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Entering the Profession at the End of the Cold War

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Some people might know when they are in college that they want to go to graduate school and get a Ph.D. I did not. I thought initially after college, I would pursue campaign work, and my first job—which I started in February of my senior year—was managing a city council campaign in Boston. We lost by a razor-thin margin that November, and if we had won, I probably wouldn't be writing this essay.

Despite getting offers to work on other campaigns, I decided I should do something else. I asked myself, who do I know whose career I would like to have? And for me the obvious person was my undergraduate thesis adviser at Harvard University, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., who had been a wonderful mentor to me. He traveled. He wrote books. He taught. It seemed ideal! I got a job at Harvard while I was applying to graduate school, working as a research assistant and reporting to Harvard graduate student Scott Sagan, who became a great mentor.

Nye advised me to go to Berkeley to study with Ernst B. Haas and Kenneth Waltz, despite the fact that I received an offer of only one year of funding and had received a full funding offer elsewhere. I had never been to California, and it did not occur to me to visit. I wouldn't have had the funds, anyway. Nye told me to go, so I went.

Although I planned to combine international relations theory and American foreign policy, with a special interest in NATO (the subject of my undergraduate thesis), Harvard post-doc Stephen Walt, who had just finished his Ph.D. at Berkeley, told me before I headed West that I should take a class on Soviet foreign policy with George Breslauer because he thought I would find it interesting. At our program orientation, our graduate adviser told us we should take classes on lots of different subjects in our first year since it would be the last time to do so before we specialized. I took a class that fall from Chalmers Johnson on Japan, and I sat in for a few weeks on Nelson Polsby's class on the work of political scientist Robert Dahl. Neither of those grabbed me, but I thought it was great advice to try out different subjects.

Meanwhile, even the one year of funding wasn't enough to get me through the first year. Luckily, Dennis Ross had just started as director of the Berkeley-Stanford Program on Soviet International Behavior, and he needed a research assistant. All the students in that program were fully funded, so they didn't need the work. I did. The one benefit of a lack of funding in graduate school is I became used to applying for external support, which I have done nearly every year since 1984.

Per Walt's advice, I took Breslauer's course in spring 1985. Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the middle of the semester. I was hooked. I started Russian language training and had amazing teachers at Berkeley. When, a couple of years later, I went to the Soviet Union to study, I was thrilled when my phonetics teacher told me derisively that I sounded like I had a Bulgarian accent; I told her that for a boy from Baltimore, I would take that as a compliment! I soaked up as much as I could from economist Gregory Grossman; historians Nicholas Riasanovksy, Martin Malia, Reginald Zelnik, David Holloway, Norman Naimark, and Alexander Dallin; and political scientists Breslauer, Ross, Gail Lapidus, Andrew Janos, Kenneth Jowitt, Condoleezza Rice, and Coit D. "Chip" Blacker. I

was so fortunate to be able to learn from such an amazing array of scholar-teachers at Berkeley and Stanford as well as from an extraordinary cohort of graduate students, a number of whom remain close friends today. After Ross left for Washington in 1986, I went to work for Dallin. Because all of the Stanford students had full funding and didn't need the work as his research assistant, he needed someone to help him, and I desperately needed the money. He was a remarkable man, who also became my landlord. He had me go through the records of all the Comintern and Cominform meetings—an experience that helped me hone my Kremlinological skills, which, unfortunately, continue to come in handy especially in studying the United States today.

The point of the Berkeley-Stanford Program was to provide training in International Relations theory and Soviet area studies. The opportunity to work with Haas and Waltz was a dream (and so was having psychologist Philip Tetlock on my dissertation committee), but the person who made the biggest impact on me was Alexander George at Stanford. Alex actually funded my RA work for Ross through his MacArthur 'genius' award.

In the fall semester of my second year, there were so many of us at Berkeley who wanted to take Alex's course on The Comparative Case Study Method that he drove up to Berkeley one night a week to teach about a dozen of us. (In those days, the traffic wasn't as bad, but still, we all would have gone down to Palo Alto to do it. He insisted on coming to us.) I audited the class but did all the work (which involved tearing apart the methodology of a prominent work in the field and then building a research design to improve on it) and remain forever grateful, particularly for his inspiration to pursue academic research that might prove of value to policy makers.

The key choice point in my career came in 1989. Dennis Ross became director of policy planning for Secretary of State James Baker. He invited a number of us to join him at the State Department. My good friends Andrew Carpendale (Berkeley), John Hannah (Stanford), and Jeffrey Hughes (Stanford) took him up on it. I was in the middle of my dissertation and wanted to see it to completion. I told Dennis that I wanted to finish and see if I could land a tenure-track job.

I missed out on quite a lot (an understatement for sure), but chose the career that was right for me. I did finish, and I was lucky enough to land a tenure-track job at Cornell. It's worth noting that when I went on the job market in the fall of 1989, I had my theory chapter and one case study completed. Berkeley discouraged us from publishing as grad students in order to allow us to focus on finishing our dissertations, and, as a result, I had no publications. My file would not even be looked at today, but the fact that I could get a job at a place like Cornell shows the power at the time of a pretty closed network. Joe Nye was right to have steered me to Berkeley.

One other feature of my graduate experience is worth noting. As I mentioned, I was always applying for funding since I was not initially funded past my first year. When I was writing my dissertation, I sent a letter to Arnold Horelick at RAND asking if they might have funding to support me. He said no, but he was willing to provide me with funds to fly down to RAND in Santa Monica (on the beach!) to present chapters as I was drafting them. I took him up on it, and took multiple trips to RAND where Horelick, Arnold Kantor, Robert Nurick and a few others provided detailed comments on my work. One of the reasons I am so eager to help younger scholars is that so many people helped me. And I always encourage younger scholars to cold call or cold email people because folks often will respond, and who knows what might happen.

Originally my dissertation was going to compare Soviet and American foreign policy, but my committee (Breslauer, Waltz, and Tetlock) encouraged me before long to focus just on the Soviet side in order to finish sooner, and they signed off on it in March 1990. (Berkeley did not have a formal defense, so you walked the piece of paper around to collect the three signatures. It was rather anti-climactic.) After being on a fellowship at Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation from September 1989-December 1990, where I met Michael McFaul and Andrew Bennett, among other amazing scholars and practitioners, I went to Cornell in January 1991 to fill the Soviet foreign policy position that was vacant due to the retirement of legendary Sovietologist Myron Rush. The department was amazing; the International Relations cohort was led by Peter Katzenstein and included Shibley Telhami, Jonathan Kirshner, Thomas Christensen, Richard Ned Lebow, Lawrence Scheinman, and Judith Reppy. My next-door office neighbor was the remarkable Benedict Anderson, whose depth and breadth of knowledge was simply extraordinary. And the students, wow. The Ph.D. program

in the department during my time there included Elizabeth Kier, Nina Tannenwald, Richard Price, Robert Herman, Peter Andreas, Marc Lynch, David Leheny, Christian Reus-Smit, Audie Klotz, and many others. My first semester there I worked with two brilliant undergraduate sophomores: Nora Bensahel and Derek Chollet.

I was hired to teach Soviet Foreign Policy, which I did spring and fall of 1991. Then the USSR collapsed and that class moved to the history department. Now what?

Thank goodness I had the International Relations training at Berkeley because the field turned its back on area studies. I feel incredibly fortunate to have worked with political scientists, economists, and historians at Berkeley who had area interests and not just theoretical ones, because that would simply not be part of most people's Ph.D. training today. It wasn't so easy to publish a book on Soviet foreign policy after the collapse, but fortunately, I was able to get my dissertation published in 1994 as *Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy*.¹

For personal reasons, I left Ithaca for Washington, D.C. in January 1994, taking an International Relations job at George Washington University, and what a great move that turned out to be. The chair of the department, Lee Sigelman, was a visionary and really knew how to build. It was an incredibly collegial environment, and I was quite fortunate my IR tenure cohort was absolutely brilliant: Deborah Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan Sell. It was a little intimidating to go up for tenure at the same time as the three of them, but it was great to be through on the other side together. We and our colleagues proceeded to hire an extraordinary group of scholars and built an amazing department, and we recruited many outstanding students over the years. I found talent-spotting and hiring to be one of my favorite activities, and that served me well when I later became dean at American University's School of International Service. In my six years as dean, we hired 26 tenure-line faculty—a wonderfully diverse cohort of remarkable junior and senior scholars across a range of disciplines and fields.

A year after I started at GWU, I was on a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship (IAF), where I served at the State Department and on the National Security Council staff, working on Russia issues. The IAFs are designed to be transformative, and mine certainly was, both for my teaching and research interests. The overwhelming feeling I had during that year was that my understanding of Russian foreign policy was a lot better than my understanding of American foreign policy, and I decided I wanted to start writing on the latter when I returned to academia. I picked an issue that I hadn't worked on in government, thinking I could be more objective that way, which is how I ended up writing a book on the U.S. decision to enlarge NATO,² a topic that allowed me to write about the intricacies of U.S. foreign policymaking, at least in the Clinton administration. I had no idea I would still be writing about NATO enlargement more than two decades later!

When I finished the NATO book, I was completing a stint as a visiting fellow at Brookings, and the head of the foreign policy program, Richard Haass (who was the only person who responded to my cold inquiry the year before when I was looking for sabbatical funding to write the NATO book), encouraged me to reach out to McFaul to write a book on U.S. policy toward Russia after the Cold War.³

While two books on American foreign policy in the 1990s might seem like enough, not long after finishing the book with McFaul, I happened to be chatting with Derek Chollet about teaching on U.S. foreign policy. We were bemoaning the lack

¹ James M. Goldgeier, *Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy: Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

² Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1999).

³ Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2003).

of a book on the period between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and we decided we should write one.⁴

I have learned so much from co-authoring (and co-teaching, which was encouraged at Cornell and enabled me to teach the IR Ph.D. field seminar with Katzenstein). I have been blessed with an amazing group of co-authors. In addition to Chollet and McFaul, with whom I have written on many occasions, article and blog post co-authors have included Zsuzsa Csergo (on varieties of nationalism in Europe), Ivo Daalder (on NATO as well as missile defense, the latter with James Lindsay), Lindsey Ford (on alliances), Gorana Grgic (on legacies of the Kosovo war), Bruce Jentleson (on bridging the academic-policy gap), Jonathan Kirshner (on progressive foreign policy), Elizabeth Saunders (on U.S. foreign policy and the power of the presidency, including a piece with Sarah Binder), Jeremi Suri (on American national security strategy), Phil Tetlock (on psychology and international relations theory), Steven Weber (on multilateralism), and Andrew Weiss (on U.S. policy toward Ukraine).⁵

Up until recently, I always worked with someone I agreed with. I learned from them because they knew lots of things I did not. It turns out, however, that working with someone you don't agree with can be extraordinarily rewarding as well. In December 2018, I called Joshua Shiffrin, whose work I have long admired. I proposed that given our disagreement on the value of NATO's post-Cold War enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe for U.S. national security, we should write together on the legacies of enlargement in order to try to improve the quality of a debate that tends toward the extremes. In spring 2020, we completed work on a special issue for the journal *International Politics* that was Josh's brainchild.⁶ In addition to the framing piece for the special issue (which includes eleven other terrific articles), he and I have a couple of other papers in the works, and it's been extraordinarily fun to work with him.

The most rewarding experience I've had in my career has been my involvement in the Bridging the Gap (BtG) initiative, funded for many years by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and, more recently, by the Frankel Family Foundation.⁷ Steve Weber and Bruce Jentleson got me involved in the project thanks to our shared love and admiration for Alex George, whose career was dedicated to producing theoretically grounded policy-relevant research, and when I moved to American University to become dean in 2011, we moved the project there. The opportunity to work closely with Steve and Bruce as well as with Naazneen Barma, Brent Durbin, Danielle Gilbert, Eric Lorber, Ely Ratner, Jordan Tama, Rachel Whitlark and

⁴ Derek Chollet and Goldgeier, *America between the Wars: From 11/9-9/11* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008).

⁵ See, for example, Chollet and Goldgeier, "The Faulty Premises of the Next Marshall Plan," *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2005-2006); Goldgeier and McFaul, "A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Organization* (Spring 1992); Zsuzsa Csergo and Goldgeier, "Nationalist Strategies and European Integration," *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2004); Ivo Daalder and Goldgeier, "Global NATO," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2006); Daalder, Goldgeier and James Lindsay, "Deploying NMD – Not Whether, But How," *Survival* (Spring 2000); Lindsey Ford and Goldgeier, "Who Are America's Allies and Are They Paying Their Fair Share of Defense?" *Brookings Voter Vitals*, 17 December 2019; Goldgeier and Gorana Grgic, "The Kosovo War in Retrospect," *War on the Rocks*, 24 March 2019; Goldgeier and Bruce Jentleson, "How to Bridge the Gap between Policy and Scholarship," *War on the Rocks*, 29 June 2015; Goldgeier and Jonathan Kirshner, "Reviving Progressive Foreign Policy," *The National Interest*, 9 June 2016; Goldgeier and Elizabeth N. Saunders, "The Unconstrained Presidency," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2018); Sarah Binder, Goldgeier and Saunders, "The Imperial Presidency Is Alive and Well," *Foreign Affairs*, 21 January 2020; Goldgeier and Jeremi Suri, "Revitalizing the U.S. National Security Strategy," *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2016); Goldgeier and Philip E. Tetlock, "Psychology and International Relations Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* (2001); Goldgeier and Steven Weber, "Getting to No," *The National Interest* (Winter 2005-2006); Goldgeier and Andrew S. Weiss, "Trying to 'Win' Ukraine Could Lead to Its Collapse," *The New Republic*, 5 May 2014.

⁶ Goldgeier and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Evaluating NATO Enlargement: Scholarly Debates, Policy Implications, and Roads Not Taken," *International Politics* (June 2020).

⁷ See www.bridgingthegaproject.org.

many other great scholars along with our wonderful BtG staff has been a real treat, and the support from Stephen Del Rosso at Carnegie and Allan Myer at Frankel has been quite overwhelming. I hope given all his work to bridge the academic-policy divide that not only would Alex George be pleased with the Ph.D. and faculty workshops we hold annually, as well as the research we have produced over the years, but he would be excited to see the great books coming out in the Oxford University Press Bridging the Gap book series that Steve, Bruce, and I co-edit.⁸ Promoting the type of work that Alex encouraged has been a great joy.

Given that I am writing this in the midst of the global pandemic, I can't help but close by reflecting on my good fortune at every step of the way, and particularly for the ability to have had the type of academic career I have enjoyed, including tenure-line positions for nearly 30 years as well as opportunities to be affiliated with a range of think tanks and scholarly centers. The job market has always been challenging for Ph.D. students for as long as I have been in academia, but the pressures for students to publish while in graduate school have grown enormously given the profiles of applicants on the job market. So has the need to become well versed in multiple methods. I had training in qualitative methods and no publication record when I went on the market; I just had recommendations from top people in the field, and luckily for me that is all I needed to get my start. There are more post-doc opportunities now, but many students are doing more than one because of the challenges of the market. I worry that the pandemic will fundamentally change the business model of universities and accelerate the trends away from tenure-line to contingent teaching positions. The latter can be rewarding, but for those who are trying to publish with higher teaching loads, it can be quite stressful and is much more insecure. We try to do our part through Bridging the Gap to assist Ph.D. students in their search for career opportunities inside academia and out, and I hope we can continue to be a resource for young scholars who have so much to offer.

James Goldgeier is a Robert Bosch Senior Visiting Fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution and a Professor of International Relations at the School of International Service at American University, where he served as Dean from 2011-2017. Previously, he was a professor at George Washington University, where from 2001-2005, he directed the Elliott School's Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies and co-founded the Summer Institute on Conducting Archival Research (SICAR). Before moving to Washington, D.C., he taught at Cornell University. He has served as a director for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian Affairs on the National Security Council Staff, and he has held appointments or fellowships at the Library of Congress, the Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Transatlantic Academy at the German Marshall Fund, the Hoover Institution, and the Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation. He is a past president of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs, and he co-directs the Bridging the Gap project, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Frankel Family Foundation. He has authored or co-authored four books, and he has received the Edgar Furniss Book Award and the Georgetown University Lepgold Book Prize.

⁸ To date, the series has produced six titles with Oxford University Press: Matthew Kroenig, *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy: Why Strategic Superiority Matters* (2018) Jeffrey A. Friedman, *War and Chance: Assessing Uncertainty in International Politics*, (2019); James H. Lebovic, *Planning to Fail: The U.S. Wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan* (2019); Catherine E. Herrold, *Delta Democracy: Pathways to Incremental Civic Revolution in Egypt and Beyond* (2020) Rupal N. Mehta, *Delaying Doomsday: The Politics of Nuclear Reversal* (2020); David Barno and Nora Bensahel, *Adaptation under Fire: How Militaries Change in Wartime* (forthcoming, September 2020); a number of other manuscripts are under contract.