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Introduction by Richard Immerman, Temple University

In 1988 Jack Devine, by then a veteran of more than two decades with the CIA's Directorate of Operations, was appointed chief of station in Rome by Clair George, the DO's Deputy Director at the time. None of Devine's previous postings had been in Italy. In fact, he had no prior experience in Europe. There was no formal selection process. George handed him what Devine describes as a "plum job" as a reward for running the Afghan Task force during William J. Casey's tenure as Director of Central Intelligence during Ronald Reagan's administration. The loyalty to the agency that Devine had demonstrated during the Iran-Contra scandal had also earned George's trust.¹

Rome held a "special allure" for Devine, in no small part because, as he writes in his memoir, the "CIA and Italy go back a long way in the covert action field."² And Devine, who retired prior to the 9/11 tragedy and George W. Bush's declaration of a war on terror, is a zealous advocate of covert action. He proudly boasts to his readers that President Harry Truman placed the fledgling CIA at the "forefront" of the "fight" to contain the spread of Soviet communism to Western Europe, and Italy became the "first of the political battlegrounds." To influence the 1948 elections, the Agency poured money (the amount remains classified) into newspapers and magazines, radio broadcasts, posters, leaflets, and political organizations. Citing as his authority his CIA colleague Hugh Montgomery, who went on to direct the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) under President Ronald Reagan, Devine concludes that the "CIA was critical to preventing a Communist takeover in the Italian elections of 1948." Were it not for the CIA," Devine quotes Montgomery, "the Communist Party, in which the Soviets had huge interests, would have won."³

Devine's brief introduction to his assignment to Rome speaks volumes about the CIA's history, its culture, and its legend. To Devine and so many others, whether American or not, the history of the CIA is the history of the Directorate of Operations. And while he makes explicit that he does not agree with every covert action the Agency has undertaken, he is no less explicit that he was and still is in favor of the vast majority of them and encourages even greater reliance on covert action in the future. In this regard the CIA's 1948 project in Italy looms large. "Our effort in Italy was so successful that it endured for years as a model for effective political covert operations," he explains. "In fact, much of the doctrine was still in vogue when I arrived in Allende's Chile in 1971. We all took a few pages from the Italy playbook."⁴

¹ Jack Devine, *Good Hunting: An American Spymaster's Story* (NY: Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2014), 107, 109.

² Devine, 110.

³ Devine, 110-11.

⁴ Devine, 111.

Readers of this H-Diplo roundtable will feast on that sentence. What's important for our purposes, nevertheless, is that Devine would not appreciate why. His dependence on Montgomery as his authority betrays the CIA's historic problem with sourcing. His application of the 'doctrine' developed in Italy to Chile, and in fact his posting to Italy after having spent his earlier career in Latin America and Asia, betrays the CIA's historic inattention to area expertise and indigenous dynamics. And his classification of the CIA's engagement in 1948 as a resounding success that determined the election's outcome betrays the CIA's devotion to its own mythology. As Kaeten Mistry reveals in this thoughtful and tightly-argued book, many scholars have fallen victim to this same mythology.

Impressively researched and informed by a deep understanding of Italian, United States, and intelligence history, *The United States, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War: Waging Political Warfare, 1945-1950*, "explores," in Mistry's words, "how the 1948 Italian election became an allegory of the cold war in American minds" (2). Toward this end, he weaves together two books seamlessly into one in order to set the record straight on what actually took place to produce the victory won by Alcide De Gasperi and the Christian Democrats. Mistry's first book is a history of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Italy set against the backdrop of the evolving cold war in Europe. The second book is a history of the evolution of political warfare in the United States set against the backdrop of the establishment of the CIA, the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and concomitant institutions that comprised America's emerging national security state. While these two narratives are mutually constitutive, Mistry's most fundamental contribution is to highlight their distinctiveness. He shows that notwithstanding the CIA's legend and cold war historiography, political warfare as waged by the 'Company' in concert with other elements of the U.S. government, at least theoretically so, does not explain the defeat of the combined forces of the Italian Communist and Socialist Parties, the Popular Democratic Front (known widely by its Italian acronym, the FDP).

Three intertwined arguments drive Mistry's revisionist account. The first, the least original, is that Italy was vital to American interests only insofar as it affected the wider constellation of states that composed Cold-War Europe and the U.S. programs and plans for containing communism in any and all of those states. The second argument, which also will not come as a surprise to informed readers, is that Italians across the political spectrum as well as most transnational actors did not subscribe to the rigid and myopic bipolar perspectives and frameworks that infected Americans in and out of government. These two arguments build up to the third—the takeaway. To Mistry, the significance of the U.S. intervention in the 1948 Italian election is its legacy. Or, put differently, what is important is not the extent to which the intervention was successful, but the perception in Washington that it was successful.

This last argument is that much more telling when juxtaposed with the celebratory story learned by Jack Devine. Mistry identifies the program to support the Christian Democrats in Italy and undermine the FDO as the seminal effort at "political warfare," a "landmark in the nascent cold war" when the U.S. government orchestrated the use of an array of instruments "short of war" to affect change in a foreign government (128). The inspiration

behind the development of a political warfare capability was George Kennan, the State Department's intellectual heavyweight who directed its Policy Planning Staff at the time. Kennan, we now know, preferred that the National Security Council (NSC) not charge the CIA with the responsibility for political warfare. But he accepted its authority as a bureaucratic compromise.⁵

Mistry discloses that in 1948 Italy the NSC directive (NSC 10/2) and Kennan's acceptance of it did not matter. The Truman administration's efforts to influence the election were *ad hoc*, led not by the CIA, the NSC, or any other Washington-based entity. Rather, what leadership of the project there was came from front-line officials, notably Ambassador James Dunn, who improvised. Further, pivotal to the outcome were local and transnational actors—religious, labor, business, civic, and more—who behaved independently of the United States. U.S. policymakers and planners credited the Christian Democratic victory on the political warfare program advocated by Kennan even though it never materialized. As a consequence of this self-deception, which was not ground truth, political warfare, institutionalized through the establishment of the Office of Policy Coordination under Frank Wisner, became for successive U.S. administrations an instrument of first resort. Wisner's contribution to the development of the CIA's covert capability, Kennan lamented in retrospect, was “probably the worst mistake I ever made in government.”⁶

Although their perspectives differ, all five contributors to this roundtable laud *The United States, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War*. Mistry “has adopted an original approach, thus providing a significant contribution in a broad perspective of international history,” writes Guido Formigoni. John Harper calls it “stimulating and valuable;” James Miller, “sophisticated and informative.” Kaeten Mistry “knows how to see the big picture,” is how Alessandro Brogi begins his review, to which Sara Lorenzini adds, the book “succeeds in bridging the gap between the literature on U.S.-Italian relations and the history of early Cold War policy-making.” Each of the expert reviewers finds aspects of Mistry's arguments with which to disagree, but they also disagree among themselves. The result is the kind of stimulating conversation which a good book should provoke.

It is therefore unfortunate that Mistry's book is unlikely to attract the readership it warrants. It is a commendably short book: a shade over 200 pages of text with some 80 pages of notes and bibliography—less than 300 in total. Yet Cambridge University Press is offering it on Amazon at a cost of over \$80.00. That is just wrong.

Participants:

Kaeten Mistry is Lecturer in American History at the University of East Anglia, specialising in U.S. foreign relations, the international cold war, and intelligence. Previously, he was a

⁵ Richard H. Immerman, *The Hidden Hand: A Brief History of the CIA* (Boston and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 19-29.

⁶ Kennan quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (NY: Penguin, 2011), 318.

Leverhulme Fellow at the University of Warwick and IRCHSS Fellow at University College Dublin. He studied at the University of Birmingham (Ph.D.), University of California, Los Angeles, and University of Padua, and has held fellowships at NYU, Bologna, and Oxford. His first book, *The United States, Italy and the Origins of Cold War: Waging Political Warfare, 1945-1950* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2014. He has published articles in journals including *Diplomatic History*, *Cold War History*, *Modern Italy*, and *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, as well as guest editing a special issue of *Intelligence and National Security*. His current project examines the rise of the transnational whistle-blower during the 1970s.

Richard Immerman currently holds the Francis W. De Serio Chair in Strategic Intelligence at the U.S. Army War College and chairs the History Advisory Committee to the Department of State. His two most recent books are the *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, co-edited with Petra Goedde, and *The Hidden Hand: A Brief History of the CIA. Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*, which Immerman co-edited with Beth Bailey, is scheduled for publication by NYU Press this fall.

Alessandro Brogi is a professor of History of U.S. foreign relations at the University of Arkansas. He also held positions at Yale, Johns Hopkins-Bologna Center, and the Nobel Peace Institute in Oslo, Norway. His principal area of research is US strategic and cultural relations with Western Europe during the Cold War, and his main works draw comparative analyses of France and Italy. His latest book, titled *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011) examines left-wing anti-Americanism in France and Italy during the Cold War, and U.S. reactions and strategies to stop the advance of communism in both countries. He has also published several articles in journals including *Diplomatic History*, *Cold War History*, and the *Journal of Cold War Studies*. Brogi is currently working on an interpretive work on U.S.-Italian relations during the entire span of the Cold War.

Guido Formigoni is Full Professor of Contemporary History at Iulm University in Milano (Italy). Among his books: *La Democrazia Cristiana e l'alleanza occidentale 1943-1953* [Italian Christian Democracy and the Western Alliance 1943-1953], Il Mulino, Bologna 1996; *Storia della politica internazionale in età contemporanea* [History of International Politics in the Contemporary Age], Il Mulino, Bologna 2006; *L'Italia dei cattolici. Fede e nazione dal Risorgimento ad oggi* [Catholics' Italy. Faith and Nation from Risorgimento to nowadays], Il Mulino, Bologna 2010). He's now working on a broad study about a social and political history of Italy in the Cold War (1943-1978).

John L. Harper is Professor of American Foreign Policy at SAIS Europe, the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He is the author of *America and the Reconstruction of Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); *American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and *The Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). He is writing a book called the *The Edge of Empire* about the first six months of 1950 in Washington DC.

James Edward Miller spent twenty years in the State Department at the Historians Office, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and as director of the European Studies Program at the Foreign Service Institute. He taught European and American history at Johns Hopkins (SAIS) and Georgetown University. The author of six books, including a prize-winning study of U.S policy in Italy, he is currently writing a history of modernization in the Mediterranean since 1700.

Kaeten Mistry knows how to see the big picture. He had already shown the wide scope of his inquiry in several articles that prepared the groundwork for this book, works exploring American “political warfare”¹ – as it was conceived by the U.S. State Department and Intelligence establishment –, its application in Italy, but above all its internal dynamics in U.S. policy-making. Broad in its conceptualization and implementation as it was, political warfare, in the author’s explanation, “represented an integrated approach, utilizing overt and covert means, to realize international objectives” (8). While the definition was used interchangeably with “psychological warfare,” this latter program, mainly focused on propaganda and information activities, was, in Mistry’s opinion, rather subordinate to the more general rubric of “political warfare”; and Italy is relevant because it was part of the “inauguration of political warfare”, of all the “integrated” means “short of war” the U.S. adopted to pursue political and diplomatic objectives (8).

The book’s main merit, indeed, is that of illustrating how the often narrowly narrated events of the early Cold War in Italy contained a broader significance that transcended the local circumstances. Showing the sinews and developments of the emerging U.S. political warfare, and, as Mistry puts it, its “perceived success” (7 and passim) in the 1948 Italian national elections, helps understand how a war-short-of-war approach was then expanded to Eastern Europe and Asia as well. The book has the additional advantage of establishing a dialogue with theoretical works on U.S. foreign relations. This interdisciplinary approach complements the author’s remarkable mastery of the historiography on U.S.-Italian relations, leaving no stone unturned. But it is mainly by mining and interpreting archival sources that Mistry has been able to offer a conclusion about U.S. politics of stabilization in Italy that stands out for its nuance, compared to often ‘lurid’ accounts on U.S. or Soviet meddling in Italian affairs.

Several respectable works, since the pioneering ones by James E. Miller, have dealt with the episode of the Italian 1948 elections, and they are all accounted for in this book.² But Mistry distinguishes himself for expanding that narrative, contextualizing it within the U.S. debate about its instruments of foreign policy and the directions they should take. To illustrate this, Mistry has moved his main focus from Italy’s specific case (sometimes sacrificing, but not excluding the subtleties of Italy’s internal debates) to its overlap with the wider American national-security planning. By looking at bureaucratic structures, in both their converging and diverging goals, Mistry’s work reveals how the Italian case

¹ See especially Kaeten Mistry, “The Case for Political Warfare: Strategy, Organization and US Involvement in the 1948 Italian Election,” *Cold War History* (2006), 6:3: 301-329; and Scott Lucas and Kaeten Mistry, “[Illusions of coherence: George F. Kennan, US strategy and political warfare in the early Cold War, 1946-1950](#),” *Diplomatic History* (2009), 33:1: 39-66.

² The body of work on this subject is too big to be condensed in this note. Suffice here to mention the seminal article by James E. Miller, “Taking Off the Gloves: The United States and the Italian Elections of 1948,” *Diplomatic History* (1983), 7, 1: 35-56, and, among the authors dealing with this subject, Stefano Luconi, Robert Ventresca, Wendy Wall.

informed Washington's debate on how to expand political warfare, also illustrating not just the strategic, but also the ideological, cultural notions that affected that expansion. Besides analyzing bureaucracies, *Waging Political Warfare* adds important, if not always novel insights on the role of transnational groups, illuminating the interplay between public and private spheres: religious, civic, labor, and business actors on both sides of the Atlantic were as important, if not sometimes more important than the leaders and ruling coalition parties, in aiding and abetting US-Italian relations.

Waging Political Warfare proposes a reevaluation of the measure of success, making important distinctions between actual and perceived success. Mistry, like others before him, stresses the limits of CIA actions, arguing that the resumption of the debate on political warfare after the Italian elections was "rooted in profound dissatisfaction with the Agency" (7). But he does quickly qualify that statement by contesting the tendency to evaluate events like the U.S. intervention in Italy with a "normative formula [...] to glean lessons from the past" (9) of either success or failure, and proposing "prescriptive conclusions: America did or did not succeed" (8) often with too much hindsight. Mistry finds it more productive to ask "how a perception of success emerged around US intervention in Italy and why figures like [George F.] Kennan, Secretary of State James Forrestal, and covert operations expert Allen Dulles repeatedly cited the 1948 election when making the case for organized political warfare" (10).

The bare-bone narrative of this book is about how the United States became involved – through an emerging, and, for the time, rather haphazard adoption of political warfare – into the struggle between its main political allies in Italy (the Christian Democrats – or DC – and other smaller centrist parties) and the Marxist forces represented by the Communist and Socialist groups (PCI and PSIUP, then PSI, which together formed the Popular Democratic Front for the 1948 national elections). From the success (as perceived in the U.S.) achieved by the panoply of U.S. (covert and overt) actions which assisted the DC to gain an absolute majority in the Parliament, Washington, especially under the inspiration of the Policy Planning Staff (PPS) of George Kennan, then proceeded to expand, reorganize, and coordinate the strategy of political warfare. Its extension to more crucial Cold-war theaters – Eastern Europe especially – gave questionable or negligible results, especially because political warfare, like the strategy of containment, succumbed to bureaucratic divisions and the continued U.S. search for an "unambiguous strategy" that favored "dangerous universalist formulae" (207) over fluidity, flexibility, and deep understanding of local circumstances.

To the inattentive reader, Mistry's repeated assertion that Italy was a secondary concern for the U.S. may seem contradictory to his general rationale, which argues that Italy became the prime catalyst for U.S. political warfare. But as Mistry clarifies, Italy mattered because it exposed the initially improvised nature of U.S. political warfare; second, it counted, because, regardless of its secondary importance, its political situation helped Washington focus on the subversive, rather than military, threat constituted by the Soviet Union and its communist affiliates; and third, as specified especially in Chapter Eight, the lessons learned by the U.S. during the 1947-48 Italian events confirmed that Italy remained an "abstract concept in the fight to systematize American political warfare" (178). America's relative

dismissal of the details of the local situation illustrates both the importance and the limits of the subsequent institutionalization of political warfare. In general, Mistry proves that this focus on the Italian case study is warranted because Italy became “a signifier” (179) in debates to organize political warfare.

To be commended is also Mistry’s ability to illustrate the overlapping of multiple narratives which constitute the core themes of his book: 1) the horizontal-vertical tensions in U.S. policy-making; 2) the struggle to consolidate the Christian Democrats’ (DC)-centrist hegemony; 3) the marriages of convenience that were at the heart of U.S.-Italian relations and state-private alliances; 4) and the ideology of Italian frailty (especially as perceived and stereotyped by U.S. observers).

And here is how it all comes into play. The account illustrates that a clearly defined U.S. policy for Italy became arduous because of local conditions affecting, transforming, and distorting the U.S. input, as well as bureaucratic problems within the U.S. (along the vertical and horizontal lines described by the author). Evidence of the vertical-horizontal tensions also helps highlight the role of Ambassador Dunn in alleviating such tensions. Mistry, quoting the historian Ennio Di Nolfo, aptly describes Ambassador Dunn as the “spokesman and amplifier” of the Italian case (93)³. An examination of the complexity of factors and channels affecting U.S. –Italian relations offers further insights on American internal politics as well: for example showing how the debate over Italy’s economic choices mutually affected the debate between free-market and pro-New Deal approaches in the United States.

By illustrating in some detail the connection of state and private actors, Mistry clarifies the multifaceted aspects of U.S.-Italian relations. He also shows both the coordination and the disjointed nature of U.S. intervention. A few instances – such as, to draw from chapter five, the links between the founder of the Socialist Democrat party, Giuseppe Saragat’s and American trade unions, Dunn’s cooperation with the Hudson Company, which included figures like Special Assistant to the Secretary of State Adlai Stevenson, and Time-Life managing director C. D. Jackson (Eisenhower’s future Director of Psychological Warfare), or the Church’s role both in its merits and its drawbacks – help corroborate Mistry’s point.

Shifting the attention to bureaucratic structures and the state-private connection also helps reevaluate the role of allegedly central policy-making structures like the National Security Council (NSC). Mistry reveals how the NSC, at least at its inception, did not establish policies but retrospectively sanctioned previous activities (carried out by the embassy or planned by the Policy Planning Staff).

On the “ideology of Italian frailty,” (passim) the interplay between instrumental (and contradictory) self-portrait of Italy’s “weak” (17) democracy and American stereotypes about Italian public opinion being subject to the bandwagon effect is well rendered, with fine examples especially from the estimates of diplomats such as the patronizing Walter

³ Ennio Di Nolfo, *Le paure e le speranze degli italiani: 1943-1953* (Milan: Mondadori, 1986), 259.

Dowling and the contemptuous George Kennan. The analysis of this aspect further reveals the cultural assumptions behind U.S. attitudes toward Italy or other European allies.

Italian historiography⁴ has pointed that the United States analyzed the main problem in Italy (and in France) as a political one: it is very telling that U.S. aid policies, from the start, were not so assuredly adhering to economic determinism, the thesis that assistance in itself would eradicate the communist problem; the Marxist threat was also political and psychological, and those aid policies were measured by their political impact and needed to be complemented with carefully (or not always so carefully) calculated psychological measures. Mistry correctly highlights how Kennan's central point about the Marshall Plan was about its psychological, more than its economic, impact.

Indeed, I find Mistry's rendition of Kennan's role (and subsequent disappointments) in defining political warfare masterful. Particularly, I found useful his contextualization of Kennan's evolving views on political warfare within his general strategy of containment, his political background, and even his cultural views of Nordic vs. Mediterranean peoples. It is just as illuminating to show how his conceptualization of political warfare allowed the restructuring of civil and military efforts under the PPS and NSC. Giving particular attention to Kennan's "infamous" March 1948 Manila telegram, in which the PPS Director recommended outlawing the PCI and contemplated military intervention, Mistry also clarifies that this was not such an anomaly in Kennan's generally cautious, non-hawkish containment line, for the PPS Director's excess can be explained with his disappointment with the poor results of political warfare, which had failed in its main mission of coordinating U.S. means of propaganda, covert actions, economic aid, and diplomacy.

The international context also receives adequate coverage here, though I think Mistry would have benefitted by expanding its sections on French, Irish, and British opinions about the imminent Italian elections in 1948. The only detailed description of other nations' views offered by Mistry is that of Britain's Labor government's disagreement with the U.S. endorsement of Italy's economic policies, a point that largely draws from previous accounts by Antonio Varsori⁵.

Although Chapter Seven at first appears as the most random of all the carefully crafted sections of the book, it does in fact show the multiple ways – through labor diplomacy, Marshall Plan implementation, and Italy's NATO membership – in which the 'marriages of

⁴ See for ex. Mario Del Pero, *L'alleato scomodo: gli USA e la DC negli anni del centrismo, 1948-1955* (Rome: Carocci, 2001); Guido Formigoni, *La Democrazia Cristiana e l'alleanza occidentale, 1943-1953* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); Simone Selva, *Integrazione internazionale e sviluppo interno: Stati Uniti e Italia nei programmi di riarmo del blocco atlantico (1945-1955)* (Rome: Carocci, 2009). I have drawn the main parallels between France and Italy first in Alessandro Brogi, *A Question of Self-Esteem: The United States and the Cold War Choices in France and Italy, 1944-1958* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

⁵ See especially Antonio Varsori, "La Gran Bretagna e le elezioni politiche italiane del 18 aprile 1948," *Storia contemporanea* 13.1 (1982).

convenience' proved to be problematic, exposing bureaucratic and political splits in both Italy and the United States.

For all its interpretive nuances, Mistry's work contains a few areas that are subject to discussion and could have been improved. As much as he argues that historians have tended to carelessly overlap political and psychological warfare, the fault might not be in the historians' interpretation, but rather in the sources themselves. At first psychological warfare may indeed have focused on "tactics rather than a comprehensive approach linking concepts and organization" (158). But Psy-war, once it became institutionalized in 1950, with the creation of the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB), its scope of action went much beyond 'media, information programs, propaganda'; it included much of the coordination that had previously been the prerogative of political warfare. When it started its activities in 1951, the PSB included political and diplomatic action among its "conceivable means to reach [its] objectives." "In the realms of psychological strategy," one of its documents explained, "all problems are interrelated."⁶

This does not mean that Mistry's thesis on political warfare is inaccurate or unsound. In fact, one of his central points, the vertical and horizontal conflicts affecting the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy, can be further proven by illustrating how the PSB's expanding field of action was quite controversial. That, plus its modest achievements (as illustrated especially by Walter Hixson and Scott Lucas)⁷ induced the Eisenhower administration and the State Department in particular to discard the aggressive 'psy-war' and return to the more subtle, centralized, coordinated forms of political warfare. This evolution is beyond the chronological scope of Mistry's study, but I think the United States' uncertainties about what constituted political or psychological warfare, the struggle among the various bureaucracies and the political outlook each represented, and the consequently fragmented or ill-coordinated 'war short of war' were all evident already in the 1948-50 period. At the end of chapter eight, we are reminded of the tendency to reduce the policy-making ability rather than the scope of political warfare, since "for the likes of [Paul] Nitze and [Dean] Acheson, political warfare did not represent an integrated approach to challenge Soviet power as much as a tactic that, in a world featuring a nuclear-armed Moscow and communist China, precluded the use of military force" (198) – a development indicating that the main subsequent problem was not the expansion of political warfare but its lack of integration. Mistry's analysis would have benefited from clarifying this.

⁶ PSB, "Notes on a Grand Strategy for Psychological Operations," 1 October 1951, Staff Member and Office Files, Psychological Strategy Board Files, box 24, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

⁷ See esp. Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Iron Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 19; and Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 128-154; see also David J. Snyder, "Domesticity, Rearmament, and the Limits of US Public Diplomacy in the Netherlands during the Early Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* (2013), 15, 3: 47-75 (and 51-52 in particular).

An integrated approach also means geostrategic coordination. The reader gets a sense from Mistry's argument that Italy at first was not correlated to the rest of Europe by the U.S., while in fact the debates in Washington and at the Rome Embassy point out that the Italians themselves, while asking to be part of a general strategy solving the Mediterranean crises or the European economic woes, did not show enough willingness to coordinate their policies with those of the other European recipients of U.S. aid. Italy's exclusion from the Truman Doctrine was actually a blessing, because Italy was better off with the coordinated aid plans for Europe, and, eventually, with the inclusion in NATO at its onset. The correlation between Italy and Europe (from both Rome's and Washington's perspectives) was stronger than Mistry presents it.

Mistry argues that the restructuring, or rather, organization from the start of covert political warfare was a result not of the actual, but the perceived, success of the operations in support of centrist parties in the 1948 Italian elections. Those operations, as recognized by the architects of political warfare (Kennan and Allen Dulles especially) – and ignored by most American authors – were, however, improvised, 'ad hoc', and subject to backlash; they showed poorly concealed divisions, and coordination among the policy-making and intelligence structures of U.S. foreign relations. Indeed, Mistry acknowledges that, while many previous works on the CIA have either ignored or the contributions of other protagonists in the 1948 elections, above all Italians, that omission does not constitute the central point he wants to raise: he is not after stressing "local conditions," (204) he argues; what's important is the conclusions U.S. strategists drew from those events.

This is all fine, and I, for one, would be inclined to restore (as other authors have done)⁸ local considerations, for the Italian case-study first matters in and of itself. In fact, Mistry's point about the importance of local actors, during the events leading to the expulsion of Communists and Socialists from the Italian government, as well as in the campaign leading to the Christian Democrats' landslide victory in 1948, has been far more consensual among historians than he concedes. Restoring 'local considerations' then, I would agree, matters also for how it affected the transformations of U.S. cold-war strategies. In Chapter Seven, Mistry seems to suggest this connection. So it is rather surprising to see chapter eight disconnecting itself from that narrative. What is the point of retelling the 1948-50 story of U.S. union strategies, of the troubles implementing Marshall Plan's programs in Italy, and of Italy's access to NATO, if they seemingly have little to do with how specifically political warfare was organized and applied (elsewhere) in those two years? In fact, the connection between the evolving political warfare and unions, the Economic Cooperation Administration, and diplomatic strategies in Italy was clearer than it transpires from the narrative of chapter eight.

⁸ See especially Robert A. Ventresca, *From Fascism to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Election of 1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Del Pero, *L'alleato scomodo*, cit. and, for the first attempt in this sense, Mario Isnenghi, "Alle origini del 18 aprile: miti, riti, mass media," in Mario Isnenghi and Silvio Lanaro (eds.), *La Democrazia Cristiana dal fascismo al 18 aprile: movimento cattolico e Democrazia Cristiana nel Veneto, 1945-1948* (Venice, Marsilio, 1978).

And frankly, I think Italy should be given a little more credit as one of America's priorities in the early Cold War. Measuring the strategic and economic importance of Italy, compared to Britain, France, Germany, is one thing; assessing its relevance for the rest of Europe (with a few notable exceptions, George Kennan above all, who rejected the notion of a U.S.-European entanglement, especially when including Mediterranean countries), and the importance of its political situation is a different, much more significant matter. Italian politics and the country's position along the Iron curtain and at the center of the Mediterranean rapidly increased its strategic importance for the U.S. I am not making too much out of the fact that, for example, Italy was the first focus of the newly established National Security Council (and I agree with Mistry that the NSC at this stage was far from being the decision-making forum it would become in the Dwight Eisenhower years). But the very decision to test political warfare in Italy was not just a matter of experimentation; that decision also indicated a greater importance of the country for U.S. interests than Mistry suggests.

Could Mistry's assessment originate perhaps in his methodological approach? He argues against the 'prescriptive' method in history, with its too often simplistic approach, based on the success-failure dichotomy. And that is fine. But, in his effort to address the 'how' questions (admirable though it is), Mistry does frequently allude to success-failure interpretations, and his whole thesis indicates the shortcomings of political warfare, not so much in theory as in how it was implemented. Chapters Six through Eight explain in detail the improvised nature of political warfare in Italy, the unraveling of the 'marriages of convenience,' the reasons (American or Italian) for the limits of economic and social reform in Italy, and the faulty assumptions with which the United States extended political warfare globally. In the conclusion of chapter seven, Mistry reminds us that anti-communist solidarity became a greater priority than socio-economic reform in Italy. Even the general conclusion about the ineffective, if not even farcical nature of political warfare in Eastern Europe, contains prescriptive elements. In the general conclusion Mistry also argues that "the essential dilemma for political warfare remained its emphasis on *warfare* over the *political* nature of the communist challenge" (206). This emphasis meant that the U.S. never truly understood that 'political nature' It seems that, though focusing on U.S. 'perception' of success, and therefore better explaining the context in which policies and strategies were formed – a contextualization that also allows the author to maintain (correctly) a stronger objective balance than the "clear-cut success stories" (8) – Mistry also confirms that the historian cannot avoid the (often necessary) hindsight, and a certain normative quality of analysis. This is not a fatal contradiction in Mistry's approach, but he may have been better off specifying that a greater focus on the 'how' questions does not exempt the historian from answering general 'why' normative questions as well.

All these are minor qualifications for a work that stands out for its interpretive framework, its retelling of an important case study of the early Cold War, and its revealing examination of how the Italian case had broad ramifications in the U.S. global approach to political warfare. *Waging Political Warfare* provides crucial insights into Washington's Cold-war strategies, and merits the attention of a wide readership, not confined to specialists of U.S.-Italian relations.

Italy's history in the very early years of the post-World War II period has been a hotly debated subject, both regarding its domestic policy and its international dimensions. Kaeten Mistry, in his book, has adopted an original approach, thus providing a significant contribution in a broad perspective of international history. He analyses the U.S.-Italian relationship between 1945 and 1950 not only as a specific and limited case-study, but as a key episode mirroring the American approach to the reconstruction of the post-war international system and then to the Cold War. His aim is to show how "particular events and broader approaches overlapped" (6). From a methodological point of view, this is a book that combines a diplomatic-history approach with some solid tools of cultural history.

Mistry, by carefully reconstructing the network of relationships existing at that time, underlines how the Italian question played a minor role soon after the end of the war, notwithstanding the action of a strong Italian lobby in the United States and the efforts of the anti-fascist Italian government to leave the defeat behind and to get rid of its ambiguous role as an 'enemy-ally' due to the 1943 events (armistice and co-belligerence). This uncertain situation culminated in the frustrating affair of the peace treaty: the Italian leadership was disappointed by its punitive aspects, since they hoped that things had changed at the moment of breaking from Germany in 1943. So in Italy some resentment spread, even toward the United States.

The stalemate was unlocked no sooner than mid-1947. On the one hand, there were "a series of working-level improvements in US-Italian relations" (43). But the picture was still unclear, as evidenced by the fact that Italy was not among the States that benefited from the funds President Harry Truman had solicited from Congress with his 'doctrine'. On the other hand, Italy, with the onset of the Cold War and the implementation of the Marshall plan, had suddenly become a crisis point: the United States could not afford to fail in a Mediterranean country, since a failure would jeopardize the whole containment scheme. A failure could result in economic chaos and bolster the fears that were already spread in Italy about the involvement of the Communist party in the government. Such chaos would have delegitimized Alcide De Gasperi, leader of the Christian Democratic party, and helped the Popular Front (alias the Communist Party) win the first political elections – which were scheduled for April 1948 - after the approval of the Italian Constitution. The U.S. government was worried about such a perspective and decided to launch the Interim-Aid to fill in the gap with the Marshall Program. As a consequence, in June 1947 De Gasperi decided to exclude the Communists from the Government, a very controversial decision which, as Mistry confirms, was made without strong American pressures (indeed the embassy "stopped short of tangible incentives," 80). After that, there was a sudden escalation of the direct American involvement, aimed at directly steering the Italian policy towards a solution highly palatable to the United States.

One could dare say that this is well-known stuff. The peculiar contribution made by Mistry starts here. The point is that the U.S. administration, with its proactive approach, for the

first time implemented a form of 'political warfare,' a new issue which it intended to tackle with fresh intellectual models and to actualize with new tools. It was a typical Cold-war battle, which had to be won with 'short-of-war' weapons, even though the use of force had not at all been ruled out. The book, in a very detailed and accurate way, spells out the steps of the U.S. intervention within the decision-making process of the Truman administration, which had singled out the Christian Democrats and centrist parties as the most suitable allies. Mistry depicts a political intervention consisting of a wide range of actions and actors. The Administration discussed and worked out the programs: it is not by chance that the first resolutions passed by the newly established National Security Council concerned Italy. However, the U.S. action was fragmented and lacked in coordination, partly because of some difficulties in finding the financial resources for specific projects (caused by the budget cuts to Voice of America, for example), partly because of the ongoing bureaucratic conflict of jurisdiction due to the lack of a coordinating agency. Interventions were often improvised, especially by embassy officers in Rome (Ambassador James C. Dunn's role proved to be crucial) and by American and Italian players in cooperation with transnational, non-governmental networks. The most important players of this kind were the Vatican and the Catholic Church in America, U.S. trade unions (above all the American Federation of Labor) and their Italian counterparts, and, finally, Italian-American associations. Later on the book describes the forms of direct propaganda and the financing methods by adding some further information to an already well-known scenario. There was an important debate on 'unvouchered fundings': the American involvement could not be too visible, but the effort was indeed inevitably more fragile and uncontrolled. But also the rearmament of the Italian armed forces raised similar problems: De Gasperi refused arms shipments in order not to be attacked by left-wing parties. Speaking of specific political aims, the outcome was sometimes frustrating, as with U.S. support in favour of the Social-Democratic party and of its involvement in the Italian Government, hoping to subtract workers' votes from the Italian Communist Party.

The conceptual framework underlying the American involvement, one subject Mistry dwells upon, was in the meantime defined by George Kennan, the first Director of the new Policy Planning Staff who insisted on the political aspect of containment, the formula that he had been proposing since 1946. He stressed that there was a 'full-fledged' confrontation at stake and criticized the incapability of the U.S. administrative bodies to handle the wide range of political warfare measures needed to fight against Communism and to include them in a well-planned strategy. The Italian case became a "key catalyst" (3) of this planning work, but also led to a lot of negative judgements and discontent, as expressed by Kennan. Such a vision was marked by a conservative and a paternalist approach towards Mediterranean Europe and its weaknesses, which were epitomized by the risk of becoming a victim of the Communist 'illness.'

This was the reason that Kennan, a few weeks before elections, was overcome by despair and in a well-known telegram sent from Manila, suggested that De Gasperi should outlaw the Communists, even at the risk of a civil war. Mistry convincingly explains that Kennan's behaviour was caused by a sense of frustration, by his pessimism about the 'Italian character,' and by his mistrust of the U.S. capabilities to change the state of affairs in due course. However, we must not forget that it was also caused by his total lack of

understanding of what was going on, and this was one of the (not rare) cases where the State Department and the President did not take his advice.

At the end of the day, on April 18th, the Italian Christian Democrats won a crushing victory, nearly achieving the absolute majority (their allies had good results too), while the Popular Front lost votes compared to 1946. From here on, Mistry develops the second important part of the book: around this event a 'success story' has been built and it has remained a true 'myth' for many years. To some extent, it was framed in the U.S. Government a conceptualization of Cold War that was previously unripe. To meet the Soviet challenge, confidence in its own military force was not enough: a range of more sophisticated political measures was deeply needed. However, the enthusiastic interpretation of recent Italian events had some drawbacks. In Mistry's opinion, the policymakers of the Truman administration "underestimated the distinctive local conditions and overestimated their own contributions" (205). Since this was the very beginning, it heavily influenced the future and resulted in a long-lasting infatuation for political warfare tools and 'covert operations' which would go beyond the wary and cautious logic Kennan had suggested and would become a sort of universal tool which, it was assumed, would fit in any situation. The book only briefly touches upon the long history of these interventions, but evokes the ineffective efforts during the fifties to apply this model to the 'people's democracies' in Eastern Europe. In short, success led the Americans to underestimate the problems and contradictions of 'political warfare': for instance, how to combine the overt propaganda of American values with secret aid aimed at financing local actors, at the risk of controversies and misunderstandings. Incidentally, after 1950 this model became a secondary tool in the militarization of containment, and it is no coincidence that in the same period Kennan left the U.S. administration.

After 1948, Italy revealed the first contradictions of the American success. The centrist coalition victory resisted American pressures for an expansive economic policy as required by the logic of the Marshall Plan. The country found place in the developing Atlantic alliance, taking advantage of the fears of a political failure should it not become a member. It would prove equally reluctant in the national political war against communism. American attempts to build on other forms of relationships, with Catholic circles or trade unions, turned out to be equally disastrous: Luigi Gedda's Civic Committees (the electoral organization set up by the Church) were effective against Communism, but had reactionary values, whereas the plan to build a free and democratic trade unionism after the split in the hitherto unitary Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) proved to be slow and tortuous, without satisfactory results for the U.S. Administration. In short, the political war had to rely on a series of limiting local alliances and on some 'marriages of convenience' that worked only 'negatively' against communism, but were less useful in the consolidation of democracies according to the American model.

This book has to be praised because of the author's ability not only to master the evolution of American politics, with its interpretative debate, but also the Italian historical context and its historiography (something which is not that obvious). For instance, the book skilfully illustrates the complex and specular search led by De Gasperi after counterparts in the United States, highlighting his skills but also the inevitable duplicity and contradictions

which marked his approach: the insistence on the country's economic weakness and the Communist threat was hardly compatible with Italy's claim to be a reliable ally and even more with its need to build a strong and independent national policy. We can perhaps only object to the representation of a close political alliance between the Christian Democrats and 'technicians' or liberals (bluntly defined by Mistry as the "DC-centrist bloc", to be understood as "a supra-party élite" (34), that would have resulted from the rupture of the anti-Fascist alliance from 1947 onwards. I am convinced that De Gasperi surely tried to exploit this alliance, which contributed to his own legitimization vis-à-vis the Italian state tradition. At the same time, more than the book seems to recognize, he aimed at rebalancing the role of the most conservative liberals given the presence of a progressive fraction within the Christian Democrats and the difficult, but stubborn attempt to find an agreement with Giuseppe Saragat's Social Democrats. If this is true, we should perhaps interpret less rigidly the Italian government's opposition to the U.S. approach vis-à-vis the use of the Marshall aid programme. But these are just details in a generally convincing picture.

Kaeten Mistry's book explores why and how early postwar Italy became an important proving ground and source of broader lessons for American practitioners of 'political warfare.' As defined by one of its main champions and conceptualizers, George F. Kennan, political warfare meant "the employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives. Such operations are both overt and covert . . ." (3) The head of the State Department Policy Planning Staff wrote these words a few months after the bitterly fought Italian elections of April 18, 1948. Postwar Italy, as Mistry shows, had recently witnessed the "inaugural war short of actual war" (10).

Near the beginning of the book, the author lays out three basic arguments. First, "Italy was never important in and of itself for American policymakers although its fate was critical in a wider sense" (5). This statement is a little misleading in that there were different views, and concern with Italy varied according to circumstances, but in general the peninsula came to be seen as an important geopolitical stake (and later a base of operations) in the East-West conflict. Writing about the late-1947 period, the author accurately observes, "Italy was now at the heart of American interests and correlated with broader plans" (60).

The second, altogether convincing argument is that the Americans and their local allies, led by Christian Democratic Premier Alcide De Gasperi, had over-lapping but by no means identical (and sometimes clashing) perspectives and agendas. Christian Democracy was "a populist, mass-based party inspired by Christianity and democratic values. It sought national sovereignty and involvement with, but not subservience to, international partners" (77). After April 1948, whereas US officials "increasingly turned to covert measures to eradicate the communist 'disease' in Italy and around the world, De Gasperi viewed it [the Partito Comunista Italiano or PCI] as a *justis hostis*, a legitimate adversary to defeat through the political process but not destroy" (202). Indeed, thanks to its role in the writing of the 1948 constitution and strategic decision to pursue a parliamentary road to power, the PCI became one of the main pillars and stakeholders of Italian democracy after 1945.

Mistry's third basic argument is that the April 1948 elections gave rise to the perception that the outcome represented "a uniquely American success" (128), spurring the institutionalization of political warfare and the attempt to practice it elsewhere. "The crux," he says, "is to understand *how* a perception of success came about—rather than the prosaic and ineffectual question of *whether* it was true—and, furthermore, consider its tangible consequences" (5). Maybe whether the perception corresponded to reality is a secondary question, but it will certainly be of interest to most readers of this book. In fact, Mistry makes a strong case that the Americans exaggerated the impact of their intervention on the outcome of the elections and drew distorted lessons from the experience. The case can be made (although never definitively proved) that the impression of heavy-handed U.S. meddling in the electoral campaign was counter-productive, prompting Italians who otherwise would not have done so to vote for the left. De Gasperi feared such an effect, initially resisting U.S. efforts to send arms to his government and declaring the day before

the vote: “We are neither servants of America nor hostages to Russia” (149).

At the heart of the book is a detailed, perceptive account of the elections in which the author emphasizes two points. First is the ad hoc, improvised nature of the U.S. effort to aid the center-right forces, including the creation of secret funding networks involving American trade unions and private entrepreneurs. This was an effort spear-headed by the Rome Embassy under Ambassador James Clement Dunn, and in which the CIA (subsequent legends notwithstanding) had a secondary part. His other point is the decisive role played in the campaign by local actors including the Vatican, Luigi Gedda’s Civic Committees, and De Gasperi himself. One could add that a single statement by Secretary of State George C. Marshall may well have had a greater influence on the result than the sum total of ‘unvouchered funds,’ namely, that a Popular Front victory would be interpreted in Washington as a decision by Italy not to take part in the Marshall Plan.

The author devotes interesting pages to Kennan’s role in developing the notion of political warfare and the lessons he took from the Italian experience. Although some of his public pronouncements left his views open to misinterpretation (*e.g.*, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”¹), Kennan insisted that Soviet backed communism was a political, not a military, challenge and must be dealt with accordingly. Mistry argues that Kennan’s famous advice (transmitted from Manila on March 15, 1948) that the Italian government outlaw the PCI, presumably provoking a civil war and allowing the U.S. to re-occupy Italian bases, was fundamentally a lament about the inadequacy of American measures short of war (123-26; 180). This is no doubt true, but the suggestion should also be placed in the context of his argument in PPS 23, issued a few weeks earlier (February 24, 1948). There he had set out the view that if the Russians were persuaded that they could make no further gains in Western Europe (*e.g.*, Italy), they might well be prepared to enter into confidential talks leading to a general agreement or modus vivendi including Germany and involving the withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet forces from Europe. In other words, the albeit foolish suggestion about the PCI arose from his concern that the stage be set for a possible settlement of the Cold War. Whether *that* idea had any merit is another question but it renders Kennan’s advice rather less peculiar than is usually believed.

As suggested by the Manila telegram and the pessimism it reflected, Kennan’s reading of the electoral outcome was not so much that it had been a clamorous success for political warfare but that such efforts needed to be better organized and co-ordinated. In any event, the elections, together with Yugoslav leader Josip Tito’s break with Joseph Stalin, were a fillip to the creation of the Office of Policy Co-Ordination (OPC) and the expansion of covert operations to the Eastern bloc and other areas. Many of these efforts, Mistry’s stimulating and valuable book suggests, were doomed to failure because they were based on a “partial and selective” understanding of the Italian experience. (204) No one, including Kennan, seems to have grasped the obvious lesson of Italian and Yugoslav events, that successful political warfare depended on the presence of determined and well-organized local partners, operating without fear of repression by Stalinist governments. The OPC’s

¹ “X,” *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*, *Foreign Affairs*, 25, No. 4 (July 1947): 566-582

activities served not to undermine Soviet control of Eastern Europe but, if anything, to reinforce it, and ran directly counter to Kennan's bids (as seen in PPS 23, and later, the Policy Planning Staff's 1948 "Plan A" for Germany) for a negotiated settlement to the Cold War.

“The Italian internal issue is easily the most pressing problem in world politics today. In saying this...it is well realized that this prominence is of a transient, relative and even negative character” (176). Henry J. Tasca, the economic expert in the American Embassy in Rome, wrote these words in a memo in early 1948, on the eve of the elections of 18 April. Italy was then considered a shaky tile in the European puzzle and many feared the bandwagon effect in the Mediterranean of Italy falling to communists. Although transient, the preoccupation was such that American efforts focussed significantly on the Italian situation. The electoral campaign revolved around international issues and in the view of contemporaries it implied taking sides irrevocably with one of the two cold warriors, either the U.S. or the USSR. American aid flowed and covert operations mushroomed. The western-oriented Christian Democratic Party (DC) won the elections. This was enough for the American administration to classify ‘April 18’ as a clear success and use it henceforth as a precedent. The Italian case constituted the rationale for waging political warfare. This was defined by George Kennan in a Policy Planning Staff (PPS) Memorandum of 4 May 1948 as the employment of all the means short of war to achieve national objectives, ranging from overt actions such as political alliances, economic measures and propaganda to covert operations such as psychological warfare and the encouragement of underground resistance. ‘April 18’ was key to placing political warfare in the core of new Cold-war strategies. In his book, Kaeten Mistry explains how this came about. He also explains why it should never have happened, i.e., why policy-makers in Washington learned the wrong lesson from the Italian case on how to wage the Cold War.

Mistry’s book is a very thoroughly researched account of bilateral U.S.-Italy relations. It focuses on a crucial time span, 1945-1950, from the early negotiations of the peace treaty to the war in Korea, the period that Italian historiography classifies as ‘the years of the Atlantic choice.’¹ It revolves around 1948, a turning point both in Italian history and in Cold-war history. Although the author aims at “offering a more complete account” (6) of post-war U.S.-Italian relations, what it actually does is something different. This is not a study on Italy; it does not deal mainly with the Italian efforts to retain or regain independence and freedom of action in the new Cold-war setting. It is not a story of how the country struggled with establishing new and more promising foreign relations, with regaining economic sovereignty or even with ‘containing containment.’² It does not focus on issues that have become commonplace in the Italian narrative of the early Cold War. For example, it quickly dispels the myth of Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi’s visit to Washington, claiming that it was not a watershed in shaping transatlantic relations (46-

¹ See Antonio Varsori, *L’Italia nelle relazioni Internazionali dal 1943 al 1992*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1998, Guido Formigoni, *La Democrazia cristiana e l’alleanza occidentale*, Il mulino, Bologna 1996, Brunello Vigezzi (ed.), *La Dimensione atlantica e le relazioni internazionali nel dopoguerra, 1947-1949*, Jaca Book, Milano 1997.

² The reference here is to Mario Del Pero, *L’alleanza scomoda. Gli USA e la DC negli anni del centrismo*, Carocci Roma 2001.

48).

Mistry's book, instead, takes a different angle. Well written and driven by a compelling argument, *The United States, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War* is pretty much a story of American ideas on how to deal with a new kind of conflict, the Cold War. It has a strong focus on how emerging American bureaucracies shaped a foreign policy anew. By making a comprehensive use of diverse bodies of literature and of new archive sources, Mistry offers a convincing narrative on how a selective evaluation of policy outcomes led to learning the wrong lessons from history. The U.S. administration, he argues, failed to understand that "the effectiveness of organised political warfare depended on a certain symbiosis with actors familiar with indigenous conditions" (202). The electoral campaign leading to 'April 18' was not centrally orchestrated by Washington, but rather by the local embassy using its own network. Ambassador James Dunn is one of the main characters of the success story, and proof that individuals can make a difference. The 1948 elections became a trope in organising political warfare and they became a calling card for covert actions elsewhere, since "Washington policy makers considered the result to be evidence of political warfare's potential for the broader cold war" (152).

As Mistry convincingly shows, however, this was the story of a fake success. American political warfare in Italy had not been so unequivocally successful, and the notion of a triumph was "detrimental, encouraging illusions the US power could be exercised unilaterally in other arenas and, ultimately, win the cold war" (19). 'April 18' had not brought about a stable Italy. The bipolar system had assisted Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi at the polls, but the aftermath of the elections raised doubts about his party's actual appeal. Doubts should have been cast on the opportunity of exporting the same strategy to Eastern Europe.

One of the most interesting features of Mistry's narrative is the attention devoted to transnational networks. The networks of mid-level representatives, in politics, economics, and social movements are key to understanding the success of 'April 18', he claims. This attention to pre-existing links and informal contacts has been explored in the historiography, especially in connection with Italian political emigration.³ Mistry, however, focuses rather on the links created through the war experience of American officials in occupied Italy. In his narrative, trade unions deserve special attention, and so does the Catholic Church, with its fight to retain control and influence on the Italian peninsula. What is missing, though, are the important transnational networks with European political and technical elites in France, the UK, and Germany. The book singles out one special case of transatlantic networking without taking into account other European actors who played a significant role in connecting Italy to the Atlantic project.

The most original trait of Mistry's book is the emphasis given to American representations of Italy. He shows how Italians were examined through the lens of cultural and racial

³ See Antonio Varsori, *Gli alleati e l'emigrazione democratica antifascista (1940-1943)*, Sansoni, Firenze 1982.

prejudice, how they were feminised and ethnically demarcated as oriental and inferior Latin whiteness. The patronising attitude that was so characteristic in American policy-makers – a feature so common in the accounts of modernisation efforts toward backward countries - is not an issue for Italian historiography. In contrast, Mistry focuses on the construction of the stereotype of the childlike, immature population desperately in need of guidance. An ideology of Italian frailty, he argues, was instrumental in confirming the rationale for “a muscular and beneficent expansion of American power” (17). After the war, the attitude did not change and was widespread among crucial personalities. Ellery Stone, Chief Commissioner of the Allied Commission for Italy, Walter C. Dowling, of the Department of State Division of Southern European Affairs, and Ambassador James C. Dunn all insisted on treating Italians like children. In 1946 Walter C. Dowling claimed that it was time for Italians to start “behaving like adults” if they wanted Americans to help them help themselves. He suggested contemptuously that American should react to Italian demands with “a kind word, a loaf of bread, a public tribute to Italian civilization, then another kind word, and so on” (42). American officials often spoke of Italy’s inherent backwardness, of a democracy that was learning to walk or that was “in course of primary training” (153). The Italian people, they concluded, had “a certain immaturity, like children” and the U.S. had to provide material assistance “but also tutelage and a model to emulate in the utilisation of that help” (154).

Mistry tells the story of the 1948 Manila Telegram as proof of the arrogant attitude of American leadership, including the father of containment, George Kennan. Writing from the Philippines on the eve of elections, Kennan suggested outlawing the Italian communist party and being ready to take strong action in case of upheaval. His suggestion was a consequence of his distrust in Latin people’s sense of democracy; they were, he said, attracted by more emotional ideologies, like communism (102). Ambassador Dunn shared the same judgemental tone, speaking of Italians as a vulnerable indigenous population that required guidance to prevent it from siding with an authoritarian force, given “the Italian propensity to flock to the winning banner” (128).

A much-needed comprehensive work on U.S.-Italian relations in English, Mistry’s book touches upon several original elements, which makes it an ideal complement to the Italian side of the story of bilateral relations. It succeeds in bridging the gap between the literature on U.S.-Italian relations and the history of early Cold-war policy-making. Moreover, it offers both useful ideas and caveats to readers interested in exploring the potential of political warfare after the end of the Cold War.

The election of April 1948 was one of the formative moments of the postwar Italian republic. It validated a political system in which the parties controlled most aspects of life and set Italy on a course toward deepened integration in Western Europe. It opened the way to a successful economic expansion (the Italian Miracle). It ended the likelihood that a communist-dominated coalition would legally and democratically assume power. The election, of course, was more than an internal issue. It validated the choices of the governing coalition for an alliance with the United States. The outcome of the election was of paramount importance to two international actors, the United States and the Holy See. Italy's electoral choice constituted a bit of a conundrum for a third major power, the Soviet Union. The prospect of a communist-dominated Italy gave hives to most West European governments while filling their national communist movements with hope. The Vatican and Washington, with support from much of Western Europe, actively attempted to steer public opinion in the direction of a vote for centrist political parties even as they prepared for the 'worst,' the possible victory of a communist-socialist coalition. Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin kept his distance, more concerned about a clash with American power than the fate of his Italian comrades. Historians have long recognized that the Italian elections figured significantly in the elaboration of an American strategic response to the Cold-war challenge posed by the Soviet state and its allied national communist movements.

To the intense relief of that political odd couple, democratic (and largely Protestant) America and the Vatican, the U.S.- and church-supported Italian Christian Democrats (DC) won a plurality of the votes (48.5%) and solid majority of the seats in parliament. The DC and its partners, a group of small democratic parties ranged from the center right to the center left, ingested the new democratic state, ruling for over forty years, in a climate of stop-and-start economic expansion, ideological confusion, rapid social change, and increasing corruption. The DC's ability to carefully manage seemingly endless sources of patronage allowed it to ride out repeated errors and scandals and even expand its majority parliamentary coalition. In the 1960s, abandoning its declining partners of the right, the DC build an unequal relationship with the intellectually and financially impoverished socialists.

Christian Democratic rule found its ultimate justification in the party's claim to be the most reliable bulwark against the threat of communism. ("Hold your nose and vote DC" in the immortal phrasing of journalist Indro Montanelli.)¹ However, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was as much the DC's partner as its opponent. The Italian constitution of 1948 (which, despite the hyperbolic claims that a 'second republic' now exists, remains the basic law) is the product of effective cooperation and compromise between DC and PCI, over the protests of socialists, middle class radicals, and moderates. The deal protected the interests of the DCs most important patron, the Holy See, and guaranteed the PCI a major

¹ Giovanna Orsina, *Berlusconism and Italy: A Historical Interpretation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 48.

role in the essential distribution of patronage that in turn permitted it, together with its allied unions, to carve out a state within the state, based on control of many local governments and the largest portion of the unionized laboring classes. Defeat in 1948 was a blessing in disguise for the PCI. It allowed the party to hold on to its significant role in the political system and avoided placing the communists in a position that would force them either to choose between the system they had helped build or to sacrifice those advantages in a probably futile effort to build a socialist Italy in partnership with the erratic and badly divided socialists. Most importantly, by losing and accepting their status as the party of opposition, the communists avoided a civil war and a military confrontation with the United States that the party could not have won.

The American stake in Italy was that large. In 1942, the Roosevelt administration announced that Italians would not suffer the treatment to be meted out to Germany and Japan, and would have a free postwar choice of regime. This lenient policy, largely made for domestic political considerations, and not endorsed by the British partner, only made sense in the context of an Italian choice of democracy. In turn, this meant a long-term U.S. commitment to ensuring that Italy made that “right” choice. From 1946 onward, the United States was deeply involved in the complex maneuvering that preceded the vote of April 18, 1948.

Kaeten Mistry offers a sophisticated and informative telling of the 1948 election saga and the U.S. role based on an impressive command of archival resources and secondary literature. Anglo-American scholarly interest has largely flagged since an outburst of books in the 1980s and Italian historians, too, have moved on to other topics over the last few decades. In *From Fascism to Democracy* Robert Ventresca essayed a reasonably successful effort to examine the internal and foreign policy elements of the 1948 story.² Mistry, taking advantage of this previous work, has returned to the story of American involvement. His examination fills gaps in our knowledge of the election campaign. In surveying the Italian story, Mistry has not produced a major revisionist work. In fact, his telling largely confirms earlier scholarship. Its value lies in providing a nice synthesis validating these conclusions. While differences of emphasis will continue, the contributions of Mistry and Ventresca remind us that the election was essentially an Italian story. The Italian parties made the big decisions on issues, strategy, timing, propaganda, and mass mobilization. Nevertheless, Mistry demonstrates that U.S. involvement was important because it helped shape the larger American strategy and, more importantly, the tactics, that ultimately restrained Soviet power, reduced the influence of individual national communist parties, and favored Italian integration into both an American dominated international trade system and into a European economic and political zone based on a regulated capitalism and democracy. With all its flaws, the European Union still provides a template for peaceful international cooperation and integration and offers an attractive alternative to current Russian efforts to return to Stalin’s original design of erecting a closed economic and political zone of control in part of Eurasia.

² Robert Ventresca, *From Fascism to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Election of 1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

While admiring the careful way in which Mistry reconstructs the 1948 story, I was less impressed by his effort to utilize the Italian case as the basis for an ambitious revisionist history of Cold-war strategy, and puzzled by a few points of his recitation of events. The most puzzling element, for me, was his attention to the role of George Kennan. The thinking of the 'Father of Containment' is well-plowed turf and its inclusion in a discussion of Italian events and projection onto larger American policy-making seems a bit forced. Kennan's influence was on the wane by the time the United States formulated a forceful response to the PCI challenge (NSC 1/3). Cerebral George, at least in my reading of the documents, had little to offer the emerging consensus except some suggestions for dangerously destabilizing measures such as outlawing the PCI. Calmer heads in both Washington and Rome viewed these suggestions as counterproductive.

My reading of the documentation also leaves me a bit skeptical about the degree to which the U.S. wanted to go beyond a careful and limited program of supplying weapons to Italian security forces. The offer was made, some shipments were sent, and Washington backed off once Premier Alcide De Gasperi determined that the potentially damaging political impact of discovery of the shipments outweighed any possible advantage in dealing with a hypothetical insurrection. American officials were concerned about the Italian prime minister's analysis but viewed militarization of the Italian situation and a potential armed intervention as a last resort. They were slow to develop or implement a program to send arms to Italy. The danger they saw was a national communist insurrection, not direct Soviet involvement. Stalin was willing to pay (covertly) for a strong communist presence in Italy but he had shown repeatedly since 1943 that he regarded that nation as a part of the Western sphere of influence. Truman and his advisors also were considerably more aware of the limits of American power and the dangers of involvement in other nation's civil wars than, say, George W Bush. While a subject of Mistry's criticism, Melvyn Leffler's emphasis on preponderance of power strikes me as a good description of the thinking behind overall policy in 1948 Italy.³

Accordingly, the author's effort to link the 1948 election to NSC 68 looks to be a bridge too far. It is at odds with Mistry's repeated embrace of the idea of the election as an example of 'means short of war' strategy, a judgment with which I agree. Even here, President Harry S. Truman's use of these means, above all covert action, was less ambitious than that of the Eisenhower Administration. The Americans were pretty sure they held a winning hand in Italy. And it is precisely the elaboration of a strategy of means short of war, particularly the development of covert 'trade craft,' that made the 1948 involvement in Italy a significant experience for U.S. policy makers. Mistry judges the CIA's money laundering operation of scant practical importance. In retrospect the first US covert operation is pretty unimpressive. The Americans relied largely on overt propaganda, economic aid, and an alliance with the Catholic Church to forward their objectives. Non-governmental contributions to various democratic parties were probably as great as the U.S. program and

³ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

often done quite publicly. The CIA handled transferring limited sums of ‘unvouchered funds’ to the DC and its allies. However, from the Agency’s viewpoint (and that of contemporary U.S. officials), the operation validated what became the Agency’s primary claim to a major role in postwar American policy development, its willingness to break any boundary (including common sense) in pursuit of U.S. objectives. The Italy operation helped the Agency shape a cult and myth of ‘intelligence’ based on its supposedly sophisticated ‘trade craft.’ Need to send money to friends, provide the Shah with a blonde, kill an unfriendly foreign leader, torture a ‘bad guy,’ or rig an election? The CIA had (or claimed to have) the expertise and was eager to do the deed.⁴ The 1948 election was a perfect example of a form of tradecraft that helped shape the Agency’s mission. Mistry is right. The covert operation of 1948 was small potatoes. But it far outweighed militarization in policy makers’ list of lessons learned. Italy was a triumph on the cheap. The path to NSC 68, with its emphasis on costly military hardware, does not seem to meander through Italy.

Finally, I find the author’s ‘revisionist’ argument over who was directing American policy a bit puzzling. I suppose every story needs a leading man and U.S. Ambassador James C. Dunn is probably a better choice than either of Mistry’s other two focuses: George Kennan, head of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, or Embassy Economic Minister Henry Tasca, the ‘protagonist’ of John Harper’s *America and the Reconstruction of Italy*.⁵ Dunn was in Rome precisely because he was a pillar of the Washington establishment that developed a Cold-war response. I cannot think of a single case where Washington and Embassy Rome were in disaccord over basic policy. Within the framework of this general agreement on policy, Dunn was expected to work out the details. Why send a senior man otherwise? Dunn had been inside the “club” for decades, knew how the game was played, and did his part well. He worked closely with De Gasperi, faithfully passed along the PM’s views (and his own judgments), managed the economic aid program, was carefully involved in the directing covert operations, and performed his public relations/propaganda

⁴ The CIA has an absolute mania about protecting its ‘trade craft.’ I would argue the major reason is to escape the sort of public scrutiny that reveals its frequent ‘keystone cops’ failures but more disturbingly how it has become our legalized mafia. In a late 1990s discussion with me, a senior State Department official recalled one example of the diversity of CIA ‘sources and methods.’ The Shah of Iran visited New York for the UN General Assembly Heads of State meetings. The ‘King of Kings’ invited some senior U.S. officials to his hotel suite and, as discussions began, announced he had a free afternoon and wished to divert himself with three Americans, a blond, a brunette and a redhead, in an effort to determine which was a better sexual partner. The U.S. delegation leader politely suggested that pandering was not the sort of service allies provided each other, only to be undercut by the senior CIA representative who picked up the phone and procured the Iranian autocrat’s desire. The meeting continued until three well-dressed New York call girls arrived. At that point the Shah selected the blond as his first partner and retired to the bedroom. The speed with which the Agency could pimp for the Iranian leader was a bit surprising, my interlocutor continued, but its immediate surrender to a bit of crude psychological provocation was not. The CIA valued its special access to the dictator. The Shah’s experiment, the former official concluded, reinforced the Iranian ruler’s belief that he could have his way with the U.S. government on matters big and small, legal or illegal.

⁵ John Harper, *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

job with gusto. Dunn had lots of influence (I am less convinced Tasca did). But no postwar administration left policy creation to an embassy. Washington was and is full of individuals and institutions -- most born under the Truman -- that handle the policy side.

Mistry's telling American involvement in Italy's 1948 vote should be the standard work of scholarly reference. He deserves a lot of credit for his research, his careful reconstruction, and his sophisticated judgments. While less impressed with the larger argument, I think it is worthy of debate and revision. *The United States, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War* is a welcome addition to the literature.

Author's Response by Kaeten Mistry, University of East Anglia

Starting out on doctoral work I remember reading some of the first roundtables H-Diplo published. I was struck by the stimulating, rigorous nature of the debates. Distinguished scholars reviewed key works in a full and frank manner but always in the spirit of intellectual inquiry and exchange (the roundtable on Marc Trachtenberg's excellent *A Constructed Peace* was one of the first I looked at). The sharp, sometimes ferocious, historiographical battles of previous decades were always a great read – as they remain¹ – but could leave a graduate student dazed, if not slightly intimidated. Struggling to get my dissertation off the ground, I would have questioned the sanity of anyone who suggested that the project would take flight and pass muster, let alone be published and one day be subject to an H-Diplo review itself. It is thus a great honour to have my book reviewed in what has become a seminal forum for the profession. Many thanks to Tom Maddux for commissioning the reviews and to Alessandro Brogi, Guido Formigoni, John Harper, Sara Lorenzini, and James Miller for their incisive commentaries.

The reviewers have each authored major works on American foreign policy and U.S.-Italian relations, and *Waging Political Warfare* builds on the platform established by these distinguished historians. I'm grateful they read my book with such care and attention. They make generous comments and fair criticisms. One of my objectives was to write a book that would not exclusively appeal to early cold war and U.S.-Italian specialists. My attempt to produce a multi-archival work of international history, that pays attention to politics and economics alongside how transnational forces and deeper cultural and social dynamics shape events and decisions, is generally well received by the reviewers. But as much as I would like to dwell on their positive assessments (an occupational hazard for anyone emerging from dark research tunnels to the light of praise from peers) readers will be relieved that I'll restrict my comments to the criticisms and broader questions raised.

First, I'll offer a brief summary of the main arguments. The book analyses U.S.-Italian relations and broader American efforts to conceptualise and fight 'cold war'² in the period between the hot conflicts of World War II and Korea. I seek to explain how Italy, a somewhat peripheral concern for the United States in 1945, became a seminal front in the post-war struggle against communism and, furthermore, how the supposed lessons of the defeat of the Italian Marxist left appeared to outline a way for the U.S. to successfully wage war without resorting to actual war. Organised political warfare represented an approach to foreign

¹ Mark Bradley and Andy Rotter provide fine overviews of these debates in "The Charlie Maier Scare and the Historiography of American Foreign Relations, 1959-1980" and "Chaps Having Flaps: The Historiography of U.S. Foreign Relations, 1980-1995," in Frank Costigliola and Michael Hogan (eds.), *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations*, 2nd Ed (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 9-29, 30-56.

² One objective is to examine the origin and definition of 'cold war' as a concept and how it was fought through political warfare, hence its appearance as a noun in small capitals (here and throughout the book) and the absence of the definite article 'the.'

relations, through a coordinated use of all the overt and covert means at a nation's command, appropriate for an era in which the contours of international conflict were in flux. Events helped provide definition and the key test came at the 1948 Italian election. The first national vote after the fall of Fascism, the election was a pivotal moment for Italians but also for the United States. The first major mobilisation by the U.S. government after WWII to influence events abroad, the campaign marked the inaugural episode of political warfare.

Political warfare, however, was more than an American story. Analysing the role of a broad, eclectic range of actors – Italian political, cultural and social elites; Europeans; transnational actors; non-governmental groups – to counter the Marxist left, the book examines this critical cold war flashpoint through an international lens. It presents three main arguments: that Italy was not important in and of itself for senior U.S. policymakers although its fate was crucial in a wider sense; 'cold' war perturbed countless American officials and commentators but a bipolar conflict short of war was less pressing for Italians and non-state actors; and, finally, the most telling legacy of the election was the emergence of a perception of success in American circles that contributed to a problematic future for U.S.-Italian relations and political warfare.

Any work that looks to examine the motives and actions of different protagonists within and between nations faces the challenge of weaving together multiple narratives. This inevitably involves synthesising and deconstructing, lumping and splitting. Guido Formigoni suggests that my "DC-centrist" label – describing an alliance between centrist Christian Democrats around Alcide De Gasperi and influential political independents and economic elites – is blunt in underestimating the Italian Prime Minister's desire to exploit the arrangement for his own purposes. Christian Democracy was certainly a complicated beast and De Gasperi was undoubtedly tactical in his choice of collaborators and coalition partners. Formigoni is well-versed here, having produced superb works on the subject.³ I tried to do justice to the divisions (much of chapters 1, 2, 4, and 7 discuss them) although *Waging Political Warfare* had to synthesise, especially since many readers are probably less interested in the finer details than the broader issue at hand. In identifying DC-centrism, my aim was to explain how Italian politics did not necessarily align along party lines, let alone bipolar cold war ones, and to highlight how and why technical experts assumed key positions of power. Labels can be blunt but they are also useful.

In contrast, James Miller suggests that my attempt to differentiate between the approaches of senior American policymakers and mid-level officials in the bureaucracy and Embassy is excessive, commenting "no postwar administration left policy creation to an embassy." This is undoubtedly true, although that is not to say that foreign policy emanates from up high and is transmitted down the bureaucracy for implementation. Washington and the Embassy

³ In particular see his *La Democrazia Cristiana e l'alleanza occidentale, 1943-1953* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); "De Gasperi e la crisi politica italiana del maggio 1947: Documenti e Reinterpretazioni." *Ricerche di Storia Politica* 6.3 (2003): 361-88; "Alcide De Gasperi 1943-1948: Il politico vincente alla guida della transizione," in Paolo Pombeni (series ed.), *Alcide De Gasperi: Scritti e discorsi politici. Volume III.1* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008): 11-147.

were united on the main objective – blocking the Marxist left – although they differed on the best way of accomplishing it.

Teasing out the divergences within policymaking structures challenges assumptions to traditional diplomatic practise, but it is also critical in framing the contribution of non-state actors. With the priorities of top-level U.S. policymakers – the National Security Council (NSC) and Policy Planning Staff (PPS) – focused on broader issues in the post-war era, guidance was frequently of limited value to those in the field. The NSC 1 series concerning Italy – the first directives ever issued by the Council – consisted of worst-case scenarios and rubber-stamping existing measures short of war. As John Harper points out, Secretary of State George Marshall made a telling declaration (assessing its impact is, of course, tricky to measure) that a left-wing election victory would be taken as Italy's rejection of the economic recovery plan bearing his name. Yet the idea itself originated with officials in Rome, and was repeatedly stressed as being important, with Marshall only making a speech late in the campaign. Political warfare plans were improvised and reliant on individuals on the ground. The Embassy was certainly not acting as a maverick, although its efforts also required collaboration with private groups. The latter had the desire and, moreover, the ability to channel money without leaving a paper trail, engage the Marxist left in a propaganda war of "good old-fashioned mud-slinging," and splinter the trade union movement. Non-state actors could wage effective, urgent political warfare in Italy. Ambassador James Dunn played a prominent role amid these ad hoc schemes, but the crucial issue is how and why he came to do so. It is not so much a desire to identify "a leading man," as Miller suggests, as recognising why, to borrow from Sara Lorenzini, "individuals can make a difference."

Therefore that Italy's fate was only important in the wider sense for *senior* (and I would reiterate *senior*) policymakers is not to downplay "local considerations" as Alessandro Brogi implies – of course they matter, hence a book addressing Italian and local dynamics in some depth – but illustrates how different approaches shaped events and, furthermore, informed subsequent decisions. When top-level Truman administration officials appropriated selective lessons from the Italian election result – namely, American efforts had won the day – this had profound ramifications for the expansion of political warfare. Without doubt, Italy was the absolute priority for the U.S. government in the lead-up to the 1948 election; "easily the most pressing problem in world politics today" in the words of the Embassy's Henry Tasca, who astutely added "once the crisis is over, the position of Italy would shrink back into its normal dimensions" (176). The Embassy and European desk officials continued to monitor local events in the aftermath of the vote while senior figures returned to the wider struggle. In particular, they emphasised selective 'lessons' from the episode in the push for an expanded, systemised application of political warfare in pastures new.

At the outset I state that analysing *how* a perception of success emerged and its subsequent consequences is more pertinent than assessing *whether* that perception was accurate (5). Brogi and Harper comment on the utility of normative analyses, with the former adding that subjectivity will inevitably mean some 'why' questions are addressed. Perhaps. I declare my personal opinion openly (that the American perception of success was largely ungrounded) although this should not be a crucial frame for the broader argument. Normative statements tend to fuel debates as to why interventions were/were not successful and what the past

supposedly teaches policymakers (9-10). Instead, my objective was to produce a piece of historical scholarship. It was not, as Lorenzini suggests, about “learning the wrong lessons from history” and why certain things “should never have happened,” or whether “heavy-handed U.S. meddling in the electoral campaign was counter-productive” (Harper). A normative analysis may interest some readers, but *Waging Political Warfare* does not look to provide one. Rather, it highlights the ideological, cultural, and social factors that inform individuals’ worldviews and the appropriateness of certain foreign policy tools.

While praising the project’s international framework, Lorenzini and Brogi question whether there is enough attention given to French, British, German, and Irish initiatives in the lead-up to April 1948. They are right that this aspect could have been further developed. I highlight the importance of European schemes, but emphasise those activities in which West Europeans played a key role, such as covert funding and propaganda efforts that were crucial to political warfare. Much remains to be written on how transnational networks developed by European state and private actors helped bind countries like Italy to the Atlantic project, with ample scope for multi-archival studies and closer attention to the role of particular countries. Indeed, I remain surprised at the lack of a distinct study of French efforts toward the Italian election.⁴

As someone sensitive to the “big picture” in his own work, it was pleasing that Brogi found *Waging Political Warfare* effective in illustrating how narrow events have broader significance. I should make one small, albeit important, clarification regarding terminology. The term ‘political warfare’ was only momentarily used interchangeably with ‘psychological warfare’ in the postwar era and primarily by military authorities. Ensuring an integrated use of all measures short of war required breaking an increasingly outmoded conception of peacetime and wartime as distinct entities, wherein civilians lead during the former and the military takes over in the latter. Indeed, civilian leaders and media commentators made a forceful case for how ‘cold war’ was to be fought in an era where one was neither at war nor peace in the traditional sense.⁵ Creating a permanent structure to respond to such realities was crucial to political warfare.

And no individual was more important in this regard than George F. Kennan. James Miller finds it “puzzling” that I pay such attention to “Cerebral George,” especially given the vast (and ever increasing) body of scholarship dedicated to him. This strikes me as an odd

⁴ There are several works on postwar France but none specifically discuss the Italian election. Even the best works on British and Irish efforts draw on a limited, and somewhat older, source base: Antonio Varsori, “La Gran Bretagna e le elezioni politiche italiane del 18 aprile 1948”, *Storia contemporanea* 13:1 (1982): 5-70; Dermot Keogh, “Ireland, the Vatican and the Cold War: The Case of Italy, 1948”, *Historical Journal* 34:4 (1991): 931-52.

⁵ Fifteen years later, at the node of cold war Europe, the Mayor of Berlin would continue to stress that the world “will have to accustom itself to continue seeking a balance of forces under conditions that mean neither peace nor war in the traditional sense of the terms.” Willy Brandt, “The Means Short of War.” *Foreign Affairs* 39:2 (January 1961): <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/71598/willy-brandt/the-means-short-of-war>.

critique. While I would agree that Kennan's words occasionally have the gravitational effect of a black hole for cold war history, he provided the critical intellectual rationale and made the bureaucratic case for organised political warfare. He was not the most influential figure with regard to Italy. Kennan knew little about the region and its peoples, demonstrating professional and personal prejudices – from a young age⁶ – against Italians and 'Latin' Europeans, which manifested in policy recommendations. One may, with good reason, believe there to be excessive focus on Kennan in the history of American foreign relations. Still, a book examining the origins of political warfare and cold war that overlooks his contribution would be ahistorical.

The other reviewers find my treatment of Kennan more convincing. The Manila Telegram revealed his limited influence on Italy policy. It was also a lament against American political warfare: an inability to successfully utilise measures short of war raised the prospects of hot war. This angle has been overlooked in the literature. Harper, who has produced a fine work on Kennan,⁷ suggests that the Manila Telegram should also be placed in the context of PPS 23, an earlier proposal to reach a modus vivendi with the Soviets over Europe, especially on Germany. Kennan was particularly keen to untangle this cold war knot, but Harper's periodisation is premature. The conditions were not right in early 1948. Congress had yet to approve the Marshall Plan, there was unrest in Berlin and Czechoslovakia, and the Italian election campaign was in full swing. It is hard to imagine Joseph Stalin coming to the negotiating table if the PCI – the largest communist party in the world outside of Russia who had close, albeit not slavish, ties to Moscow⁸ – had just been outlawed. It was not until the following year that Kennan began to press his ill-fated 'Program A' of a reunified Germany, vacant of American and Soviet troops, as a solution to the European imbroglio. It made no sense to attempt this in early 1948.

Miller's objection to the focus on Kennan is linked to a critique of my so-called "ambitious revisionist history of Cold War strategy." I must admit to finding this claim peculiar since nowhere do I claim that *Waging Political Warfare* is "revisionist" or, indeed, about "Cold War

⁶ In the 1924 summer vacation from Princeton University, a twenty-year old Kennan embarked on a tour of Europe during which he encountered several Italians, with one group described as a "course, rude, sloppy bunch" and Kennan taking "a violent dislike" to another individual, "a typical dago." Frank Costigliola (ed.), *The Kennan Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014): 27, 34.

⁷ John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D Roosevelt, George F. Kennan & Dean G. Acheson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 183-232.

⁸ Silvio Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia: l'USSR, il PCI e le origini della guerra fredda, 1943-48* (Rome: Carocci, 1999); and his recent *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism 1917-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): chapters 4-5. The 1948 result may have been "a blessing in disguise for the PCI" as Miller notes although it certainly was not seen as such at the time. The party's despair was genuine and sense of injustice that outside forces were controlling Italian affairs became ingrained. It developed into a trope in the Marxist left's rationalisation for subsequent national electoral defeats, which regularly featured U.S. intervention. For more see Kaeten Mistry, "Approaches to Understanding the Inaugural CIA Covert Operation in Italy: Exploding Useful Myths", *Intelligence and National Security* 26:2-3 (April-June 2011): 249-55, 267-8.

strategy.” My work builds on the foundations laid by scholars like Miller and Melvyn Leffler (both of whom are cited frequently), rather than revising earlier conclusions. It seeks to bridge the gap between specific bilateral studies and broader histories of U.S. foreign relations, considering the interplay of local and wider issues. The field has moved beyond the labels of earlier historiographical struggles. And contrary to Miller’s suggestion, I do not link the 1948 election with NSC 68. Rather, my point is the 1950 strategic blueprint marked a key shift in the Truman administration’s approach. Political warfare would no longer be the priority, which is where *Waging Political Warfare* concludes. The subsequent militarisation of foreign policy signalled that the United States would be prepared for both hot and cold war. The latter was preferable but the tools had to be in place for the former. The pursuit of “preponderant power” astutely explains how the Truman administration arrived at and sought to implement the famed 1950 document.⁹ Yet two years earlier, the anticipation was that political warfare would successfully confront, and defeat, communist power.

Political warfare remained on the table for the Truman administration and its successors. Each would, however, struggle to organise measures short of war alongside an increasingly militarised posture. Different agencies came and went – the Psychological Strategy Board (Truman), Operations Coordinating Board (Eisenhower), Special Group-Augmented (Kennedy), 303 Committee (Johnson), 40 Committee (Nixon) – as the meaning of political warfare warped from an integrated covert and overt approach to fighting a ‘cold’ war to reference specifically clandestine methods. Thus, the creation of the Office of Policy Coordination, the first full-time American agency dedicated to covert action in peacetime, represented the true legacy of the Italian election for American policymakers. Subsequent Presidents would use underhanded methods more frequently amid foreign policy interventions. Miller observes that the Truman administration’s employment was less ambitious than the Eisenhower regime. But the capabilities were also less advanced. Eisenhower expanded the scope of covert activities, as would every one of his successors. Presently, the Obama administration has dramatically ramped up the use of unmanned drones yet this is hardly evidence of prudence on behalf of the previous George W. Bush administration or in holding a “winning hand.” In other words, we should not be surprised when leaders turn to clandestine methods short of war that promise, in theory if not in practise, a hidden hand. The allure of covert warfare is as powerful as ever in an age increasingly defined by unending, irregular, asymmetric war.¹⁰ It remains one of the bastions of Executive power.

⁹ After all, Paul Nitze’s statement that the U.S. could “gain preponderant power” came in mid-1952. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration and the Cold War* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1992): 19.

¹⁰ Richard H. Immerman, *The Hidden Hand: A Brief History of the CIA* (Malden MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Killing Machine: The American Presidency in the Age of Drone Warfare* (New York: New Press, 2013); Mary L. Dudziak, *Wartime: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

I hope this roundtable contributes to an ongoing discussion – the ultimate purpose of academic debate – and H-Diplo’s tradition of constructive engagement. Thanks again to Tom Maddux and the reviewers for an enjoyable exercise.