

H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXII-30

Luke A. Nichter. *The Last Brahmin: Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and the Making of the Cold War.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. ISBN: 9780300217803 (hardcover, \$37.50).

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INTRODUCTION BY JESSICA ELKIND, SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

In his engaging new book, *The Last Brahmin*, Luke Nichter presents a compelling biography of Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Nichter argues that Lodge was one of the most influential, though often overlooked, figures in the history of twentieth-century U.S. foreign relations and that “the story of [Lodge’s] life and career illustrates America’s coming of age as a superpower” (2). Throughout the book, Nichter emphasizes Lodge’s character, specifically his commitment to public service and his sense that duty should outweigh personal ambition. In fact, one of the main themes of the book is how Lodge’s integrity and patriotism transformed the Republican Party and shaped American foreign policy.

The Last Brahmin is well-written and relies on extensive archival research in collections around the world, as well as oral histories and interviews with many of Lodge’s family members, acquaintances, and colleagues. Organized chronologically, the book begins with Lodge’s childhood and early political career and concludes with his retirement after a half-century of public service. In the early chapters, Nichter paints a vivid picture of Lodge’s privileged upbringing, childhood experiences, and his intrinsic intellectual curiosity. As a member of one of Boston’s elite “Brahmin” families, Lodge continued the family tradition—unbroken since George Washington’s administration—of serving in politics.

According to Nichter, the death of Lodge’s father when Lodge was a young boy had a profound effect on his life. In the aftermath of the tragedy, Lodge’s mother moved the family to Paris for several years. Living abroad as a child allowed Lodge to become fluent in French and sparked a lifelong interest in learning about other countries and cultures. In addition, after his father’s death, Lodge developed a close relationship with his grandfather, Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. A prominent Republican senator from Massachusetts, the elder Lodge is best known for his opposition to Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations. In fact, Lodge Sr.’s legacy and influence on his grandson provides the backdrop to a central feature of the narrative: Lodge’s personal transformation into an internationalist and his role in advancing Cold War foreign policies.

Throughout his career, Lodge was part of a generation of Republican politicians who were willing to work across the aisle and reach bipartisan compromises. Nichter demonstrates how Lodge altered the modern GOP by strengthening its progressive wing and steering the Party in a more internationalist direction. As a member of the Massachusetts legislature and the U.S. Senate, Lodge took principled stances on a number of controversial issues, even when it meant bucking the trends within his own party. For example, Lodge supported some of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal programs and was one of the few Republican senators to vote in favor of the Lend-Lease bill in 1941. Lodge was also committed to military service. As an Army reservist and sitting senator, Lodge participated in training exercises in North Africa in 1942. Then in 1944, he resigned from the Senate in order to serve in a combat unit in Europe, becoming the first senator to leave office for military service since the Civil War. According to Nichter’s account, Lodge’s wartime experiences convinced him that working productively with allies was an absolute necessity for the United States. As Nichter explains, during the early 1940s, Lodge came to believe that the U.S. had a “responsibility in maintain the peace of the world...by cooperating with like-minded powers” (61). Such convictions shaped Lodge’s positions upon his return to the Senate after the war and resulted in his conversion into a committed internationalist.

After the Second World War and the loss of his Senate seat to John F. Kennedy in 1952, Lodge spent the remainder of his life advising presidents and advancing U.S. interests around the world. In addition to exploring Lodge’s own public service, Nichter emphasizes Lodge’s contributions to Dwight Eisenhower’s political career. As one of the first people to identify the celebrated general as a potential president, Lodge ran Eisenhower’s successful campaign in 1952 and then became one of his most trusted foreign policy advisors. Nichter devotes several chapters to Lodge’s tenure as the U.S. permanent ambassador to the United Nations, a position that Eisenhower elevated to cabinet status. According to Nichter’s account, Lodge’s presence at the U.N. was transformative—it “gave real legitimacy to the international body that served as a multilateral vehicle for U.S. engagement with the world” (130). Lodge’s accomplishments during Eisenhower’s presidency secured his selection as Richard Nixon’s running mate in the 1960 election. Following the narrow defeat of the Nixon-Lodge ticket, it appeared that Lodge’s political career might be over. However, Lodge would go on to serve as a diplomat for the next quarter century, in both Republican and Democratic administrations. The highlights of this period in Lodge’s career include ambassadorships in South Vietnam and West Germany, a central role in the Vietnam peace talks, and a position as

personal representative of the president to the Vatican. Nichter skillfully contextualizes Lodge's long career within the prevailing political and international developments of this nearly fifty-year period.

In their reviews of *The Last Brahmin*, John Milton Cooper, Jr., Lloyd Gardner, and Sophie Joscelyne conclude that Nichter's book makes important contributions to our understanding of Lodge and his influence on U.S. foreign policy. Cooper writes, "This biography does full justice to Lodge and the role he played in some of the most significant events of his time." The reviewers especially appreciate Nichter's impressive research and his accessible writing. Cooper describes the book as "a pleasure to read" and calls the research behind it "awe-inspiring." Similarly, Joscelyne notes that Nichter "weaves extensive archival research into a highly readable narrative."

Although the reviews in this roundtable are generally positive, the reviewers raise some important questions and issues, in particular with respect to Nichter's interpretation of Lodge's internationalism. Gardner begins his review with a discussion of the distinction between interventionists and internationalists, citing his former advisor Howard Beale's work on Theodore Roosevelt. Gardner notes that, despite his reputation as a staunch isolationist, Lodge's grandfather was actually "the most famous senator in the ranks of the expansionists." Gardner's review suggests that interventionism and expansionism might also be a more accurate way to understand the younger Lodge's approach to the world. As Gardner writes, "Throughout Cabot Lodge, Jr.'s career, then, there could be no higher calling than stopping the United States from hiding from world leadership."

Cooper is more direct in his critique of the foreign policy of both the senior and junior Lodges—he contends that both men were proponents of American empire. In the case of Lodge, Jr., his participation in the imperial project was especially apparent in his roles as ambassador to South Vietnam and negotiator during the peace talks. While Joscelyne does not specifically object to the characterization of Lodge as an internationalist, her review takes slight exception with Nichter's analysis of how and why Lodge embraced internationalism. According to Nichter, Lodge's experiences fighting in World War II served as the primary catalyst for his shift towards internationalism. Joscelyne suggests that Nichter may have overstated the degree to which the war served as the only or most important factor in Lodge's transformation. As Joscelyne writes, "Arguably, however, Lodge came into his own in his role as a diplomat."

All three reviewers also devote significant attention to Nichter's interpretation of the 1963 coup in South Vietnam that resulted in President Ngo Dinh Diem's overthrow and death. This issue is important because Nichter presents his account of Lodge's role in the coup as one of the book's primary contributions. As Cooper points out, Lodge's ambassadorship to South Vietnam, which lasted less than three full years, accounts for over one third of the book's text, and Nichter devotes 61 pages to the few months and days leading up to the coup. In fact, *The Last Brahmin* begins with a short description of the coup's importance and offers a tantalizing promise that the book will reveal new information about this pivotal event. However, Nichter does not make a clear argument in the introduction about how this new information might fundamentally alter our understanding of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Nichter's new information on the coup comes in the form of a previously unpublished and secretly-recorded conversation between John F. Kennedy and Lodge on the eve of the latter's departure for Saigon as the new U.S. ambassador. According to Nichter, this conversation "gave Lodge a mandate—not an order for a coup, but an instruction to plan for its possibility" (200). Most importantly, Nichter contends that this exchange proves that Kennedy authorized the coup months before it occurred and that U.S. policy in Vietnam was "not the product of a rogue ambassador but rather came from Washington" (232).

While the reviewers agree with Nichter that the taped conversation between Kennedy and Lodge absolves Lodge of some responsibility for the coup, they also downplay the significance of this revelation to varying degrees. Gardner acknowledges that the publication of Kennedy's August 1963 instructions debunks the conventional wisdom that Lodge served as the primary architect of the coup. However, Gardner also states that the conversation "confirms softer evidence that has been available for some time." Cooper suggests that the exchange actually reveals more about Kennedy's position and motivations—specifically his ambivalence regarding Vietnam policy, his unwillingness to provide the Republicans with campaign fodder for the upcoming election, and the powerful influence of his hard-line advisers—than it does about Lodge's role. Perhaps most important, Joscelyne concludes that Nichter's detailed discussion of American decision-making around

the coup fails to engage with larger questions about U.S. involvement in the region or Lodge's views about the conflict in Vietnam. Joscelyne's review also raises interesting questions about how Nichter treats Lodge's anti-Communism, more generally. She notes that Nichter might have engaged more directly with recent scholarship that considers the intersections among gender, masculinity, and Cold War-era foreign policy.

Despite their relatively minor criticisms of the book, Gardner, Cooper, and Joscelyne agree that *The Last Brahmin* fills an important gap in the scholarship on American policy makers during the Cold War. By exploring the trajectory of Lodge's career and shedding new light on his role in Vietnam, Nichter restores Lodge to a position of prominence within both the Republican Party and the twentieth-century foreign policy establishment. As I learned more about Lodge's life and career, I was struck by how out of place he would be in today's hyper-partisan and polarized political landscape. In the final chapter of *The Last Brahmin* Nichter presents several quotations that had special meaning for Henry Cabot Lodge. One in particular seems to sum up Lodge himself: "a man of old-fashioned virtue and trustworthiness" (345).

Participants:

Luke A. Nichter is a Professor of History and Beck Family Senior Fellow at Texas A&M University – Central Texas. His other books include *Richard Nixon and Europe: The Reshaping of the Postwar World* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), and the *New York Times* bestseller *The Nixon Tapes: 1971-1972* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014) and sequel *The Nixon Tapes: 1973* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015) – each co-edited with Douglas Brinkley. His next book, an international history of the 1968 U.S. presidential election, is under contract with Yale University Press.

Jessica Elkind is Associate Professor of History at San Francisco State University, where she teaches courses on American foreign relations, Southeast Asian history, the Cold War, American empire, and the Vietnam War. She is the author of *Aid under Fire: Nation Building and the Vietnam War* (University Press of Kentucky: 2016), as well as several articles and essays on U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. Her current research examines American non-military intervention and humanitarian aid in Cambodia during the 1970s.

John Milton Cooper, Jr. has written on World War I, the progressive era, and Woodrow Wilson. He has dealt most extensively with the elder Henry Cabot Lodge in *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001). He is currently collaborating with Trygve Throntveit on a one-volume edition of Woodrow Wilson for Princeton University Press.

Lloyd C. Gardner is Professor Emeritus of History at Rutgers University. A Wisconsin Ph.D., he is the author or editor of more than fifteen books on American foreign policy, including *Safe for Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 1984), *Approaching Vietnam* (W.W. Norton, 1988), *Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam* (Ivan R. Dee, 1995), and *The War on Leakers* (The New Press, 2016). He has been president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Affairs

Sophie Joscelyne is a Ph.D. candidate and Doctoral Tutor in American History at the University of Sussex. She recently submitted her doctoral thesis on the subject of American intellectuals and the concept of totalitarianism since the 1960s. Her article "Norman Mailer and American Totalitarianism in the 1960s" has been published in the journal *Modern Intellectual History* (online, September 2020). Her research interests include US Cold War history, 1960s radicalism, neo-conservatism, liberal interventionism in the twenty-first century, and the role of ideas in American foreign policy from the Cold War to the War on Terror.

REVIEW BY JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR., UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON,
EMERITUS

In February 1919, the elder Henry Cabot Lodge sneered at the Draft Covenant of the League of Nations, authored by President Woodrow Wilson: “As an English production it does not rank high. It might get by at Princeton but certainly not at Harvard.”¹ Forty-two years later, his grandson displayed a similar attitude, though in a jocular vein, when he received an honorary degree from Princeton. The younger Lodge was coming off two terms in the Senate, nearly eight years as American representative to the United Nations (UN), and having run for vice-president with Richard Nixon in the most recent election. That year, 1961, Princeton pulled out all the stops in awarding honorary doctorates to notables, others of whom included the secretaries of state and the treasury, the presidents of Notre Dame and Radcliffe, the historian Herbert Feis, and the editor of *Foreign Affairs*. The rest of the honorees wore black gowns, including two others who were also Harvard graduates and the Radcliffe president. Not Lodge—he stood out in his crimson Harvard gown, which clashed vividly with the orange Princeton hood.² For anyone else, this would have been a sartorial *faux pas*, but not for Lodge, for such is the way of the Boston Brahmin.

That word ‘Brahmin’ supplies the title of Luke Nichter’s excellent biography of the younger Lodge. It is a wise choice because this identity played a central role in his life. The term comes from India, to denote the highest status in the caste system, a divinely ordained rank that gives its members direct access to the gods. Their New England counterparts enjoyed a similar dispensation, as summed up in verse:

And this is good old Boston,
The home of the bean and the cod,
Where the Lowells talk only to the Cabots,
And the Cabots talk only to God.

Fittingly, the grandfather and grandson were known to those who called them by a first name, not as ‘Henry’ or ‘Hank,’ but always as ‘Cabot.’

After the younger Lodge’s father died when he was only seven, his grandfather soon became the dominant influence in his life. His widowed mother took him and his brother and sister to live in Paris for two years—which gave him fluency in French and a steeping in French culture, assets that later served him well in military and diplomatic service. Aside from that interval, young Lodge never strayed far from his grandfather, who directed his studies and pointed him toward a political career. Rather than rebelling against this grand-paternal regimen, as he admitted he might have done, he enjoyed it. Interestingly, the elder Lodge recommended journalism rather than law as the best preparation for politics, which proved to be good advice.

¹ Lodge quoted in Stephen Bonsal, *Unfinished Business* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1944), 275. Interestingly, Wilson agreed with Lodge about the literary deficiencies of the Draft Covenant, which diplomatic necessity had made him amend and tone down. See John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 51.

² This is an eyewitness account. I was a sweltering graduating senior that hot June day. The one of the notables who made the strongest impression on me was the *Foreign Affairs* editor, Hamilton Fish Armstrong. Between the glamorous citation and his white moustache and flowing white hair, he was the one I wanted to be in my imaginings.

This is not to say that the younger Lodge became a clone of his grandfather. The difference in spirit behind their respective rank-pulling on Princeton was telling. Although the grandfather could be warm and engaging with family and social peers—most notably his bosom buddy Theodore (never “Teddy”) Roosevelt—he had a public manner that was often arrogant and aloof, and he was well hated by political adversaries and by some on his own side of the aisle. His grandson came off as just the opposite. One observer noted, “The average Yankee Republican acts as if he were doing the voters a favor by running for office. Cabot tries to make the voters feel that they were doing him a favor—and that is what the Irish like” (79-80). One Massachusetts Irishman, John Kennedy’s factotum Larry O’Brien, said, “I always found him an extremely likeable man with whom it was impossible to be angry” (124). To put it colloquially, the second Lodge was a much nicer guy than the first.³

For two decades, the younger Lodge led a charmed political life. Easily elected at the age of thirty to a seat in the Massachusetts legislature, he moved on to his grandfather’s old bailiwick of the U.S. Senate four years later. Inasmuch as the year was 1936 and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s tidal wave engulfed Massachusetts as elsewhere, Lodge’s victory was a rare political feat. It helped that his opponent was James Michael Curley, who had a checkered past, to say the least, had made many enemies in his previous career, and did not enjoy Roosevelt’s backing. Curley tried to belittle Lodge by calling him ‘Henry’ and ‘Little Henry,’ but the aspersions failed to stick. Six years later, he faced a somewhat tougher race against Representative Joseph Casey, who did have Roosevelt’s backing. Lodge profited from Joseph Kennedy’s spending against Casey in the Democratic primary and from his having seen combat in North Africa as an activated reservist before members of Congress were ordered back from military service. A little over a year after being re-elected, Lodge became the first senator since the Civil War to resign in order to go on active military duty. He saw combat again in Italy, France, and Germany, and he used his fluent French to serve as a high-level liaison with their forces. In 1946, he returned to the Senate to occupy his grandfather’s old seat by beating the long-serving incumbent, David Ignatius Walsh, who was showing his age and had been implicated in an alleged sexual scandal involving a man a few years earlier.

Then came 1952. Thus far, Lodge had faced variously compromised Irish-American opponents, and he had enjoyed crossover support from their ethnic community. Now, he faced a Hibernian challenger with none of their disadvantages and a plethora of assets of his own—Joe Kennedy’s eldest surviving son, John Fitzgerald Kennedy—and this time, Lodge carried baggage of his own. The heaviest piece came from his having spent the previous two years masterminding and overseeing General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s drive for the Republican presidential nomination that year. Lodge’s tireless efforts on Ike’s behalf caused him to neglect his own re-election campaign. Nichter maintains that this was the major reason for his losing to Kennedy, and he interprets it as a noble act of self-sacrifice.

Perhaps so, but Lodge probably suffered more from having earned the enmity of the GOP’s conservative, mainly midwestern, and erstwhile isolationist forces led by Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, whom Eisenhower nosed out for the nomination.⁴ One denizen of that wing of the party in Massachusetts was a newspaper publisher who made it his mission to defeat Lodge. Besides, the handsome, youthful war hero Kennedy was an exceedingly attractive candidate who ran an excellent campaign that took leaves from Lodge’s previous runs. Kennedy could draw from the cavernously deep financial pockets of his father, who spent lavishly and strategically to send ‘Jack’ to the Senate and put him on the road to the White House.

³ Not to take away from the younger Lodge’s genuine likeability, but he needed this quality more than the older one. In his long career, the elder Lodge faced the voters only a few times. Early on, he ran for Congress in a safely Republican district. In his last two Senate races, which came after the adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment, he won comfortably in 1916, but in 1922 he barely squeaked by a much lesser known Democratic opponent.

⁴ There was an irony in this symbolic contest between these Eastern establishment and Midwestern conservative and isolationist Republicans. The leader of the heartlanders and conservatives, Taft, sported an even more impressive political and educational pedigree than Lodge’s. He was the son of a president, chief justice, and cabinet member and the grandson of another cabinet member, as well as a graduate of Yale and Harvard Law School, where he had edited the law review.

For many politicians such a defeat, one which was made more galling by Eisenhower's sweep of Massachusetts and the unseating of a Democratic governor, would have been a career-ender. But, again, not for Lodge. The new president not only owed Lodge for his pre-nomination labors, but the two men had also forged strong personal bonds that went back to the war. John Foster Dulles had a pre-emptive claim on the secretaryship of state, so Eisenhower named Lodge to the UN post, which he elevated to cabinet status, and made him a co-equal partner in foreign policy. The next seven and a half years at the UN gave Lodge national standing and recognition that he had not enjoyed before. He became the public face of the administration's foreign policy, as he denounced Communist aggression and espionage and made America's case to the world. Also, in the short-lived thaw at the end of the 1950s, he hosted the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev on his well-publicized visit to the United States. These years provide one of the justifications for Nichter's subtitle about Lodge's role in the making of the Cold War.

His reward for that role was the vice-presidential nomination on the Republican ticket with Nixon in 1960. What, if any, part he played in the outcome of this cliffhanger election continues to be in dispute. One western Democrat was overheard chuckling about the contrast between the respective running mates: "Take Lyndon [Johnson] and put him in tails, and he still looks like a farmer. Take Lodge and put him in overalls, and he still looks like a diplomat."⁵ There was carping at the time and later about Lodge's supposedly lackadaisical campaigning, which Nichter cites evidence to refute. Publicly and privately to Lodge, the presidential nominee had only good things to say about his running mate, but Nichter has found unpublished chapters from Nixon's memoirs that contain bitter criticisms. Lodge made his biggest splash by announcing that, if elected, Nixon would appoint a "Negro" to the cabinet—a pledge Nixon walked back because he was courting southern white votes (178). The subsequent adulation of John Kennedy and "Camelot" have obscured how nearly those things did not come to pass. Nixon almost won this election, and, if he had, his vice president could well have played a big part in the administration, perhaps as a foreign policy czar over a figurehead secretary of state—the way Henry Kissinger later did during Nixon's first term.

Lodge was not yet sixty, but he believed his public career was over. Once more, that did not happen. Despite their rivalry, he and Kennedy liked each other, and the young president valued the older man's foreign policy experience and standing within his party. In June 1963, Kennedy summoned Lodge to the White House to offer him what Secretary of State Dean Rusk called "the toughest post in our service"—the ambassadorship to South Vietnam (192). Lodge accepted without hesitation and thereby began an engagement that would occupy him off and on, but mainly on, for the next six years.

Those years take up 150 pages, over one-third of the text of this book. Given the importance of these events, this is probably not an excessive allocation of attention, but I do have questions about the allocation within this part of the book. Sixty-one pages are devoted to the first three months of Lodge's first tour in Saigon and deal with the coup that overthrew President Ngo Dinh Diem and led to his murder, along with his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. These are the only pages I had difficulty reading. Nichter writes well here, as he does consistently throughout the book, but the confusion of what was happening and the multiplicity of characters, both American and Vietnamese, make what was transpiring hard to follow. I wondered whether this part of Lodge's life would lend itself better to a separate book; it would help to have a list of the *dramatis personae*. Nichter argues persuasively that Lodge did not exactly engineer the coup and did not order Diem's and Nhu's assassination, but he does come off as an accomplice. My main take away from these pages involves Kennedy. He comes off as ambivalent, fixated on not giving the Republicans an issue in the 1964 election, and overly influenced by hard-line advisers, who argued for Diem's overthrow.⁶ In this, Kennedy looks a lot like Lyndon Johnson after him, and he does not appear to have learned all that much from his Bay of Pigs fiasco.

⁵ This is another eyewitness account. In 1960, I had a summer job delivering documents to congressional offices. I overheard these remarks in the office of Representative LeRoy H. Anderson (D-MT).

⁶ One of those advisors was another Boston Brahmin, McGeorge Bundy, whose mother was a Lowell.

Other matters interrupted Lodge's later involvement with Vietnam. In 1964, liberal and internationalist Republicans mounted a drive to draft him for the party's presidential nomination, in an effort to derail the right-wing takeover with Barry Goldwater. Lodge, who stayed in Saigon until the convention, won a few primaries, but his candidacy suffered from Eisenhower's refusal to lend public support and from fragmentation among the anti-Goldwater forces. All the while, Lodge was advising Johnson on Vietnam, and in 1965 he accepted another assignment to Saigon, which lasted almost two years. During that time, he advised against too rapid escalation by U.S. forces and made contacts with the North Vietnamese, but he steadfastly backed the American presence and looked forward to a Korea-style stalemate born of the enemy's fatigue. He continued to advise Johnson on Vietnam and accepted assignments as an ambassador-at-large and ambassador to West Germany, where he first encountered Henry Kissinger.

Lodge's last involvement with Vietnam came under Nixon, whom he knew and liked from their time together in the Senate and the Eisenhower administration. Two days before Nixon's inauguration, Lodge went to Paris to head the American delegation to the peace talks, which had begun under Johnson. He enjoyed being in Paris, but the intransigence of the North Vietnamese frustrated him. Back channels and secret talks soon took precedence over Lodge's publicized parley, and the behind-the-scenes operator, Kissinger, supplanted him. Lodge resigned after eleven months, and he played no part in the later talks that finally ended the war. When the possibility of Lodge's involvement in those negotiations came up in 1971, Kissinger, who had always been outwardly friendly toward him, said, "Over my dead body" (341).

By that time, Lodge was serving as special envoy to the Vatican. He was not a fully accredited ambassador; that post that would not be created until 1984. He did not move to Rome and had only a minimal staff. His role was largely ceremonial, although he informally helped Nixon campaign for Catholic votes in 1972. Lodge filled no further posts after the Republicans left office in 1977. In retirement, he wrote two short books, but he rejected the idea of a comprehensive, tell-all memoir. He particularly enjoyed having his grandchildren nearby, but ill health and financial problems clouded his retirement. He died in February 1985 at the age of eighty-two.

This biography does full justice to Lodge and the role he played in some of the most significant events of his time. It is a pleasure to read, and the research behind it is truly awe-inspiring. Nichter has literally gone around the world to find material, consulting archives in five foreign countries, including Vietnam. In the United States country, he has worked in forty-three repositories. He has made extensive use of oral history, particularly the materials at WGBH Boston gathered for Stanley Karnow's television series on Vietnam. He has also done extensive interviewing of his own. Both the research and the writing make this a truly outstanding work, and Nichter deserves great credit for his accomplishment.

Let me underline my high esteem for this book by suggesting a few things that could have made it better still. On the nit-picking level, there are some unfortunate errors of fact. For example, Nichter has Leverett Saltonstall becoming Lodge's Senate colleague in 1938; he did not enter the Senate until six years later, when he was elected to fill Lodge's unexpired term, has James Watson of Indiana serving in the Senate in 1940; he had been defeated in 1932, and has Johnson becoming the first president to visit the Pope at the Vatican in 1965; that honor belongs to Grandfather Lodge's nemesis, Woodrow Wilson, who visited Benedict XV in 1919. Historians need fact-checkers, too.

On an interpretative level, I want to raise questions about Lodge's relationship with his grandfather and the use of the term "Brahmin." To approach these questions, let me quote from the last paragraph of the book: "Lodge was the culmination of his grandfather's ambitions, a softer, gentler kind of Republicanism designed to appeal to the masses. Through his dramatic conversion from isolationism to internationalism, Lodge emerged from his grandfather's long shadow. Yet he remained a Brahmin with a duty to preserve American institutions and traditions. Only now, after a sufficient passage of time since the end of the Vietnam War, can we see that the country lost more than it gained through the exit of these families from politics and public service" (351).

On the first matter—his relationship with his grandfather—let me raise two related questions: did he emerge from the elder Lodge's shadow and did this involve an abandonment of the older man's isolationism? Neither Lodge would have seen it that way. The term 'isolationist' had not come into much use during the elder's lifetime, but if it had, he would have

emphatically rejected the label. The biggest concern throughout the career of the first Lodge was to have the United States pursue a “large policy” in the world, as William Widenor has pointed out in his superb intellectual biography.⁷ His happiest times came when he and Theodore Roosevelt teamed up to work toward that end, first through the Spanish-American War and the acquisition of the Philippines and then through Roosevelt’s presidential initiatives in securing the route for the Panama Canal, proclamation of the ‘Roosevelt Corollary’ to the Monroe Doctrines, mediation of the Russo-Japanese War, intervention in the Moroccan Crisis of 1906, and sending the “Great White Fleet” around the world. A supreme irony of the senior Lodge’s career was that he became best known for his opposition to Wilson over membership in the League of Nations. Like Roosevelt, he sometimes favored an international peace-keeping organization, and he supported the mutual security guarantee with Britain and France that Wilson had agreed to at Paris in 1919.

Likewise, the grandson did not see himself as having broken with his forbear. At the end of 1952 or beginning of ’53, he took time to write critiques of John A. Garraty’s biography of the first Lodge, several of which are reproduced in that book. In one regarding the League, the grandson stated, “The statement that Lodge appeared to refuse to assume any responsibility for building a contrivance for developing collective security and international peace, is not borne out by the record. . . . He was a constructive critic. By no stretch of the imagination can this be construed as the attitude of a man who ‘refused to assume any responsibility.’”⁸ In his own first term in the Senate, the younger Lodge does not appear to have shared wholeheartedly in the embrace of isolationism by the majority of his fellow Republicans and quite a few Democrats. Already an active Army reservist, he consistently supported strong defense measures, and in early 1941 he broke with his party brethren to vote for Lend-Lease. Nichter stresses the impact of front-line service in World War II on Lodge’s foreign policy, but his ‘conversion,’ such as it was, seems to have been less than dramatic.

This matter has more than strictly biographical interest. There is another, less flattering term for the “large policy” that the elder Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt championed; that term is ‘imperialism.’ They were imperialists not only when they pushed for overseas expansion in the 1890s or when Roosevelt wielded his ‘big stick’ as president. Their ideas for collective security and international organization embodied a refined, sophisticated, perhaps slightly chastened imperialism. They envisioned a directorate of the great powers that would keep “less civilized” nations and peoples in line—a kind of world-wide Roosevelt Corollary.

One does not have to be a devotee of Noam Chomsky or William Appleman Williams’s ‘Wisconsin School’ to recognize that since the 1940s the United States has often played such a role in the world.⁹ Nowhere was that truer than in Vietnam. At one point, Nichter notes, “Lodge recognized the problem of appearing to be a viceroy of the Saigon government” (267). Yet that was precisely what he often was during his two tours in Saigon and perhaps even a bit during the peace talks. This is not to take away from the nobility of Lodge’s service, but it does show another aspect of his character and career. He was something more than the Mr. Nice Guy of Massachusetts politics, the suave and handsome spokesperson at the UN, and the unfailingly selfless public servant.

On the matter of being a Brahmin, Nichter seems to broaden that identity too much. He appears to use it as a synonym for the Eastern Establishment and Wise Men of the first three-quarters of the twentieth century. These were the men (no women need apply) of old money and old family background, education at blue ribbon prep schools and Ivy League colleges,

⁷ William Widenor, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). When Lodge first broke with Wilson over the League idea, he protested that he had “no superstitious regard for [George] Washington’s policy” of avoiding alliances. Lodge quoted in Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 22.

⁸ Lodge quoted in John A. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biography* (New York, Knopf, 1953), 358.

⁹ On the “Wisconsin School” and its intellectual underpinnings, see the superb study by David R. Brown, *Beyond the Frontier: The Midwestern Voice in American Historical Writing* (University of Chicago Press, 2009). On a personal note, although I taught at Madison for four decades, I was never and hoped I was never taken for a member of this school.

and often ties to top-tier law firms. They included, among others besides the Lodges, the two Roosevelts, Henry Stimson, Dean Acheson, Averell Harriman, and the Dulles brothers. They could reach out beyond the Northeast and colonize elsewhere, as the Bushes, father and son, did in Texas, where they joined hands with homegrown products of similar background, such as James A. Baker III.

As Brahmins, Lodge and others shared attitudes and values with those non-Massachusetts patricians, but they also enjoyed a specialized, localized identity. They had a hold on their state's politics that was unmatched anywhere else in the country. When the younger Lodge served in the Senate, fellow Brahmin Republicans filled other elective offices in the Bay State. His equally deep-dyed Brahmin Senate colleague Saltonstall had previously served as governor. A cadre of others occupied House seats in and around Boston.¹⁰ One of those congressmen, Christian Herter, won the governorship in 1952, the year of Lodge's defeat. He later succeeded Dulles as secretary of state. That was because, Nichter reports, the dying Dulles extracted a promise from Eisenhower not to appoint Lodge for fear that the UN representative would overshadow his legacy (164).¹¹ This Brahmin ascendancy in Massachusetts prevailed in the face of changing demographics that made the electorate steadily less Yankee and Protestant and more ethnic, particularly Irish, and Catholic. That trend had begun in the elder Lodge's time, when David Walsh was elected governor in 1914 and defeated a Republican senator in 1918. Ten years later, Massachusetts became one of only two non-southern states to go for Al Smith against Herbert Hoover.¹²

Yet the "softer, gentler kind of Republicanism" of these Brahmins held sway until the younger Lodge's time. Nichter is right to call this Lodge "the last Brahmin." His son, George Cabot Lodge, lost to Edward Kennedy in 1962 in a Senate race to fill John Kennedy's unexpired term.¹³ In later decades, Brahmin Republicans would occasionally break through, as with Francis Sargent and William Weld, who got elected governor. But they were rarities and owed their victories to Democrats' fumbling and often ethnically based internecine strife. With the younger Henry Cabot Lodge, the sun set on Brahmin sway over the Bay State. He remained true to his breed to the end. He was buried alongside his father and grandfather in the family tomb in Cambridge's Mount Auburn Cemetery. Another Boston saying holds that a Brahmin is someone who has a share in the Athenaeum, a plot in Mount Auburn, and a relative in McLean's (a celebrated, old-line mental hospital). Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. satisfied two out of three.

¹⁰ I would not include Lodge's younger brother, John Davis Lodge, among this group. He left Boston after graduating from Harvard Law School and pursued a successful career as a movie actor in Hollywood. He later served two terms in Congress from a Connecticut district centered in the New York exurbs of Fairfield County and one term as the state's governor. The brothers were close, but they did not depend upon each other politically.

¹¹ Nichter's source is memorandum of a conversation with Joseph Sisco, *Last Brahmin*, 392, n. 59.

¹² The other state was neighboring Rhode Island, which had similar demographics, although its dominant ethnic group was Italian.

¹³ To be factually precise, Saltonstall was re-elected in 1960, despite JFK's presidential sweep in the state. The senator's comfortable win owed both to his personal popularity and to Democrats' even greater than usual disunity that year.

REVIEW BY LLOYD GARDNER, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

The Mission: Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., and the American Century

A long, long, time ago counting in the ages of historical interpretation, Professor Howard K. Beale liked to chastise graduate students for confusing “interventionists” with “internationalists.” I had called President Franklin D. Roosevelt an internationalist in my master’s thesis. “You mean interventionist, don’t you?” Beale had seemingly become a pacifist, and, however much one might argue over definitions -- and degrees -- for him all those who supported post-World War II foreign policy in any way were, quite simply, interventionists, not internationalists. The latter category he reserved for opponents of military alliances, and, opponents of undeclared wars like Korea and the beginnings of American involvement in Vietnam. Amongst history professors at the University of Wisconsin (before the arrival of William Appleman Williams) Howard K. Beale drew the most committed leftists among graduate students.

All this might seem a little strange because just at this time Beale had published *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, a volume in Johns Hopkins University’s famed Albert Shaw Lectures on Diplomatic History.¹⁴ Filled with admiring conclusions about Theodore Roosevelt’s “Greater America” foreign policy it celebrated his perspicacity in managing foreign and domestic affairs. The book was supposed to be a trial run for a full-scale biography of Roosevelt. But Beale did not live to finish his magnum opus. Nevertheless, and despite his paradoxical abhorrence of interventionism masquerading as internationalism, Beale had become an admirer of Roosevelt and his entourage, which included the most famous senator in the ranks of the expansionists -- Henry Cabot Lodge. “In spite of Roosevelt’s vigorous talk, his reputation for brandishing the big stick, his determination to have a big navy so that he could support whatever policy he chose pursue ... he chose his actions with caution. Contrary to the myth that has grown up about him, in international crises he was calm and careful in his decisions.”¹⁵

What finally emerges from all this? First, Beale now believed that American historians had mistaken Roosevelt for a reckless interventionist. Instead, Roosevelt and Lodge foresaw two great trends merging to shape the world. If American leaders did not meet the challenge of Populism and social unrest, what happened abroad, combined with a reactionary set of policies at home, would produce a calamitous outcome. Roosevelt understood, he argued, that there was an intimate connection between domestic and foreign policy. Abroad, the looming challenge was the inevitable decline in British power vis-à-vis new competitors, Germany and Japan whose ascent would shake the world order. Complicating the picture were the impending signs of Chinese revolutionary upheaval. One way or another the outcome there would one day present the world with a new force to reckon with in Asia. Indeed, it had already begun, as Roosevelt wrote the German Ambassador, Hermann Speck von Sternburg, about the Boxer Rebellion. “All of us Western fellows have been fools to let the Chinese movement gather such a head.”¹⁶

But the immediate danger was not Germany, nor Japan, nor even Russian moves in China that loomed in the background. The first danger was William Jennings Bryan and the Populists. To turn the country over to Bryan, and “his gang” would be “a hideous misfortune,” Senator Lodge insisted, “for they have no foreign policy and understand no foreign questions”¹⁷ Labeled an isolationist for his opposition to Woodrow Wilson’s all or nothing peace treaty, Henry Cabot Lodge Sr. was anything but an isolationist. The mission that the elder Senator Lodge set forth, opposing William Jennings Bryan “and his

¹⁴ Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956).

¹⁵ Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, 451.

¹⁶ Beale, 185.

¹⁷ Beale, 184.

gang,” passed to his grandson Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., when the “threat” re-emerged in the prospective candidacy of Robert A. Taft for the Republican nomination in 1952. Cabot Lodge, as he was usually known, played a key role in promoting the candidacy of General Dwight Eisenhower for the 1952 Republican presidential nomination -- thereby thwarting the Taft wing of the party. In some measure, Lodge’s activities on Eisenhower’s behalf cost him heavily in his own campaign for re-election to the Senate, as the seat went to John F. Kennedy - the beginnings of a stranger than fiction relationship between the two men.

After his defeat, General George Marshall wrote Lodge that he hoped that Eisenhower’s victory would provide him with greater opportunities for service to the nation than would a seat in the U.S. Senate. “Personally, I want to see you Secretary of State preferably . . . if ever the country needed a man it needs you.” This powerful endorsement is quoted in Luke Nichter’s new biography, *The Last Brahmin: Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and the Making of the Cold War* (129). Nichter argues in his introduction that World War II and Lodge’s military service – he was the first sitting senator to resign his seat since the 1860s to serve in the military – converted him from an isolationist into an “internationalist.” In 1940 after Germany swept through Poland and France he still thought England and France would have to defend themselves and their empires by themselves, going so far as to declare, “I have one supreme determination -- to do all that I can to keep war away from these shores for all time” (49).

Yet the younger Lodge often described himself as a “practical progressive,” a term that comes up several times in *The Last Brahmin*. In addition to Eisenhower’s opposition to Taft’s foreign policy positions, he was not a rabid anti-New Dealer. Perhaps these views are not so far from the phrase “social imperialists” Bernard Semmel used so effectively to describe certain British members of the *intelligentsia* as well as political leaders concerned about the health of the nation at home in order to meet the needs of successful empire management.¹⁸ Eisenhower did not follow Marshall’s suggestion, however, and name Lodge secretary of state. That post went to John Foster Dulles, a dour Presbyterian who had a little truck with diplomatic subtlety. Instead Eisenhower asked Lodge to go to the United Nations as the American ambassador, giving him a seat as well at the top table in foreign policy discussions inside the Cabinet. When Lodge Jr., served as the American ambassador to the United Nations the circumstances of membership in the United Nations were entirely different from what had obtained at the time of Wilson’s League of Nations. At least for the moment, the United States was even more than first among equals. It was the world’s only superpower, militarily, economically, and politically. And Lodge, Jr seemed always mindful of his grandfather’s maxim: You must prevent the management of American foreign policy from falling into the hands of those who “have no foreign policy and understand no foreign questions.”

Throughout Cabot Lodge, Jr’s, political career, then, there could be no higher calling than stopping the United States from hiding from world leadership. Perhaps his grandfather had been rightly criticized for opposing Wilson’s league, but the mission remained at home and abroad. Before he left the Senate to go back on active duty in World War II, Lodge was one of those in Congress who took an important trip to wartime Europe in 1943 that included talks with Prime Minister Winston Churchill about the postwar era and what it would bring in terms of new configurations -- in order to achieve older objectives. When he came back from that trip he gave a long speech on the Senate floor about the war aims of America’s allies. “One of them -- Britain -- frankly intends to maintain the Empire, and the other -- Russia -- has clear intentions regarding Eastern Europe” (64).

Add to that the unstoppable tide of revolutionary nationalism as Japan was driven out of its proposed East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere and America’s problems could already be foreseen in meeting the intertwined challenges ahead. It did not help matters at all that President Harry Truman would assure the nation that with the dropping of the atomic bomb the questions of old entangling alliances had been solved -- there would be no need for them. In 1947 Congress passed the Marshall Plan, and then two years later agreed to a self-entangling alliance, NATO. So far not too bad, despite some grumbling among isolationist diehards. But then came the ‘loss’ of China and the stalemated Korean War. People like Senator Joseph McCarthy could place the blame on all those ‘Communists’ in the State Department -- and even in the

¹⁸ Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960).

White House during the New Deal. And with the conviction, albeit for perjury, not espionage, of Alger Hiss, a high level assistant at 1945 Yalta conference, where the future of Europe was discussed, there were many of those who came to agree, at least in part, with the Wisconsin senator. The desire for simple solutions was behind the McCarthyite movement and it struck at all levels. Nichter points to the Taft backlash against Lodge in the 1952 Massachusetts senatorial campaign that helped John Kennedy defeat the Republican Lodge as a warning sign that the fight against Taft-ism had just begun.

McCarthy's role in that election became part of the tangled relationship between Lodge and the Kennedys that would prove so fateful in the next decade and after. Quite literally McCarthy was in bed with the Kennedys -- or at least he had dated two of Kennedy's sisters - and served as godfather to one of Robert Kennedy's children. And old Joseph Kennedy made a sizable contribution to the McCarthy re-election campaign in 1952. Nichter notes that "William F. Buckley wrote that McCarthy's friendship with the Kennedys cost Lodge the election" (125). That might be too strong, but during the race, "Many voters considered Lodge to be to the left of Kennedy, which did not serve him well" (125). In the state of Massachusetts the Irish vote was always important, if not determinative, and with the added anti-Communist sentiment ginned up by Kennedy's assaults on Truman's policies in Asia, it was a perfect storm.

That was the first Kennedy-Lodge skirmish -- well not really a skirmish, some would argue, but a strange Tarot card forecast of future entanglements for Lodge -- with the climactic scene played out a decade later in the early struggles Washington had in trying to work out an answer to the Vietnamese crisis. In the summer of 1963 President Kennedy called upon Lodge to serve as U.S. ambassador to Vietnam. Lodge had a considerable familiarity with French politics and the French military. Early in his life he had spent much time early in his life in France, and during the war he had liaised with French army units. In that sense he was well prepared for such a mission. About Vietnam, however, he hardly knew anything. In that he was not alone, for very, very few policymakers knew much about Vietnam. Lodge had been to Southeast Asia in 1929, during his pre-political career as a newspaper reporter. He traveled by train through Cambodia and then to Saigon. Afterwards, he wrote that the French were good colonizers: "There is prosperity, health, and education. Your life and property is as safe in Indo-China as in the United States -- safer, indeed, than in certain communities at home, for without being harsh, the French officials give the natives to understand that there must be no 'funny business'" (27).

One should probably call Lodge's perceptions a part of the 'Gunga Din' view of the world. He had learned a great deal since then, no doubt, but the first impression is usually a lasting one, in this case a tragic one. Since that time he had served in the Senate, in the army as an officer in World War II, as ambassador to the United Nations, and, in 1960, as Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon's running mate. The theme that runs through all these assignments, as Nichter so ably stresses, is the one that went back to his grandfather's original posing of the mission -- to keep foreign policy out of the hands of those who knew nothing about how to manage the Empire/Cold War. Hence, also the second part of Nichter's title: "the Making of the Cold War." It was up to Lodge Jr. to see that the end of crises like that in Vietnam in 1963 did not become the unmaking of the bipartisan coalition. He well understood that Kennedy feared the prospect of facing the electorate with chants ringing down of 'Who lost Vietnam?'

Lodge had himself joined in criticism of Truman's China policy, but for all his differences with the Democrats he wanted no part in the undoing of American foreign policy. The current Vietnam crisis, as Kennedy explained to him in a one-on-one conversation that Nichter publishes here for the first time, was about President of South Vietnam Ngo Dinh Diem's seeming determination to do anything to preserve his personal power, even if that meant negotiating a settlement with the Viet Cong and North Vietnam that looked like another Korean outcome -- a divided country. It would look like the "loss" of Vietnam after Washington had made clear that could not happen. It would be a disaster politically in U.S. politics, a fallen domino that would supposedly set off a catastrophic series of victories for the Sino-Soviet bloc in world affairs. Thus Theodore Roosevelt's and the elder Lodge's fears seemed to be coming true.

Lodge had paved his way into the discussion, Nichter notes, by advising Secretary of State Dean Rusk that if it ever came to a question of putting U.S. troops into Vietnam, he was willing to do what he could to help out with the problems inherent in such a decision. He also advised Rusk and then Kennedy when they met that he had no future political ambitions. That turned out to be not quite so, as he tried to prevent the nomination of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater as Republican

Party presidential nominee the following year, for the same reason, of course, that he had opposed Taft in 1952. But that afternoon in the White House, August 15, 1963, when he and Kennedy discussed what had to be done to keep Vietnam out of U.S. politics in the months to come, Kennedy said, “The time may come, though, we’ve gotta just have to try to do something about Diem, and I think that’s going to be an awfully critical period”(199). Nichter argues that this was close to an authorization for a coup. Kennedy, putting a fine point on his instructions, added that he wanted an ambassador who was capable of wide-ranging decisions on his own.

The ultimate outcome on November 1, 1963, is well known. Nichter’s publication of the August 15, 1963 conversation confirms softer evidence that has been available for some time. What he adds to the discussion, also, is the debunking claims down through the years that no such definitive conversation took place. Supposedly no copy of the conversation existed. And this led to the conclusion that Lodge had acted on his own in approving the coup and standing aside as Diem and his brother Nhu were killed in a horrible fashion. Even Robert Kennedy in his oral history for the Kennedy Library blamed Lodge. Ironically, years later Richard Nixon, fearing a challenge from Ted Kennedy, sent CIA spy Howard Hunt to the National Archives to concoct a fraudulent message to Lodge from Kennedy that no one should stand in the way of a coup. As Nichter concludes, the fraud was actually “rather mild” (334) compared with the now-revealed record in his book of the August 15, 1963 conversation. And so Lodge took the hit as one who would sacrifice himself so as not, in British imperial lingo, to let down the side. It was a Brahmin obligation; interestingly, Nichter concludes the country has lost something valuable in public spiritedness, and that was perhaps more important in American history than the horrors of the Vietnam War.

As Erich von Stroheim once said in *La Grande Illusion*, “peut être.”

Today, in Ho Chi Minh City, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge’s “home” is a restaurant catering to American tourists with advertisements on Google. Guests dine, apparently, where plotters once gathered. What an ending for his mission!

REVIEW BY SOPHIE JOSCELYNE, UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

“One long and distinguished record of personal sacrifice to public service.” This is how former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger described the career of Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and this, too, is the interpretation which emerges in Luke Nichter’s comprehensive biography. Nichter deploys Lodge’s status as an elite East Coast “Brahmin” figure to frame his study.¹⁹ This background, for Nichter, imbued Lodge with unique qualifications which equipped him for his roles as politician and diplomat. Specifically, Lodge emerges as a champion and facilitator of bipartisan politics and a man who was able to gain the confidence and trust of those in power. Furthermore, Lodge’s personal background instilled him with a deeply felt patriotism and commitment to public service which also influenced his decision-making. These characteristics informed some of the most consequential decisions of his life, including his resignation as U.S. senator to serve in the military during World War II, and his acceptance of the position of ambassador to South Vietnam in 1963.

This is an important book which illuminates the life and career of an understudied, yet extremely influential, individual. Rich in historical detail, it weaves extensive archival research into a highly readable narrative. Lodge’s career held all the more significance because, as Nichter notes, it “illustrates America’s coming of age as a superpower” (2). An important shift in Lodge’s principles, and a central theme of the book, is the country’s transition from the politics of isolationism to internationalism. This transformation occurred writ small in Lodge’s personal views during his military service and was echoed in American politics more broadly during the debate over U.S. involvement in World War II.²⁰ Lodge played a far from insignificant role in encouraging Americans to embrace a global role in the post-war period. During the 1940s, he became the “unofficial spokesperson” for progressive Republicanism, supporting policies which led to the Marshall Plan (to which he dedicated 335 speeches) and the creation of NATO (88). Nichter illuminates the crucial part played by Lodge in leading the “draft Eisenhower” campaign, which resulted in the defeat of the conservative and isolationist wing of the Republican Party led by Robert Taft.

Different facets of Lodge’s personality and career emerge in this pre-Vietnam era. Nichter highlights his subject’s political skill and the motivation behind his vision for a more liberal Republicanism by assessing Lodge’s Senate career and his role in the Eisenhower campaign. Lodge’s association with the army (he joined the army reserves at age 23 and served with the American Sixth Army Group during World War II, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel) is another important dimension of his character. Nichter argues that it was the experience of combat which “changed Lodge’s mind about the need for international cooperation, a shift that would dramatically affect his political views” including his support of the United Nations (UN) and NATO (61). The military is thus credited as a source of one of the most, if not *the* most, significant developments in Lodge’s politics. Arguably, however, Lodge came into his own in his role as a diplomat. Appointed UN ambassador by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953, he became a “household name for millions of Americans” and succeeded in significantly increasing the popularity and influence of the U.S. mission to the United Nations (144).

Nichter promises dramatic revelations about the November 1963 coup which toppled the government of Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam, and indeed delivers in the form of a previously unpublished and secretly recorded conversation between Lodge and President Kennedy, but this book contributes more than further clarification of this singular, and well-studied, event. Nichter thoroughly embeds Lodge’s career from the 1930s in its historical context, thus illuminating important domestic and international developments in this crucial period of U.S. history. In particular, Lodge’s tenure as UN ambassador highlights the significance of the UN as a forum for the ideological Cold War, a feature which is often left out of histories of

¹⁹ In this way, Nichter contributes to literature on the influence of elite families and the ‘dynastic impulse’ in American politics, see Stephen Hess, *America’s Political Dynasties: From Adams to Clinton* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2016).

²⁰ See Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020).

U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.²¹ Lodge's use of his position to counter Soviet rhetoric and influence shows how the UN became a "key battleground" in the ideological Cold War and "a unique worldwide forum for the dissemination of American propaganda" (142). The rhetorical battle between Soviet and American propaganda at the UN spanned the Cold War and was still being waged by Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, who aimed to counter the "semantic infiltration" of international political discourse by the Soviet Union, in the closing decade of this conflict.²²

Nichter responds to scholarship on the Vietnam War by offering a more generous reading of Lodge's ultimate responsibility for the overthrow and assassination of Diem. While Lodge has been typically presented as the "primary architect" of the coup, Nichter argues that rather than deserving blame, Lodge was in fact a "moderating influence" and "arguably the reason a coup did not occur sooner" (218).²³ The conversation between Lodge and Kennedy which occurred just before the former became ambassador shows that the president had provided Lodge with a "mandate" for the coup before he arrived in Saigon – a fact which challenges the prevailing view that Lodge took policy into his own hands by instigating the coup.²⁴

In the wealth of detail provided about the days and hours surrounding the November 1963 coup, some of the bigger questions about the reasons for Lodge's, and more broadly America's, presence in Vietnam are rendered less clear. For example, Lodge's assertion that he "never believed that the Vietnam War was basically a war against communism" and it "was not an ideological matter" seem surprising (195). In addition, Nichter notes that Lodge "had no illusions of establishing a democracy in a place with no Western democratic traditions" (293). These statements provoke two questions: What kind of war did Lodge believe he was fighting, and what did he aim to achieve? For Nichter, Lodge's motivations for accepting the post in Vietnam can be found in his deep commitment to public service. However, while this provides a convincing picture of Lodge's personality, as an explanation of his actions and reasoning it remains somewhat abstract. If Lodge was motivated by the pursuit of the national interest, how did he perceive this interest?

The context of anti-Communism as the overarching framework of U.S. Cold War foreign policy is surely important here, and, indeed, Nichter suggests that Lodge's proven commitment to opposing Communist rhetoric at the UN was part of what qualified him for the job in Vietnam. However, Nichter does not overtly comment on the significance of anti-Communism to Lodge's thought and actions. As an illustrative example, Lodge's record of engagement with Senator Joseph McCarthy suggests a degree of ambiguity. Lodge did not condemn McCarthy's efforts but sought to "discredit him" by demonstrating that "there was no evidence to support his charges" (92). Lodge also "did not see the irony," after having opposed McCarthy's efforts, when he proposed a loyalty review committee at the UN (141).

Lodge's relationship with anti-Communism and McCarthyism invites questions about the importance of gender and masculinity in understanding this figure. Lodge was clearly operating, throughout his career, in a highly masculine and homosocial environment. This context, which emerges most strikingly in the section on Vietnam, is not interrogated by Nichter. The literature on the role of gender in Cold War foreign policy is now extensive.²⁵ Lodge appears to belong to the

²¹ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 215.

²² Jeane Kirkpatrick, *The Reagan Doctrine and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and the Fund for An American Renaissance, 1985), 12.

²³ George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 126.

²⁴ See Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, revised and updated ed. (London: Pimlico, 1994), 293–327.

²⁵ See, in particular, Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). See also Geoffrey Smith, "National Security and Personal Isolation: Sex, Gender, and Disease in the Cold-War United States," *International History Review* 14:2 (May 1992): 307–337; Frank Costigliola, "Unceasing Pressure for

group of Cold War policymakers in the Kennedy administration who were “shaped by the institutional prescriptions and ordeals of elite manhood, and by the proscriptive lessons of the Red Scare”.²⁶ Like Lodge, these men were driven by ideals of “service” and “sacrifice” instilled and perpetuated in exclusive all-male institutions.²⁷ Several pertinent episodes from Lodge’s career reinforce this perception. He was affected as both an instigator and potential victim of the “countersubversion” crusades. Nichter notes that, in issuing Executive Order 10450, which barred homosexuals from working for the federal government, Eisenhower was carrying out Lodge’s proposal for loyalty reviews. An FBI investigation into Lodge turned up accusations of his own homosexuality, though these were not taken any further (142). Robert D. Dean has shown how the norms of elite masculinity and the lasting effects of the Red Scare influenced U.S. foreign policy in the 1960s, and Nichter could have usefully employed this context to add depth to his analysis of Lodge’s thought and actions in Vietnam and beyond. Overall, however, this book offers a compelling portrait of Lodge, the “embodiment of an American Cold War diplomat,” and makes a convincing case for re-centring this largely forgotten figure in Cold War history (351).

Penetration’: Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan’s Formation of the Cold War,” *Journal of American History* 83:2 (March 1997): 1309–1339.

²⁶ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 170.

²⁷ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 4.

RESPONSE BY LUKE A. NICHTER, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY–CENTRAL TEXAS

Receiving an email with three reviews of your book attached – to which you must respond – is a harrowing experience. It is up there with my Eagle Scout court of honor (passed), auditioning at the Eastman School of Music (failed), and opening my SAT scores (good enough). Once, when learning French as a student at the Université de Ouagadougou, I remember trying to keep up with a conversation between two native speakers. In the middle of speaking a sentence, my memory failed like an unreadable 5.25-inch floppy disk while searching for *peut être*. To the presumed horror of Maurice Spears, my high school French teacher, I ad-libbed with *possiblement*. After reading these reviews, I am happy to see Lloyd Gardner's *peut être*.

I had very little idea what I was getting into with this book – which, incidentally, I did not plan to write but am very grateful that I was pushed to do so. William Frucht, the Executive Editor of Yale University Press, called me on Friday, November 14, 2014. I was on lunch break outside of the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Bill, who would become my editor, asked me what I knew about Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. I tried to think of an erudite answer, but the best I could do was the truth: not much. For this kid who grew up among the cornfields of northwestern Ohio, Lodge had a famous name that showed up in archival records but was not someone with an identity. Bill asked whether I would like to propose a biography; I signed a contract in 2015

This book challenged me in all sorts of ways. Due to Lodge's 50-year career, I assumed it would require research in a lot of archives. That is problematic for someone for whom research can be an obsession. If you want to scene-set where Lodge met Eisenhower during the war, there is no better way than by re-reading Matthew Connolly's *A Diplomatic Revolution* while on an Air France flight to Algiers to navigate the Casbah and the rooms at the Hotel St. George high above the Mediterranean where Eisenhower made his headquarters. I re-traced Lodge's steps everywhere his career took him with the exception of central Asia. There are limits to what even the most forgiving spouse will tolerate. Thankfully I was in the final copyediting stages when COVID-19 hit.

I read more widely than probably any time since I was a graduate student. Lien-Hang Nguyen, who had recently been awarded a Public Scholar Grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities, offered some tips for assembling my own application. "And you'll get to go to Vietnam!" she said. How right she was. Spending the better part of a month there in November 2016 allowed for not just productive research, but a chance to see one's own country from afar during an interesting political time. Giving a talk at Duy Tan University in Danang on the Monday prior to Election Day, its content might have been about Lodge but the Q&A was not.

Interviews with Lodge family and former associates were a big help to fill in gaps in the archival record. Most were eager to share their memories. Maybe a couple, out of a total of 53, disliked him. At a certain point I became determined to find someone really critical. One person, a truly discreet public servant, refused to talk. As with most historians, doing interviews takes me out of my comfort zone and was not part of my training. It seems that historians agree it is less risky to rely on oral histories than fifty-year-old memories. I think they're right. But interviews give one a sense of a person, and many interviewees choose not to discuss sensitive subjects with someone they don't know so soon after the events occurred or to take part in an oral history in the first place.

One, Rufus Phillips, challenged me to write the book that largely resulted. Max Holland deserves credit for connecting me with the last two living Kennedy-era officials who had been senior enough then to comment substantively on Lodge. Phillips is one, and Thomas Hughes is the other. From the family, George Cabot Lodge and Emily Lodge shared especially rich anecdotes. During one of my conversations with Emily Lodge, at her and her husband Robert Pingeon's *7ème arrondissement* flat in Paris, she produced original records from her grandfather, including a handwritten letter from George Marshall and a cassette recording of Lodge late in life telling old stories and jokes – some of which must have been passed down to him from his grandfather.

Rufus Phillips, who wrote a good book of his own called *Why Vietnam Matters* (Naval Institute Press, 2008), had a way of referring to his age: “by nature of the actuarial tables, I am the last living American to have known Diem.”²⁸ He gave me a challenge that I tried to meet, to determine Kennedy’s instructions to Lodge before the latter’s departure to Saigon in August 1963. He told me that in a biography of Lodge it would be the most important contribution I could make. Phillips, who at the time was a U.S. Agency for International Development staffer in Vietnam, said Lodge told him that he had authorization for the coup although no evidence was ever produced. While Lodge’s time in Vietnam was a small part of his life, I thought it might be the part of the book that received the most scrutiny. There was no way to phone it in with only superficial coverage.

The three chapters that cover Lodge’s first ambassadorial tour in Saigon are the one part of the book that slows down, allowing for a blow-by-blow account. Some readers are drawn to it while others have told me they wished I had not taken that approach. Each reader is different. I did not plan to go into such detail. Works by Anne Blair, Arthur Dommen, Ellen Hammer, Seth Jacobs, Howard Jones, David Kaiser, and Edward Miller covered the Diem coup in some detail.²⁹ But, I changed my mind and rendered the account in the book after: 1) that portion of Lodge’s life received the most scrutiny by interviewees and scholars while I was researching the book, and 2) the discovery of new evidence in the U.S, UK, and Vietnam convinced me it would be worth doing, especially to tell the story as much as I could from Lodge’s perspective.

I am not the first to discover the Kennedy-Lodge tape of August 15, 1963. But I believe I am the first to produce a transcript of it, discuss its mysterious origin, and make full use of its content after discussing it with individuals such as George Cabot Lodge, Henry Kissinger, and Phillips and Hughes. They represent the remaining individuals arguably closest to the subject and the participants in the taped conversation. My original plan was to include the transcript in the book’s appendix, but I was so far over length already I did not know what I would cut in order to convince my publisher to do that. I had a contract for 150,000 words, submitted a manuscript of 283,000 words, and the finished book ended up around 200,000. It would have been a tall order to have asked for another twenty pages of space for the transcript, and I had not yet submitted Diem’s handwritten coup notes and translation – which do appear in the appendix.

Two popular works mentioned the August 15 tape, Thurston Clarke’s *JFK’s Last Hundred Days* (Penguin Press, 2013) and Patrick J. Sloyan’s *The Politics of Deception* (Thomas Dunne Books, 2015).³⁰ However, I relied on more scholarly works because those by Clarke and Sloyan left me with more questions than answers. For example, each mixes up Lodge’s June 12 and August 15 meetings with Kennedy. The former is when Lodge was asked to go to Saigon, while the latter is his farewell. When Sloyan accessed the August 15 tape, he said that twenty minutes of it were still redacted whereas when I accessed it had just one redaction of 38 seconds – and that redaction did not appear to have to do with Vietnam. The accounts by Clarke and Sloyan also confuse the speakers at times, are not based on original research to situate the taped material, and contain significant errors. For example, in one key line Kennedy says to Lodge, “The time may come, though, we’ve gotta

²⁸ See Rufus Phillips, *Why Vietnam Matters: An Eyewitness Account of Lessons Not Learned* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008).

²⁹ See Anne Blair, *Lodge in Vietnam: A Portrait Abroad* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Arthur J. Dommen, *The Indochinese Experience of the French and the Americans: Nationalism and Communism in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), Ellen J. Hammer, *A Death in November: America in Vietnam, 1963* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987), Seth Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin: Ngo Dinh Diem and the Origins of America’s War in Vietnam, 1950-1963* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), Howard Jones, *Death of a Generation: How the Assassinations of Diem and JFK Prolonged the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), David Kaiser, *American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), and Edward Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

³⁰ See Thurston Clarke, *JFK’s Last Hundred Days: The Transformation of a Man and the Emergence of a Great President* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2013) and Patrick J. Sloyan, *The Politics of Deception: JFK’s Secret Decisions on Vietnam, Civil Rights, and Cuba* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2015).

just have to try to do something about Diem...”; instead, Clarke has “The time may come when we’re going to have to do something about *this war*.” (66) The books serve their purpose as a diving off point for scholars but do not satisfy beyond that, and no scholarly work in existence, mine included, deals with the full range of newly declassified evidence related to the Diem coup, mine included, which necessarily had to focus on the life of someone born in 1902.

Whether a reviewer and an author see eye-to-eye is a secondary concern. It takes an investment of time to review a book the way John Milton Cooper Jr., Lloyd Gardner, and Sophie Joscelyne have. I learned something from each review that will stick with me going forward, even if they do not come in time for me to make another round of pre-publication revisions. I especially enjoyed the insights from Cooper and Gardner that come from long careers of their own, as well as by Joscelyne, who has a long career ahead. Each reviewer showed me the ways, in effect, in which the work passed, failed, or was good enough. I am grateful for their noting of errors, which I will add to my list of errata that I hold more closely than Lodge’s coup documents in his inner safe at the embassy on Ham Nghi Boulevard. Thankfully none has surfaced that is truly embarrassing or changes the meaning of a passage. We all wish our books were flawless, but there is no such thing. Some blind spots are impermeable. Instead, our books are like us: well-meaning but far from perfect.

In the end, I return to Lloyd Gardner’s *peut être*. I think Lodge would be happy with that assessment, so how could I ask for more? I do not understand why Lodge did not do more during his lifetime to correct the record or to tell his side of events. Instead, he left his secrets in his personal papers. I was simply the first person to make full use of them. I did not try in vain to convince readers to like Lodge more or less. Instead, the purpose of the book was simple: to restore him to a place in history that he really always occupied. We have overlooked it to such a degree that since his death a generation has grown to adulthood without learning the lessons of his life. That’s why I’ll take *peut être*. It’s a good start, and a lot better than *possiblement*.