

but the women got only 4.2. More than two-thirds of the men could name one of their U.S. senators, while only slightly more than half of the women could. Asked whether the federal government spends more on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration or on Social Security, two in five men knew the correct answer (Social Security), but fewer than one in five women did. In all, men did better on nine of the 10 questions. The lone exception: naming the head of the local school system, which 30 percent of the women could do, compared with 27 percent of the men.

Indeed, when it came to *local* politics, the sexes seemed about equally engrossed: 22 percent of the men and 21 percent of the women were “very interested.” Of those who read a daily newspaper, 36 percent of each sex reported paying “a great deal of attention” to local politics.



*When candidates like these U.S. senators are on the ballot, does women's interest in politics grow? The authors' data say: maybe.*

Does it matter that women take less of an interest than men in national politics? The authors say that aside from voting, it makes women slightly less inclined than men to work in political campaigns or get actively involved in politics in other ways—and that, they fear, may mean that public officials pay less heed to “their concerns, preferences, and needs.”

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

### *Too Proud to Listen*

“An Inner Circle of One: Woodrow Wilson and His Advisers” by Robert W. Tucker, in *The National Interest* (Spring 1998), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

The presidency’s lonely burden of decision has been portrayed so often that it’s almost a cliché. “The buck stops here,” as Harry Truman said. But never was a president more isolated than Woodrow Wilson was during the fateful years of U.S. neutrality in World War I, writes Tucker, a professor of political science emeritus at Johns Hopkins University.

“Wilson’s neutrality policy enjoyed widespread support,” Tucker writes, “because his own waverings and uncertainties reflected those of the American people.” But had he made greater use of his advisers to clarify his own thinking, he might have led the country sooner to decisive action, whether to stay out of the war or to intervene. “Wilson’s unwillingness to seek advice, his disinclination to hear what was unwelcome to him, and, even more, his penchant for taking an immediate dislike of those who told him what he did not wish to hear, were traits recognized by all who served him,” Tucker observes. He did not allow much

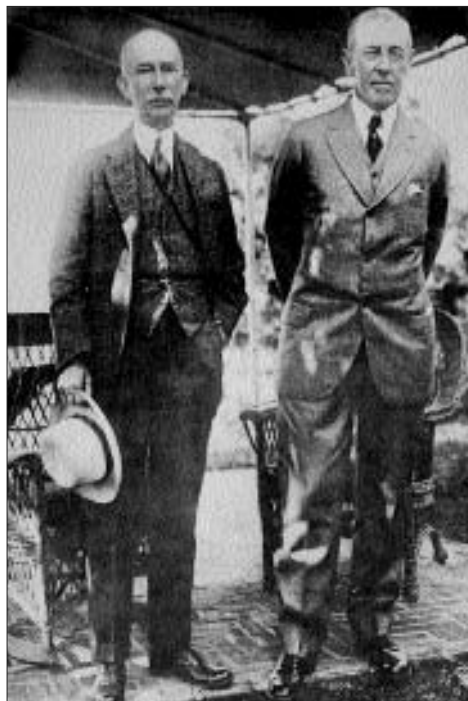
“give and take” over policy.

Wilson’s inner circle of foreign policy advisers was small, seldom more than three or four people. They included Colonel Edward House, who held no official position, William Jennings Bryan, the secretary of state, and Robert Lansing, the counselor to the State Department.

Wilson considered Bryan, the great populist orator and former presidential candidate, whom he had appointed for political reasons, an unsatisfactory secretary of state. Tucker agrees that Bryan was inept, but points out that he advocated positions—U.S. mediation of the conflict, and the idea of a peace without victory—that Wilson himself would later take. Moreover, Bryan, alone among Wilson’s advisers, “saw almost from the start” that the administration’s continued insistence on neutral rights would likely lead to war with Germany.

Like the pacifist Bryan, Wilson “wanted above all else to remain out of the war,” Tucker

says. Had he listened to his secretary of state, he probably “would have been far more hesitant to take positions from which retreat would



Colonel House (left) complained that Wilson would not devote “sufficient time” to foreign affairs.

later prove so difficult.” But in February 1915, when Germany declared a war zone in the waters around Britain and Ireland, Wilson demanded that Germany respect the rights of neutrals. In May, after a German submarine sank the British ocean liner *Lusitania*, killing 128 Americans, the United States demanded that Germany abandon its U-boat attacks. Bryan resigned on principle, believing that Wilson’s course would lead to war. (Wilson privately denounced Bryan’s position on neutrality as “moral blindness.”)

By late spring of 1915, Lansing, now the secretary of state, had privately concluded that the United States would have to enter the war if Germany gained the upper hand. By the summer, House had concluded that U.S. involvement was all but inevitable, and fumed at Wilson’s wavering policy and failure to improve military readiness. “If we were fully prepared, I am sure Germany would not continue to provoke us,” House confided to his diary.

But “never once did Lansing reveal his true position to the President. . . . House was only slightly more direct,” Tucker writes. Dissimulation remained necessary even after Germany’s January 1917 declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare. “Only Wilson’s decision for war in March,” the author notes, “would bring that necessity to an end.”

## The Sex Bomb

“The Sexual Behavior of American GIs during the Early Years of the Occupation of Germany” by John Willoughby, in *The Journal of Military History* (Jan. 1998), Society for Military History, George C. Marshall Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va. 24450–1600.

Now that the Soviet Union is a thing of the past, sex often seems to be the U.S. military’s chief foe. But it’s not the first time top commanders have had to face this enemy. During the first few years of the occupation of Germany after V-E Day, writes Willoughby, an economist at American University, “the apparently unrestrained sexual activity of the American GI” spawned anti-Americanism and threatened U.S. efforts to build a new democratic German nation.

At first, the high command tried to prohibit all fraternization between Americans and Germans. But that proved impractical. On June 8, 1945, General Dwight Eisenhower declared that the ban did not apply to German children. Before long, the GIs had a new greeting for their girlfriends: “Good day, child.” The army gave up and permitted relatively unregulated fraternization. In October the Allied

Control Council, representing the United States and the three other occupying powers, lifted all but a few restrictions on soldiers’ relations with Germans.

Fresh from foxholes and front-line combat, thousands of miles from home (and exercising less self-control than their British counterparts), the American GIs found willing *Fräulein* without difficulty. “The women of Berlin are hungry, cold, and lonesome,” a writer named Walter Slatoff reported in the *Nation* in May 1946. “The GIs have cigarettes, which will buy food and coal. The GIs have food—chocolate, doughnuts (taken in large quantities from the Red Cross Clubs). . . . And the GIs provide a kind of security and meaning in an otherwise meaningless city.” But these relationships bred resentment among the Germans, exacerbated by the sometimes crude, drunken, or criminal acts of the occupiers.