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Review by **Michelle Reeves**, University of Texas

Volume E-1 of the recently released E-FRUS series covers a wide variety of international issues with which the Nixon administration contended. The material runs the gamut from drugs and terrorism to environmental and oceans policy and even to outer space. Along the way, readers have a plethora of opportunities to observe the inner workings of the Nixon administration in documents that are sometimes uncensored and brutally frank. The picture that emerges is of an administration that was not only intent on exercising leadership and using all available resources to coerce recalcitrant countries, but is also pragmatic, judicious, skillfully diplomatic, and content to let other countries take the lead on issues of global significance.

The first chapter contains over one hundred documents related to international terrorism, and particularly airline hijackings. This type of terrorism reached an apogee in 1969 and 1970. The heightened security measures adopted in response made it more difficult for terrorists to penetrate such targets as foreign embassies, foreign diplomats, and commercial airliners. Yet while the number of attacks on certain targets declined from its peak in 1969-1970, the overall volume of terrorism increased thereafter as did the number of resulting casualties. The documents in this chapter reveal an administration primarily concerned with ensuring the safety of international air travel and operating under the correct assumption that ensuring safe passage was a fundamental prerequisite of global security.

Nixon administration officials, while taking the lead in pursuing international resolutions to coordinate a unified front against terrorism, encouraged other countries to devise policy initiatives. The administration also played the role of mediator, modifying the language of policy initiatives to better reflect the interests of all concerned parties. In contrast to later U.S. policies that adamantly proscribed negotiations with terrorists, these documents

reveal a willingness to support negotiations on behalf of the countries victimized by the kidnappings of public officials. The administration sought to prevent the Organization of American States from adopting measures that would circumscribe the freedom of action of such countries to take any steps deemed necessary to secure the release of hostages. U.S. officials were shrewd in their efforts to maintain and even increase leverage on so-called 'hijacking' states. Rather than staunch the flow of aid and thereby undercut the U.S. bargaining position, administration officials sought to use such aid as a financial mechanism with which to pressure into complying with U.S. demands those countries to whom hijackers frequently demanded safe passage. The administration recognized that unilateral measures would not only be ineffective but would also aggravate the countries involved; the focus was therefore on multilateral action.

In the aftermath of the massacre at the Summer Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, the administration maintained a clear-eyed stance toward the Israelis that did not sacrifice vital U.S. interests vis-à-vis the Arab world. Nixon and Kissinger realized that complying with Israeli demands to cancel American participation in the games would play right into the hands of Black September and embolden other radical groups. In private conversations, Nixon and Kissinger tried to strike a balance between the competing demands of placating Germany and lodging an appropriate response to the attack on the one hand, while avoiding alienating Arab countries and guarding against accusations of being in the pocket of the Israelis on the other. Preventing a military reprisal against the attack was also a priority for Nixon, who suggested the best role for Israel to play was that of "injured martyr."¹

The documents in this chapter are interesting as well for what they reveal about the U.S. approach to the U.N. and the obstacles that the international organization posed to the realization of U.S. policy goals. The United States adopted a leadership role in the U.N. on the terrorism issue and was generally disappointed with the weak reaction of Arab, African, and even some Western European countries with regard to the implementation of strong anti-terrorism initiatives. A potential avenue of study here is the way that U.S. officials sought to balance the competing demands of spearheading anti-terrorism initiatives and accommodating Third World national liberation movements that feared being labeled terrorists. Suspicion of U.S. motives seems to have prevented many Third World nations from accepting U.S. anti-terrorism initiatives and even from recognizing international terrorism as a problem worthy of top-level consideration.

Negotiations with the Cubans to reach an agreement on an anti-hijacking treaty are the subject of the second chapter, which is the smallest of the volume at only twenty documents. The Nixon administration sought Cuban ratification of an international protocol whereby hijackers would be returned to the country of origin of the airline registry. In a particularly interesting document, Kissinger bluntly reveals the potentially embarrassing situation whereby the United States in 1961 had refused similar Cuban

¹ Document 95, Conversation among President Richard Nixon, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger and Chief of Staff Bob Haldeman, September 6, 1972 in *FRUS* E-1.

demands.² When in 1961 several Cubans seized planes and ships to escape the country, the United States failed to respond to Cuba's request that the hijackers be returned to the country of registry of the ships and planes. Nevertheless, in 1973 an agreement to return hijackers to the country of origin of the hijacked vessels was achieved through the mediation of the Swiss embassy in Havana. The main sticking point for Cuba involved the return of illegal exiles. A compromise was reached whereby the United States agreed to return illegal exiles but not retroactively; thus Cuban émigrés already living in the United States would not be affected.

The third chapter of the volume covers international drug production and trafficking, and here readers can witness the escalating significance of anti-narcotics goals in the administration's foreign policy. Nixon, while shying away from the language of national security (which Reagan would use a decade and a half later to describe the menace posed by drug trafficking), nevertheless pronounced the problem of narcotics addiction in the United States as a threat to "national stability."³ Although the document from which this quotation was extracted was not for public consumption, it indicates a level of personal attention to the drug issue on the part of the president that readers may find fascinating. Nixon emerges from the documents in this chapter as a president closely engaged with the issues surrounding drug production, trafficking, and abuse, both domestically and as an international phenomenon with serious ramifications for U.S. foreign policy.

Nixon considered the domestic realities of heroin abuse to be grave enough to warrant a sustained attempt to discourage the production of opium poppy crops abroad through the generous use of financial incentives. In Thailand, despite the best efforts of the Royal Thai Government to eliminate opium poppy production in that country, the primary cultivation site in the northwestern mountain region was under insurgent control. The U.S. embassy in Thailand recommended a crop substitution approach, which offered financial inducements to farmers to switch production from opium poppy to more legitimate cash crops. The administration pushed hard for the complete elimination of opium poppy production in Turkey, despite the continued insistence of Turkish officials that a total ban would spark fierce resistance among poppy farmers. The State Department even offered to pay for the entire annual crop yield, but the Turkish government emphasized that there was no way to plow under the crop without creating a public furor in support of poppy farming. Readers can witness the tension that arose in U.S.-Turkish relations over the perceived lack of political will in Turkey to eliminate all opium poppy cultivation at once, as the Nixon administration insisted, rather than in an incremental fashion, as was the Turkish preference. In an accusation that would be bruited about in the 1980s and 1990s by the Latin American marijuana- and coca-producing countries, the Turkish government accused the Americans of wanting to eliminate all competition for their own domestic pharmaceutical industry. Another claim that later became popular among drug crop-

² Document 122, Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, February 7, 1969 in *FRUS* E-1.

³ Document 144, memorandum from Kissinger to Secretary of State William Rogers and Attorney General John Mitchell, September 29, 1969 in *FRUS* E-1.

producing countries was that the problem lay not on the supply and cultivation side, but on the demand and abuse side. It was difficult for the public to understand why it was incumbent upon Turkish poppy farmers to abandon a legitimate, traditional enterprise for the sake of drug addicts half a world away. The Turkish government eventually came around, however, and enacted a total ban on all illicit poppy cultivation in the country in exchange for U.S. financial assistance. Turkish officials also requested that President Nixon give a public expression of gratitude and reiterate the U.S. commitment to strong economic and military ties between the two countries. This chapter will be fascinating reading for scholars of the drug war and others interested in the origins of U.S. supply-side anti-narcotics policies.

The fourth chapter of the volume contains almost sixty documents on the development of international space initiatives. These documents reveal the close relationship that Nixon administration officials perceived between international cooperation on space initiatives and the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy objectives. With regard to the Soviet Union, for instance, the administration sought to cultivate contacts within the influential strata of Soviet society and to foster a more general improvement in relations. At the same time, U.S. officials strove to reassure its allies that their interests would be considered and that outer space was not simply being carved into American and Soviet spheres of influence. The Nixon administration expressed a desire to keep cooperation with the Soviets on space initiatives insulated from global political developments and hoped that such cooperation could prove a useful corrective to misunderstandings and disagreements over other unrelated matters. The U.S. embassy in Moscow reported that the Soviets were intent merely on acquiring technical knowledge and that broad cooperation would not be allowed to develop to the point that Soviet allies or the international community would realize that the Soviet space program was in fact inferior to that of the United States, nor would American officials be permitted access to information about the military uses of space technology. The embassy also predicted that the Soviet media would suggest that the U.S. space program relied on Soviet technical expertise when in fact the opposite was true.

The fifth chapter, which consists of almost fifty documents on global environmental issues, will undoubtedly be of interest to scholars of U.S. environmental diplomacy. In recent years, scholarship on the non-Cold War aspects of the Cold War period has flourished, and international environmental issues have attracted much attention. From these documents, it is apparent that not all segments of the federal government were equally enthusiastic about what some considered a misdirection of U.S. resources toward international environmental cooperation. The Nixon administration, nevertheless, decided to adopt a more active leadership role in international organizations to deal with environmental problems common to advanced industrial societies. The State Department was involved with both foreign policy goals related to the environment as well as domestic goals that were pursued in concert with foreign countries.

The U.N. Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 devoted special attention to concerns over increasing industrialization and unplanned urbanization in developing countries. Unsurprisingly, less-developed countries labeled environmental

regulations and concerns a “rich man’s game.”⁴ U.S. officials expected Brazil to lead a contingent of developing countries at the conference in order to resist pressure to conform to regulations that would impede industrialization in those countries. It will probably come as no surprise that Soviet officials attempted to downplay the urgency of international comprehensive action on environmental issues, instead emphasizing the primacy of national, piecemeal efforts. The Soviets also attempted to use the conference as a political weapon, urging the German Democratic Republic to attend in order to achieve international recognition. Ultimately, the Soviet and Eastern bloc countries did not participate in the conference, although China used the occasion to firmly align itself with the Third World. Scholars seeking to de-center the Cold War from the narrative of twentieth century international history may have their work cut out for them here, as much of the conference and the preparation for it demonstrated the salience of the rivalry not just between the United States and the Soviet Union but within the communist bloc as well.

The final chapter of the volume contains a little over one hundred documents on global oceans policy. Preserving freedom of navigation was the Nixon administration’s primary goal, although there were internal divisions over the appropriate size of coastal sovereignty zones, with the Defense Department in favor of narrow zones, the Departments of Interior and Commerce in favor of broader zones, and the State Department seeming to vacillate between the two. U.S. officials were particularly worried about states extending their jurisdictional claims beyond the continental shelf and into the abyssal ocean floor. These officials realized that unless a moratorium was put in place, it would be much more difficult to persuade these countries to abandon or modify such claims in the future. Defense and Commerce bemoaned the threat to U.S. military mobility and commercial interests posed by expanding national claims of sovereignty over territorial seas and continental shelves. The Soviet Union and the United States had since 1968 been negotiating an agreement whereby the maximum territorial sea claims would extend to twelve miles. U.S. officials expected a coordinated attack on any resulting agreement on the part of Latin American nations. Nixon proposed a two hundred meter depth for national sovereign rights over resources and that all resources beyond this limit be considered a common heritage of humankind.⁵ It was frankly acknowledged that this option would best preserve U.S. military interests while to some extent satisfying the international community. Some of the lesser developed countries pushed for much wider zones of sovereignty, sometimes to the point of antagonizing their (often land-locked) neighbors. The potential exists here to challenge the dominant narrative of Cold War competition, as the impression that the reader gets from many of the documents is that of U.S.-Soviet collusion against the interests of developing countries attempting to assert sovereignty over the resources of the continental shelf.

⁴ Document 306, Scientific Adviser Miller N. Hudson, Embassy in Brazil, to Christian A. Herter, Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs, February 12, 1971 in *FRUS* E-1.

⁵ Document 375, National Security Decision Memorandum 62, Washington, May 22, 1970 in *FRUS* E-1.

The FRUS-E format provides concise descriptions of the documents, which highlight their origins and significance. The documents are linked directly via HTML. They are also available in PDF format, both for download and within the internet browser, which is a nice function for those who want to preserve space on their computers while still being able to view the original marginalia. The exact citation of each source is also helpfully provided; this will enable scholars working on these topics to expedite their search for said documents during research trips to the National Archives. The one puzzling thing that may leave readers scratching their heads is the inclusion of documents which are seemingly still classified. The headings of these documents link to the citations of the documents with no accompanying text. Aside from this oddity, however, this FRUS volume is chock full of fascinating documents that should interest scholars from a variety of subfields and could lead to some provocative reinterpretations of the conventional wisdom surrounding the Cold War.

Michelle Reeves is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin. She is currently in Moscow researching Soviet policy toward Latin America from the death of Stalin to the collapse of the Soviet Union. She has written an article on the rhetorical origins and evolution of narcoterrorism for a forthcoming edited volume on Cold War Latin America.

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