

Re-imagining America:

The Princeton Military Studies Group and the Cultivation of the National Security
Imagination, 1933-1947

by

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Abstract

This essay examines the invention of national security in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Whereas previously Americans spoke of ‘national defense,’ by 1945 ‘national security’ became common parlance and Washington began building the national security state. I argue that a group of social scientists at the Institute for Advanced Study called the Princeton Military Studies Group spurred this shift. Led by Edward Mead Earle, members of the group projected geopolitical anxieties—about global economic instability, the failures of the Versailles system, and the rise of totalitarianism—inward on to the United States and helped develop the institutional role of the defense intellectual, construct the cold war university, make citizens into manpower, and popularize geopolitical thinking. Most consequentially, they created a novel way of imagining and speaking about the world. We are the heirs of their national security imagination.

Preface

This thesis is entirely the original, unpublished, and independent work of the author, Dexter Fergie.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Dedication.....	x
Introduction.....	1
Geopolitics Turned Inwards.....	9
Re-imagining Social Scientists.....	18
Re-imagining Universities.....	28
Re-imagining Citizens.....	38
Conclusion: Cultivating the National Security Imagination.....	49
Bibliography.....	54

List of Figures

Fig. 1 “Facing Two Fronts” (Map).....	45
Fig. 2 “Axis Highwater Mark” (Map).....	47

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¹ Lachlan Charles Fleetwood, “How to Dissect an Elephant: Surgeons, Clergymen, Local Informants and the Production of Knowledge at Fort St George, 1690-1730,” (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2011), vi.

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from the imagination that this paper intends to unveil. It is to Alexa Bennett Fox, my life partner, that I pay my deepest gratitude. Ever since that fateful November morning when we first laid eyes on each other, sitting on opposite sides of the number 44 bus, Alexa has continuously made my life meaningful. She has also suffered through the drawn-out process of writing this thesis. She read innumerable drafts, offered much-needed moral support, and tamed my occasionally rambunctious prose. She inspires me to be a better writer and, much more significantly, a better person. I dedicate this work to her.

For Alexa

Introduction:

*“Imagination frames events unknown... And what it fears creates.”*² – Hannah Moore

On a wet Wednesday morning in November 1940, an audience of academics, journalists, policymakers, business leaders and military men crowded a Columbia University auditorium for a panel discussion on “The Bases for an American Defense Policy” at the Academy of Political Science’s annual meeting.³ The first speaker, an esteemed expert on imperial history named Edward Mead Earle, opened on a contrarian note and questioned the language of the session’s title. The term “defense,” Earle began, was “misleading.” Though commonly used, “defense” designated a policy of passivity and reaction. What was needed was “a much more far-reaching concept than mere sitting back and waiting until the enemy is at one’s gates.” Pondering aloud, Earle suggested that, “perhaps a better word to use is security.” For only with security could

the initiative... be ours, and only by taking the initiative, only by being prepared, if necessary, to wage war *offensively*, can we in the last analysis make sure that defense is something more than a phrase and is in fact a reality.

Notwithstanding his own enthusiasm for that “better word,” Earle’s co-panel that morning did not heed his call and continued to use “defense” unabated.⁴ But soon national security would be on the tip of all their tongues, as the United States itself pivoted from a policy of national defense to that of national security. This transition was more than a semantic shift. National security heralded a novel way of imagining the world, in which a permanently prepared United States confronted the seeming omnipresence of threats. It dawned the re-thinking and re-making of American power abroad and at home.

² Quoted in Albert Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), 411-12.

³ “Experts to Weigh Defense Problems,” *New York Times*, November 3, 1940, 5.

⁴ Emphasis mine. Edward Mead Earle, “Political and Military Strategy for the United States,” lecture notes, Box 37, Drafts/Transcripts-Lectures/Miscellaneous, Edward Mead Earle Papers, Seeley G Mudd Library, Princeton University (hereafter MLP).

References to national security in newspapers, policy discussions, and scholarship, were sparse throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and, as evidenced by Earle's attempt to swap that term for national defense, even the early 1940s.⁵ 'Security'—often without the modifier—and its counterpart 'insecurity' were definitive watchwords of the New Deal. But their meaning was bound to unemployment, welfare policies, and other economic issues.⁶ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the first politician to tie the economic insecurity of the Great Depression to the insecurity spurred by World War II. In a fireside chat on "national security" in late 1940, he warned Americans of the urgent need to mobilize, fortify the military, and supply the nation's allies in order to prevent fascist domination of the world.⁷ Yet the term's new meaning was not yet universally shared nor divested of its earlier associations with social security.⁸ By the end of the war, however, the militarized version won out and had become so ubiquitous that one could not, another commentator observed, "leaf through a magazine" or even "go to a dinner party" without coming across a "chance remark" on the "future security of the United States."⁹ President Harry Truman's signing of the National Security Act of 1947 punctuated this growing cultural obsession by establishing the institutional infrastructure of the national security state.

⁵ Andrew Preston suggests that early interwar references to national security were mostly "rhetorical flourish." Andrew Preston, "Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security," *Diplomatic History* 38:3 (2014): 477-500, quote from 487-88.

⁶ Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 76-105; Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2014). Contemporaries also used 'national security' when invoking the economic sense of the term. See Charles Beard, "The Quest for National Security," in National Education Association of the United States, *Proceedings of the Seventy-Third Annual Meeting* 73 (June/July 1935): 510-15.

⁷ Franklin Roosevelt, Fireside Chat, December 29, 1940, The American Presidency Project, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>.

⁸ Demonstrating that the term's meaning was not yet fixed, one insurance broker argued in late 1940 that "national security" could be provided by insurance companies. See O.J. Arnold, "Our National Security: Government Is Not and Cannot Be a Charitable Institution," speech delivered at Joint Meeting of International Association of Casualty and Surety Underwriters and the National Association of Casualty and Surety Agents, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, October 9, 1940. Printed in *Vital Speeches of the Day* 7 (October 10, 1940): 22-26.

⁹ Joseph E. Johnson, "American Security and World Security," in *The United States in the Postwar World: Addresses Given at the 1945 Summer Conference of the University of Michigan*, eds., William B. Wilcox and Robert B. Hall (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1947): 281-82. Cited in Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 195.

The literature on the history of national security is vast. Research into national security's origins has revealed complex lineages that intertwine imperialism, the New Deal, and other antecedent historical experiences.¹⁰ The foundation of the national security state has been ably clarified by numerous works that bring together variables as heterogeneous as wartime mobilization, rapidly developing military technology, and the geopolitically bewildering postwar world.¹¹ Other historians have plunged into the murky depths of bureaucracies that housed, transformed, and institutionally legitimated ideas of national security.¹² This research, taken together, has illuminated our understanding of national security's history and signifies a radical improvement upon the older piecemeal picture stymied by archival secrets and Cold War narratives.

My paper provides a contribution to this burgeoning literature and attempts to redirect it down a less trodden path. While some scholars have recently traced the role played by intellectuals in the creation of, and participation in, the national security state,¹³ others have

¹⁰ Mark R. Schulman, "The Progressive Era Origins of the National Security Act," *Dickinson Law Review* 104 (2000): 289-330; Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: the United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); and Alexandre Rios-Bordes, "Quand les Services de Renseignement Repensent la Guerre: Éléments d'une archéologie de la 'sécurité nationale' (États-Unis, 1919-1941)," *Politix* 104 (2013): 105-132.

¹¹ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Yergin, *Shattered Peace*; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); and Michael Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹² Charles E. Neu, "The Rise of the National Security Bureaucracy," in *The New American State: Bureaucracies and Policies Since World War II*, ed. Louis Galambos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 85-108; Amy Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); and Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, *Governing Security: The Hidden Origins of American Security Agencies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

¹³ Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983); Paulo Jorge Batista Ramos, "The Role of the Yale Institute of International Studies in the Construction of the United States National Security Ideology, 1935-1951" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2003); Bruce Kuklick, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Douglas Stuart, *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law that Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); and Daniel Morris Bessner, "The Night Watchman: Hans Speier and the Making of the American National Security State" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2013).

begun the daunting task of sketching the history of the idea of national security.¹⁴ I aim to bridge these two bodies of works by historicizing—both at the level of intellectuals *and* ideas—the broad shift from national defense to national security. Social scientists not only helped cobble together the national security state, they also gave shape to the very idea of national security.¹⁵ By examining national security’s original authors, this paper helps explain how the idea of national security arose, how it firmly planted itself in academic and public discourse, and why it expanded to include an ever-growing array of institutions and people. This paper’s focus on the shift from national defense to national security also pushes our understanding of national security’s origins beyond the Cold War and into the interwar era.

At the centre of this shift were Edward Mead Earle and his Princeton Military Studies Group (hereafter referred to as the Princeton Group), a collection of scholars led by Earle at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey.¹⁶ In response to the economic crises, political instability, and bellicose totalitarian states that beset the United States and the world in the 1930s, members of the Princeton Group wanted a much more expansive concept than national defense. In choosing national security, they became the first historical actors to define, theorize, and explicitly promote that idea. What constituted national security for the Princeton Group was a forceful foreign and military policy that identified threats before they

¹⁴ For intellectual histories of national security, see John Thompson, “The Exaggeration of American Vulnerability: The Anatomy of a Tradition,” *Diplomatic History* 16 (1992): 23–43; Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); and Andrew Preston, “Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security.”

¹⁵ In the attention paid to the *idea* of national security, this paper draws inspiration from recent formidable works that trace the role of ideas in international relations. See Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Robert Jackson, *Sovereignty: Evolution of an Idea* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present*. (New York: Penguin, 2013); John Bew, *Realpolitik: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁶ Without an official designation, the group was also recognized as the “Princeton Military Group” and “Earle’s Seminar.” For aesthetic expediency, I will use the name the Princeton Group. It is important to note that, though its neighbour, the IAS is not formally affiliated with Princeton University.

materialized, that intervened in global flare-ups, and that defended interests—both direct and indirect—beyond the country’s borders.¹⁷ In his recent work, historian David Ekbladh highlights the global dimensions of the Princeton Group’s understanding of national security and suggests that Earle in particular represents an incipient interwar American globalism. Ekbladh argues that Earle was one of countless Americans in the 1930s who concluded that “to remain secure at home,” the United States “had to actively promote policies they believed would assure global stability.”¹⁸ The world order was too vital, too volatile for the United States to retreat back to its borders. National security offered a way out.

While it is true that the Princeton Group promoted a novel American globalism, I argue that national security also had a centripetal effect. Earle and his colleagues projected their anxieties about the world order and, above all, the threat of totalitarianism onto the United States’ society, economy, and psyche.¹⁹ There was a domestic price to be paid for the far-reaching geopolitical commitments that national security commanded. And American globalism would not come cheap. It necessitated a re-imagining and remaking of domestic institutions and the American people. The quest for national security, according to the Princeton Group,

¹⁷ The Princeton Group belongs to a long history of the role of intellectuals in creating, articulating, contesting, and justifying American foreign policy. See H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David Milne, *Worldmaking: The Art and Science of American Diplomacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015); Perry Anderson, *American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers* (London: Verso, 2015); and Joy Rohde, *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, s.v. “Social Science and Foreign Affairs,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), accessed May 2, 2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.154>.

¹⁸ David Ekbladh, “Present at the Creation: Edward Mead Earle and the Depression-Era Origins of Security Studies,” *International Security* 36 (2011/12): 107-41; David Ekbladh, “The Interwar Foundations of Security Studies: Edward Mead Earle, the Carnegie Corporation and the Depression-Era Origins of a Field,” *Global Society* 28:1 (2014): 40-53; David Ekbladh, “Look at the World: The Birth of American Globalism in the 1930s” (lecture, Nobel Seminar Series, Norwegian Nobel Institute, June 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4QqxceNcEQ>. Quote from description of Ekbladh’s current book project on his Tufts University faculty page: <http://ase.tufts.edu/history/faculty/ekbladh.asp>. Ekbladh also argues that Earle was “a lost founder” of security studies, a claim that Robert Vitalis theatrically rejects in his Review of “Present at the Creation: Edward Mead Earle and the Interwar-Era Origins of Security Studies,” David Ekbladh, *International Security*. H-Diplo/ISSF Article Review, vol.5 (2012), accessed May 5, 2016, <http://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-AR14.pdf>.

¹⁹ On the idea of totalitarianism’s role in American politics and society, see Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

demanding that social scientists conduct applied policy-oriented research; that universities develop working relations with the state and produce students equipped with national security knowledge and values; and that American citizens develop an awareness of the insecure world and embrace novel national security responsibilities. Linking these visions of American institutions and people was a mission to put into practice what I call a national security imagination.

I have chosen the term ‘national security imagination’ because it encompasses the full scope of the Princeton Group’s project. The Princeton Group intended not just to theorize national security; the critical conditions of the 1930s moved the group to transform Americans’ thinking about the world, lurking foreign and domestic threats, and America’s coming global role. The Princeton Group targeted the “assumptions, perceptions, and expectations” held by Americans—from academics and bureaucrats to military officers and civilians—and hoped to persuade them all of the need for military preparedness and personal sacrifice during the present war and the future peace.²⁰ The term imagination thus underscores that national security was, to use Earle’s own words, as much “subjective” as it was “objective,” as much in people’s minds as it was tangibly in the world.²¹

The task of instilling the national security imagination in institutions and people ran up against certain notions of American exceptionalism.²² The United States’ historical experience,

²⁰ I take inspiration from work on the geographical imagination. Quote from Jesse Gilley, *Encyclopedia of Geography*, s.v. “Geographical Imagination,” edited by Barney Warf (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010), 1222. See also Susan Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001). Another source for my terminology is Joseph Masco, who writes that it was the arrival of the atomic bomb that “provoked a monstrous imagination, a new kind of apocalyptic sensibility.” See Joseph Masco, *Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2006), 1-39, quote from 17.

²¹ Earle, “Traditional Aspects of American Security,” notes from lecture at Columbia University, April 16, 1941, Box 32, Lectures, Notes, Misc. Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

²² American exceptionalism has meant many things to many people. See Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York, NY: Hill & Wang, 1995).

oceanic frontiers, and non-threatening neighbours to the north and south had provided Americans with a false sense of security.²³ According to the Princeton Group, Americans believed war was always something that happened elsewhere. What was needed to puncture this superstition was imagination—a peculiar, militarized imagination. Harold and Margaret Sprout, members of the Princeton Group, indicated this sentiment after the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima when they suggested that “[m]ost Americans simply cannot imagine themselves huddling in underground shelters, fighting incendiary fires, picking in the charred ruins of their burned-out homes.” Instead of “forget[ting]” or playing the platitude “it can’t happen here,” the security of the United States depended on a widespread awareness of potential doom and gloom scenarios so as to enable expansive policies aimed at strengthening and safeguarding the United States.²⁴ The road to security was paved with feelings of insecurity.

The national security imagination obliterated distinctions between domestic and foreign, soldier and civilian, and even war and peace. But it is clear that the collapse of these distinctions was not strictly ideational. It had a very material existence in the post-World War II era, as Americans scoured the homeland for fifth columns, bombarded civilian infrastructures in the Korean peninsula, and established a permanent warfare state. The Princeton Group represented a significant nexus in these developments. During the American mobilization effort of World War II, members of the Princeton Group served in countless wartime agencies and quickly became sought-after academic experts on grand strategy and national security. Although they never achieved the influence to which Earle sometimes delusively aspired, members did forge strong

²³ On the United States’ “free security,” see Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 13-58. There is plentiful cultural evidence that suggests Americans have never felt secure. See H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), especially chapter 2.

²⁴ Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, introduction to “Security in the United States: How Can We Achieve It?,” in *Foundations of National Power; Readings on World Politics and American Security*, eds. Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), 731.

links to Washington movers, shakers, and opinion makers, many of whom were the most vociferous proponents of national security, such as Navy Secretary James Forrestal and the widely syndicated journalist Walter Lippmann.²⁵ The Princeton Group members completed much of the early intellectual legwork by articulating the first definition of national security, outlining its global and domestic requirements, and advocating their ideas through policy networks and the popular press.

This paper traces how the fear of global instability and insecurity that took hold of the members of the Princeton Group pushed them to re-imagine and attempt to re-make America from the inside out. They produced a novel way of imagining the world and a novel language to describe that world. I begin by situating the Princeton Group in its interwar intellectual and political milieu. I then outline how members of the Princeton Group incorporated domestic institutions and American citizens into geopolitical objectives. They pushed social scientists, universities, and citizens to reflect on their own contributions to a militarily prepared America and to internalize the national security imagination. Today, in the so-called war on terror, we have inherited the Princeton Group's imagination.

²⁵ For the personal contributions of these men to the creation of the national security state, see Jeffrey Dorwart, *Eberstadt and Forrestal: A National Security Partnership, 1909-1949* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991) and Milne, *Worldmaking*, 168-216.

Geopolitics Turned Inwards

The Princeton Group's thinking arose out of the interwar debate over the United States' proper role in the world. Americans had been wrangling over questions of their nation and the globe since at least the 1890s, particularly around their imperial foray into the Caribbean and across the Pacific, but the debate gathered steam in the aftermath of the First World War. President Woodrow Wilson's attempt to found a new world order that enshrined multilateralism, the legitimacy of public opinion, and the virtues of transparent diplomacy provoked a domestic backlash. Idahoan Republican senator William Borah, traditionally seen as an arch-isolationist, denounced Wilsonianism out of fear that membership to the League of Nations would degrade American sovereignty and result in policies detached from the national interest.²⁶ This conflict spurred oscillations in American foreign policy, best exemplified in Wilson's authorship of the League Covenant, which was directly followed by President Warren Harding's contempt for the League of Nations. But the debate over the United States' global role, still hotly contested, did not divide neatly along internationalist and isolationist lines.²⁷ Indeed, the virulently anti-Wilson Republicans who controlled both the Senate and Congress from 1921 to 1931 oversaw a period that pushed forward what Akira Iriye describes as the "globalizing of America," as American businessmen, financiers and politicians extended their reach across the globe.²⁸ Republican departments of state linked the United States to the rest of the world through an extensive series of diplomatic agreements, such as the Washington Naval Treaty, the Locarno Treaties, and the

²⁶ Christopher McKnight Nichols, *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011): 229-72.

²⁷ See Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916-1931* (New York: Viking Press, 2014).

²⁸ Akira Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Volume III: The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially chapters 5-7, in which Iriye discusses the security, economic, and cultural aspects of the United States .

Kellogg-Briand Pact.²⁹ The unravelling of the Versailles system in the 1930s—the return of tariffs worldwide, the jump in military hostilities, and the failure to enforce League of Nations protocols—only raised the stakes of this debate.

The conflict over America's role in the world had both a public and scholarly life. Pundits and experts alike staked positions on the United States' international role and defended them in print, on radio, and at cocktail parties.³⁰ Evidence of a growing interest in the world can also be found in the dizzying development of the study of international relations, as the first academic programs were founded, along with specialized journals, think tanks, and associations. In 1921, a group of east coast elites created the Council on Foreign Relations and, the following year, began publishing *Foreign Affairs*.³¹ In 1923, Johns Hopkins established the first school devoted to the study of international relations, the Walter Hines Page School. In 1933, Harvard and Tufts created the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and, in 1935, Nicholas Spykman, Frederick Dunn, and Arnold Wolfers formed the Yale Institute of International Studies.³² While devoted to research, the desire for expertise to shape the policymaking process and public opinion undergirded this sprawling knowledge infrastructure, a desire shared both by international relations scholars and their foundation bankrollers.³³

Witness to the world crisis and a student of international affairs, Earle was caught up in this historically perilous moment. Earle studied at Columbia University in 1917 and, upon

²⁹ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 436-483.

³⁰ See Craufurd D.W. Goodwin, *Walter Lippmann: Public Economist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 261-315.

³¹ Before its Council on Foreign Relations' incarnation, *Foreign Affairs* was originally published from 1910 to 1919 as the *Journal of Race Development* and then as *Journal of International Relations*. See Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of International Relations*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015). See also Dexter Fergie, *Eugenics Archives Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Political Science and Race," (Living Archives of Eugenics in Western Canada, 2015), accessed May 5, 2016, <http://eugenicsarchive.ca/database/prods/encyclopedia>.

³² Ekbladh, "Present at the Creation," 116; Ramos, "The Role of the Yale Institute of International Studies," 18.

³³ Inderjeet Parmar, "The Carnegie Corporation and the Mobilisation of Opinion in the United States' Rise to Globalism, 1939-1945" *Minerva* 37 (1999): 355-78, and Bruce Kuklick, "The Rise of Policy Institutes in the United States, 1943-1971," *Orbis* 55, no.4 (2011): 685-99.

receiving his bachelor's in history, served as lieutenant in both the Field Artillery and Air Service in World War I. Following his deployment, Earle pursued graduate work and earned a PhD from Columbia in 1923. Earle published widely on international relations, diplomatic history, and the Near East, quickly rose to academic fame, and received tenure from his alma mater in 1927. Not confined to academia, Earle also embraced the policy-oriented circuit and, from 1924 to 1927, served on the board of the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), including one year as vice-chairman.³⁴ During the same period, Earle lectured at the Army War College and the Army Industrial College.³⁵ His Stakhanovite productivity gave out, however, after he contracted tuberculosis in 1928. The infection left Earle more or less incapacitated for half a decade and would continue to menace his health for the rest of his life. Barely on the mend, Earle re-booted his career in 1933 and attained a faculty position at the Institute for Advanced Study's School of Economics and Politics. The IAS was a novel multidisciplinary research institution that maintained a small permanent faculty and a continuously changing cast of scholars in residence. The IAS provided these scholars the time and space—read: no students, and thus no teaching responsibilities—to conduct basic research.³⁶ Earle remained at the Institute until his early death in 1954.

Earle's scholarship and political life in the 1920s reflected an anti-imperialist strain of isolationist ideology. In *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway: A Study in Imperialism [sic]*, which netted him the American Historical Association's George Louis Beer Prize,³⁷ Earle excoriated the role of imperial interests as the root of international conflicts. Like

³⁴ According to Robert Vitalis, the Foreign Policy Association was a “national, progressive, mass-member alternative to the Council on Foreign Relations.” See Vitalis, Review of “Present at the Creation,” 3.

³⁵ Earle Bio, Box 7, Earle Faculty File (1950-1970), Records of the Director of the Office, Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center at the Institute for Advanced Study (hereafter IASA).

³⁶ Ekbladh, “Present at the Creation,” 114.

³⁷ Vitalis, Review of “Present at the Creation,” 2.

many other early twentieth century thinkers, including his former Columbia colleague Charles Beard, Earle's anti-imperialism gave way to a more general skepticism of the United States' projection and protection of its interests abroad, as he feared that foreign involvement would plummet the country into a competition with other empires.³⁸ But shifting winds blew away Earle's fears. With the Versailles system seemingly in tatters, the instability and insecurity of the 1930s caused Earle to embrace America's active involvement in international affairs.³⁹ Only an America that flexed military muscle and asserted itself across the globe—an America, according to Earle, that did not shirk “power politics” and instead sought a “preponderance of power”⁴⁰—could help stave off the world crisis.

Earle's new thinking about America's role in the world led him to launch a seminar devoted to the study of foreign relations and military policy that would, he hoped, contribute to a more globalized, militarily prepared America. From 1939 to 1942, Earle attracted a steady stream of social scientists, who were already working on projects related to international relations or war, into the Institute to fill the ranks of the seminar. Some stayed for a semester, others for the seminar's entirety. The first cohort consisted of luminaries such as Princeton University historian Robert Albion and the prolific married couple, Margaret and Harold Sprout, respected for their expertise on American naval policy and strategy.⁴¹ Also beginning their membership in 1939 were Alfred Vagts, a German intellectual whose father-in-law was Charles

³⁸ See Edward Mead Earle, “The Outlook for American Imperialism,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 108 (1923): 104-107; Edward Mead Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway: A Study in Imperialism* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1924). Also, Charles Beard and William Beard, *The American Leviathan: The Republic in the Machine Age* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1930).

³⁹ See Earle, “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations,” n.d. [November 1937], Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1936-37), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁴⁰ Earle coined this phrase to describe US foreign policy. Earle to Sydnor Walker, June 26, 1939, Institute for Advanced Studies—Vagts folder, Box 350, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archives Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

⁴¹ See Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939) and Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *Towards a New Order of Sea Power: American Naval Policy and the World Scene, 1918-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943).

Beard; diplomatic historian Albert Weinberg; political theorist Felix Gilbert; and a handful of others. Over the coming years the seminar brought in European and American scholars from a wide range of disciplines. The seminar served as a professional stepping-stone for future cold war strategists Bernard Brodie and Stefan Possony and international relations scholars Richard Stebbins and William T.R. Fox, while offering mid-career platforms for others, namely president of the American Military Institute Harvey DeWeerd, French political scientist Étienne Dennerly, and the war economist Albert Lauterbach.⁴² Given this intellectual lineup, one recent scholar has claimed, perhaps hyperbolically, that every American social scientist studying strategy during the 1930s and 1940s participated in the Princeton Group's seminar.⁴³

Princeton Group members met weekly to discuss and, in DeWeerd's words, "clarif[y]" problems of foreign policy, military defense, and "a unified concept of grand strategy." Despite disciplinary differences, they applied a tough-minded realism to "American security, its basic assumptions, its changing conditions and its present imperatives."⁴⁴ Many members believed these problems had been neglected or even repressed within the social sciences, and thus, they perceived themselves to be at the forefront of a novel field of research.⁴⁵ Out of the seminar discussions came books, conferences, and the diffusion of national security ideas, all of which quickly earned the Princeton Group members recognition as potential experts useful for

⁴² A complete roster list of the seminar from 1939-1942 can be found in the appendix to "Studies of the Foreign Relations and Military Policies of the United States, at the Institute for Advanced Study," 1942, Box 6, Earle Faculty File 1940-1944, Records of the Office of the Director, IASA.

⁴³ Barry H. Steiner, *Bernard Brodie and the Foundations of American Nuclear Strategy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 2. Cited in Ekbladh, "Present at the Creation," 126.

⁴⁴ Quote from Harvey A. DeWeerd, "Princeton: A Center of Military Studies," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (June 5, 1942): 7-8. Inderjeet Parmar identifies Earle and his colleagues as early but forgotten exponents of realism in international relations. See Inderjeet Parmar, "Edward Mead Earle and the Rise of Realism in the United States Academy" *Manchester Papers in Politics* (No. 3/01, Department of Government, University of Manchester, 2001).

⁴⁵ Bernard Brodie to Earle, January 30, 1946, Box 12, Correspondence A, Earle Papers, MLP; William T.R. Fox, "Interwar International Relations Research: The American Experience," *World Politics* 2:1 (October 1949): 67-79. Some social scientists, such as Quincy Wright at the University of Chicago and Pendleton Herring at Harvard University, had studied war and related issues during the 1930s. See Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942) and E. Pendleton Herring, *Impact of War: Our American Democracy Under Arms* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart Inc. Publishers, 1941).

American mobilization.⁴⁶ Government and military agencies began to scoop up Princeton Group members and, due to their strenuous wartime workload, Earle halted the seminar in 1942. They would, however, continue to correspond and collaborate throughout the war.⁴⁷

Members of the Princeton Group were some of the earliest to advocate national security over national defense. They derided that older term—national defense—for being archaic and insufficient to address dangers of the modern world order. Novel war technologies, total warfare and totalitarian states spelled the end for national *defense*'s utility, the Princeton Group believed. As the mobility of aircraft and tanks crumpled traditional and static defensive postures, the Maginot Line was no match for the Nazi *Blitzkrieg*.⁴⁸ Because combat advantages were granted to the aggressor, Earle proposed the much broader concept of national security. And although that term had been bandied about—often as a synonym for national defense—its meaning had yet to be understood.⁴⁹ The first step was a definition.

Albert Weinberg began the Princeton Group's attempt at defining national security in the autumn of 1940. He circulated a memorandum to his colleagues that described national security as a "condition" in which "external attack...upon the nation's territorial domain, rights or vital interests is not likely to be made or, if made, to succeed."⁵⁰ In response, members of the Princeton Group critiqued Weinberg's memorandum for its lack of subjective considerations.

⁴⁶ Policymakers and military officials regularly expressed appreciation for the Princeton Group's publications on military affairs. See some of the citations in Frank Aydelotte to Walter A. Jessup, January 23, 1942, Carnegie Corporation Folder (1940-47), General File Records, IASA.

⁴⁷ I therefore refer to the Princeton Group's activities in the years after the seminar's closing. Earle revived the seminar with an almost entirely different cast in 1947. He shifted the focus, however, away from national security and towards general problems of international relations, the Soviet Union, and France.

⁴⁸ Edward Mead Earle, "American Security—Its Changing Conditions," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 218 (1941): 186-93, see 191-92 for section on "Changing Military and Naval Technology."

⁴⁹ Albert Weinberg had parsed the differences between "security" and what he called "self-defense" in his earlier book on American expansionism. Whereas self-defense devoted itself to guarding against immediate threats, the "concept of security is logically flexible to a degree permitting much more sweeping political demands." See Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, 20-23, 384-412.

⁵⁰ Albert Weinberg, "The Meaning of National Security in General and in American History," n.d. [autumn 1940], Box 33, Security Folder, Edward Mead Earle Papers, MLP.

Felix Gilbert highlighted an epistemological problem: each country or era had differing criteria for “rights” and “vital interests.” Others, such as Albert Lauterbach, saw security in terms of scarcity: one country’s measures to secure itself would directly infringe upon another’s national security concerns. Lauterbach also criticized the banishment of domestic threats from the definition, as he viewed economic problems to be critical factors in national security. Broadening it even further, Earle, defined national security in psychological terms. “If the belief in security does not exist,” he wrote, “even the substance of security may easily be destroyed.” Finally, capturing the irony of their disagreements, Richard Stebbins warned that the “progress” of the Princeton Group’s forthcoming edited volume on national security’s changing conditions “threaten[ed] to be impeded by this effort to define a concept which is already sufficiently familiar to each of us.”⁵¹

Although Earle weaved Weinberg’s memorandum and the rest of the Princeton Group’s suggestions into a page-long definition of national security, that book was never completed.⁵² But the consequences of such quarrels extended beyond an abandoned publication. Their disagreements pointed to a central tension underlying the idea of national security. The same qualities that made national security superior to the term national defense—its elasticity and expansiveness, its focus on pre-emption and preparedness—rendered the concept near-impossible to contain in a single, unified definition. Indeed, the very breadth of the term, widened most by Earle’s inclusion of psychology, left national security wholly unverifiable,

⁵¹ “Comments on Mr. Weinberg’s definition of National Security,” memorandum, n.d. [autumn 1940], Box 33, Security Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

⁵² A sample of Earle’s attempt: “Security is a state of affairs in which the nation’s territorial domain, political independence, rights, and vital interests are free from any substantial threat of aggression from abroad, or from internal forces operating under foreign control or influence. Should aggression... [illegible] occur it will be under conditions most favorable to successful resistance. This security may arise either from the nation’s own strength (inherent, actual, or potential), combined with the strength of its allies (actual or probable), and from factors of regional or world ~~political~~ stability. Or it may arise from the weakness or non-aggressive policies of others.” See Earle, “Further Comments,” Box 33, Security Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

immeasurable, and limitless, thereby opening up the concept to a permanent spiral of increasing perceptions of insecurity and the implementation of an ever wider range of national security measures. It became totalizing.

From the Princeton Group's unwieldy understanding of national security came a re-appraisal of the United States' commitments abroad and capabilities at home. Harold Sprout proclaimed that the boundaries enshrined in the Monroe Doctrine had to be pushed further outward. "We must prevent any and all rivals," Sprout wrote, "from gaining footholds anywhere within striking, or even within threatening distance by air as well as by sea."⁵³ This geographic area, however, did not "represent the totality of our military defense problem." There were also insular possessions, the maintenance of globalized trade networks, and even "the world order" that all required American protection.⁵⁴ But again, such imperatives failed to capture the full totality facing American strategists. The Princeton Group's expansive vision for national security also directed its members' to include domestic factors.⁵⁵ The "frontiers of defense" were also "industrial," which cast economic production as a crucial factor in the national security and a potential target of sabotage. Finally they were "psychological," which meant that national security entailed both securing Americans and making them *feel* secure.⁵⁶ American institutions and citizens had to internalize the epic proportions of the United States' strategy—the globe, the homeland, and even the psyche—that Sprout laid out. It was a way of imagining the world and imagining one's place in it. The Princeton Group believed that social scientists, universities, and

⁵³ Harold Sprout, "Frontiers of Defense." *Military Affairs* 5:4 (1941): 217-19.

⁵⁴ Sprout, "Frontiers of Defense," 219-20.

⁵⁵ Another example of the trajectory of the Princeton Group's thinking: by the end of the first semester, the group changed the seminar's name from "U.S. Military and Foreign Policy" to "The interrelations of foreign, military, and domestic policies." See "U.S. Military and Foreign Policy," grant report, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC; Earle to Mitrany, December 6, 1939, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1939), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁵⁶ Sprout, "Frontiers of Defense," 217.

ordinary citizens had to re-imagine and remake themselves. The quest for national security depended on it.

Re-Imagining the Social Sciences

The tumultuous years between the Great Depression and the Second World War electrified the debate over the role of the social sciences. Though competing and conflicting notions of the social sciences had swirled around the American academy since the nineteenth century, interwar social scientists sensed their scholarship to be on trial. What role could the social sciences play in addressing the economic crisis, wobbly world order, and the menace of totalitarianism?⁵⁷ The elevated stakes of the interwar era did not witness the victory of one paradigm over another, but rather the “crystallization of opposing perspectives.”⁵⁸ Robert Lynd’s 1939 *Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture* outlined two dominant approaches. In an exaggerated manner, Lynd partitioned social scientists into two camps: “the scholars” and “the technicians.” The former, Lynd wrote, cloistered themselves in the academy, privileged interpretation over empiricism, and skated towards irrelevance by building theoretical castles in the sky. Meanwhile, the latter—pejoratively named technicians—were empiricists bent on collecting data, quantification, and accepting institution-determined foci. A commitment to objectivity came at the expense of theory building and, more importantly, it precluded posing fundamental questions that challenged the status quo.⁵⁹

The Princeton Group confronted both “scholars” and “technicians.” The type of social scientific research championed by members of the Princeton Group crisscrossed the technician-scholar dichotomy, which landed its leader Earle in trouble early on with the Institute for Advanced Study’s founder and director, Abraham Flexner, and with funding agency

⁵⁷ Edward A. Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1973), 117-158.

⁵⁸ Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 7.

⁵⁹ Robert Lynd, *Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), 1-10.

administrators.⁶⁰ The Princeton Group dispelled the distance of “scholars” from society, but found value in their emphasis on theory and interpretation. Meanwhile, the Princeton Group agreed with the “technicians” who tilted the social sciences towards applied research, but eschewed their fetish for data collection and objectivity. Instead, the world crisis should compel social scientists to become handmaidens to the state and proffer practical, analytical knowledge—not mere data—for policymakers to consume and apply. The grave problems that vexed the United States and the world in the 1930s led Earle to frequently ask of his social scientific peers if they “shall... fiddle while Rome burns.”⁶¹

The story of how members of the Princeton Group reached their conception of the social sciences begins with Edward Mead Earle’s arrival at the Institute for Advanced Study. Flexner had selected Earle for a faculty position under the assumption that Earle would traipse along a research path fit for the IAS: research for the sake of research, divorced from the messy, fleeting realities of society.⁶² However, this assumption and mutual conviviality—Flexner and Earle were intimate friends—concealed differing views of the nature and role of the social sciences. Far from marginal, these definitional differences mutated into a professional dispute and eventually contributed to Flexner’s ejection from the IAS.

As the United States still creaked from the consequences of the Great Depression in 1934, a still bedridden Earle took a growing interest in the world crisis. Earle thought that, though liberalism had not passed, “certainly we are undergoing some kind of a political and

⁶⁰ On Flexner’s own professional relations with the Rockefeller Foundation, see Steven C. Wheatley, *The Politics of Philanthropy: Abraham Flexner and Medical Education* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

⁶¹ Earle’s speech, Open Meeting on International Relations, September 15, 1937, Box 28, Folder SSRC, Earle Papers, MLP.

⁶² Flexner to Earle, July 22, 1934, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1930-1934), Records of the Office of the Director, IASA.

economic revolution.”⁶³ The problems that the United States confronted were vast and numerous; social scientists could be of use. But when Earle expressed to Flexner his concern for contemporary issues and his appreciation for social scientists researching them, such as those at the Brookings Institution, a policy-oriented Washington think tank, Flexner replied with consternation.⁶⁴ Such thinking was anathema to Flexner and the philosophy of the IAS. Flexner founded the IAS as a center for basic research, at which “first rate men” could pursue research projects of their choosing unabated by administrative and teaching obligations. Built into this “paradise of scholars” was a distance from the everyday, and Flexner was determined to defend the IAS from politics and society.⁶⁵ In early 1936, Earle again wrote to Flexner to convey an academic and political interest in the present, particularly in Roosevelt’s Neutrality Bill.⁶⁶ Flexner rebuked him harshly. He warned Earle: “I really think that a scholar like yourself wastes himself on practical politics. The approach is too direct to be useful.” Flexner continued:

I have a profound conviction that an Institute devoted to the advance of knowledge cannot concern itself with day-to-day policies. No matter what the field, we are interested in the study of phenomena, whether they be astronomical, archaeological, or political. The moment we interest ourselves in policies the spirit and disinterestedness of our scholarship is impaired.⁶⁷

For Flexner, scholarship was necessarily insulated from the everyday, as distance sustained disinterest.

⁶³ Earle to Flexner, November 13, 1934, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1930-1934), Records of the Office of the Director, IASA.

⁶⁴ Earle to Flexner, November 29, 1934, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1930-1934), Records of the Office of the Director, IASA; Abraham Flexner to Earle, December 3, 1934, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1930-1934), Records of the Office of the Director, IASA. For a historical account of the Brookings Institution and its applied research program, see Donald Critchlow, *Brookings Institution, 1916-1952: Expertise and the Public Interest in a Democratic Society* (DeKalb: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

⁶⁵ Abraham Flexner, “A Proposal to Establish an American University,” November 1922, quoted in Thomas N. Bonner, *Iconoclast: Abraham Flexner and a Life of Learning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 238.

⁶⁶ Earle to Flexner, February 6, 1936, Box 6, Earle Faculty File 1936-1937, Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁶⁷ Flexner to Earle, February 8, 1936, Box 6, Earle Faculty File 1936-1937, Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

Flexner's preference for basic, disinterested research in the social sciences arose from an incautious analogy to science. He repeatedly used the work of scientists as a model for faculty members of the School of Economics and Politics. In particular, Flexner identified theoretical physicists and mathematicians—Albert Einstein and Kurt Gödel were both IAS faculty—as embodiments of the ideal of basic and disinterested research. They “have the right attitude,” Flexner proclaimed to Earle, “they are indifferent about immediate results.”⁶⁸ Theoretical physicists and mathematicians understood their work as scholarship for the sake of scholarship, an attitude to research Flexner hoped the social scientists would emulate; Earle, however, would not. The world crisis drove Earle to re-imagine himself as a social scientist and to make his research relevant. “This is not a day for bookworms; there is too much to be seen and heard,” Earle relayed to Flexner.⁶⁹

In addition to his problems with Flexner, Earle had to contend with the “technicians” representing the foundation world. Over the course of the first quarter of the twentieth century, a rapid build-up of funding agencies breathed life into social scientific research. The first of these grew out of Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which began in 1911. Not far behind, the Rockefeller family set up the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund in 1918, which eventually evolved into the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1923, Rockefeller philanthropy bankrolled the formation of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), an organization dedicated to advancing social scientific research. Whereas earlier enterprises, such as the nineteenth-century American Social Science Association, intertwined

⁶⁸ Flexner to Earle, February 8, 1936, Box 6, Earle Faculty File 1936-1937, Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁶⁹ Earle to Flexner, December 3, 1934, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1930-1934), Records of the Office of the Director, IASA.

reform and scholarship,⁷⁰ these nascent industry-funded organizations reflected the ideology of the “technicians.” Social scientists would still solve social problems, though not through advocacy but by way of the scientific method. This institutional framework was critical to the development of the social sciences. It helped “catapult” the social sciences’ importance in both society and academe.⁷¹ It also granted foundation backers and administrators an exorbitant amount of power over the direction of the social sciences.

The philosophical distance between Earle and his potential supporters—Flexner and the foundations—was revealed in 1937 when Earle circulated a proposal titled “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations.” In this proposal for an interdisciplinary “subject for research,” Earle identified the need for social scientists—historians, psychologists, and economists, among others—to conduct research into military affairs and foreign policy. The urgency of Earle’s vision stemmed from his perception that war, not peace, ruled modern life. Whereas the architects of the Kellogg-Briand Pact a decade prior could discuss “war as an instrument of national policy,” Earle wondered if national policy itself was not now an instrument of war.⁷² This blurring between war and peace was exemplified by economic policies once deemed “insane” by neo-classical economists becoming

rational... quasi-military measures. Governmental controls of the press, the radio, the church, the school are understandable by reference to the obvious fact that under modern conditions almost all phases of life must be subordinated to the exigencies of war.⁷³

⁷⁰ Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975).

⁷¹ Donald Fisher, *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences: Rockefeller Philanthropy and the United States Social Science Research Council* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 1-12. Representative of the SSRC’s understanding of the social sciences was its co-founder Charles Merriam, who championed “extreme empiricism” in the service of political reform. See Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 84.

⁷² Earle, “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations,” n.d. [November 1937], 1, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1936-37), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁷³ Earle, “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations,” n.d. [November 1937], 1, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1936-37), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

In the mobilization efforts of Italy, Japan, Germany, and also those of England and France, Earle identified a national security imagination in which the primacy of war, even in peacetime, radically changed domestic policies and institutions.⁷⁴ The social sciences were no exception. Indeed, the study of international relations could not “proceed” without recognition of these facts.⁷⁵

Implicit in his “frankly utilitarian” proposal, and the source of disapproval among administrators, was Earle’s conception of the social scientist’s role in society. The social scientist, Earle envisioned, would conduct interpretive research—not “monumental collections of documents and mere facts”—in order to define the national interest, create an informed public, clarify the needs for war preparation, and thereby “enlighten” military and foreign policy. American grand strategy would be “intelligently directed” by a cadre of wise technocrats, or at least by state and military officials who heeded Earle’s band of social scientists.⁷⁶ In an addendum to the proposal the following year, Earle went further and suggested that, instead of publishing monographs, social scientists produce “short memoranda which might be placed in the hands of persons who actually influence the course of events in Washington.”⁷⁷ Thus the content and form of Earle’s project would adapt to the needs of a world in crisis and a country in search of national security.

Both Flexner and the Carnegie Corporation rejected the proposal. Flexner responded with his longstanding critique of social scientists involving themselves in the “immediate crisis.”

⁷⁴ A generation earlier, Randolph S. Bourne made similar observations on war’s domestic consequences, while reaching drastically different conclusions. See Randolph S. Bourne, “The State” in *War and the Intellectuals: Collected Essays, 1915-1919*. ed. Carl Resek (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 65-104.

⁷⁵ Earle, “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations,” n.d. [November 1937], Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1936-37), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁷⁶ Earle, “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations,” n.d. [November 1937], 7-Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1936-37), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁷⁷ Earle, “Supplementary Statement on American Foreign Policy,” Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1938), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

According to Flexner, Earle's project was too presentist and proximate to politics; it was not the work of a bona fide scholar but that of an "advocate."⁷⁸ More troublingly for Earle, in spite of the positive relations he cultivated with Carnegie administrators—director Frederick Keppel, for example, once proclaimed himself to be a "member of the Society for the Preservation of Ed Earle"—the Carnegie Corporation declined to support the project.⁷⁹ The Carnegie Corporation accused the proposal of being "propaganda," insinuating that, "if done at all," it should be pursued by the government.⁸⁰ In deliberating, Keppel also solicited the opinion of SSRC president Robert Crane, who was equally dismissive.⁸¹ Earle's proposal offended the technician's credo of the Carnegie Corporation, which treasured objectivity and quantification over interpretive research aimed at influencing officials and the public. Numbers and facts, not theory and qualitative conclusions, were the appropriate method of persuasion. Earle's proposal fit neither Flexner's nor the Carnegie Corporation's criteria of scholarship.

By summer 1939, however, trouble hit Flexner's paradise. The IAS faculty openly revolted against Flexner, and it was the historic and unlikely team of Earle, Einstein and mathematician Oswald Veblen that led the mutiny. Their motivations were manifold, though Flexner's rejection of the proposal loomed large in Earle's reasoning.⁸² Earle went so far as to accuse Flexner of covertly scuttling his external funding applications.⁸³ In October, IAS trustees

⁷⁸ Flexner to Earle, January 4, 1938, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1938), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁷⁹ Record of Interview, Frederick Keppel and Earle, October 8, 1937, Box 135, Edward M. Earle Folder (1937-1951), Carnegie Corporation Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University (hereafter MLC).

⁸⁰ Report on Grant, Studies of Military and Foreign Policies, June 23, 1942, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1942-1954) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

⁸¹ Record of Interview, Frederick Keppel and Robert Crane, July 5, 1938, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

⁸² The other conflicts were Flexner's micro-management of faculty affairs, nepotism-addled hiring processes, and his failure to address rampant anti-Semitism in the Princeton community. Earle to Flexner, June 9, 1939, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1939), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA. Rumours of "senility" circulated as the source of Flexner's erratic behaviour. Earle to Herbert Maass, July 26, 1939, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1939), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁸³ Earle, Confidential statement for Herbet Maass and Mr. Leidesdorf, July 21, 1939, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1939), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

and faculty replaced Flexner with a new director, Frank Aydelotte. Aydelotte, in addition to being an English professor and the president of Swarthmore College, directed the War Issues Course from 1917 to 1919, which was the army's attempt to lift soldiers' morale through the incorporation of liberal arts pedagogy into their training during the last American mobilization.⁸⁴ Aydelotte was thus eager to assist in Earle's endeavours.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, as Europe was collapsing into war, the tide also turned within the Carnegie Corporation. The Corporation began to fund projects that would contribute to American defense, even if that meant overlooking philosophical differences. In November 1939, Earle again applied to the Carnegie Corporation, this time with a revised proposal seeking funds for an investigation into "American Military Policy."⁸⁶ The Carnegie Corporation approved Earle's request in December and disbursed \$6,500 in February 1940 to enable the "formulation of a theoretical "Grand Strategy" for the United States."⁸⁷ Although the seminar had begun a few months prior, the Carnegie Corporation's grant provided necessary funds to maintain its roster and recruit others for the following year.⁸⁸

Earle's colleagues shared his vision for social scientific research. They all agreed that the world order was too fragile and American security too critical to carry out work strictly meant for their academic peers. This type of social scientific research earned them gushing praise from

⁸⁴ Frank Aydelotte, *Final Report of the War Issues Course of the Students' Army Training Corps*. (Washington, D.C.: War Department Committee on Education and Special Training, 1919).

⁸⁵ Earle to Mitrany, October 19, 1939, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1939), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

⁸⁶ "Memorandum Concerning a Study of American Military Policy," November 2, 1939, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

⁸⁷ Close to \$110,000 in 2016. Cross reference sheet, December 16, 1939, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC; "U.S. Military and Foreign Policy," grant report, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

⁸⁸ Thomas Bailey and Alfred Vagts had arrived at the IAS earlier thanks to one-year grants-in-aid from the Rockefeller Foundation. See [no name] to Earle, September 18, 1939, Box 350, Folder IAS – Alfred Vagts, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archives Center (hereafter RAC), Sleepy Hollow, NY.

Walter Lippmann.⁸⁹ It also proved a viable enterprise during the American mobilization, as social scientists across the country increasingly straddled the divide between state institutions and academia.⁹⁰ Many members of the Princeton Group found themselves contributing their expertise to the war effort. Alfred Vagts and Jean Gottmann worked for the Board of Economic Warfare, while Stefan Possony produced radio propaganda in Central Europe for the Columbia Broadcasting System.⁹¹ Bernard Brodie's *Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*, following its commercial success, became required reading for the Reserve Officers' Training Corp.⁹² Throughout the war, Earle worked for the Office of the Coordinator of Information, assessed troop morale for the Army Air Force, and, most significantly, headed the Committee of Operations Analysts of the Army Air Force in the last two years of the war, which determined the strategy of the Allied aerial bombing campaign against Germany and Japan.⁹³ The domains to which members of the Princeton Group applied their expertise—intelligence, propaganda, and strategy—relied on their interpretative and qualitative craft.

It was a sense of the world crisis that motivated the Princeton Group's members to re-imagine their work as social scientists. The world was too unstable and insecure for social

⁸⁹ Lippmann exclaimed to Earle that he would "rather be working in that seminar than anything else." Walter Lippmann to Earle, Box 8, Folder 351, Walter Lippmann Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

⁹⁰ See Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). Mark Stoler briefly mentions the impact of Harold Sprout and Earle on the state department. See Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 128-29, 193-97.

⁹¹ One colleague congratulated Gottmann's "very valuable contributions" during his time with the Board of Economic Warfare. See Hayes A. Kroner, (Brigadier General, Chief, Military Intelligence Service) to Earle, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1940-44), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA. Earle to Aydelotte, June 5, 1942, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1940-44), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA. Frank Aydelotte to Walter Jessup, January 23, 1942, Carnegie Corporation Folder (1940-47), General File Records, IASA.

⁹² Bernard Brodie, *A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942). Earle, "Memorandum for Dr. Aydelotte," April 7, 1943, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, CCA.

⁹³ Earle to Members of the Seminar, September 17, 1941, Box 5, Seminar on American Military Policy Folder, Edward Mead Earle Papers, MLP; Earle Bio, Box 7, Earle Faculty File (1950-1970), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

scientists to confine themselves to the campus; social scientists should orient their work towards the political, economic, and military crises facing the United States. The Princeton Group therefore advocated and conducted research that could resolve policy questions, was accessible to policymakers and practitioners, and did more than “collect dust on shelves.” Yet Earle and his colleagues also sought to retain academic rigour and an interpretive approach that processed, rather than accumulated, data.⁹⁴ Members of the Princeton Group deployed this methodology in both their seminar and their war work. Indeed, by 1942, Frank Aydelotte commented that to “distinguish between work which is of fundamental scholarly importance and the work which... is nevertheless directed more especially to the war effort” had become impossible.⁹⁵ The Princeton Group’s ecumenical methodology—despite Earle’s past squabbles with Flexner and the Carnegie Foundation—impressed wartime allies in the armed services and the state department, and helped create the institutional space for the postwar defense intellectual.

⁹⁴ Earle’s speech, Open Meeting on International Relations, September 15, 1937, Box 28, Folder SSRC, Earle Papers, MLP.

⁹⁵ Frank Aydelotte to Walter A. Jessup, January 23, 1942, Carnegie Corporation Folder (1940-47), General File Records, IASA.

Re-Imagining Universities

If Earle and his colleagues sought to insinuate social scientists into the war effort, they also attempted to bring the military to campuses across the country. As modern war and mobilization placed a high premium on specialized knowledge, technical skill and economic organization, the Princeton Group envisioned universities as critical nodes in a future national security state. Moreover, as the pursuit of national security over national defense required a shift in values, universities would have to recode and disseminate cultural understandings of war, peace and civil-military relations. In particular, the Princeton Group scholars advocated military studies, which they saw as key to university contributions to national security knowledge and values. By studying war, undergraduates—the country’s next generation of legislators, bureaucrats, opinion makers, and even military leaders—would develop an awareness and appreciation of military matters. The Princeton Group commenced this daunting task by bringing the war effort to the Princeton community and hoped to sustain this collaboration through the postwar years.

The Princeton Group’s vision for the university prefigured the “Cold War University” that would arrive in the postwar period.⁹⁶ That the scholars of the Princeton Group theorized and attempted to situate the university within an inchoate “military-industrial-academic complex” in the interwar period challenges the narrative that the Cold War university was merely the result of wartime developments.⁹⁷ It also demonstrates the multitudinous motivations of those in favour of this transformation of the university. While some interwar and wartime university administrators

⁹⁶ For discussions of the Cold War University, see Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) and Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁹⁷ Christophe Lecuyer has argued the same about MIT. See Christophe Lecuyer, “The Making of a Science-Based Technological University: Karl Compton, James Killian, and the Reform of MIT, 1930-1957,” *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 23, no.1 (1992): 153-80.

transformed their institutions for economic reasons—faced with shrivelling funding they tapped into industrial patronage networks and federal research contracts⁹⁸—the Princeton Group theorized the need to revolutionize universities out of a concern for national security. The inherently insecure and unstable world—the modern world which the United States was to lead—required universities to rethink their own role in contributing to the nation’s security.⁹⁹

Prior to the seminar’s formation, Earle had identified the university’s potential to contribute to the nation’s security. In early 1938, Earle suggested reform of social science education and research, so that academics could help resolve strategic questions for the state.¹⁰⁰ But it was Alfred Vagts, a veteran of the seminar, who most vociferously outlined the Princeton Group’s re-imagining of the university. In his 1940 article, “War and the Colleges,” Vagts continued the Princeton Group’s less than subtle admiration for elements of totalitarian states by highlighting the role of universities in guiding Germany and Russia “far along the path of Wehrwirtschaft” (military economy), which now threatened democracies across the world. In understanding the novel combination of industry, knowledge and technology required for participation in the modern international order and “total war,” wrote Vagts, both countries had attended to these needs with radical changes to the university. The Nazis, according to Vagts, introduced military studies into the university system in 1933 and inculcated in their military officers current theories and techniques from psychology, economics, and other relevant social

⁹⁸ See Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University*, 17-42.

⁹⁹ Other universities, such as Harvard, MIT, and Stanford, were more materially significant to mobilization efforts in World War II and the Cold War than Princeton University and the Institute for Advanced Study. The Princeton Group’s efforts to transform the university remain important for historical study, however, because of how fear of and admiration of totalitarianism informed its work.

¹⁰⁰ Edward Mead Earle, “American Military Policy and National Security,” *Political Science Quarterly* 53 (1938): 1-13.

sciences.¹⁰¹ The results of these totalitarian efforts struck fear in Vagts; they also appeared to him as a model for the United States.¹⁰²

While Vagts identified the totalitarian university as “modern” by way of its contributions to military thought and national security, he viewed the American university as hidebound and ill-equipped to confront the world crisis.¹⁰³ The American university’s objective of transmitting canonical knowledge and values across generations tended toward conservatism at the expense of addressing contemporary problems. Too absorbed by “scholastic hobbies, the overspecialized dissertation, the playful or ponderous antiquarian research, the belief in the services of diplomacy and the functioning of traditional international law,” American academics shirked both interest in, and examination of, questions related to war, military institutions, and power. “We have thus punished with sovereign contempt the military problems,” Vagts wrote, “and we have viewed with suspicion those who contemplated them.”¹⁰⁴ Evasion of such urgent questions threatened the very relevance of the university. Because “the American intelligentsia did not grasp the spread of insecurity in the world... it played practically no part in the preparation or discussion of the steps that were finally found necessary to avert military danger to this hemisphere.” Even as the state required expertise to identify threats, troubleshoot armament problems, and administer some of “the greatest, most vital, most costly institutions,” universities provided little help.¹⁰⁵ Filling the void of academic expertise were whimsical politicians, military

¹⁰¹ Relations between universities and the Nazi state were much more nuanced than Vagts’ assessment. See Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1919-1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

¹⁰² Alfred Vagts, “War and the Colleges,” *American Military Institute*, Document no.4, 1940, 1, 7-8, copy in Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941) File, Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

¹⁰³ Vagts, “War and the Colleges,” 3.

¹⁰⁴ Alfred Vagts, “Ivory Towers into Watchtowers,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 17:2 (1941), 164, 169-70.

¹⁰⁵ Vagts, “Ivory Towers into Watchtowers,” 169-70. Vagts neglects the outsized role social scientists played in the New Deal. See Elliot Rosen, *Hoover, Roosevelt, and the Brains Trust: From Depression to New Deal*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

planners trapped by tradition, and “publicists,” such as Liddell Hart, who “preach[ed] ...doctrines unwarranted by experience or reason.”¹⁰⁶ Thus not only did dodging urgent war-related questions threaten the universities’ relevance, in the lead up to the Second World War it also jeopardized the country itself.

Vagts linked the university’s conservatism to the problem of the traditional military ideal that still framed many Americans’ thinking on war and peace. Earlier modes of warfare were characterized by a democratic impulse, Vagts wrote, that ranged from the ancient civilian militia to the more recent idea of a national guard constituted by civilians. A turn of the century revolution in military affairs, however, rendered these older forms obsolete.¹⁰⁷ Modern total wars, as the Germans demonstrated, were won and national security maintained through a knowledge elite—“highly expert war-technicians”—capable of organizing war industry, integrating armed forces on the battlefield, and translating social scientific literature into strategy.¹⁰⁸ Yet in spite of this revolution, these earlier modes of warfare had not only outlived their utility, they had crystallized into a fantasized ideal that clung to the American mind. The democratic belief that civilians made good soldiers persisted. Vagts posed the rhetorical question: “Is it not time to reappraise the effect of preparedness, with its intense demands for high skills and specialized knowledge, upon the Cincinnatus ideal for education?”¹⁰⁹ Total war meant that midwestern “farmers can no longer oppose “regulars,”” that is, professionally trained soldiers.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Earle, “National Defense and Political Science,” 485-93.

¹⁰⁷ Vagts, “Ivory Towers into Watchtowers,” 167-68.

¹⁰⁸ Vagts, “Ivory Towers into Watchtowers,” 167-69, 174-75.

¹⁰⁹ Cincinnatus was a Roman civilian farmer who, upon the call of war, became military dictator and saved Rome from defeat.

¹¹⁰ Vagts, “Ivory Towers into Watchtowers,” 167-68.

Vagts concluded that the solution to dislodging and supplanting both the university's conservatism and the outdated ideal of the military lay in modernizing the university. By making "ivory towers into watchtowers," the university would regain its social relevance and authority, as well as contribute to the needs of national security. Charged with "the task of getting the nation out of its own past [and] into the fearful present," the university would produce knowledge, strategies, and technologies necessary for war-making while indoctrinating students into the national security imagination.¹¹¹ The dual function of the university—production of knowledge and of values—would thus be attuned to contemporary circumstances. Other scholars of the Princeton Group shared Vagts' vision of the university. Harvey DeWeerd called for the university to function as a "liaison" between the military and the public, and, as highlighted above, Earle asked his social science peers to take up an interest in military affairs.¹¹² To pursue their vision of the university, the Princeton Group worked collectively towards establishing a "*centre d'études militaires*" in the Princeton community and bringing national security concerns to campuses across the country.¹¹³

In pursuit of this vision, members of the Princeton Group established and promoted across the country undergraduate and graduate courses devoted to security problems. A year before the Princeton Group's seminar, Harold Sprout led a course on the "Quest for National Security," and in the fall of 1939, he taught "Political and Military Geography," while his colleague Robert Albion taught "Military History and American Defense Problems."¹¹⁴ From

¹¹¹ Vagts, "Ivory Towers into Watchtowers," 178.

¹¹² Harvey DeWeerd, "Soldier and Civilian in Total War" *Infantry Journal* 48:4 (1941), 27.

¹¹³ Quoted in Earle, "The Princeton Program of Military Studies" *Military Affairs* 6 (1942), 23.

¹¹⁴ *Daily Princetonian* 63, no.14 (February 25, 1938): 4; Harvey A. DeWeerd, "Princeton: A Center of Military Studies" (*Princeton Alumni Weekly*, June 5, 1942), 8. Later, Bernard Brodie taught a course on "Modern War Strategy and National Policy" at Dartmouth College and Albert Lauterbach taught one on "Modern War—Its Economic and Social Aspects" at the University of Denver. Frank Aydelotte to Walter Jessup, January 26, 1942, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study—Study of Military and Foreign Policies of U.S. (1937-1941), Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

1940 to 1941, seminar members assisted Columbia University, Rutgers University, and the United States Military Academy in preparing courses devoted to military affairs. Earle himself corresponded with California Institute of Technology President William Bennett Munro, who was “tremendously interested” in bringing similar courses to his uniquely situated technical school.¹¹⁵ Earle also reported that his article on “National Defense and Political Science,” in which he sounded the alarm on the lack of academic interest in military problems, was also rippling westward. It apparently inspired both the University of California and Stanford to establish military-related undergraduate courses in the 1940-41 school year.¹¹⁶

To support these courses, the Princeton Group, in cooperation with a cast of ivy leaguers, completed a syllabus called *War and National Policy*. Although not published until 1942, the syllabus was completed and circulated months before the American entry into the war.¹¹⁷ In the foreword, Earle, Columbia University political scientist Lindsay Rogers, and future president of the American Historical Association Carlton Hayes, wrote that as “totalitarian war and defense preparations by the nontotalitarian states” became urgent problems, American universities were compelled to offer courses that examined these issues.¹¹⁸ Several Princeton Group members authored individual chapters, with topics ranging from morale to mobilization, civil-military relations to grand strategy. Linking the various topics was the Princeton Group’s broad

¹¹⁵ Frank Aydelotte to Robert Lester, December 16, 1940, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study Grants-in-Aid File (1937-1942); Earle to Kepler, June 2, 1941, Box 135, Folder Earle, Edward M. (1937-1951), Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

¹¹⁶ Earle to Kepler, June 2, 1941, Box 135, Folder Earle, Edward M. (1937-1951), Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC; Earle, “National Defense and Political Science,” *Political Science Quarterly* 53 (1940): 481-95.

¹¹⁷ Earle to seminar members, September 17, 1941, Box 5, Seminar on American Military Policy, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹¹⁸ Edward Mead Earle et al., Foreword to *War and National Policy: A Syllabus*, eds. Kirk, Grayson and Richard P. Stebbins (New York: Farrar & Rinehart Inc. Publishers, 1942), v.

understanding of national security.¹¹⁹ In addition to providing teaching materials to interested professors, the syllabus laid the groundwork for future academic concern for military affairs.

Where the Princeton Group made most headway, however, was in Princeton itself. In May 1942, Earle wrote to Vice-Admiral of the Navy Theodore S. Wilkinson, professor of economics and history at the US Military Academy Herman Beukema, and Secretary of War Henry Stimson to invite the government and armed services to take advantage of the facilities offered by universities in general and Princeton University in particular.¹²⁰ The “academic world,” he wrote, was interested in expanding its contribution to the “successful prosecution of the war.” Channelling Vagts’ writings on the university and modern life, Earle wrote:

Modern war is, as you know, a many-sided and complicated business which requires a great variety of skills and the utilization of all available scientific and specialized knowledge. American universities have built up over the years a carefully trained and experienced personnel which is at the disposal of the Armed Forces and other federal agencies, and which might profitably be employed by them.¹²¹

In addition to the personnel, universities possessed “physical equipment” such as “laboratories, residence halls, libraries, map collections and class rooms.” If the state mobilized university personnel and resources, efforts to construct “buildings and other specialized facilities” could be redirected towards more urgent and necessary wartime activities. Moreover, the use of universities could “avoid the further concentration of personnel in Washington and other overcrowded centers.”¹²² While Earle framed the invitation in terms of benefit to the armed services

¹¹⁹ Kirk and Stebbins, eds., *War and National Policy*, 1-5.

¹²⁰ Earle to Admiral T.S. Wilkinson, May 16, 1942, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1940-44), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA. Same letter sent to others. See Earle to Secretary of War Stimson, May 14, 1942, Box 24, Princeton Facilities and Army Schools – 1942 Folder, Earle Papers, MLP; Herman Beukema to Earle, May 5, 1942, Box 24, Princeton Facilities and Army Schools – 1942 Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹²¹ Earle to Admiral T.S. Wilkinson, May 16, 1942, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1940-44), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

¹²² Earle to Admiral T.S. Wilkinson, May 16, 1942, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1940-44), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

and government, he also identified the increasing presence of the military on campuses as a boon for the long-term development, funding, and prestige of universities.

Earle was particularly interested in inviting the military to the town of Princeton. Due to the assemblage of “special fields of knowledge, unusually qualified specialists, and excellent physical facilities,” the Princeton community enjoyed a unique vantage point for aiding the war effort. Between Princeton University, the Institute for Advanced Study, and several local firms, the community possessed expertise in mathematics, public opinion, propaganda, the physical sciences, public health, military intelligence, and, thanks to his seminar, war, security, and strategy. The continuous flow of academics called to Washington and other centers for government and military service threatened the concentration of intellectual and material resources in Princeton. Though Princeton residents enthusiastically assisted the war effort, Earle asked whether “their value as individuals may well be less than their value as members of a team,” that is, as community members. Moreover, Princeton’s proximity to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington rendered it an ideal alternative center for, say, training reserves or conducting military research.¹²³ Henry Stimson expressed gratitude and informed Earle that the “very patriotic offer” would be circulated among the agencies tasked with training personnel.¹²⁴

As the war progressed, Princeton did become a critical center for the war effort.¹²⁵ In early October 1943, Princeton University invited Washington staff of the British Army, Navy, and Air Force to complete a special three-day faculty-led course, that covered such material as “The American Mind” and “Regional Influences on American Thinking and Acting.” Both

¹²³ Earle to Admiral T.S. Wilkinson, May 16, 1942, Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1940-44), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

¹²⁴ Henry Stimson to Earle, June 8, 1942, Box 24, Princeton Facilities and Army Schools – 1942 Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹²⁵ Richard Challener, “Response to War,” *Princeton History* 11 (1992): 48-65.

Harold Sprout and Earle participated.¹²⁶ More significantly, several members of the Princeton Group, including Stefan Possony, Bernard Brodie, and Harvey DeWeerd, helped organize the army orientation curriculum and lectured to new recruits.¹²⁷ Their work even earned them recognition in *Time Magazine*. The 1942 article “Geopolitics in College” applauded the Princeton Group’s *War and National Policy* syllabus, Sprout and Albion’s military studies courses at Princeton University, and the work of “top-flight scholars” in Earle’s seminar.¹²⁸ Finally, in early 1944, James Forrestal commissioned the Sprouts “to organize [a] pilot course” for naval reserves in the wartime V-12 Program.¹²⁹ With the goal of providing future officers knowledge of “world affairs,” Harold and Margaret Sprout produced a syllabus and tested it on the Princeton Naval Reserve Officers’ Training Corps and at a handful of other university naval training bases.¹³⁰ After sitting in on a class in fall 1944, Forrestal was proud of his maneuverings and began to advertise the course to “makers of opinion,” including Walter Lippmann, the *New York Times* Washington correspondent Arthur Krock, and other high profile journalists, as an example of potential military-academy collaboration.¹³¹ The course grew into a “regular feature” of the postwar naval training curriculum.¹³² By contributing their expertise in teaching positions, Princeton Group members circulated their expansive conception of national security to military officers and trainees.

¹²⁶ *Princeton Alumni Weekly* 44:4 (15 October 1943): 3.

¹²⁷ Herman Beukema to Earle, December 10, 1941, Box 24, Army Camp Lectures Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹²⁸ “Geopolitics in College,” *Time Magazine*, January 19, 1942, 56.

¹²⁹ Harold Sprout, Memorandum concerning Sprout’s war service, March 30, 1945, Box 22, Correspondence S, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹³⁰ During the trial run, the course was given by Robert Kerner at University California at Berkeley, Samuel T. Emory at University of North Carolina, William A. Bryan at Northwestern University, Robert Strausz-Hupé at University of Pennsylvania, Arnold Wolfers at Yale University. See Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, eds., *Foundations of National Power*, viii.

¹³¹ James Forrestal to Harold Sprout, September 17, 1944, Box 29, Folder 49, James Forrestal Papers, MLP; James Forrestal to Earle, September 24, 1944, Box 15, Folder 20, James Forrestal Papers, MLP.

¹³² Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, eds., *Foundations of National Power*, viii.

The Princeton Group's efforts also concentrated on shaping students and academic colleagues. The undergraduate and graduate courses listed above helped, but so did the growing presence of military officers and administrators in Princeton, which impacted even the most studious of departments. For instance, urban planning and architecture professor Jean Labatut directed the conversion of the Princeton stadium into a laboratory for "camouflage experiments" in 1943. To replicate an aerial photographer or bombardier's view, Labatut built scale models of defense installations, an airstrip, and factories, which he used to instruct students "in the art of dissimulation," hoping their "camouflage discipline" would become "second nature."¹³³ Harvey DeWeerd also stoked university interest in the war, by transporting the headquarters of the American Military Institute to Princeton in 1942 and appointing Vagts, Earle, Harold Sprout and Robert Albion as trustees.¹³⁴ Through an in-house journal called *Military Affairs*, the American Military Institute offered yet another venue for the Princeton Group to bring questions of war and national security to the campus. Out of these endeavours, Princeton became the academic-military admixture that Vagts and Earle had only fantasized about before 1941. Wartime contingencies made possible interwar dreams.

¹³³ "Stepladder." *Princeton Alumni Weekly* 44, no.4 (15 October 1943): 3-4.

¹³⁴ DeWeerd, "Princeton: A Center of Military Studies," 8.

Re-Imagining Americans

The Princeton Group's concern for national security drove its members to not only re-imagine social scientists and universities, but also American citizens. The country's security, the Princeton Group argued, hinged upon a productive, confident citizenry capable of combat, sympathetic to the curtailment of civil liberties, and willing to work. Citizens had to internalize the national security imagination. Strategic thinking was no longer the exclusive task of military officers and diplomats. Rather, all citizens needed to understand the international order, recognize threats to their country, and support the extensive parameters of securing the United States. The Princeton Group's re-imagining of American civilians even looked to mobilization efforts in Germany and the Soviet Union for inspiration. The United States' grand strategy would lack substance without a domestic strategy to re-make citizens.

States have long surveyed, analyzed and altered their citizens, though improved technologies and differing motivations in the past two centuries have escalated states' ability to do so.¹³⁵ Another mark of modern statecraft is the monitoring of enemy states' population and economic output.¹³⁶ The Princeton Group understood these developments and identified production, fertility rates, and morale as crucial cogs in maintaining national security. What truly separated the 1930s and 40s from the past was the rise of totalitarian governance. Totalitarian states, Earle warned in 1937, "frankly recognize that all national life from the birth-rate to the most delicate mechanism of the national economy shall be conducted with reference to its

¹³⁵ Malcolm Thompson, "The Birth of the Chinese Population: A Study in the History of Governmental Logics" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2013).

¹³⁶ Consider the French obsession with fertility rates following the Franco-Prussian War. See Joshua Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

military utility. Conscription has taken hold of everything and everybody.”¹³⁷ Totalitarianism was not a vestige of old autocratic power. The sheer intensity of the Nazi management of its population reflected a qualitative shift and an image of future state practices in both totalitarian and democratic governments. Earle and his colleagues urged the United States to catch up. Nazi Germany’s civilian mobilization efforts thus served as a source of earth-shattering fear and as inspiration for an American program to bring citizens further into the fold of national security. The potential hypocrisy of imitating totalitarianism in order to defeat it was quietly explained away.¹³⁸

The Princeton Group adopted totalitarian-tinged categories of citizens—soldiers, mothers, and workers—and their derivatives—such as economic potential and “war potential”¹³⁹—and bound them into a theory of *manpower*.¹⁴⁰ By manpower, the Princeton Group meant the total human resources of a country, “not just the number of men between 18 and 45 at present available for active duty.”¹⁴¹ Lifting the term from the founder of geopolitics, Sir Halford Mackinder, the Princeton Group produced and promoted novel forms of identifying, measuring and, ultimately, modifying populations in order to secure the United States and the world order.¹⁴² Earle called for

¹³⁷ Earle’s speech, Open Meeting on International Relations, September 15, 1937, Box 28, Folder SSRC, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹³⁸ Lauterbach suggested democratic governments could adopt “the technical set-up of governmental agencies and measures” of totalitarian states, while maintaining “the fundamental spirit and philosophy” inherent to democracy. See Albert Lauterbach, “Militarism in the Western World: A Comparative Study,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5:4 (October 1944): 478.

¹³⁹ Albert Lauterbach, *Economics in Uniform: Military Economy and Social Structure* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 48-49.

¹⁴⁰ Princeton Group members wrote both “manpower” and “man power.” I use the former, though I keep the original orthography in direct quotes. Despite its continued significance in shaping industry, education and defense policy across the world, “manpower” has yet to be historicized as a concept.

¹⁴¹ Earle’s opening remarks at “Military Man Power and American Policy Conference,” proceedings, September 25, 1942, 3, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁴² Copy of Halford Mackinder’s 1905 lecture, “Man-Power as a Measure of National and Imperial Strength,” in which he coins the term, found in Box 36, Books—Democratic Ideals & Reality Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

a long range national program concerning man power, designed to raise the physical and mental capacities of all citizens to the highest practicable level and to provide in peace time physical and vocational training which will assume the maximum utilization of human resources in time of emergency.¹⁴³

Nazi Germany understood the virtues of manpower; democratic states had to recover lost ground.

In autumn 1942, the Princeton Group hosted a conference on “Man Power, Military Potential, and American Policy,” in which scholars and state officials explored the inter-relationships of demography and national strength. With a wide range of participants from the United States Army, Navy, Department of State, Office of Strategic Services, the Princeton University’s Office of Population Research and several other universities, the Princeton Group treated the conference as a strategic opportunity to display the benefits of a growing military-academic partnership.¹⁴⁴ The Princeton Group specifically strove to impress the practical utility of scholars upon the conference’s co-host and sponsor, the Geopolitical Section of the Military Intelligence Division, which was the Army’s short-lived international relations research group.¹⁴⁵

As manpower encompassed more than just the number of men capable of active duty, conference participants discussed and debated the role of all human resources in the present war and in the future global balance of power.¹⁴⁶ Presentations varied in geographical focus, but centered on common demographic questions of fertility, mortality, and immigration, and on the

¹⁴³ Earle, “Memorandum Concerning a Study of American Military Policy,” December 20, 1938, Box 178, Institute for Advanced Study Grants-in-Aid File (1937-1942), Carnegie Corporation Archives, MLC.

¹⁴⁴ Personnel of Conference, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP. In his conference invitation to certain scholars, Earle wrote that the conference could prove that “a certain amount of theoretical research and discussion and preparation of memoranda which are now being done in Washington can be done to better advantage by being farmed out to university groups throughout the country.” See Earle to William T.R. Fox, September 16, 1942, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁴⁵ Earle to Mrs. Samuels of the Princeton Herald, September 29, 1942, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP. In the early 1940s, the Geopolitical Section was funding and organizing joint academic-military roundtable at east coast universities on pressing strategic issues, “mobilizing... the intellectual resources on a given subject.” See William S. Culbertson to Quincy Wright, September 30, 1942, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁴⁶ “Military Man Power and American Policy Conference,” proceedings, September 25, 1942, 3-4, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

impact of policies aimed to promote reproduction, education, and industrialization.¹⁴⁷ What made the conference historically significant was the incorporation of these metrics and policies—manpower broadly construed—into a national security imagination. Conference participants imbued domestic phenomena with geopolitical meaning; one country’s fertility rate spelled doom for another’s security.

In practice, the concept of manpower led to an interest in and anxiety over the everyday activities of Americans. Throughout the 1940s, Earle wrote countless letters expressing his outrage at the lack of patriotism demonstrated by his fellow citizens. A month into the official American war effort, Earle lamented to James Forrestal the employment of “football and baseball players” as “physical instructors” in the Armed Services. Men of such “youth” and “vigor” would be more appropriately “engaged in combat duties,” while older, less fit men would be better assigned to teaching duties. Moreover, the seemingly preferential treatment of professional athletes was bad for military morale, as regular soldiers, in contrast, were condemned to carry out the Navy’s “dirty work.”¹⁴⁸ Closer to the end of the war, Earle relayed to Director of Mobilization and future Secretary of State James Byrnes his sour feelings towards sports and their diversion of energy and resources from the war effort. Recounting one experience of traffic before and after a recent college football match, Earle wrote that he was “literally nauseated at the spectacle” of automobiles “idling along for miles.” Earle enjoined Byrnes to take action: “the least we can do is to prevent the frittering away of our man power resources in circuses when we so desperately need guns.”¹⁴⁹ In constructing citizens as

¹⁴⁷ See various presentations in “Military Man Power and American Policy,” proceedings, Box 30, Military Man Power Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁴⁸ Earle to James Forrestal, January 27, 1942, Box 29, Citizen Involvement in War Effort Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁴⁹ Earle to James Byrnes, Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, January 2, 1945, Box 24, Correspondence W, Earle Papers, MLP.

manpower, Earle treated humans as any other resource at the state's command; given the crisis, the state had the prerogative to better manage, arrange, and employ these resources.

The administration of citizens, however, was not a nostrum for winning the war or attaining the nation's long term security. Ordinary Americans themselves had to internalize the national security imagination, which would transform their assumptions about the world—by blurring distinctions between domestic and foreign, civilian and soldier, and peace and war—and inspire action at the grassroots. Earle elaborated his volunteerist philosophy of the citizen in a letter to the *Princeton Herald*:

In a war of the magnitude of the one in which we are now involved, it is imperative that every citizen consider himself a committee of one on the state of the nation and that every community undertake essential tasks without waiting for instructions from Washington.¹⁵⁰

War demanded that all citizens orient their individual actions towards victory. While the state took responsibility and initiative, so too should citizens. Earle envisioned such an ethos persisting into the postwar period, even if it necessitated legal enforcement.¹⁵¹

It was the task of state officials and opinion-blazing elites, a class to which the Princeton Group perceived itself belonging, to push citizens in this direction by promoting national security. To this end, Earle wrote for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, a magazine edited by old neighbours from his Columbia days, Bruce and Beatrice Gould. At the time, the *Ladies' Home Journal* was the most popular homemaker magazine, boasting a readership of over 1 million as early as 1904, with sales only accelerating in the subsequent decades.¹⁵² In September 1940, Earle began a series of articles on the subject of war for the magazine, in which he adapted the

¹⁵⁰ Earle to Princeton Herald, January 6, 1942, Box 29, Citizen Involvement in War Effort Folder, Earle Papers, MLP. Earle also conveyed his philosophy of the citizen in a letter to President Franklin Roosevelt. See Earle to Franklin Roosevelt, January 7, 1942, Box 29, Citizen Involvement in War Effort Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁵¹ Earle to various Senators, March 29, 1945, Box 20, Correspondence M, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁵² Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 235.

Princeton Group's national security ideas into a medium legible for the magazine's homemaker audience.

In a 1943 article, Earle familiarized readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal* with the technological innovation of aerial bombing, a novelty that radically changed combat strategy in World War II and something Earle knew about as a special consultant to the Army Air Force.¹⁵³ Moral opposition to strategic bombing was strong before the American entry into war and continued to hold sway even after the Pearl Harbor attack.¹⁵⁴ The Princeton Group's understanding of manpower, which placed ordinary citizens' economic production and morale at the center of modern warfare, stood opposite to American squeamishness at bombing urban and industrial hubs.¹⁵⁵ The Air Force took a close interest in the research and writing of Earle's aerial bombing article. Colonel Edgar Sorenson approvingly wrote to Earle that "it is important that we use several magazines and several writers to cover similar subjects in the hope of getting the proper concepts before the public."¹⁵⁶ Sorenson even relayed to Earle that members of his Air Force staff would be interested in "collaborat[ing]" with the *Ladies' Home Journal* to organize a press release for the publication.¹⁵⁷ Although we do not know how the intended audience—homemakers—responded to the article, Colonel Malcolm Moss wrote to Earle after reading a copy of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. He was greatly impressed with the article, which proved to him the value of public outreach and the ingenuity of using a popular magazine to do so. Such

¹⁵³ Earle, "Bombing Germany to defeat," *Ladies' Home Journal*, copy in Box 38, Writings: Articles/Reports/Misc. Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁵⁴ George E. Hopkins, "Bombing and the American Conscience during World War II," *Historian* 28, no. 3 (1966): 451–73; and Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, eds., *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, From Flying Fortresses to Drones*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

¹⁵⁵ A good example of how far the Princeton Group took this logic is a memorandum written for the Army Air Force on "A Suggestion for the Army Air Forces in Europe: Locomotives as a Target" that Earle and his colleagues wrote and passed on to Army Air Force generals. Copy in Box 25, Army Air Forces Headquarters, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁵⁶ Colonel Edgar Sorensen to Earle, March 20, 1943, Box 23, Correspondence Edgar Sorensen 1942-1943, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁵⁷ Earle to Colonel Edgar Sorensen, May 6, 1943, Box 23, Correspondence Edgar Sorensen 1942-1943, Earle Papers, MLP.

articles, Moss quipped, “can contribute in the very greatest degree to strength and common sense on the ‘Home Front.’”¹⁵⁸ The task of convincing the citizenry of one country to bomb another required all the help it could muster.

In general, Earle’s handful of articles tapped into the psychological dimensions of national security, as they emphasized the far-reaching menace of totalitarianism. Before the American entry into the war, Earle rhetorically asked “what a Nazi victory [would] mean to America.” Contemplating a British defeat, Earle chillingly mulled over the Nazification of Europe and the world.¹⁵⁹ Earle counterposed his *Ladies’ Home Journal* articles that aimed to strike fear into the readers with others that propped up a belief in the United States’ global capabilities. Such a switch can be seen in his 1943 “Can U.S. Have Peace?: It’s Your Foreign Policy Too,” in which Earle reviewed Walter Lippmann’s *U.S Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, itself a bombshell of a book that helped popularize the national security concept.¹⁶⁰ Though the President formulated foreign policy, Earle wrote, its success depended on the support of “enlightened and determined men and women.”¹⁶¹ Thus in his popular writings, Earle delicately walked a thin line between fear and empowerment, between feelings of insecurity and security—a paradox at the heart of national security.¹⁶² One sought to inspire action, the other to inspire confidence.

¹⁵⁸ M.W. Moss to Earle, June 28, 1943, Box 20, Correspondence M.W. Moss Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁵⁹ Edward M. Earle, “What would a Nazi victory mean to America?,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 58 (1941), 16.

¹⁶⁰ Milne, *Worldmaking*, 200-03. Later commentators would claim Lippmann’s 1943 book to have included the first definition of national security: “A nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war.” Quoted in P.G Bock and Morton Berkowitz, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Volume 11*, 2nd ed., s.v. “National Security,” (London: Macmillan, 1968): 40-45.

¹⁶¹ Earle, “Can U.S. Have Peace?: It’s Your Foreign Policy Too,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, copy in Box 38, Writings: Articles/Reports/Misc. Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁶² Roosevelt made a similar move. As Preston writes, “To protect the national security, he first had to stoke Americans’ sense of *insecurity*.” See Preston, “Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security,” 492.

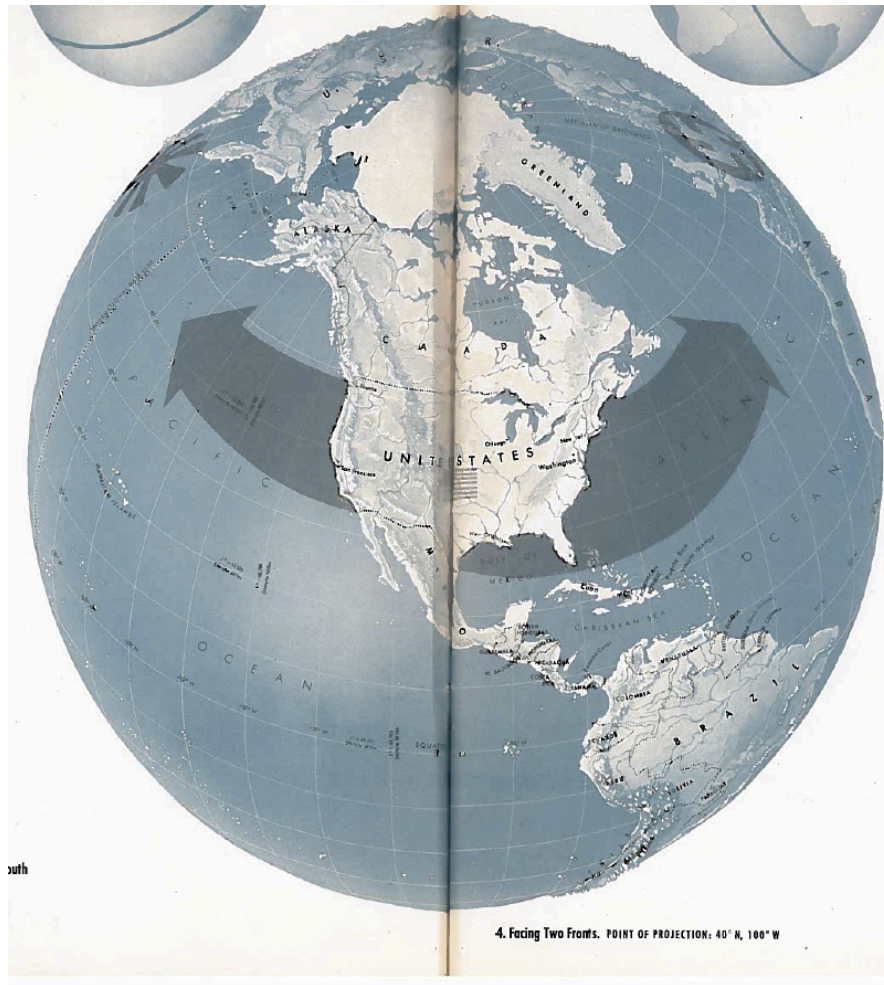


Figure 1. “Facing Two Fronts.” From The Office of War Information, *War Atlas*, 2-3.

The Princeton Group’s aim of informing citizens of wartime developments and of cultivating a national security imagination manifested in other projects. Exemplifying the Princeton Group’s widening Washington network, in November 1942 the Office of War Information commissioned Harold Sprout to create an atlas to help ordinary citizens fit the “blow-by-blow-account of this world war,” transmitted to them by radio and newspapers, “into the grand design of the entire struggle.”¹⁶³ Sprout and the Princeton Group looked to this project as a very “important public service.”¹⁶⁴ The Office of War Information, which was President

¹⁶³ The Office of War Information, *A War Atlas for Americans*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), iii.

¹⁶⁴ Harold Sprout to Chester Kerr, November 19, 1942, Box 29, Global War Atlas Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

Roosevelt's newly minted propaganda arm, directed Sprout to represent the war through a combination of maps and descriptive and analytical text.¹⁶⁵ Harold Sprout, along with Margaret Sprout, Jean Gottmann, Felix Gilbert and Earle commenced work on the project in late November and published *A War Atlas for Americans* in 1944.¹⁶⁶ The Princeton Group consulted outside experts throughout the project, such as those from the Research and Analysis Division of the Office of Strategic Services, the War Department, and the National Geographic Society.¹⁶⁷ This broad range of state and non-state actors interested in mapmaking was not unusual for the time, as many contemporaries thought maps could help overcome isolationist sentiment. In the months following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt encouraged Americans to purchase and “spread before [them] a map of the whole earth,” and cast such cartographic activities in the rhetoric of patriotism.¹⁶⁸

The authors of the *War Atlas for Americans* understood their work in a similar light. They sought to make citizens “map-conscious.” However this map-consciousness came with a caveat; the Princeton Group aimed to represent the United States visually as the center of the globe (figure 1).¹⁶⁹ The United States’ geography, the authors contended, tied the European and African theatres to the Pacific theatre. In order to provide a “more realistic view of the war” and the United States’ centrality to it, they did not orient all maps along the north-south axis, and they often duplicated Asia, which had the effect of emphasizing American connections to the

¹⁶⁵ Project for a Global War Atlas, November 24, 1942, Box 29, Global War Atlas Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁶⁶ Meeting Attendance, November 27, 1942, Box 29, Global War Atlas Folder, Earle Papers, MLP.

¹⁶⁷ The Office of War Information, *A War Atlas*, ii.

¹⁶⁸ Franklin Roosevelt, Fireside Chat, February 23, 1942, The American Presidency Project, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>. Cartographic mania took place in France and England as well. See Michael Heffernan, “The Cartography of the Fourth Estate: Mapping the New Imperialism in British and French Newspapers, 1875-1925,” in *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 261-300.

¹⁶⁹ Spatial knowledge both projects and reinforces state power. For an analysis of the United States and maps during the Cold War, see Matthew Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). Also, Mark Polelle, *Raising Cartographic Consciousness: The Social and Foreign Policy Vision of Geopolitics in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999).

Asia-Pacific via both the west coast and via Europe (figure 2).¹⁷⁰ In other words, it was a *world* war because of the United States' geographic location. American isolationism was thus irrelevant as a description of the world and as polemic. In this regard, the *War Atlas* sought to undermine one of the conceptual bastions of the term “national defense”—guarded by two oceans, insulated from the uncertainty and infighting of Asia and the Old World—and to prepare the American mind for the global dimensions of national security.

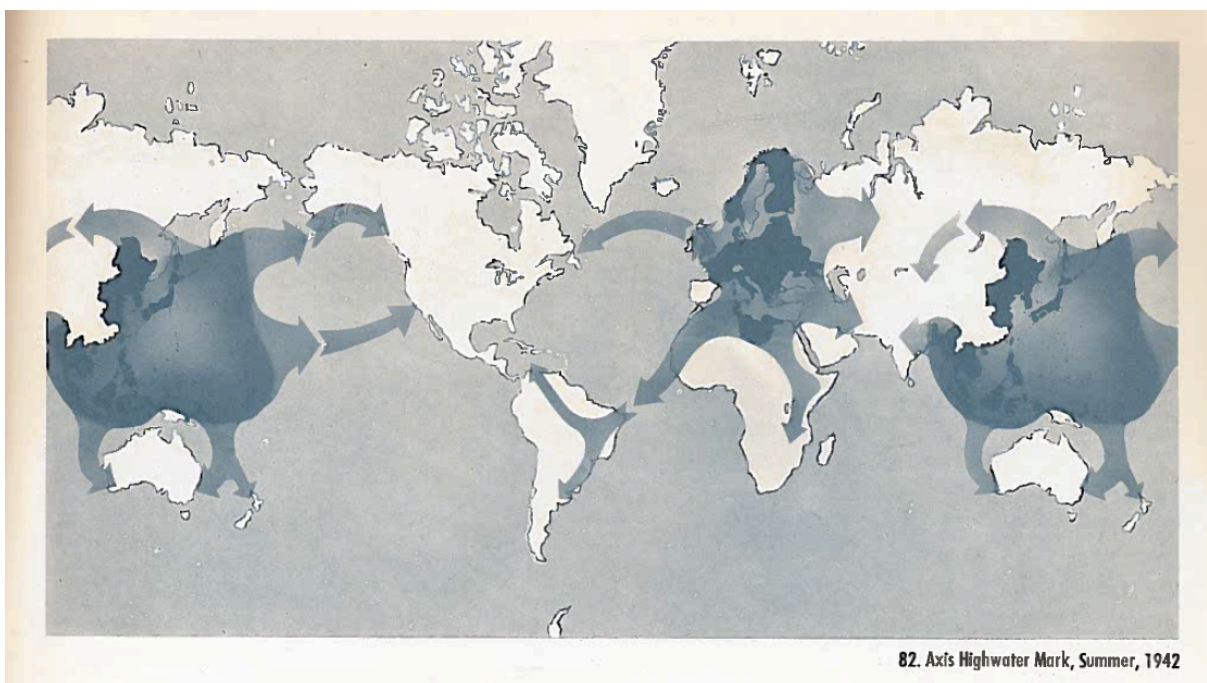


Figure 2. “Axis Highwater Mark. 1942.” From The Office of War Information, *War Atlas*, 83.

Through these projects, the Princeton Group worked towards cultivating a national security imagination within the public. Americans, in the Princeton Group's vision, were to embrace the immediate war effort, the extensive needs of national security, and a longer term belief in American power at home and abroad. Citizens had to imbibe strategic thinking. Moreover, these changes warranted action. The Princeton Group wanted Americans to re-

¹⁷⁰ The Office of War Information, *A War Atlas*, vii; for the centering of the United States, see also map 1.

imagine themselves as citizens. When Earle lambasted athletes for not “plac[ing] the interests of the nation before their own interests,”¹⁷¹ he was asking citizens to situate their personal lives in the broader currents of geopolitics and to view themselves as manpower, as conscious material for the state. The Princeton Group advocated for the re-imagined citizen to outlast the Second World War.

¹⁷¹ Earle to James Byrnes, Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, January 2, 1945, Box 24, Correspondence W, Earle Papers, MLP.

Conclusion: The Cultivation of the National Security Imagination

Observing signs of a doomed international order, Earle and his Princeton Group colleagues opened up a novel way of imagining the world. The national security imagination they created bore the imprint of its age. It took inspiration from totalitarian governance, turned fear into a foreign policy, and subsumed American institutions and citizens under geopolitical goals. Troublingly, as feelings of insecurity could never fully be mollified by increasing security measures, the national security imagination became totalizing. From academic communities to everyday Americans, all were to be judged by their contributions to national security. Moreover, the Princeton Group aimed to inculcate within institutions and the American people the national security imagination. Such were the domestic consequences of the modern international system. The Princeton Group advocated for the wartime mobilization practices and patriotism to outlast the war, which would situate America in a state of eternal preparedness.

By 1945, Earle became increasingly worried that the Princeton Group's ideas had gained popularity due to historical chance, as the waging of war happened to coincide with the group's first seminar back in 1939. The war's end, Earle feared, would thwart the Princeton Group's efforts to promote a national security imagination within the social sciences, at universities, and among Americans. National security would then have to wait until the next emergency. In June 1945, Earle communicated his anxiety to James Forrestal in a letter:

The security of the United States demands that there be no relaxation of vigilance in academic circles during the next twenty years in matters concerning the national security. Past experience indicates that there will be a grave temptation shortly after the war to allow academic, public, and official concern with the national security to lapse into neglect and indifference. Should this occur the United States will be unprepared psychologically, morally, and politically to play its part in the affairs of world, or to meet any crisis which may arise from renewed threats of aggression.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Earle to James Forrestal, June 1, 1945, Box 14, Correspondence D, Earle Papers, MLP.

An American globalism would remain dependent upon the preparedness of the state and its people, even in peacetime. Indeed, national security issues should not “lapse into neglect and indifference” following the end of World War II because, as the Princeton Group stressed, war and peace were just different “stages of mobilization.”¹⁷³ Earle was eager to sustain the Princeton Group’s efforts. And in order to reboot the seminar, Earle requested from Forrestal government funding to the tune of \$1 million.¹⁷⁴

Earle’s anxieties turned out to be misplaced, however, as the postwar administration of President Harry Truman introduced sweeping legislation in 1947 that interrupted demobilization and re-affirmed American military and political commitments to the world. The administration rendered war preparedness permanent. This postwar shift was accompanied by other radical changes anticipated by the Princeton Group. In the context of a burgeoning national security state and the beginnings of the Cold War, applied research in the service of the state attained a higher cachet, leading one famous sociologist to describe the social sciences as “a basic national resource.”¹⁷⁵ Meanwhile scientists and administrators formed new alliances with the military and government, which poured astronomic amounts of funding into research aimed at contributing to American security.¹⁷⁶ Finally, the national security imagination extended ever further into public

¹⁷³ Earle, “Military Policy and Statecraft: A Proposed Field for Study in International Relations,” n.d. [November 1937], Box 6, Earle Faculty File (1936-37), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA.

¹⁷⁴ Well over \$13 million today. Forrestal declined Earle’s request, but the Carnegie Corporation stepped up and funded the seminar from 1946 to 1954. Earle to James Forrestal, June 1, 1945, Box 14, Correspondence D, Earle Papers, MLP; Robert L. Lester to Frank Aydelotte, June 12, 1946, Box 6, Earle File (1945-1947), Records of the Office of the Director.

¹⁷⁵ Talcott Parsons, “Social Science: A Basic National Resource,” [1948] reprinted in *The Nationalization of the Social Sciences*, eds. Samuel Z. Klausner and Victor M. Lidz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 41-112.

¹⁷⁶ The national security state had a profound impact on the conduct of research. For an analysis of how the postwar physics community negotiated the national security state, see Jessica Wang, *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism, and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

life, as Americans conjured communist conspiracies and imagined nuclear apocalypse.¹⁷⁷ These fears resulted in widespread support for the national security doctrine, citizen participation in civil defense initiatives, and a growing interest in world affairs.¹⁷⁸

While bureaucratic entrepreneurs, fear-mongering politicians, and other actors played a role in the postwar materialization of Earle's interwar desires, the Princeton Group was a vital nexus in this reconceptualization of the American state and citizenship. Their contributions to the war effort convinced countless mid-level military officers and civil servants of the usefulness of social scientists in mobilization and strategy, and thereby helped carve the coming institutional space for the defense intellectual. As an example of this recognition, the Army Air Force recommended Earle receive the Medal of Presidential Merit, an honor he did earn in 1946 for his work on the aerial bombing campaign and for raising a "sound and informed public opinion."¹⁷⁹ Finally, as members of the Princeton Group fanned out after the war to far-flung academic posts at RAND, Stanford, Columbia, and Paris' École des hautes études, they stoked and spread scholarly concern for national security.¹⁸⁰

More significantly, however, its members contributed to a novel language for what they perceived to be novel world-historical conditions. In the 1930s and the early 1940s, 'national security' still evoked the United States' policy response to the economic crisis, yet by 1945 it had become a concept that could be understood, discussed, and debated in terms of geopolitics

¹⁷⁷ Dexter Fergie, "Looking into the Abyss and Seeing Hell: Eisenhower and Experts Debate the Apocalypse," (presentation at Instability and Insecurity Graduate Symposium at the University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, May 7-8, 2015).

¹⁷⁸ Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in Ekbladh, "Present at the Creation," 133.

¹⁸⁰ Updated Who's Who of Contributors, Roy E. Thomas, September 25, 1970, Box 7, Earle Faculty File (1950-1970), Records of the Director of the Office, IASA. The best account of the rise of security studies is Gene M. Lyons and Louis Morton, *Schools for Strategy: Education and Research in National Security Affairs* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965), for Princeton Group alumni, see 137-62, 188-90. See also Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8-101.

and war. Charles Beard's reflections on the need to expand the social safety net in his 1935 paper "The Quest for National Security" are incomprehensible to our postwar world's understanding of national security.¹⁸¹ Members of the Princeton Group spurred this shift. They were among the earliest commentators to orient national security towards its militarized meaning and to circulate this evolving concept in academe, the policy community, and public discourse. As early as 1942, they obtained endorsements from the two most influential visionaries of the national security state—Walter Lippmann and James Forrestal—both of whom latched on to the Princeton Group's language and deployed it in their advocacy for deep institutional changes that would enact permanent preparedness and a muscular, globalized foreign policy.

Beyond a look at its local influence, an examination of the Princeton Group illuminates the meaning—both historical and contemporary—of national security. Earle's rationale for employing national security over national defense points to crucial differences between the two concepts. Whereas national defense posited boundaries between the domestic and the foreign, soldier and civilian, and war and peace, national security neither conceptually nor in practice divides the world along such lines. Under a regime of national security, everything is imagined as a potential target and enemies are imagined everywhere. The Princeton Group's totalizing conception arose out of their interwar fears and anxieties. Sixty years later, the authors of the 9/11 Commission Report echoed this totalizing nature of national security. In explaining how the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon occurred, the authors of the report listed the "failure of imagination" as the first of four critical faults: national security institutions did not imagine the conversion of civilian aircrafts into ballistic weapons.¹⁸² Looking

¹⁸¹ Beard, "The Quest for National Security."

¹⁸² The other three were policy, capabilities, and management. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, Thomas H. Kean, and Lee Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission Report: final report of the National*

towards the future, they recommended that these institutions “find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing, the exercise of imagination.”¹⁸³ Much like the Princeton Group, the 9/11 Commission concluded that the nation’s security depended on a militarized, permanently suspecting imagination. Whereas the Princeton Group’s national security imagination represented a rupture in American thought during the 1930s and 1940s, the war on terror has made it ordinary.

Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004), 339-360.

¹⁸³ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 344-48.

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