

UCD Clinton Institute for American Studies

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Medium and Message: Conflict Photography in the Digital Era

Final Conference of the Clinton Institute's Photography and International Conflict Project

Funded by an Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences Thematic Project Research Grant, the Clinton Institute has been running the Photography and International Conflict project for the past three years. The initial phase of this project came to a close this May with a final colloquium which included a two-day seminar and workshops.

The seminar was rooted in the core rationales of the overall project. It recognised that the digitization of photography and the exponential growth of images on the Internet have, in the past fifteen years, had profound effects on the medium of photography. It also acknowledged that ramifications for the interpretation of the nature of the photograph and visual information more generally are tied intrinsically to questions of economics, cultural change, technological developments and

stylistic innovation.

The two-day seminar addressed photography in the digital era through a specific focus on documentary photography and photojournalistic representations of conflict. It fostered dialogue across a spectrum of interested and involved parties including: creators and users of lens-based media such as photographers, NGO personnel, photo editors and other media workers, academics and commentators on the issue.

Guest speakers included Prof. Susie Linfield, Director of the Cultural Reporting and Criticism programme at New York University; Stephen Mayes, Managing Director of VII Photo agency; and award-winning photojournalist Ashley Gilbertson.

The seminar proceedings were video-recorded and will be available on the project's website, www.photoconflict.org



Photographer Ashley Gilbertson of the VII Network speaks at the conference.

European Corporate Engagement Forum

In association with the Clinton Global Initiative, and organised by the Soul of Haiti Foundation, the Clinton Institute recently hosted a meeting of the Irish branch of the European Corporate Engagement Forum. The Corporate Engagement Forum was convened to help reach Ireland's global development goals, aims which are very much in line with the Clinton Global Initiative. The event was organised and chaired by Michael Carey, Chairman of Jacob Fruitfield and Chairman of the Soul of Haiti Foundation. Over 100 people were in attendance, including political and business leaders, philanthropists, social entrepreneurs, and representatives of NGOs. Denis O'Brien, the first speaker, commented on the "seismic effect" President Clinton has had on the developing world. The next presentation was a video address by President Clinton in which he stressed the challenges created for an interdependent world and the need for Europeans to continue to play a leading role in meeting these. Other notable speakers included Mary Davis (Special Olympics), Tom Arnold (Concern), and Neil O'Leary (Ion Equity).



Ashley Gilbertson/VII Network: Iraqis attempt to extinguish a fire on Saadoun Street in Baghdad, Iraq.

Conference on 'New Ways of War' at the Clinton Institute

The recent American experience with insurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq has led to a new debate on the nature of contemporary conflict. Newly popular concepts such as 'irregular warfare,' 'asymmetric conflict,' 'hybrid war,' 'fourth generation warfare' and even 'War 2.0' all describe a form of conflict that involves far more actors—including insurgents, criminal gangs, peacekeepers, civilians, NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments and media outlets – than does warfare as traditionally conceived. However, these issues, new as they seem, have a past.

On 1st and 2nd June this year, funded by the Graduate School for Arts and Humanities, the Clinton Institute hosted a conference to explore the past and future of these concepts. Entitled 'New Ways of War? Insurgencies, 'Small Wars' and the Past and Future of Conflict,' the conference attracted a wide range of very high quality scholars who convened to discuss the ways in which the nature of contemporary armed conflict is changing and the historical roots of that change.

The opening panel, with contributions from T.X. Hammes, Antulio Echevarria and Theo Farrell (see photo), set the stage for later conversations by discussing the problems of NATO strategy in Afghanistan. The plenary address by Prof. Mark Grimsley of Ohio State University focused on the changing parameters of military history, arguing for a much broader conceptualization of the field. Grimsley contended that military history has suffered from its long association with military staff colleges and that it needed to draw much more deeply on insights from other areas of academia. Using the Civil Rights Movement as an example, Grimsley argued that scholars need to think of military history in terms that reach beyond the

battlefield and the movement of armies.

In keeping with this call for broader thinking on war, panels drew on the expertise of theorists, historians, and practitioners. They discussed an extensive range of topics, such as the advisory experience in counterinsurgency; small wars and the education system; the IRA and the war of independence; 18th century small wars; Clausewitz; and global counter-terrorism. Discussion was lively throughout, as an interdisciplinary mixture of senior academics, military practitioners and emerging scholars engaged with the problems thrown up by the debates over 'small wars.'



Prof. Theo Farrell (Kings College London), T.X. Hammes (National Defense University), and Antulio J. Echevarria (US Army War College) form a panel at the conference.

The overall tone of the conference saw a growing skepticism about the utility of counterinsurgency as a strategy, even if most participants agreed that a 'new way of war' was probably emerging, albeit one grounded in generally overlooked past experiences.

Upcoming events at the Clinton Institute

July 10th–17th

The Clinton Summer Institute.

September 9th–10th

Conference: *Diaspora Strategies: Encouragement, Evolution, and Engagement*

(www.diasporastrategies.wordpress.com)

September 15th

Prof. Sean Kay of Ohio Wesleyan University: *Celtic Revival? The Rise, Fall and Renewal of Global Ireland.*

September 16th and 17th

Conference: *'The United States and Northern Ireland: A Transnational Perspective on Problems and Solutions, 1970–2001.'*

Wikileaks, Old Diplomacy and New Media

Prof. Scott Lucas of the University of Birmingham visited the Institute on the 5th April of this year. Prof. Lucas, who runs the prominent international affairs blog, *Enduring America*, gave a talk on what the 'Wikileaks' phenomenon means for international old and new media. He argued that Wikileaks is very



Prof. Scott Lucas, University of Birmingham

much a new media phenomenon and that the 'gatekeeper' role of traditional media outlets has been eroded by the huge leak of documents by an independent player. Prof. Lucas pointed out that new media outlets are quicker and more flexible, offering a non-linear, kaleidoscopic way to interpret stories such as those generated by Wikileaks.

Prof. Lucas also argued that recent events in the Maghreb and Middle East represented a vital shift in post-Cold War politics, as they have served to fundamentally challenge the idea of the unipolar world. Not only was the United States shifted from its central role, but traditional western media as a whole deferred to the newly influential Al Jazeera network, as well as Twitter, Youtube, and Facebook. Prof. Lucas also emphasised, however, the limits and complexity of new media, arguing finally that Wikileaks and Twitter are tools that could be used for good or for ill.

Prof. Robert Dallek Delivers the John F. Kennedy Memorial Lecture



Taoiseach Enda Kenny with Prof Robert Dallek and Clinton Institute Manager Catherine Carey, viewing a copy of a poem handwritten by President John F Kennedy after hearing it recited by Sinead de Valera, wife of President Eamon de Valera.

Addressing a packed audience in Newman House on 3rd June last, presidential historian Professor Robert Dallek of the University of California Los Angeles gave the John F. Kennedy Memorial Lecture. Hosted by the Clinton Institute, Prof. Dallek looked back on the leadership and legacy of President Kennedy from his vantage point at the 50th anniversary of the President's inauguration.

Prof. Dallek is the author of international best seller *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963*, the most widely read one-volume biography of the 35th President. His scholarship in the area is unmatched, and he wielded his professional insights to shed light on the historiography of John F. Kennedy. He also, much to the delight of the audience, provided some unique revelations about President Kennedy's time in office.

Prof. Dallek was recently given access

to the pages of Jacqueline Kennedy's "Oral History," featuring conversations the former First Lady had with historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. in 1964. In these previously undisclosed interviews, Mrs Kennedy talked *inter alia* about JFK's early campaigns, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the President's plans for a second term. The poignancy of this last observation was heightened by a conversation Prof. Dallek recounted between the First Lady and the President, wherein the President announced, in the days after the Cuban Missile Crisis, "If anyone's going to kill me, it should happen now."

The 2011 Kennedy Memorial Lecture was organised with the support of the UCD Clinton Institute, MCE Public Relations, The Taoiseach's Office and The Washington Ireland Programme. A video of Prof. Dallek's lecture is available on the Institute's website at www.ucdclinton.ie

David Rieff Lecture in Collaboration with the IIEA

Co-hosted by the Clinton Institute and Dublin's Institute of International and European Affairs, prominent American author and policy analyst David Rieff discussed the recent public uprisings in the Arab world and the escalating global food crisis. Linking these two issues by pointing out the young demographic in the Middle East and the failure of many governments in the region to deal with long term issues of poverty, Mr. Rieff highlighted the population's sensitivity to increasing food prices. Rieff commented on shifts in policy priorities in several developing countries and within some aid agencies, which have begun acknowledging the importance of focusing on maternal health and childhood nutrition during infancy, rather than in later life stages.

Discussing the popular uprisings, Rieff highlighted important differences between countries; protests were led largely by the middle classes in countries such as Egypt, while they were driven by the desperate and poorest in the case of Tunisia. While the failure of 'trickle-down' neoliberal economic policies in much of the Middle East should be acknowledged, Rieff argued, the impact of increasing levels of prosperity in large population countries such as China should also be considered from the perspective of how this development will impact on food prices and availability.



David Rieff speaking on the global food crisis.

History, Memory and US Foreign Relations – A Conference at the Institute

A conference on 'History, Memory and US Foreign Relations' was organised by the Institute's post-doctoral scholar, Dr. David Fitzgerald, on the 8th–10th April. Scholars from institutes in North America, Ireland and Europe convened to debate the struggle for the construction, possession and interpretation of historical memory in the context of US foreign relations. A compelling plenary address by Professor Jay Winter of Yale University addressed the issue of silence in international affairs. Winter argued that silence could be a speech act in itself; that to focus on the issue of silence

in remembrance is to examine the 'strategic silences' that are used to cut off open-ended disputes. The conference's other plenary speaker, Dr. David Ryan of University College Cork, demonstrated how the concept of constructed collective memories could be used by historians to examine US foreign relations.

Building on these insights, participants explored aspects of the confluence of memory and US foreign relations, such as how policymakers use memory in their decision-making. Specific panels discussed issues commemoration and foreign policy, remembering World War II, ethnic American identities, as well as the changing memories of the Vietnam and Cold Wars.

Student Profile: Ph.D. Candidate, Geoffroy O'Connor

Geoff's affiliation with the Institute began in 2008 when he undertook a Masters in American Studies, and he has since continued his research to doctoral level. Now in the third year of his Ph.D., Geoff's project, entitled "Pursuing Investment: American Investment in Ireland," is an analysis of the Irish State's pursuit of economic as opposed to diplomatic concerns in the United States during the period 1950–80. It examines the reorientation of the Irish Economic model, looking at how the policies and activities of specific Irish agencies altered Ireland's relationship with the United States and its geo-strategic position more generally.

The study comprehends institutional analyses on multiple levels within different relevant organisations, with a particular focus on the work of the Industrial Development Authority. As Geoff explains, "The IDA would prove to be one of the most crucial mechanisms for the structural transformation of Irish economic policy towards a more liberal model. In the process it also changed both the underlying approach to industrial development in Ireland as well as the ways this development was realised."



Geoff O'Connor at his desk in the Institute.

Geoff's doctoral research is only one strand of his engagement with the Institute. Along with fellow Ph.D. candidate Martin Russell, Geoff developed and maintains "The Outpost," a current affairs blog which examines Irish-American relations today (www.theoutposting.com). He also worked to organise a very successful symposium at the Institute entitled "Post-Globalisation: Rethinking the Relationship of Ireland and the United States." Encouraged by the impact of the first event, Geoff is now working with Martin Russell to coordinate a full conference in the autumn, entitled "Diaspora Strategies: Encouragement, Evolution, and Engagement." The conference, which will take place on the 9th and 10th of September, has drawn plenary speakers such as Prof. Gabriel Sheffer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Kingsley Aikins of Networking Matters and Tim Finch of the Institute for Public Policy Research. The conference is supported by the UCD Graduate School of Arts and Celtic Studies, and you can receive further information at www.diasporastrategies.wordpress.com.

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Current Ph.D. Research Projects at the Institute

Javad Alipoor: 'Soft Power and US Foreign Policy towards Iran 2001–2012.'

Madhi Bahmani: 'US Diplomacy and Iraq.'

Julieann Galloway: 'Google Work: Globalisation and the New Corporate Environment in Ireland.'

Fiona Hackett: 'Terra Incognita: Visualising Southern California – Human Dreams and Fragilities in the Landscape, 2008–to date.'

Adrienne Hawley: 'Modern American Religions in Ireland: the Strategies and Effectiveness at Gaining Irish Converts.'

Grattan Lynch: 'Border Watch: Comparative US and EU Foreign Policies and Security Measures.'

Geoffroy O'Connor: 'Pursuing Investment: American Investment in Ireland.'

Martin Russell: 'The Politics of Diaspora Memory and Identity: Irish-America and the Northern Ireland Conflict.'

Mical Russo: 'Staging Death: Memorial Photography in America.'

Desmond Traynor: 'Dissent in Contemporary American Popular Music: Aesthetics Meets Politics.'

Louise Walsh: 'A Comparative Analysis of the Harlem Renaissance and the Irish Literary Revival.'

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