographic region and its inhabitants. The origins of this term are complex, and its usage varies in the area it describes. To give some indication of the way in which the expression Middle East has avoided critical scrutiny, as recently as 2012, an edited volume could boldly declare on its back cover that "no one studying the region has yet addressed whether this conceptualization has real meaning –and then articulated what and where the Middle East is, or is not."[23] That volume, *Is There a Middle East?: The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*, traces the usage of the term across centuries, academic disciplines, and in multiple languages. In English language usage, and particularly in its American usage, the term "Middle East" is usually traced back to U.S.

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21. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, ed. David L. Szanton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
22. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, 89.
23. Michael E. Bonine, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper, eds. *Is There a Middle East?: The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mayan, who first used it in 1902. Matthew Jacobs has written that "Mahan's views...were central to new perceptions of the region that focused on secular, as opposed to sacred, concerns."[24] Prior to the widespread adoption of "Middle East" as a term, the region was often referred to as the "Near East." Jacobs has asserted that, by WWII, "'Near East' and 'Middle East' became essentially interchangeable terms in emerging specialist and popular imaginings of the region."[25] (The most prominent exception to the interchangeability of Near East and Middle East is Iran, which is sometimes included in the Middle East, but would not be included in the Near East.) To use examples relevant to this dissertation, James Henry Breasted, a prominent archaeologist who died in 1935, referred to the region as the Near East. Carleton Coon, a physical anthropologist who worked in Morocco during the 1920s, but continued his career well past the Second World War, adopted the term Middle East.[26]

Going a conceptual step further, Zachary Lockman has pointed out that "denominating this portion of the earth's surface as the Middle East is just as arbitrary as depicting it as part of the Orient. It encompasses a vast area of great ecological diversity, from snowbound mountains to barren deserts to fertile river valleys and rain-watered

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24. Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 26.
25. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967*, 29.
26. Coon addressed the terminological conundrum in one of his texts by writing, "scholars who enjoy arguing about nonessentials are of two minds about the term Middle East. It seems to have been concocted during World War II to designate the Cairo command of the British Army. Before that people referred to the Near East, meaning in a general way the Arabic-speaking areas of the former Turkish Empire, from Egypt to 'Iraq and from Syria to the Arabian peninsula. Some still do." Carleton S. Coon, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East.* (New York: Holt, 1951), 1.

coastal plains, includes huge cities as well as myriad towns and villages, and is inhabited by many different peoples with their own distinct languages, cultures and ways of life."[27] Also of concern, he writes, is the fact that "calling this region the Middle East obviously manifests a Eurocentric perspective: it is 'middle' and 'eastern' only in relation to Europe. Yet the term Middle East has caught on, not only in the West but even in the languages of the region itself, where it is widely used."[28] For the purposes of this dissertation, the Middle East stretches from Morocco in the west to Iran in the east. I have been prompted to include that geographic area because some of the men who I have written about, during the time period covered by this dissertation, began to see that region as one whose component countries and inhabitants shared salient characteristics. While North African countries west of Egypt (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) are not always included in conceptualizations of the Middle East, I have included them here. I have done so in part because Carleton Coon's original area of study was Morocco, but also because numerous scholars who had never been west of Egypt were nevertheless asked to help prepare intelligence for the Allied invasion of western North Africa. The necessities of war often served to collapse categories and broaden the purview of expertise.

My use of the term Middle East in this dissertation also includes Iran, which, as mentioned earlier, sometimes is not included in the geographic boundaries of the term. Iran is sometimes left outside of the Middle East for those who consider the Middle East to be congruent with the Arab world. I have included it here because Donald Wilber, one

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27. Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 97-98.
28. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 98.

of the subjects of this dissertation, worked primarily in Iran. Interestingly, though, I do not think that Wilber viewed himself as an expert on the entire Middle East as much as he felt he developed expertise on individual countries within the Middle East. His category of analysis was mainly the nation-state, and he therefore shared numerous common characteristics with a group that has become known as analysts of "national character." Nevertheless, because Wilber wrote with such a sense of authority about so many different countries, he also tended to collapse descriptions of peoples based on general geographic categorization.

This dissertation has four chapters. Chapter One covers the period from 1919-1939, when American archaeologists in the post-WWI period saw opportunities to increase their involvement in the region. James Henry Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, was foremost amongst American archaeologists in prominence, funding, and political connections. As was just mentioned, Breasted died in 1935; he was never formally affiliated with the U.S. government. However, as we will see in Chapter Two, many of his students and former employees were. That chapter details the use of American archaeologists and physical anthropologists in the U.S. Information Services of World War II, when these men (and a handful of women) took their experiences with Middle Eastern artifacts, and derived from those experiences actionable information about Middle Eastern peoples. Chapter Three details the demobilization from the wartime "Chairborne Division," as those social scientists who had been providing information for the U.S. government returned, or tried to return, to their prewar scholarly duties. They returned to the academy with a variety of ideas of how to change their departments. That chapter details the proposed changes by John

Wilson at the University of Chicago and Philip Hitti at Princeton University to become outposts for Middle East area studies. Chapter Four focuses on Donald Wilber, a scholar who published widely and taught sporadically, but also worked as a contract worker for the CIA during the postwar period. Wilber exemplified the way in which some scholars adapted to the postwar reality by maintaining a close relationship with the U.S. government. While Wilber's example is an extreme one, his work for the CIA is indicative of a number of larger trends that occurred within the academy in relation to Middle East area studies.

This narrative is deeply invested in something that had potential to happen, but ultimately did not come to pass: the creation of Middle East area studies departments that had, built into their structure, means of modulating government influence over scholarship. Although I do not deeply analyze the development of Middle East area studies centers during the 1950s, as mentioned previously, other scholars have performed that analysis. They have found a high degree of complicity between those two institutions. The example of government-scholar collusion that I examine in this dissertation is that of Wilber, whose example is egregious, but also serves to show the outer extreme of such practices. The more typical ties were more subtle, but were similarly insidious. Wilson and Hitti, who were charged by their respective institutions with establishing centers for the study of the contemporary Middle East, were, due to their government work during WWII, aware of the ways in which government collaboration could corrupt knowledge production. Yet neither man was able to institutionalize a sufficient firewall between government and academia. As a result,

despite the fact that they did not participate in Middle East area studies as it was sometimes practiced as an adjunct of the U.S. government, they too are implicated in not having done more to prevent that mode of connivance from influencing Middle East area studies.

Chapter One

American archaeological expeditions to the Middle East in the 1920s and 1930s were inextricably intertwined with the histories of European colonialism and archaeology in the region. This chapter begins with a political history of Western involvement in the Middle East, focusing in particular on the aspects of archaeological history that exerted the greatest influence on American archaeologists. That is followed by an examination of the evolution of American archaeological thought from 1919-1939. Generally speaking, that time period had three main divisions: first, from 1919-1922, when the beginning of the colonial mandate system in the Middle East cleared the way for archaeologists to operate with relative impunity. The second period, from 1923-1929, was marked by rising nationalism in Middle Eastern states. As has been explored by a number of scholars, the rise in anti-colonial nationalism often played out in public over disputes about who had the rights to archaeological sites and artifacts. The last period, from 1930-1939, coincided with the Great Depression, which curtailed the number of archaeological expeditions to the Middle East. One consequence of the rapid rise, and subsequent precipitous decline, of American archaeology in the Middle East was the large cohort of young archaeologists and physical anthropologists who trained on expeditions during the 1920s and early 1930s, then found themselves out of work when the effects of the Depression hit their institutions' funding streams. As a result, when World War II broke out, there were numerous unaffiliated scholars who had spent time in the Middle East, and could lend their experience to the American war effort. This chapter will also lay the groundwork for the subsequent three chapters by delving into the

specific experiences that young archaeologists and physical anthropologists had on expeditions during the 1920s and 1930s.

When American archaeologists first mounted expeditions to the Middle East, they knew a great deal about the region's ancient history, but often quite little about its recent history. The recent past was considered to be outside of their purview. In the aftermath of World War I, when American archaeologists travelled to the Middle East in substantial numbers for the first time, the region was in flux due to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire, at its peak, stretched from present-day Morocco in the west to present-day Iraq in the east. From its apogee in the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire was buffeted by competition from a number of directions. The ascendency of European powers during the 19th century led to an all-out assault on the territories that could no longer be controlled by the diminished Ottoman Empire. There were three international crises preceding WWI that historian Eric Hobsbawm has identified as bringing the great powers closest to war. They all involved conflict over a territory in North Africa or the Near East.[1] The Ottoman territories were fought over extensively during the war itself. It was only during 1916 when England and France gained full military advantage over the Ottoman army. That year was also a pivotal one for setting in motion the postwar division of the Ottoman territories.[2]

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1. E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 321. Hobsbawm emphasizes the brinksmanship of the Tangier (Morocco) Crisis of 1905-1906, the Turkish Revolution of 1908, and the Agadir (Morocco) Crisis of 1911.
2. Scott Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East* 2013). Anderson's book focuses on T.E. Lawrence's experiences in the Middle East before, during, and after WWI, but he also provides invaluable background on the war in the Middle Eastern theater. See also John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: A. Knopf ; Distributed by Random House, 1999).

In May 1916, the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement between the United Kingdom, France, and Russia stipulated that the Ottoman Empire would be divided into spheres of influence after the war. In June 1916, the Arab Revolt, supported by the British Army, began. One of the central premises of the Arab Revolt was that, in return for Arab military support against the Central Powers, the British would support Arab self-rule after the war. Clearly these two developments, made within one month of each other, worked at cross purposes.[3] It was not until late 1917 that the Sykes-Picot agreement became public, and it was not until after the war, at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the San Remo Conference of 1920, that the British and French colonial designs on the Middle East were put into practice. Yet for all intents and purposes, the effects of the European colonial spheres of influence on Middle Easterners were felt much sooner.

Specifically, there was a growing awareness within a number of Middle Eastern countries of the vast disconnect between the espoused ideals of many Western powers, and the actual policies that those powers enacted after WWI. Mohammad R. Salama has pointed out that "not only did Europe take its own values for granted in the Versailles Treaty, seeking to apply them to its colonized subjects, but it ironically failed to uphold

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Although Keegan focuses mainly on the war in Europe, he also includes useful sections on "The Wider War," and his text is helpful in providing a broader context for the war.

3. The actual boundary lines established by the Sykes-Picot Agreement were later redrawn in postwar planning, at which point "the Sykes-Picot agreement then became irrelevant to the later map of the Middle East," according to author Christopher Catherwood. Despite the relative unimportance of the agreement's terms, the existence of the treaty has become shorthand for British imperial perfidy in the Middle East. Christopher Catherwood, *Churchill's Folly: How Winston Churchill Created Modern Iraq* (New York: Carroll & Graf Pub., 2004), 56. The existence of the agreement was revealed in 1917 after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, at which point the Bolsheviks revealed all the previously secret foreign agreements and treaties entered into by Czarist Russia.

those same ideals. The Versailles Treaty was therefore a major disappointment to colonized subjects and to anti-colonial movements in general within Europe and abroad."[4] Historian Erez Manela has documented this widespread disappointment in his book *The Wilsonian Moment*, which analyzes the acutely-felt betrayal among colonized peoples at the bald hypocrisy on display in the post-WWI land grab. And while Manela pointed out that some of the prominent activists of the later anticolonial movement first articulated their positions vis-a-vis the unfulfilled promise of the Wilsonian Moment (thereby giving the Moment a later, more productively anticolonial importance), it was still a time when the United States could have lead the European powers in decolonization, rather than reifying the existing order. Manela's book, which traverses the globe in documenting what was truly a worldwide phenomenon, originated out of research he was doing on the anti-colonial movement in Egypt, one of the most prominent sites for this type of activism.[5] Salama and Manela assert that U.S. ideals were betrayed in American acquiescence to British and French colonial designs. However, both scholars argue that the main drivers of colonial policy in the Middle East were Britain and France.

Ussama Makdisi has gone a step further than Salama and Manela to argue that the United States enjoys a special culpability for the perpetuation of colonialism in the Middle East. For one thing, the Wilsonian Moment is named after U.S. President—and espouser of self-determination as a goal of U.S. policy—Woodrow Wilson. The fact that

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4. Salama, *Islam, Orientalism and Intellectual History: Modernity and the Politics of Exclusion Since Ibn Khaldun*, 190.
5. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Preface.

Wilson pressed so hard for a League of Nations to be formed, and then was unable to ensure its passage through Congress, subjects him to a particular perfidy in Makdisi's narrative. But just as important to Makdisi is how the long history of U.S. engagement in the Middle East led Arabs to carry a certain "faith" in U.S. actions in the Middle East. He relates an extended pre-WWII narrative of what he calls "the largely voluntary and private relationships between Americans and Arabs rather than between states," which were "a fairly fluid and open set of cultural interactions."[6] He contrasts those open and positive interactions with the betrayal felt by Arabs when those private interactions did not translate into American support for Arab political self-rule.

The mandates had two significant effects on the relationship that the growing field of American archaeology formed with the region of its study. First, as of 1919, British and French authorities controlled access to Middle Eastern archaeological sites. Americans were dependent on British and French largesse, rather than the help of local Middle Easterners, for their expeditions. Permits, visas, and letters of introduction were all filtered through the European powers. Second, because of this political situation, Americans interacted most frequently with Europeans, accepting as a result their predilections, opinions, and stereotypes of Middle Easterners. American archaeologists did not adopt wholesale the European viewpoint of Middle Easterners, which was, not incidentally, sometimes filled with racism and sweeping generalizations, but the

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6. Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced : The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2001* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 5. Although Makdisi placed a great deal of importance in the post-WWI disappointment of Arabs, his pivot point for the breakdown of American-Arab relations was American support for the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

European viewpoint, for many Americans, was their first crash course in the peoples of the Middle East.[7] Those Americans who had studied the Middle East prior to 1920 had focused their work on ancient civilizations, and seemingly had not given a great deal of thought to the modern inhabitants of those lands. Some Americans readily adopted the European view of Middle Easterners as lazy, slow, and pre-modern, as shorthand for their daily interactions.[8] In contrast, there was also a strong impulse among some Americans to distinguish themselves from their European colleagues. Not only did some Americans self-consciously reject the general European view of Middle Easterners, but some also saw an advantage in maintaining a distinct American identity. Americans, they thought, were still perceived favorably by many Middle Easterners, in contrast to the almost universally-detested British and French. American archaeologists could therefore align with the expeditions of other Western nations when it was expedient to do so; but they could also claim a special dispensation as Americans when among Middle Easterners.[9]

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7. European colonial structures are discussed in the histories of archaeology and Orientalism cited elsewhere. Other excellent histories of European colonialism in the Middle East abound, with two excellent examples being Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Heather J. Sharkey, *Living With Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

8. As James Goode put it, "Archaeologists were not free from the prejudices of their day, of course, and many carried to the Middle East those notions of racial and religious superiority that were common baggage in the West." Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*, 9.

9. One example of this British-American push-pull was in a joint Oxford-Field Museum expedition to Kish, Mesopotomia in the 1920s. The relationship between the two institutions broke down at some point, resulting in the complete findings not being published until the 1960s in a dissertation by McGuire Gibson. Henry Field, *The Field Museum-Oxford University Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia, 1923-1929* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1929); Henry Field and Field Museum-Oxford University Joint Expedition to Mesopotamia, *Arabs of Central Iraq, Their History, Ethnology, and Physical Characters* (Chicago: 1935); Henry Field and Field Museum-Oxford University

This pattern continued into American dealings in the Middle East during WWII.

Archaeology also took on a particularly important role in the movement towards Middle Eastern self-rule, as a number of countries, most prominently Egypt and Turkey, began to pass antiquities laws that limited what could be removed from archaeological sites. Furthermore, such countries insisted that archaeological digs include local workers and authorities, thereby breaking the monopoly that Western powers had held over archaeology in the Middle East. The effect of political changes on archaeological procedures in the Middle East has been discussed at length in several books.[10] Although widely bemoaned by archaeologists of that earlier era, most scholars today accept that Middle Easterners had the right to claim autonomy over their own antiquities. Still controversial is whether or not this shift in authority was beneficial to archaeology as a field, with scholars such as Magnus Thorkell Bernhardsson expressing some dismay that Western archaeological practices did not continue after Iraqi independence, even as he acknowledges the imperial overtone of his own wishful thinking. As he put it, "Western

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Joint Expedition to Mesopotamia Field, *Excavations At Kish; the Herbert Weld (for the University of Oxford) and Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago) Expedition to Mesopotamia* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1924); Henry Field and Field Museum-Oxford University Joint Expedition to Mesopotamia Field, *Kish Excavations, 1923-1933: With a Microfiche Catalogue of the Objects in Oxford Excavated By the Oxford-Field Museum, Chicago, Expedition to Kish in Iraq, 1923-1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); McGuire Gibson, *The City and Area of Kish*. Coconut Grove, FL: Field Research Projects, 1972.

10. Abbas Amanat and Magnus Thorkell Bernhardsson, eds., *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters: A Critical Survey* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007); Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq*; Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*; Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*; Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity From Napoleon to World War I.*

archaeologists of 1920-1940 certainly made self-serving arguments and may have abused their position in one way or another, but in the end, at least as it seems in the last years of the twentieth century in Saddam's Iraq, their activities were more beneficial to archaeology as a science and their recommendations, in the long run, could have preserved more artifacts."[11] Although scholars do not go so far as to express outright nostalgia for Western archaeological dominance, many do wish that anti-colonial nationalism and Middle Eastern independence movements had not exerted such a strong influence on the field of archaeology, even as they understand the importance of archaeological history for the burgeoning nationalist movements in many Middle Eastern nations.[12]

Archaeology was a unique flashpoint for Middle Easterners who were struggling to assert their national identity and authority. Some leaders, particularly those in Egypt,

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11. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq*, 217. Bernhardsson defended his dissertation at Yale University in 1999, and his book was published in 2005. He evidently rewrote portions of the manuscript after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 (and incorporated his analysis of Western press coverage of the post-invasion ransacking of Iraq's National Museum, which held most of the most prized archaeological finds that were still in Iraq). Nevertheless, there are portions of the book that retain some latent nostalgia for past archaeological practices that would have preserved more artifacts. Such nostalgia takes on a particular poignancy in light of the complete mishandling of post-invasion security on the part of the U.S. Army, which affected many Iraqi institutions, including cultural ones such as the museum.
12. Orit Bashkin, the scholar interviewed for this Breasted-focused Chicago Public Radio show, expressed dismay that Iraqi antiquities had not been better taken care of by the Iraqi authorities, a viewpoint which elided the root cause of the looting of the Iraq Museum – namely, the American invasion and subsequent failure to guard the museum. Jerome McDonald, "Worldview - Pioneers to the Past: The Story of James Henry Breasted," *Worldview* (2010). Other scholars have been more willing to place blame for the looting of archaeological sites in the hands of the military invaders of 2003. See Benjamin R. Foster, Karen Polinger Foster, and Patty Gerstenblith, eds., *Iraq Beyond the Headlines: History, Archaeology, and War* (Hackensack, N. J.: World Scientific, 2005), 213-24.

Iran, and Turkey, encouraged archaeological discoveries as a means of linking their countries' current situation to the past glories of the ancient civilizations that formerly inhabited those areas.[13] Archaeology also proved to be a significant way to assert power over Westerners, at a time when international mandates limited the authority that Middle Easterners had over their own lands. Outlawing the exportation of antiquities was an effective thumb in the eye of Western powers.

Western archaeologists were frequently aggravated by the newfound regional interest in archaeology. Whereas previously they had enjoyed near-complete autonomy, the assertive leaders of the Middle East wanted to control aspects of archaeological digs that had previously been left in Western hands. For instance, the division was a longstanding tradition in Western digs in the Middle East. At the end of the season, all the finds were laid out, and representatives of each interested party–the Western institution, and the Middle Eastern government–could choose what they wanted to have. It was essentially a draft for artifacts. Agatha Christie witnessed the division through the eyes of her husband, British archaeologist Max Mallowan:

> The burning moment of 'The Division' is now drawing near....It is left to Max to arrange everything found in two parts exactly as he pleases....In the end we lose all sense of value....
> All is over! The Division has taken place. M. and Madama Dunand have examined, handled, reflected. We have stood looking on in the usual agony. Then he flings a hand out...'Eh, bien, I will take this one.' True to human nature, whichever half is chosen, we immediately wish it had been the other.[14]

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13. Reid and Goode make extensive use of political archives from Middle Eastern nations. Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*; Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity From Napoleon to World War I.*
14. Agatha Christie, *Come, Tell Me How You Live.* (London: Collins, 1946), 185-191, quoted in Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in*

Over time, Middle Eastern governments altered the terms of the division to make the terms more favorable towards them. This rankled Western archaeologists who had grown accustomed to dictating the terms of engagement and compensation. No longer were they able to remove substantial artifacts for display, a practice that had provided tangible evidence of an expedition's success, impressing both the general public and donors.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Western archaeology and physical anthropology was premised on the acquisition and display of ancient artifacts. Andrew Zimmerman has called this practice "primitive accumulation," and has situated it within "a larger reorientation of nineteenth-century European urban culture toward things as a source of meaning."[15] Just as the German anthropologists in Zimmerman's book were thwarted by colonized peoples who "challenged European interpretations of the exchange," so too were Middle Eastern peoples able to reclaim some of their countries' patrimony.[16] Developments that hindered access to artifacts created an existential crisis for the field. As competition grew for artifacts both between Western collectors, as well as those in the Middle East, prices rose. Archaeological expeditions, already expensive, were made more expensive by the higher cost of artifacts, which was one of the first effects felt by the field. The second move was to actually restrict what could be removed from the country, with native governments increasingly asserting their right to keep the best objects. In other words, first the cost of artifacts became prohibitive, and, shortly thereafter, the removal of artifacts was actually prohibited. Western archaeologists might still remove

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the Middle East, 1919-1941, 58.

15. Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 149.

16. Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, 151.

select finds, but more often they were items of lesser significance, particularly for those Westerners who had grown accustomed to picking the most illustrious pieces for their home institutions.

American archaeologists reacted to the new restrictions on their work. Some initiated digs in countries that did not have antiquities laws. However, it was not long before numerous Middle Eastern countries had established stricter laws, and many archaeologists realized that the opportunities that had long structured their field would no longer be available.[17] Either they transitioned to modes of inquiry that emphasized in situ interpretation, or they left the field entirely. American archaeology would never again reach the peaks of funding, finding, and founding it enjoyed during the 1920s. Yet, while changing conditions for archaeologists within the Middle East influenced a number of changes within the field, those changes did not entirely account for the shift of inquiry from artifacts to people facts – from archaeology to area studies. The changing geopolitical landscape in which American archaeologists found themselves during and after WWII also influenced some to focus more on the contemporary Middle East.

The idea that Middle Easterners could take charge of their own past ran up against a deeply-held set of beliefs among Western archaeologists that Westerners were in fact the proper caretakers of those ancient civilizations. Some of these ideas were couched in scientific terms, others in civilizational terms. Scientifically, Westerners claimed to have

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17. Morag M. Kersal, "The Changing Legal Landscape for Middle Eastern Archaeology in the Colonial Era, 1800-1930," in Geoff Emberling, ed., *Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919-1920 (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010), 85-90.* In some countries, antiquities laws had long been on the books, but the mid-1920s saw increased enforcement of those laws.

a monopoly on archaeological technique. One can say with certainty that they had a monopoly on the way that they claimed was the correct way to excavate an archaeological site. Until mandated to do so by Middle Eastern governments as a condition of their being granted the ability to dig, Westerners generally did not train Middle Easterners to excavate in the specialized manner that developed over roughly a century of archaeological digging.[18]

The proper way to excavate a site became, over time, a matter of mining each minute artifact for the tiniest clue as to its use, placement, and history. By the early 1900s, historical archaeology became more than simply unearthing the largest and most obvious artifacts. It became a matter of charting out excavation sites with careful grids; drawing and/or photographing the sites prior to digging, and at regular intervals thereafter; and using delicate tools to sift through each layer of dirt and sand, careful to note each irregularity.[19] This shift in archaeological methodology was part of a larger shift in scientific observation, in which detailed measurements and observations became the currency of science. This shift also served to raise the bar of entry to such fields. A

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18. According to archaeologist Susan Pollock, this practice has not changed up to the present day: "It is striking, however, that one rarely finds a published report in which local laborers are acknowledged by name; at most, they tend to be thanked in the aggregate, in contrast to the common practice of listing all foreign members of a team and local officials. To the best of my knowledge, no laborer—with one exception—has ever been included as an author in an archaeological report, perhaps because few have ever been encouraged to engage in anything other than physical work on an excavation project," Susan Pollock, "Decolonizing Archaeology: Political Economy and Archaeological Practice in the Middle East" in Ran Boytner, Lynn Swartz Dodd, and Bradley J. Parker, eds., *Controlling the Past, Owning the Future : The Political Uses of Archaeology in the Middle East* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 206.
19. My understanding of the history of archaeological methodology and ideology is heavily indebted to Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

casual observer might record most of the details that a professional would, but the professional knew the protocol in order to make his observations stand up to scientific rigor. In other words, as archaeologists grew more concerned with the layers they were digging out, so too did they add layers to the processes that accompanied their craft. Each successive innovation in technique complicated the teaching and learning of the science. By continually making the process more complicated, Westerners kept interlopers from joining their field. Combined with the low opinions that many Westerners held about Middle Easterners' capacity for learning, archaeologists developed a built-in excuse to keep from teaching Middle Easterners how to perform more than the most menial tasks at excavation sites.

One of the most repeated complaints that Western archaeologists had about Middle Easterners was that they had no respect for the scientific process that, to the Westerners, had to accompany the excavation of each site, each layer, each artifact. At their most self-righteous, an archaeologist would say that an artifact stripped of its context (i.e. the other items that were around it when it was found) was stripped of its scientific value. A vase could be an entirely intact and utterly unique specimen, but without knowing if it came from a house, a place of worship, or a burial site, it had no narrative to go along with it. Yet Western archaeology had not always paid attention to such details. Earlier in its development, it was extremely artifact-centric, searching mostly for the pieces that would serve as the most glamorous for display in museums, or even private collections.

Ironically, by making the process of archaeological discovery so complicated that,

in their minds, it could not be taught to Middle Easterners, Western archaeologists planted the seed of their second largest complaint about Middle Easterners, that they stole antiquities and sold them on the black market. Westerners had monetized ancient artifacts in the first place, by traveling to the Middle East in search of such pieces. But it was seemingly by not including Middle Easterners in the archaeological process that Westerners set the stage for even more dealing in illicit antiquities. The Middle East was awash in antiquities, due to the number of ancient civilizations that had thrived there at different times in human history. In order to monetize those sites, Middle Easterners mined them for precious, intact pieces, which could be sold for the most money. The casual tourist-collector did not care about provenance, and even most museum buyers could not be bothered with such details. They would buy an interesting piece even if they suspected it was ill-gotten gains.[20] But there are no records of a Western museum purchasing the archaeological field records of an expedition performed by Middle Easterners. In other words, there was no way for Middle Easterners to make money from performing 'archaeology' as practiced by Western scientists. They could serve as adjuncts to Western expeditions, providing manual labor or selling goods or services to the members of a Western expedition. But during the 1920s and 1930s they could not be expected to be archaeologists in Western-controlled lands. Alternatively, an enterprising individual could do well by finding individual pieces and selling them on the black

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20. Some recent works have started to more closely examine the impact that the illicit antiquities trade has had on the practice of archaeology. See Paula Kay Lazrus and Alex W. Barker, eds., *All the King's Horses: Essays on the Impact of Looting and the Illicit Antiquities Trade on our Knowledge of the Past* (Washington, D.C.: SAA Press, Society for American Archaeology, 2012).

market. In some countries, such as Egypt, there was a legal market for antiquities. Having the legal market could also create the conditions for dealers encouraging the removal of antiquities from archaeological sites without recording the conditions in which they were found. In most cases, Western archaeologists did not dig too deeply into how a given antiquity came into the possession of a dealer. In this way, Western archaeologists, created the conditions for a market (legal or not, depending on the country and time) in antiquities, which they were otherwise vocal about trying to curtail. In some cases, archaeologists would purchase antiquities, although while maintaining plausible deniability.[21]

James Henry Breasted was the most prominent American archaeologist working in the Middle East from 1919 until his death in 1935. His experiences and expeditions are representative of American archaeological involvement in the Middle East during this time period. Beginning with an extensive artifact-gathering expedition in 1919-20, Breasted ramped up a number of high-profile expeditions to the Middle East.[22] Breasted's ideas were highly influential in the field of archaeology as a whole, but were particularly

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21. James Henry Breasted had broad purchasing powers from his home institution (Chicago's Oriental Institute) as well as other institutions when he traveled to the Middle East in 1919. Breasted's 1919-1920 expedition was commemorated in a 2010 exhibit at the Oriental Institute called "Pioneers to the Past: American archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919-1920." This exhibit offered an intriguing window into both the way the expedition was perceived at the time, as well as how it is reflected upon from within the institution of the OI today. I visited the exhibition in 2010. The antiquities market in 1919 was relatively open. Licensed vendors could legally sell to buyers like Breasted, and Breasted could make arrangements to export the objects he acquired. Antiquities dealers were not required to demonstrate how they acquired the item.

22. See Geoff Emberling, ed., *Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919-1920* (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010).

influential with his scholarly acolytes. As a philologist, he began to de-emphasize the acquisition of artifacts as the central goal of archaeological fieldwork. (Although he was not immune to the impulse to acquire.) His most lasting contribution to fieldwork in Egypt, in fact, is an epigraphic survey that set as its goal the transcription of every hieroglyph in the country. As an "Orientalist," Breasted was, for some of his acolytes, a progenitor of an American model of Middle East area studies. As Breasted biographer Jeffrey Abt has pointed out, Breasted self-identified as "an 'Orientalist,' as opposed to the narrower designation 'Egyptologist.'"[23] Breasted's expansive view of what objects of study came under the purview of the Orientalist influenced the subsequent generation of scholars.

Few Americans had formally studied Middle Easterners when Breasted organized his Oriental Institute expedition to the region in 1919. Breasted was already a prominent figure in American archaeology by the time he sought funding to establish a formal Oriental Institute. He had studied with the comparative philologist William Rainey Harper at Yale. When Harper was offered the first presidency of the newly-formed University of Chicago in 1891, he recruited Breasted to join the faculty. However, he insisted that Breasted first complete a doctorate in Germany, a practice which was then in vogue amongst Americans who "were especially smitten with the positivist ethos of German research and its ideology of 'science' that came to stand for exactitude and verifiability in all spheres of learning."[24] From that point on, Breasted was part of a group

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23. Jeffrey Abt, *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 59.
24. Abt, *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute*, 19.

of American scholars who tried to "supplant amateur puttering with professional rigor."[25] In particular, Breasted's project contrasted with the Biblical archaeology that had preceded it, which was mainly concerned with finding hard evidence of stories from the Bible.[26] Although Breasted was a religious man, he thought that religion should not infiltrate the hard science of archaeology. In 1894, Breasted was the first American to be granted a PhD in Egyptology, from the University of Berlin, and by 1919 he was already the author of numerous popular texts on the ancient civilizations of the Middle East. He also had a knack for self-promotion and institution building, which boded well for his ability to convince John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to finance the Oriental Institute. The OI was designed to be a museum under the broader auspices of the University of Chicago. After WWI, Breasted saw his opportunity to capitalize on the political uncertainty of the postwar period to make inroads on behalf of his American sponsors, which included both the Oriental Institute and the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as Rockefeller himself. Archaeological sites that had previously been off limits were now open for exploration, and antiquities dealers who had built up a backlog of artifacts during the war were eager to unload their inventories, often at extremely low prices.

Well positioned to benefit from the region's political instability, Breasted mounted an expedition, secured a budget, and recruited graduate students to accompany him. Although a philologist and archaeologist by training, his priority on this first expedition was not to record inscriptions or unearth new sites, but was rather to acquire

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25. Abt, *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute*, 19.
26. Bruce Kuklick describes many of the earlier, Biblical expeditions in Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880-1930*.

what had already been dug up. He also wanted to establish connections with local administrators that would allow him access to archaeological sites when he decided to return. On both counts, the OI and Breasted considered this initial, eight-month trip to have been a success. The main goals of the 1919-1920 OI expedition were purchasing antiquities and making personal and political connections that would facilitate later expeditions. The expedition was not concerned with seeing actual sites, and was not equipped to properly excavate them. This set of circumstances meant that the group's main interactions with local residents were through British and French administrators and antiquities dealers, rather than with Middle Eastern workers or officials. Moving forward, this way of doing things would prove to be unusual, as 1922 marked a turning point year in which Middle Easterners fought harder, and with more frequent gains, to exercise autonomy over the archaeological discoveries being made within their lands. That year was most important for the unearthing of the tomb of Tutankhamen by Howard Carter. Once the tomb was uncovered, the rightful division of its contents became a contentious issue through which decades of anti-colonial resentment played out over the partitioning of the stunning artifacts contained therein.[27]

Breasted was decidedly pro-Western. He did, however, espouse a then-novel conception that Western society was an outgrowth of Near Eastern civilization, not Greek and Roman society, as had been argued by classicists. He argued that civilization was

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27. This issue has been explored in numerous books, including Carter's own. Carter became increasingly obstinate during the process, and eventually was ready to wash his hands of the entire matter. Carter spoke "several dialects of Arabic fluently," (x) which serves as a useful reminder that learning a local language does not necessarily align an individual with the local society. Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamen* (New York: Dover Publications, 1977).

born in the Fertile Crescent, a term he coined to describe the productive strip of land between the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia. Such a view glorified the accomplishments of those ancient Middle Eastern civilizations, drawing attention to their achievements in a way that had not been done previously. Yet Breasted's positive view of ancient Middle Easterners was coupled with his view that modern Middle Easterners were not the civilizational heirs to the great civilizations of the past. He was adamant that those Middle Eastern societies had ceded their knowledge and preeminence among humanity to the West. Rather than serving as a way to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of Middle Easterners through their civilizational heritage, Breasted's viewpoint in fact denigrated them further, pointing out, in his view, how far they had fallen from their past heights, and how thoroughly they had been surpassed by the West in every measure. Breasted was also an early American proponent of the idea of universal patrimony. This ideology espoused that because the Western world has its origins in the ancient civilizations of the Middle East, Westerners had every right to excavate Middle Eastern archaeological sites and claim what they find their for their own museums. This logic has evolved from Breasted's time, when he confidently claimed that Westerners were in fact the rightful heirs to Middle Eastern civilizations, leaving present-day Middle Easterners with no claim or connection to those ancient civilizations.

Breasted was frequently and explicitly political in his contacts both with colonial administrators as well as with local contacts. He exhibited a bias towards the Western administrators of the places that he visited, offering to assist them by, for instance, reporting his observations about the places he visited and the people he encountered to

Britain's Foreign Minister, Lord Curzon. He performed that service as a courtesy for British protection, but also for additional access. In sum, Breasted was thoroughly in league with his Western allies. To Breasted, Middle Easterners happened to live near, but no longer had any meaningful connection to, the artifacts and sites of the ancient Middle East. Although Breasted has been described as an "an accidental intelligence agent...[who] took a political role that most archaeologists today avoid," in many ways his actions on behalf of the British colonial authority were intrinsic to his Middle East expeditions.[28] Breasted's political role was not accidental. Such political interactions continue with present-day archaeology. Archaeologists today still interact with Middle Eastern governments for permits, and are dependent on good relations with such bureaucracies for their continued access to archaeological sites. Furthermore, archaeologists still influence, and are influenced by, present-day perceptions of the regions and peoples they study.[29] Just as significant, Breasted's students did not just learn his archaeological methodologies. They also inherited his willingness to act as a government informant.

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28. "Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919-1920." The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637. 15 August 2010.

29. Archaeologist Susan Pollock captures the dynamic well: "Willingly or not, foreign archaeologists arrive on the scene as representatives of the authority and power of the local government…if further 'proof' is needed, it is evident to local villagers from the beginning that they have little, if any, say over whether the foreigners may stay and work; rather, negotiations are confined principally to matters of how much rent or other compensation will be paid for crops destroyed and land set aside for excavation. In other words, from the outset the relationship between foreigners and locals rests on an unequal footing, with the archaeologists having the implicit threat of government authority behind them," Pollock, "Decolonizing Archaeology: Political Economy and Archaeological Practice in the Middle East" in Boytner, Swartz Dodd, and Parker, eds., *Controlling the Past, Owning the Future: The Political Uses of Archaeology in the Middle East*, 204.

One significant paradox of the 1919-1920 expedition was that around Breasted's status as an American traveling in the Middle East. On the one hand, he depicted the journey as "increasingly dangerous," "unstable," and let his correspondents know that such encounters put the expedition in "serious danger." Yet Breasted also went to great lengths to depict the positive perception of the United States that many Arabs held. The expedition's vehicles even flew American flags to capitalize on the positive reputation of the United States. Breasted seemingly wanted to have it both ways regarding his depiction of the expedition. For the people who gave him money to sponsor the expedition, he emphasized the competitive advantage he had as an American over other parties who sought antiquities. His American-ness served him, as his sponsors' proxy, by giving him access to sites and items to purchase. His depictions of danger might have served his own self-interest more, as he was invested in his self-portrayal as an adventurer. To be sure, he was thoroughly off the beaten track for Westerners, but by continually emphasizing the danger the expedition was encountering, he served to bolster his own bravery while disparaging the ability of Middle Easterners to control their own affairs. He therefore also provided additional support for one of the principle arguments of the mandate system, which was that Middle Easterners were not capable of maintaining order in their own lands, necessitating the intervention of Western powers.

The 1919-1920 Oriental Institute expedition was the first foray of an American institution to stake a claim for American archaeologists in the post-WWI Middle Eastern landscape. Although American archaeological experience in the Middle East was relatively sparse, there had been enough encounters between Americans and Middle

Easterners by this time to ensure that each side had ample opinions of the other. American missionaries, educators, diplomats, businessman, and soldiers had traveled to the Middle East, and American authors had long depicted Arabs and Muslims in works of fiction. Americans who traveled to the Middle East as archaeologists in the years after WWI had a plethora of texts to draw on, and carried the freight of those preconceived notions with them as they crossed the Atlantic. They already "knew" a great deal about Middle Easterners before they had met a single one. Their experiences on archaeological digs were instrumental in further shaping their ideas; their very time spent on the digs became their calling cards as experts on Middle Easterners during WWII.[30]

Reconstructing the experiences of fledgling American archaeologists on their Middle Eastern expeditions treads common ground with the archaeologists themselves, in that, during WWII, they portrayed their experience on expeditions as essential to their understanding of Middle Easterners. They claimed, however, that their scientific training enabled them to impartially observe Middle Easterners, even if that was not their primary mission at the time. As previously discussed, archaeologists were deeply situated political actors, embroiled in the current affairs of the Middle Eastern countries where they studied. Yet the focus of current scholarship on American archaeological and physical anthropological expeditions has been on American and Middle Eastern elites. As it happens, many of the most eminent American archaeologists died or retired in the late

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30. Despite the prevalence of archaeologists in U.S. policymaking circles during WWII, scholars have examined neither the opinions archaeologists expounded during the war, nor the implications of archaeologists having formed those opinions on archaeological expeditions. Chapter Two will examine in more detail the mobilization of their opinions, and the uses to which they were put during the war. Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*, 225-28.

1930s or early 1940s, and those who had not were rarely enticed into government service. Those who were most willing and able to put their expertise to use during the war were those who had lower-level staff positions on expeditions during the 1920s and 1930s. They were influenced, to be sure, by the contact between their American bosses (and mentors) and the Middle Eastern elites who were asserting control over their country's antiquities, often to the consternation of American scholars. But the lower-level functionaries also interacted on a day-to-day basis with the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of Middle Easterners who toiled on the American-sponsored digs to unearth ancient antiquities. Such workers were paid low wages, treated as potential thieves, beaten by their overseers, and unceremoniously dismissed if problems arose. Observing and enforcing this highly hierarchical arrangement often shaped those Americans' opinions of Middle Easterners, even if their opinions did not register at a level of significance to explicitly record them. American archaeologists and physical anthropologists may have recorded limited information about Middle Easterners, but what they put into words was revealing. These archaeologists and physical anthropologists would later argue that their experiences on archaeological expeditions gave credence to their wartime assertions about Middle Easterners. Their initial expeditions were how they came to acquire their cultural knowledge.

There was a generational divide amongst American archaeologists in the Middle East. Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute, was by 1920 already the elder statesman of the group, while his protégés and assistants were as much as 20 years younger than him. This divide was one of both mindset and experience. The younger generation drew

much more from the texts of adventurers such as Freya Stark, Gertrude Bell, T.E. Lawrence, Richard Burton, and Bertram Thomas.[31] The exploits of these British Orientalists were retold in American publications, and budding American Orientalists such as Henry Field clipped those serialized tales.[32] T.E. Lawrence was feted for his daring support of the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans. Richard Burton was renowned as the first Westerner to visit Mecca, a journey for which he had to disguise himself as a Muslim. Thomas became the first Westerner to traverse the notorious Empty Quarter of Arabia. The two women of the group, Stark and Bell, were seemingly more targets of respect than emulation; they had to deal with a separate set of issues in the Middle East because of their gender, and the Americans who headed expeditions were almost exclusively male.[33]

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31. Richard Francis Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855); Gertrude Lowthian Bell, *The Desert and the Sown* (New York: E.P. Dutton and company, 1907); T. E. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert* (New York: George H. Doran company, 1927); Bertram Thomas, *Alarms and Excursions in Arabia* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill company, 1931); Freya Stark, *Baghdad Sketches* (Baghdad: Times Press, 1932); Freya Stark, *The Valleys of the Assassins and Other Persian Travels* (London: J. Murray, 1934). Biographies of some of these historical figures have been helpful in contextualizing their actions, especially Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East*; Jane Fletcher Geniesse, *Passionate Nomad: The Life of Freya Stark* (New York: Modern Library, 2001); Georgina Howell, *Gertrude Bell: Queen of the Desert, Shaper of Nations* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).
32. Field seems to have kept almost everything he ever read or wrote. The newspaper clippings referenced here are in his personal papers at the Field Museum in Chicago.
33. Henry Field was particularly impressed by meeting Bell in Iraq, an encounter he described in Henry Field, *Arabian Desert Tales: Between the Two Great Wars* (Santa Fe, N.M: Synergetic Press, 1977). Reading British Orientalists' adventures influenced the younger generation of Americans archaeologists. Most of them mentioned the popular culture mania surrounding all things Tut, and many things Middle Eastern. To some, it was an unscientific kitschy mess; to others, it fueled an initial interest in the field. For a survey of pre-WWII American popular culture obsession with the Middle East, see Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle*

The members of the generation of Middle Eastern scholars who participated in policy discussions during WWII were born in the first decade of the 20th century. They came of age, disciplinarily-speaking, in an era of archaeology when the objectivity of archaeological methods was waxing. The most prominent archaeologists eschewed Biblical archaeology in favor of positivist notions that emphasized the factuality of archaeological conclusions. The original cohort of American archaeologists in the Middle East had been searching for sites that would prove the truth of the Bible.[34] Over the course of 40 years, they shifted their focus from proving a literal interpretation of the Bible to providing scientific deductions about ancient civilizations. This shift meant that, for the group of scholars who came of age during the interwar period, they were initiated directly into archaeological methods that emphasized so-called hard science, rather than interpretation. These scholars learned to place emphasis on textual analysis and analytic rigor. Some scholars of this generation sought to break away from this mode to make subjective claims about the civilizations they studied. In that sense, the wartime and postwar shift towards subjective conclusions made by archaeologists is a function of being granted a forum for their views, but also as a disciplinary shift in which the students shifted emphasis from their teachers.

The interwar period also saw a large emphasis on epigraphy, measurement, and photography. In part, this shift was linked to the new difficulties encountered by archaeologists who wished to remove artifacts from the Middle East. New laws made it

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East Since 1945, 9th ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 1-42.
34. Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880-1930*.

far more difficult to take artifacts from their countries of origin. John Wilson and Donald Wilber, two young scholars who worked for the Oriental Institute during the 1920s and 30s, had paradigmatic experiences in that regard. Both Wilson and Wilber worked on the Oriental Institute's principal undertaking in Egypt, which was to produce detailed reproductions of hieroglyphics engraved on temples near Luxor, Egypt. The OI's Chicago House hosted young artists and scholars who would spend entire seasons photographing, sketching, cataloguing, and translating sections of inscriptions. These tedious tasks served to emphasize the scientific legitimacy of the OI. Rather than being painted with the broad brush of colonialist thieves of antiquities, the OI could claim scientific objectivity; they were not removing anything from the sites, but merely were recording the eroding inscriptions for posterity.

In that regard, the OI should be commended, but its behind-the-scenes machinations also make clear that the OI and its leader, Breasted, continued to seek ways to bring more antiquities under their aegis. A Rockefeller-sponsored museum was proposed for Cairo, which would have been controlled by Western authorities but would have housed Egyptian antiquities, thereby sidestepping some of the new regulations. Breasted also sought new ways of bringing antiquities back to the United States, including buying items from private dealers who had found ways to circumvent the new laws. In addition, Breasted refused to return any items that he had purchased prior to the enactment of the law. Breasted disdained the Egyptian government's attempts to regulate the sale and exportation of its antiquities. He felt that the Egyptian people did not appreciate the history of the ancient peoples who had lived in their land, and furthermore that those peoples were not the predecessors of the modern inhabitants. Breasted, as a

modern Westerner, claimed to have a more direct connection to Ancient Egypt.[35]

For the younger generation of scholars, the context of each man's pre-WWII exposure to the Middle East influenced how he would come to see Middle Easterners. Each man's background and character mattered as well. Although somewhat similar as a group, each individual formed his own opinions about Middle Easterners that influenced how he acted. While American archaeologists and physical anthropologists who worked in the Middle East functioned as an informal network, and sometimes acted as a group, they were also individuals with discrete ideas about the role of the United States in the world and the way that Middle Easterners should be treated. The personalities and upbringings of John Wilson, Henry Field, Carleton Coon, and Donald Wilber influenced their later pronouncements about Middle Easterners.

John Wilson was named the new Director of the Oriental Institute shortly after James Breasted's death in 1935. Wilson, an Egyptologist who had first worked for the OI on their epigraphic survey of ruins near Luxor, Egypt, was a logical choice who had the support of OI faculty and administrators, as well as that of Rockefeller Foundation officials, and even JDR Jr. himself. Although the foundation did not have an explicit say in such administrative decisions, it behooved the OI to choose a leader who could maintain a productive working relationship with those who would fund its work. Breasted was the only Director the OI had had at the time of his death. There was some indication that his son, Charles, who also worked at the OI, was being groomed to follow his father

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35. Erez Manela, "'Is This Not the Ugliest of Treacheries?!' Diplomacy, Culture, and the Origins of Anti-Americanism in Egypt" in Amanat and Bernhardsson, eds., *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters: A Critical Survey*, 101-20.

as Director. At the RF, however, Charles was viewed as a loose cannon whose brashness was off-putting. For example, after Charles learned of the RF's decision to reduce its funding of the OI, he wrote an embarrassing screed directly to JDR Jr. expressing his outrage and anger that the reduced funding meant the "Oriental Institute as conceived by my father, as a laboratory for the study of the rise of civilization, has ceased to exist."[36] JDR Jr. handled Charles's emotional hyperbole ably, writing to Wilson that although he had read Charles's letter "with complete sympathy and understanding…may there not be danger lest his own sense of disappointment and hurt…color his communications and utterances."[37] JDR Jr. understood that Charles was simply trying to protect his father's legacy, but Wilson was perceived to be a more prudent choice than the founder's impetuous son.

When Wilson took over the OI in 1935, his first task was to reevaluate the Institute's financial positions. Whether from a change in the core mission of the Rockefellers, or because of delayed-onset austerity measures as a result of the Great Depression, the OI going forward would never again receive the level of funding it had under Breasted. Wilson ultimately decided to cut back on all but the most vital expeditions, taking the number of active field commitments of the OI from twelve to three to one in the course of two years. He cut administrative staff and wrote, "our museum staff will be reduced, as we no longer receive antiquities from the field."[38] He

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36. Charles Breasted to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., April 23, 1936, Rockefeller Family Record Group 2, Educational Interests, Box 111, Folder 804.
37. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to John Wilson, May 6, 1936, Rockefeller Family Record Group 2, Educational Interests, Box 111, Folder 804.
38. John Wilson to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., May 8, 1936, Rockefeller Family Record Group 2, Educational Interests, Box 111, Folder 804.

vowed to allocate additional funds to scholarship, identifying the publication of results as a troubling deficiency of the OI, with "70 additional manuscripts in press, on hand, or definitely promised," that had yet to be completed.[39] The glut of expeditions during Breasted's directorship resulted in a large number of finds, and a number of invaluable additions to the Institute's collections, but the rate of publishing had not kept pace with the rate of discovery and acquisition. Clay tablets sat untranslated, artifacts languished undeciphered, and significant finds were unreported. Although the OI was an institution developed for the advancement and spread of knowledge about the ancient Near East, in the realm of publishing, its efforts had not kept pace with its expeditions.

Faced with an opportunity to shift the OI's research focus, Wilson laid out his priorities. He speculated the institution's members might "no longer confine ourselves strictly to the Orient," but rather could look more generally at "the rise of man and his institutions." He even questioned as to "whether we should be entitled to act under the name of Oriental Institute." Only six months into his tenure as Director, Wilson speculated that the OI would "no longer [be] able to concentrate on archaeology," which had been the OI's main mission since its inception. Wilson made clear, though, that the OI's potential shift in focus was partly an attempt to secure future funding, adding, "when such a question is definitely posed, we should apply to the New York Boards for permission to apply the funds which have been appropriated to an institution of slightly different character."[40] Wilson, a man with diverse personal interests, made it clear from

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39. John Wilson to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., May 8, 1936, Rockefeller Family Record Group 2, Educational Interests, Box 111, Folder 804.
40. All previous quotes John Wilson to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., May 8, 1936, Rockefeller Family Record Group 2, Educational Interests, Box 111, Folder 804.

the beginning of his time as Director that he would not hesitate to drastically alter the OI's specific mission of Near Eastern archaeology if its general mission of humanistic interpretation was allowed to continue.

Wilson did not have Breasted's dynamism, nor did he benefit from the same close, personal relationship with JDR Jr. that had served as Breasted's principle method of seeking funds, but he did put the OI on a path towards long-term viability. He also proved himself to be increasingly attuned to modern occurrences in the Middle East. Partly this interest grew from necessity, as nationalist leaders in the Middle East grew increasingly engaged with archaeological activities in their countries.[41] Such efforts served to both aggrandize and aggravate Western archaeologists. They were aggrandized because their finds were often heavily promoted by leaders like the Shah in Iran, who sought to connect his modern right to rule to that of the ancient rulers of Persia. In connecting his reign to that of past emperors, the Shah employed archaeological finds to bolster the connection. Those Western archaeologists who established close relationships with the Shah enjoyed his patronage; those who defied his vision of the past could be ostracized.

John Wilson, as we will see in Chapter Two, tended to be among the most humanist of Americans towards Middle Easterners, consistently arguing against making broad generalizations across the entire region.[42] This outlook was influenced, at least in

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41. Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*; Silberman, *Between Past and Present*; Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*; Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*; Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*; Manela, "'Is This Not the Ugliest of Treacheries?!' Diplomacy, Culture, and the Origins of Anti-Americanism in Egypt" in Amanat and Bernhardsson, *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters*.

42. Here I draw from scholar Alice Conklin's useful definition of a "humanist science" as

part, by his personal feelings of tolerance towards others. He was the son of a pastor, but, as recounted in his memoir, had no strong religious beliefs that might have predisposed him against Muslims. Instead, he consistently described himself as drawn towards peoples different from himself, and, when looking for work after he graduated from Princeton in 1920, he took a job as a teacher at the American University of Beirut. He described himself not as a missionary for religion, but he did admit:

> there was some evangelical spirit to my enlistment, even though this college was not a missionary institution. The war was just over, and some of us thought that we might spread the good tidings of American democracy in countries that should be responsive to that message. Surely the good example of education and medical work would be persuasive. It would be a long time before I could see the wisdom of helping other people to find themselves, instead of making them imitation Americans.[43]

Although Wilson later participated in pro-American proselytizing towards Middle Easterners when he worked for the U.S. government during WWII, his policy recommendations were based on the United States performing positive actions, rather than depicting itself positively but acting otherwise.

When Wilson arrived at the American University of Beirut, he was assigned to teach English, rather than History, which had been his original assignment. This shift actually served the purpose of putting him into contact with more Middle Easterners, who "were bright and eager to learn…they were warm-hearted, hospitable, and generous to their own disadvantage. Thus began my love affair with the Arabs, which has lasted all

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being one that "studied peoples for the values each society creates, rather than one that ranked them on charts or graphs relative to other races," Alice L. Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 7.

43. John Albert Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner, 1972), 34.

my life."[44] Although Wilson recounted that much of his social time was spent within the small community of Americans in Beirut, and he did not learn much Arabic, he does seem to have availed himself of Arab hospitality in Lebanon. He made many contacts with Middle Easterners that were not based on one side or the other having something to gain, or one side or the other asserting hierarchical authority over the other. While based in Beirut, Wilson took a number of trips to Egypt, which he said piqued his interest in the Ancient Near East. In contrast to many of his future colleagues, Wilson came about his interest in the ancient history of the region after he had encountered the modern peoples of the region. They were not separate entities in his mind, but rather were more intertwined. The path he took to becoming an archaeologist seems to have kept him from developing the same kind of proprietariness over the artifacts and history of the ancient Middle East that made archaeologists like Breasted resentful of Middle Easterners' attempts to own their pasts.

Just as Wilson's personality, education, and work experience influenced his humanist approach towards Middle Easterners, so too did those factors influence Donald Wilber's more paternalistic view of Middle Easterners. Wilber, who first worked for the Office of Strategic Services in Iran during WWII, and as a contract worker for the CIA from 1948 to 1969, had a far more Manichean view of the world. The Cold War against the Communist Soviet Union seems to have governed most of his actions in the Middle East, which included his planning of the 1953 CIA coup in Iran that overthrew the democratically-elected Prime Minister. Wilber's background was relatively modest, like

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44. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 36.

Wilson's. They both went to Princeton, although Wilber was about a decade behind Wilson. While Wilson had direct encounters with Middle Easterners through his teaching at the American University of Beirut, Wilber was an architect by training. In terms of practical experience, the son of the founder of the Oriental Institute, Charles Breasted, hired Wilber when Breasted visited Princeton to recruit someone to draw hieroglyphics for the OI project near Luxor, Egypt. Wilber wrote that he was the only applicant.

When Wilber traveled to Cairo in the fall of 1930, he had to be dissuaded from buying a revolver, which indicates to some extent his presumed hostility from and towards Middle Easterners. He recounted having brief meetings with Middle Easterners, but mostly they were ancillary characters in his memoir: street cart vendors, travel agents, and tour guides. They were seemingly employed mainly as tropes in his memoir. In his telling Egyptians were alternatively oversexed, deferential, and conniving.[45] At Chicago House in Luxor, there were some local boys from whom Wilber learned vulgar Arabic slang, but that seems to have been the extent of their bond.

Wilber's deepest friendships were formed with the other Western members of the crew. In his memoir, Wilber demonstrated his abiding faith in the power of national character, the notion that members of a nation were predetermined to act a certain way based on their national origins. Although this first expedition took him to Egypt, Wilber would later apply the idea of national character more broadly, a topic which will be explored in more depth in Chapter Four, in relation to his later analyses of Iranian character. Wilber did not confine his faith in the ability of one's national origins to define

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45. Donald Newton Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin, 1986), 11.

one's personality to only Middle Easterners. Of the other members of the crew, Wilber wrote, "This Signor Canziani had Italian rages, while Herr Bolacher went into a smouldering German fury when he thought he was not getting the respect he deserved."[46] Wilber's mindset, that nationality defined one's actions and constitution, would later arise in the books he wrote about Iranians, Afghans, and Sri Lankans. It was a crutch on which he seemingly relied to boil down the opinions and actions of a diverse nation-state into the timeless and intrinsic characteristics of a small group of people. While someone might look at a country and see diverse opinions, motivations, and political aspirations, Wilber saw a flattened landscape where similarity trumped conflict. Wilber's predilection towards boiling down the characteristics of individuals into more certain and inherent traits of populations also served to make his opinions seem more fact-like, and to make his recommendations more actionable. In other words, Wilber's certainty about the innate qualities of the peoples he studied instilled more confidence in his readers and higher-ups. Wilber eventually took his bequeathed mantle of expertise further than John Wilson did. Wilson confined his government intelligence work to the war; Wilber's continued for the rest of his professional career. Although trained as an architect, and experienced mostly in measuring the buildings of the countries he visited, he was eventually seen as an expert in all things about those countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and other places. Without identifying himself as such, Wilber was a progenitor of Middle East area studies.

Although it was rare to find what we would today classify as a cultural

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46. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 13-14.

anthropologist working in the Middle East during the 1920s and 1930s, there were a number of physical anthropologists who traveled to what was (thanks in part to Breasted's increased prominence and advocacy of his viewpoint) considered to be one of the cradles of civilization. The Middle East was thought to be a key location in the central task of many physical anthropologists, which was tracing the Races of Mankind to see which cultures were most closely related, and which were more or less advanced. The principle tools of physical anthropologists were those of cranial measurement, and they traveled extensively and compiled enormous reams of data from which to draw conclusions. There were physical anthropologists who were blatantly racist, and used their data to bolster their own conceptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority. But, just like with archaeologists who worked in the Middle East, the viewpoints of physical anthropologists were not uniform.

Carleton Coon and Henry Field had careers in physical anthropology that spanned from the 1920s until the 1960s. Coon is the better-known scholar, but Field's is the better-known name. Coon taught at Harvard for many years, and was not shy about politicizing his work. Later in his career, he became notorious for refusing to denounce racist readings of his scholarly work. In his 1981 autobiography, he still decried, over fifty years later, the "snake of racial consciousness [that] had raised its head out of the central European bulrushes, largely through the cult leadership of Franz Boas. His devotees leaked introspection into our curricula, turning both physical and social anthropology into political forums."[47] While today Boas is revered as an antiracist

47. Carleton S. Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1981), vii.

progenitor of modern anthropology, Coon's reputation is more compromised. A strong-willed iconoclast, Coon was unwilling to compromise his visceral reaction against cultural relativism in polite terms.[48] Coon is also famous today for his account of his time spent working for the OSS in North Africa during WWII, at which time he engaged in numerous dangerous missions to prepare for Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa.[49] Although he is more frequently brought up today as a cautionary tale of what happens when scholars become spies, he was one of the first anthropologists to incorporate some of the techniques of cultural anthropology, such as in-situ observation, to a Middle Eastern population.[50]

Henry Field was a son of privilege on both sides of the Atlantic. Born December 15, 1902, in Chicago, he was a great-nephew of Marshall Field, the founder of the famous department store and the philanthropist who endowed the Field Museum in Chicago. Field's parents divorced when he was young, and his mother remarried an English gentleman. Field spent his formative years on an English estate, where he developed a love of archaeology. After graduating from Oxford in 1925, he was Assistant then Head Curator of Physical Anthropology at the Field Museum until 1941. In 1942, he was enlisted by FDR to head the M Project, which is discussed in Chapter Two. The anthropological work that he performed between the two World Wars affirms his status

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48. My conclusions about Coon have been formed as a result of reading his memoirs and other published works, cited here, as well as his personal papers, which are housed at the Smithsonian Anthropological Archives.
49. Carleton S. Coon, *A North Africa Story: The Anthropologist as OSS Agent, 1941-1943* (Ipswich, Mass: Gambit, 1980).
50. Price devotes a portion of his excellent work to Coon's activities during the war, as well as Coon's postwar assessments of those activities. Price made extensive use of Freedom of Information Act requests to access previously-unreleased wartime materials related to anthropologists' wartime activities. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 248-61.

as a scientist caught between two different epochs of anthropological research. In that role, he made numerous trips to archaeological expeditions in Iraq and Iran, sometimes aiding with work on the dig, but often to perform his own work of gathering locals and measuring their skulls.[51]

Skull measurement, or craniometry, has a rightly insidious reputation as a tool of repression and a bolster for racism.[52] For many of its practitioners, it performed the function of placing whites at the top of a global hierarchy of newly-conquered peoples. Yet many anthropologists perceived it as a way to free their field from the biases inherent in observational anthropology. As Andrew Zimmerman put it in his study of anthropologists in imperial Germany: "More than any ethnographic artifact, the skull presented anthropologists with an object that could be studied in a way fundamentally different from the interpretive methods of the humanities. Studies of skulls were based on quantitative measurement and precise comparison and were thus totally devoid of what anthropologists regarded as subjectivity—either in the researcher or in the object under consideration."[53] Not only did many anthropologists attempt to incorporate skull

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51. For my analysis of Field's anthropological and wartime work, I use both his published memoirs and his archives at the Field Museum in Chicago and the University of Miami in Coral Gables, FL. Henry Field, *The Track of Man; Adventures of an Anthropologist* (Garden City, N. Y: Doubleday, 1953); Henry Field, *The Track of Man; Adventures of an Anthropologist* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969); Field, *Arabian Desert Tales: Between the Two Great Wars*.

52. Stephen Jay Gould first published his oft-cited debunking of craniometry in 1981, revisiting the lab notes and methods of several imminent 19th-century craniologists. The second half of Gould's book focuses on the legacy of skull measurement in the racism of standardized tests. Gould's work is useful to understand the predecessor's to 20th-century anthropologists who measured skulls. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1996), 62-141.

53. Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 86.

measurement into the core practices of anthropology, most were confident they were performing legitimate science that would help determine humanity's ancestry. In the same way that the Leakey family is celebrated today for finding pre-human remains in Africa, so too did physical anthropologists of the 1920s and 1930s see their task as one of blending interpretation and objectivity to link humanity, sometimes even emphasizing commonality over difference. Excavated skulls are still used today by physical anthropologists to attempt to determine the ancestry of modern humans, albeit with an improved understanding of the potential pitfalls of an over-reliance on skulls as the sole basis for interpretation.

There are, however, major differences between determining the cranial capacity of a long-dead hominid found in a South African cave system, and lining up hundreds of Iranians to place calipers around their heads. The methods of early 20th-century physical anthropologists like Field and Coon brought them, by necessity, into intimately close, physical contact with Middle Easterners. That methodology, coupled with their deeply-held belief in the scientific accuracy of skull measurement, affected what these anthropologists thought of Middle Easterners. During World War II, Coon and Field, like the archaeologists Wilson and Wilber, had the opportunity to articulate their beliefs about Middle Eastern peoples and cultures. They had formed their impressions during their time in the Middle East in the 1920s and 1930s, but their wartime assertions were formulated without the benefit of deliberate study, and without the burden of producing evidence. Coon and Field formed their opinions about Middle Easterners through the procedures and methodologies of archaeology and physical anthropology. Physical anthropologists did not write extensively on the character or personality of their subjects,

at least not until WWII, when they were hired by the government to draw conclusions about Middle Easterners for the purposes of U.S. policy there. But it is possible to use what they did write, combined with an analysis of the actual physical practices of skull measurement, to draw a picture of how those practices shaped the ideas of those doing the measuring.

Skull measurement is a practice that objectifies the human being who is being measured, literally turning that person into an object of study. Although a similar critique of cultural anthropology or sociology centers on the same type of observation – that the measurement or study of another human being cannot be done without enacting hierarchies between the studied and the studier – the literalness of the act of physical measurement requires an act of objectification of a higher order. When measuring the skulls of the residents in a remote village in Iran, as Field described in his memoir *The Track of Man*, the anthropologists lined up as many as 200 villagers for a day's work, moving down the line from one to the next. Field wrote, "despite the general reluctance of the people to submit to anthropometric study, we were able by means of friendly coercion and some bribery to measure and photograph forty-eight men, with Katherine acting as recorder."[54] Large sample sizes were needed so that an anthropologist could create averages across an entire village or region, thereby identifying the “typical” size of, for instance, a Persian skull. There would be little interaction between the Western scientist and the Middle Eastern subject, as there was often a language barrier.

Yet even with the use of translators, Field never noted that he sought to explain

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54. Field, *The Track of Man; Adventures of an Anthropologist*, 285.

the purpose of his actions, and there was no such thing as informed consent or approval for the use of human subjects. Even if they did take the time to explain what they were doing, it is possible that they felt that Middle Easterners would not understand. It is difficult to know what the subjects thought they were being measured for, but undoubtedly there were a variety of reactions, from fear to confusion to curiosity. Field recounted some resistance from his potential subjects, who, "when asked as to relatives, living or dead...refused to answer."[55] Although Field made that comment without any self-reflection as to why groups refused to cooperate, one can imagine a variety of reasons. They might have been skeptical as to what these scientists would do with their information. In addition to the actual physicality of the relationship, in which Westerners were allowed to do what they wished with Middle Easterners, but obviously not vice-versa, the act of skull measurement would have further inscribed a hierarchy already present between the anthropologists and their subjects. Physical anthropologists did not finish their studies with the impression that Middle Easterners were cooperative, but rather that they were placid and passive. When peddling their opinions later, physical anthropologists had the unimpeachable claim of scientific objectivity to reinforce their views.

This viewpoint of anthropologists being above reproach, and their opinions being unassailable – in fact, that their opinions carried the weight of facts because of their source – was both a product of other factors of this time period, as well as a viewpoint that was actively cultivated by the scientists who would presumably benefit from others

55. Field, *The Track of Man; Adventures of an Anthropologist*, 285.

holding such opinions. Anthropologists were eager to report their findings as fact, the better to wield influence. In this way, then, expertise based on experience became intertwined with expertise based on scientific bona fides. Furthermore, as anthropology and archaeology grew increasingly standardized during this time period, the scientific skills associated with physical anthropology were seen as geographically transferable. Therefore someone like Henry Field could travel across the Middle East and Asia armed with one technique, skull measurement, and arrive at conclusions about the peoples of an wide geographic and cultural swath of the world precisely because he was a scientist.

For instance, at the end of several seasons of digs in Kish, Mesopotamia (now Iraq), Field reported that conditions for workers greatly advantaged Westerners. The gangs of workmen, or "jokhas" were relegated almost entirely to physical labor, and children as young as six were employed as "basket boys." If anyone, including the children, did not work with "sufficient zeal" they could be summarily dismissed from the worksite. Suspected thieves were thrown in prison and workers were rewarded for turning someone in for theft. Workers were compensated for finding objects through a perverse system that paid more for smaller (and less valuable) objects since these could be stolen more easily. Field did not record the voices or opinions of any workers, but revealed a great deal about the level of mistrust and coercion with which they were treated on a daily basis.[56] Convinced that the sites would not run effectively and according to scientific procedures if they did not exercise total control, archaeologists and physical anthropologists became despots of their digs.

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56. Field, *The Field Museum-Oxford University Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia, 1923-1929*, 25-32.

Locals were not allowed in archaeological and physical anthropological sites if they were not employed there. Digs often took place in isolated locales that were kept consciously separate from local residents. To Western social scientists, the security of a site was directly linked to the ability to keep it from being raided by antiquities traders. Ironically, those same traders were merely trying to capitalize on a market strengthened by Western interest in the Middle East. However, archaeologists differentiated strongly between their enterprise, practiced for the advancement of knowledge, and that of "tomb raiders," who sought only monetary gain and did not record their findings according to archaeological conventions. Field reported that the only sound at night was "an occasional shot by the sentries at Arabs wandering in the vicinity of the camps, which is strictly forbidden during the hours of darkness."[57]

It is significant that the exposure these scholars had to Middle Easterners during the 1920s and 1930s was almost exclusively with those locals who were working on their archaeological and anthropological digs. Those workers were 1.) more willing to work with Westerners; 2.) dependent for their livelihoods on Westerners, and unlikely to voice any negative sentiments towards their employers; and 3.) not likely asked their opinions anyway. These conditions led American scholars to view the populations of the areas they studied as artificially homogenous, which effectively allowed them to ignore conflict within individual localities, countries, or regions. This lead to archaeologists and anthropologists forming superficial views of varied cultures. As we will see in the next chapter, when, during WWII, those same scholars were asked to opine about Middle

57. Field, *The Field Museum-Oxford University Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia, 1923-1929*, 30.

Easterners, the flattened view many held about Middle Easterners as a group made the process of characterizing and formulating propaganda seem easier and more appealing. If all Arabs, Muslims, Iranians, Orientals, etc (their terms varied) were perceived to think and behave in the same way, then changing their behavior or collective minds through propaganda became an inherently more doable task. When the U.S. government sought out Middle Eastern experts to formulate propaganda during WWII, archaeologists and physical anthropologists were ready and willing to share the opinions they had forged during their earlier expeditions.

A number of impactful changes occurred in the fields of Middle East archaeology and physical anthropology during the 1920s and 1930s. Disciplinary changes happened in both fields that deemphasized the collection of artifacts. Nevertheless, both fields retained practices around digs that were highly dependent on hierarchical relationships with local laborers. As we have seen, archaeologists and physical anthropologists became, out of necessity, more politically aware of the countries in which they worked. However, they were not uniformly sanguine about changes that made Middle Eastern countries more autonomous. These constituted radical changes for those fields, but the true sea change happened early in the Second World War, when the need for social scientists with expertise on the Middle East led U.S. government officials to recruit American archaeologists and physical anthropologists into the war effort. Their wartime experiences would alter the doxa of American scholars who studied the Middle East, bringing them closer to government service and normalizing the process of using expeditions to the Middle East to gather people facts instead of artifacts.

Chapter Two

In 1947, Leonard Doob, a psychology professor from Yale University, wrote an assessment of his time working for the U.S. government's Office of War Information (OWI) during World War II. Doob was one of hundreds of academics who had worked in a war agency during the war, he wrote, "sometimes merely because it was somewhat vaguely felt that all kinds of brains, even academic, were necessary to win a total war."[1] Doob was in an exceptional position from which to critique the ways in which social scientists were employed by the OWI during the war. In his academic research prior to the war, he had studied the psychological impacts of propaganda. He purposefully made his article "somewhat autobiographical, so that the raw materials may be presented as concretely as possible" with the hope that "other social scientists will record their own similar and dissimilar experiences and produce a more general guide-book for social science in government."[2] While he wanted to provide a guide that could be "utilized whenever social scientist meets policy-maker," he was not convinced about the prospects of productive postwar interactions between the two groups, noting that "any social scientist about to enter government service" should read his cautionary tale to "be aware of the problem and more easily survive the initial period of disillusionment and misery."[3] Doob's relatively brief article, written in the aftermath of his experience, provides an

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1. Leonard W. Doob, “The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information,” *The American Political Science Review* 41, no. 4 (1947), 649.
2. Doob, “The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information,” 650.
3. Doob, “The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information,” 649-50.

astute window into how to understand the actions of social scientists who worked for the U.S. government during WWII.

In particular, his article pointed to the way in which government work acted on the doxa of the social scientists who worked for the U.S government during the war. Doob argued that social scientists within the war effort were not practicing social science in their government work. As Doob put it, "it may be seriously questioned whether much of it had anything at all to do with social science, unless social science be defined broadly as simple fact-gathering about people."[4] But Doob had also become, more generally, a nonbeliever in productive governmental-scholar interactions. He felt that academics' opinions that contradicted policymakers' opinions were not taken seriously. He also did not think that social scientists' ideas ended up being influential in the overall war effort. Many of the other social scientists who mobilized for intellectual war, however, believed that they had a positive effect on the American war effort. Working for the U.S. government therefore empowered and enabled some social scientists to broaden the purview of their academic inquiries. For some social scientists, the ability to make pronouncements that had concrete implications was sufficiently fascinating that they sought out other avenues by which to do so. To Doob, there was not adequate data about most of the countries being studied to employ the tenets of social science to try to tell a compelling narrative about a place. Doob, as a skeptic, did not continue his affiliation with the U.S. government after the war. Like a number of like-minded colleagues, he self-selected out of continued involvement with the government. His account, coupled

4. Doob, “The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information,” 651-52.

with the particular experiences of the handful of scholars that are recounted in this dissertation, lends credence to the notion that the scholars who worked with the U.S. government during the early Cold War were those who were already predisposed to support U.S. actions in the world.

The particular cases of those social scientists who studied the Middle East demonstrates the validity of much of what Doob described. For physical anthropologists and archaeologists who had studied the Middle East, the broadening of their purview beyond credible social science allowed them to express opinions about modern-day Middle Easterners that would have otherwise been considered outside the temporal and disciplinary boundaries of their work. As demonstrated by some of the memoranda which were circulated during the war, the lack of facts or systematic study did not stop some social scientists from making sweeping claims about the Middle East and its peoples. Doob was dubious of the ability of social scientists to inject nuance into conversations with policymakers. (In the structure of the OWI, academics were most likely to be "researchers" whose research could, but did not always, inform the decisions that were made by governmental officials who were considered to be "policy-makers.") Doob gave the overall impression that the OWI could be a contentious place where a social scientist, whose "training tended to make him less subjective, less ethnocentric, less prone to generalize from biased data, and -- all in all -- less likely to be dogmatic" was often overridden by "the research race in the OWI" which "tended to be won by the swift and the glib."[5] Overall, "the OWI's propaganda principles, consequently, tended to be

5. Doob, “The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information,” 655.

unsubtle and elementary."[6] Yet while Doob did not believe in the practice, a great many social scientists did come to believe that their participation had had a positive effect on the war effort.[7]

The widely-shared impression that scholars, from WWII forward, were going to be consequential in U.S. policymaking, is the leitmotif of this chapter. It was an impression that was strongly felt both by academics and by government officials that scholars had something to contribute to the way in which the United States would shape the postwar world. In this chapter, I chart the significance of wartime projects to a number of social scientists whose prewar work had focused on the Middle East. I analyze the archival traces of the work they did, and employ their memoirs to discuss what effects that work had on their later activities. Their postwar activities will also receive more attention in later chapters. Even as they were discussing propaganda meant to focus on a population thousands of miles away from their own location, they often revealed a great deal about themselves in their memoranda. The experience of having attempted to formulate policy and propaganda affected these scholars for years to come. But while the participants experienced changes in perception as to the importance of the relationship between scholarship and government action, their ideas about the peoples of the regions they were studying changed less dramatically. In other words, the dominant effect of the

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6. Doob, "The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information," 658.

7. As a reflection of how difficult it has been for historians to parse the finer points of history versus myth, Peter Mandler is an author who is both skeptical of the positive effects of scholarly participation in the war and celebratory of Margaret Mead's individual contributions. Peter Mandler, *Return From the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War and Lost the Cold War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013).

war was not to alter anyone's perceptions of the peoples of the Middle East. Rather, the dominant effect was a change in the degree of acceptance towards scholarly participation in the formulation of governmental policy. The wartime information agencies were not designed to be fora for measured debate and reasoned conclusions. The inclusion of scholars in those information agencies did little to alter the way in which the agencies operated, which often felt haphazard and rudderless to those on the inside.

In the context of a mostly noncontroversial U.S. war against a totalitarian enemy, operatives of many different personal and political backgrounds were capable of coming together to promote U.S. interests. But, as we will see, the structure of the U.S information agencies thwarted any necessity of coming to a resolution about the peoples of the Middle East. Furthermore, information agency academics were not ultimately influential in the outcome of the war, especially in the Middle East. They often felt that their opinions did not hold much weight with their military counterparts. Nevertheless, those who worked in the information agencies left the war certain that their experience would have non-military applications. In sum, the U.S. information agencies gave some social scientists (e.g. physical anthropologists and archaeologists) an opportunity to weigh in on the foreign peoples of the Middle East. Although their directive to produce credible information about Middle Easterners was short-lived, they produced a number of memoranda that were revealing articulations of the opinions they had formed during earlier archaeological and anthropological expeditions. Archaeologists and physical anthropologists were also involved in on-the-ground spy operations, as well as postwar planning. Those efforts were similarly influential on the individuals who undertook them.

This chapter looks first at the impetus for, and creation of, the U.S. information

agencies. Created prior to U.S. entry into the war, they were spearheaded by powerful personalities who sought to impose their ideas and visions on the people they brought in to staff the agencies. After explaining the bureaucratic and geopolitical context for the U.S. information agencies, I then examine the work that was done in the divisions of those agencies that focused on the Middle East. That wartime work shifted in accordance with the needs of the U.S. military at any given time. As a consequence, there were several distinct phases to the work the information agencies did. Those phases meant that the information agencies addressed themselves to different agendas at different times. In general, the internal emphasis shifted from discussing other cultures to promoting American interests and power. Over time, that shift came to mean that regional expertise was less important. The last section of this chapter will deal with postwar planning. While not an information agency per se, the changing emphasis during the war from solely looking at ways to win the war, to closely examining how to exert influence during the peace, was a significant shift in mindset, and one that seemingly stayed with scholars even after they demobilized from the war effort.

Significantly, there was a strong temporal component to what types of pronouncements carried weight at a given time. From July 1941 to May 1943, operatives who focused on the Middle East were at their most active. In particular, the period from mid-1941 to November 1942, when Allied troops invaded North Africa, was a period when internal memoranda were produced rapidly and circulated between operatives in an attempt to divine the intentions of the peoples who inhabited areas that might soon become active theaters of war. That first period was also the time in which operatives

tended to be the least guarded in their pronouncements, no doubt prompted by the urgency of the mission. The first phase focused on convincing Middle Easterners to not join the Nazis. The defeat of Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943 greatly reduced the urgency of the operatives in U.S. information services who focused on the Middle East, and inaugurated a more informational phase of the propaganda effort. The defeat of General Erwin Rommel's Afrika Corps signaled not just the end of active combat in North Africa, but also the lessening of any possibility that Axis forces could attack anywhere in the eastern Mediterranean, either. Given the reduced threat of military operations in the Middle East, U.S. information services focused on convincing Middle Easterners to join the Allied cause, or at least to stay neutral. In most cases, propaganda from that point on focused on positive depictions of the United States. In the third phase, there were still some physical anthropologists and archaeologists who were producing information about the Middle East. In most cases, academics with a Middle Eastern focus who were still working for the U.S. government were studying postwar planning, for instance how to deal with the impending refugee situation. By the end of the war in August 1945 (at the latest; many returned earlier), academics had returned to their previous posts, often with novel ideas about how to negotiate what they already knew would be a drastically different postwar world. While the lessons they took from their wartime work varied, they all had witnessed that the relationship between the production of academic knowledge about the Middle East, and the way producers of knowledge interacted with the U.S. government, had been irrevocably altered.

The United States entered World War II in December 1941, and immediately sought ways to expand its gathering of intelligence about, and dissemination of

information to, all the parts of the world within the reach of the Axis powers. The United States was at a distinct disadvantage to both its belligerents and allies in this regard (as well as, more pressingly, militarily). The war's participants had almost all been at war since September 1939, and in the intervening 27 months had mobilized all the tools at their disposal to fight total war, including building robust espionage and propaganda arms of their militaries. Powers that be within the U.S. government, mindful that the United States would not likely be able to maintain its neutrality throughout the war, had established some government agencies that prepared the nation for war, even while it maintained its ostensible neutrality. Most prominently, the United States began its Lend-Lease Program in March 1941 to give aid to Britain and China. The law that enacted Lend-Lease was officially known as "An Act to Further Promote the Defense of the United States," and its title gives some clue as to the strength of isolationist influence within the United States. Even pro-war government officials understood that, barring an outright declaration of war from the Axis powers, a sizable group of people within the United States would have to be convinced that the United States should become involved in another world war, only two decades after the previous one. In the interim between the fall of France in June 1940 and Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Great Britain was the only country standing strong against what would become, with the signing of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940 between Germany, Italy, and Japan, the Axis powers. At the very least, the U.S. government had to find out if Britain would be able to survive until such time as the political situation within the United States made the

declaration of war possible.[8]

To that end, William Donovan, a WWI military hero, lawyer, and former Justice Department official, was tasked with visiting Britain and determining its prospects for holding out against the Germans. Donovan was a prominent Republican who also happened to be pro-war. Although he and FDR had been political rivals when they were both politicians in New York State, by 1940, "FDR and Donovan began to warm to each other; they were two canny politicians who were beginning to see an opening for a common cause."[9] That common cause was to begin marshaling American power towards war against the Axis. Donovan was first sent to London on July 14, 1940, to meet with England's new prime minister, Winston Churchill. Churchill gave Donovan extensive access to classified information in an effort to curry favor, as well as more concrete commitments, from Roosevelt. When Donovan returned to Washington to file his report, he insisted that Britain, with American military and technological support, could repel a German attack. When his upbeat assessments were made public, columnist Walter Lippmann wrote that Donovan's report "'almost singlehandedly overcame the unmitigated defeatism which was paralyzing Washington.'"[10]

Donovan took advantage of his influence to recommend the establishment of a central intelligence organization. That organization, the Office of the Coordinator of

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8. The pre-Pearl Harbor history of U.S. intelligence, as well as the general history of the OSS, is drawn from Douglas Waller's biography of William Donovan. See Douglas C. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 58-63.
9. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 55.
10. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 61.

Information (COI), was formed in July 1941, and Donovan was asked to head it.[11] It was an ad hoc arrangement, and Donovan had a great deal of latitude to run the organization as he saw fit. He convinced Roosevelt to fund the office out of a secret White House fund, which would reduce oversight from other government agencies. Donovan also insisted that he would report directly to Roosevelt, and that Donovan would use his White House authority to demand resources from other parts of the government. Donovan's "duties were described so vaguely it left other cabinet officers scratching their heads over exactly what his job was."[12] He was granted an extraordinary amount of latitude both in mission and in choosing his new agents. "He would 'collect and analyze all information and data, which may bear upon national security,' and perform other unspecified 'supplementary activities' for FDR (which Donovan took to mean psychological operations and sabotage)."[13] What form those activities would take was largely up to Donovan, and, once he began to recruit other agents and deputies, he similarly left operational decisions in their hands.

A great deal of the decision-making was left in Donovan's hands. Historians who have examined his life have not dwelled on the various deliberations he must have made when selecting personnel, other than that his own contacts played an important role. He began by recruiting Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Robert Sherwood and public opinion pollster Elmo Roper. Donovan knew each man previously through his network of

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11. Thomas F. Troy, *Wild Bill and Intrepid: Donovan, Stephenson, and the Origin of CIA* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
12. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 72.
13. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 72.

connections. They then plumbed their personal networks to recruit others. Sherwood went to New York to recruit "broadcasters and journalists, like *Chicago Daily News* foreign correspondent Wallace Deuel, who were eager to leave the newsroom and join Donovan as spies or propagandists."[14] Roper focused on developing a research department, which, Donovan told him, should have "men who can tell us more about France than anybody now knows...and we've got to know the same thing about every single country in Europe and probably Asia."[15] To that end, they received commitments from Archibald MacLeish, the librarian of the Congress, to "lend the library's scholars." Donovan personally "recruited James Phinney Baxter III, the erudite president of Williams College, to head the research and analysis section."[16] Donovan also made politically-savvy hires, including Estelle Frankfurter, the sister of Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, and James Roosevelt, FDR's son.

In short order, hundreds of staff members, including over 50 professors from various backgrounds, had moved into the agencies new headquarters at 25th and E Streets in Northwest Washington, DC. The haphazard nature of this recruitment process left behind few traces in terms of how professors were selected. Personal and professional connections seem to have played a large role. It also seems that an individual could make it known through certain channels that he was interested in serving in the COI, and, given the right set of connections, that person could get hired. Sometimes this lack of formality

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14. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 72-73.
15. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 73.
16. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 73.

caused confusion, especially since FDR "encouraged rivals and he never let one person know everything he was doing." With that in mind, Roosevelt had established multiple espionage organizations. Donovan "stumbled across another one almost by accident as he tried over a breakfast to recruit Chicago anthropologist Henry Field...Henry told a startled Donovan he could not join his organization because he worked for another secret White House spy agency."[17]

Some of the recruitment efforts harkened back to Ivy League old boys' networks. Baxter, the head of research and analysis who was "an expert in American diplomatic history" recruited friends like William L. Langer, a Harvard University historian. For approval of their plan, they submitted it "to a small luncheon group at the Tavern Club in Boston in July 1941."[18] According to Langer's autobiography, "the response was decidedly favorable." To Langer, "the notion appealed as innovative and full of promise," and he and Baxter "set to work to invite or persuade outstanding scholars in the social sciences to join the board and begin enlisting a staff."[19] Langer did not recount why "scholars in the social sciences" were selected, but the choice was consequential, especially in relation to the selection of experts on the Middle East. With a built-in bias towards social scientists, scholars of Middle Eastern religions and languages seem to have been mostly (although not entirely) excluded from the fledgling U.S. intelligence agencies. Social scientists such as physical anthropologists and archaeologists, though,

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17. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 74.
18. William L. Langer, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower* (New York: N. Watson Academic Publications, 1977), 181.
19. Langer, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower*, 181.

were brought into the process.

The gathering of information did not become more systematized once the agencies were up and running. Langer, who became head of Research and Analysis when Baxter stepped down because of health reasons, later wrote, "we were badly hampered by our own ignorance about the details of our mission. No one would or could enlighten us as to what we should do and how to go about it."[20] He was also was unsure as to the effects that their research had on the war effort:

> Although I served as chief of R and A from September 1942 until the dissolution of the OSS in 1946, I find it difficult to recount its work and accomplishments. My chief claim to leadership was the extent of my published work in international relations, but I found myself for the first time in a strictly administrative position, which became ever more burdensome as the organization grew. By the end of the war, the staff comprised some hundreds of trained professionals, including men of such outstanding ability as Ralph Bunche.[21]

Langer's inability to enumerate the accomplishments of scholars in the context of WWII is not unusual. In fact, it is a theme that runs through a number of analyses of the impact of scholars on WWII.[22] It also infused the thinking of practitioners at the time they were working for the government, and the utility of working for the government did not get any clearer as time passed, even after the war. Wrote Don Peretz, a Middle East Studies pioneer, of some of his government work done around 1950, "I found a respite from academia at the Voice of America (then in New York City), where I worked for a year as a Middle East Media Evaluator. The task of our office was to determine the impact, if

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20. Langer, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower*, 182.
21. Langer, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower*, 184.
22. See, for example, Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, "Science, Democracy, and Ethics: Mobilizing Culture and Personality for World War II" in George W. Stocking, *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict, and Others: Essays on Culture and Personality* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

any, of the VOA on listeners throughout the world." He attempted to accomplish that task by trying "to analyze listeners' letters, reports from embassies, any references to VOA in foreign media, and chats with anyone who happened to be passing through the office from some overseas visit." The methods used to assess VOA impact were rudimentary, and he concluded, "I can't say that I was ever able to determine the impact of the Voice in the Middle East, but the assignment broadened my horizons somewhat as I became familiar with a wide range of new sources and learned something of how government bureaucracy works."[23] Peretz, like other scholars who worked for the government during and immediately after the war, felt that his impact on the government's actions was minimal, but that he himself was changed by the experience. That feeling, and that alteration, amounts to the doxa that scholars experienced while working for the government. Peretz and Langer were not alone in feeling that their work for the government had an effect on their way of thinking. Yet scholars, for a variety of reasons, continued to engage with the U.S. government. Some wanted to peddle influence on a greater scale than they could in their academic work. Some wanted to temper what they perceived to be the potential negative effects of U.S. influence in the world. And others simply felt that the government and the academy were going to continue to grow closer together, and that to not participate was to deny the inevitable.

All this is not to say that the information services were fruitless. But many of the individuals who worked for the U.S. government during WWII and after, later reflected that they could not pinpoint what impact they had. The largest impact that working for

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23. Don Peretz, "Vignettes--Bits and Pieces" in Thomas Naff, ed. *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 238.

the government had on scholars was oftentimes to condition them to work closely with the government in the future. It also contributed to scholars not being judgmental about colleagues who continued to work with the government even after the war ended. This wartime work was, therefore, a direct contributor to the close government-foundation-Middle East area studies nexus that developed throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. It was only later that the doxa of scholars shifted again to no longer turn a blind eye towards the prospect of scholars collaborating with the government.[24]

Like many of the scholars who wrote about their OWI experience in later memoirs, John Wilson was vague about both his recruitment and participation in the wartime work for the U.S. government. As with Langer, he was recruited through his previous professional connections, although his recruitment did not happen until after the United States had entered the war, when Wilson "was asked to come to Washington by my friend of Beirut days, Walter L. Wright, Jr."[25] Wright knew Wilson from contact through the American University of Beirut. Wright would later work at Princeton, but at the end of 1941, "he was the chief of that research group [Division of Special Information] working in the Library of Congress. He had to return to his position as president of Robert College in Turkey, and he invited me to take over his position in Washington. Under the urgent conditions of January 1942, the transfer of functions went

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24. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 241-45. Lockman argues that the 1980s were a crucial decade in the distancing of scholars from government oversight: "it is instructive that when in the 1980s reports surfaced of questionable links between academics and intelligence agencies, the most vocal response among scholars in the field was condemnation" (244), which he says would not have been the case in the 1950s and 1960s.

25. John Albert Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner, 1972), 88.

through very rapidly."[26] Once Wilson began working as a researcher for the Coordinator of Information, his tasks varied widely. Wilson later wrote that the Research and Analysis Branch "was not bureaucratic, nor was it power-seeking." He said their task was:

> such chores as studying the reports from Japanese navy yards, identifying personalities in the Syrian independence movement, and reading newspapers written in Uzbek. How much chrome was being shipped out of Turkey, and to whom did the shipments go? Would it be possible to send a shipload of coffee to Turkey and thereby win some gratitude for the United States? What was that mysterious and powerful figure, el-Glaoui, doing about the Moroccan independence party? Where were General Leclerc's Free French forces last reported in Africa? Who in the world authorized the shipping of sand to Saudi Arabia for the building of an airport? What other country might use the broad-gauge railroad equipment intended for a destination taken over by the enemy?[27]

Having such a broad purview was a heady experience for scholars, even if division heads like Langer were not sure what use their reports were having.

In fact, by 1943 these government-academia connections so widespread that Harvard anthropologist E.A. Hooton wrote his friend Beatrice Blackwood at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, England that "most of the anthropologists here who are not lame, halt, or blind, (or senile like myself), have departed for some sort of war work." Harvard was a large contributor of academics to government work, and Hooton reported an extensive roster of academics doing war work: "[Carleton] Coon has been in North Africa for over a year, Dr. [Alfred] Tozzer is running some sort of a government office in the Hawaiian Islands and several of our younger men are commissioned in the Air Force, the Navy, etc. [Clyde] Kluckhohn and [Lauriston] Ward are teaching here at Harvard in

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26. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 88.
27. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 89.

the School for Overseas Administrators."[28] Hooton is an example of an anthropologist who remained skeptical of the role that academics, or academic knowledge, could hope to influence the government, or the world for that matter. As he later wrote Blackwood in 1951, by which point government work was a thoroughly accepted practice:

> We have had a moderately prosperous year but suffer under the disadvantage of the fact that most of our ambitious young men feel that the world can be saved through social anthropology and are always dashing off to Washington, to Japan, to Korea and other far away places. Consequently, even when I have staff appointments, about one half of the fellows are continuously away on leave of absence doing these portentous things for the interest of peace. I hope their efforts are successful, but am inclined to doubt it.[29]

Hooton does not seem to have gone further with expressing his skepticism about the power of anthropology to save the world than sharing his thoughts in private letters with correspondents like Blackwood. As an outsider to government work, he seems to have been aware that his colleagues' scholarly doxa was being altered for the sake of providing the U.S. government with actionable scholarship.

Given the biases towards social scientists within the Office of the Coordinator of Information, coupled with the scarcity of behavioral social scientists who had studied the Middle East, it should not be surprising that many of those individuals recruited to participate were archaeologists or physical anthropologists. The types of work they were asked to do during the war varied from Washington, D.C.-based research on a variety of topics (John Wilson and Henry Field) to spying on Soviet troop movements in Iran

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28. Letter to Beatrice Blackwood from Earnest A. Hooton, July 20, 1943, Beatrice Blackwood Papers, General Correspondence, Folder 'H', 1 (Pitt Rivers Museum Archives, Oxford, England).
29. Letter to Beatrice Blackwood from Earnest A. Hooton, July 19, 1951, Beatrice Blackwood Papers, General Correspondence, Folder 'H' (Pitt Rivers Museum Archives, Oxford, England).

(Donald Wilber) to spying on Vichy troops in Morocco (Carleton Coon). Archaeologists and physical anthropologists who made the transition into U.S. policy circles frequently operated under a logic determined by their previous fieldwork. Converted archaeologists and physical anthropologists tended to portray the entirety of the Middle East as resource-poor (except for oil). They frequently depicted the inhabitants of the region as simple minded. As a result, archaeologists and physical anthropologists insisted that Middle Easterners had to be governed with a strong hand. This assertion was a reflection both of the historical work archaeologists did, which focused on the glorious accomplishments of ancient Middle Eastern despots, and of their experiences in the present at dig sites, where they lorded over local workers with their own firm hands. Particularly in the first, most haphazard period of U.S. policy towards North Africa and the Middle East, American propagandists mobilized this framework – that Middle Easterners embraced strong leaders – not only to explain the success of Nazi propaganda, but also to justify their own harsh assessments of Middle Easterners as simplistic peoples who were highly credulous of any authority figure.

The Second World War was a key period in which the United States came to view the Middle East as a region of strategic importance. As many scholars have pointed out, relationships between American and Middle Eastern interests multiplied greatly after the war. Postwar policy decisions had their antecedents in the wartime belief that foreign peoples (not only those who inhabited the Middle East) could be engaged and recruited to accede to the U.S. agenda. World War II was a testing ground for persuading the peoples of the Middle East to accept what Melani McAlister has characterized as America's

"benevolent supremacy," the growing role of the United States as a “benevolent” global power.[30] In connecting the archaeological and physical anthropological practices of American scientists to the biased opinions they later espoused in the wartime context, this project joins a line of inquiry that has looked at the long-term effects of scholars having worked for the U.S. government during WWII. Many of those studies have critiqued the "national character" studies instituted by cultural anthropologists Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, among others.[31] For the most part, those scholars have found that the impact academics had on the war effort was negligible. Even examples that have been cited as positive impacts of scholars have been questioned. For instance, Ruth Benedict studied Japanese "culture at a distance" and has been said to have recommended that the U.S. government should not remove the Japanese emperor once victory was achieved. The emperor was not removed after the war, but there has also been little evidence that his removal was seriously considered by the Allies.[32] Without minimizing the risk and effort that wartime scholars exposed themselves too, there is not convincing evidence that the war work done by academics traveled beyond a narrow audience. Ultimately their work did not significantly impact the war effort, but the war significantly impacted many scholars. For those scholars who became enamored of governmental involvement, the war authorized a new hybrid mode of thought in which scholarship was formulated in service to policy.

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30. McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*.
31. For an early example of this critique, see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 46-52.
32. Virginia Heyer Young, *Ruth Benedict: Beyond Relativity, Beyond Pattern* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 31.

World War II provided an outlet for the ideas that archaeologists and physical anthropologists had accumulated during their earlier expeditions. Were it not for World War II, their ideas would have likely been limited to the relatively small audiences that read their accounts of the expeditions, as well as an audience of students and acquaintances. The Second World War was therefore an essential impetus to the particular way in which they articulated their opinions about Middle Eastern populations. In published expedition reports of the 1920s and 1930s, local workers were incidental to the primary purpose of writing, which was to describe the archaeological discoveries. If non-Westerners were mentioned, it was as part of the process. Occasionally individuals were named as having uncovered an especially valuable find. For the most part they were regarded as a means to an end. The Second World War provided archaeologists with an outlet for their opinions in a way that opened a door for credentialed pontification about living peoples, an area in which they had no training or background. That was a heady experience for some scholars, who thereafter saw the expression of an opinion as a conduit for influence. As explored in Chapter One, archaeologists and physical anthropologists practiced the most extractive social sciences, literally transporting enormous artifacts and human remains from the countries where they worked. When they were recruited into the U.S. information agencies, they brought with them an imperial legacy honed during their previous experiences.

The attempted creation of actionable knowledge about the peoples of the Middle East therefore has to be understood within the context of the era. To summarize that context: first, in 1941, there was little precedent in the United States for producing

behavioral social scientific knowledge about the peoples of the Middle East.[33] Second, the conditions of the information agencies were, as OWI operative John Badeau would later put it, "bizarre."[34] Those conditions, from recruitment to mission, were difficult to navigate and not necessarily conducive to the production of thoughtful knowledge. Third, there was debate and disagreement as to the best approach to producing propaganda. That debate stemmed partly from the differing professional backgrounds of U.S. information services operatives (professors, journalists, advertisers) but also from individual differences of temperament and background. There was rarely a sole determining influence on the ideas that individual Americans produced about the people of the Middle East.

One additional factor that must inform the way in which these documents are read is the context in which they were produced. As with most such decisions made during wartime, they were produced quickly, by men and women who were asked to make decisive judgments about the United States government's chances for making inroads among the public opinion of regions that were taking on urgent military strategic value. If the Germans were capable of gaining alliances with Middle Eastern nations, the attendant access to oil resources was seen to have the potential to shift the momentum of the war.

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33. From 1920 to 1940, there were four featured articles in *American Anthropologist* that could be categorized as cultural anthropology, with only one of those published after 1935. In the latter half of the thirties, there were four book reviews of 1-2 pages each that discussed works of cultural anthropology in any of the countries of the Middle East. While some individuals such as OWI operative Anne Fuller completed fieldwork prior to the outbreak of the war, they often had not published it. In Fuller's case, which is covered in more detail in this chapter, the research that she did in Lebanon in 1937-38 was not published until 1961.

34. John Stothoff Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered* (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1983), 95.

There was a great deal of anxiety that the Allies were losing the battle for the hearts and minds of an entire geographic region to the Germans. This anxiety was reflected in assertions such as the one in a September 29, 1942 Office of War Information memo titled "Iran-Propaganda Target," which declared that "it is not surprising that from 80 to 90 percent of the population in Iran are said to be pro-German."[35] Information Service operatives were on high alert, particularly during the first, most uncertain part of the war.

Despite not being part of an active theater of war in the early days of the war, the countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean were quickly identified as targets for German propaganda, as well as for British and French military defense. In the still-neutral United States, readers of *The New York Times* were encouraged to put their minds at ease regarding potential German advances into the region. An October 8, 1939 headline optimistically declared: "Nazi Propaganda Fails Among Arabs; Moslems Fear Suppression of Religion if Dominated Either by Hitler or Stalin; Democracies Their Hope." The article, by Joseph M. Levy, stated that the Germans had "wasted their money and time" on propaganda for the Middle East because "it is almost traditional to regard Great Britain as the leading benevolent infidel power that is most tolerant of other peoples' religious beliefs, respectful of their rights and invariably ready to help in the development and progress of Moslem countries." The article then quotes an unnamed "leading [Arab] in Beirut" as scoffing at Nazi propaganda:

> 'According to 'Mein Kampf,' we Arabs are considered by Hitler fourteenth in racial grading. Then why is he so eager for our sympathy and support? It only proves his knavery. Goebbels [Propaganda Minister Joseph] or whoever prepares

35. "Iran – Propaganda Target," 3, Records of the Office of War Information, RG 208, Box 425 (National Archives (NA), College Park, Md.).

> these Arabic broadcasts, in my opinion is a big fool if he believes the Arabs are listening to them or are in any way influenced by them. We Arabs know very well what we can expect from Hitlerism. We know our lot would be probably even worse than that of the Jews. Arabs will not be fooled by Hitler. May Allah protect us from nazism! The destiny of the Arabs lies with the democracies!'[36]

The story ends on that defiant and hopeful note, with Levy's unidentified Lebanese acquaintance propounding his vociferous denial of Hitlerism and his insusceptibility to Nazi propaganda.

The preponderance of Nazi propaganda in the Arab World was an obsession for the first American propagandists, even if they were not able to separate the ubiquity of Nazi propaganda from how that propaganda was received. Present-day scholars face the same difficulty. Jeffrey Herf has argued that Nazi propagandists "[understood] that some currents in Arab politics…offered points of entry for a positive reception of Nazism." Nazi propagandists advanced "denunciations of Western imperialism and Soviet Communism" that positioned Nazi Germany "both as an ally of Arab anti-imperialism and as a soul mate of the religion of Islam as it understood it."[37] Yet Herf acknowledged that, "with the exception of Rashid Ali Kilani's short-lived pro-Axis coup in Iraq in 1941, no Arab government emerged that supported the Axis."[38] He also conceded that "an adequate examination of the impact, reception, and after effects of Nazism's Arabic-language propaganda is beyond the scope of this work."[39] Studies of the reception of

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36. Joseph Levy, "NAZI PROPAGANDA FAILS AMONG ARABS; Moslems Fear Suppression of Religion if Dominated by Either Hitler or Stalin; Democracies Their Hope," *The New York Times*, October 8, 1939, sec. The Week in Review, 79.
37. Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2009), 4-5.
38. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, 264.
39. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, 265.

propaganda have tended to be inexact. Seventy years after WWII, there are limits to studying the effects of Allied or Nazi propaganda in a scientific fashion.[40] Public opinion polling done in foreign countries during the war was imprecise and, when quoted in internal memos, sourcing was not provided. Consider the layers of equivocation in the OWI memo quoted earlier: "*under these circumstances*, *it is not surprising* that *from 80 to 90 percent* of the population in Iran *are said to be* pro-German."[41] Such statements served to alarm policymakers to the German threat, as well as provide internal motivation and justification for U.S. propaganda efforts.

American officials in U.S. information services were attuned to the threat of German propaganda. Herf focused on the reaction of U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Alexander Kirk, who had Nazi broadcasts transcribed and translated. From September 1941 until he left his Cairo post in March 1944, Kirk sent 15 to 30 pages of text each week (about 3,000 pages over the course of the war) to Washington, D.C., as well to embassies and consulates in Jerusalem, Beirut, and Jidda. According to Herf, several themes persisted, including "Arab and Muslim victimization at the hands of the Jews, British, Soviets, and then the Americans; the expectation of Axis victory and Allied defeat; denunciations of Arab leaders who sided with the Allies; predictions of murderous

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40. Authors who have subsequently tried to connect the legacy of Nazi propaganda to "the modern Middle East" have stood on shaky ground regarding cause and effect. See Barry M. Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014). Another work to tread similar ground, but make more modest claims for the overall influence of propaganda in the Middle East, is Youssef H. Aboul-Enein and Basil H. Aboul-Enein, *The Secret War for the Middle East: The Influence of Axis and Allied Intelligence Operations During World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013).
41. "Iran – Propaganda Target," 3, NA RG 208, Box 425, italics added.

and expansionist policies by the Jews against the Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere; and support for Arab independence against British rule combined with religious appeals to Muslims."[42] While Kirk was one of the more prominent members of the U.S. government who was monitoring Nazi propaganda in the Middle East, similar efforts were also initiated in the fledgling information services.

In the early days of the COI from mid-1941 through the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was a small research group based in the Library of Congress which dedicated itself to studying the entirety of North Africa, the Near East, and India. Physical anthropologist Henry Field, not yet formally working on the M Project (covered later in the chapter), contributed his thoughts on British, German, and Italian broadcasts to that vast region. Also contributing analysis was Irving Pflaum, a journalist originally from Chicago who had lived in Spain, and Estelle Frankfurter, the previously-mentioned sister of Felix.[43] The most prolific author until early 1942, though, was Anne Fuller, a cultural anthropologist. She was the author of, or mentioned in, most of the memoranda of that time period. Fuller was one of the few American cultural anthropologists who had performed fieldwork in the region prior to the outbreak of war. Fuller spent a year in a Lebanese village called Buarij in 1937-38. She published her findings from that fieldwork in a brief 1961 volume, in which she wrote that the residents of Buarij "were my friends…whom I came to see in loyal affection."[44] Prior to U.S. entry into the war,

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42. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, 102.
43. Harvard Law School News, "All My Love, Filly." (1999): accessed October 25, 2014, http://www.law.harvard.edu/news/bulletin/backissues/summer99/article67.html; Heise, Kenan, "Irving P. Pflaum, 79, Journalist, Lawyer and Latin American Expert." *Chicago Tribune*, 1985.
44. Anne H. Fuller, *Buarij, Protrait of a Lebanese Muslim Village.* (Cambridge: 1961), v.

however, she and her colleagues could do little other than study what the WWII belligerents were broadcasting in the region, and "agree that it is most essential to encourage the morale of these people, who number approximately 425 million."[45] Once the United States entered the war in December 1941, COI operatives felt they had a lot of catching up to do, especially to match the propagandistic sophistication of Germany.[46]

With German propagandistic success seen as so evident, American operatives were enlisted for their insights into Middle Eastern peoples. Archaeologists, physical anthropologists, and journalists produced a broad array of opinions and ideas about the peoples of the Middle East. These opinions touched on a number of recurrent themes. The articulation of those themes evolved over time, especially during the initial phase of propaganda. The principle themes that COI operatives identified were the geographic isolation and barrenness of the Middle East; the simpleness of the people of the region; and the necessity of despotic leaders to control unruly and childlike Middle Easterners. Each of these themes was linked, sometimes explicitly by the archaeologist or physical anthropologist, to ideas he or she formed while on an archaeological expedition. Yet colleagues of various backgrounds also attempted to refute some of the most blatantly biased opinions that were put forth. As the procedures of the COI became more formalized, the haphazard aspects of the early days gave way to more institutionalized ways of thinking and operating. Nevertheless, the early prejudices left their traces on later

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45. Unsigned, "Memorandum on Broadcasting to North Africa, The Near East and India," August 13, 1941, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 1, 1.
46. There has been a great deal written about Joseph Goebbels and the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda. One of the most visually-oriented histories is Anthony Richard Ewart Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1976).

writings.

By February 1942, more people had been brought into the COI, including Francis Olcott Allen, an archaeologist who had worked on a series of Harvard and Oriental Institute archaeological surveys during the 1930s.[47] Although Allen remained with the Cairo office of what would later become the Office of War Information (OWI) until near the end of the war, he does not seem to have contributed a large number of memoranda during the early days. Nevertheless, one of his contributions stands out for the ferocity of its prejudices against Middle Easterners. Allen contributed a notion that the propaganda target in the Middle East was primitive and childlike. To those propagandists who bought into this belief system, this schema simultaneously made the propaganda effort incredibly simple, because the target was so susceptible to messages, and incredibly difficult, because the message had to be presented in such a remedial way. For some archaeologists, the "Oriental" had to be talked down to in simple language using simple ideas, lest the concepts exceed his capacity to understand. Allen submitted his thoughts on "the peculiar psychology of the people of the Arabic speaking world and the way propaganda should take advantage of it." In this memo, Allen stated:

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47. According to genealogical documents available online, Allen was a distant cousin of John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles, who would later become Secretary of State and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, respectively. There is not much information available about Allen's life, including the existence of any direct connections to the Dulles family. Horatio Connell Snyder, "Francis Olcott Allen/elizabeth Horner Dulles." accessed October 25, 2014, http://www.pennock.ws/surnames/fam/fam27523.html. For more on Dulles family history, see Stephen Kinzer, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War* (New York City: Henry Holt and Company, 2013). Allen Dulles was an OSS agent in Switzerland during the war, and his wartime dispatches provided helpful background for this chapter. See Allen Dulles and Neal H. Petersen, *From Hitler's Doorstep: The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942-1945* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

> the cardinal fact about the psychology of the Arabic speaking peoples, the Moslems of the Near East, is that they are still a primitive people. For all the superficial European culture that has reached some of them, they are still at the stage of primitive mental development. This means they lack the power of analysis and accurate judgment of cause and effect. Consequently they are all (including those Europeanized) superstitious, i.e. they believe what they are told by tradition and the carriers of tradition, their sheiks and learned men, and strangely enough (though they would deny it) their women, quite omitting any attempt at rational analysis of actual cause and effect, or accurate estimate of facts. This condition bears with it a frame of mind which makes these peoples an ideal subject for propaganda in that it is almost literally true that THEY WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING THEY ARE TOLD OFTEN AND VIVIDLY ENOUGH.[48]

Allen presented a bizarre conundrum under his next heading:

> ON HOW their ignorance and total lack of education limit the kinds of propaganda that should be presented to them. It is very hard for Europeans and Americans to realize the profundity of the ignorance of the mass of the people of the Near East. They have no conception whatever of geography, of their own or any other part of the world. The people of Egypt have only the vaguest notions, for example of where Greece is in relation to their own country, and even Palestine is just some place vaguely off to the north…Their ignorance is a definite limiting factor in propaganda because of the fact that that of which any man is totally ignorant is not likely to interest him in the slightest. If a million American tanks arrive in China, it doesn't impress the Palestinian Arab at all, since he has practically no idea of the existence of China, and doesn't give a damn what happens to it one way or the other."[49]

To Allen, even their language was a limiting factor: "a man who knows a Semitic language perfectly rarely knows anything else."[50]

This memo is quoted at length here in part because its outright contempt for the

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48. Francis Olcott Allen, "Memorandum on Propaganda in the Arabic Speaking Countries Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt," February 18, 1942, 1, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 1. Emphasis in the original.
49. Allen, "Memorandum on Propaganda in the Arabic Speaking Countries Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt," February 18, 1942, 2.
50. Allen, "Memorandum on Propaganda in the Arabic Speaking Countries Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt," February 18, 1942, 5.

"Moslems of the Near East" shocks the modern reader, and in part because Allen made no attempt to disguise his bigotry behind social scientific reasoning. Allen's memo stands out in the OWI files for its virulence, but not for its underlying bias. Other memo writers observed the decorum of accepted academic discourse, but the "primitive mental development" of the Muslim mind was a common trope among many memoranda writers. Allen went on to assert that "this propaganda job in the Arabic speaking world is not really difficult, because the propagandist is greatly aided by the factor discussed as Section II below,- namely the extreme impressionability, gullibility and vivid imagination of the Orientals."[51] Low literacy rates were cited as further evidence that "Orientals" were primitive peoples. Such views correlated with the paternalistic stance taken by American archaeological expeditions. Because non-Western workers were denied the opportunity to engage in non-manual labor at the work sites, archaeologists like Allen could not conceive of them in any other way. Accordingly, his recommendations for propaganda techniques were premised on "Oriental" inferiority.

Allen also touched on another concern, that the United States project a powerful image through its propaganda. Allen insisted that the United States must appear strong, because "the Arabic speaking world, like the rest of humanity, is more impressed by visible signs of strength and actual victories than by any amount of propaganda… [T]he role of propaganda here should be to create the impression of strength where there is little or none, and make vividly known and magnify what actual strength we have in the Near

51. Allen, "Memorandum on Propaganda in the Arabic Speaking Countries Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt," February 18, 1942, 1.

Eastern section."[52] Although Allen pointed out a commonality that Arabic speakers shared with the rest of humanity, it was not a flattering characteristic. Even though his formulation suggested that most people were impressed by demonstrations of strength, it was only the simple mind of the "Arabic speaker" that could be fooled into perceiving strength where there was none. Taking the idea of perceived strength even further, Allen stated that "Orientals" felt an affinity towards displays of cruelty. Under the heading "Horrors are not horrible to the Arabs," Allen wrote:

> atrocity stories and tales of cruelty and oppression have no effect, or the opposite effect to what is intended. All the Orientals have nothing but respect for power and all its manifestations,- a strong man is practically the same as a good man in their thought. Depiction of the Germans maltreating subject peoples merely tells the Arab world that they are firm governors, the kind they admire.[53]

This assertion, which seems to be derived from *Arabian Nights* imagery of ancient despotic sultans and their modern successors, barbaric dictators, was used to explain why anyone would choose Germany over the United States.

Anne Fuller, by then a COI veteran in an agency of continual new hiring, sought to incorporate the views of new hires, while also softening some of the harsher views that she saw in evidence in the texts that circulated across her desk in the Library of Congress. Nevertheless, she slipped into the paternalism that occurred even for those Americans who sought to humanize their propaganda targets in their wartime memoranda. Fuller wrote a February 1942 memo to her colleague Allan Fry on broadcasts to Iraq, in which she noted, "the program should be presented so as to appeal to the simple mind. The

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52. Allen, "Memorandum on Propaganda in the Arabic Speaking Countries Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt," February 18, 1942, 1.
53. Allen, "Memorandum on Propaganda in the Arabic Speaking Countries Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt," February 18, 1942, 3.

populace should be considered as if theyr [sic] were children eager to learn and talked to accordingly." She also emphasized that "tales of courage and feats of endurance should be told, and told in such a way which appeals to the imagination of the average. The bulk of the Arabs are hero-worshippers."[54] For Fuller, the perceived simplicity of the populace was depicted as childlike innocence, curiosity and an obsession with tales of great feats. Fuller's writings contrast with the more blatantly racist memo writers such as Francis Olcott Allen, who disparaged "Orientals" as profoundly and irrevocably ignorant.

The perceived ignorance of the propaganda target affected the medium as well as the message. Low literacy rates became a factor in what types of propaganda were promoted, which in turn led to a strong belief in radio broadcasts (a fact which also contributed to the dearth of actual propaganda products in the archive). One person who tried to refute the notion of low literacy as a barrier to written propaganda was Professor Nabih Amin Faris, then in the Department of Oriental Languages and Literature at Princeton University: "It is true that the great majority in the Near East are not literate. But what a literate man reads is widely and rapidly disseminated through the bazaars and the Friday meetings in mosques. One pamphlet is better than ten radio programmes."[55] Faris, who had previously taught at the American University of Beirut, had been asked by colleague D.C. Poole to comment on a paper written by Timothy Pfeifer.[56] Faris,

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54. Anne Fuller, "Memo 'Broadcasts to Iraq' to Allan Fry," February 22, 1942, NA RG 208, Box 425, Folder 8.
55. Nabih Amin Faris, "Remarks by Nabih Amin Faris on Memorandum by Timothy Pfeifer," February 27, 1942, 3, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 8.
56. I have not found background information about all of the COI, OWI, and OSS operatives, especially those who either had common names or did not go on to publish anything later in life. I include the names of other operatives to portray the way in which each memorandum (especially early in the war, before central authorities established top-

influenced by personal experience, therein described a communal social network and community that was much different from the image of uneducated masses put forth by other memo writers.[57] Faris also advocated for country-specific analyses, stating that Saudi Arabia was a "backward, half nomadic conglomeration of tribes, welded together only by the strong hand of Ibn Saud himself."[58] In addition, he argued that authoritarian rule was not a necessary characteristic of the Arabic-speaking world, but rather was a historically-specific condition brought on by colonialism. Therefore Faris agreed that propaganda targets would not respond to American attempts to depict German rule as authoritarian, but for a different reason than Allen used. Faris cautioned, "the Arabic-speaking world cannot be frightened by the horrors of Nazi rule. They reason that things cannot be worse than what they are at present. Our appeal to them should be out of hope not fear."[59] Thus, to Faris, propagandists could appeal to the Arabic-speaking world with hope that they would, after the war, be freed from the colonial constraints imposed by France and Great Britain. Faris also cautioned against excessive claims of American benevolence because "the people of the Near East can never forget American philanthropy during the World War I, particularly through the Near East Relief. They were and are still grateful; but constant reminders might hurt their pride, a human trait which they share with other people."[60] Faris was attuned to the detrimental effects that

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down directives) circulated through the COI to solicit feedback from multiple people.
57. This memo then circulated back to Wilson, who in turn wrote again to Fuller. Especially early in the war, there was a great deal of back-and-forth over details.
58. Faris, "Remarks by Nabih Amin Faris on Memorandum by Timothy Pfeifer," February 27, 1942, 1.
59. Faris, "Remarks by Nabih Amin Faris on Memorandum by Timothy Pfeifer," February 27, 1942, 2.
60. Faris, "Remarks by Nabih Amin Faris on Memorandum by Timothy Pfeifer,"

anti-Middle Eastern bias, or excessive pro-Americanism, could have on the propaganda itself.[61]

Future foreign service officer Achilles N. Sakell and journalist Joseph Fels Barnes were other operatives who, like Faris, insisted that Arabs wished to escape from under the heel of their colonial oppressors. Sakell and Barnes thought that Arabs were "lover[s] of freedom," a point that contradicted Allen's earlier insistence on a need for despotic rulers. In this understanding, freedom, although unachieved, would be embraced if available. Sakell and Barnes argued that Arabs would therefore be amenable to an American message of democracy and equality. They identified the characteristics of "the Arab" that would make him a receptive target for the American message:

> The dignity of the Individual.--No Arab could support a brutal tyranny such as is radiated from Berlin.--The Arab, as a passionate lover of freedom, is a born democrat.--He should easily perceive that Hitler is the foe of freedom everywhere, and that he would have the scantiest respect for Arab liberties.--The soulless machine of Berlin would be anathema to the liberty-loving Arab.--Cite fate of subjugated people of Europe.--Undoubtedly Hitler would treat Arab freedom and independence as gently as the Mongols of the Middle Ages, who wrecked the glories of Arab civilization, treated it.[62]

Sakell and Barnes's perspective, while forcefully argued, depended on a firmly anti-

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February 27, 1942, 2.

61. After the war, Faris co-wrote a text called *The Crescent in Crisis* that analyzed "*homo Arabicus* as an individual possessing his own human personality and dignity, and as a member of a segment of mankind which has its own distinctive characteristics." Although necessarily general in nature, it captured the nuanced type of analysis that Faris advocated for during the war. Nabih Amin Faris and Muhammad Tawfik Husayn, *The Crescent in Crisis: An Interpretive Study of the Modern Arab World* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1955).

62. Achilles N. Sakell and Joseph Barnes, "Near Eastern Script," March 6, 1942, 3-4, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 8. The script noted, "Our Near Eastern script is based on a publicity plan which has been approved by Messrs. Nelson Poynter, Irving Pflaum, Richard Hollander, George Bookman and Dr. [Walter Livingston "Livy"] Wright."

colonial policy from the U.S. government. That central presupposition would prove to be impossible for COI operatives to uphold, as they only made propaganda, not policy. As Sakell and Barnes seemed to understand, their recommendations depended on the United States becoming focused on its role in "a just and equitable post-war world," in which "such movements as the Pan-Arab and Pan-Muslim will be encouraged and utilized by the family of nations to good ends" along with "the freedom and independence of the nations of the Near East." They also lauded "our [U.S.] probable leadership in a world-wide effort to raise the standard of living of poorer peoples to something approximately our own. We may help the Bedouins, who are beginning to realize the economic hopelessness of nomadic existence, to settle down."[63] The emerging enunciation of a U.S.-dominated postwar world depended upon an abandonment of traditional mores that prevented groups from achieving the material prosperity of the United States. To Sakell and Barnes, the standard of living in Arab countries could improve to "approximately" the same level as the citizens of the United States, but only with the technical, military, and financial assistance of actual Americans. They also wanted to channel Muslim distrust towards the Germans through their scripted messages: "Germany aims at world domination…Aryan racial superiority…In the end the Nazi wolf, if not checked in time, will devour the Semitic sheep irrespective of the color of their fleece—Arabs will not fare any better than the Jews in their hands…The godless Nazis have been playing on the religious feelings of the devout Muslims."[64] This proposed script therefore had several unusual missives: it mentioned Islam, a topic which operatives tended to avoid; it

63. Sakell and Barnes, "Near Eastern Script," March 6, 1942, 3-4.
64. Sakell and Barnes, "Near Eastern Script," March 6, 1942, 2-3.

advocated for anti-Axis as well as pro-American messaging; and it envisioned an explicitly anti-colonial U.S. policy.

Given the speed with which the COI was changing in early 1942, it is not surprising that Anne Fuller wrote John Wilson at the end of March to ask "Questions pertaining to the Near East Desk." Many of her questions cut to the core of the COI's mission in the Near East, and were as fundamental as "is Sakell's script to be regarded as final?"; "if the translators need not necessarily use Sakell's script...who is to direct and be responsible for the scripts written by them?"; and "if the scripts are to be criticized or suggestions made in regard to them, who is to make the criticisms, and will or are these criticisms to be followed?"[65] Fuller was confused and likely frustrated. Operatives continued to produce memoranda throughout the spring of 1942, each one, to judge from the tone, seeking to be treated as authoritative. Fuller wanted to know where authority ultimately resided. Wilson, by then the head of the Near Eastern section of the COI, tried to provide an answer.

Like Francis Olcott Allen, Wilson was an archaeologist, but his experiences had left him with a dramatically different outlook than Allen's. As mentioned previously, Wilson had also taught English at the American University of Beirut (AUB). This extended contact with Middle Eastern peoples had given him a more positive impression of the region and its peoples, and he was frequently a dissenting voice against derogatory generalizations. Writing in response to a request for his comments on a proposed Persian Gulf guide, he cautioned against overly casual assertions about the barrenness of the land:

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65. Anne Fuller to John Wilson, “Questions pertaining to the Near East Desk,” March 27, 1942, 1, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 8.

"The statement that the land and the climate are 'unfriendly and harsh' is a general statement which is not true for individual exceptions."[66] He also added more specific notes about particular geographic areas in an effort to have a tighter adherence to facts on the ground rather than broad, sweeping statements. As was well known by WWII, the region was home to an enormous amount of untapped oil. Most members of the OWI seemed to have an intuitive understanding of the importance of oil to the war effort. However, considering the prominence of oil as a policy point in Allied and Axis efforts to control the Middle East, remarkably few operatives mentioned oil as part of their briefings on the region. Wilson was more upfront in his approach. By merely acknowledging the importance of oil to the war, Wilson also turned on its head the image of the region as being bereft of resources. Wilson went on to mention that, "some rough percentage figure might be used to indicate the importance of the Middle East oil supply in the general strategic picture. In round numbers it could be said that the Middle East oil production represents 70 percent of the oil of the eastern hemisphere, or 70 percent of that in which the Axis is directly interested."[67] Wilson was, in this case as in others, one of the pragmatic voices within the OWI.[68]

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66. John A. Wilson, "Letter to Wallace R. Deuel" (Division of Special Information, June 20, 1942), 1, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 8.
67. John A. Wilson, "Letter to Wallace R. Deuel," 2. What observers saw as barren and desolate contained most of the world's supply of accessible oil, which would become the world's most vital natural resource in the 20th century. Oil greatly influenced U.S.-Middle East relations long after the end of the war.
68. Later in the 20th century, a strong economic and cultural argument arose that saw oil as a resource that should be made cheaply available for all mankind, as opposed to solely enrich the people whose countries that the oil happened to be underneath. Such arguments were self-serving for those people who made them. WWII was an important inflection point for such ideas, as the United States became dependent on foreign oil. For an analysis of the cultural influence of the idea of oil as universal heritage, see McAlister,

Wilson also attempted to contextualize the "Oriental" as a propaganda target within a more familiar context. In response to assertions that Middle Easterners would not be amenable to democracy, he generally agreed, but with an exception: “fierce self-respect” means, “personally, the Oriental has a successful working democracy based on this self-respect and the response that it invokes in others. This democracy is similar to that in our western ranching country, and it has no relation to functional political democracy. The Oriental has little understanding of political democracy and prefers rather an imposed government.”[69] To Wilson, personal liberty (in the form of excess pride) might have been a familiar concept to “Orientals,” but it had not yet become widespread to the point that Middle Easterners were demanding representative government. Wilson’s comparison of “Oriental…working democracy” to “our Western ranching country” created both familiarity and distance. He compared Middle Easterners to one of the most identifiably American archetypes, but simultaneously undermined the favorability of that comparison by noting that Middle Easterners were not sophisticated enough to have expanded their desire for individual freedom into a larger system of government. If one dissects the comparison further, western ranchers have been notoriously ambivalent about government, particularly “an imposed government.” Despite Wilson’s apparent attempt to draw a connection between Middle Easterners and Americans, his juxtaposition ultimately revealed that he, too, considered Middle Easterners to be best suited to an imposed government. In fact, he wrote that they

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Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945, 133-40.

69. John A. Wilson to Wallace R. Deuel, June 20, 1942, 2-3, NA RG 208, Box 418, Folder 8.

preferred it.[70]

Later, in his memoir, Wilson readily acknowledged that "it [the OWI] was a decidedly amateur group that faced the hard-boiled problems of war" and that "the chief qualifications for this research were field experience and a knowledge of foreign languages."[71] Nevertheless, he saw his role as bringing a useful corrective to wrong-headed notions of engagement with the populations of the Middle East. For instance, Wilson wrote "when I visited my 'opposite number' in Army Intelligence, I found him equipped with a map of the Near East, put out by the *National Geographic Magazine*, with no references to strategic considerations. He talked about the 'Ay-rabs' as though they were all primitive nomads."[72] Wilson felt that "Washington often ignored our precision as being inconsequential." Despite Wilson's efforts, he frequently felt ignored by the powers-that-be:

> When a young Army officer briefed us about the situation near el-Alamein he kept referring to the Qattara Depression as 'the Quarter-ah Depression.' I went up to him afterward and said, 'That depression is Qattara, pronounced like catarrh-ah.' He nodded his acknowledgement. Next week he resumed his report about activity around 'the Quarter-ah Depression.' Americans often have a little scorn for the professor who has knowledge but 'does not know much.'[73]

Furthermore, Wilson perceived that his "diffidence" contributed to his work sometimes being ignored or overlooked. He claimed that "the dogmatic thrust that was a necessary part of the government setting was beyond me...Nobody could be heard in that frantically

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70. In his autobiography, Wilson was non-judgmental of his work for the government. His personal papers at the Oriental Institute in Chicago were heavily edited prior to their donation. He has only a single file box consisting of mainly his published writings, so it has not been possible to gain insight into his non-official mindset at that time.
71. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 88.
72. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 90.
73. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 92.

busy setting unless he spoke out loudly and confidently. It was a naive hope that good work would speak for itself, without a loud and repeated assertion that it was the best."[74] Wilson did not claim that only his advice should have been heeded; rather, that in the environment of government work, expedience could easily trump thoughtfulness, even if some degree of thoughtfulness could have ultimately produced a more useful conclusion.

He cautioned the reader that "if this account suggests gaiety and gusto in the work, that has to be understood in a setting of oppressive urgency and frustration."[75] He wrote that "my own performance fell far short of my hopes...the application of knowledge for immediate power purposes was something for which scholars were not adapted. Psychological warfare or that unknown hush-hush side of OSS involved attitudes and techniques outside the normal range of an academic mind. I did not have the discipline for ruthless purpose."[76] He also added an interesting postscript regarding the use of archaeologists as spies:

> There was a popular suspicion that many archaeologists served as government spies. Even though the cloak-and-dagger activities of OSS were kept secret from us on the research side, I was aware that there was some such use during the Second World War. Before that time and since I have known of no archaeologists serving as government agents. They really have two liabilities against such employment. Their professional concern is for the ancient, and if they should show a visible curiosity about the modern this would be very conspicuous. Secondly, they normally pursue their archaeology in some desert of rural setting, where there simply is no strategic information to be gained. Few archaeologists have more than a superficial knowledge of the obscure power forces in the countries where they work.[77]

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74. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 92.
75. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 91.
76. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 92.
77. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 93.

Wilson was attentive to the impact that his wartime work had on his scholarly output, as well as the areas where his mode of scholarship could be most impactful in terms of lessening the deleterious effects that speed had on the generation of knowledge. Chapter Three will deal with his proposal to incorporate his wartime experiences into a productive center for Middle Eastern studies at the University of Chicago.

Mid-1942 witnessed a momentous change in the overall structure of the U.S. information agencies. On June 13, 1942, the Office of the Coordinator of Information split into two separate agencies: the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The OWI became more focused on what would become known as public diplomacy, and the OSS specialized in psychological warfare and spying. Their postwar successor agencies are considered to be the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), respectively, which gives some notion of the split between their respective missions. Some of the activities undertaken by archaeologists in the OSS will be covered later in this chapter. The significance of the OWI-OSS split in mission was that the OWI continued to professionalize and evolve. The agency's foreign offices grew increasingly standardized in process and message. For the operatives working in North Africa and the Middle East, their propaganda, by order of the OWI's directors, became less focused on amateur psychological analysis of their prospective audience, and much more focused on producing pro-American messages that would be palatable to as wide an audience as possible.

OWI memoranda produced in the immediate aftermath of the OWI-OSS split did not see much change in the tenor of their recommendations. "Suggestions for Propaganda

to Persia," written in June 1942, reinforced the idea that the Nazis were seen as succeeding by exploiting Persian baseness as "they [German radio shows] consciously seek to win their listeners by flattery, in the midst of which news items with a strong Axis bias are introduced."[78] German propagandistic success implied that a certain type of message by the Americans would be effective: "It must be mentioned, however, that the gulf between the Herdenvolk and the Herrenvolk can easily appeal to the prejudices of the Persian landed groups. Cruelty and violence can easily be presented as indications of virility and strength."[79] Such techniques were needed because the Germans played up similarities between Germany and Persia such as "the origins of the Persians in dwelling on the bonds which exist between Persia and the 'Aryan' Germany of today."[80] Nevertheless, Americans could count on the positive legacy of economic and religious missions to help create receptiveness for their propaganda.[81] The memo continued:

> In the progress which Persia has made in the past two decades, the United States has played an important role. Many of the ideas of the present generation --- emancipation of women, public hygiene, wider educational advantages --- came through their contacts with America. Consequently, the most effective Allied propaganda in Persia can be done by our government. We enjoy a decided advantage over the British; Persians are unwilling to believe English claims, because of unhappy past experiences and even feel a certain hostility toward the British Empire. The Persian, however, still generally feels that America does not

78. "Suggestions for Propaganda to Persia," June 1942, 2, NA RG 208, Box 425, Folder 8.
79. "Suggestions for Propaganda to Persia," June 1942, 3.
80. "Suggestions for Propaganda to Persia," June 1942, 2.
81. Analyses of U.S. economic missions to Iran have often emphasized the power politics between Britain, the United States, and sometimes the USSR. See for instance John A. DeNovo, "The Culbertson Economic Mission and Anglo-American Tensions in the Middle East, 1944-1945," *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 4 (1977). There is a long history of economic missions to Iran. Millspaugh headed two economic missions to Iran, one in 1922-1927, and another from 1942-1945. See Arthur Chester Millspaugh, *The American Task in Persia* (New York: Arno Press, 1973).

> have imperialistic ambitions in the Middle East, but is rather acting from sincere and humanitarian motives.[82]

Memoranda such as this one contributed to a sense that Nazi propaganda appealed to Persian prejudices, but that American propaganda could make its appeal based on cultivating hope for the future.

A July 1942 OWI memo presented a typical conglomeration of ideas about the receptiveness of Middle Easterners to American ideas. Allan Fry assumed that Middle Easterners hated nearly everyone except the United States. He cited anecdotal evidence that the United States held a privileged position in the region, and instructed his propagandists to "emphasize…the splendid reputation the Americans enjoy in the Middle East. It is a well known fact that certain outstanding Americans are well on the way to apotheosis. A great deal of the ground work in winning this area to the American way has been accomplished years ago and we should certainly capitalize on this to the fullest extent."[83] But Fry did not believe in sugarcoating his ideas about their propaganda targets. In the same memo (referencing an earlier propaganda plan), he stated: "I think point 9, Cruelty, ought to be expanded somewhat to include such factors as that Arabs are not moved by overt acts which we consider cruel. In fact, they are very much impressed by physical punishments being inflicted by superiors on inferiors."[84] He did not make clear how that characteristic would be portrayed in propaganda towards Arabs, but he evidently though that it was information worth sharing.

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82. "Suggestions for Propaganda to Persia," June 1942, 2.
83. Allan Fry, "Memo 'Basic Plan for the Middle East' to Wallace Deuel," July 11, 1942, NA RG 208, Box 418.
84. Fry, "Memo 'Basic Plan for the Middle East' to Wallace Deuel," July 11, 1942.

The OWI-OSS split took on greater import once the OWI bureaucracy was firmly in place, and could impose a more uniform, hierarchical structure throughout the agency. Significantly, though, the message from the upper echelons of the OWI was not that operatives had produced bad information per se. In other words, there is not documentary evidence that anyone who had produced the memoranda cited above were reproached for having exceeded the boundaries of their assignments. Instead, they were reminded that their memoranda were circulating widely, and that what they wrote would be kept for posterity. A September 1942 memo on the "Preparation of O.W.I. Directives" instructed: "The writer should keep in mind that our directives are sent in abbreviated form to many foreign countries to inform our outpost men about the character of current programs; that our directives are filed in Washington and form a permanent record of our work, which may be consulted by persons who do not usually read our actual scripts or hear our broadcasts. We are writing for the record and may be judged by it some day."[85] After that memo was circulated, there was a distinct change in the character of the directives that were written regarding the foreign peoples of the Middle East. Of course, the character of the war was changing as well. The tide had turned against the Axis forces in North Africa by the end of 1942. Those forces would be completely defeated by May 1943. By the end of 1942, the OWI's official position seems to have been an overwhelming sense that they could only mess things up by saying or doing the wrong thing. The military was winning the war; if the OWI was not careful, they could put victory in jeopardy by unnecessarily

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85. Memorandum from Douglas Miller to Percy Winner, "Preparation of O.W.I. Directives," September 4, 1942, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 13, Entry 6E, Folder Policy - Overseas Branch, 1-2.

alienating foreigners against the United States. Accordingly, they sought mainly to project positive images of the powerful United States military and the rightness of the Allied cause.[86]

The Director of the OWI's overseas branch, Robert E. Sherwood, was, by early 1943, concerned that the United States tread lightly when projecting itself abroad. In a widely-distributed directive, he wrote, "It is the widespread impression that Americans have a tendency to boast. We should not attempt to remove this impression by uncharacteristic and therefore probably unconvincing diffidence, nor by an attempt to indulge in typical British understatement. But we should most certainly never make the serious mistake of drawing or implying comparisons between our relatively happy lot and that of less fortunate peoples."[87] Nevertheless, his concern at this point was not that the OWI should prioritize knowing anything about the targets of their information; rather, the OWI needed to put America's best foot forward, "since the first prerequisite of trust and friendliness is understanding, there is literally no aspect of American life which is not worthwhile presenting clearly and truthfully to those whom we hope to have know us, understand us, trust us, and, if possible, like us."[88] Sherwood also wanted "to demonstrate to the peoples of other countries that this really is a people's war and that we are not

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86. Such propaganda could be effective, and operatives were well-served to be attentive to cultural norms of their audiences. For more on radio propaganda in North Africa, see Sean Foley, “When the Qur’an Was America’s Weapon for Freedom in the Middle East: Muhammad Siblini and the Defeat of the Axis in North Africa,” Alex Lubin (Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut Press, 2014).
87. Memorandum from Robert E. Sherwood, "O.W.I. Overseas Branch Long-Range Directive," January 15, 1943, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 13, Entry 6E, Folder Policy - Overseas Branch, 2.
88. Sherwood, "O.W.I. Overseas Branch Long-Range Directive," January 15, 1943, 2.

fighting merely to reestablish the old order."[89] Sherwood also singled out some areas for "special treatment - for example, most of the Middle Eastern countries." Within Sherwood's directive, then, was a further acknowledgement that OWI operatives could still develop country-specific policies, but that those policies needed to be produced in a way that prioritized the positive project of the United States, and avoided any topics that were unpleasant or potentially incendiary. The singaling out of "Middle Eastern countries" indicates that Sherwood distinguished between Middle Eastern countries and the (mainly European) countries where he felt the OWI should tone down its propaganda. In addition, because the incendiary topics were specifically related to colonialism in the Middle East, Sherwood was effectively admitting that the Middle East was the only region in which the United States needed to be disingenuous in its messaging.

Journalist Joseph Fels Barnes composed a March 1943 directive for Iraq that was in line with the new rules of the OWI. Barnes began by recounting a brief history of the Rashid Ali coup of May 1941, including the various competing interests that had ruled Iraq since that time. Barnes noted that German propaganda was still rampant in Iraq, and may have influenced the Iraqi Royal Family in declaring war against the Axis Powers (it had previously remained neutral). Barnes noted that "this is probably the first time that enemy radio broadcasts have been accepted as grounds for a declaration of war." Taking German propaganda as "a challenge to us," Barnes wrote that "in order to counteract the past effects of German propaganda, however, it will first be necessary to examine the nature of that audience to which our written and spoken words will be addressed."[90]

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89. Sherwood, "O.W.I. Overseas Branch Long-Range Directive," January 15, 1943, 6.
90. Joseph Barnes, "Basic Directive for Iraq," March 5, 1943, NA RG 208, Records of

Barnes's analysis was an intriguing amalgamation of sweeping claims mixed with astute insights. Some of what he wrote would not be out of place in a George Packer or Dexter Filkins journalistic piece about Iraq today. For example, after a lengthy section about the various religious, economic, and cultural groups within Iraq, Barnes noted, "these social divisions cut clearly across economic distinctions to create a kaleidoscopic assortment of conflicting religious, economic, and social interests, which have left an indelible impression on the temperament of the people."[91] His March 1943 memo stands as testament to the fact that the structure of the OWI, depending on the circumstances, did produce memoranda that contained thoughtful examinations of other societies. The question soon became, then, to what use would those insights be put? Would they be used solely for the execution of a wartime strategy to defeat the Axis, or would they be employed to influence a postwar world in which the supremacy of the United States was to be the most salient feature?

Barnes was vague about his particular vision for the future, although the idea of the postwar world had clearly entered his head. This paragraph pointed towards what would become the next phase of American influence on the region: a reliance on specious notions of "national characteristics," coupled with a widespread desire to mold foreign peoples in a specific manner:

> Cultural pride, religious fanaticism, mutual distrust, and class consciousness are qualities characteristic of the typical Iraqi. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that such should be the case. On the other hand, these people have virtues to outweigh their faults. Despite a high percentage of illiteracy, their leaders are progressive and are genuinely anxious to weld disruptive elements into a homoge-

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the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 12, Folder 11, Foreign Information Service, 2.
91. Barnes, "Basic Directive for Iraq," March 5, 1943, 4.

> neous state. They are virile, alert and highly intelligent, with enormous reserves of vitality, although, like all Arabs, they react badly under sustained exertion of any sort. They have a keen sense of humor, are brave, and, with proper leadership, will fight hard in their own interests. In short, they are a people whose potentialities we should encourage as a means to help them eliminate those temperamental, economic, and political obstacles to a healthy national growth in the future.[92]

Barnes thus seems to have retained some aspects of the earlier assessments by archaeologists and physical anthropologists. But he tempered those views here with more self-consciously positive depictions of Iraqis. In addition, his memo was suffused throughout with additional optimism for the future, reflecting the changing circumstances of the war.

While Barnes included his analysis of the Iraqi people, ultimately his recommendations for propaganda focused on encouraging positive depictions of the United States, in particular its "wealth [which] is closely associated in their minds with physical and material strength. Hence graphic representations of the wealth of our resources or the cold architectural magnificence of some of our cities will help stimulate respect and admiration."[93] Barnes was also adamant that propaganda should not broach the subjects of Zionism or Pan-Arabism. His vision was that propaganda necessarily had to ignore those topics. The significance, then, of Barnes's memo was that it retained some of the previous prejudices, but packaged them in a more palatable way; it was written by a journalist, not a social scientist, which indicates a shift away from a reliance on social scientists within the OWI; and it was specific to Iraq in terms of analyzing Iraqi character, but ultimately its analysis of Iraqi national character was subsumed within a

92. Barnes, "Basic Directive for Iraq," March 5, 1943, 4.
93. Barnes, "Basic Directive for Iraq," March 5, 1943, 5.

larger goal of advancing positive depictions of the United States.

Along with changes in mission and guidance, there were frequent personnel changes with the OWI. In late 1942, the future Ambassador to Egypt under John F. Kennedy, John Badeau, was asked to join the OWI. As explained previously, when the U.S. information agencies scrambled to find operatives who were familiar with the Middle East, there was an emphasis on finding people who had worked in U.S. higher education. That bias – towards the professoriate – in large part excluded one significant potential source of Americans who had spent time in the Middle East: religious missionaries. Former missionaries were, on occasion, invited to join the OWI or OSS. John Badeau provides an interesting example of one former missionary who worked for the OWI, particularly because when he joined the OWI, he was no longer a missionary. By that time he was employed as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the American University in Cairo (AUC). While the AUC had missionary origins, according to Heather Sharkey, by WWII it had effectively shed its religious affiliation in favor of a more inclusive model of liberal education.[94] The same could be said of another bastion of American protestantism in the Middle East, the American University of Beirut. That institution officially changed its name in 1920 from Syrian Protestant College, a move that Betty S. Anderson has described as the official end of "its Christian proselytizing mission."[95] In both cases, the change in focus of those formerly evangelical institutions, combined with the economic effects of the Great Depression, had lowered the overall

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94. Heather J. Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). See Chapters 4 and 5.
95. Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 5.

number of American missionaries in countries across the Middle East. The net effect was that, by the time war broke out, there were fewer missionaries from which to draw. In addition, for many of the reasons described above, including the initial recruitment of William Langer to head the Research and Analysis Branch, there was a bias towards historians and social scientists in the U.S. information services.

Nevertheless, the recruitment of John Badeau serves as an illustrative counterexample. He noted in his memoir that he never found out who had recommended him for service with the OWI. He had taught in philosophy and religion, but never in what would later be called Middle East studies. Although he was a missionary in Iraq from 1928-1935, he was not of the generation that sought wholesale conversion of Muslims. In fact, he recounted in his memoir that in one of his first experiences in Egypt, "a young university student on the train...said, 'But have you ever considered that my religion, Islam, is also a good religion? Because it comforts me when I am sick, it helps me when I am in difficulty. It is my experience of God.'"[96] Badeau entered missionary service not out of religious fervor but because, when he graduated from Union College, "there was no Peace Corps, and very few other opportunities for what we would now call humanitarian social service. So I decided to enter the ministry."[97] He was predisposed to be receptive to appeals like the one from his young acquaintance on the train.

As a regional consultant to the Middle East section in the OWI, based at different times in Washington, DC and Cairo, he was attuned to any potential propaganda that might offend the target audience. His work "was simply to prevent a man from

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96. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 14.
97. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 7.

making a fool out of himself--and America from making a fool out of itself."[98] With that attitude in mind, he "quashed" a number of ideas, such as one that involved giving away pin cushions that had images of Mussolini and Hitler on either side, giving users "the psychological effect of sticking pins in the derrieres of two dictators."[99] Unfortunately, when he sent some of the prototypes to contacts in Egypt to test them out, a Cairene looked at the image of Hitler and said it was "'either Churchill or Roosevelt. I am not sure which.'"[100] The pin cushions were not distributed. Later, Norman Schwartzkopf, the head of the New Jersey State Police who was aiding the government of Iran with its police force, requested an agricultural film to be sent to Iran as positive propaganda about the United States. The film was made in Iowa, and featured lots of footage of hogs. Badeau had to explain to his colleagues that the film could not be viewed positively in Muslim countries. He felt that he kept running into "that strange cultural blindness that went on the theory that you cannot tailor these kinds of materials to local cultural needs."[101] Later, Badeau consulted with Hollywood scriptwriters to provide "culturally sensitive suggestions...for the release of *The Mummy's Ghost*," a horror movie that was scripted to be set in Egypt.[102] He later wrote, "I do not know how valuable it was to them. It was valuable to me because it immediately put me in the flow of a great deal of information,

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98. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 96.
99. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 96.
100. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 97.
101. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 97. Schwartzkopf's son was later known as "Stormin' Norman" during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.
102. Rick Worland, “OWI Meets the Monsters: Hollywood War Films and War Propaganda, 1942 to 1945,” *Cinema Journal* 37, no. 1 (1997), 55. The movie was not intended to be released in Egypt, so the producers did not make all of Badeau's recommended changes.

and for the first time I began to think more connectedly politically, and I began to collect material."[103] Like many of his fellow scholars, Badeau noticed that the impact of working for the U.S. government was not to have created a more enlightened or empathetic foreign policy. The change, rather, had been to himself.

The transition from the wild west version of OWI foreign propaganda memoranda, where operatives seemingly did not filter their opinions about Middle Easterners whatsoever, to a more institutionalized, self-censoring version, was significant for the individuals working in the OWI at that time. It changed the thrust of their focus away from discerning the character of foreign peoples to selling the story of American success. The shift therefore encouraged operatives to think differently about the propaganda task. Indeed, a widespread faith in the positive potentialities of a postwar world dominated by U.S. interests seems to have permeated the agency. For scholars like Badeau, that change in doxa included visions of the influence that scholarship could have on a U.S.-dominated postwar world.

In the later, less frantic period of propaganda planning, some units were able to make rudimentary efforts towards studying the reception of propaganda. In October 1944, for instance, the Research and Translation Department of the OWI office in Cairo sent out 38,000 copies of "The American Worker and His Family, No. 3 in the series of booklets entitled Life in America that this Outpost is publishing in Arabic for the information of the peoples of Egypt and the other Arabic-speaking lands of the Middle East."[104] The memo writer admitted that "the best means we have at hand for gauging the

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103. Badeau, *The Middle East Remembered*, 95-96.
104. "Reception of the Booklet The American Worker by the Egyptian Public" October

character of the reception of this booklet by the Egyptian public and particularly the Egyptian workingman is an analysis of the letters sent to us by Egyptians who have read the booklet." They did not actively solicit input from readers, and only distributed the booklet to "names on the OWI Mailing List" with "a special effort...to get copies to trade unions (usually called labor syndicates in Egypt)." They received 941 letters in August and September 1944, mainly requesting additional OWI publications. The unsigned memo reported that "not one of the letters...contained a word of adverse criticism." The memo included excerpts from letter writers, such as the Washing and Ironing Syndicate of Cairo, which wrote, "After reading your booklet we feel convinced that the U.S.A. is the country of freedom and democracy. This is so because the workmen there have realized much of what they had sought. We pray to God that Democracy will achieve victory and that the Egyptian workmen may have what has been acquired by their brethren in the other countries."[105] By all appearances, the booklet had accomplished the goal that its writers had set, namely to provide noncontroversial, flattering information about the United States.

By September 1944, Sherwood, the Director of the Overseas Branch of the OWI, was already making plans to liquidate the program in anticipation of Allied victory in Europe. With the theaters of war still active in Europe and Japan, any remaining personnel was expected to shift to those areas. Sherwood felt that staff could be reduced in Europe, where "government sponsored propaganda in any form is looked upon with

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1, 1944, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 4, Entry 6E, 1.
105. "Reception of the Booklet The American Worker by the Egyptian Public" October 1, 1944, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 4, Entry 6E, 3.

suspicion and abhorrence by the people of the liberated countries."[106] Everyone else, including those agents who had served in the Middle East branch, were to be phased out. For the duration of the war, he felt that neutral countries no longer needed to be targeted by the OWI. He asserted that "it would require a formidable stretch of the imagination -- and, in my opinion, a lessening of the dignity of the U.S. -- to maintain that we must campaign to enlist the good will of these neutrals in furthering the war against Japan."[107] In other words, he felt that, by that point in the war, the righteousness of the Allied cause was so well established that any additional propaganda towards nonaligned regions was unnecessary.

Sherwood did, however, anticipate that the Office of War Information would morph into some kind of peacetime organ of public diplomacy for the United States, although he was not sure what form that would (or should) take. He wrote to Elmer Davis, who was then the Director of Domestic Operations for the OWI, that he was not convinced of "the legitimacy of the term 'Voice of America,'" despite "having been originally responsible for this designation of our broadcasts."[108] He was "prepared to defend its legitimacy under war conditions," but once the war ended, he wrote, "I feel that it would be patently dishonest to describe as the 'Voice of America' broadcasts which are subject to rigid control by the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. With all

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106. Memorandum from Robert E. Sherwood to Elmer Davis, September 20, 1944, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 4, Entry 6E, 1.
107. Memorandum from Robert E. Sherwood to Elmer Davis, September 20, 1944, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 4, Entry 6E, 6.
108. Memorandum from Robert E. Sherwood to Elmer Davis, September 20, 1944, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 4, Entry 6E, 8. Sherwood has been credited with coining the term, originally "Voices of America."

proper respect for these eminent and honorable institutions it is obvious that they are not qualified to interpret the Voice of America - which is, eternally, many voices." Once information began to flow more freely after the war, he felt that "it would become increasingly apparent to the discerning listener that U.S. Government controlled broadcasts were telling no more than a carefully selected part of the truth."[109] Sherwood, a loyal government mouthpiece during the war who is credited with coining the phrase that later became FDR's famous description the United States as "the arsenal of democracy," was, by 1944 shifting to a more skeptical view of the role of the United States in the world. That viewpoint would later be further articulated in his Academy Award-winning screenplay for *The Best Years of Our Lives*, the immensely popular 1946 film that explored the difficulties faced by returning veterans. It was a skepticism that was shared by individual scholars like John Wilson, John Badeau, and Lawrence Doob, who had been exposed to the inner workings of the government during the war, but were not convinced as to whether the wartime righteousness of the U.S. cause would carry over into the peace.

After the OWI-OSS split, the OWI became more hierarchical and directive. The OSS gained some additional administrative trappings, but for the most part it remained an eclectic organization that rewarded operatives for coming up with unusual ideas. That attitude began at the top with William Donovan, who became the head of the OSS when it was created out of the COI.[110] The OSS maintained a Research and Analysis branch,

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109. Memorandum from Robert E. Sherwood to Elmer Davis, September 20, 1944, NA RG 208, Records of the Historian, Subject File 1941-46, Box 4, Entry 6E, 8.
110. For instance, "[Carleton] Coon, who had a bawdy side, developed the 'explosive turd'--a charge to blow vehicle tires, which looked like a mule dropping. Donovan

which was tasked with studying issues that were pertinent to military operations in various areas, such as the creation of short guides to regions where troops were being sent. It also deployed agents like Carleton Coon and Donald Wilber to conflict zones around the world, which will be explored in more detail later.

The short guides that were created for soldiers were crafted for consumption and use by military officials who would be deployed to the various regions of the war. These documents often shared biases with some of the propaganda memoranda, reflecting the common origins of both types of writing in the COI. In a way, though, the short guides achieved wider circulation and influence by virtue of being published and distributed to American servicemen. From 1942-1945, American military deployments to the Middle East were mainly intended to protect supply lines to Allied forces in the Soviet Union or in British-controlled Iraq. The U.S. Army's Persian Gulf Service Command transported almost 8 million tons of shipborne cargo through what was known as the Persian Corridor. Archaeologists and physical anthropologists were among those who prepared guides for soldiers who were sent to the region. There were a handful of similar guides that dealt with various regions within the Middle East and North Africa. The guides themselves were not published with credited authors, although physical anthropologist Carleton Coon prepared one for troops who would be landing in North Africa.[111] The

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enjoyed reading cables on their antics." Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 132-33.

111. "In the early spring of 1941 Gordon [Browne, another scholar-turned-government intelligence officer] had the idea of preparing a handbook and dictionary of local Arabic phrases to be used by American troops landing in North Africa. We wrote it and sent it to the Military Dictionary Committee. It was printed in modified form and used at the landing, along with fliers dropped from covering aircraft which read that we were friends, not foes." Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon*,

1943 guide that was prepared for American troops stationed in Iraq was republished in 2007 by the University of Chicago Press. That document was praised in 2007 as the type of document that would have been useful in the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. It, like many of the other WWII guides produced about non-Western nations, preached a modicum of respect for cultural differences, even while holding American cultural superiority as a central premise.[112] Nevertheless, the fact that a WWII-era troop guide about Iraq could elicit praise from a 2003-era serviceman, says as much about American ill-preparedness in 2003 as it does about the WWII-era guide. While some of the WWII guides had positive attributes, they should not be mistaken for flawless examplars of cultural sensitivity.

A guide that was written for soldiers in Iran provided servicemen with some historical perspective, and attempted to elicit some empathetic understanding, even while depicting Iranians as inherently distrustful of outsiders, especially the British and Soviets.[113] These conflicts, despite having been instigated by the colonizing powers, were portrayed in the American documents as being as much the fault of the colonized as the colonizer: "Although Iranis tend to be suspicious of each other, they are likely to agree in

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160. Future Nobel Peace Prize winner Ralph Bunche produced another OSS text in the same genre for the North African landings. See Brian Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: An American Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 101-10.
112. John A. Nagl, *Instructions for American Servicemen in Iraq During World War II* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
113. Some documents cited "unanimous hostility to Zionist political aspirations" as a cause of hatred towards the British as a result of the Balfour Declaration, but the importance of the "Zionist question" was consistently downplayed in wartime intelligence analysis. Most U.S. policymakers felt justified in ignoring Zionism as a question or source of conflict, especially during the war when there were war-related issues that took priority. In the OWI, most propaganda directives enforced silence on the topic.

distrusting foreigners. Some of them feel that in the game of power politics, richer nations have taken advantage of Iran's weakness and tried to take away what little wealth she has."[114] Even empathy for "the people of Iran" who "feel they have had to bear the brunt of invasion despite their desire to remain neutral" was merely an opening for "the propaganda of our enemies" which "has made the most of this situation, and has attempted to set up the Axis as the protectors of the Near East from United Nations aggression. Although few Iranis have been deceived, nevertheless, we have to admit that the war was brought to them uninvited and has imposed many hardships."[115]

The Short Guide to Iran was relatively innocuous, but other guides were more crass in their descriptions of the Middle East and its peoples. One such guide, ominously titled "How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf," emphasized that the barren, desolated, and diseased landscape could kill swiftly and without warning. Not only was the Persian Gulf "one of the world's least known regions" it was also recounted that the "great story teller, Marco Polo, claimed that his sword melted in its sheath when he reached Basra!"[116] The landscape itself seemed uninhabitable, and "both the winter and the summer are uncomfortable, the winter because of its chilly dampness and the summer because of its steamy heat." The summers were described as extremely intense, and "for 345 days in the year the sun shines and in summer sends the thermometer up to 130º F in the shade." Such conditions seemed to defy even the possibility of habitation, and no system of logic

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114. OSS Research and Analysis Branch, Psychology Division and Near Eastern Section, "Short Guide to Iran," 6, June 11, 1942, NA RG 208, Box 425, Folder 6.1.
115. OSS Research and Analysis Branch, Psychology Division and Near Eastern Section, "Short Guide to Iran," 6.
116. "How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf," n.d., 1, NA RG 208, Box 425 Folder 6.

governed the region: “It never snows -- yet on the high mountains to the east snow can be seen in winter.”[117] These descriptions formulated a geographic area that was not constrained by the tenets of reality.

Even for those who survived the hostile landscape, disease was presented as a constant problem for the visiting Westerner:

> the Near East has no sanitation as we know it. In the villages, animal dung is plastered on the house walls to dry and then used as fuel for cooking. Houses have no toilets or latrines. Any open space is used and most often the area around the village spring or well is the public toilet. Water is so scarce that the few streams are used in washing the dead, laundering the clothes, bathing the baby, and also for drinking.[118]

This description captured what the author saw as a convergence between the barrenness of the land, which barely provided any water or resources, with the backwardness of the people, who did not have the good sense to not defecate in their own water source. In fact, the guide continued, “the population of the Near East should have died off long ago by all rules of health.” Frustrating the author was the population’s perceived lack of action to improve its situation, for “only in the cities is any effort made to prevent and cure disease.” It was only the “penetrating and burning rays of the sun” that provided any “disinfectant for most of the people.” Paradoxically, constant exposure to such conditions was seen as an advantage over Westerners who “[had] not developed the power of resistance.” And because all “weaklings have died in infancy and only the tough have survived,” presumably the Persian Gulf population would have an underlying toughness that Westerners would not.[119] Yet whatever strength was gained by this childhood trial

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117. “How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf,” 1.
118. “How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf,” 4.
119. All quotes from “How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf,” 1.

was outweighed by other detrimental societal characteristics.

Despite the efforts of several government staffers to maintain a respectful tone towards residents of Middle Eastern countries in the documents they produced, the guides that were distributed to serviceman were replete with unflattering depictions of, in this case, people who lived in the Persian Gulf region. The countervailing force to descriptions of ignorance was not wisdom; rather, the word of choice was “shrewd." For some writers, shrewdness took the form of being able to bilk people out of their money, although according to the same logic, that form of “intelligence” was enabled by a distinctly local set of rules that were not legible to Westerners. Accordingly, the market “will cost a lot to those who do not know its rules” because “the seller will always ask far more than he expects to receive -- sometimes twice as much.”[120] Once a Westerner was told how to act he could easily beat a salesperson at his own game by “point[ing] out all the faults and offer[ing] much less than he is willing to give.” Readers were exhorted to “pretend that you don’t want the article and its price will drop at once,” and then reminded that they would rarely find a respite because “fixed prices are known only in one or two European-operated stores in the cities.”[121] Even—or particularly—trading dollars for local currency was a fraught exchange, as “the markets are full of men who will be glad to get your dollars and give as little in return as possible. The money changer considers it a duty to skin the innocent -- and especially Americans, as they are all ‘rich people’. They have seen a few films from Hollywood and are sure that all Americans live

120. “How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf,” 2.
121. “How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf,” 2.

in palaces with money to throw around."[122] Shrewdness as a dominant trait contributed to an overall impression of Orientals as ungovernable.

Ironically, a later OSS Propaganda Report asserted that the activities of American troops in Iran had made it more difficult for American propaganda efforts to make inroads with Iranians. The report said that American troops:

> have had a negative propaganda effect. Hitherto acquainted only with diplomats, missionaries, scholars, and business men from the U.S., Iranians were due for some disillusion regarding their American ideal when they should meet a more general and representative cross-section of the American public. But the jolt has been unnecessarily severe because of the low morale and lack of discipline reported among American troops, who on leave are given to violating the Moslem taboos of wine, women, and song to an intemperate degree.[123]

The OSS report thereby called into question the efficacy of the earlier OSS guide to Iran that had been distributed to American troops stationed there at its task of providing troops with behavioral guidelines.[124] In sum, country guides distributed to troops contained the same types of biased generalizations that plagued some of the earliest COI and OWI propaganda memoranda. Significantly, though, country guides were widely distributed and had the potential to influence how deployed troops viewed the locals in places where they were stationed. Within the OSS archives, there is little evidence that the influence of the country guides on the soldiers who read them (if they did actually read them) was systematically studied. Nevertheless, there was a sense among some members of the OSS that enlisted men were behaving in a manner that could damage what they saw as

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122. "How to Keep Alive in the Persian Gulf," 3.
123. "Enemy and Allied Propaganda in Iran" (Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Branch, October 7, 1943), 22, NA RG 226, Box 10, Folder 293.
124. Sydney Morrell, *Spheres of Influence* (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 23-99. Morrell's journalistic account provided useful background for WWII-era operations in Iran.

American prestige in the region.

As mentioned previously, the OSS both performed research of the types described above, and sent its own men abroad for clandestine operations. The first major test of the OSS was the invasion of North Africa, which took place on November 8, 1942.[125] The principal OSS agents in North Africa were William Eddy, Carleton Coon, and Gordon Browne, with Coon and Browne reporting to Eddy. (Coon also served under J. Rives Childs at the U.S. Embassy, but when Childs asked Coon to translate an Arabic newspaper, and Coon was not able to, Childs saw him as substantially less useful to his cause.)[126] Eddy was a Marine in WWI, where he had lost a leg. He had also taught English at Princeton between the wars, as well as served as president of Hobart College. Eddy was later a U.S. Minister to Saudi Arabia, consultant to ARAMCO, and early developer of the CIA. During WWII, he was the head of intelligence for North Africa. Significantly, he was fluent in Arabic and French due to his upbringing in Lebanon.[127]

Coon, whose career in physical anthropology was discussed in Chapter One, was recruited into the OSS through his friend Browne, "a Boston importer who also had lived in Tangier and now worked under diplomatic cover as a vice consul."[128] Coon was

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125. For an insightful look at cultural encounters between the U.S. military and residents of North Africa during the Allied invasion, see Brian T. Edwards, *Morocco Bound: Disorienting America's Maghreb, from Casablanca to the Marrakech Express* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 29-77.
126. The inability to translate Arabic was recounted by Coon in his memoirs. Childs also published his recollections of the preparations for Operation Torch in J. Rives Childs, *Foreign Service Farewell; My Years in the Near East* (Charlottesville: Published for Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Va., by the University Press of Virginia, 1969), 114-36.
127. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 131.
128. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern*

recruited into the COI in November 1941, shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Gordon Browne had made informal inquiries "offer[ing] his and my services to various government agencies in preparing for a probable invasion of Morocco by American forces."[129] Prior to his formal involvement with the COI, Coon and Browne prepared a handbook and dictionary of Arabic phrases to be used by an invading force. Once his training was complete, Coon went to Morocco in May 1942. Coon understood their OSS job to be "a special service with specially selected and specially trained personnel, whose function it is to complement the activities of other more numerous and more overt branches of the government. It is our job to go ahead of the army and navy and lay open the ground for them; to find out things that their normal services cannot discover; to perform hostile or aggressive acts that they cannot normally accomplish."[130] Part of laying the groundwork for an invasion was to cultivate local informants. Coon used contacts from his archaeological expeditions, including the local foreman from a previous expedition, who he code-named "The Neanderthal."[131]

The French colonies of North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria) were part of Vichy France, which meant that Tangiers, Morocco, where Eddy, Coon, and Browne were based, was controlled by the Vichy French, but also heavily patrolled by German

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American Espionage, 132.

129. Carleton S. Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 162.

130. Carleton S. Coon, *A North Africa Story: The Anthropologist as OSS Agent, 1941-1943* (Ipswich, Mass: Gambit, 1980), 124. Late in his life, Coon resurrected his wartime diary and, with the help of an editor, compiled it for publication. *A North Africa Story* is therefore presented as a diary written during the war, but with historical context interspersed.

131. Coon, *A North Africa Story: The Anthropologist as OSS Agent, 1941-1943*, 25.

agents. The OSS tried to determine how Vichy troops would react to an Allied invasion. As German proxies, would they resist an invasion? Or would the U.S. troops be greeted as liberators? According to the sources that Eddy, Coon, and Browne cultivated, the French would turn against the Nazis. It turned out that they were overly optimistic about the degree to which French troops would lay down their arms in response to the Allied landing. American generals were shocked by the level of resistance they encountered, and some blamed the OSS for that faulty intelligence. Donovan continued to believe that, for all the agency's flaws, it was still performing as well as Army intelligence, and should be recognized as such.[132]

Coon participated in some major operations in North Africa, and was eventually injured and could not return to duty. Keeping in mind that he turned 40 in 1944, an advanced age for combat maneuvers, his exploits were extraordinary (if not also unethical and potentially illegal).[133] They were partially recounted in a 1980 book called *A North Africa Story*, which was billed as an account from his misplaced WWII-era

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132. Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, 141.

133. David H. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 248-61. This section on Coon's wartime activities is indebted to Price's book, which also includes information from Freedom of Information Act requests that Price has made related to work done by anthropologists during the war. One major difference between Price's analysis and my own is that Price, as a practicing anthropologist, is heavily concerned with analyzing the ethical boundaries that anthropologists crossed, whereas I see the prewar physical anthropological work of individuals like Field and Coon as having enabled their wartime contributions. In other words, where Price sees wartime service as exceptional to the physical anthropologists, I see their wartime service as part of a broader continuum. (Price also does not differentiate between behavioral/ cultural anthropology and physical anthropology, whereas I contend that the distinction between the two fields is significant.)

journal, published for the first time. He ran weapons into enemy territory, performed surveillance on Vichy generals, and attempted to sabotage the activities of Axis allies in North Africa. By the end of his official service, Coon still had grandiose ideas for clandestine operations in the postwar world, including his advocacy for a group of undercover, paramilitary individuals with "the task of thwarting mistakes, diagnosing areas of potential world disequilibrium, and of nipping the causes of potential disturbance in the bud." This "group of men, sober-minded and without personal ambition" would "judge the needs of our world society and...take whatever steps are necessary to prevent this society from a permanent collapse."[134] Coon was likely not alone in expressing such ideas and, as David Price has pointed out, some of Coon's thoughts seem to have been "prescient" as a blueprint for the CIA.

Donald Wilber's experience as an OSS agent in Iran differed greatly from Coon's wartime exploits. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Wilber registered with the local draft board. He had not heard from them regarding a potential enlistment when:

> fate and good fortune intervened...I answered the phone and heard a voice from Washington asking me to come down at once for an interview at the Office of Co-ordinator of War Information. In Washington I found that the section to which I was directed had a small staff of people familiar with the Middle East -- then called the Near East. There were very few Americans who knew the region at all well: missionaries, archaeologists, research scholars, oil men, and a scattering of businessmen, such as tobacco buyers in Turkey. So, the net gathered many of us, including missionaries whose possible scruples about serving other than the Lord gave way before patriotism.[135]

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134. Carleton S. Coon, *Torch Anthology* (Section 22, Copy 1), North Africa, May 1942-1943, My Part in the OSS Operations during that Period, OSS Archives, National Archives, 1945, quoted in Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 255-59.
135. Donald Newton Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin, 1986), 100-01.

Wilber did not mention who the phone call was from. From May 22, 1942 until the end of May 1946, Wilber was one of two OSS agents studying Iran. The other OSS agent in Iran was Joseph M. Upton, a curator in Iranian art from the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. Upton, a naval reservist, had been in Iran since September 1941 as an OSS agent. Wilber was in Iran from September 24, 1942 until 1946, with the exception of two extended stretches at home.

The activities of the OSS in Iran were decidedly lower-key than those of Carleton Coon in North Africa. As Wilber pointed out in his memoir, "Joe and I were not in a hostile country, much less one under Axis occupation, and we were not targeted against such countries. We were not instructed to recruit a network of spies. In fact, our instructions were not too precise." Wilber and Upton recruited one Iranian to do research work, aware that he was possibly also working for British intelligence. The same man was later "taken on by the CIA and was on its payroll for at least 15 years, until he retired."[136] Wilber and Upton filed 365 reports by legation pouch, mostly with "background material" on subjects such as industry, mines, economic survey, industrial bank, industrial workers, government employees, etc."[137] Wilber wrote later that he and Upton were "particularly concerned with the Soviet presence in Iran. From the very first, our reports were critical of Soviet intentions and of the steps the Russians were taking toward their goals. Later, we learned that such reports were not welcome in Washington – until there was a change of attitude, brought about by a realistic recognition of Soviet

136. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 133.
137. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 133.

post-war intentions."[138] Yet Wilber also described an incident in which his car broke down in the Soviet zone of Iran, and he was helped by a Soviet officer who towed his car into town, hosted him for several days as his guest, and arranged for Wilber's car to be returned to Tehran on a railway flatcar. While it seemed as though he was treated quite well, Wilber's report of the incident contained his assessment that the incident was "the first of many occasions when I was able to note the extreme mistrust of the Soviets toward their friends, who could never be accepted as sincere friends if they were not Communists."[139] Wilber did not delve too deeply into the potential origins of his anti-Soviet feelings, but his memoir provided the impression that he was a good Cold Warrior, even before the Cold War began.

The next section will look closer at postwar planning. To summarize this previous section: the work of the U.S. information agencies in the Middle East varied greatly during WWII. The split between the OWI and OSS was highly influential for both agencies. Over the course of the war, the OWI became more hierarchical and directive. Instructions for propaganda were created at the top by people like Robert Sherwood, who were intent on staying on message. By 1943, in the countries of the Middle East, that message consisted of positive portrayals of the United States and avoidance of potentially controversial topics such as Zionism. Although the period from 1941 to mid-1942 had witnessed some derogatory characterizations of the peoples of the Middle East, by the end of 1942 most of the most blatantly racist of those writings had been quashed by the OWI bureaucracy. Nevertheless, such ideas were not necessarily actively discounted.

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138. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 134.
139. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 139.

Rather, they were simply superseded by other agency directives as the war progressed. On the other hand, the OSS, according to David Price, maintained an "emphasis on the use of unorthodox means" which "created an institutional environment that fostered some amoral practices."[140] The charismatic leadership of William Donovan may also have inspired academics in the OSS, such as Carleton Coon and Donald Wilber, to follow orders without considering the consequences. In other words, the institutional structure of each agency seems to have had an effect on the postwar careers of wartime academic participants.

The COI, OWI, and OSS, were far from the only organizations in Washington, DC, that were crafting wartime strategy towards the Middle East. There were many smaller projects, such as the 'M' Project, that fell under the general category of postwar planning. The M Project (the 'M' stood for Migration) was not an information agency per se, but rather a research project that was meant to study a single issue: refugees. Although global in scope, it dealt with many parts of the Middle East. Run by physical anthropologist Henry Field (although FDR's job choice for the job had been Johns Hopkins geographer Isaiah Bowman), its findings revealed a great deal about what Aiyaz Husain has called the "broader sets of assumptions [that] shaped the globalism...through which larger groups of officials in Washington...viewed the postwar world."[141] Even though its recommendations were not formally followed in a systematic way, the M Project "represented the core intellectual database of wartime American globalism. Here,

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140. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 267.
141. Aiyaz Husain, *Mapping the End of Empire: American and British Strategic Visions in the Postwar World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 7.

in more concrete form than anywhere else, were American proposals for relocating war refugees on a global scale—one that mirrored the equally expansive strategic geography of a global network of bases in its scope."[142] In other words, Husain argues that the M Project's significance lies in its very existence as a wartime project that saw the world as a blank canvas primed for the exercise of American power. Like the other wartime operations discussed in this chapter, the M Project utilized social scientists to analyze issues that were outside the purview of their previous scholarly work. The project is significant for the way in which it prompted a circulation of ideas about foreign peoples – in this case, potential refugees/settlers – and the role that the United States would play in determining their fate. Just as significant, though, the M Project altered how scholars viewed the relationship between their creation of knowledge and its use by the government.

The M Project was a proto-think tank focused on potential refugee populations. In the post-WWII period, Hannah Arendt was one of the first great thinkers to closely interrogate the philosophical and existential underpinnings of the "refugee problem." She captured the plight of refugees in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* when she wrote, "once they had left their homeland they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth."[143] In the years immediately following World War II and the Holocaust, Arendt understood the dangers of allowing nations to systematically expel

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142. Husain, *Mapping the End of Empire: American and British Strategic Visions in the Postwar World*, 245.
143. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 267.

minority groups, while most countries simultaneously tightened their immigration laws. This problem was not limited to Jewish refugees. In an era when human rights were being inextricably tied to national citizenship rights, having no nation left refugees with no rights. While the war was still going on, the U.S. government was already working to diagnose and solve the anticipated postwar refugee problem.

The M Project was funded through the White House, and consisted of many multilingual academics compiling reports on populations that could be displaced by the war, as well as areas where they could be resettled. The main offices were in the Library of Congress, and summaries of the reports were sent to a distribution list that included FDR. At the end of the war, when the reports were compiled, 666 reports had been completed, which comprised 66 volumes at 3" each. After the war, President Harry S Truman continued its funding until November 30, 1945, at which point the project was officially terminated. According to Field, it was then "filed and forgotten."[144] The project did not see the light of day until Field had summaries of the reports published after it was declassified in 1962. Field, an established scholar who had political connections, which may have accounted for his selection as administrator of the M Project, was nevertheless unable to use those connections during the war to gain greater exposure for the M Project.

Neil Smith has argued that the M Project was indicative of (original top-choice M Project administrator Isaiah) Bowman's larger interest in the larger movement of human

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144. Henry Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement.* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: 1962), Introduction. When the project was declassified in the early 1960s, Field had a single volume of the report summaries published. Many of the full reports are extant in Field's papers at the University of Miami. However, some of the reports are absent.

populations. He interpreted Bowman's involvement in the M Project as an instantiation of Bowman's belief that "the undervalued study of populations would be central to an informed and appropriate exercise of [American] power." In turn the concern with population became a "question of how the colonial territories could be settled, developed, and brought into commercial intercourse with the United States."[145] Smith mainly focused on the M Project as a vehicle of capitalist exploitation. Smith's analysis at times seems to disavow that the M Project ever had any potential to positively impact the postwar refugee situation, regardless of who was at the helm. That position seems extreme. There was potential for scholars to have added value to the study of the refugee problem. Nevertheless, the project's flaws were damning. The final product was cumbersome to the point where it lacked utility. Despite Field's efforts, the M Project as a whole did not achieve any sense of coherence or concerted focus. In the end, the project was never put to its explicit intended use. But the M Project still serves as an instructive artifact of the types of knowledge that were created by physical anthropologists who joined the war effort.

Field was a central figure in the M Project, and while his voice is not the only one in the documents, his work was representative of physical anthropological work of the period. In Field's published books on anthropological expeditions performed between the two World Wars, the results were predominantly statistics and measurements rather than

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145. Neil Smith's 2003 monograph *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* provides a brief, but informative, analysis of the M Project. Smith critiqued Isaiah Bowman as the facilitator of postwar American Empire. He has one part of one chapter on the M Report, and focuses on the geographical aspects of the reports rather than the anthropological or refugee aspects. Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, 301.

cultural observations. In fact, many of the studies had very little to do with the populations that inhabited the regions. In lengthy books on Iran and Iraq, published in 1939 and 1940, respectively, substantial space is given over to descriptions of the geography as well as weather patterns and rainfall measurements. Although not information necessarily associated with anthropology today, Field included these measurements, in addition to ones that he made of indigenous peoples.[146]

According to his first of his two memoirs, *The Track of Man*, Field's anthropological studies followed accepted methods and procedures, including skull measurements. In a series of photos from his 1953 memoir, he was shown measuring the heads of both living subjects such as a "Bedouin being measured by author in southwestern Sinai during University of California African Expedition," as well as skulls recovered from archaeological digs.[147] As was discussed in Chapter One, craniometry, the practice of measuring skulls to determine and differentiate populations, was a longstanding practice in anthropology. By the mid-1920s, though, craniometry as a scientifically-valid practice was falling out of favor. Franz Boas, the famous Columbia University cultural anthropologist, conducted an enormous study of skull size that found differences between groups were largely the result of environment rather than genes, which indicated to many scientists that racial differences were not immutable.[148] Despite

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146. Field, *The Field Museum-Oxford University Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia, 1923-1929*; Henry Field and Natural History Museum Chicago, *Contributions to the Anthropology of Iran* (Chicago: 1939); Henry Field and Richard A. Martin, *The Anthropology of Iraq.* (Chicago: Field Museum, 1940).
147. Field, *The Track of Man; Adventures of an Anthropologist*, figures 19-21.
148. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*; Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*.

the scholarly repudiation of craniometry, Field was enough of an unabashed adherent to have included photos of his own craniometric past in his memoir. Field's background was as a traditional physical anthropologist, and he continued to adhere to many of the methods of his early career, even as the scientific establishment moved in other directions. Many of the studies in the M Project reflect his traditionalist training, despite it being out-of-touch with the cutting edge developments in his field.

The M Project was more important conceptually than in the ideas that were actually produced through the reports. The project had the potential to be a timely, positive intervention in an enormous, ongoing humanitarian disaster. If the project reports had been able to successfully diagnose and solve even some small aspect of the refugee plight, it could have positively impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of displaced persons. It has been estimated that in the aftermath of World War II, sixty million European civilians were forced to move.[149] Given the scale of the postwar refugee crisis, the M Project was undoubtedly understaffed and underfunded to be able to adequately address the enormity of the looming postwar refugee emergency. Even judging the project by more modest criteria, the memos that were produced by M Project staff were disappointingly limited in scope. Furthermore, there were a number of conceptual issues that handcuffed the project almost from its inception.

The fact that Field had performed his fieldwork as a physical anthropologist is significant to understanding his particular predilections, especially his tendency to, as David Price has put it, display "naive assumptions about history, culture, and politics of

149. Michael Robert Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

geography. In some reports, Field and his staff appear as giddy social engineers collecting cultural and geographical data and calculating outcomes of speculative relocation schemes for specific cultures in distant lands and unfamiliar environments."[150] Price, in his contextualization of the M Project as one of many projects undertaken by anthropologists during WWII, expressed surprise that Field, as a trained anthropologist, could express some of the opinions and ideas that he does. Field, however, had his formative experiences as a physical anthropologist, and his experiences would have differed from the fieldwork of a cultural anthropologist. Referring to a potentially apocryphal conversation between Field and FDR about refugee relocation, Price wrote, "That a president was comfortable with such global brinksmanship is not surprising, but an anthropologist's comfort with such paternalistic relocation schemes is disquieting. Field and his staff generated hundreds of reports without focusing much on the likely harm to come from such plans—potential harm for those moved and for those living in or adjoining regions of relocation."[151] Indeed, as was discussed in Chapter One, it was in fact Field's training and background as a physical anthropologist contributed to his views of certain populations as transferrable and land as underutilized.

Although development and modernization were not in use as concepts among

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150. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 127.
151. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 126-27. Price also recounts that Field's credibility was called into question by FDR advisor John Franklin Carter, who "later claimed that Field wholly invented this dramatic interaction with Roosevelt…Carter's statements undermine Field's credibility and make it difficult to evaluate which elements of Field's account were fact or fiction." Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 125.

scholars, what would become modernization theory was nascent among the activist scholars of the M Project. A number of scholars have demonstrated the ways in which postwar international development had its origins in the New Deal. Elizabeth Borgwardt has termed this a "New Deal for the world." The prominence of a New Deal-like ideology amongst the staffers of the M Project shows that some basic tenets of international development were already shared at various levels of the U.S. government. The M Project embraced an agricultural model for settlements. Most of the resettlement proposals offered through the M Project reports were predicated on settling large numbers of refugees into what the report-writers decided were underutilized sections of existing nations. In some cases, the reports advocated moving urban populations back into rural areas where they could relearn the skills of their ancestors' agrarian past. Leaving aside the difficulty of teaching urbanites to farm, this particular M Project paradigm was at odds with what would become the postwar scholarly consensus among development experts. Such theorists were shifting their views to say that removing agricultural workers from the land was in fact the essential historical rupture that needed to occur for modernization to proceed.

Yet it was changing conceptions of refugee status that may have had the largest impact on the ultimate failure of the M Project. The M Project embraced a conception of refugees as having chosen to leave their home country, whereas political theorists like Arendt embraced broader definitions that took into account the coercive and violent aspects of expulsion and abjection. While some of the reports in the M Project considered these more unpleasant aspects of refugee status, as a whole the project's failure to grapple

with such issues precluded the project from broader application. A particularly deleterious conceptual shortcoming derived from the practice of discussing "settlers" rather than "refugees." While it would be specious to suggest that a simple semantic change would have proved to be a panacea for displaced persons, that word choice guided a deeper set of assumptions that influenced the reports. Yet that selection of terminology was part of a legacy of how refugees had been dealt with previously.

The treatment of refugees after World War I was tentative, contingent, and inextricably linked to citizenship. Administered through the League of Nations, refugee plans focused on planned resettlements and dealt with large but ethnically homogenous groups of refugees. As with many policies that originated with the League of Nations, there was little in the way of an enforcement mechanism. Minority rights "were essentially to be protected by the force of international public opinion."[152] This particular model of dealing with refugees influenced the M Project reports. The actual post-WWII model offered substantially altered the League of Nations efforts.[153] After WWII, there was more broadly-based political cooperation that provided funding for dealing with refugees, as well as some legal strictures to enforce the international agreements. But the

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152. Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 108.
153. For more on refugees after World War II, see Ilana Feldman, *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917-1967* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Liisa H. Malkki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992). Other histories of human rights and refugees include Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007); Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Saskia Sassen, *Guests and Aliens* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 1999).

overwhelming reality of the post-WWII refugee paradigm was that the post-WWII framers had given up on some of the grander aspects of the post-WWI proposals, which "represented the most intrusive intervention by international law yet sanctioned in the domestic affairs of sovereign states—so intrusive that the great powers ruled out applying the same kind of regime to themselves."[154] The M Project thus managed to be simultaneously overly ambitious in some ways (imagining technologically-infeasible solutions to water shortages) and woefully inadequate in others (not drawing enough attention to the plight of Jews). These shortcomings contributed to the M Project's inability to meet the challenge of the refugee realities of the Second World War.[155]

Although the 'M' in the M Project stood for migration, the reports themselves encompassed topics far broader than simply migration. When FDR expressed interest in the issue of postwar refugees, he was initially quoted a figure of 10-20 million displaced persons after the war. The reports were also commissioned in the context of growing knowledge about the Holocaust, as American involvement in the war had increased intelligence and reports about the systematic extermination of the Jewish population in Europe. With all of these problems in mind, FDR decided to enlist a scholarly effort to survey the problem before direct action was taken. From the very beginning, the M

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154. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, 108.

155. The League of Nations approach to refugees was through the lens of prisoner of war resettlement. Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian explorer and diplomat whose name is most frequently linked to the post-WWI refugee situation, was commissioned to repatriate more than 450,000 prisoners, many of them held by Russia. For more on Nansen, see www.nobelprize.org entries on Fridtjof Nansen and the Nansen Office, as well as Chapter 4, "Opportunities and Challenges: Visions and Rights Between the Wars," in Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

Project was geared more towards study than intervention.[156]

At the time, Henry Field most recent large-scale project at his family's namesake Field Museum was an exhibit called “The Races of Mankind.” Tracy Lang Teslow described the exhibit as adhering to “a form of prewar racial science oriented toward nineteenth-century conceptions of race,” which she juxtaposed against “the cultural understanding of race that has been ascendant since WWII.” Her analysis indicated that Field “adhered to a hierarchical, typological vision of unchanging difference characteristic of nineteenth-century theories of race.”[157] Teslow has argued that the Races of Mankind exhibit was outdated even for its time.[158] Field’s conception of races as static and immutable resulted in a project that reflected the limitations of Field’s framework. The M Project discussed populations as something akin to interchangeable parts, rather than populations of discreet individuals with variable motivations. The principle challenge that international organizations faced after WWII, of incorporating new populations into new locations, in the end required an underlying structure with more

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156. Geographical historian Neil Smith faults the M Project in general and Isaiah Bowman in particular for their failure to address the Holocaust during the war. However, there is little evidence that the M Project workers uncovered evidence about the Holocaust prior to any other bodies. In other words, the same criticism could be made of so many individuals and groups that the onus cannot be placed entirely on the M Project staff. Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

157. Tracy Lang Teslow, “Representing Race to the Public: Physical Anthropology in Interwar American Natural History Museums," diss., The University of Chicago, 2002), 2.

158. Peabody asserted that the "exhibition was in keeping with contemporary theories of both racial science and museum display"; Rebecca Peabody asserts that the "exhibition was in keeping with contemporary theories of both racial science and museum display," Rebecca Peabody, “Race and Literary Sculpture in Malvina Hoffman’s 'Heads and Tales,'” *Getty Research Journal* 5 (2013), 120.

flexibility than the one Field was able to provide.

Field put his previous training to work in his role as M Project administrator. Although he wanted the memoranda to be read as authoritative, the reports were frequently issued with disclaimers:

> Report R-133. "Immigration and Settlement in Postwar Chile"
> This Report undertakes to investigate the possibilities of the available land, and to point out that the country's general social environment is suited to a more active and important immigration settlement policy. It must be made clear that this Study represents a compilation of relevant material made available in Washington; there is no claim to first hand knowledge or experience of the regions discussed or of the potentialities therein described.[159]

The documents themselves deny easy categorization because there was no central author, despite Field's attempts to create a sense of coherence between the reports. In the published version of the summaries, Field included numerous appendices to explain the context of the project:

> Revealed here for the first time is President Roosevelt's momentous M Project, which would have started 20 million people on the road to a new and better life. Working under the President's direct supervision, a small group of top scientists prepared 600 documents dealing with every aspect of the global problem of Displaced Persons. An "International Settlement Authority" with an annual budget of one million dollars was envisaged as necessary to solve humanity's most persistent international problem--once and for all. Many a lesson contained in the M-Project may be of great value to the UN and IRO in their urgent quest of a solution.[160]

Field explained that the reports were divided into six series: Reports, Translations, Memoranda, Administrative, Legal and a Special Administrative series that "dealt mainly with Nazi problems in Germany."[161] The translation series reports were mainly from

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159. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 88.
160. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 395.
161. The summaries of the "Special Administrative Series" are not included in the M Project summary book. Field includes the following note: "Both Dr. and Mrs. Kempner contributed to this Series. The former prepared A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-13, A-14, A-15 and A-16. Mrs. Kempner contributed A-5, A-7, A-8, A-9, A-10, A-11 and A-12. Parts I-

Russian and Japanese.

The divisions seem to have had more meaning for Field than they do to a reader today. There is little to differentiate the type of information found in one section from that found in another. Geographical surveys were placed in each of the sections, and covered areas as diverse as Baja California to Kamchatka as potential areas for refugee settlement. The search for available land often led the M Report scholars to view Asia, South American, and Africa as possible areas for settlement. Such reports thereby recapitulated logics of formal imperialism. In some instances, the M Project staff seemed to have either anticipated a backslide to imperialism when self-determination was quickly becoming the accepted practice; or, in other instances, report writers seem to have envisioned a more powerful method of global governance that held sway over nations rather than enforced their claims to sovereignty.

For instance, Report R-6, "Settlement Possibilities in Negeb, Palestine," exhibited a combination of both conceptual limitations. The report's author asserted that "Modern settlements in the Negeb [Negev] are limited by the lack of water for irrigation and the desolate character of the land." Yet later the author wrote, "since there were numerous villages in historical times within our selected area, it should be possible with modern mechanical equipment to provide catchment basins and to control the seasonal supply of rainwater for irrigation." Other proposals for the development of the land include "a

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V on "Women in Nazi Germany" formed an important series of Studies. Dr. Robert Kempner, who was personally fired by Heinrich Himmler, was later one of the U.S. witnesses at the Nurnberg trials. Since this Series is completely out of date, I felt it unnecessary to write abstracts or summaries" (325). That series is also absent from Field's papers at the University of Miami. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 4.

canal…dug from the Mediterranean inland" or exploitation of "new methods recently developed for converting saltwater into fresh water."[162] The most basic miscalculation made by this report writer was portraying the Negev as unpopulated. Even in the 1930s and 40s, the Negev was home to large Bedouin populations that used the land for grazing. Further, the area itself was never as barren as the report depicts it. The report did get the part about room for expansion right, though: today part of Israel, the Negev supports a substantial population. The author used an impressive number of sources to write the report:

> I have drawn freely on the following: historical sources; archaeological reports; information from recently returned travelers; meteorological data from the U.S. Weather Bureau and the Climatic Research Unit, Office of the Quartermaster General; data supplied by the Office of Strategic Services; terrain intelligence and maps from the Section of Military Geography, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of the Chief of Engineers.[163]

Despite the number of sources that were used, the report spent more time discussing the potential utility of the Delano Sunstill (a device invented by a cousin of FDR's that, on a small scale, used solar energy to desalinate salt water) than it did discussing what populations could potentially be settled in the Negev. While the report did mention Jewish people briefly, it was in a historical (mostly biblical) contextualization of the region. In other words, despite the report having been issued in March 1944, the reference was divorced from the reality of that time period, and was consequently not conducive towards action.

The halting response of the U.S. government to news of the extermination of Jews

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162. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 9.
163. "Settlement Possibilities in Negeb, Palestine," 1, March 1, 1944, Henry Field Papers, Box 17, Folder 104 (University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Fl.).

by the Nazi regime has been justifiably condemned. January 22, 1944 marks one of the more positive milestones of that inadequate response: FDR established the War Refugee Board (WRB), "tasked with the 'immediate rescue and relief of the Jews in Europe and other victims of enemy persecution.'"[164] Prior to 1944, there had been only one major Allied condemnation of Nazi atrocities against the Jews, which was issued December 17, 1942. The establishment of the WRB, while ultimately insufficient, nevertheless signaled a renewed dedication in FDR's administration to address the refugee problem in general, and the persecution of Jews in particular.

The establishment of the WRB also coincided with a significant uptick in the number of M Project reports that focused on Jewish refugee issues. Of the 666 total reports, 54 have either the word "Jews" or "Jewish" in the title.[165] Only five of those 54 reports were produced prior to 1944, with the remainder produced after the establishment of the WRB.[166] There is no evidence that the WRB and the M Project staff shared information, despite the fact that both projects were dealing with a similar set of problems. While the WRB had funding to finance the rescue of approximately 200,000

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164. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "War Refugee Board: Background and Establishment." Holocaust Encyclopedia. http://http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007409. Accessed on May 28, 2014.

165. Jewish settlers are also mentioned in a small number of studies without the word "Jews" or "Jewish" in the title. Because so many full reports were not included in Field's archive, I am using the title reference as a useful proxy for the heightened interest in Jewish refugees over the course of the war.

166. One unfortunate aspect of the administrative structure of the M Project is that, while there was a distribution list for each report, there is no extant record of how the reports were used, nor have I been able to find any associated correspondence between the report authors. Here I am pointing out a correlation between increased emphasis on Jewish refugees, rather than asserting causation between the establishment of the WRB and the increased focus on Jewish refugees in the M Project reports.

Jews from different parts of Europe, the M Project had no similar financial incentive. Even as the U.S. government took on a more activist stance regarding refugee populations, the M Project reports maintained a studious distance.

Mark Mazower has argued that the M Project's critical distance from the rescue of refugees needs to be seen in the larger context of the "diametrically opposed views…derived from the study of what the Nazis were doing. Some experts remained committed to versions of the old idea of minority rights protection and still placed their faith in international legal safeguards…others saw that the world order for which the United Nations were fighting differed from its predecessor precisely in its more sober assessment of what international law could actually achieve." For those experts, they thought that "eliminating minorities was simply a necessary part of modern nationalism and modern internationalism alike; what was desirable therefore was to rationalize forced population transfers and exchanges by making sure they were internationally negotiated and organized rather than spontaneous and disorganized outcomes of war or unilateral fiat."[167] Given the lack of unanimity among policmakers, and the associated lack of a defined mission for the M Project, the project's scholars were given a difficult task. The project was certainly not aided by the insularity and secrecy that surrounded it. Without a mechanism to get feedback, the project was not adaptive to changing circumstances, and was reliant on Field as the administrator to direct its research. The M Project was kept secret, and the ideas generated by the reports were never given a public airing.[168] The

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167. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, 106-07.

168. David Price lamented the insularity of the project: "Given the international political problems that would result from the disclosure of such planning, it is understandable that

reports do, however, point to some of the ideas that were then germinating around what would take shape in a new era of nationalism.[169]

The report on the Negev cited earlier was far from the only report to recapitulate colonialism. The reports on Africa operated under a similar logic. A series of country-specific reports produced by the M Project staff on "White Settlement in Africa," emphasized that, for instance, "the White man can live and work" in Uganda because of the inviting climate of the "interior highlands."[170] When the reports acknowledged local occupants, they were auxiliary to, rather than agents of, progress, with "group settlements of small settlers...reducing to a minimum the need for native labor. Such developments

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the government kept the program's existence secret. But as almost all of the provisional plans developed by the M Project were never implemented (in part for exactly the reasons that would have been the focus of public criticism had the program been subjected to public scrutiny) these wasted efforts might have been redirected to more practical ways of assisting refugees if these conditions of secrecy had not been imposed. If free criticism of these outlandish plans had occurred, Field and other could have worked on projects of greater importance to the war effort, or on more realistic refugee assistance programs." Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 125-26.

169. Mazower looked at the M Project in light of trends in international governance that emerged from WWII. My focus is instead on the physical anthropological aspects of the study. Interestingly, Mazower also saw the emergence of support for a separate state of Israel in the M Project: "The M-Project is the backdrop against which we may evaluate the wartime shift in thinking on stabilizing European nationalism and preventing a future war--a shift that took policymakers away from international legal protection regimes and toward a territorialization of postwar planning. one of the consequences was the emergence of an independent Jewish national state in the Middle East as part of a 'New Deal for the Middle East.' This was an important development in its own right; but it was also the forerunner of the numerous other national states that the UN's General Assembly would recognize in the coming decades together with the refugee camps and displaced minorities that accompanied their emergence," Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, 113.

170. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 28. Summary of full report titled "White Settlement in Africa I - East Africa," February 29, 1944, Henry Field Papers, Box 20, Folder 118.

should go hand in hand with a liberal policy toward the natives, helping instead of preventing their economic aspirations. Their rise would create markets for secondary industries, which the White small settlers could be expected to start." Even though this report's author asserted that the plan would "make both settlers and natives more prosperous," the plan was predicated on settler action and native passivity. Without settlers, the report author added, Kenya would remain "a doubtful proposition."[171]

These writings were biased by geographic and racial determinism. Field and his cohort clung to a number of disproved ideas. The proposed settlements also required substantial spatial elisions in order for them to be practicable, or even plausible. Many of the M Project's settlement reports described regions in a manner analogous to how settlers of the United States portrayed the West as vast empty regions ripe for white settlement, ignoring the presence of Native Americans. Settlement was therefore also racialized, so that white and/or European refugees would only be transferable to temperate zones, whereas Asians and Africans could settle even in additional climatic zones. These conclusions followed theories of climactic determinism espoused by individuals like Louis Agassiz, who in the 19th century posited that certain racial groups would only ever be able to live in areas that suited their inherent constitutions. According to Agassiz's vision, dark-skinned peoples would be consigned to the area between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, and light-skinned peoples would inhabit the temperate zones. Similar ideas also influenced U.S. imperial policies in the second half of the 19th century.[172]

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171. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 29.
172. For a recent example of a treatment of the role of climactic determinism in imperial

Although numerous summaries referenced agricultural settlement as the most desirable outcome of migration, R-97 "Land Settlement Technique in Europe: III" went into a great degree of detail on how settlers should be chosen. In a series of 20 maxims, the report first stated that "based on the opinion that farming is a hard profession requiring long, practical experience, it has often been argued that the bulk of the settlers should come from the agricultural population." If not full-time farmers by profession, all settlers should have at least some experience, as "concerning the selection of settlers from the ranks of adult persons in non-agricultural occupations, much skepticism has been voiced."[173] This particular report focused specifically on agricultural settlements, but this perspective permeated most of the reports. Similar proposals that focused on agricultural settlers also frequently mentioned those who they thought would be the best settlers, a qualification that implied a level of selection that was not practical in refugee cases. Good examples were typically thought to be professional farmers or, failing that, "non-farm youth" who would still be capable of shifting professions.[174] Settlers would be placed on land that was presented as previously uncultivated, although as in the cases explored earlier, there was little evidence in the reports that the land was actually uncultivated.

When there were exceptions to the agricultural paradigm, such as in R-60 on

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policy, see Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

173. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 72. Summary of full report titled, "Land Settlement Technique in Europe: III," November 2, 1944, Henry Field Papers, Box 25, Folder 145.

174. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 73.

"Belgian Congo," new and different problems were left unaddressed. This summary reported:

> The desire to contribute as much as possible to the common war effort has stimulated economic activities. Not only has the agricultural output been increased, but a rapid industrialization is in progress, which may lastingly influence Congolese life and economics. These recent developments make it imperative to consider the Congo not only for the possibilities it may hold out for White agricultural settlers, but also for the potentialities inherent in its new industrial life.[175]

The staff member(s) who prepared this report were either ignorant of, or chose to ignore, the societal upheaval which accompanies "rapid industrialization." But the core assumption was that white settlers would guide the Congolese through their nation's industrialization. In this and on many other counts, the M Project staff was on the wrong side of historical and disciplinary trends that were beyond their control.

Liisa Malkki has offered an additional perspective through which to analyze the innumerable factors that the M Project tried to address, noting that "involuntary or forced movements of people are always only one aspect of much larger constellations of sociopolitical and cultural processes and practices." Those processes can include "nationalism and racism, xenophobia and immigration policies, state practices of violence and war, censorship and silencing, human rights and challenges to state sovereignty, 'development' discourse and humanitarian interventions, citizenship and cultural or religious identities, travel and diaspora, and memory and historicity."[176] Malkki notes that

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175. Field, *"M" Project for F. D. R., Studies on Migration and Settlement*, 45. Summary of full report titled, "Settlement Possibilities in the Belgian Congo," May 31, 1944, Henry Field Papers, Box 23, Folder 130.
176. Liisa H. Malkki, "Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things.," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (1995), 496.

these varied forces are often not well understood or appreciated in attempts to address refugee situations. As Ilana Feldman has shown, even when more complex factors have been acknowledged, as in the case of the American Friends Service Committee in Palestine, the implementation of humanitarian assistance for refugees has been far from perfect, and "on-the-ground negotiations and interactions were crucial for shaping the refugee condition."[177] Even if the M Project's conceptualization had been flawless, its implementation would assuredly have been contingent and compromised.

The M Project had difficulty situating itself between different disciplinary and methodological paradigms. But the M Project's conflation of emigrant, settler, and refugee was not the only methodological breakdown. The project, by its very existence, also created refugees as an anthropologically resolvable problem. It emphasized settlers as apolitical objects of scientific study, rather than human subjects of violent, political exclusion. Furthermore, the M Project glorified a United States-centric vision of unproblematic assimilation of immigrants, which was itself a construction rather than objective truth. Although Field placed most of the blame on Truman for not continuing to fund the project, it seems likely that the nonuse of the project had numerous other justifiable rationales. While less than instructive as a piece of policy, as a historical document the M Project has much to offer in terms of reconstructing the usage of physical anthropologists as part of the United States's war efforts during WWII.

In this chapter, I have focused on the circulation of ideas that took place within the U.S. information agencies and research projects (COI, OWI, OSS, and M Project)

177. Ilana Feldman, "Difficult Distinctions: Refugee Law, Humanitarian Practice, and Political Identification in Gaza," *Cultural Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (2007), 132.

regarding how best to conceptualize policy and propaganda towards the Middle East. The circulation of ideas points to two main themes: first, that the privileged position of the United States would go a long way in terms of attracting neutral parties to the Allied side; and second, that the most valuable propaganda needed to tap into something in the psyche of the recipient in order to be successful. The individuals tasked at crafting propaganda towards the Middle East debated the finer points of these main themes, but, according to Nicholas J. Cull, they adhered in principle to "the British idea of a 'Strategy of Truth,' holding that the best way to manage information in war was to aim for credibility and conduct propaganda with facts."[178] Even with that overarching agency strategy, there were certain truths that were best avoided, such as U.S. ally Britain's imperial legacy in the Middle East, or the possibility of a U.S.-supported Jewish homeland in Palestine. Nevertheless, the propaganda that was distributed mainly focused on news reports that were intended to generate a positive impression of the United States in the hopes that the audience would see the inevitability of an Allied victory. While the propaganda missives may have left out crucial details or avoided topics such as the future of self-rule in the region, it was not filled with lies. It was a far cry from the early post-WWII period, when the increased use of propaganda as a method of peddling influence through deception prompted Douglas Little to label the time period as the CIA's "cult of covert action in the Middle East."[179]

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178. Nicholas John Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 15.
179. Douglas Little, "Mission Impossible: The CIA and the Cult of Covert Action in the Middle East," *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 5 (2004): 663-701.

For some scholars, such as John Wilson, working for the U.S. government awakened him to the potential pitfalls of government work. In particular, he worried that government officials ignored nuance and detailed understanding, things that he thought were essential to formulating good policy towards the countries in that region. There were also scholars who took other lessons from their work with the U.S. government. Donald Wilber, who parlayed his OSS career into one with its successor agency, the CIA, came to feel that "the Agency was a place where an individual could contribute directly to promote American interests and counter the subversive aims of foreign enemies."[180] Wilber's notion that the CIA was a place where a scholar could make an impact on the real world was an influential one. In the cases of Wilson, Wilber, and the other scholars who worked for the U.S. government during the war, and who also produced scholarship after the war, their experiences were highly important in shaping what they thought was acceptable in terms of working with the government. Those who rejected government collaboration after the war were not necessarily disenchanted with all of U.S. policy. They were, however, disenchanted with the use to which their scholarly knowledge was put. The effects of some of the wartime experiences of academics will be reckoned with in Chapter Three and Four.

Significantly, the doxa of scholars who worked for the U.S. government during WWII was irrevocably altered. The Second World War left academics with a broadly-shared sense that scholars should henceforth be involved in developing U.S. policy towards foreign peoples. As we will see in Chapter Three, some scholars like John

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180. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 150.

Wilson and Princeton historian Philip Hitti envisioned their role as needed to blunt the hard edge of U.S. power abroad through bringing scholarly nuance to bear on U.S. policy towards the Middle East. In different ways and for different reasons, each man failed to fully imprint his particular brand of scholarship onto what would become Middle East area studies at their respective institutions, the University of Chicago and Princeton. The flip side of Wilson and Hitti's approach was that of Donald Wilber, whose postwar work is the subject of Chapter Four. It seems as though Wilber was first exposed to the idea of dedicating himself to promoting U.S. interests through his government work during WWII. That initial idea of promoting U.S. interests later morphed into a full-fledged ideology during the postwar period.[181]

While U.S. government-scholarly interactions were normalized during the early Cold War, in Middle East area studies, such interactions often took place without the involvement of skeptics of U.S. power such as John Wilson. While I do not argue that John Wilson, or even many others like him, could have modulated the exercise of U.S. power in the Middle East in the postwar period, it is noteworthy that, by 1945, there had already been sorting amongst scholars. Some, like John Wilson and Leonard Doob, exposed to what they perceived to be the more egregious excesses of government power, self-selected out of government work. Others, like William Langer, Donald Wilber, and Carleton Coon, chose to continue their careers with one foot in both worlds. Langer, Wilber, and Coon were believers in the opening of the world to American interests by

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181. Although it is written about a different historical era, I have found Menand's *The Metaphysical Club* to be a helpful intellectual history in terms of how ideas become, or do not become, ideologies. Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001).

whatever means necessary, and they had self-selected into their work. All this is not to say that the U.S. government could have built a better Orientalist, so to speak, by including other voices in their discussions of what type of policy to develop in the Middle East. As Sadik Jalal al-'Azm wrote in response to Edward Said's Orientalism, we should not become convinced that "had the long tradition of Cultural-Academic Orientalism fashioned a less peculiar, more sympathetic and truthful epistemological framework, then the Powers would have acted on the Orient more charitably and viewed it in a more favourable light!"[182] This dissertation is not about how the United States could have used its understanding of foreign peoples to more thoroughly exploit them. However, in the case of the individuals whose paths are examined in this work, the self-selections that scholars made after the war indicate that wartime work served as a scholarly sieve, filtering out individuals who wanted to have a debate about ideas, and filtering in those individuals who grew increasingly wedded to a central ideology of American benevolent supremacy.

182. Sadik Jalal al-'Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse," *Khamsin* 8(1981), 8.

Chapter Three

In 1965, *Saudi Aramco World,* the official magazine of the American oil company, published an appraisal of Middle Eastern studies in the United States. Written by journalist John Starkey, it struck a tone similar to that of Timothy Mitchell's scholarly missive from 2004, in which Mitchell recounts the recurring theme of appraisals of Middle Eastern studies: skeptical about the past, but encouraged about the future.[1] Starkey wrote that there was still work to be done, but that the progress that had been made formed a solid basis for future efforts. More significant than his tone, however, is his proximity to the changes occurring in the field. Starkey's article brought up many issues, particularly related to the period between the end of the Second World War and the mid-1950s, that have not been fully explored when scholars have examined the history of Middle East area studies.

In particular, Starkey pointed to the longer-term impact of WWII on Middle East area studies. Intellectual historians have traditionally seen the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 as the precipitating event that caused the boom in area studies.[2] Passed in response to the launch of Sputnik in order to boost the United States' educational system, the NDEA provided significant funding for university centers that were intended to study regions of the world which were of strategic importance to the United States. These area studies centers included several that focused on the Middle

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1. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge*.
2. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge*; Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*; Don Babai, ed., *Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future,* (Cambridge, Mass: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, 2004).

East. Significantly, though, Starkey pointed out that, in the realm of Middle East area Studies, "only eight schools qualified for federal support and seven of them had programs in operation before the act was passed." In other words, "the major effect of the NDEA was to bolster programs already in existence."[3] Yet even as recent scholarship has insisted that the NDEA Act of 1958 did not begin Middle East area studies in the United States, we still know remarkably little about what actually went on in the "Middle Eastern" departments of U.S. institutions prior to 1958. Many appraisals of the field have focused mainly on the driving personalities, particularly Orientalists such as H.A.R. Gibb who came to the United States during the mid-1950s to direct fledgling centers like the one at Harvard. Gibb, who came to Harvard from Oxford in 1955, and was Director of the Center for Middle East Studies from 1957-1966, was a preeminent figure in the field, but he was entering a terrain that already had a way of doing things. In other words, even as new centers were being established in the 1950s, and even as massive grants flooded the previously empty coffers of existing departments, new visions of Middle East studies were not being projected onto blank canvases. Rather, they butted up against, contradicted, and compromised with existing department heads and faculties who had already established their visions for Middle East studies.

Historians are in relative agreement about what Middle East area studies became in the late 1950s into the 1960s and 70s. It developed into a field in which scholars sought to be of service to the U.S. government, as well as to U.S. interests – most prominently oil companies – in the Middle East. By the 1980s, when links to government

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3. John R. Starkey, "Arabists In The U.S.A.," Saudi Aramco World, August 1965, http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/196504/arabists.in.the.u.s.a..htm.

and business were seen as corrosive influences on scholarship, such connections were either discontinued or disguised. Anger over the Vietnam War, coupled with broader societal mistrust of institutions of power, drove a wedge between the academy and the U.S. government. Yet as Zachary Lockman has written, while scholarship may have become more "pure" as it was disassociated from governmental influence, the field of Middle Eastern Studies also lost some of its institutional cachet.[4] Even from the late 1940s and early 1950s, scholars within Middle East area studies had struggled to strike the right balance between broad relevance and scholarly integrity. Fledgling departments of Middle East area studies sought new sources of funding to maintain their faculties and facilities. Frequently, those funds came from business interests or foundations. Relevance, for them, then, meant whatever kept the money coming in from these private foundations and businesses. The NDEA only bolstered what had existed previously. And what existed in 1958 were scholarly departments of the Middle East that were inexorably shaped by their intimate connections to businesses and foundations.

The Department of Near Eastern Literatures and Languages at Princeton University was an early leader in the field. The department was led by Philip Hitti, a Lebanese-born scholar who was regularly invited to provide testimony regarding the Middle East. In 1946, Philip Hitti and Albert Einstein appeared before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, a panel that had been appointed by President Harry Truman, to study the question of Zionism. Einstein, then in residence at Princeton's

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4. Lockman, "Critique from the Right"; Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*. Changes within Middle East area studies were also influenced by changes across university disciplines, including the rise of women's history, community analysis, and subaltern studies, among many other changes.

Institute for Advanced Studies, was not only the most famous academic in the world, but also an ardent Zionist who publicly supported the creation of a Jewish state in what was then still Palestine. In Hitti's unpublished memoir, he recalled that Einstein "urged members of the committee to read 'an important document' on the subject by a British officer in Palestine. But when asked by an English member as to how he got hold of the document, Einstein replied that he had been told about it. Laughter followed." Hitti asserted that, "if the Zionist organization had encouraged his appearance, it must have been disappointed by his performance." When Hitti's testimony was quoted in the press and Einstein refuted it, Hitti "wrote back that Professor Einstein knew about the Palestine problem as much as I knew about the theory of relativity, the only difference being that whereas he poses as an authority on Palestine, I do not pose as an authority on relativity."[5]

Hitti recalled further that Einstein once told one of Hitti's Princeton students that Hitti was an Arab agent. Hitti wrote Einstein a letter:

> Dear Dr. Einstein:
> It has been reported to me that today on the campus of the University you told a student, an entire stranger to you, that I was an agent of the Arab states and the oil company. As this charge involves personal honor and professional standing I am addressing this letter to ask you to submit your evidence in substantiation of this charge.
> Your prompt reply will be appreciated.
> Truly yours, Philip K. Hitti[6]

Einstein replied the next day. He did not apologize; rather, he furthered their dispute with

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5. Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, Near Eastern Collection, Immigration History Research Center (IRHC), University of Minnesota, 79.
6. Hitti to Einstein, March 3, 1946, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 4, Folder 9, IHRC.

the following:

> Dear Professor Hitti:
> Your student must have been mistaken. All I told him was that I had the impression that you are somehow financially interested in the matter. The reason for this impression were the press-reports at the time of the San Francisco Conference that the Arab Delegation with whom your name was linked was the guest of one of the big American Oil Companies. Until you mentioned it in your letter I did not even know that there were agents of the Arab States in this country.
> Sincerely yours, Albert Einstein[7]

Hitti replied:

> My dear Dr. Einstein:
> The facts in your letter of explaining the remarks you made to one of my students are erroneous and the reasoning based on them is curious.
> In San Francisco I was adviser to the Iraq delegation which was the guest of no oil company big or small. As adviser I received no recompensation from anybody, government oil or otherwise. These are the simple facts.
> To reason that a scholar whose services were requested by a government at an international conference aiming at building up a new world order – even if that scholar received hospitality or pay (which I did not) – is financially interested in the matter of Zionism is not worthy of a scientist. It is the kind of reasoning that only a Zionist blinded by his prejudice can work out to his satisfaction.
> Truly yours, Philip K. Hitti[8]

Hitti's clash with Einstein demonstrates several of this chapter's animating concerns: the slippery nature of regional expertise; the contestation over Israel that influenced Middle East area studies from the very beginning; and the marginalization of humanistic scholarship in the early postwar years.

Expertise on the Middle East gained public and political value in the postwar years. Two of the most important venues for that discussion were the University of Chicago and Princeton University. Scholars at those two campuses sought to establish

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7. Einstein to Hitti, March 4, 1946, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 4, Folder 9, IHRC.
8. Hitti to Einstein, March 7, 1946, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 4, Folder 9, IHRC.

centers for the study of the contemporary Middle East, but failed to do so in a way that implemented their vision. At the University of Chicago, John Wilson struggled to convince his Oriental Institute colleagues to change their scholarly focus from the ancient Middle East to the contemporary Middle East. There, Middle East area studies was a non-starter.[9] At Princeton, however, Hitti secured funding, new faculty, and an influx of students. The program lived on, and still exists today, but in some ways Hitti never completely implemented his vision. By the time he retired in 1954, his plans for a humanities-based Middle East area studies program remained unfulfilled.

In the 1950s, when numerous Middle East area studies programs were initiated at U.S. universities, the field of inquiry never shed its geopolitical raison d'être as it had developed during the Second World War. The field was, from its inception, intertwined with the perceived needs of the United States's foreign policy in the Middle East.[10] Initially, scholars like Hitti viewed the strengthening of business relationships between the United States and the Middle East as a mutually beneficial process. Hitti had no qualms about accepting funding from oil companies for his program, nor did he hesitate to direct graduates of his program towards working for ARAMCO, the American oil company that controlled the oil concession in Saudi Arabia. For Hitti, there was no

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9. The University of Chicago later established a Title VI-funded Center for Middle Eastern Studies in 1965.

10. For histories of Middle East area studies, see Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, The contemporary Middle East (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Timothy Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in David L Szanton, ed., *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

conflict in promoting the business interests of American companies in the Middle East, as many of the countries of the Middle East needed investment capital in order to modernize. Whereas today Hitti's view would be seen as hopelessly naïve, or even as treasonous towards his fellow Middle Easterners, at the time there was not such a desired separation between academia and business. Based on Hitti's political actions, including testifying to Congress in 1946 on behalf of Palestinians regarding the potential partition of Palestine, he was a tireless advocate for the advancement of all Middle Easterners. Yet despite his occasional prominence, Hitti's voice was rarely heeded in the American political community.

This chapter and Chapter Four examine the historical development of Middle East area studies, including the earliest interactions between area studies departments and the CIA, in order to demonstrate the historical roots of political expectations for scholarship on the Middle East. Chapter Four, for instance, examines how scholar Donald Wilber revised new editions of his textbook on Iran to adhere to an ahistorical narrative of the 1953 coup that he, as a contract employee for the agency, had helped plan. Wilber's dual role as scholar and spy serve to illustrate that academia and foreign expertise were not just cozy during the years of the early Cold War; they were sometimes codependent, to the point that the promotion of U.S. interests in the Middle East became the mission of many scholars and policymakers. Stability became the core principle of each side, with scholars and intelligence analysts touting the stability of Middle Eastern leaders, with the specific interest of seeing those U.S.-allied Middle Eastern leaders remain in power. Although initially scholars like Hitti attempted to consciously demobilize the scholarly

war effort in favor of a humanities-based approach to studying the Middle East, such attempts were not perceived by foundation officials as adequate to the task of providing a path for U.S. interests to be served in the Middle East. Instead, humanities-based scholarship was overridden by a push for social scientific actionability, which was the type of scholarship that eventually received the bulk of Middle East area studies funding.

It should not be surprising that the ideology and material need of some scholars aligned with that of the U.S. government's policy toward the Middle East during the early Cold War. Many historians of foreign policy have shown how the overwhelming force of America's "benevolent hegemony" created a dominant ideology during the early Cold War.[11] For those internationalists who believed in American exceptionalism, they saw ample opportunities to apply American power and influence abroad. In practice, a fervent desire to improve the world turned into a frenzied mania to make the world more

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11. Benevolent hegemony and its exceptionalist application have been examined extensively in a variety of Cold War histories. See John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Christian G Appy, ed., *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966*, Culture, politics, and the cold war (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); Michael H Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Walter L Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*, Cornell studies in security affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*, Updated ed., with a post-9/11 chapter. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Michael E Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*, America in the world (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

American. Accompanying this reformist agenda was a desire to bolster modernization programs with a degree of social scientific backing. Thus benevolent hegemony was, out of necessity, paired with social science, the better to justify the readily apparent absurdity of producing a world in America's image with unbending faith that that the world required exactly that. This faith in futurology continued to influence what was seen as useful knowledge of the Middle East, and drove both political and scholarly approach towards the region.

Scholars Robert Hall in 1947, Vicente Rafael in 1994, and most recently, Timothy Mitchell in 2004, have argued some variation of Mitchell's assertion that "World War II and the ensuing crises of the Cold War did not give birth to area studies…on the contrary…they may have postponed its development."[12] This chapter insists that WWII did in fact serve as an area studies Petri dish for those scholars previously engaged with the Middle East. In particular, the use of archaeologists and physical anthropologists in the U.S. wartime information services, a hitherto unexamined aspect of the birth of Middle East area studies, illuminates the way in which some scholars tried to graft the study of the contemporary Middle East onto existing disciplinary and institutional structures. In other words, the scholars' wartime experiences deeply influenced the first attempts to develop area studies in the United States.[13] This examination of one failed effort and one partial success will demonstrate why the paradigmatic area studies center – a separate, interdisciplinary outfit funded by large grants from the Ford Foundation and/

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12. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge*, 76.
13. Wartime efforts to study the Middle East are covered in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

or U.S. government – became the dominant mode of area studies in the United States. This chapter also demonstrates some of the reasons why humanities-based scholarship, initially seen as the vital basis of regional knowledge, became subjugated to social scientific knowledge as the dominant force in the field, a development that had far-reaching consequences.

John Wilson and Philip Hitti were scholars of the Middle East who worked in U.S. universities prior to WWII; were pulled into different war work during the conflict; and returned to their respective universities after the war, determined to harness the momentum brought about by the war to change the way their field was practiced. They experienced failed attempts, ill-conceived notions, and pyrrhic victories in their quests to change the way that the Middle East was studied in the United States. Wilson, having worked for the OWI during the war, self-consciously tried to shape the Oriental Institute in a way that insulated him and his colleagues from what he perceived to be the worst tendencies of wartime work: oversimplification, a focus on generalization rather than detail, and a desire by the government for information that could be used to stimulate action. In short, Wilson derided actionability.[14] Wilson viewed actionable information as the anti-intellectual pablum of government work, and he initially had hoped to provide a scholarly corrective to his wartime experiences. When area studies was formally constituted at different universities, it was done so with less attention to gradations of meaning and the humanities that Wilson (and Hitti) saw as essential for the success of

14. Actionability denotes knowledge that can be used to make policy decisions, from supporting certain rulers, to advocating for particular economic strategies. It is defined by blanket generalizations about large groups; the minimization of conflict within a given society, religion, or country; and the prediction of future developments.

area studies. Instead, the influence came from the government, which, due to the Cold War, continued to place an emphasis on actionable intelligence over nuanced dialogue.

Over the course of the late 1940s and early 1950s, Middle East area studies became increasingly focused on social scientific prediction and forecasting. There are three key aspects to that transition. First, WWII was a significant laboratory for "trying out" approaches to the contemporary Middle East for scholars whose previous research interests had been in the region. Second, Hitti and Wilson (early area studies advocates) had political ideas they wanted to advance, but their means of study were based on their own personal wartime experiences. Finally, by the early 1950s, the humanistic study of the Middle East was eclipsed in favor of social scientific, predictive modes of understanding that emphasized actionability.

Even though the various information agencies of the U.S. military had a similar mission – to convince the world to join the Allied side – there was a wide degree of latitude in terms of what means they used to do the convincing. Furthermore, as seen in Chapter Two, even within a single agency, numerous opinions existed that were as varied as the individuals who espoused them. Similarly, the postwar trajectories of U.S.-based scholars of the Middle East who worked for the U.S. government during WWII varied greatly. Most scholars emerged from their wartime experience with the view that there was a need for American experts on the Middle East, but their different ideas of what constituted the 'right' kind of expertise about the Middle East led them to make different recommendations for the path that Middle East area studies should take. Because the field itself did not exist, scholars and administrators were free to suggest novel forms for what

the regional study of the Middle East should look like. Others merely wanted to prod existing departments into reorganizing or refocusing.

Two factors limited scholars who returned to the academy after WWII. The first was the structure of American universities, which were centered on disciplinary departments. This convention of the American educational system circumscribed most attempts at change. The second factor, which was related to the first, was the need for money. Because existing departments were often perceived to be in competition with new departments for scarce resources, any new initiatives needed to be accompanied by new funds. Until the U.S. government increased higher education funding in 1958, with funds appropriated under the National Defense Education Act, such funding had to come from private donors, companies, or foundations.[15]

The Rockefeller Foundation, a leading figure in the push for Middle East area studies, supported two postwar attempts to use lessons learned during WWII in the establishment of Middle East area studies. The first was archaeologist Wilson's failed attempt to convince his colleagues at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute to become a center for the study of the contemporary Middle East. The second was Hitti's attempt to create a foreign language and humanities-centric program of study at the

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15. Although foundations generally would not impress requirements on universities once funds were dispersed, they had the power to shape the very boundaries of academic inquiry by setting the limits of what they would fund. As any academic who has shaped an idea or proposal to fit within the guidelines of a grant application knows, there is a shoe-horn effect to grant writing that can change the original purpose of a study. Of course, foundations also had the power to withhold renewal or additional funds if their views were not being represented. Foundations, which are also composed of individuals whose motivations can be difficult to discern, are notoriously opaque enterprises. One of the few with open archives is also one of the richest: the Rockefeller Archive Center.

Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures at Princeton.[16] The Princeton Department is commonly cited as the first Middle East area studies program in the United States.[17] Throughout its early years, however, the department's research and teaching focus remained firmly rooted in the distant past. Rockefeller Foundation (RF) records reveal how RF program officers' frustrations with what was seen as Hitti's stubbornness led the foundation officers to seek alternative modes of research, ones that emphasized actionability and influence over mere 'knowledge.'

As we have seen, the Oriental Institute (OI) at the University of Chicago (UC) was founded in 1919, and quickly grew to become one of the most prominent and active archaeological institutions in the world. Thanks to the dynamism of its founder, James Henry Breasted, and the deep pockets of its principle benefactor, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the OI filled its new building in Chicago with significant artifacts from all over the Middle East. Although the Institute still exists today, its period of fastest growth ended in 1935, when Breasted died and Rockefeller cut funding.[18] Breasted's successor, John Wilson, was an Egyptologist who, as Director, had to cope with slashed budgets and skeleton expeditions. Although not well known today, Wilson was a prominent archaeologist. For instance, from 1959-65, he was the American representative on the

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16. Founded in 1927, the department originally focused on the philology of ancient languages. In the early 1960s, it expanded to offer Japanese language and literature courses, and around that time changed its name to the Department of Oriental Studies. In 1969, that department split into the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the East Asian Studies Department.
17. See Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science" in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge*; Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*; Babai, *Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future*.
18. See Chapter One of this dissertation for my analysis of this period.

UNESCO committee that relocated the Temple at Abu Simbel when it was to be flooded by the construction of the Aswan High Dam.[19]

There were two principle factors that influenced Wilson's attempt to change the OI between 1943 and 1945. The first was his experience in 1935, when he cut the number of active field commitments of the OI from twelve to three to one in the course of two years. Wilson, a man with diverse personal interests, made it clear from the beginning of his time as Director that he would not hesitate to drastically alter the OI's specific mission of Near Eastern archaeology if its general mission of humanistic interpretation was allowed to continue.[20] As Director of the OI, he was constantly looking for ways to cut budgets and still maintain a semblance of original research. His pragmatic outlook led him to consider adopting a more present-day approach, especially if a present-day approach would lead to new sources of funding. By the time he began working for the U.S. government in 1941, Wilson had spent six years embroiled in debates that firmly grounded him in concerns of the present. The second major influence was his wartime work. From 1941-1943, as an operative in the OWI, he saw firsthand the new kinds of research that, he anticipated, would be prioritized during the postwar period. Aware that

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19. Wilson's account of his UNESCO work is in Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 145-65.

20. In Chapter One I explore how larger trends in archaeology influenced his decision-making process. Some background on Middle Eastern archaeology in the Middle East is in Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*; Silberman, *Between Past and Present: Archaeology, Ideology, and Nationalism in the Modern Middle East*; Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*; Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*; Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq*; Amanat and Bernhardsson, *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters: A Critical Survey*.

many chauvinist opinions about Middle Easterners were propagated during the war, he wanted his type of humanist scholarship to be at the forefront of any area studies model. Yet he also wanted his department to maintain relevance, and saw that area experts would be sought after in the postwar period. If funding was shifting towards contemporary studies, then Wilson wanted to make a gambit for it, even if it meant sacrificing his pursuit of his original line of inquiry. Wilson felt that departmental relevance was not available in perpetuity, but was, rather, in a state of near-constant contestation. If not actively sought, it could be lost.

As WWII wound down, various American thinkers sought ways to capture the momentum of the war to bolster scholarship. RF officers initially saw the OI as the best place to endow a center for the study of the contemporary Middle East. The foundation and the institute had a longstanding relationship. Their scholars, including the Director, Wilson, were known entities. Finally, they had a critical mass of scholars who had previous regional experience, which was seen as a decisive advantage for studying the contemporary world. The effort to start the center there failed, due in large part to faculty resistance to changing their research focus – in other words, due to disciplinary and institutional constraints. To established scholars in the field of Near Eastern/Middle Eastern studies, there was already a research agenda. It was a field that was based in the discovery, interpretation, and translation of ancient texts, and had little or nothing to do with the contemporary events and peoples of the region.

In 1943, Wilson was released from his government duties in order to return to the University of Chicago to conduct a study on the best methods by which area studies

could be instituted at the university level. Wilson was one figure among many who were concerned that the U.S. educational system was ill-equipped to deal with the anticipated complexity of the postwar world. Moving forward, there was near unanimity that U.S. universities would have to broaden their teaching in order to prepare the next generation of students to understand the world. That vision was undergirded by the overwhelming social scientific optimism of the age. Most fundamentally, Americans were confident in the ability of American ingenuity to solve the world's problems, whether technological, societal, or psychological. That is to say, problems big and small, global or intimate in scope, were thought to be solvable through study and concerted action.[21]

Wilson was hopeful that his institution, the University of Chicago, would be at the vanguard of "regional studies," his initial term for what has more commonly been called "area studies." Striking in Wilson's advocacy for a university-wide commitment to regional studies was his willingness to extend his efforts beyond his own scholarly wheelhouse, both in terms of time period and region. Wilson was trained as an Egyptologist, but he was advocating an approach that brought modern techniques to bear on modern problems. He had not shied away from using his regional expertise to opine on contemporary issues, as was illustrated by his government work during WWII. Despite his misgivings about aspects of the U.S. propaganda programs during the war, his solution was not to leave such prognostications to government functionaries; rather, he

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21. See for example David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge*; Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War*, Cold War and the university (New York: New Press, 1998).

sought to bolster the academic infrastructure of his institution in order to better prepare individuals to make more accurate judgments in the present. Wilson's confidence in the reasoned judgments of individuals arose from his orientation as a humanist. His theoretical and attitudinal approach to human difference was to better understand those differences through empathetic study. Wilson was confident that his approach could be taught and replicated, and would form a suitable basis for the U.S. study of other cultures.[22]

Wilson was so confident in the ability of U.S. universities to institutionalize the humanistic study of other cultures that he advocated for emphasis on regions beyond his own, the Middle East. Wilson's advocacy for cross-disciplinary scholarship was part of a larger ascendency of interdisciplinary study in the postwar period. Jamie Cohen-Cole has written that "interdisciplinarity seemed an unqualified good in postwar America. In the era of the Cold War, interdisciplinarity meant not only creativity but also democracy, rigor, and practicality." Cohen-Cole also found that interdisciplinarity had its origins in "patrons like the SSRC and Rockefeller Foundation [that] decided that interdisciplinarity was the shortest route to solving practical problems."[23] Even so, Wilson was having to put

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22. Wilson's perspective is distilled largely from his published writings, as he left behind minimal personal papers. (Although he did publish a memoir.) John Albert Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner, 1972); John Albert Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt; an Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture*, An Oriental Institute essay (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); John Albert Wilson, *Signs & Wonders Upon Pharaoh; a History of American Egyptology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Henri Frankfort, H.A. Frankfort, John Wilson, and Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man; an Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1946).

23. Jamie Nace Cohen-Cole, *The Open Mind: Cold War Politics and the Sciences of Human Nature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 101-02.

aside his own self-interest as a scholar in order to bolster what he viewed as broader concerns. In contrast to many of his contemporaries, though, he viewed the study of foreign cultures as part of an exchange between scholars of those countries, rather than the mere advancement of American interests through scholarship. Wilson may have derived his ethos from a State Department committee that he worked for briefly during the Second World War, which was called the Division of Cultural Cooperation. As was discussed in Chapter Two, the U.S. propaganda model during the Second World War came to focus on (mostly) positive portrayals of the United States. The United States Information Agency largely continued that mission after the war.[24] The USIA as an organization was established to disseminate information about the United States to other countries, and had relatively few mechanisms to encourage cross-cultural contact. They followed what media study scholars have termed the hypodermic approach, in which ideas are injected into populations. The USIA's approach was meant to inoculate populations against the spread of Communism.[25]

Wilson's experience working for the U.S. government during WWII was paradigmatic of the experience many academics had during their forays into government work. He was transformed by it; in particular, he was thereafter more eager to seek forms

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Interdisciplinary centers of study were later institutionalized in cases such as Talcott Parsons's Department of Social Relations at Harvard.

24. A thorough book on the USIA is Nicholas John Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

25. While this stance seems arrogant from today's perspective, at the time many Americans perceived their high-handedness as justifiable. The previous 30 years had witnessed two world wars in which the delayed entry of the United States was the turning point.

of engagement between his scholarship and the changing political landscape of the Middle East. Wilson's reaction to government work was frustration with an eye towards reform. In other words, he thought the process could be improved, but he most assuredly thought academics and government officials would continue partner in their attempts to figure out the world. More specifically, given his experience with the government during WWII, he realized that government agencies would continue to study of the rest of the world's populations, whether trained academics joined the cause or not. As he wrote in late 1944:

> During my eighteen months of service in Washington, it became increasingly clear to me that the universities of this country must face a demand for regional studies, with work on the modern world. I was concerned that some universities should undertake regional work in innocence of a demand for 'practical training,' so that world understanding might be based on detached rather than vocational considerations. It seemed to me inevitable that the social sciences would demonstrate interest in regional studies and that the humanities should, therefore, be emphasized in order that the studies might profit by a respect for language, history, and philosophy.[26]

He returned to the University of Chicago with higher-level administrative support for his idea. Although at times he expressed disenchantment with government processes which adulterated scholarly work, he also seems to have been convinced that such efforts would be completely misguided without the advice of scholars like himself.

In 1944, Wilson took formal action to alter the scholarly focus of the Oriental Institute. He proposed a new plan of contemporary Middle Eastern research for his colleagues there. His reasoning was seemingly thus: 1) Wilson himself had made the

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26. John Wilson, "'Regionalism' at the University of Chicago: Reactions of a Department," December 15, 1944, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.1, Series 216R, Box 18, Folder 247.

transition from studying ancient Egypt to making pronouncements about the modern region, and others could do the same; 2) although the arrangement was not perfect, there were no other Americans with the close contacts with the Middle East; and 3.) some university department was going to assume this role, so it should be his.[27] In June 1944, he went to his colleagues with a proposition: to transform the OI into the preeminent center for the study of the contemporary Middle East. He wrote:

> This memorandum throws open for discussion several proposed changes in the Oriental Institute and the Department of Oriental Languages. None of the changes is sweeping. None of the changes can be effected without group action and consent. That is why they are being proposed now for consideration in advance of our reorganization at the end of the war…It is proposed that there be a new emphasis on interpretative studies of broad cultural nature… without diverting means or quality from our attack on the problems of the Near East, it is proposed that we welcome added workers in other fields of the Orient, and, most particularly, workers and projects dealing with the modern Orient.[28]

Wilson attempted to diminish the significance of the change, arguing that "none of the changes is sweeping," but his colleagues were not convinced that was true. From all indications, his colleagues not only saw the changes as sweeping, but also as a fundamental shift in mission for the institute as a whole, as well as for their own research agendas in particular. Despite Wilson's assurance that there would be no "diverting means or quality," without a significant infusion of outside funds, the members of the Oriental Institute could see the proposal for what it was: a wholesale change that would

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27. Wilson, perhaps influenced by the Rockefeller Foundation officers with whom he was in contact, was confident about the inevitability of Middle East area studies. While not explicitly a case of the foundation tail wagging the departmental dog (Wilson also seems to have believed that the Oriental Institute should engage in the study of the contemporary Middle East), the RF officers exerted some influence over the proposed direction of the department.

28. John Wilson, "Oriental Studies at the University of Chicago," June 1944, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.1, Series 216R, Box 18, Folder 247.

require them to develop new fields of expertise. To his colleagues, Wilson was undermining the very nature of scholarly expertise. Any professors in the Oriental Institute had likely trained for years to learn their subject matter, and most had learned multiple ancient languages in order to translate the written texts that were the focus of their research. Wilson's willingness to challenge his department's focus was out of sync with his colleagues. Although he acknowledged that he and his colleagues would need additional training in order to be true experts about the modern Middle East, his colleagues did not share his confidence in his and their capabilities for reform.

Wilson's ideas were ambitious and involved large-scale exchange between other regions and American institutions. He understood that the training of qualified educators would be a central conundrum in the development of regional or area studies. Writing to RF officer David Stevens in September 1944, he asserted:

> our present interest is a groping search for the correct academic atmosphere for regional work of any kind. That involves experts qualified by experience, visiting professors from world regions, library facilities, and the opportunity to do research in and with contemporary world cultures. We thus approach the problem of teaching from the standpoint of the scholarly qualifications of a faculty rather than from the anticipated demands of the students.[29]

Wilson's vision of an area studies model that emphasized the humanities, fostered close collaboration with local experts, and eschewed social scientific inquiry is dramatically different from the way in which area studies would eventually become institutionalized in the United States.

Wilson reported back to Stevens in January 1945 with news that the proposal had

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29. John Wilson to David Stevens, September 15, 1944, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.1, Series 216R, Box 18, Folder 247.

been resoundingly rejected. The center of the study of the modern Middle East would not, for the time being at least, reside at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. Wilson wrote, "you will undoubtedly detect a note of disappointment that I was unable to persuade my own colleagues that their current interests might legitimately and profitably be extended." Wilson reported several reasons for the faculty's rejection of the proposal. Most significantly, the faculty members "[felt] that their current work is so important that it should receive any benefits forthcoming instead of suffering the competition of new activities." Wilson understood that impulse, and also saw it as a force that would impede any attempts to change faculty missions from within:

> That is simply a normal valuation of one's own work. It does, however, indicate the formula prevailing in any group of scholars where the tendency will be to emphasize past and present activities rather than additions of the future. As universities are at present constituted, interdepartmental concerns receive less attention and weight than departmental concerns so that the problem of any change based on faculty initiative is difficult. Nevertheless, I cannot see successful change in a university unless there is faculty participation.[30]

Wilson was stymied by this faculty model that resisted adaptation. He realized the need for contemporary experts on the Middle East would be fulfilled from somewhere, and remained frustrated that his colleagues could not see their way to provide it.

Yet Wilson may have also provided an impetus for RF officers to take a more activist role in the promotion of area studies. Summarizing the motions passed by the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures, Wilson maintained the importance of area studies, but acknowledged that change would not come from within the university departments themselves, as "this Department has stated that regional studies of

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30. All quotes above from John Wilson to David Stevens, January 10, 1945, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.1, Series 216R, Box 18, Folder 247.

contemporary cultures are a concern of the University at large, and not of a single nuclear department or division." Wilson anticipated that other departments would react in a similar way, and lamented, "in the absence of any mechanism to express this concern and stimulate individual departments to new interests and activities, the University may have no regional program. There the matter rests at present as far as Oriental Studies are concerned." The only hope was that "some agency must be designated as a catalyst, if (a) regional studies are a valid concern of a university, and (b) the interdepartmental stimulus to such studies is to be activated."[31] The external catalyst, Wilson implied, would be a foundation that would provide the financial incentive for universities to establish interdepartmental area studies programs. Failing foundational support, Wilson was convinced that area studies would not get off the ground.

Wilson's push-pull relationship with the Rockefeller Foundation developed over the course of his decade of experience as the Director of the Oriental Institute between 1935 and 1945. In that role, he had witnessed the drastic reduction in funding that came around the time of the death of the Institute's founder, James Henry Breasted. His experiences with times of financial scarcity made him acutely aware of the trends in foundation funding, as had his relatively candid relationship with Rockefeller Foundation figures such as Charles Fahs and John Marshall. Breasted's relationship to funding had been that if he had an interest, he felt confident he could seek and secure the necessary money, even if the interest was ancillary to the broader goals of the OI. Wilson's relationship to RF funding was far more complicated. The structure of the 1935 funding

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31. John Wilson to David Stevens, January 10, 1945.

agreement was such that the OI received a "terminal grant…for the use of institute over a period of ten years."[32] The expectation was not, as it had been under the Breasted years, that if other priorities arose, Wilson could simply petition for additional funds. On the contrary, what he got was what he got, and from that amount he had to pay salaries, provide for upkeep, and fund ongoing projects. There could be no outside interests, because no funding for such projects was available.

Because Wilson's relationship to RF funding was more fraught, he was more aware than Breasted had been of shifts in Rockefeller Foundation priorities. He was considerably more pragmatic than his predecessor had been. When he saw an opportunity for additional funding, as he did with area studies, he was willing to stretch his priorities and compromise some of his academic principles in order to secure the future of his institution. Even if the OI had to drastically shift its mission, Wilson was willing to take that chance. What he ran up against when he brought the proposed changes to his department colleagues was the conservative nature of bureaucracy, but also a kind of inertia or sclerosis that overtook his academic department. Scholars did not want to change their research agendas, when doing so would entail leaving behind interests, projects, contacts, and indeed, the very mantle of their profession: expertise. Uncertainty about future funding made the archaeologists in Wilson's department more hesitant to accept any change, lest a shift in mission lead to a wholesale abandonment of archaeological pursuits. As Wilson later recounted, "a majority of the voting members went on record as being concerned with ancient times and opposing any attempt to

32. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 76.

'dilute' such concentration by the introduction of modern studies." More personally, some Oriental Institute faculty insisted that "such changes would 'betray the memory'" of Breasted, the OI's founder.[33]

Wilson's archaeologist colleagues were evidently convinced of the timelessness of their scholarly pursuits. Wilson's willingness to shift directions therefore had both a positive and negative pull, which included his desire to shape the type of scholarship being done, as well as to ensure that his department was doing it. Yet Wilson was not seen as a departmental savior by his colleagues for seeking to be a forerunner for funding and relevance. His colleagues instead sought protection within the departmental structure of the university. The need of universities to adapt and evolve to a changing world notwithstanding, the departmental priorities of the Oriental Institute were emphasized over what was perceived as a trend (area studies) that may or may not have significance or permanence. Wilson's colleagues were protecting their interests, but they were also standing up for a field of inquiry in which they believed.[34]

Furthermore, what Wilson was asking actually had broader implications for the very idea of expertise. His colleagues, archaeologists who studied the ancient past, were

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33. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 95.
34. We can see similar debates played out in universities in the early 21st century, in which a long-term shift of resources away from departments such as Classics or French towards Business and STEM fields is now resulting in the wholesale elimination of entire departments which are seen as irrelevant and non-self-supporting financially. Scholars who argue that scholarship is not intended to be trendy, nor have practical value, are frequently institutionally marginalized. My understanding of the development of disciplines in American universities relies heavily on the work of intellectual historian Louis Menand: Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas*, 1st ed., Issues of our time (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010); Louis Menand, "Live and Learn," *The New Yorker*, June 6, 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2011/06/06/110606crat_atlarge_menand.

justifiably hesitant to weigh in on issues in which they had no experience or proficiency. Their refusal to accept Wilson's proposal points to the opportunism of his idea that familiarity with one very narrow aspect of a region could be parlayed into much broader mastery. While Wilson was on some level far-sighted in seeing the inevitable future of area studies, to his colleagues, he may have come off as an opportunist whose scholarly allegiances were for sale. For his part, Wilson's dalliance with the idea of area studies ended up being a temporary one. In 1952-53, he "had a research post in Egypt under the Fulbright program...King Farouq had been deposed in July 1952, and no one knew the attitude of the new military government. The year proved to be happily free and productive...I offered a brief series of lectures...otherwise I was free to see those antiquities I had missed on previous visits."[35] In other words, on his future research posts, he remained aloof from present-day politics. His future dealings with the present were isolated to saving antiquities, as in the UNESCO project mentioned earlier.

When the Rockefeller Foundation decided to fund a certain line of inquiry, by dint of its political connections, high visibility, and, ability to disperse funds, it could shift the center of gravity in academia. By all indications, the officers of the RF knew of their own influence, and took their roles seriously.[36] They did not want to follow trends that might fizzle out without producing results, but they also did not want to become a stodgy institution that lost broader relevance by not addressing the vital questions of the day creating a tension between consistency and adaptation. Although RF officers sometimes

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35. Wilson, *Thousands of Years; an Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt*, 169.
36. As of November 2014, the diaries of Rockefeller Foundation officers were still in the process of being digitized for scholarly research. A full analysis of those diaries is outside the scope of the current work. Some diaries can be found at dimes.rockarch.org.

argued that they were insulated from outside influences, their consideration of contemporary issues shows how deeply embedded in their times they were, and how thoroughly political the RF funding considerations were as a result of its officers' personal engagements with the world.

Undaunted by a failed attempt to transform the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, RF officer John Marshall, along with other RF officers, continued attempting to define what role area studies would fulfill at the university level. Marshall expressed wariness that the area studies model would encounter resistance from professors who felt they would be supplanted by this new model. The RF began to articulate a position that would support an area studies model that would be laid on top of the existing disciplinary structure of American universities. In other words, area studies would not necessarily be a new department for universities, but would instead be like a lattice resting on top of the established system, touching all aspects of the university, but not fundamentally altering them. This vision of area studies as a mode of thinking that would enhance the work done by the disciplines conflicted with the abiding faith that many area studies proponents had that area studies would fundamentally change the way that its students interacted with the world. As visionaries, they were keen to imagine drastic changes that would alter the fundamental assumptions of academic inquiry, yet they were also embroiled within the system they hoped to change. Thus professional obstacles stood in the way of broader structural changes to the way scholarship was done.

But, as would also be expected of an undefined academic mode of thinking, competing visions of how to do area studies resulted in contradictory missions and

implementations of its core principles. From the academic side of things, many administrators and scholars envisioned area studies as one way of providing a general education for students. In fact, University of Chicago Dean Robert Redfield saw area studies as having "advantages which are not always present in what passes for general education in many institutions."[37] Redfield quoted John Stuart Mill to support his claim as to the importance of specificity in a general education:

> Without knowing the language of a people, we never really know their thoughts, their feeling and their type of character: and unless we do possess this knowledge, of some other people than ourselves, we remain, to the hour of our death, with our intellects only half expanded…since we cannot divest ourselves of preconceived notions, there is no means of eliminating their influence but by frequently using the differently colored glasses other other people, and those of other nations, as the most different, are the best.[38]

For Redfield, Mill's exhortation to study the Classics was analogous to the then-current desire to enhance understanding of other contemporary cultures.[39] Redfield wrote that "the area program he was upholding in the speech…was the classical education organized around Latin and Greek literature."[40] Advocates of area studies used this analogy to justify the current interest in area studies as similar to studying the Classics: one was given a new way of seeing the world, which was, for advocates of general education, the ultimate tool that could be gained from a university education. In addition to critical

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37. Robert Redfield, quoted in Joseph Willits to David H. Stevens, "Area Studies," Memoranda, July 26, 1944, 2, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 3.2, Series 900, Box 31, Folder 165.
38. Redfield, quoted in Joseph Willits to David Stevens, "Area Studies," July 26, 1944.
39. The comparison with Classics also enabled a certain type of thinking about the Middle East (and other regions of study) as outside of time. An important study of how certain anthropological depictions of time (or of other cultures being outside of time) contributed to imperialist reasoning within the field of anthropology is Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*.
40. Redfield, quoted in Joseph Willits to David Stevens, "Area Studies," July 26, 1944.

reading and writing, educators argued that they provided students with analytical tools with which a wide variety of problems could be approached and solved. Their principle goal in education was to provide students with a way of thinking about and seeing the world.

Scholars like Redfield who argued for area studies as a modern way of providing a classical education were ignoring some important differences that would become increasingly important to area studies.[41] The Classical analogy encouraged area studies scholars to see the cultures they studied as static and unchanging. Studying the Ancient Romans and Greeks in this manner was a fairly simple task, given that there was a relatively stable set of texts and ideas that all subsequent ideas would develop from. The field of Classics was not static in the sense that there were not new ideas, translations, and discoveries being debated; but it was static in the sense that there was not anything else being actively produced by ancient Greeks and Romans (new discoveries aside) that would radically alter the fundamental assumptions of the field. Studying current events posed a different set of problems. What area studies was intended to do, by its most ambitious and optimistic advocates, was to study the vast curve of a given society – its changes, ebbs, flows, and conflicts. Area studies practitioners sometimes attempted to provide a glimpse of one aspect of the society and mistook it for the whole. To use a mathematical analogy, the slope of a curved line can be taken at any point of the curve, provided one can establish a formula for the curve. Yet the rate of change of the curve is

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41. Redfield's anthropological career was more interesting than his role as a university administrator. See Clifford Wilcox, *Robert Redfield and the Development of American Anthropology* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004).

only accurate for that isolated point. The measurement taken at that point is completely unrepresentative of the larger whole, and may in fact give an inaccurate picture of the rate of change of the whole. In other words, seeing area studies as analogous to studying the Classics enabled a mindset within area studies that may have contributed to, as Zachary Lockman wrote, "what many critics would eventually argue were the grave shortcomings of the Orientalist tradition."[42] Referring to H.A.R. Gibb's 1947 text *Modern Trends in Islam*, Lockman wrote:

> Like many earlier Orientalists, Gibb started from the assumption that there was an unchanging and distinctive 'Arab mind' or 'Muslim mind' (both derived from an even more primordial 'Semitic mind') whose essential nature he could deduce from his knowledge of the classical texts of Islamic civilization and which could be implicitly or explicitly contrasted with an equally unitary and essentialized 'Western mind.'[43]

In this way, even though postwar area studies was derived in part from earlier, Orientalist traditions, it was also part of a postwar shift in the American academy. Gibb and others were themselves part of their own 'modern trend' in scholarly thought.

With the Rockefeller Foundation plans for Middle East area studies on hold at the University of Chicago for the time being, RF officers shifted their focus to Princeton.[44] From the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, Princeton received the bulk of the RF's funding for Middle East area studies. In many ways, Princeton's department was a good fit for the kind of program the RF officers envisioned. In internal memos, officers such as Joseph

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42. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 108.
43. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 108.
44. Considering the fact that the University of Chicago was founded with Rockefeller money, officers had long felt a predilection to start new programs there.

Willits advocated for the funding of programs that effectively demobilized scholars from their previous wartime roles. At least initially, Willits and his colleagues wanted scholars to cede some of the actionability that their wartime scholarship had taken on. In addition, program officers stipulated that new area studies programs should not be dictated by politics within the universities where such programs were established. Finally, such programs were meant to address longer-term problems, namely the "long-run problem" to "acquire intellectual mastery of other countries and cultures."[45] Ultimately, though, the Princeton model of Middle East area studies left people on both the university and foundation side wanting something different. As we will see, the relationship between Princeton and the RF may have influenced later developments in Middle East area studies.

The RF capitalized on its preexisting relationship with Princeton's Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures. Through grants in 1937, and 1939, the RF had given $9500 to the department, money intended to finance "a seminar in Arabic and Islamic studies, and the development of Turkish studies." The work on Turkish studies, though, was not completed, meaning that most of the money went towards the study of modern Arabic. When the RF decided to give additional money to Princeton's department in 1946, it was based on the legacy and leadership of Philip Hitti, who was then chairman of the department. Hitti regarded the humanities, especially language study, as the starting point of any cultural study of the region. He had taught at Princeton since 1926, and had, beginning in 1935, organized summer seminars in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. In 1941,

45. Joseph Willits to David Stevens, "Area Studies," July 26, 1944.

Hitti organized crash courses in language and cultural knowledge for soldiers who were to be deployed to the Middle East. His personal papers contain numerous letters from graduates of his wartime language program who had been deployed overseas. Although few of them had any opportunity to use their language skills, as their deployments often took them to Europe instead, they wrote Hitti with news that they were continuing their study on their own, and attested to the fact that their language study had imbued them with a deep interest in Middle Eastern culture, broadly construed.[46] Hitti retained the idea that language study was the key basis of any program of regional understanding.

Hitti's biographical, intellectual, and philosophical roots reveal that he had long sought a model of cross-cultural understanding. Hitti was born in 1886 to a Christian family in Shemlan in the Mt. Lebanon region of the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire. He first came to the United States in 1913 as a delegate to the World Student Christian Federation in Lake Mohonk, New York. He made plans to stay in the United

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46. For example, Rodger Davies to Philip Hitti, February 23, 1945, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 4, Folder 8, IHRC. Letter from Army Lt. Rodger Davies during WWII to Hitti. Davies was a student in the Army Specialized Training Program. Davies later became ambassador to Cyprus, and was assassinated there in 1974. Davies wrote, "Dear Professor Hitti: Many thanks for the Arabic notes. I hope someday, as a civilian, to return to the Middle East and feel that the retention of as much of the colloquial Arabic learned in the months at Princeton and the year overseas is desirable. Truly the sun shines brighter always on the other side of the street for now that I am returned to the routine hubbub of our military organization I often look back happily on leisurely afternoons spent in conversation over the coffee table or of just wandering in the sun. The countries of the Eastern Mediterranean possess a certain charm in their way of life that shines through the squalor and ignorance resulting from centuries of Turkish and European exploitation. I shall return. Berger, Hackett, and I are now in our eleventh week; friend Oleksiw has been released from the hospital and is in his third week. Todres, newly-returned from Denersoir on the Suez is undergoing basic training at Camp Gordon and should commence O.C.S. in six weeks. I wish to thank you again for your many kindnesses and send warm salaams to both Mrs. Hitti and yourself. Sincerely, Rodger Davies"

States for graduate work, and chose to study at Columbia University. He was attuned to opportunities that would allow him to expand his personal horizons. This personal openness led to his seeking to continue his higher education in the United States. Despite being excited to be in New York City, and well adapted to the mores of the United States, Hitti was not entirely satisfied with the way Columbia treated its foreign students. In his unpublished memoir, written in the 1960s and early 1970s, Hitti enumerated a number of complaints about Columbia, including the distance between students and faculty, as well as the difficulty that foreign students had in adapting to Columbia's system. He also decried the fact that language courses were taught without any mention of the culture that used the language, a critique that he later attempted to address through his own teaching.[47] Hitti was not content to sit on the sidelines and merely point out a problem. He became president of the Cosmopolitan Club, working with a Columbia professor to provide housing and advising to the growing numbers of international students at Columbia. His years at Columbia also marked his first encounter with the Rockefeller Foundation, which funded the building of the Cosmopolitan Club at Columbia, as well as at several other international universities.[48]

Columbia was also the first American university where Hitti taught. When World War I broke out in 1914, he accepted the chance to teach Syriac, a sister language of Aramaic, despite the fact that he was not fluent in the language. By keeping one lesson in

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47. Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, IRHC, 49B.

48. Hitti's biography as recounted here is from his unpublished memoir. Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, IRHC. See also Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab relations, 1820-2001* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 163-66.

front of his students, he was able to pull it off. When WWI dragged on beyond the one year that Hitti thought it would last, he extended his stay at Columbia, gaining more experience teaching at the university level. When he was able to return to what was then French-mandated Lebanon after the war, Beirut was devastated by blockades that led to widespread famine. Upon his return, he made efforts to translate American culture for foreign audiences, publishing a series of pieces about "America in the Eyes of an Easterner" in 1924.[49] He taught for several years at the American University of Beirut (from which he had graduated in 1908), but he was relieved when, in 1925, the fortuitous visit of a Princeton professor opened up an opportunity for Hitti to move back to the United States. Princeton's library had been gathering Middle Eastern materials for several years, and had recently been given money to hire a professor with an expertise in the area. When Dana Munro visited Beirut and came to the AUB for a local guide, Hitti stepped forward. During their time together, he developed a rapport with Munro and was offered the Princeton job.[50]

Once back in the United States, though, Hitti was not fully content with his new position. Although he was teaching at one of the most prestigious universities in the world, he taught a subject that he felt remained on the periphery of the principle concerns of the broader university. Accordingly, he had to fight for resources there, just as he had at AUB. Even 45 years after his early years at Princeton, he wrote with urgency in his

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49. Philip Hitti, "America in the Eyes of an Easterner: Or Eight Years in the United States" in Kamal Abdel-Malek, *America in an Arab Mirror: Images of America in Arabic Travel Literature, an Anthology, 1895-1995* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 49-54.
50. Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, IRHC, 63.

memoir of the indignities he felt in not having his own space, and having to seek out his own office chair.[51] Hitti's administrative experience up until the middle of WWII was, to him, defined in part by his need to fight for resources within the university. He resented this near-constant asking for funds, as it came up frequently in his memoir. In his teaching, Hitti reported having been principally motivated by his desire to expose his American students to the culture of the Middle East.[52] In particular, he advocated for increased economic connections between the United States and the Middle East. His opinion about oil, for instance, was that it was a resource that could be used to encourage trade between the two geographic regions. He was optimistic that such trade would be mutually beneficial. This belief system seems to explain why he was willing to accept funding from Western oil companies such as ARAMCO, as well as to feed gifted students into that field.

Like the archaeologists and physical anthropologists discussed in Chapter Two, Hitti was also an active participant in a U.S. government program during World War II. Hitti organized and taught at the Army Specialized Training Program, which instructed Army enlistees in Turkish and Arabic. There were significant differences between his program and those discussed in Chapter Two. First, Hitti was not tasked with developing actionable knowledge about Middle Eastern peoples. That in and of itself is a curious

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51. Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, IRHC, 65. He also recalled the 92 stairs between his desk and the nearest bathroom, and crossed out a comment from a draft of his memoir about how he considered suing Princeton for his later prostate troubles.

52. He was also active with a number of organized groups of the Syrian American diaspora. His involvement is briefly described in Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

oversight, as Hitti was an authority on Arab culture and seems to have been willing to offer insights into Arab culture for the U.S. government. Second, Hitti stayed in Princeton during the war. He was therefore not exposed to government bureaucracy of the kind that had such a profound effect on the social scientists whose wartime service was examined in Chapter Two.[53] As a result, the change to his doxa was not as profound as the changes wrought on those previously discussed scholars. Nevertheless, it does seem true that, as ASTP instructor Farhat Ziadeh later wrote, "Professor Hitti later built upon the ASTP experience to found in Princeton the first program in Near Eastern studies in the country."[54] Hitti stated his own philosophy of the relationship between language-learning and general education in his memoir:

> For both educational purposes and national interest a foreign language in its written and spoken forms may be said to add a distinct dimension to him who masters it. Studying the literature of a people in the original is likely to increase sensitivity toward and understanding of the genius and the entire culture of that people. Reciting, with full cognizance of background, significance and implications of a couple of koranic formulas...may take a student deep into the heart of Islam more than reading a whole popular treatise on the subject. What is more, the study of a foreign language or religion provides a new perspective for viewing one's native tongue or faith. As it has been well said he who knows only his own religion does not know his religion well. Anthropologists assure us that a bilingual shifting in oral and written communication from one language to the other experiences--a fact to which I can testify--a mysterious, partial change in personality. They further claim that a person who feels at home in two cultures develops a stereoscopic view of the two.[55]

Hitti's experience with the ASTP program, and the positive reactions of many of his

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53. For these reasons Hitti's WWII experience is included here, rather than in Chapter Two.
54. Farhat Ziadeh, "Winds Blow Where Ships Do Not Wish to Go," in Naff, *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back*, 304.
55. Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, IRHC, 72-73.

students to his curriculum, influenced Hitti to keep language study as the core tenet of his evolving program. As Hitti put it in a letter to philanthropist William T. Grant in 1944:

> Our aim, in a sentence, is to build up in connection with Princeton a center for Oriental studies which will help our country to play its part more effectively and more intelligently as a great and leading power in the international affairs of the new era that is dawning upon us. Princeton is dedicated to liberal education and we do not propose to institute a business school or a foreign service school. What we have in mind is a center where those interested in business abroad, foreign service, missionary or educational or archeological work could acquire the necessary grounding in the prerequisites for a useful and happy career in a grounding in the languages, religions, history, social life and other aspects of the culture of the peoples of the East.[56]

Hitti's area studies model was therefore intended to use humanities-based coursework to evoke in its students positive feelings about the "culture of the peoples of the East." Those positive feelings could lead, then, to positive dealings with the peoples of the East. Hitti does not seem to have felt that he needed to be explicit about the purpose of his teaching, but that it would develop naturally through a love of languages and literature.

Hitti's decision to not more explicitly politicize his classroom teaching on the Middle East appears to have changed how he was perceived at the RF. RF officers like John Marshall seem to have become convinced that Hitti's curricular alterations were too subtle for the enormity of the area studies task at hand. This impression took several years to gather steam. For instance, Mortimer Graves, the head of the American Council of Learned Societies in 1946, wrote to John Marshall that the best path for Islamic and Arabic Studies was to integrate a program of study more fully into the undergraduate curriculum, rather than to keep it separate in its own department.[57] Hitti assured Marshall

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56. Philip Hitti to William T. Grant, November 16, 1944, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 5, Folder 2, IHRC.

57. Mortimer Graves to John Marshall, "Notes Basic to Consideration of the

that Princeton would make a broader effort to have discipline-based appointments whose expertise was Near Eastern studies. However, when Marshall visited Princeton in April 1946, representatives from History, Politics, and the School of International Affairs all proved unwilling to make appointments based on regional expertise, based on "the Princetonian view that the other departments of the University are primarily concerned with the tradition of Western Europe."[58] Accordingly, "Hitti is left with apparent responsibility for all appointments necessary for an adequate coverage of the Near East."[59] As chair of the department from 1944 to 1954, Hitti therefore had a great deal of autonomy in hiring faculty and developing courses. As of 1946, he also had dramatically increased amounts of funding from a number of foundations (especially Rockefeller) and oil companies. By all indications, many of the changes he advocated for were along the humanities-based lines that he had envisioned: more teaching of more languages, and a thorough grounding in the history and literature of the region. Over the course of several years, though, officials within the Rockefeller Foundation became increasingly unsatisfied with the changes Hitti had made.

RF officials were careful stewards of the funds they distributed, and visited regularly with program affiliates to check on the status of the grants they had made. Charles Fahs visited Princeton in November 1947 to meet with members of the department, including Turkish studies professor Walter L. Wright. They had "a general

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Development of Near Eastern Studies in the United States," May 20, 1946, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Sub-Series R, Box 408, Folder 3519.
58. John Marshall interview with Philip K. Hitti, April 9, 1946, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Sub-Series R, Box 408, Folder 3519.
59. John Marshall interview with Philip K. Hitti, April 9, 1946.

discussion on Near Eastern studies" that ranged from opinions about graduate students to faculty productivity to the state of Princeton's Near Eastern library resources. Fahs wrote that "Wright took the opportunity to make a strong defense of Professor Hitti, whom he described as greatly admired by his staff."[60] It is not clear from the interview notes why Wright felt the need to defend Hitti. Wright related that "foundation grants have given Hitti for the first time the opportunity to subdivide his responsibilities." Wright also made what Fahs "[assumed] to be a reference to the Jewish-Arab situation," in which Wright "said that Hitti had a sensitive appreciation of the fact that an American could say things in committee meetings which would not come appropriately from Hitti." Wright also "emphasized particularly Hitti's high prestige among Near Easterners as indicated by the deference shown to him by UN delegates from that area."[61] Fahs seems to have understood at that point that Hitti's program of study would take some time to be fully implemented. The sense, though, that Wright felt he needed to make a "strong defense" of Hitti gives the impression that Fahs had expressed some degree of skepticism about the accomplishments of the program.

Although Hitti maintained his own scholarly focus on studying the Middle East through a humanities-based lens, the department also changed along with the social scientific tendencies of the postwar era. In 1951, according to a departmental history, it became "a separate interdisciplinary program emphasizing the social sciences, administered by a committee of representatives from the departments of economics,

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60. Charles B. Fahs interview with Walter L. Wright, November 6, 1947, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Sub-Series R, Box 408, Folder 3519.
61. All quotes from Charles B. Fahs interview with Walter L. Wright, November 6, 1947.

history, and politics, as well as of the department of oriental languages and literatures. The Program undertook to meet the lack of teacher-scholars in the sociology and politics of the Near East by providing language study and research opportunities in the area for two social scientists."[62] Around that same time, individuals within the program also increased their work directly with the U.S. government. T. Cuyler Young, professor of Persian, was drafted for advisory service in the American Embassy at Tehran during the second semester of 1950-51, and returned there for the entire academic year 1951-52.[63]

Young's absence was relayed to John Marshall by Myron Bement Smith, an idiosyncratic scholar who was "an old friend" of Marshall's.[64] Marshall saw Smith "as someone who is ordinarily well informed on questions relating to Near Eastern studies."[65] Smith also passed on gossip that Marshall dutifully recorded in his meeting notes, thereby entering them into the permanent record of the RF's interactions with Princeton's area studies program, and allowing them to be circulated to other RF officials.[66] Smith told Marshall that "it is commonly understood that major developments in the Department of

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62. T. Cuyler Young and A.L. Udovitch, "Near Eastern Studies," in Alexander Leitch, ed. *A Princeton Companion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 338-341.
63. Young's presence in the American embassy in Tehran occurred just prior to the 1953 CIA coup in Iran, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. Young knew coup planner Donald Wilber, but there is no evidence that Young was involved with the coup.
64. Smith was a prolific collector, and his archive of Islamic Art is in the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian. He is a relatively minor figure, but, as a result of the insularity of his field, knew almost everyone in the field of Islamic Art from approximately 1920-1960. For more on Smith, see Matt Kohlstedt, "The Good Sumerian: Myron Bement Smith and the Islamic Archive," unpublished manuscript (copy of file with author).
65. John Marshall interview with Myron B. Smith, October 31, 1951, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Sub-Series R, Box 408, Folder 3520.
66. RF memos all had a 12-box grid at the top where other RF officials could initial once they had read the document. Marshall's memo about his meeting with Smith was also read by Charles Fahs and Joseph Willits.

Near Eastern Studies at Princeton are unlikely as long as Hitti is chairman. Hitti has never shown interest in the appointment of anyone to a senior post in the Department who was in any way qualified to rival Hitti's authority."[67] Getting even more personal, Smith reported to Marshall that "Hitti now gives everyone the impression of being tired and of taking it easy. Originality and initiative seem to have gone out of him. This S [Smith] hears directly from a graduate student in the Department who worked with Smith during the summer."[68] Smith also informed Marshall that "students in the Department" had complained about nepotism regarding Hitti's hiring of his son-in-law, Bayly Winder. In sum, there seems to have been a conscious effort by foundation officials to gather any information, no matter its source, about Hitti.[69]

Telling too is that in late 1951, Charles Fahs met with Princeton President Harold Dodds to complain that, based on his reading of the department's course offerings, "Hitti's interest [was] not in the present."[70] Both men agreed that Hitti "in real life" had a great deal of interest in "contemporary Near Eastern developments," but that interest had not translated into increased course offerings on contemporary issues.[71] But Princeton's

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67. John Marshall interview with Myron B. Smith, October 31, 1951.
68. John Marshall interview with Myron B. Smith, October 31, 1951.
69. When Marshall met with Hitti the next day, he used Smith's gossip as the partial basis for some of his questions during Hitti's official foundation interview, but without informing Hitti of the reason for his line of questioning. In Marshall's interview notes, the practice seems like academic entrapment. John Marshall interview with Philip Hitti, November 1, 1951, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Sub-Series R, Box 408, Folder 3520.
70. Charles B. Fahs interview with Harold Dodds, November 1, 1951, Rockefeller Foundation Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Sub-Series R, Box 408, Folder 3520.
71. I found some evidence, in the form of archived letters from former students, that Hitti did discuss current affairs in class, even in his courses that were ostensibly about the ancient world.

course listings from the late 1940s and early 1950s showed only a small handful of courses that were explicitly about the modern Middle East. RF officers based their opinions on those course listings, which were included in the annual reports Hitti sent to the foundation. Fahs and Dodds also discussed "possibilities for further development in humanistic work at Princeton," and Fahs recorded that Dodds "expressed full confidence in the emphasis which the Humanities division of the Foundation has placed on making the humanities more effective in contemporary life. According to D [Dodds], some of the modern language people at Princeton as a result of recent travel in Europe have come back convinced that more must be done to make a contribution to contemporary affairs."[72] The RF files all point to an increasing case being made, whether consciously or not, against Hitti's version of humanities-based study of the Middle East.

Fahs and Dodds seem to have interpreted Hitti's political activism and lack of teaching about the contemporary moment as incongruous, assuming that because Hitti was politically active, his classes would be as well. But Hitti apparently took great care to keep politics out of his classroom, choosing to stay grounded in what he perceived to be the objective field of history. Hitti's decision may have been influenced by his growing disenchantment with U.S. policies towards the Middle East, as well as the backlash he experienced when he spoke out against the partition of Palestine.[73] But he also maintained

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72. Charles B. Fahs interview with Harold Dodds, November 1, 1951.
73. Hitti's disagreement with Einstein is one of the more dramatic examples. He also received protests about some of his texts. For instance, in 1943 the anti-defamation league of B'Nai B'rith sent a letter to Princeton University Press calling Hitti's *The Arabs: A Short History* 'anti-Semitic,' an allegation that he guessed might have been prompted by his statement that "'the Arabians of the central part of the peninsula had preserved more of the physical, mental and linguistic features of the so-called Semitic people than the Jews.'" Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (In America), 1972,

throughout his career that history, which, to Hitti, could not be manipulated, because historical events were not up for debate, would ultimately persuade world opinion of the right of the Palestinians to Palestine. In any case, even while Hitti was still a well-known figure at Princeton, his mode of scholarship was seen as out-of-date. As Marshall gleaned from his November 1951 interview with Hitti, "the Department [of Near Eastern Studies] renders some service to the Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs but at present more or less on an informal basis."[74] Marshall added a parenthetical remark, though, that "possibly the fact that this kind of arrangement has not continued might be due to some honest doubt on the part of the School as to the qualifications of Hitti and his present colleagues for work in international affairs."[75] With Hitti's qualifications called in question, his influence over the department appears to have waned.

Hitti's version of influence never broadened in the way that he initially hoped. His desire to weigh in on matters of U.S.-Middle East relations remained strong throughout his career and into his retirement. As mentioned previously, Hitti espoused a philosophy of empathetic engagement with the Arab world, one based in promoting mutual understanding between different cultures. Even as he personally became more politically active, though, Hitti maintained that scholarship and teaching could be kept separate from political considerations. Hitti's insistence on the apolitical nature of scholarship became especially problematic for him during WWII, when the Zionist movement gained in strength and visibility. In 1943, after reading a book by Eliahu Ben-Horin that he thought

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Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, IHRC, 78.
74. John Marshall interview with Philip Hitti, November 1, 1951.
75. John Marshall interview with Philip Hitti, November 1, 1951.

rallied historical inaccuracies to promote a Zionist agenda, Hitti was compelled to write a review of the book for *The New York Times*.[76] In his review, Hitti emphasized the ridiculousness of many of the assertions made in the book. He cited contentions the author made that had little or no basis in historical fact. Hitti perceived history to be an uncontroversial series of events. Things happened. The historian recorded those events. While events could be considered to have been controversial, their occurrence was not. History was, to Hitti, a series of facts.

Hitti increasingly saw it as his role to advocate for the rights of Palestinians. He was able, in some instances, to leverage his position for political use. He was one of only two Arabs to testify before New York congressman Sol Bloom's 1944 committee on Jewish settlement in Palestine. Ussama Makdisi recounted of the episode that "Hitti was blunt. He opposed U.S. support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine on the grounds that the vast majority of the land's inhabitants were Muslim and Christian Arabs. A Jewish state could be imposed upon them only by force."[77] Hitti's "dissenting perspective was clearly exceptional, and exception was quickly taken to it. He was interrupted frequently" and "accused of misrepresenting the facts on Palestine."[78] Hitti's viewpoint was seemingly only accommodated insofar as it was a concession by the

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76. Philip K. Hitti Author Of "the Arabs", Review of “Bridge Between Two Worlds; *The Middle East: Crossroads Of History*. By Eliahu Ben-Horin. 248 pp. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. $3.,” *The New York Times*, September 12, 1943, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F70E12FF3F5C167B93C0A81782D85F478485F9&scp=16&sq=philip+hitti&st=p.

77. Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab relations, 1820-2001*, 182.

78. Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab relations, 1820-2001*, 182-83.

committee that there was such a thing as an Arab viewpoint. By all indications his recommendations were not seriously considered or debated. As Makdisi argued, "for Hitti, understanding and accommodating Arab views was essential for a coherent American policy in the Middle East and for the stability of the region." That U.S. viewpoint had to acknowledge the centrality of Palestine, which was "not simply a Holy Land for Christians and Jews, not simply the site of potential Western Christian atonement for the persecution of the Jews, and not simply an imaginary locale where scenes of the Bible could be reenacted by modern-day preachers. It was an actual place inhabited by real people."[79] Despite Hitti's growing sense that this viewpoint had been defeated, he continued to be an advocate for the rights of Palestinian Arabs.

Hitti also sought avenues by which he could more broadly influence public opinion on behalf of the Palestinian cause. For instance in the summer of 1946, Hitti wrote to Barclay Acheson, who was then the international ambassador for Reader's Digest, the American bastion of Republican internationalists and anticommunists,[80] that Hitti was "undertaking a trip to the Near East early in May under the auspices of the Cultural Division of the State Department...The object is to study ways and means by which cultural relations between the United States and that part of the world may be strengthened." He would "speak at colleges, investigate manuscripts and publications in which American scholars, libraries and universities may be interested and establish contacts with min-

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79. Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab relations, 1820-2001*, 183.

80. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 70. Klein briefly mentions Acheson, who is ultimately a very minor figure in her history of the middlebrow internationalism of Reader's Digest.

istries of education etc."[81] Hitti seems to have been making connections with journalistic outlets in the hope that they would serve as public relations outlets for his message.

Even though after the Second World War he became a prominent figure at Princeton, serving as the university's representative for visits from Saudi dignitaries in 1947 and the Shah of Iran in 1949, Hitti remained a prominent historian, but not, to his regret, a politically-influential one.[82] In 1954, Hitti retired from Princeton. He continued to be an active participant in conferences and publishing. He also continued to advocate for the rights of Palestinians. In a letter to his friend Emile Bustani, a longtime acquaintance through their joint affiliation with the AUB, Hitti expressed his faith in the power of educating an ignorant public. He wrote, "admittedly lack of knowledge on the part of Great Britain and the United States and failure to appreciate Arab points of view have led them to commit serious mistakes; the question then arises, what have the Arabs in the past done and what are they now doing to enlighten them?"[83] Hitti acknowledged that more had to be done to influence public opinion in Great Britain and the United States. Once public opinion was changed, Hitti asserted, democratic forces within those countries would begin to advocate for changed policies at the governmental level. Hitti felt that "official reports by their foreign service men are not the determining factors." He continued, "once we assume our rightful share in the responsibility for the calamities that befell us, we begin to learn our lesson from those unhappy experiences. Our role in enlightening

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81. Philip Hitti to Barclay Acheson, March 27, 1946, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 4, Folder 5, IHRC.
82. Correspondence between Mary Hitti and Philip Hitti, January 1, 1947 and November 23, 1949, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, IHRC.
83. Philip Hitti to Emile Bustani, January 10, 1955, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 9, Folder 10, IHRC. Subsequent quotations are from the same letter.

public opinion abroad about our rights, privileges, hopes, aspirations requires a long, undramatic, conscious, purposeful educational process involving time, money, patience, tact and scientific approach." That educational purpose, he felt, would not have to be extensive, due, he implied, to the rightousness of the cause. He wrote Bustani that "if our people in those crucial years of 1945 to 1948 had spent, through the proper media, $100,000.00—against the Zionist millions upon millions—possibly Palestine would have been saved and they would have been spared the humiliating, agonizing experience of the years since, to say nothing about the loss of property and wealth." Even though Hitti had not lost his faith in the belief that better knowledge (promoted in his scenario above through a public relations campaign) would create better policy outcomes for Palestinians, his approach proved to be inadequate to the level of influence that he desired.

Undeterred, Hitti continued to fight injustices where he perceived them. When State Department official Edwin Wright was accused of anti-Semitism in 1956, Hitti wrote a letter on his behalf to one of his contacts in the State Department, asserting that he had "known Mr. Wright since his graduate school days at Columbia University, followed his career with interest and pride in the political field of your Department, as well as in the Middle East Institute of the Foreign Service School, and consider him one of the more loyal Americans, a faithful public servant and a scholar with first-hand knowledge of the Arab world in general." Hitti connected criticism of Wright to what he perceived to be a broader campaign to defame anyone who criticized the "Zionists", writing that "if there were more experts like him in government service, our country would not - I dare-say - be in the mess in which it finds itself in its relation to the Near East...The charge of

anti-Semitism, as you may have observed, is the usual one brought by Zionists against anyone who dare criticize them."[84] Again, Hitti articulated his faith that teaching students in the humanities of the East would spread to other institutions and thereby create a kinder, gentler version of U.S. foreign policy. Perhaps by the mid-1950s he was becoming disabused of that notion. Not only were institutions like the Rockefeller Foundation less interested in funding humanities-based programs, there was also a broader sense that social science was the way in which the world's problems would be solved. That trend towards an increased focus on social science would greatly influence the field of Middle East area studies.

Hitti maintained that the broader implication of removing humanities from foreign relations was to remove empathy from the idea of foreign relations. Because "objective" data came to be valued more highly than assessments of culture, scholars based in the humanities came to have less influence in foreign policy concerns. However, Chapter Four will demonstrate that objectivity was frequently claimed more easily than it was actually achieved. Scholars who sought to influence U.S. foreign policy created a sliding scale of objectivity. Moreover, an emerging ideology of pro-Americanism bolstered those scholars who advanced viewpoints that adhered to the assertion of American power and influence in the Middle East, and the protection of business interests. In this manner, a position that promoted stability – stability to bolster against the threat of Communism, but also to protect the business interests of the United States and its allies – was perceived to be highly valuable.

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84. Philip Hitti to William M. Rountree, November 24, 1956, Philip Khuri Hitti Collection, Box 6, Folder 1, IHRC.

Humanities-based scholarship, with its attendant focus on the messiness of motivations and human relations, could not compete with the social sciences when it came to wielding influence with policymakers. Although the humanities and social sciences are both concerned with the complexity of human relations, the version of Middle Eastern-focused humanities promoted by Hitti at Princeton tended to be less prescriptive and more descriptive. Especially during the early Cold War, many social scientists sought to develop a holistic model of mankind that could predict and direct behavior. Policymakers may have perceived it to be more difficult to derive policy from humanities-based scholarship. Instead, many influential thinkers began to formulate ideas that they thought would simplify and standardize foreign relations. That method tended to treat countries as individuals, either personified by a single, charismatic leader, or through the lens of 'national character.' Social scientists were extraordinarily influential in propounding the idea of national character, which sought to distill the entire population of a country into a single entity, the better to divine how that entity might act. National character has ultimately been shown to be a fallacy, but it was (and in some cases continues to be) a highly useful one. Although some social scientists sought to elevate national character beyond crude stereotypes, in the Middle East, few were able to do so. In the short term, this flaw in the system was obviated by the ability of the United States to create its own reality through clandestine operations, as well as through military and economic muscle. In the longer term, one result of the reliance on national character was that foreign policy experts became less attuned to conflict within Middle Eastern societies. They were therefore less able to anticipate change within those societies, a

theme which arose in the failure of foreign policy analysts to foresee change within the societies they supposedly were experts on.[85]

In terms of the impact that this shift had on institutions of higher learning, it seems that the Rockefeller Foundation's desired vision of area studies was influenced by Joseph Willits's maxim that, "on principle, foundations do not follow, especially when it is clear as in this case that the 'parade is on.'"[86] The influence of foundations might explain why area studies models changed from their initial attempts to integrate within preexisting departmental structures, to a mid-1950s notion that foundations should fund separate, semi-autonomous entities at universities to perform area studies scholarship. That later-adopted model had the effect of releasing scholars from previous disciplinary restrictions. The consequences of that maneuver were far-reaching, creating, during the 1950s, area studies as a field outside of the disciplines. Inasmuch as this extra-disciplinarity provided scholars with the impetus to move beyond established modes of scholarship, it was a bold move. Middle East area studies centers at Harvard University, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and the University of California at Berkeley, among others, all adhered to this new model. The emergence of the Ford Foundation onto the area studies scene in the early 1950s radically changed the focus and goals of Middle East area studies in the United States. Scholars such as Timothy Mitchell, Zachary Lockman, and Francis X. Sutton have ably explored the sizable imprint that the new regime of social scientific understanding had on the field, efforts made

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85. See for example Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).
86. Willits to Stevens, "Area Studies," July 26, 1944.

possible by Ford Foundation and Title VI funding.[87]

The program officers of the Rockefeller Foundation were insistent that centers of regional focus were essential for the study of various regions of the world. This insistence seems to have been most basically a Henry Lucian desire to shape the postwar world as the "American Century." The RF, aligned as it was with the elite internationalists of New York City, was deeply embroiled in the kinds of conversations and conferences where many influential people argued, apparently convincingly, that the United States would have to take a more activist role in the postwar world.

The aim in this chapter has been threefold: to connect the work that academics did during WWII to postwar attempts to establish Middle East area studies; to demonstrate that early attempts to form area studies programs were shaped by personal, as well as political, forces; and to establish that the humanities-based study of the Middle East was eclipsed by social scientific studies because of the widespread perception that the humanities were not actionable. Foundations, universities, and individual scholars would, during the early 1950s and beyond, become enamored of a social scientific approach that promoted actionability and, in the eyes of some, additional real-world relevance.[88] It is not a given that a humanities-based approach to the Middle East would have resulted in

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87. Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*; Zachary Lockman, "Critique from the Right: The Neo-conservative Assault on Middle East Studies," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 5, no. 1 (2005): 63-110; Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge*, Francis X. Sutton, "Nation-Building in the Heyday of the Classic Development Ideology: Ford Foundation Experience in the 1950s and 1960s," in Francis Fukuyama, ed. *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 42-63..

88. W. W Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, a Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1960); Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*.

"better" scholarship – in fact, the same kinds of generalizations might have resulted. Rather, it was the flattening out of difference across wide swaths of the Middle East and North Africa, facilitated in part by broader trends in social science and politics in general, that influenced the civilizational view of the Middle East that came to dominate the U.S. government and academy.

Chapter Four

Donald Wilber was a CIA operative who helped to plan the 1953 American-British coup in Iran that ousted the democratically-elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq, and restored the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to power.[1] In 1954, Wilber wrote the official agency debrief on the coup, and continued to work for the agency until 1969. While working for the CIA, he was also a scholar who published extensively on Persian art, architecture, and history, including, from 1948 to 1981, nine editions of a textbook called *Iran, Past and Present*. Wilber was a scholar and a spy, yet his readers (and co-authors, and colleagues) did not know about his clandestine work. Wilber was therefore able to write the very history in which he had covertly participated. In other words: history written by the planner.[2]

Wilber was not able to compartmentalize these two parts of his life. His two initial, pre-coup editions of his *Iran, Past and Present* book, a text meant for a broad audience that was also used in college courses, were written based on his experience working for the Office of Strategic Services in Iran during the war. In that role, he spied on Soviet activity in Iran using the cover of doing archaeological work. His previous archaeological work, done in various Middle Eastern countries during the 1930s, was

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1. Ervand Abrahamian, "The 1953 Coup in Iran," *Science & Society* 65, no. 2 (2001); Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, eds., *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004); Nikki R. Keddie and Mark J. Gasiorowski, eds., *Neither East Nor West: Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, N.J: J. Wiley & Sons, 2003).

2. Wilber's heavily censored autobiography sketches out the broad strokes of his life. Other details have been culled from a variety of sources. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*.

what got qualified him for the OSS job during the war.[3] In other words, Wilber was not a spy one moment, a scholar the next, but rather a scholar/spy.[4] Yet his scholarly work is still sometimes cited in academic texts on Iran today without acknowledging the role he had in influencing the very history he recorded. In histories of the coup, he has been dismissed as a "gentleman spy," or, in the words of one scholar, praised as a "competent historian" who would not fabricate his internal memo on the coup.[5] He may not have fabricated his work for the CIA, but his report did reflect the biases that he had developed through his previous scholarly roles.[6] In order to better understand the relationship between scholarship and government action during the early Cold War, this chapter reassesses Wilber's scholarly work and academic legacy in light of his CIA affiliation.

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3. As we saw in Chapter Two, Wilber was one of many social scientists who were recruited for the U.S. war effort during WWII. Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Geoffrey Gorer are among the more well-known cultural anthropologists who were brought into the U.S. information services to formulate policies towards peoples of various regions. In the Middle East, however, there were few Americans who had studied living peoples. There were, though, a number of archaeologists who, like Wilber had studied bones, bodies, or buildings. Wilber brought a perspective to his clandestine work that was heavily influenced by his archaeological and architectural work, which studied the ancient glories of Middle Eastern societies. He contrasted those past achievements with what he saw as the decrepit modern condition of those same regions, especially Iran.
4. There was precedent for deploying a practicing archaeologist as a spy going back as long as the discipline existed. T.E. Lawrence was the paradigmatic example, but there were American precedents as well. See Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Archaeologist Was a Spy: Sylvanus G. Morley and the Office of Naval Intelligence* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003). Later, suspicions about the practice bedeviled practicing archaeologists, which both Wilson and Coon acknowledged in their memoirs.
5. Mark J. Gasiorowski, "What's New on the Iran 1953 Coup in the New York Times Article (April 16, 2000, Front Page) and the Documents Posted on the Web." (2000): accessed November 1, 2014, http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/.
6. Wilber's leaked report was published in book form in 2006. Donald N. Wilber, *Regime Change in Iran: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran* (Nottingham, England: Spokesman, 2006).

By rereading the various editions of his *Iran, Past and Present* text, we can see that Wilber made numerous changes between the editions. Knowing what we know now about Wilber's work with the CIA, we can interpret his textual, edition-by-edition changes as having been made due to his work with the CIA. Whether or not he was asked, encouraged, or coerced to make those changes, is currently impossible to know. Nevertheless, it is clear that his published assessment of the Iranian people changed over time; his assessments were influenced by his work with the CIA; and that those altered assessments tracked closely with changing perceptions of Iranians that were occurring within the U.S. government.

This chapter brings his two careers together by examining his clandestine political work against his public scholarly work. Wilber's scholarly work changed over time as he sought ways to bolster the legitimacy of the Shah's rule. In contrast to other contemporary scholars who wrote on Iran, post-coup, Wilber emphasized the long-term stability of the Iranian monarchy, as well as the image of the Shah as a modernizer who was bringing Iran up to Western standards. From edition to edition of his book, Wilber changed the way he depicted the Iranian people, so that before the coup he was confident they would continue to modernize through education as part of a transformation to a democratic monarchy; whereas after the coup he described them as intransigent and capable of change only under the firm hand of a strong leader.

His depictions of Iran also contributed to a widespread perception that the Shah's rule would continue indefinitely, a view that was dramatically shown to be false in the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79. Scholar Charles Kurzman has described the Islamic Revolution

as "unthinkable" because so few people anticipated its occurrence.[7] Wilber's writings, while not determinative of the phenomenon, are demonstrative of the artifice of stability that was both consciously and subconsciously built up to bolster the Shah's increasingly fragile hold on power. Wilber's work was one of the earliest contributions to what became a large body of disparate works of foreign policy analysis, journalism, and outright paeans to the Shah's beneficial role as a stalwart supporter of American policy in the Middle East. That perception held strong even as reports of unrest filtered out over the course of his reign.[8] Post-coup, Wilber was in a unique position to bolster the Shah's rule, as Wilber understood how precarious that rule was.[9] Ironically, Wilber's 1954 report warned against the possibility of "blowback" in the case of CIA-sponsored foreign

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7. Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).
8. There are a number of negative assessments of the Shah's reign. Saikal's was one of the first to appear after the Islamic Revolution, and he has recently provided a revised introduction. Works by Ali Ansari and Ervand Abrahamian demonstrate how precarious the Shah's rule was at different times, although both scholars benefit from hindsight. Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Ali M Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921: The Pahlavis and After* (London ; New York: Pearson Education, 2003); Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1980).
9. Wilber was merely one of many analysts who added to the perception in American policy circles that the Shah's rule was secure. The American relationship with the Shah is mentioned frequently in U.S.-Middle East foreign policy texts. David R. Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter With Radical Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect : Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). Today, the Islamic Revolution is seen as the ultimate example of blowback, and is a continuing source of tension between the two countries. It is, though, an incident far better remembered by Iranians than by Americans.

interventions.[10] Analyzing Wilber's various writings, including the full body of his published scholarly work; his memoir; his pre-coup writings; and his declassified CIA reports, offers a unique window into one individual's efforts to pull a cloak over the dagger of American actions in Iran.

Wilber's story provides one example of how scholarship on the Middle East became weaponized during the early Cold War. Knowledge of the Middle East became, for some U.S.-based scholars, a political project with specific goals and explicit uses. Although the uses of knowledge of the Middle East have been the topic of extended scholarly analyses, few studies have looked at the particular ramifications of situation-specific scholarly assertions.[11] The example that Donald Wilber set as a scholar whose writings were inextricably intertwined with his clandestine activities is an extreme one. Nevertheless, he was hardly alone in shaping his scholarship according to desired policy outcomes.

Wilber's writings on Iran changed relatively little over the 33 years between publication of his first and ninth editions of *Iran, Past and Present*. Both the changes and the consistencies reveal Wilber's willingness to bend his task of historical interpretation to serve the purposes of the government he worked for and the one he helped install. Wilber the scholar was able to use his academic voice to make an extended argument for

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10. Most scholars credit Wilber's 1954 report with coining the term 'blowback' as referring to the geopolitical repercussions of clandestine actions. James Risen, "Word for Word/ABC's of Coups; Oh, What a Fine Plot We Hatched. (and Here's What to Do the Next Time).," *The New York Times* Week in Review (2000). See also Chalmers A. Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

11. For an example of the former, see Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967*.

the longevity and legitimacy of the Pahlavi dynasty. Wilber's textbooks were obviously not the sole means of support behind the Shah's quarter-century of rule between 1953 and 1979. But his role in the coup needs to be closely examined precisely because he was able to, over the course of nine editions of a textbook, clandestinely offer support for the very actions which, unbeknownst to his audience, he had a hand in enacting. And while Wilber's example is an extreme one, it is precisely his mode of national character analysis that even today lends itself toward sweeping judgments of societies that elide conflict and the possibility of change in complex societies.

Before going into more detail about Wilber's work for the CIA, it is worth asking why some individuals, such as Henry Field, did not continue working for the government after WWII, either directly or as a member of an interdisciplinary Center for Middle East Studies. As we saw in Chapter Three, some of the most promising initial attempts to create Middle East area studies centers at the University of Chicago and Princeton in the late 1940s and early 1950s experienced false starts and partial implementation. When later efforts were made, for instance at Harvard, government ties were made more explicit. As Don Babai has noted, "the pursuit of knowledge about the region [the Middle East] was not treated as an end in itself. Rather, it was in terms of the strategic interests of the United States that the foremost rationale for a Middle Eastern studies center was framed."[12] (The explicit knowledge-for-strategic-interests rationale was even more foregrounded by the 1950s than it had been in the proposals put forth by Wilson and Hitti in the previous chapter.) As Babai pointed out, Harvard's Committee on International and

12. Don Babai, *Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future* (Cambridge, Mass: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, 2004), 3.

Regional Studies began their 1953 proposal for funding a Middle East area studies center by noting: "Our international commitment to counter the Soviet threat in the Middle East, the fundamental importance of Middle-eastern [sic] oil to our economy, and the continuing crisis in the area make it imperative that American universities turn their attention to this vitally important but hitherto relatively neglected region.'" The program would "train selected men for service in private industry and in government."[13] Field had already worked for the U.S. government. It would have seemed natural to continue that working relationship. He did not leave his wartime experiences with a particular aversion to having worked for the government. In his voluminous memoirs, he did not mention any hesitation at having worked with the government, the way Lawrence Doob and John Wilson did.

As discussed previously, Field was a physical anthropologist who participated in both archaeological expeditions as well as craniometry. As was discussed in Chapter One, by WWII physical anthropology had been displaced in the academy by an explicitly antiracist mode of cultural anthropology spearheaded by Franz Boas and his acolytes.[14] It

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13. Committee on International and Regional Studies, "Proposal for a Program in Middle Eastern Studies," March 26, 1953, Records of President Pusey, UAI 5.169 (Middle Eastern Studies, 1953-1954), Box 20, Harvard University Archives, p. 1, quoted in Babai, *Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future*, 3.

14. Boas is often seen as a, if not the, principal figure in changing the anthropological conception of race. There were many other contributors to that change. See, for instance, Lee D Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For a comprehensive review of the changes in cultural anthropology, see Tracy Teslow, *Constructing Race: The Science of Bodies and Cultures in American Anthropology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Teslow's exemplary work looks at museum exhibits as well as anthropological publications, including work done by Ruth Benedict for the Office of War Information, which later became *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword; Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston:

is possible that Field was marginalized by his adherence to an academic model that was so out of step with contemporary norms. (Ultimately his academic standing could only be a partial explanation, as fellow physical anthropologist Carleton Coon continued working for the government, which will be explored more later this chapter.) After WWII, Field continued traveling and publishing, but he was often self-funded and privately or self-published. He maintained a "fixation on the 'story of man' broadly conceived in space and time, and in the racial story of man in particular, [which] predated his work for the Field Museum and guided his research program before, during, and after his tenure at the museum."[15] That fixation may have kept him from further pursuing any connection with the U.S. government. Field may also have exaggerated his government connections in the first place, making him an unlikely candidate to maintain those connections in the post-war world.[16] Lastly, as explored in Chapter Two, Field may have felt some sense of futility that the enormous M Project never received the recognition he felt it was due.

The details of Coon's postwar trajectory are more difficult to parse. Like Field, he continued to adhere to an explicitly racial (if not racist) mode of physical anthropology.[17] After the war, he wrote a history of the OSS, and served as a scientific consultant to the

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Houghton Mifflin company, 1946).

15. Teslow, *Constructing Race: The Science of Bodies and Cultures in American Anthropology*, 87-94.

16. For questions about Field's credibility, see Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 124-25.

17. Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 204. Haraway wrote that Coon "showed confusion, common in physical anthropology until much later, about how populational analysis might undermine romantic racial and cultural teleologies...Coon's great chain of being remained bound to a romantic typological approach...Coon's later racial taxonomies changed little from his 1939 account."

CIA in 1948, 1949, and 1950.[18] The termination of his consultancy in January 1951 does not seem to have dampened his enthusiasm for working directly with the government, as evidenced by his later work as a photographer for the U.S. Air Force in 1956-57.[19] Somewhat surprisingly, given his network of colleagues and contacts in the academy and government, he was not involved with the creation of any of the new Middle East area studies centers, which, as we saw in Chapter Three, were increasingly seen as the locations where academics could make their knowledge useful to governmental purposes.[20] Coon, building off his WWII experience with current events, continued to publish analyses of the political situation in North Africa and the Middle East.[21] Coon was told by "one retired CIA man...that during his tour of duty in the Middle East he carried with him only

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18. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 244-45.
19. Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon*, 298-320.
20. Coon returned to Harvard after the war, but left in 1948 to become a curator of the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania. He gave the impression that he left Harvard of his own accord, yet he also called it "not a simple departure, but a second divorce." (He and his first wife had also divorced.) Coon described one postwar meeting about area studies: "One night in the Columbia Faculty Club in New York, a big meeting was held to discuss the problem of area-study programs, not just in anthropology, but in all pertinent disciplines. The idea was that no one university could afford to cover the world. One would take Black Africa, another China, another India, and still another the Middle East. The finger was pointed at me for the Middle East, although Philip Hitti already had a functioning Middle Eastern program at Princeton." He seems to have been involved in early discussions around area studies, but ultimately did not join an organized center. Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon*, 204.
21. Coon contributed the North Africa chapter to a book called *Most of the World*. Interestingly, this volume had separate chapters for North Africa and The Near East. Carleton S. Coon, "The Near East" in Ralph Linton, ed. *Most of the World; the Peoples of Africa, Latin America and the East Today.* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1949), 405-60. The Near East section was co-written by a former OWI officer named James Batal. Batal published some of OWI writings in a slim postwar volume. James Batal, *Assignment: Near East.* (New York: Friendship Press, 1950). Batal was an operative who expressed frustration with the stifling bureaucracy of the OWI.

the Bible and *Caravan*" referring to Coon's 1951 book.[22] Coon was flattered, and he later wrote "at least I tried to continue serving my country, which means more than any religious denomination does to me."[23] But Coon himself may have stumbled upon why his viewpoint in *Caravan* was incompatible with U.S. strategic aims in the Middle East:

> In the first chapter I specifically set the time of the Middle Eastern cultural level covered at the zenith of the Abbasid caliphates in Baghdad and of the caliphate of Cordoba in Spain, both having peaked around A.D. 800. My point, conveyed in the final chapter, was that modern Middle Easterners, however westernized, have their roots in the civilization of the period specified, and that we westerners must take this fact into consideration while dealing with them. This warning might have been heeded during the crises of the 1970s and 1980s had *Caravan* still been available.[24]

The dominant viewpoint of postwar modernization was becoming, by the early 1950s, more dedicated to the idea that other peoples could be modernized and therefore westernized. Coon's ideas of permanent racialized hierarchies and Middle Eastern resistance to westernization were not simply out of step with academic thought, they were out of step with the role that U.S. policymakers saw for the United States in the world, as strict racial hierarchies would preclude the possibility of uplift through modernization policies. It seems plausible that Coon's tendency to be bombastic also contributed to the termination of his CIA consulting, although the exact reasons are not known.[25]

Coon's most lasting impact may have been a document he wrote in 1945, titled "The World after the War: OSS-SOE, the Invisible Empire." David Price has aptly de-

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22. Coon, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East.*
23. Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon*, 227.
24. Coon, *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon*, 226.
25. On Coon's combative personality and its effect on academic debates later in his career, see John P. Jackson, Jr., “”In Ways Unacademical”: The Reception of Carleton S. Coon’s the Origin of Races,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 34, no. 2 (2001).

scribed this document as capturing "Coon's confidence in the usefulness of intelligence operations and his vision of a natural role for academics in intelligence. It also shows Coon advocating for America to increasingly rely on the OSS's skills (or the CIA's) to maintain a 'secret empire' in the postwar period."[26] In the document, which Coon's editor chose to leave out of his wartime memoir *A North Africa Story*, Coon envisioned a role for the "versatile and bold individuals" of the American and British intelligence agencies to serve as "a body of men whose task it is to throw out the rotten apples as soon as the first spots of decay appear. If such a body had existed in 1933 its members could have recognized the potential danger of Hitler and his immediate disciples and have killed this group." Coon's apparent faith in the power of an extra-governmental group of mercenaries to police the world indicates the extent to which Coon believed in the inerrant ability of the U.S. government (or intellectual affiliates of the government, such as himself) to effectively regulate the world.

Donald Wilber shared a number of characteristics with Field and Coon. What Field and Coon seem to have lacked that Wilber had was a dedication to modernization. As physical anthropologists, Field and Coon expressed an idea of separately-developed races. Accordingly, neither seems to have seen much utility to development schemes. As we will see, Wilber did believe in development – or, at least, he was willing to profess a belief in development in his published writings. From an admittedly small sample size, then, it seems as though the qualifications for bridging between government and academia were to both be willing to work for the government, but also to be willing to adhere

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26. Price, *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, 255.

to some of the U.S. government's ideological convictions. Wilber was willing to commit to what James C. Scott has termed "a high-modernist ideology." To Scott, that ideology is "best conceived as a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws. It originated, of course, in the West, as a by-product of unprecedented progress in science and industry."[27] In Wilber's case, his commitment to high-modernist ideology was supplemented by his ideological commitments to anti-Communism and pro-Americanism. But lest I give the impression that Wilber was a hopeless ideologue who was the intellectual offspring of Richard Nixon and Henry Luce, it was just as important that Wilber was a good soldier. He does not seem to have questioned the directives he was given. He executed them faithfully. If he seems to be subjected in this chapter to a particularly harsh analysis for his perfidy, it is not because he is solely culpable for the heinous actions of the CIA. Rather, Wilber was an agglomeration of the characteristics that were most useful to the CIA at that time. In an era that valued academic knowledge of a certain type, Wilber fit the bill.

Wilber confirmed as much in his history of the coup:

> The operation was a time of testing for the US principal agents and for those of the station agents who were committed to the effort. All these agents did a superb job. It is easy to say that they did such a good job because they were not merely carrying out orders but were heart and soul in favor of the operation. This is true, but the fact must not be overlooked that in recruiting these individuals over a con-

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27. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

> siderable period of time the station wittingly selected people whose basic ideologies were in accord with US policy toward Iran and the USSR. This factor should not be overlooked in future recruitment in Iran.[28]

Wilber, in addition to complimenting his own performance in the coup, here highlights how integral he perceived his unquestioned allegiance to the United States to be in terms of the way that he executed his role in the coup. He ascribed the same importance to the allegiance of the rest of his confederates.

We have already seen the process by which the ideas that Wilber generated on his first archaeological expeditions to Egypt developed into full-blown ideologies during his WWII service. After the war, Wilber returned to his family in Princeton. He taught part time at art historian Arthur Upham Pope's Asia Institute in New York City, although his "income tax returns for 1946 and 1947 show no sums received from that source," so he was not particularly active as a teacher.[29] He wrote up some of the research that he had gathered into the first edition of his textbook, *Iran, Past and Present*. Although he "had not the slightest intention of going back to the intelligence field...in the spring of 1947 friends of OSS days asked me to come to Washington for meetings. They persuaded me." He joined the Central Intelligence Group in May 1947, and when that organization became the Central Intelligence Agency in November 1948, he became part of that fledgling group. Until his retirement from the agency in November 1969, he held a variety of titles that indicated his half-time availability, "not including the duration of any special assignments abroad."[30]

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28. Wilber, *Regime Change in Iran: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, 66.
29. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 148.
30. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 149.

Although Wilber was evidently an ardent anti-Communist even during WWII, while the Soviet Union and the United States were allies, he was slower to embrace some of the tenets of modernization theory. In his memoir, Wilber wrote that he:

> was impressed more than ever with the virtues of the Persian villagers. Year in and year out one could read about the poverty-stricken peasants of Iran, the blame for their plight being placed on the state. In all my travels, often to places remote from highways and towns, I saw villages without poverty and filth, and met friendly people. I suspect that those who wrote about the plight of the peasants had never visited a village...villages are described in some length in my *Iran Past and Present*, where I stress the problems of integration in a modernizing society.[31]

Wilber seems to have embraced modernization at some point, as he espoused a belief in the importance of modernization in different editions of *Iran, Past and Present*. Whether he was expressing a disingenuous opinion in his textbook, or had simply lost track of his shifting positions by the time he wrote his memoir, it is difficult to say. Nevertheless, Wilber's assertion that he was attuned to the "problems of integration in a modernizing society" does not necessarily hold up to scrutiny when looked at in concert with his other published texts.

It is worth noting that American perspectives on Iran were not monolithic during the early Cold War. While Wilber stressed the importance of continuity through strong leadership because of the difficulties of ruling intransigent Persians, which in turn necessitated modernization through Western tutelage, a set of ideas which became dominant in American policy circles, other scholars wrote about Iran in different terms. William S. Haas, who worked as an adviser to the Ministry of Education in Tehran before he wrote his 1946 book, observed a changing, dynamic political scene, with an active

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31. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions*, 139.

public sphere emerging in the form of a reform-minded press that was gaining prominence after years of repression under Shah Reza Pahlavi. Haas depicted the press as a vanguard force of an "awakening political interest" within the country, which was a "promising symptom of the interest in and the will to an independent political life."[32] In other words, Haas believed that the populous of Iran was not only ready for democracy, but was also capable of creating its own version. For Haas, the key to Iran's development was limiting outside influence, writing, "Iran is definitely on the right path, and what she needs is independence, peace, and friendly co-operation with other nations."[33] Significantly, he did not see the Shah as one continuous monarchy with 2500 years of history, but rather as a series of leaders who wrested power from its previous holder in violent and destructive ways. Iranians would be able to affect their own change, and would indeed be best equipped to do so if freed from foreign domination and the yoke of monarchy.

The first edition of Wilber's textbook, *Iran, Past and Present*, was published in 1948. The second, with some textual changes and an additional chapter titled "Iran's Future," was published in 1950. Wilber's perspective in the 1950 edition was that for Iran to develop, its society could retain some Iranian characteristics, but had to mostly adopt Western ones, asserting that "national survival [depended] upon adopting the techniques, methods, and attitudes of the most successful nations."[34] He wrote, "Persians have always been marked individualists, but they are now moving towards group

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32. William S. Haas, *Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), 227.
33. Haas, *Iran*, 241.
34. Donald Newton Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 93.

cooperation and collective responsibility." Their encounter with the West had caused "a feeling of frustration and helplessness" but Wilber insisted, "a new kind of education…will provide a thorough grounding in the techniques of a mechanical civilization while still retaining the basic elements of the Iranian cultural tradition."[35] This attitude is akin to what Christina Klein called "a global imaginary of integration," a Cold War-era ideology that advocated winning over new adherents to the American way of life through positivity rather than coercion.[36] Wilber, unlike Haas, did not believe that Iranians could reform *and* retain their traditions, but would have to assume the trappings of Western cultures in order to advance their standing in the world order. In 1950, though, he was in favor of relatively benign measures such as education, guided by American advisers, to achieve Iranian progress.[37]

Of these two texts, Haas's and Wilber's, Wilber's was more widely read. One of the possible reasons for its positive reception is that it received a more favorable review in *The Middle East Journal*, the then-new journal that was covering Middle Eastern affairs. Both Haas's and Wilber's books were reviewed by Princeton professor T. Cuyler Young who, like Wilber, had worked for the OSS during WWII. Young pointed out a

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35. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1950), 94.
36. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, 23.
37. Another foil for Wilber's work is Afif Tannous, a Lebanese-born U.S. Department of Agriculture employee who implemented Point 4 programs in the Middle East during the postwar period. He was extremely attuned to local needs and used a bottom-up approach throughout his career. For some examples of his work, see Afif I. Tannous, "Social Change in an Arab Village," *American Sociological Review* 6, no. 5 (1941); Afif I. Tannous, "Group Behavior in the Village Community of Lebanon," *The American Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 2 (1942); Afif I. Tannous, *Village Roots and Beyond: Memoirs of Afif I. Tannous (Written at Intervals Between 1972 and 1985)* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2004).

number of seemingly minor issues in Haas's book. On the other hand, Young called Wilber's "the best short summary of Iran's two and a half millennia of history yet to appear in print."[38] Wilber benefited from his close connections to the other members of this relatively small field. To be sure, other factors may have influenced the books' respective receptions, but it is possible that their preexisting personal and professional relationship influenced Young's review.

Between the publication of the second and third editions of his text, Wilber spent time in Afghanistan and Iran for the CIA under the auspices of preparing texts for publication. He was likely monitoring Soviet activity there. He spent the first six months of 1952 in Tehran, and then in May of 1953 was sent to Cyprus to meet with a British agent to prepare plans for the overthrow of Mossadeq, then the Prime Minister, who had nationalized Iranian oil. Mossadeq had come to power as Prime Minister in an election in 1951. Technically Mossadeq served under the Shah, but the Majlis (Parliament) held most of the power during that era. From 1941 to 1953 Mohammad Reza was seen as a weak leader who, in Wilber's words, "reigned instead of ruled." He was largely a figurehead monarch who left most of the decisions to the parliament, which is why he was still officially, but not effectively, in power when the 1953 coup occurred.[39]

In August 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency, with the help of British

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38. T. Cuyler Young, "Review: Iran, By William S. Haas," *Middle East Journal* 1, no. 1 (1947); T. Cuyler Young, "Review: Iran: Past and Present, By Donald N. Wilber," *Middle East Journal* 3, no. 2 (1949).

39. Ervand Abrahamian has recounted the history of the coup in several publications. His 2013 book is a tremendously useful and compelling analysis of his most recent findings. Ervand Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations* (New York and London: The New Press, 2013).

intelligence, facilitated a coup in Iran that overthrew Mossadeq, instated Iranian General Fazlollah Zahedi as Prime Minister, and reasserted the primacy of the Shah. In 1978-79, the Islamic Revolution in Iran overthrew that same Shah and created the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the 26 years between those two regime changes, the Shah's rule was bolstered by financial, military, and rhetorical support from the United States. Threatened by assassination attempts and the prospect of his overthrow by nationalist forces, the Shah poured resources into his secret police, the SAVAK, which sought out and punished dissidents. He exercised authoritarian rule over his country, made non-substantive gestures towards democracy, and appropriated a great deal of Iran's oil wealth for his own personal use. He was deeply unpopular but also widely feared within his own country.

While he ruled, the Shah was lauded by American presidents and policymakers for his "modernizing" impulses and his role in maintaining "stability" in the Middle East. Iran, under his rule, was one of Henry Kissinger's "pillars" of the Middle East, providing a steady supply of oil to the American marketplace and a staunchly anti-Communist ally in central Asia. How one man could embody these contradictory drives – to both modernize (change) his society and provide stability (stasis) – required some Cold War sleight of hand. The Shah's identity as a source of modernizing stability had to be constructed through discursive strategies that attempted to reconcile the irreconcilable. Wilber was an early force in this rhetorical formation.

Charles Kurzman has made a powerful argument for the factors that blinded U.S. policymakers and even dissident Iranians to the possibility that the Shah could be overthrown. Kurzman asserted that "according to social-scientific explanations for

revolution, it [the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979] shouldn't have happened when it did, or at all."[40] Unquestioned U.S. support, coupled with the Shah's authoritarian rule, drove even close observers of Iran to the conclusion that the Shah would rule in perpetuity. As Kurzman wrote, "a seemingly stable regime, led by a monarch with decades of experience, buoyed by billions of dollars in oil exports, girded with a fearsome security apparatus and the largest military in the region, and favored by the support of the world's most powerful countries—how could such a regime fall?"[41] Kurzman quoted a number of contemporaneous analyses from agents at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department, none of which thought the growing protests against the Shah were anything more than a temporary thorn in the side of the Shah. Gary Sick, a State Department analyst on the Iran desk during the late 1970s, has referred to the "group think" that permeated the department at the time.[42] There was, however, another force that bolstered widespread belief that the Shah of Iran would continue to rule that country indefinitely. That force was Wilber's scholarship that voiced confidence in the Shah, even as its author was aware of the very conditions that would eventually contribute to the Shah's downfall.

Scholars debate the degree to which the coup was instigated solely through Western treachery or merely by exploiting preexisting Iranian discontent with

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40. Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*, viii.
41. Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*, 1.
42. Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1985). Other authors have suggested that CIA station officers and Foreign Service officers were more attuned to the weakness of the Shah's regime, or at least aware of its undemocratic practices and heavy reliance on the SAVAK secret police for keeping the Shah in power. See Kai Bird, *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2014), 158-59.

Mossadeq's rule.[43] What is widely accepted is that the CIA provided pro-Shah and anti-Mossadeq propaganda; paid mobs to riot; and convinced the U.S. ambassador to Iran to play a role.[44] The American seen as most instrumental in the coup is Kermit (Kim) Roosevelt, a grandson of Teddy.[45] Wilber's participation is also significant, though, because he highlights the role that social scientists played in 20th century American foreign policy. Such social scientists gave credence to monolithic depictions of foreign cultures, which enabled policymakers to conceive of them coming under the aegis of American influence. Reinstating Wilber's role in the coup is one way of examining that relationship.[46]

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43. Scholarship on the coup has evolved in a unique way because details of events have been sketchy due to documents that have been kept classified. The latest revision of events occurred after 2000, which is when Wilber's 1954 report was leaked to *The New York Times*. Subsequently, a number of conferences were held that involved long-time Iran scholars, and a book was published in 2004 that contained many of the papers presented: Gasiorowski and Byrne, eds., *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*.

44. Kinzer, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War*.

45. Hugh Wilford's 2013 book provides additional context on Kim Roosevelt, his cousin Archie, and their friend Miles Copeland. All three were CIA agents stationed in the Middle East. Hugh Wilford, *America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2013). Also by Wilford, and helpful for providing context on the way in which the CIA tried to influence the creation of culture (although in a different way than Wilber did) is Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

46. In most existing scholarship on the 1953 coup, Donald Wilber is portrayed as having played an ancillary role. The principal actor is more often described as having been Kermit Roosevelt, a grandson of Theodore Roosevelt, and the CIA agent whose actions in Tehran are seen as directly responsible for the coup. See for instance Karl Ernest Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Kingmakers: The Invention of the Modern Middle East* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008), 322-47. Roosevelt was able to construct his own role in the coup through the publication of his autobiography in 1979. Through his political connections and high security clearance, Roosevelt was able to get permission to publish an account of the coup that acknowledged the role of the United States. However, what Roosevelt saw as a righteous and justified extraterritorial action by the United

Wilber planned the coup, but was not in Tehran as it played out. Kim Roosevelt was the main agent on the ground in Tehran. Wilber was in Washington, D.C. getting reports on the coup's progress. Wilber's influence, though, can be seen in examples of anti-Mossadeq propaganda that were distributed by the CIA in Iran prior to the coup. Leading up to the coup, this type of propaganda was the main way in which the CIA sought to influence popular opinion in Iran. Most of the pre-coup propaganda was what is called "black propaganda," progaganda which disguises its source and knowingly presents falsehoods or misrepresentations. The excerpt quoted at length below is one example of a CIA-produced piece of propaganda that was presented as having been written by an Iranian who was concerned about Mossadeq's influence on foreigners' opinions of Iran:

> As long as foreigners have been coming to Iran - since the days of Shah Abbas - they have written many flattering things about Iranians in their books published in Italy, Germany, France and England. They complimented us highly and listed us as the most polite people in the world and among the most hospitable. They told their readers in Europe and America that we were polite to visitors and very tolerant of men of a different race and religion. Chardin, the astute French observer of the Iranian scene, made a very profound statement on this characteristic of politeness. The foreign travelers in Iran have described us as a gentle people with a wonderfully rich culture - a people that likes to spend long hours in friendly discussion but that abhors any form of physical violence. They wrote that Iranians love poetry, art and beauty and despise vulgarity and incivility.
>
> We Iranians are proud of our reputation abroad and believe that it is justified. There have been times in our past when we have not lived up to our reputation. We remember with shame what happened to Major Imbrie many years ago when

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States government, was soon revealed to be a misguided act of empire. In 1979 Islamic Revolution was connected by many commentators to be a reaction against external influences on the Shah, not least of which was the U.S. coup that reinstalled him as unquestioned leader. Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup, the Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

a few people forgot our traditions of hospitality and tolerance. We have long been determined that such events do not recur in our country.

But what has happened in Iran since the dictator Mossadeq made an alliance with the Soviet Tudeh Party? In place of our traditional friendliness, politeness, and hospitality, Iranians are becoming rude and unfriendly. Some of our people have been insulting foreigners on our streets. In place of our traditional tolerance, Iranians are acting increasingly hateful towards people who are different. Some of our people have even gone so far as to have thrown acid on the wife of the Argentine Ambassador. In place of our traditional gentleness and abhorrence of violence, Iranians are becoming noisy and rough and are resorting to physical violence. Some of our people have attacked foreigners and have stoned foreign cars and many times in recent days groups of our people have fought each other - even in the Majlis. Already our reputation of old is being destroyed in Europe and America. It is reported that Secretary Dulles was advised not to visit our country because of the dangers of physical violence.

Ever since the alliance between the dictator Mossadeq and the Tudeh Party, Iranians have been less polite, less hospitable, and less tolerant. Iranians have been rude, rough, and unfriendly. Many of our people are acting more like Bolsheviks than like Iranians. Dictator Mossadeq, you are corrupting the character of the Iranian people. You have case [sic] aside the qualities that have made us a great people and you are destroying our reputation abroad.

Many of us - but not enough of us - are aware that the fundamental tactics of the communists in Iran is to undermine and discredit everything that keeps the country together, such as family ties and parental authority, respect for law and order, loyalty to the government and the throne. If they can corrupt our character then all the rest that they desire will follow along easily. That is the great trap into which Mossadeq has fallen, to join with the communists in encouraging us to be rude, uncouth and coarse. We Iranians must stop acting like Bolsheviks and remain true to our traditional national character.[47]

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47. Propaganda Commentary CIA, “Our National Character.” *National Security Archives* (undated): accessed November 1, 2014, http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/. Malcolm Byrne and others at The George Washington University National Security Archives have vigorously pursued the story of the coup and its aftermath, filing many Freedom of Information Act requests. They characterize this document as being consistent with Wilber's other writings, although cannot confirm authorship: "This appears to be an example of CIA propaganda aimed at undermining Mosaddeq's public standing, presumably prepared during Summer 1953. Like other examples in this posting, the CIA provided no description when it released the document. It certainly fits the pattern of what Donald Wilber and others after him have described about the nature of the CIA's efforts to plant damaging innuendo in local Iranian media.

This document, and other ones like it, were conceived by agents at the CIA as a way of undermining Mossadeq's rule prior to initiating the coup. This document betrays Wilber's (or a combination of CIA authors') preoccupation with the idea of national character, a phrase which first emerged as a descriptive category in social scientific analyses of "culture at a distance" during WWII.

While Roosevelt may have contributed to the overthrow actually having been achieved, Wilber was able, through his later, published writings, to historicize the coup in such a way that elided foreign influence, emphasized the coup as a spontaneous uprising of Iranians, and focused on the Shah's stabilizing influence on the development of the country. The changes Wilber made to the subsequent editions of his book evolved, and it is instructive to link those changes to his evolving justifications for the coup.

By the 1955 edition of his book, Wilber's view on Iranians had shifted, either before he planned the coup or as a result of it. His opinion, expressed in earlier editions, that Iranians could be Westernized through education, had become an insistence that they had to be Westernized through persuasion from a strong leader – a leader that, unbeknownst to his audience, Wilber had a hand in restoring to power. His view, new to the 1955 edition, was that "features rooted within the cultural pattern make it difficult for the Persian to feel in harmony with the modern world or even with his own fellows." Whereas in his pre-coup writings he thought Persian character could be an asset in Iran's self-directed modernization program, in his post-coup editions he saw Persian national

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In this case, the authors extol the virtues of the Iranian character, particularly as admired by the outside world, then decry the descent into "hateful," "rough" and "rude" behavior Iranians have begun to exhibit "ever since the alliance between the dictator Mossadeq and the Tudeh Party."

character as a liability that inhibited progress. As in the 1950 edition, Wilber called Persians "marked individualists," but in 1955 he added they "seem reluctant to enter into group cooperation or to accept collective responsibility. The Persian is not a joiner nor does he find it natural to work with others toward a mutually desired goal."[48] This view seems to have been influenced by his experience in the coup itself. Apparently Iranians who had been bribed to support the Shah had proven unreliable agents, leading Wilber to write in the official CIA report on the coup of the "recognized incapacity of Iranians to plan or act in a thoroughly logical manner."[49] Wilber considered this lack of logic to be anti-modern and a flaw in Persian character and politics. In his book he wrote, "basic to any modern political party are such factors as continuity, definite programs, suitable organization, regular contributors, and devoted workers, but such a party has failed to emerge in Iran…"[50] He cited the Iranian "failure to stand for something positive and constructive" as "one of the greatest handicaps in the way of establishing long range internal stability in Iran."[51] Because he completely elided foreign influences in Iran as a source of instability, Wilber blamed the Iranians themselves for their country's lack of progress. He did not mention, for instance, publicly-available information that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company convinced other oil companies to boycott Iranian oil after Mossadeq nationalized that resource, thereby preventing Iran from selling the oil. Nor did he reveal the AIOC trained so few Iranians to run their oil refineries that the refineries

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48. Donald Newton Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 94.
49. Gasiorowski, "What's New on the Iran 1953 Coup in the New York Times Article (April 16, 2000, Front Page) and the Documents Posted on the Web."
50. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 94.
51. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 95.

could not be operated after nationalization. Because the AIOC had been run solely as an extractive enterprise, it had offered nothing to Iran besides a rather meager portion of the proceeds of the oil's sale.

His 1955 edition was also Wilber's first opportunity to narrate the events of the 1953 coup, which he called in his book "a spontaneous uprising of the masses" in favor of the Shah. Wilber ascribed agency to the Iranian people, although he knew that their actions had been influenced by American and British propaganda and bribery. While there was certainly popular resistance against Mossadeq's rule, most scholars now agree that the coup itself would not have succeeded without prodding from the American planners. Wilber knew that the coup was not a spontaneous uprising – quite the opposite. He had helped plan it three months before it happened.

Wilber also revised his 1955 text to address "public interest in Iran" that was "greatly stimulated by the action of the Iranian government…to nationalize all oil resources, by the subsequent activity of Dr. Muhammad Mossadeq and his dramatic downfall."[52] These are the full passages in which he described the coup:

> On the 18th the atmosphere altered slightly as another side of the story began to unfold. Opposition papers managed to appear: they printed reproductions of the firman naming General Zahedi as Prime Minister, statements of the Shah at Baghdad, and an interview from the hidden Zahedi that he was the legal Prime Minister and that the so-called coup d'etat was a device thought up by Mossadeq to divert public opinion.[53]
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> On August 22 the Shah returned to a tumultuous welcome and spoke of the necessity for the government to concentrate all its attention upon social reforms. By this time it was perfectly clear that a spontaneous uprising of the masses, including thousands who were not normally involved in parties or politics, had

52. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), viii.
53. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 125-126.

> occurred. The insults of Fatemi, the destruction of the statues of the ruler and his father, and the shouts in favor of a republic had an effect quite opposite from that intended for they had aroused fears as to the future of the country and the wisdom of casting aside long established, national traditions. The Tudeh party had completely misjudged the popular temper, its erstwhile supporters melted away, and it was powerless to react against the changed situation. In the few days of uncertainty General Fazlollah Zahedi, who was boldly critical of Mossadeq, served as the rallying point.[54]

In 1955, Wilber, in the first edition of his textbook to be published since he helped plan and implement the 1953 coup, was somewhat tentative in his attitude towards the Shah. In the narrow window between the coup and the publishing deadline, the Shah had seemingly not made any great strides in terms of his policies.[55] Wilber undoubtedly wanted the Shah's rule to justify the U.S. government's support of his regime. In the 1955 edition, Wilber had not yet settled on the marker that, in his later writings, would become a nearly all-important factor in the Shah's rule: stability.

In addition to changing his depictions of Iranians, over time Wilber changed his depictions of the Shah. Among the archaeologists who worked as intelligence offers during WWII, Wilber's viewpoint was the one that was the most in concert with what became official U.S. government policy towards the region after WWII. As a scholar who stayed in direct government employ after the war, it was natural that he internalized some

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54. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 127.
55. Wilber seemed to have been searching for targets to blame to explain pre-1953 instability: "Among other elements which have been conspicuous on the current political scene mention should be made of religious leaders. In the era of the "new freedom" which followed the abdication of Reza Shah there was a trend toward the revival of religious customs and observances. However, only in the latest years has active fanaticism characterized by mob agitation and political assassination appeared. Nationalism swept to the foreground Sayyid Abol Qasem Kashani, an embittered, elderly religious figure, whose overriding passion was hatred of the British." Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 242.

of the growing consensus among policymakers that the most essential bulwark against the Soviet menace was the stable reign of pro-American leaders in all regions of strategic importance. Iran, a country that was oil rich, and which was located in an area that was geographically vital to the exercise of American power in the Soviet sphere of influence, was one of the most hotly-contested areas of the early Cold War. With Mossadeq having withdrawn access to cheap Iranian oil, as well as activating American fears of Communism's spread, the planners of the coup were adamant about ensuring that no future upstarts would be able to wrest power from the Shah.

After the 1953 coup, both U.S. government officials and the Shah himself grew increasingly invested in depictions of the Shah as a strong, modernizing leader who was immensely popular with, and firmly in charge of, his people. Scholars have not uncovered any direct evidence that Wilber was meant to advance such views at anyone's behest, either American officials or the Shah himself. He, like many other CIA agents of his era, most likely thought that he was performing his patriotic duty by supporting, as a private citizen, the work he had done as a contract worker for the CIA.[56] He was, however, invested in a narrative of the coup that ascribed agency to the Iranian people only inasmuch as they themselves thought that their country could not function without a

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56. Author Peter Matthiessen, who worked for the CIA in Paris in the early 1950s, later described his CIA work as a "youthful folly." Nevertheless, he admitted that he used *The Paris Review*, which he co-founded, as a cover for his activities. Christopher Lehmann-haupt, "Peter Matthiessen, Lyrical Writer and Naturalist, is Dead At 86," *The New York Times* (2014); Joel Whitney, "Exclusive: The Paris Review, the Cold War and the CIA." Although there is ample evidence that the CIA surreptitiously funded a number of cultural organizations, there is no evidence that the CIA paid Wilber for his scholarly works. For more on the CIA's funding of cultural groups, see Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

strong monarch. Throughout his writings, the Iranian people were described as lacking agency and initiative; if Wilber were Max Weber he might have said they were governed by the Muslim non-work ethic. While Wilber may have imagined that he had, through his planning of the coup, helped the Iranian people, it was only through his fallacious understanding of what Iranians were like that he could justify his actions.

By late 1959, in an article he wrote for the Foreign Policy Association's Headline Series, Wilber made it clear that the Shah's stability was vital to his conception of Iran's leadership. The article, entitled "Iran: Oasis of Stability in the Middle East?" introduced a number of ideas that were central to Wilber's lines of thought in his textbooks which were released subsequent to the 1953 coup. Those ideas were: the lack of enterprise of Iranian people, the instability wrought by Mossadeq, and the stable, guiding hand of the Shah, whose tradition of rule stretched back centuries. In his 1959 Foreign Policy Association article, he wrote, "Iran possesses inherent factors of stability, notably the millennial institution of the monarchy, pride in the history and prestige of the nation, cohesiveness of the population and common attachment to Islam."[57] Wilber perceived the monarchy to be an intrinsic part of Iran, as perpetually and inextricably a part of the nation as the geological formations or archaeological ruins he described in other sections of his books. Wilber portrayed Iran's employment of democracy, and its election of Mossadeq as Prime Minister, as temporary deviations from a deeper truth that the country would adhere to moving forward.[58] This view seems to have been a distillation of his

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57. Donald Newton Wilber, *Iran: Oasis of Stability in Middle East?* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1959), 12.

58. Although Wilber went to great lengths to praise the Shah, he did not spend as much time discussing Mossadeq. Despite the fact that he helped conspire to overthrow him (or

archaeological point of view, but mobilized in service of his governmental work to justify the Shah's rule.[59]

The idea of stability gained purchase in U.S. policy circles during the early Cold War. Communism was depicted as the ultimate source of instability, and the Middle East was one of those undeveloped areas perceived to be particularly susceptible to Soviet influence. As has been argued convincingly by David Schmitz, the United States government prioritized anti-Communist right-wing dictators over democracy throughout the Cold War.[60] What is unique about Wilber's justification is that in Iran, a strong ruler was portrayed as not only necessary as a bulwark against Communism, but also to serve

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perhaps in order to keep his cover), Wilber was not overly harsh in his assessments of Mossadeq. He accused him of overreaching his powers, but in many ways his depiction of Mossadeq was less racist than some views advanced by policymakers and journalists.

59. For more on Western perceptions of Mossadeq during his time in office, see Mary Ann Heiss, "Real Men Don't Wear Pajamas: Anglo-American Cultural Perceptions of Mohammed Mossadeq and the Iranian Oil Nationalization Dispute" in Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss, eds., *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World Since 1945* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 178-94. Also of interest is John Foran, "Discursive Subversions: Time Magazine, the CIA Overthrow of Mussadiq, and the Installation of the Shah" in Christian G Appy, *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 157-82. The story of the coup has cachet for scholars engaging with the "cultural Cold War," in which cultural studies models are brought to bear on Cold War issues. Mary Ann Heiss, for instance, has demonstrated through examining policy documents (mainly memos written by diplomatic personnel) that American officials 'orientalized' (in the Saidian sense) Mohammad Mossadeq, thereby weakening his rule and contributing to an environment in which his downfall was facilitated. Heiss argued that feminizing and infantilizing depictions of Mossadeq combined with political forces to oust the prime minister. John Foran examined depictions of Mossadeq in the popular press, finding that government officials may have been influenced by a journalistic discourse (mainly in *Time* magazine) that associated Mossadeq with Communism and instability. Foran also found that depictions of the Shah were more positive, contributing to a perception that he would provide continuity while simultaneously modernizing the nation.

60. David F Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

to modernize an otherwise unmotivated population. In Wilber's 1959 article, for instance, the peoples of Iran were considered to be unchangeable, at least through their own initiative. In a section on "The Village Way of Life," Wilber referred to the villagers as "shrewd, patient, imaginative, humorous and unenterprising." Outside of the cities, "farmers live much as they have for many centuries."[61] As an archaeologist, Wilber was quick to point out the significance of "ancient irrigation barriers and canals" which indicated that "Iran, once, was more prosperous and more densely populated, but…a long drawn-out period of military weakness, decadent rulers and economic stagnation marked the country's decline."[62] Archaeologists like Wilber studied past civilizations that, to them, were representative of a time when Middle Easterners held a great deal of power and prominence in the world. Simultaneously, Wilber witnessed modern nationalists like the Shah making arguments for the past greatness of Middle Eastern civilizations. While the evocation of the past for Middle Easterners was a way of claiming political agency that had been subverted by colonial regimes, for archaeologists like Wilber, it was an indication of how far the peoples of the Middle East had fallen. Archaeologists seemingly could not help but see the past and present converge with the presence of an autocracy.

Furthermore, for Wilber, what he perceived as the Iranian lack of initiative governed day-to-day activities as well as political activism. Although his depictions of Iranians were never entirely flattering, in early versions of his textbook he gave them credit for moves towards democratization that had occurred during the early 20th century. In 1906, a number of political reforms were enacted that moved Iran in the direction of

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61. Wilber, *Iran: Oasis of Stability in Middle East?*, 7.
62. Wilber, *Iran: Oasis of Stability in Middle East?*, 10.

democracy, including the writing of a Constitution. In Wilber's 1955 edition, he depicted 1906 as a watershed year for Iranian democracy:

> Until the revolutionary movement of 1906 which secured for Iran a constitutional government, she had been for over twenty centuries under the rule of absolute monarchs. Taking into account this background, and the fact that during the forty years since then she has been so often subjected to foreign pressure, the amount of progress she has made in democratic government is considerable.[63]

This passage was actually an unaltered remnant from Wilber's 1948 pre-coup edition. His acknowledgement of Iranian political agency was deleted after the 1955 edition.

In later editions, Wilber continued to revise his depictions of different groups. By the time of the 1976 edition, the eighth of nine eventual editions, Wilber only used the adjective "revolutionary" to describe dangerous and disruptive elements within Iranian society, such as "communists";[64] a separatist movement in Azerbaijan;[65] and anti-Shah movements like the Confederation of Iranian Students Abroad.[66] The activists of 1906 were described more frequently as Constitutionalists, and less space was given to the reforms enacted then. Wilber seems to have acknowledged by 1976, without explicitly saying so, that Iran had ceased progress towards "democratic government" and returned to the "twenty centuries of rule under absolute monarchs."[67] Wilber still referred to the reforms initiated by the Shah as the "White Revolution," which was the term the Shah himself used, along with the "Shah-People Revolution." But he did not mistake any of the Shah's reforms for democracy, and he did not pretend that the Shah was subject to any

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63. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 173.
64. Donald Newton Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present*, 8th ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1976), 209.
65. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 137.
66. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 209.
67. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1955), 173.

restrictions by the Constitution. Wilber, despite (or perhaps because of) his rather obvious veneration of the Shah, did not go to great lengths to hide the fact that Iran under the Shah was far from a democracy: the Shah appointed the Prime Minister, and at the time of the 1976 edition, that man was "Amir 'Abbas Hoveida, who was named in January 1965 and was still in his post throughout 1973." Wilber also stated, "continuity within the executive branches of the government is not seriously dislocated by the recurrent changes of Cabinets."[68] For Wilber, as for many other U.S. government officials, "continuity" and "stability" trumped "democracy."[69]

Wilber also re-characterized the 1953 coup in his 1976 edition. While much of the text about the coup was similar, Wilber added, "the Tudeh party, possibly acting on instructions from its Soviet masters, made a serious tactical error in pushing for revolution when it lacked the power base to carry it out."[70] Here he added the specter of the Communist menace, which was barely mentioned in the 1955 post-coup edition. Because the coup could be justified as a Cold War anti-Soviet narrative, Wilber was able to harness that narrative for his own uses, whether or not he actually believed that the Tudeh party had Communist leanings (and there is some evidence that he knew the

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68. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 249.
69. Perhaps as important as Wilber's bolstering of the Shah's legitimacy and effectiveness as a ruler is his hagiographic treatment of the Shah's father, Riza Shah Pahlavi. Riza Shah was the first ruler of the Pahlavi dynasty, and came to power with a coup during the 1920s. He was a stern modernizer who insisted on Western clothing and the use of last names – what Wilber termed "conformity" rather than "unity." Riza Shah was also insistent on removing foreign influence from Iran, which, ironically, is one of the traits Wilber seems to admire the most in his biography of Riza Shah, which was published in 1975. For that book, Wilber had extensive access to the royal family, including the Shah himself. Donald Newton Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1975).
70. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 148.

Tudeh party to be non-Communist).

Wilber continued to pathologize the Iranian people in later editions. Whereas Haas, in the text described earlier, considered the press to be a source of democratic expression, Wilber's 1976 edition referred to the burgeoning public sphere as a time of "general disorientation." Returning to an earlier theme, he wrote, "This exaggerated individualism found expression in negativism, expressed in the form of destructive criticism of authority and of the country's institutions, groups, classes, and individuals. On the political scene negativism found formal expression in Dr. Mossadeq's policy of negative equilibrium."[71] Wilber blamed the Tudeh Party that "traditional feelings of tolerance seem to have been replaced by unrestrained expression and open hostility." Such negativity, in Wilber's view, had to be contested by the strong will of a stable, central leader.

Wilber also depicted stability as an end unto itself, so that anything that maintained the Shah's rule was justifiable because it provided stability, which was what the Shah provided. The Mobius strip-like logic circled back on itself in an infinite loop without cause or effect – which was the only way that he could argue that a society had continuity over a 2500-year-long history. In the 1976 edition under a section titled "Patterns of Iranian Culture and Society," and subtitled "The Continuity of History," Wilber wrote, "Iran remains headed by a *shahinshah*, the 'king of kings,' and probably no other country has borne a single name as long as has Iran, nor been ruled by as many monarchs bearing the same title."[72] By continually emphasizing continuity of leadership in Iran through the figure of the Shah, Wilber was participating in a discourse that

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71. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 226.
72. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 74.

insisted the Shah would rule in perpetuity; although Mohammad Reza Shah would step down at some point in the future, the ideal of enlightened modernization would continue through his son, the Crown Prince. By the mid-1970s, Wilber was already retired from the CIA, but still thoroughly in the thrall of the Shah. Wilber received a special invitation to the Shah's extravagant celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the first Shah of Iran. He also was granted special access to the royal family to write a hagiography of the Shah's father, Reza Shah Pahlavi. As mentioned previously, by the 1970s, the Shah was considered, along with King Saud of Saudi Arabia, to be one of Nixon and Kissinger's "pillars" in the Middle East. Both rulers were autocratic, but their repressive tactics were overlooked due to their ability to supply the world with cheap oil, and to use those petrodollars to buy American arms.

Wilber reiterated in the 1976 edition his earlier contention that the 1953 coup had constituted "a choice between the stable institution of the monarchy and an alternative which seemed to offer instability and possible political chaos," again ascribing that choice to the Iranian populous.[73] He had also grown bolder about revealing the role of foreign intervention, as he continued: "statements that the American and British intelligence services played active roles in support of the monarchy in these critical days have won acceptance, although the Shah, in his own published record of these days, gives all the credit to his loyal followers."[74] To reiterate, it is impossible with information currently available to say with any certainty if Wilber was meant to advance such views at the behest of anyone, either American officials or the Shah himself. He was clearly

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73. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 149.
74. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present* (1976), 149.

invested in a narrative of the coup that ascribed agency to the Iranian people only inasmuch as they themselves thought that their country could not function without a strong monarch, something which Wilber himself seems to have believed.

To be sure, the lack of change in Wilber's versions of his book did not go unnoticed by other scholars in his field. Middle East area studies changed a great deal, while the changes to Wilber's texts, analyzed above, were more reflective of Wilber's ideological loyalties than his desire to disseminate relevant information. One 1986 review captured how stymied some scholars were not necessarily by the paucity of changes to Wilber's editions, but rather by the inexplicability of the changes that were made:

> When as a student in the early 1950s I became interested in Iran, only two general works on that country were readily available, namely William S. Haas's *Iran* and Donald N. Wilber's *Iran Past and Present*, and it is with these two slim but informative volumes that I started my book collection on Iran. Haas's work was soon out of print and, as far as I know, no revised edition of it was ever published. But this was not to be the fate of Wilber's book; it is now in its ninth edition. Strangely enough, however, the author's perception of events has changed so little during the past thirty years that even though his book has been extensively revised it is now hopelessly dated. When the first edition came out shortly after World War II it was possible for even the most liberal-minded person to agree with Wilber and look with favor upon the reign of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. But as the shah's folie des grandeurs assumed ever more Bokassaesque dimensions and as his regime became ever more corrupt and brutal such an outlook became increasing Panglossian. Yet, in the latest edition of his book, which appeared in 1981, Wilber displays the same misty-eyed admiration for the shah as he did in the first edition. This is hard to swallow even for a person, such as this reviewer, who thinks that in spite of its numerous flaws and excesses the shah's regime was preferable to that of the Ayatollah's. For example, in a chapter on the Iranian government which was written before the 1979 revolution but which has been retained in the revised 1981 edition, Wilber writes: "The Shah is a tireless exponent of programs of social reform and economic progress, and a severe critic of local administrative shortcomings," and in a chapter entitled "From Monarchy to the Islamic Republic," which was added after the 1979 revolution, the author ascribes the downfall of the shah to the "spirit of xenophobia" which is "endemic in Iran" and to the intellectuals' concern over the "destructive impact of Western manners and modes on Iranian culture."

> It pains me to be so harshly critical of Donald Wilber, an author whom I respect for his previous works on Iran, in particular his excellent biography of Reza Shah, *Riza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran* (1975). But by omitting the abuses and atrocities of the Pahlavi regime, he is, in fact, distorting history.[75]

Yet, despite all this, Wilber's scholarship has still been cited since the year 2000, when his involvement with the coup was revealed.[76] The minimization of his role in the coup has prevented scholars from looking more closely at the political agenda behind his scholarship. Coming to this topic post-2000, when Wilber's role in the coup was fully revealed, it is difficult to reconstruct how his scholarship was viewed before that time.[77] His books were cited without qualification in many texts about Iran.[78] There are also references which appear in a number of post-2000 books.[79] Surely merely having cited Wilber does not completely taint others' scholarship, but some acknowledgement of his biases seems necessary.

Ultimately, though, the use or misuse of Wilber's scholarship is a relatively minor issue. His embroilment in the dominant ideologies of the postwar period, such as

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75. Pierre Oberling, "Review of Iran Past and Present By Donald N. Wilber," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 4 (1986).
76. Some scholars such as Abrahamian and Gasiorowski seem, even in their pre-2000 writings, to have been aware of Wilber's involvement, perhaps because of interviews that they did with him before he died.
77. In a book of essays written in honor of Nikki Keddie, Ervand Abrahamian mentioned that when she arrived at UCLA in the 1960s, Wilber's books were still used as texts. Rudolph P Matthee and Beth Baron, eds., *Iran and Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000).
78. Nikki R Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
79. Nikki R Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*, Updated ed. (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2006); Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

modernization theory, was also significant. Recent histories have documented the rise of modernization theory as the logic governing U.S. Cold War policy.[80] Modernization theory posited that countries move through stages of development towards a monolithic version of modernity that conformed to theorists' conceptions of the United States. Through correct policies and procedures, underdeveloped countries could be pushed towards "lift-off," thereby avoiding the pitfall of communism and moving directly towards the ideal state of advanced capitalist democracy.[81] Scholars like Wilber contributed to the valorization of modernization, just as government operatives like Wilber contributed to the implementation of modernization theory. The production of academic knowledge was so intertwined with the enacting of government policy in Wilber's case that they emanated from the same person. Nevertheless, Wilber stands today as merely an emblem of the cozy relationship between those two forces. The U.S. government and scholarly knowledge were thoroughly enmeshed, even when not combined in the work of one individual.

Modernization theory, which posited a certain type of economic development, was a highly conservative notion, and was dependent on strong leadership to force through radical societal changes. The Shah of Iran was seen as the prototype of the modernizing dictator. He pushed through liberal-seeming programs of land redistribution

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80. Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "nation Building" in the Kennedy Era*, New Cold War history (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*, New studies in American intellectual and cultural history (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).
81. Rostow's 1960 book remains the paradigmatic articulation of modernization theory. W. W Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, a Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1960).

that actually had the effect of evicting long-time farmers from their land. Peasants were forced to move to the cities, penniless, while the landed classes were further enriched. The Shah's White Revolution programs were in fact prototypical modernization programs in the sense that Iran's citizens were stripped of agency. The gap between the stated aims of modernization and the countervailing desire for stability can be a productive point for historical analysis. That rhetorical disconnect had to be filled in by someone, and Wilber was one of the Cold Warriors invested in that very project.

This chapter's parsing of Wilber's alterations to the various editions of *Iran, Past and Present*, not to mention his various other writings, including his memoir; his pre-coup writings; and his declassified CIA reports, is not an attempt to classify one set of writings as the "true" Wilber. Whether or not he had a central set of beliefs that most closely resembled one set of writings or not, Wilber's published writings came, over time, to closely adhere to the official U.S. governmental positions on issues like modernization, development, and stability. That Wilber published positions along those lines even as the official U.S. views were still evolving is not to suggest that he was the progenitor of such ideas. Nevertheless, he does seem to have been in the vanguard in terms of seeking out ways to make those ideas palatable to as broad an audience as possible. Wilber was a lifelong believer in the power of messaging. He seems to have believed that the ends justified the means. For Wilber, the ultimate end was to keep the Middle East from becoming Communist. In this desire, he was hardly alone.

There does seem to have been significant evidence during the Shah's rule that indicated that his regime was in fact unstable (although not from the Soviet Union), as well as numerous indications he was repressing his own people through the use of secret

prisons and police. Just as it required a great deal of effort for the Shah to maintain his rule within Iran, it required a great deal of effort to maintain what Hilton Root has called "the mirage of stability" in Iran.[82] Totalitarianism requires a great nexus of authority in a central figure, to be sure, but in its 20th century iterations it has also exploited a monopoly on information. Wilber was invested in having the Shah's rule be perceived as a positive force, and he staked his scholarly reputation on maintaining that image – which, it turned out, was as illusive as Wilber imagined it to be in 1954.

Wilber's two perspectives were thoroughly incommensurate. Wilber the CIA contract worker was influential in planning the propagandistic measures used during the 1953 coup to promote instability in Iran and call the leadership of Mohammed Mossadeq into question. When he assessed the success of the coup in 1954, he acknowledged that the coup could have long-term repercussions for both the Shah's rule and the role of the United States in the Middle East. Yet Wilber the scholar wrote that Iran had been ruled for 2500 years by monarchy, and would continue that way indefinitely. It was Wilber who, when writing the official CIA history of the coup in 1954, coined the term "blowback" as delayed recourse for American interventionism abroad.[83] In 1981 Wilber published a 9th addition of his book that added a chapter about the 1978-79 Islamic Revolution, leaving the rest of the book unchanged. He started the final chapter: "In the concluding chapter [of the 8th edition], it was stated that Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was very much in command of his nation…no experienced observer of the Iranian scene

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82. Hilton L. Root, *Alliance Curse: How America Lost the Third World* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).
83. Chalmers A Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

would have believed that a single elderly, frail, extremely conservative Muslim could topple the monarchial system which had held sway in Iran for over two thousand years."[84] It is significant to recall that the Islamic Revolution caught many observers of Iran unaware, which is why Charles Kurzman called it "unthinkable." Yet it took the whitewashing of history by people like Donald Wilber to make it so. By the time of the revolution, Wilber may have even convinced himself that the ruler he helped install would rule indefinitely.

84. Donald Newton Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic*, 9th ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981), 334.

Conclusion

My goal in this dissertation has been to trace the ways in which scholarly knowledge about the Middle East was formed in the academy, and found its way into the governmental operations of the United States. Due to the scholarship of a number of different intellectual historians, I entered this project with a distinct picture of what shape the field of Middle East area studies took from the time it was formally instituted in various universities during the mid-1950s, until the late-1960s and early 1970s, when a number of scholars began to question the bases of the field. Beginning in the 1950s, the field was dominated by Orientalists, many of whom, according to Zachary Lockman, shared a "conviction...that Islam was a coherent civilization whose historical dynamics, institutions, thought, and way of life were expressions of a basically unitary and stable set of core values and beliefs, such that [an Orientalist like H.A.R.] Gibb could regard medieval Islamic thought as directly relevant to the problems which Muslims everywhere faced in the middle of the twentieth century."[1]

Orientalist is a fraught term today, but it was, until 1978, considered by many people to be an honorific. Edward Said's seminal book, *Orientalism*, appeared that year, and exposed a number of fault lines in Middle East area studies. I have come to understand Said's influence on the field as exposing the doxa of Middle East area studies to its practitioners. Said was not alone in this project, and a number of his contemporaries articulated arguments similar to his in relation to the field: that Orientalism as a practice

1. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 105.

was guided by a discourse that defined the Middle East as its object of study; that Orientalists operated in certain tropes that negatively stereotyped Middle Easterners; and that those tropes had exerted an influence beyond the narrow academic confines of the field of Orientalism. Yet I have also been influenced by more recent scholarship that rightly credited Said with having shaken the foundations of Middle East area studies, yet also asserted that Said did not leave behind an entirely coherent mode of scholarship in his wake. Melani McAlister has written "that Orientalism is not the best model for understanding U.S. representations of the Middle East in the post-World War II period."[2] Indeed, based on my analysis, a Saidian binary is too limiting to understand the influence that archaeologists and physical anthropologists had on Middle East area studies between 1919 and the early Cold War. Individuals like Carleton Coon were simultaneously against French colonialism in North Africa, and yet not convinced that North Africans could rule themselves. His spectrum of ideas cannot be neatly characterized.

The time period covered by this work is also a significant contribution to the scholarly understanding of the origins of Middle East area studies.[3] For Lockman and others, 1955 was the key year in U.S.-based Middle East area studies. That was the year when Hamilton Gibb left Oxford to join Harvard's faculty and lead their new center for the study of the Middle East. That event "signaled the growing weight of US-based scholars and academic institutions focusing on the Middle East relative to those based in

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2. Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 270.
3. Other works have covered an expanded time span (beyond the postwar period), including Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967*.

Europe." It also was a significant year for "the rise of the new field of 'Middle East studies.' This new field, supported by government and private funding on an unprecedentedly lavish scale, created a set of new institutions within and outside of the university in whose framework traditionally trained Orientalists could interact with scholars in other humanities and social science disciplines."[4] Those changes were monumental, to be sure. In addition to structural changes, there was also "a new theoretical framework that sought to explain the character and historical trajectories of Middle Eastern societies... [using] some of the key assumptions of Orientalism in contemporary social-science language."[5] Allowing for the fact that Lockman used 1955 as a pivot point in the context of a work that traced a much longer history of the study of the Middle East by westerners, I still wanted to dig deeper into the pre-Gibb history of Middle East area studies in its U.S. context. Gibb was clearly a significant figure, but he was born in Egypt to Scottish parents, and only came to Harvard when he was 60. This work has explained the ways in which pre-Gibb efforts to form programs of Middle East area studies at the University of Chicago and Princeton were thwarted by institutional and interpersonal turf fights.

Also significant is the way in which the doxa of scholars who studied the Middle East was altered over the time period covered in this dissertation. The most significant fulcrum in that process was the Second World War, but the changing role of foundation, the rise of social science as panacea, and the ideological commitments of the Cold War

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4. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 110.
5. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 110.

were also significant. It is vital to remember that, in the years after World War II, there was a sorting of scholars who worked for the U.S. government during the war. Some chose to continue their government affiliations; others did not. Particularly for those scholars who chose not to continue their governmental affiliations, their reasons resonate with some of the factors that later lead efforts to eliminate all government influence on scholarship. Those efforts, while well intentioned, were ultimately fruitless, as military efforts like the Human Terrain Project are again ascendent.[6]

I have also been influenced by the work of Brian Edwards, who has noted an "institutional chasm between the State Department and the humanities."[7] While I have not explicitly addressed the institutional chasm between those two entities, I have aimed to demonstrate the ways in which a humanities-based approach to studying the Middle East was systematically devalued by Rockefeller Foundation officials and Princeton administrators. In other words, postwar Princeton was one of the places where that "institutional chasm" was constructed. I see this dissertation as a contribution to a body of intellectual histories that "attend to...that institutional chasm itself, how it is constructed, how it operates, how it organizes reading practices, and how current reading practices leave it undisturbed."[8]

I should note that I am not the first person to draw a scholarly lineage between the intellectual project initiated by James Henry Breasted, and the postwar development of

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6. David H. Price, *Weaponizing anthropology : social science in the service of the militarized state* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011).
7. Edwards, *Morocco Bound: Disorienting America's Maghreb, from Casablanca to the Marrakech Express*, 10.
8. Edwards, *Morocco Bound: Disorienting America's Maghreb, from Casablanca to the Marrakech Express*, 10.

Middle East area studies. Timothy Mitchell also traced "the concerns of area studies" to "Breasted's vision for the development of oriental studies in America [which] was to transform it from a philological into a historical discipline 'in which art, archaeology, political science, language, literature and sociology, in short all the categories of civilization shall be represented and correlated.'"[9] What I have done is to begin with the origin story that has been ably captured by other scholars, and which I have also recounted here, to understand how the doxa of scholars who worked for the U.S. government during WWII was altered by that experience, and influenced later developments in the field of Middle East area studies. Most scholars have agreed that Middle Eastern area studies, especially in the years between the end of WWII and the late 1960s, was a field that was closely aligned with the U.S. government. As Timothy Mitchell pointed out, "many of the scholars who emerged as the field's first generation of social scientists around the mid-1960s had earlier connections with U.S. intelligence."[10] I have expanded on Mitchell's point to more closely examine the relationships between scholars who studied the Middle East and also worked for the U.S. government during WWII. Mitchell also pointed out that "none of them necessarily maintained their connections with U.S. intelligence after they became academics."[11] But Mitchell was not naive about the possibility of continued connections between the U.S. government and scholars, particularly through CIA front

9. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in David L. Szanton, ed. *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 77.
10. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, 90.
11. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, 91.

organizations like the Congress for Cultural Freedom, of which Princeton sociologist Morroe Berger was a member.[12] Mitchell cited Berger's example as just one indication that "only recently has it been understood how widely the CIA influenced the production of academic and intellectual culture around the world in the second half of the twentieth century."[13]

To be sure, I see one aspect of this dissertation as further reflecting on the deep connections between academia and the CIA. Donald Wilber had one foot in each world, and my analysis of the ways in which his scholarship served to bolster his own clandestine CIA operations demonstrates the degree to which scholars of that era accepted an indistinguishably close relationship between the U.S. government and academia. Wilber was a product of his time, as well as of a particular scholarly doxa that allowed scholars to be both credible scholars and U.S. government affiliates. To be clear, Wilber's colleagues were unaware that he maintained his government ties for as long as he did. And many people who had contact with Wilber seem to have been genuinely surprised by the revelation, in 2000, that he planned the 1953 CIA coup in Iran. But I have not found any reflections from scholars who worked with him or referenced his works regarding his role in the coup in conjunction with his role as a scholar. My sense is that because he was not employed as a scholar in a U.S. institution of higher learning, no one has felt a need to claim him, so to speak, as a scholar/spy. I have showed, though, that he was perceived by scholars within the academy to be an authority on the peoples and institutions of coun-

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12. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, 91.
13. Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, 91.

tries such as Iran. A one-time Wilber co-author wrote "I knew nothing about Donald's work with the CIA, only that some colleagues hinted he had come to Iranian studies through that involvement. Only later it came out that he had been very active in covert operations--but I only know what I've read in his book."[14] Those hints from colleagues, the whispers at conferences, whatever form that forgiven impropriety (or merely colorful side job, depending on one's perspective) took to those who interacted with Wilber, contributed not just to his continued relevance within the field, but likely was part of the doxa that was passed onto subsequent generations of scholars. In other words, as long as scholars unquestioningly allowed colleagues to work with the U.S. government, more scholars would work with the U.S. government.

However, I have also not written a moralistic paean to some imagined, impossible standard for objective scholarship. What I have found to be intriguing, and I hope can provide direction for further scholarship (both for myself and for others) is this prospect of impossible past futures for Middle East area studies in the United States. More concretely, I am referring to the attempts by John Wilson and Phillip Hitti, to try to use their knowledge of government interactions with scholars to mold programs that could obviate some of the negative effects of that relationship. I believe each man, in his own way, was trying to figure out a way to inject empathy into U.S. foreign relations with the Middle East. In 1980, William Appleman Williams titled his new book *Empire As a Way of Life*, indicating the degree to which he perceived American Empire to be inextricably inter-

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14. Lisa Golombek, "Re: Questions About Donald Wilber," (2007). Personal correspondence with Matt Kohlstedt, April 5, 2007. Golombek and Wilber co-wrote a text late in his life. Lisa Golombek and Donald Newton Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

twined with U.S. history. Resurrecting Wilson's and Hitti's efforts might point us toward something that I would call "empathy as a way of life." Surely we could do worse.

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