

## The New History of Cold War Alliances

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The rivalry between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact was a defining feature of the Cold War. It inspired an enormous amount of scholarship from the mid-1950s through the early 1990s, most of which is now happily obsolete though still worth reading to appreciate how drastically perspectives have changed. Since 1991, when the Warsaw Pact was disbanded, scholars have benefited from knowing how the conflict ended and from being able to exploit new evidence from the “other side.” These advantages have helped shape a new and different picture of the Warsaw Pact–NATO rivalry.

This essay attempts to take stock of scholarly works about NATO and the Warsaw Pact that have appeared over the past decade. The coverage here is necessarily selective as well as provisional. The essay tries to avoid being one-sided by including foreign-language publications, and it cites both standard and unusual works about the key issues. It takes a broad view by considering both the military competition and its larger implications. Although it highlights what has been accomplished thus far, it also reveals how much more remains to be done.

### The Forty-Year Rivalry

Much of the archival evidence on the history of the two alliances is still inaccessible for security reasons, whether real or alleged. This is unfortunate but hardly surprising with regard to NATO, which, unlike a state entity, originally lacked any legal framework for the eventual release of its documentary record. NATO’s priority was to keep its papers from hostile eyes, even if this meant destroying them when they were no longer needed. Fifty years passed before the members of the alliance finally agreed to create a historical archive. This repository, established in 1999 at NATO’s headquarters in Brussels, permits researchers to use declassified documents through 1965.<sup>1</sup>

1. For information about these files and for access to them, see the archive’s website, <http://www.nato.int/archives>.

Because the Warsaw Pact is no longer around to protect its secrets, one might think that its papers would be readily available. Unfortunately, this is not the case. When the Pact was dissolved in 1991, the foreign and defense ministers of the member states (all of which except the Soviet Union were no longer under Communist rule) agreed that its documents should not be “given to third parties or divulged.”<sup>2</sup> Since then, most of the alliance’s successor states have, in practice, regarded this agreement as obsolete. Two, however, still consider it valid. One, perhaps predictably, is Russia, and the other, not so predictably, is Poland, which is now a member of NATO. The record of military rule in Poland during the last years of Communism remains intensely controversial.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately for historians, there are enough sources that can substitute for the ones that remain sealed. Much about the workings of NATO can be gleaned from archives in the United States and Canada, as well as from open sources and the indispensable *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, published by the U.S. Department of State. Thousands of declassified documents from most of the former Warsaw Pact countries, especially East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria, are being published in digital form by the Zurich-based Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP).<sup>4</sup> The PHP, which is part of Switzerland’s contribution to NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP), is cosponsored by the National Security Archive in Washington, a leader in the dissemination of declassified U.S. documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.<sup>5</sup>

Because of the demise of Eastern Europe’s Communist regimes, their archival documents have become accessible, despite the generally prevailing ban on the disclosure of records less than thirty years old. When those regimes were collapsing, however, an unknown quantity of sensitive materials were

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2. The agreement of 25 February 1991, entitled “Protokol o prekrashchenii deistviya voennykh soglashenii, zaklyuchennykh v ramkakh Varshavskogo Dogovora, i uprazhnenii ego voennykh organov i struktur” (Agreement on the cessation of the military covenants concluded under the Warsaw Treaty and the dissolution of its military organs and structures), was divulged by the alliance’s former chief of staff, Anatolii I. Gribkov. *Sudba Varshavskogo Dogovora: Vospominaniya, dokumenty, fakty* (The fate of the Warsaw Treaty: Recollections, documents, and facts) (Moscow: Russkaya Kniga, 1998), pp. 198–200, quotation on p. 199.

3. On the skeletons in Polish closets, see *O stanie wojennym: W Sejmowej komisji odpowiedzialności konstytucyjnej* (The martial law: Report of the parliamentary commission on constitutional responsibility) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1997). See also Andrew A. Michta, *The Soldier-Citizen: The Politics of the Polish Army after Communism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

4. The project, coordinated by the author, is described on its home page, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php>.

5. For the Swiss sponsor, see the website of the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (<http://www.fsk.ethz.ch>). The PHP constitutes the historical dimension of the International Relations and Security Network (<http://www.isn.ethz.ch>)—a NATO-linked database of open information on security matters. On the U.S. side, see the National Security Archive’s website, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv>.

carted off to Moscow, especially from East Germany and Bulgaria. These records remain sealed, as do Soviet Warsaw Pact documents and nearly all other Soviet military files from the Cold War era, allegedly because of their continuing relevance to Russian security (or perhaps Russia's public image). Until officials in Moscow realize the folly of this practice, the history of the Warsaw Pact will continue to be written mainly on the basis of East European sources. Although the result will likely be accurate enough, it will not be comprehensive.

As for NATO, there is not, nor is there ever likely to be, an "official" history of the alliance comparable to the officially sponsored military histories of the individual member countries. The closest thing to such a history is the prodigiously researched, multivolume project sponsored by the German Research Office of Military History in Potsdam, but this series was slow in coming and does not cover beyond 1956.<sup>6</sup> Supplementing it are numerous studies published by the same Office, all of which are notable for their wealth of factual information and attention to detail.<sup>7</sup> The infrastructure for the writing of a parallel history of the two alliances, in cooperation with but independently of official institutions, may eventually be provided by the PHP, with its multinational network of younger scholars and increasing access to new sources.

General histories of NATO have thus far been based mainly on published sources. *The Long Entanglement*, by the dean of U.S. historians of NATO, Lawrence S. Kaplan, was prepared for the alliance's fiftieth anniversary in 1999. With one exception, it consists exclusively of Kaplan's earlier articles, which fit together remarkably well. Kaplan elucidates, with wit and erudition, the often tedious and convoluted disputes that have been a hallmark of this exceptionally durable peacetime alliance. Never losing sight of the larger picture, Kaplan offers intriguing, if necessarily inconclusive, counter-factuals—arguing that NATO, apart from its role vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact, may have saved Italy from Communism, Great Britain from insulation, Europe from a "fourth German Reich," and the world from a United States gone isolationist.<sup>8</sup>

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6. The first two volumes of this *Entstehung und Probleme des Atlantischen Bündnisses bis 1956*—Winfried Heinemann, *Vom Zusammenwachsen des Bündnisses: Die Funktionsweise der NATO in ausgewählten Krisenfällen, 1951–1956* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998); and Norbert Wiggershaus and Winfried Heinemann, eds., *Nationale Außen- und Bündnispolitik der NATO-Mitgliedstaaten* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000)—are followed by Gustav Schmidt and Vojtech Mastny, *Konfrontationsmuster des Kalten Krieges 1949 bis 1956* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002).

7. See, for example, Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus, eds., *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis, 1949–1956* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993); and Norbert Wiggershaus and Roland G. Foerster, eds., *The Western Security Community, 1948–1950* (Providence: Burg, 1993).

8. Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement: NATO's First Fifty Years* (Westport: Praeger, 1999)

A history of NATO published in 1993 by RAND analyst Richard L. Kugler is a celebration of the alliance's "commitment to purpose."<sup>9</sup> Kugler recounts the assorted challenges that NATO had to overcome, and he attributes the alliance's victory in the Cold War to the Reagan administration's efforts to force the Soviet bloc into a ruinous arms race that proved more affordable for the robust West than for the feeble Communist economies. Plausible as the alleged ploy may seem to Reagan's admirers and detractors alike, there is no conclusive evidence that it was a deliberate policy. Writing from the perspective of the early 1990s, Kugler also highlighted NATO's importance as a political rather than solely military alliance, and he pleaded for its preservation—a plea not nearly as topical now as it was then.

*A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years* is, despite its title, not a history, but a three-volume collection of essays resulting from a major conference held in Brussels and Bonn on the alliance's fiftieth anniversary. The conference was organized by Gustav Schmidt, an indefatigable German organizer of scholarly meetings on NATO history.<sup>10</sup> Although only about half of the more than sixty essays take a historical perspective, some of the best chapters cover little known topics such as the alliance's surprisingly frequent entanglements with "out-of-area" problems. The book also contains fresh studies of NATO's nuclear weapons policies and the security of the northern and southern flanks, often based on new archival material. The strength of the volumes is in the diversity of perspectives, rather than any unifying theme or methodological cohesion.

The "conflict and strategy" of the Cold War are treated by the well-known naval historian Norman Friedman in his *The Fifty-Year War*, a book written without academic pretensions but with a good grasp of the latest English-language scholarship.<sup>11</sup> When Friedman discusses the main military issues of the rivalry, he is on very solid ground; but when he turns to other topics, his predilections too often get in the way. He is quick to praise his heroes, Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan, and just as quick to berate his bêtes noires, John F. Kennedy, Robert McNamara, and above all Jimmy Carter.

follows on his indispensable *NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance* (Boston: Twayne, 1988) and updates the articles he coedited for the alliance's previous anniversary: Lawrence S. Kaplan, S. Victor Papacosta, et al., eds., *NATO after Forty Years* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1990).

9. Richard L. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose: How Alliance Partnership Won the Cold War* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1993).

10. Gustav Schmidt, ed., *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years*, 3 vols. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

11. Norman Friedman, *The Fifty-Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2000).

*The Cold War*, by British journalist David Miller, is subtitled *A Military History*, but it is military history only in a narrow sense. Long on figures and acronyms but short on politics, Miller's book is useful on strictly military topics. Unfortunately, he is occasionally sloppy with details (for example, in his claim that Soviet troops intervened to suppress the 1956 Poznań riots) and is prone to dubious generalizations. The book opens with a dedication to "the officers, soldiers, sailors and airmen of all the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries" who, we are told, together "ensured that the Third World War never started"—implying that one side or the other had in fact been intending to start one. Miller ends with a quotation from Sun Tzu that "the acme of skill" comes not from winning "one hundred victories in one hundred battles" but from subduing "the enemy without fighting," as if this piece of ancient Chinese wisdom applied to what the West really tried to do.<sup>12</sup>

A history of the Communist alliance from the post-Cold War perspective has yet to be written. Gerard Holden's *The Warsaw Pact*, published just before the conflict ended, tells the story from the European "peace studies" perspective, using an impressive range of sources available in 1989 and interpreting Soviet security needs as they appeared at the time.<sup>13</sup> Neil Fodor's contemporaneous political and institutional analysis of the Pact is more detailed but narrower in its outlook.<sup>14</sup> Frank Umbach's doctoral dissertation of 1995 was the first attempt to cover the full development of the Warsaw Treaty Organization on the basis of evidence (though not archival materials) that emerged after its breakup.<sup>15</sup>

Although most of the Western literature written under the Warsaw Pact's shadow looks hopelessly dated, there are some exceptions. These tend to be academic studies with a historical bent, along with many well-researched studies by perceptive and erudite analysts at RAND and the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) research department.<sup>16</sup> Countless works that

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12. David Miller, *The Cold War: A Military History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. v, 57, 387.

13. Gerard Holden, *The Warsaw Pact: The WTO and Soviet Security Policy* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1989).

14. Neil Fodor, *The Warsaw Treaty Organization: A Political and Organizational Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

15. Frank Umbach, "Die Evolution des Warschauer Paktes als aussen- und militärpolitisches Instrument sowjetischer Sicherheitspolitik 1955–1991" (Ph.D. diss., Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, 1995).

16. Among the former are Robin Alison Remington, *The Warsaw Pact: Case Studies in Communist Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971); David Holloway and Jane M. O. Sharp, eds., *The Warsaw Pact: Alliance in Transition?* (London: Macmillan, 1984); and Robert W. Clawson and Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Warsaw Pact: Political Purpose and Military Means* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1982). Outstanding RAND studies are Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe*,

tried to divine the enemy's intentions from its external behavior and orders of battle are now of little interest other than as period documents, illustrating how easily behavior could deceive and how numbers could obscure the reality that lay behind them. The ongoing dispute about the accuracy of estimates made by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which have only selectively been opened to the public, is a sobering reminder of the limitations of even the best intelligence as a reliable guide for policy.<sup>17</sup>

The Western view of the Warsaw Pact has been supplemented by the “inside” perspective of its longtime chief of staff, General Anatolii I. Gribkov. Although Gribkov is eminently knowledgeable, he is sadly devoid of a sense of history.<sup>18</sup> Since 1991 he has remained a true believer in the Pact's mission as a bulwark against U.S. “imperialism,” though he has acknowledged the organization's failings, which he attributes to the high-handedness and pettiness of Soviet civilians (rather than military officers) who oversaw it. More illuminating are the reminiscences of Gen. Tadeusz Pióro, an early Polish liaison to the Warsaw Pact, who harbors no illusions about the Pact's true nature.<sup>19</sup> Other testimonies by the Pact's former high command, including the longtime commander in chief, Marshal Viktor G. Kulikov, and the former East German defense minister General Heinz Kessler, are striking in their banality.<sup>20</sup>

## The Nuclearized Alliances

There is no shortage of books and articles on the origins of NATO and on its first decade. A four-volume history of the beginnings of West Germany's security policy, published by the Potsdam Research Office, is in many respects tan-

*1945–1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970); Fritz Ermarth, *Internationalism, Security, and Legitimacy: The Challenge to Soviet Interests in East Central Europe, 1964–1968* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1969); and A. Ross Johnson, Robert W. Dean, and Alexander Alexiev, *East European Military Establishments: The Warsaw Pact Northern Tier* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1980). Robert L. Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968–1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983) used the rich material gathered for the RFE/RL research reports, all of which are now stored at the Open Society Archives in Budapest (<http://www.osa.ceu.hu>).

17. For the releases, see [www.foia.ucia.gov/historicalreport.htm](http://www.foia.ucia.gov/historicalreport.htm).

18. The Russian version of the Gribkov memoirs (*Sudba Varshavskogo Dogovora*) was preceded by a German version: Anatoli Gribkov, *Der Warschauer Pakt: Geschichte und Hintergründe des östlichen Militärbündnisses* (Berlin: Edition q, 1995).

19. Tadeusz Pióro, *Armia ze skazą W Wojsku Polskim 1945–1968 (wspomnienia i refleksje)* (The defective army: In the Polish army, 1945–1968 [Memories and reflections]) (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1994).

20. Viktor Kulikov, “Kalter Krieg: Sicht aus dem Osten,” and interview by Dieter Kläy, in *Neue Perspektiven zum Kalten Krieg: Bericht der MFS-Frühjahrstagung 1999* (Zurich: Militärische Führungsschule an der ETH Zürich, 1999), pp. 37–61, 89–93; and Heinz Kessler, *Zur Sache und zur Person: Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1996).

tamount to a history of NATO's early years.<sup>21</sup> Robert Wampler's unpublished yet widely used Harvard Ph.D. dissertation about the alliance's not so "ambiguous" legacy is indispensable.<sup>22</sup> Aside from the crucial U.S. stewardship of NATO, the significant if unequal roles of smaller member states in the formation of the alliance have been emphasized by West European scholars.<sup>23</sup>

The memoirs of those present at the creation, including U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Canadian diplomat Escott Reid, and NATO's first two secretaries general, Hastings Ismay and Paul-Henri Spaak, convey the authentic flavor of the time, as do those of the alliance's leading Western critic, George F. Kennan.<sup>24</sup> Kennan's critique of NATO as a needlessly provocative military response to the essentially political Soviet challenge has not been fully substantiated by what we now know about Josif Stalin's dismissive attitude toward the alliance, which he believed would be only a weak organization (as indeed it was during the early Cold War).<sup>25</sup> NATO's initial weakness and the steps taken to overcome it are evident in the alliance's strategic-planning documents, which are reproduced in a groundbreaking publication by the historian Gregory Pedlow of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Western perceptions of the Soviet threat have grown more sophisticated since 1991.<sup>27</sup> Early perceptions were exaggerated because of the sparseness and ambiguity of available intelligence and the worst-case assumptions that

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21. *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik, 1945–1956*, 4 Vols. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1982–1997).

22. Robert A. Wampler, "Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain and the Foundations of NATO Strategy, 1948–1957" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1991).

23. The excellent volume edited by Olav Riste, *Western Security, The Formative Years: European and Atlantic Defence 1947–1953* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1985), was followed by Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

24. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969); Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the Atlantic Treaty, 1947–1949* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977); Hastings Ismay, *NATO: The First Five Years, 1949–1954* (Brussels, NATO pamphlet, n.d.); Paul-Henri Spaak, *The Continuing Battle: Memoirs of a European, 1936–1966* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); and George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1950–1963* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972).

25. Natalya I. Egorova, "Evropeiskaya bezopasnost i 'ugroza' NATO v otsenkakh stalinskogo rukovodstva" (European security and the NATO "threat" in the assessments of the Stalin leadership), in Ilya V. Gaiduk, Natalya I. Egorova, and Aleksandr O. Chubaryan, eds., *Stalinskoe desyatiletie kholodnoi voyny: Fakty i gipotezy* (The Stalin decade of the Cold War: Facts and hypotheses) (Moscow: Nauka, 1999), pp. 56–78.

26. Gregory W. Pedlow, ed., *NATO Strategy Documents, 1949–1969* (Brussels: NATO, 1997).

27. Compare Carl-Christoph Schweitzer, ed., *The Changing Western Analysis of the Soviet Threat* (London: Pinter, 1990), with Philip A. Karber and Jerald A. Combs, "The United States, NATO, and the Soviet Threat to Western Europe: Military Estimates and Policy Options, 1945–1963," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp. 399–429.

seemed warranted in light of unrelenting Soviet hostility. Yet authors who are now wholly dismissive of the threat underestimate NATO's importance in preventing Soviet leaders from ever having confidence that aggression in Europe would pay off, as Stalin had calculated it would in Asia when he gave the go-ahead for North Korea's attack on South Korea in 1950.<sup>28</sup>

With U.S. encouragement, NATO was the main engine of European integration during the early Cold War, when other supranational structures were still in their infancy. The indigenous European Coal and Steel Community promoted integration through the merger of "military-industrial complexes," whereas NATO relied on the solidarity of peoples.<sup>29</sup> The burgeoning literature on the history of European unification tends to regard the former rather than the latter as the real progenitor of Europe's common institutions—rightly so, in view of the persisting "democratic deficit" of these institutions.

NATO's transformation from a paper alliance into a real alliance under the shock of the Korean War was the only time the alliance changed its posture in response to action by its enemies rather than its own internal dynamics. This shift entailed the creation of an integrated military command structure and a huge military buildup, leading to the rearmament of West Germany. The extent of Soviet miscalculation that made all this possible, and its effect on Stalin's policy during the last murky years of his life, raise questions about his aptitude as a strategist.<sup>30</sup> Vacillating between contempt for NATO's weakness and concern about its growing strength, he anticipated a showdown yet failed to make adequate preparations for it.

The unsuccessful role of the European Defense Community as a NATO subsidiary, through which West Germany was originally to have been rearmament, has attracted recurrent interest (despite its dubious relevance) as a model for the alliance's "European pillar."<sup>31</sup> The subsequent integration of West Germany into NATO long appeared an insuperable obstacle to the country's reunification and was criticized for that reason by many Germans.

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28. For example, see Robert H. Johnson, *Improbable Dangers: U.S. Conceptions of Threat in the Cold War and After* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

29. Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., *The United States and the Integration of Europe: Legacies of the Postwar Era* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

30. Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), judges Stalin's statesmanship more critically than does Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

31. Michel Dumoulin, ed., *La Communauté Européenne de Défense, Leçons pour demain?* (Brussels: Lang, 2000), draws few connections with the present, much less with the future. The latest study is Kevin Ruane, *The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defence, 1950–55* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

Once unification was accomplished, however, the earlier integration strategy was vindicated by the important contribution it had made to the peaceful growth of German power.<sup>32</sup>

West Germany's role in NATO's nuclear strategy, as well as the strategy itself, remains a controversial historical topic. Of the many authors who have written about nuclear strategy, only some of whom have dealt with the NATO debate, those skeptical of the strategy's viability have best withstood the test of time.<sup>33</sup> Lawrence Freedman's classic book on the evolution of nuclear strategy is a good example.<sup>34</sup> The concern about the diminishing credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella that underlay such seminal works on the "entangling" and "troubled" alliance as those by Robert Osgood and Henry Kissinger seems rather antiquated today.<sup>35</sup> By contrast, Arnold Wolfers's essays on "discord and collaboration" have proven relevant to the state of post-Cold War Europe.<sup>36</sup> Many valuable studies undertaken by the Nuclear History Project—a project that, unfortunately, got under way just as perspectives were about to change fundamentally because of the end of the Cold War—have also aged prematurely.<sup>37</sup>

The same is true of much of the theoretical literature about deterrence—NATO's preeminent *raison d'être*—that was written with the Soviet Union in mind. Most of the contributors to this literature disregarded the fact that Soviet leaders neither thought nor behaved as deterrence theory predicted they would. Rather than feeling "deterred," they were guided in their decisions by a wider range of considerations (military and otherwise) than their Western counterparts tended to be. Hindsight lends support to the critics of deterrence theory who considered it a problem, not a solution, because

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32. On the key role of the occupation powers, see Thomas A. Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); and Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Policy for West German Rearmament, 1951–1955* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

33. As do David N. Schwartz, *NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1983); and John Steinbrunner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974).

34. Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

35. Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); and Henry A. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership: A Re-appraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

36. Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962); and Douglas T. Stuart and Stephen F. Szabo, eds., *Discord and Collaboration in a New Europe: Essays in Honor of Arnold Wolfers* (Washington: Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1994).

37. Only some of them have been published; for example, Christoph Hoppe, *Zwischen Teilhabe und Mitsprache: Die Nuklearfrage in der Allianzpolitik Deutschlands 1959–1966* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1993). Others are on hand in libraries in desktop editions.

of the arms races and hair-trigger postures that the theory encouraged on the dubious assumption that capability breeds intentions rather than vice versa.<sup>38</sup>

The core assumption of deterrence theory was more readily accepted by Americans than by Europeans, whose “nuclear mentalities” nevertheless differed from one another. As diagnosed by the British historian of NATO, Beatrice Heuser, these outlooks were rooted in different political cultures. The British were “pragmatic” and hence sought “compromise devoid of any ideological concerns”; the French were “highly imaginative, self-consciously abstract and philosophical rather than practical”; and the Germans were guilt ridden and “full of religious overtones.”<sup>39</sup> Heuser rightly sets little store by the U.S.-British “special relationship,” nuclear or otherwise, although there is something special (or at least unusual) about the steady stream of recent books on that subject.<sup>40</sup>

The diverse perspectives of leading statesmen regarding nuclear weapons during the first twenty-five years of the Cold War are addressed in an important book of essays inspired by John Gaddis and Ernest May that assess John Mueller’s contention that nuclear arsenals did not make much difference.<sup>41</sup> According to Mueller, the “balance of terror” created by nuclear weapons is not what precluded another major war; such a war, he argues, had already been made obsolete by the combined experiences of the two world wars.<sup>42</sup> On the basis of up-to-date evidence, the contributors to the volume conclude that the weapons did make a difference for policy—a conclusion that leaves room for debating the consequences.

Although the debate is unlikely to be resolved soon, if ever, the consequences can be judged better now than they could while the Cold War was still under way. NATO’s decision in 1954 to deploy tactical nuclear weapons as a substitute for its presumably unaffordable conventional forces appears, in

38. Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) adds the post-Cold War perspective to Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

39. Beatrice Heuser, *Nuclear Mentalities? Strategies and Beliefs in Britain, France and the FRG* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), pp. 260–268, quotations from pp. 51, 260.

40. Robert M. Hathaway, *Great Britain and the United States: Special Relations since World War II* (Boston: Twayne, 1990); G. Wyn Rees, *Anglo-American Approaches to Alliance Security, 1955–60* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); Stephen Twigge and Len Scott, *Planning Armageddon: Britain, the United States and the Command of Western Nuclear Forces 1945–1964* (Philadelphia: Harwood Academic Publishers 2000); and Donette Murray, *Kennedy, Macmillan and Nuclear Weapons* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

41. John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May, and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

42. John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

retrospect, to have been an avoidable mistake.<sup>43</sup> At the time, the Soviet Union was not yet committed to integrating such weapons into its own inferior nuclear arsenal and was, moreover, reducing its conventional forces. By needlessly expanding the number of weapons, the NATO deployments promoted an arms race and fostered the spurious notion that such weapons were of utility in combat. Heuser's companion volume about the strategies and postures engendered by the nuclear mentalities finds that the British were the most adamant proponents of nuclear war-fighting at the time and that the Europeans in general were not nearly as averse to having nuclear weapons installed on their territory as many of them later wanted to pretend.<sup>44</sup>

The "enormous historical importance" of NATO's nuclear sharing is the leitmotif of what could have been a landmark study of the alliance within the larger setting of the Cold War—Marc Trachtenberg's *A Constructed Peace*. Unfortunately, the book is all but exclusively about the "construction" of peace by the West. The Soviet role receives little attention—a gap that is especially troubling because Trachtenberg himself acknowledges that he was unable (for linguistic reasons) to use important material that is now available and therefore did not have "really adequate evidence from Soviet sources to work with."<sup>45</sup> Rather than examining Soviet motives and actions and how they interacted with Western policies, he implicitly assumes that Soviet and Western motives and perceptions were broadly similar.

Such an oversimplification is all the more regrettable in a book that is, in many ways, a model of "new" history—a work that defies traditionalist, revisionist, and postrevisionist labels. Resting on prodigious research in U.S., British, and French archives, Trachtenberg's study is exemplary in relating microanalysis to the bigger picture and in taking ample account of previous scholarship without accepting it uncritically.<sup>46</sup> Yet the book leaves the reader more challenged by the questions raised than satisfied by the answers offered.

Trachtenberg's core thesis is as original as it is tenuous. In his view, the overriding Soviet concern was the military threat from West Germany. The "NATO system" that contained this threat (by ensuring a U.S. military presence in Europe) created the preconditions for a settlement as early as 1955.

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43. Leon Sloss and Richard N. Smith, *The Deployment of Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe, 1945–1955: Key Decisions and Drivers*, Occasional Paper No. 4, Nuclear History Project (McLean: Science Applications, 1997).

44. Beatrice Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949–2000* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 78–83.

45. Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. x, 146.

46. Its overflow material is posted, together with other useful information, on the website, <http://www.history.upenn.edu/trachtenberg>.

But a misguided urge to “bring the boys home” induced the Eisenhower administration to entrust the defense of NATO to nuclear weapons and to transfer control of them to the Europeans (notably the West Germans), thereby gratuitously provoking the Soviet Union into staging the Berlin and Cuban crises. These crises, he contends, delayed a European settlement until 1963, but a “constructed peace” finally took hold and came to rest on three “pillars”: “general respect for the status quo in central Europe”; “the non-nuclear status of . . . Germany”; and an “American military presence on German soil.” Astonishingly, Trachtenberg claims that these pillars remain “largely intact” even today—as if NATO had not changed the status quo by expanding to Russia’s borders and as if Germany had not replaced Russia as the premier power in a Europe that is no longer dependent on nuclear weapons.<sup>47</sup>

The Eisenhower administration’s “New Look” policy is the subject of a book by Saki Dockrill, who argues that the policy did not in fact entail an overwhelming reliance on NATO’s nuclear arms.<sup>48</sup> Rhetoric aside, the size of U.S. conventional forces in Europe, she points out, was not significantly reduced. According to Andreas Wenger, Washington’s missile buildup was calculated to reassure the allies of an undiminished American commitment to their defense.<sup>49</sup> Whatever the ambiguities of Eisenhower’s thinking and pronouncements on nuclear weapons, Robert Bowie—the architect of the administration’s ill-fated Multilateral Force (MLF) plan—commends the president for shaping an “enduring Cold War strategy.”<sup>50</sup> The strategy facilitated both the ascendancy of NATO and the “first détente” with the Soviet Union in 1955.

It has long been puzzling why the Warsaw Pact was created just when this initial détente was dawning and when Nikita Khrushchev had begun reducing Soviet conventional forces. But it now seems clear that the formation of the Pact, together with the Soviet proposal for a congenial “collective” security arrangement that would supersede the hostile “NATO system,” was consistent with Khrushchev’s attempted “demilitarization” of the Cold War. If both alliances could be negotiated away, the Soviet Union would become Europe’s dominant power by virtue of its presumably superior nonmilitary assets.<sup>51</sup> As

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47. Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, pp. 399, 402.

48. Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower’s New Look National Security Policy, 1953–61* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

49. Andreas Wenger, *Living with Peril: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nuclear Weapons* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

50. Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

51. Vojtech Mastny, “The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Warsaw Pact in 1955,” in Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, Bent Jensen, and Erik Kulavig, eds., *Mechanisms of Power in the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 241–266.

long as Khrushchev remained in office, he used the Warsaw Pact mainly as a launching pad for his diplomatic initiatives rather than trying to make it a functional equivalent of NATO.

Political rather than military considerations lay behind the 1958 Berlin crisis, which is now regarded as a much more open-ended development than was earlier realized. Those who wrote about the crisis when Germany was still divided tended to regard it as a catalyst for the ostensibly permanent solution of the German question, a solution symbolized by the Berlin Wall. When Khrushchev precipitated the crisis, the long-term prospect of a nuclear-armed West Germany did not preoccupy him as much as he wanted the world to believe. What *did* worry him was the potentially destabilizing effect of West Germany's ascendancy within NATO at a time when East Germany was politically vulnerable.<sup>52</sup> He was concerned about a possible repetition of the 1953 East German rebellion, which he feared might get out of hand and provoke, perhaps inadvertently, Western military involvement. The result could be a broader war—the mirror image of NATO's scenarios for limited war. It was precisely to forestall such an outcome that Khrushchev attempted to oust West Germany's protectors from their positions in Berlin.

Once the Berlin crisis began, however, it entailed even greater military risks than the Cuban missile crisis later posed, in part because the risks were less clearly perceived. Both sides were preparing for a clash between their alliances, but were fairly confident that they could avert a nuclear confrontation. Evidence that has emerged over the past decade shows that, in reality, they had the situation much less under control than they—and later analysts—generally thought.<sup>53</sup>

Fissures among the allies during the crisis were often deeper than they themselves admitted. The British were closer to wanting an agreement at any price than were the Americans.<sup>54</sup> The West Germans were most concerned about the further division of their country, whereas their allies—as noted bitterly by Rolf Steininger—wanted mainly to ensure that they would not have to “die for Berlin.”<sup>55</sup> French President Charles de Gaulle was convinced that Khrushchev was bluffing—but he was wrong.<sup>56</sup> The Soviet leader did not

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52. The most important evidence has been published in the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* and on the project's website, <http://www.cwihp.si.edu>.

53. See William Burr, “New Sources on the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1962,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 2 (Fall 1992), pp. 21–24, 32; and the declassified U.S. documents on the National Security Archive website, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv>.

54. John P. S. Gearson, *Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis, 1958–62: The Limits of Interest and Force* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

55. Rolf Steininger, *Der Mauerbau: Die Westmächte und Adenauer in der Berlinkrise 1958–1963* (Munich: Olzog, 2001).

56. Cyril Buffet, “The Berlin Crises, France, and the Atlantic Alliance, 1947–62: From Integration to

mastermind the crisis as much as it seemed. His East German client, Walter Ulbricht, was able to pursue his own agenda, and he even manipulated the very weakness of his regime to induce Khrushchev to accept greater risks.

This did not mean, however, that the “tail was wagging the dog,” as suggested by Hope Harrison. Michael Lemke draws a more realistic picture of the client-patron relationship between Khrushchev and Ulbricht.<sup>57</sup> Such relationships within the Warsaw Pact were fundamentally different from those in NATO. As implied by Geir Lundestad’s distinction between America’s “empire by invitation” and the Soviet empire by imposition, neither the diversity of interests nor the ability to pursue them was the same.<sup>58</sup> Thomas Risse-Kappen has demonstrated how often the shared democratic values within NATO enabled the West European states to influence Washington’s policies—something that Soviet allies in the Warsaw Pact could never aspire to do, regardless of their common allegiance to Communism.<sup>59</sup>

The Berlin crisis reversed Khrushchev’s demilitarization of the Cold War, as both alliances embarked on more extensive preparations for a war in Europe. Unlike in Germany, however, the danger of such a war did not emanate from the recurrent upheavals in other parts of the Soviet empire. Those upheavals may have threatened the integrity of that empire, but, contrary to Western anxieties, they lacked the potential to escalate into a larger conflagration. During the Hungarian and, later, the Czechoslovak and Polish crises, Soviet leaders never seriously feared that NATO would move, basing their decisions instead on their assessments of local events and the likely impact on the cohesion of their alliance.<sup>60</sup>

## The Parallel Histories

By raising the specter for the Europeans of “annihilation without representation,” the Berlin and Cuban missile crises helped provoke grave rifts within

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Disintegration,” in Beatrice Heuser and Robert O’Neill, eds., *Securing Peace, 1945–62: Thoughts for the Post-Cold War Era* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 84–104.

57. Hope Harrison, “Ulbricht and the Concrete ‘Rose’: New Archival Evidence on the Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations and the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1961,” Working Paper No. 5, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC, May 1993; Hope Harrison, “Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: A Super-Ally, a Superpower, and the Building of the Berlin Wall, 1958–61,” *Cold War History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 2000), pp. 53–74; and Michael Lemke, *Die Berlinkrise 1958 bis 1963: Interessen und Handlungsspielräume der SED im Ost-West-Konflikt* (Berlin: Akademie, 1995).

58. Geir Lundestad, *The American “Empire” and Other Studies of U.S. Foreign Policy in a Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

59. Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

60. Mark Kramer, “The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and

both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, rifts that paralleled one another.<sup>61</sup> The events in each case have been extensively documented, although only the NATO experience has been studied at any length. Washington's management of its allies has been scrutinized by Dockrill and by Pascaline Winand, both of whom argue that Eisenhower and even Dulles were sensitive to the concerns of Europeans.<sup>62</sup> No such judgment has been passed on Kennedy's "grand design" for Europe, even by historians who admire other aspects of his foreign policy.

Lawrence Freedman, in his magisterial *Kennedy's Wars*, is troubled by the president's constant desire for more "options," the expansion of which made war in Europe seem more feasible than the continent's inhabitants wanted to contemplate.<sup>63</sup> Lyndon Johnson's "benign neglect" of the Kennedy legacy was therefore bound to have a soothing effect, as noted in Massimiliano Guderzo's monumental study. Guderzo praises the Johnson administration for its skill in steering NATO through difficult years. He contrasts American generosity and courage with the pettiness and timidity of many Europeans, whom he blames for missed opportunities on the road to integration.<sup>64</sup>

The outcome of the twin alliance crises was crucial for the future of détente and arms control. Helga Haftendorn regards the resolution of NATO's problems through the "Harmel exercise," balancing the defense function of the alliance with the pursuit of détente, as validating the neoliberal institutionalist theory of international behavior over the neorealist approach.<sup>65</sup> The allies renewed their bonds despite their diminishing concern about the Soviet threat, thus demonstrating NATO's strength as a community of values, reinforced by well-established institutions and procedures. The creation of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group in 1967 showed that nuclear weapons could have not only a divisive but also a unifying effect by forging an instrument of consultation that vividly distinguished the Western alliance from its rival.<sup>66</sup>

New Findings," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (April 1998), pp. 163–214. See also nn. 92 and 114, below.

61. On the impact of the Cuban events on Europe, see Maurice Vaisse, ed., *L'Europe et la crise de Cuba* (Paris: Colin, 1993).

62. Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New Look National Security Policy*; and Pascaline Winand, *Eisenhower, Kennedy and the United States of Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

63. Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

64. Massimiliano Guderzo, *Interesse nazionale e responsabilità globale: Gli Stati Uniti, l'Alleanza atlantica e l'integrazione europea negli anni di Johnson, 1963–69* (Florence: Aida, 2000), pp. 43–144, 567–569.

65. Helga Haftendorn, *NATO and the Nuclear Revolution: A Crisis of Credibility, 1966–1967* (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1996).

66. Paul Buteux, *The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO, 1965–1980* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

NATO's simultaneous shift from the declared policy of "massive retaliation" to that of "flexible response" was not as abrupt as often believed. Jane Stromseth emphasizes that "limited" nuclear options had been part of the alliance's strategy since at least 1957 and that the transition left the degree of NATO's commitment to conventional defense ambiguous. Whether the attempt to create a "seamless web" of deterrence that would allow "decision-makers to avoid hard choices" actually reduced (or perhaps increased) the chances of a war is a question that can be answered only by taking account of the enemy's perceptions and plans of action.<sup>67</sup>

According to Matthew Evangelista, the Soviet Union lagged behind the West in most areas of technology and therefore had to respond to Western innovations.<sup>68</sup> Kimberley Marten Zisk agrees, but she emphasizes that changes in Moscow's strategic posture followed from the internal dynamics of its political and military establishment—a phenomenon that also characterized NATO.<sup>69</sup> Zisk found no evidence of a Soviet belief that arms races and doctrinal changes encouraged reciprocity; instead, she found that Soviet military planning was driven by a momentum increasingly divorced from reality—again, a finding that applied equally to NATO.

The Warsaw Pact's war plan from 1964—the only such plan of either alliance that has become available thus far—envisaged marching to victory through Germany into France within a week amidst hundreds of nuclear bombs that would be exploding along the way. Despite the preposterous nature of this scenario, which conformed to Soviet notions about nuclear war outlined in a secret study by the chief of Soviet military intelligence, General Petr Ivashutin, the plan was undoubtedly intended to be implemented.<sup>70</sup> By contrast, doubts within NATO about the U.S. government's willingness to implement similar plans to defend Western Europe underlay the crisis that prompted France to withdraw from the integrated military command.

The French withdrawal, which made NATO's adoption of the flexible response strategy possible, was less a premeditated step than a futile attempt by de Gaulle to "refound" the alliance in conformity with his vision of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals." According to Frédéric Bozo's authoritative

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67. Jane Stromseth, *The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO's Debate over Strategy in the 1960s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 94.

68. Matthew Evangelista, *Innovation and the Arms Race: How the United States and the Soviet Union Develop New Military Technologies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

69. Kimberley Marten Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955–1991* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

70. Both documents appear, with commentaries, on the PHP website, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php>.

study, the divorce between France and NATO proved beneficial for both insofar as it helped NATO overcome its crisis and enabled France to thrive on its own.<sup>71</sup> The split precluded neither sub rosa joint contingency planning to deal with an emergency nor France's partial reintegration into NATO structures after the Cold War ended.

The ambiguities and paradoxes of the French way have been explored in suggestively titled books on the "reluctant" or "supercilious" ally, the "guarded friendship" or "cold" alliance between France and the United States since World War II, and the "uncertain" partnership between Paris and Bonn.<sup>72</sup> The results of the interaction are examined in all their complexity in an important collection of essays edited by Maurice Vaïsse and other leading French experts on NATO. Summing up their findings, Dominique Moïsi is ambivalent about the benefits of France's "self-marginalization."<sup>73</sup> Certainly, when the Cold War ended, France found itself the least prepared of the allies.

Moïsi notes the enduring relevance of NATO's debates from the 1960s. Key issues such as the requirements of deterrence, the potential uses of nuclear and other weapons, and the nature of defense ties between Europe and the United States were already considered and even resolved back then. Some of de Gaulle's views on nuclear weapons remain fresh. The general's belief in the indispensability of nuclear arms as an attribute of a great power may seem outdated, but his conviction that the mere possession of them regardless of numbers is sufficient to keep enemies at bay has been vindicated. By comparison, the flexible response idea, with its corollary of "controlled escalation" and the consequent need for ever-larger nuclear arsenals, seems even more bizarre now than it did at the time.

The mindset that led to flexible response was not specifically American. In a study of the strategic thinking of NATO's other key members, Beatrice Heuser describes flexible response as a British rather than American invention.<sup>74</sup> She finds the British contributions more numerous and substantive, for better or worse, than one might assume from the dominant U.S. position

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71. Frédéric Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

72. Michael Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Charles G. Cogan, *Oldest Allies, Guarded Friends: The United States and France since 1940* (Westport: Praeger, 1994); Frank Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance since World War II* (New York: Twayne, 1992); and Georges-Henri Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine: Les rapports politiques et stratégiques franco-allemands 1954–1996* (Paris: Fayard, 1996). See also n. 73, below.

73. Maurice Vaïsse, Pierre Mélandri, and Frédéric Bozo, eds., *La France et l'OTAN, 1949–1996* (Brussels: Complexe, 1996), pp. 633–634, quotations on p. 634 and 115 (for the *alliée sourcilieuse*).

74. Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG*, pp. 47–52.

in the alliance—a testimony to how much more important NATO was for Europe than for the United States.

That said, the benefits that the member states expected from the alliance, and their willingness to contribute to it, differed widely. Among NATO's smaller countries, security considerations mattered more to the prosperous, established democracies on its exposed northern flank than to the poorer southern countries with authoritarian pasts. For the latter the alliance was more valuable in facilitating their integration into Western Europe's thriving democratic community.

In the north, only three of the five different “roads to Nordic security” led through NATO.<sup>75</sup> Norway's strategic location was an asset for the alliance, not least because of the Norwegian intelligence service, as described by Olav Riste in his masterly study based on unrestricted access to sensitive files.<sup>76</sup> By contrast, the strategic location of Denmark, the “ally with reservations,” was more of a liability. According to Poul Villaume's penetrating study, however, the Danes' very anxiety not to offend the enemy helped maintain the northern flank's relative stability even as an arms race in the area continued.<sup>77</sup> The same is true of Iceland's willingness to permit the use of its territory, albeit reluctantly at times, in return for protection.<sup>78</sup>

The Dutch and Belgians found that the best route to security was through their membership in NATO as well as in Europe's other international organizations, to which both (especially the former) contributed more than their share of important officials.<sup>79</sup> The legendary loyalty of the Italians, dubbed “the Bulgarians of NATO” by Leopoldo Nuti, was reinforced by internal security concerns about the strength of the Italian Communist Party—until the Communists themselves endorsed NATO membership for the sake of the European security balance.<sup>80</sup> In Nuti's view, membership in the alliance may not have brought the country notable security benefits, but it did

75. Johan Jørgen Holst, ed., *Five Roads to Nordic Security* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1973).

76. Olav Riste, *The Norwegian Intelligence Service, 1945–1970* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

77. Poul Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold: Danmark, NATO og de kolde krig: En studie i dansk sikkerhedspolitik 1949–1961* (The ally with reservations: Denmark, NATO, and the Cold War: A study in Danish security policy, 1949–1961) (Copenhagen: Eirene, 1995).

78. Valur Ingimundarson, *The Struggle for Western Integration: Iceland, the United States, and NATO during the First Cold War* (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1999); and Thor Whitehead, *The Ally Who Came in from the Cold: A Survey of Icelandic Foreign Policy, 1946–1956* (Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 1998).

79. J. Hoffenaar and B. Schoemaker, *Met de blik naar het Oosten: De Koninklijke Landmacht, 1945–1990* (Facing the East: The Royal Netherlands Army, 1945–1990) (The Hague: Historical Section of the Royal Netherlands Army, 1994) is a model official history.

80. Leopoldo Nuti, “Continuity and Change in Italian Defence Policy (1945–1995),” in Dumoulin, ed., *La Communauté Européenne de Défense*, pp. 375–400, quotation from p. 387.

expedite the democratization of Italy by reducing the influence of the military in society and politics.<sup>81</sup>

The situation was different in Portugal where, as argued by António José Telo, the dominant role of the armed forces is precisely what enabled military officers to spearhead the modernization and eventual democratization encouraged by NATO.<sup>82</sup> Ekavi Athanassopoulou has found that a similar dynamic operated in Turkey after the original assumptions about Soviet policy that brought Turkey into the alliance failed to materialize. NATO's role in providing a door to Europe was its most valuable and enduring contribution to Turkish security.<sup>83</sup> Political considerations also figured prominently when the alliance brought in other newcomers—Greece and Spain—as Mark Smith points out with an eye on NATO's future enlargement.<sup>84</sup>

NATO's "silent partners" among the European neutrals, Sweden and Switzerland, no longer hide the plans they devised at the height of the Cold War to coordinate defense with NATO in the event of an emergency.<sup>85</sup> Although Finland did not have similar plans, its army was never an asset for the Warsaw Pact, whereas NATO sometimes benefited from Finland's competent intelligence service.<sup>86</sup> Austria, according to Günter Bischof, was another "secret ally" of the West, at least until the 1955 proclamation of Austrian neutrality.<sup>87</sup> Even afterward, Warsaw Pact plans took it for granted that if hostilities broke out Austria would side with NATO.

Post-Cold War literature on the individual armies of the Warsaw Pact is still scarce. The East German armed forces, renowned as Moscow's most reli-

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81. Leopoldo Nuti, *L'esercito italiano nel secondo dopoguerra: La sua ricostruzione e l'assistenza militare alleata* (Rome: Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore Esercito, 1989), p. 240. See also Lorenza Sebesta, *L'Europa indifesa: Sistema di sicurezza atlantico e caso italiano, 1948–1955* (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1991).

82. António José Telo, *Portugal e a NATO: O reencontro da tradição atlântica* (Portugal and NATO: The return of the Atlantic tradition) (Lisbon: Cosmos, 1996), pp. 343–344.

83. Ekavi Athanassopoulou, *Turkey—Anglo-American Security Interests 1945–1952: The First Enlargement of NATO* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

84. Mark Smith, *NATO Enlargement during the Cold War: Strategy and System in the Western Alliance* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

85. Commission on Neutrality Policy, *Had There Been a War . . . : Preparations for the Reception of Military Assistance 1949–1969* (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1994); and Mauro Mantovani, *Schweizerische Sicherheitspolitik im Kalten Krieg (1947–1963): Zwischen angelsächsischem Containment und Neutralitäts-Doktrin* (Zurich: Orell Füssli, 1999).

86. Pekka Visuri, *Puolustusvoimat kylmässä sodassa: Suomen puolustuspolitiikka vuosina 1945–1961* (The defense forces during the Cold War: Finnish defense policy in 1945–1961) (Juva: WSOY, 1994); and Kimmo Rentola, "From Half-Adversary to Half-Ally: Finland in Soviet Policy, 1953–58," *Cold War History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 2000), pp. 75–102.

87. Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945–55: The Leverage of the Weak* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). See also Erwin A. Schmidl, ed., *Österreich im frühen Kalten Krieg, 1945–1958: Spione, Partisanen, Kriegspläne* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2000).

able combat ally, have been studied less for that role than for their place in East German history. In *Requiem for an Army*, a U.S. expert on the East German military, Dale Herspring, is impressed by the army's professionalism.<sup>88</sup> He also praises military officers for not intervening to save the regime they had served; the real credit, however, belongs to their civilian superiors who, for lack of nerve if for no nobler reason, failed to issue the necessary orders.

Bulgaria's proverbial loyalty to Moscow was marred by the still murky episode of the attempted military coup in 1965. The position of Bulgaria in the Warsaw Pact has been illuminated by Jordan Baev's writings and his pioneering digital editions of documents.<sup>89</sup> The Parallel History Project has begun publishing the annotated records of the Pact's three main committees—the Political Consultative Committee, the Committee of Defense Ministers, and the Committee of Foreign Ministers—which are often illustrative of the discord among its members.

Much like in NATO, the nuclear supremacy of the Warsaw Pact's leading power was controversial among the other allies, though far less susceptible to their influence. Unlike their Western counterparts, however, the Warsaw Pact's East European members did not strive to share control of nuclear weapons, nor did the Soviet Union show any inclination to relinquish its monopoly.<sup>90</sup> Instead, the East Europeans tried to prevent harm by seeking to constrain the use of weapons by either superpower. Although Soviet leaders paid scant heed to East European concerns, they were mindful of the effect that nuclear deployments in Eastern Europe could have on the West. Having previously installed nuclear missiles in East Germany, Khrushchev removed them in 1959 just before his summit with Eisenhower, in the hope of prompting Western concessions on Berlin.<sup>91</sup>

Nuclear policy was but one of numerous issues that roiled the Warsaw Pact in the lead-up to the 1968 Czechoslovak crisis. The crisis, in its effects,

88. Dale R. Herspring, *Requiem for an Army: The Demise of the East German Military* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998).

89. Jordan Baev, *Voennopoliticheskiye konfliktii sled vtoraya svetovna voina i B'lgariya* (Military-political conflicts since World War II and Bulgaria) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Ministerstvoto na Otbranata "Sv. Georgi Pobedonosets," 1995); *B'lgariya v'v Varshavskiy Dogovor* (Bulgaria in the Warsaw Pact), CD-ROM (Sofia: Izdatelska K'shcha BM, 2000); and *NATO na Balkanite* (NATO in the Balkans) (Sofia: Izdatelska K'shcha BM, 2001).

90. Mark Kramer, "The 'Lessons' of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Warsaw Pact Nuclear Operations," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 59, 110–115, 160, speculates that the Soviet Union might have been willing to consider a NATO-style "dual key" arrangement if the Cuban missile crisis had not intervened.

91. Matthias Uhl and Vladimir I. Ivkin, "'Operation Atom': The Soviet Union's Stationing of Nuclear Missiles in the German Democratic Republic, 1959," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 12–13, (Fall–Winter 2001), pp. 299–307. For more on missiles in East Germany, see Harald Nielsen, ed., *Die DDR und die Kernwaffen: Die nukleare Rolle der Nationalen Volksarmee im Warschauer Pakt* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998).

was not so much a harbinger of the alliance's disintegration as a catalyst of its consolidation.<sup>92</sup> Although Czechoslovak reformers came up with some impressive ideas about how to restructure the Warsaw Pact, their proposals were notable for the reluctance with which they were pursued. Moreover, even if the reforms had been pressed more vigorously, the aim of the measures would have been to make the Pact more viable, not to dispense with it.<sup>93</sup> NATO's lackadaisical reaction to the approach of Soviet troops toward West German borders during the invasion of Czechoslovakia did not discourage Moscow from proceeding with its own reform of the Warsaw Pact, a reform that helped ensure the existence of the Pact for another twenty years.<sup>94</sup>

The 1969 reorganization of the Pact, which has yet to be seriously studied, rendered harmless the impact of Romania's dissidence. The Romanian "deviation," which apparently went so far as a secret offer of neutrality to Washington in the event of armed conflict between the superpowers,<sup>95</sup> is still to be fully explained from declassified records. Western assessments of the country's devious ruler, Nicolae Ceaușescu, swung wildly from exaltation of his prowess to indignation at his vices as corruption progressively got the better of him. Because Romanian historians have had to rely mostly on testimonies from Ceaușescu's cunning diplomats and other aides, they have barely begun to penetrate the arcana of his Byzantine policy.<sup>96</sup>

The Polish Communists' quest for a "special" relationship with Moscow fueled fiercer competition with East Germany for the status of a "superally" than contemporaries suspected.<sup>97</sup> Unlike the Romanians, both the Poles and

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92. The military dimensions of the Czechoslovak crisis have been documented in Antonín Benčík, Jaromír Navrátil, and Jan Paulík, eds., *Vojenské otázky československé reformy, 1967–1970: Vojenská varianta řešení krize (1967–1968)* (Military problems of the Czechoslovak reform, 1967–1970: The military option in the solution of the Czechoslovak crisis) (Brno: Doplněk, 1996). See also Mark Kramer, "The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine," in Carole Fink, Detlef Junker, and Philipp Gassert, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 111–172, esp. 136–141, 166–170.

93. Vojtech Mastny, "We Are in a Bind: Polish and Czechoslovak Attempts at Reforming the Warsaw Pact, 1956–1969," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 11 (Winter 1998), pp. 230–250.

94. On the NATO response, see John G. McGinn, "The Politics of Collective Inaction: NATO's Response to the Prague Spring," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1999), pp. 111–138.

95. Raymond L. Garthoff, "When and Why Romania Distanced Itself from the Warsaw Pact," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 111. Compare with Mircea Suciú, "Criza rachetelor din Cuba și apropierea româno-americană (The Cuban missile crisis and the Romanian-American rapprochement)," *Dosarele istoriei* (Bucharest), No. 6 (1997), pp. 30–31.

96. Mihai Retegan, *In the Shadow of the Prague Spring: Romanian Foreign Policy and the Crisis in Czechoslovakia, 1968* (Iași: Center for Romanian Studies, 2000).

97. Of the two recent studies of Polish-East German relations, the former focuses more closely on alliance relationships: Douglas E. Selva, "Poland, the German Democratic Republic and the German Question, 1955–1967" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, New Haven, 1998); and Sheldon Anderson, *A Cold War in the Soviet Bloc: Polish-East German Relations, 1945–1962* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000).

the East Germans, each for their own reasons, feared NATO and tried to pursue their interests with, rather than against, Moscow. The much discussed plan of Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki for a zone of disengagement in Central Europe was a scheme calculated to elicit Soviet support for overlapping interests. If the plan had been implemented, it would have pushed NATO farther away from both Polish and Soviet borders while diluting Soviet control over Poland and other Warsaw Pact countries. This latter consideration helps explain why Moscow endorsed the plan only after it became clear that the West would veto it.<sup>98</sup>

What is still lacking is a study of the Warsaw Pact's crisis and reform—a study complementary to Haftendorn's book about NATO's dual "Harmel exercise"—that would clarify Moscow's use of the Pact as both a military machine and an instrument of alliance management. Regardless of the crack-down in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union's diminishing readiness to use force in maintaining the Warsaw Pact required more effective integration of the Pact's diverse components. Did this mean that, contrary to prevailing Western assessments at the time, the alliance's military value to the Soviet Union in a hypothetical European war had been superseded by its political value in dealing with the looming crisis of the Soviet empire?

## The Final Decades

The last two decades of the NATO–Warsaw Pact rivalry, which coincided with the rise and fall of détente before the Cold War's eventual dénouement, are more notable for the questions they raise than for the ones they answer. Students of this period of NATO history are forced to get by without official archival material. Although books about important topics such as allied nuclear strategy and the neutron-bomb controversy have been written from open sources, the interaction between the military competition and détente remains poorly understood.<sup>99</sup>

How did the growth of détente, at a time when the two alliances reached rough military parity but failed to resolve their fundamental political differences, affect their continued confrontation? How did it later affect the unexpected end of that confrontation? In interpreting the relationship, Raymond

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98. The best discussion of the plan is Piotr Wandycz, "Adam Rapacki and the Search for European Security," in Gordon A. Craig and Francis L. Loewenheim, eds., *The Diplomats, 1939–1979* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 289–317.

99. Holger Mey, *NATO Strategie vor der Wende: Die Entwicklung des Verständnisses nuklearer Macht im Bündnis zwischen 1967 und 1990* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1992); and Sherri Wasserman, *The Neutron Bomb Controversy: A Study in Alliance Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1983).

Garthoff's imposing *Détente and Confrontation* has set a standard—but a subtly shifting one. The original 1985 edition, published when the superpowers seemed “foreordained to continuing rivalry,” stressed how the Cold War rivalry could be mitigated by reciprocal understanding and tended to give the Soviet Union the benefit of the doubt. The revised, post–Cold War edition, which was updated to include new sources from Russia, shows that the necessary understanding was possible only after Moscow acted first, thus leaving in doubt how Soviet actions could have been influenced from the outside under any circumstances.<sup>100</sup>

Did NATO's acceptance of the Communist alliance as a legitimate counterpart, at the very moment when the terminal decline of the Soviet system was setting in, foster accommodation, or did it merely prolong the Cold War? In a critique of Western illusions, Dana Allin argues that the West's ability to rely on the U.S. nuclear arsenal gave it defense “on the cheap,” thereby avoiding the militarization of Western economies and converting the East-West rivalry to a mainly political and economic contest.<sup>101</sup> Aaron Friedberg persuasively argues that the open political system and market economy of the United States saved it from becoming a “garrison state” akin to the Soviet Union.<sup>102</sup> Yet the West's surprising diffidence about its own system, according to Allin, kept it from pressing its advantage and gave its collapsing adversary a new lease on life.

The “golden years” of détente in the early 1970s are the least researched period of the Cold War. Was the Soviet Union getting ready—and if so, at what price—to reverse the arms race before détente began to turn sour by the middle of the decade? In an account of the rapprochement that East Germany pursued under Soviet auspices with the Western “devil,” M. E. Sarotte concludes that Moscow sought an accommodation in Europe because it believed it could achieve that accommodation on its own terms and because it feared China more than it feared NATO.<sup>103</sup> The most lasting accomplishment of the period of “high détente” was the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which was finally renounced by President George W. Bush in late 2001. Despite the unmistakable Cold War vintage of the treaty, it received undeserved prominence in the recent debate on national missile defense, being alternately

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100. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1985 and 1994).

101. Dana H. Allin, *Cold War Illusions: America, Europe and Soviet Power, 1969–1989* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

102. Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

103. M. E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente and Ostpolitik, 1969–1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

cited as obsolete and indispensable—as if the existence (or lack thereof) of the treaty was really necessary to judge the project’s doubtful merit.<sup>104</sup>

In considering the consequences of NATO’s “Europeanization,” Beatrice Heuser describes how the specter of a superpower rapprochement instilled in Europeans an “almost hysterical” fear of abandonment, despite the popularity of détente. In the aftermath of the Berlin crisis the British had ceased to advocate nuclear war-fighting and had become the main proponents of nuclear sufficiency, yet they continued to insist on keeping NATO’s “first use” option for its political value. The British found a new role as intermediaries between the United States and Europe and also developed their own “special relationship” with the West Germans. The West Germans, in turn, imposed on the alliance its “no-target” option, as well as the alternative of striking targets deep inside enemy territory rather than anywhere near the German homeland.<sup>105</sup>

More consequential than these hypothetical scenarios was the real option that West Germany exercised with its *Ostpolitik* in order to supplement NATO missiles with more nimble and less lethal instruments of policy. What the exact consequences were, however, is difficult to determine even from Timothy Garton Ash’s exceptionally subtle and clearheaded assessment of the policy.<sup>106</sup> On the one hand, West Germany’s deliberate and unequivocal subordination of its interests to larger European concerns left no doubts about its loyalty to NATO, not least in the minds of its Warsaw Pact enemies. On the other hand, the “change through rapprochement” that *Ostpolitik* was designed to foster worked in mostly unintended ways—ultimately, better than its architects had bargained it would. This left many Germans feeling ambivalent about the actual accomplishments of the policy. Citing East German archival documents, Michael Ploetz argues that the Communists lost their will because of the tenacity of NATO and despite the timidity of *Ostpolitik* as it was manifested in the appeasement tendencies of West Germany’s Social Democrats (though presumably not their conservative opponents, who pursued many of the same policies when in power).<sup>107</sup>

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104. Apart from David S. Yost’s dated *Soviet Ballistic Missile Defense and the Western Alliance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), the history of the ABM treaty has been mired in polemics. See Bernd W. Kubbig, *Experts on Trial: The Wohlstetter/Rathjens Controversy, the Making of the ABM Treaty, and Lessons for the Current Debate about Missile Defense* (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, 1999); and William T. Lee, *The ABM Treaty Charade: A Study in Elite Illusion and Delusion* (Washington: Council for Social and Economic Studies, 1997).

105. Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France, and the FRG*, pp. 19, 54–62, 88–90, 141–147.

106. Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Random House, 1993), pp. 357–377.

107. Michael Ploetz, *Wie die Sowjetunion den Kalten Krieg verlor: Von der Nachrüstung zum Mauerfall* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2000), pp. 202–252.

There is no definitive way to judge whether détente, of which *Ostpolitik* was a key component, prepared the necessary ground for the peaceful end of the Cold War or unnecessarily prolonged it, with attendant military perils. What *is* certain, however, is that the perils were greater than implied by Soviet weakness, but smaller than claimed at the time by Western critics of NATO's buildup. The incidence of nuclear mishaps on both sides was alarming. Accidents involving Soviet submarines, for example, occurred at the rate of one a year, according to an incomplete list.<sup>108</sup> Equally disturbing was the Soviet "war scare" of 1983, when NATO's "real-life" Able Archer exercise caused some in Moscow to fear that a dreaded surprise attack might be coming—yet they were not fearful enough to take military countermeasures.<sup>109</sup> Whatever the cost of the more aggressive Western posture, it had a sobering rather than provocative effect on the enemy.

Did the Warsaw Pact's rank and file deserve credit for ensuring that "the Third World War never started?"<sup>110</sup> The influence of the Soviet military, which effectively ran the alliance through the Ministry of Defense and General Staff in Moscow, was growing rather than diminishing as détente ran its bumpy course. The privileged, though not independent, position of the military within the Soviet state did not make it any less committed to its "sacred cause," a cause it continued to uphold even as other beneficiaries were giving up their faith.<sup>111</sup> As the aging leaders in the Kremlin were losing their grip, the generals' input into policy and their ability to act on their own were potentially dangerous or at least politically counterproductive—as demonstrated, for example, by the still unexplained intrusions of Soviet submarines into Scandinavian waters.

The Warsaw Pact's Soviet-trained officer corps was particularly useful to Moscow in view of the rising tide of East European nationalism. The top ranks of the corps owed their primary loyalty to the alliance. When General Wojciech Jaruzelski and his cohorts imposed martial law in Poland in 1981, they spared Moscow the embarrassment of having to tolerate the downfall of Communism in the largest and most important state in the region. Stunning new evidence reveals that the Polish leaders acted to protect their own interests as well as Soviet interests, but did not act, as they later alleged, to save the

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108. As compiled in Miller, *The Cold War*, pp. 426–428.

109. Ben B. Fischer, "Intelligence and Disaster Avoidance: The Soviet War Scare and U.S.-Soviet Relations," in Stephen J. Cimbala, ed., *Mysteries of the Cold War* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 89–104.

110. Miller, *The Cold War*, p.v.

111. Thomas M. Nichols, *The Sacred Cause: Civil-Military Conflict over Soviet National Security, 1917–1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) has retained its value despite the obsolescence of its predictions.

country from Soviet invasion. On the contrary, they actually sought a military guarantee in case they ran into difficulty, but did not receive it.<sup>112</sup> Still, Moscow's dependence on local subordinates to maintain the integrity of the bloc presaged the impending dissolution.<sup>113</sup>

Was the Warsaw Pact's growing conventional capability—which had long been NATO's chief worry in light of the nuclear standoff—offset by Moscow's reluctance to use its military power? Pending the availability of Soviet war plans from after 1964, the intentions of the Warsaw Pact can only be inferred from the copious records of its exercises and related documents.<sup>114</sup> The interpretation of these documents requires a more subtle reading than was provided by the German federal government in 1992 when it published excerpts to demonstrate the Warsaw Pact's aggressive design and the efficacy of NATO's deterrent.<sup>115</sup> In reality, the evidence shows an offensive strategy but not necessarily offensive intentions. The surviving commanders of the alliance have vigorously and plausibly denied that there were such intentions.

Jack Snyder notes that a bias toward offensive strategy tends to be accentuated when civilian control is weak, when civilian-military disputes erupt, or when the military retains a monopoly on operational expertise—all of which applied during the era of Leonid Brezhnev.<sup>116</sup> In the best Russian study of Soviet military doctrine, Vadim Tsymburskii stresses how the “trauma of June 1941”—the memory of the narrow escape from defeat by the German invaders—shaped and warped Soviet notions of “threat” and “victory.”<sup>117</sup> Nothing warped them more, however, than the ideology that Communist generals shared with their political superiors.

According to the prevailing Marxist-Leninist discourse in the Soviet Union, the “capitalist” enemy was inherently threatening because of the fun-

112. See the revealing service diary of the special assistant to the Warsaw Pact's supreme commander, edited, translated, and annotated by Mark Kramer, “The Anoshkin Notebook on the Polish Crisis, December 1981,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 11 (Winter 1998), pp. 14–31. See also *Wejść nie wejść—Polska 1980–1982: wewnętrzny kryzys, międzynarodowe uwarunkowania* (Will they enter or not? Poland 1980–1982: The internal crisis and its international ramifications) (London: Aneks, 1999).

113. Vojtech Mastny, “The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980–1981 and the End of the Cold War,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (March 1999), pp. 189–211.

114. Beatrice Heuser, “Warsaw Pact Military Doctrines in the 1970s and 1980s: Findings in the East German Archives,” *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (October 1993), pp. 437–457.

115. Mark Kramer, ed., “Warsaw Pact Military Planning in Central Europe: Revelations from the East German Archives,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 2 (Fall 1992), pp. 1, 13–19.

116. Jack Snyder, “Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984,” *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1984), pp. 108–146, esp. 140–141. See also Snyder's *The Ideology of the Offensive* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

117. Vadim L. Tsymburskii, *Voennaya doktrina SSSR i Rossii: Osmysleniya ponyatii “ugrozy” i “pobedy”*

damental incompatibility of the two sides' political and social systems, a condition that could not be overcome unless one side or the other disappeared (as indeed one ultimately did). The Soviet Union's classified assessments of the threat did not differ from its public allegations of NATO's aggressive intent. Because of the "objective" character of the threat, evidence of its existence or scale was immaterial. Warsaw Pact planners took for granted that the West's intent was malevolent, and their scenarios of war invariably foresaw an initial enemy attack, usually after a political crisis deliberately or inadvertently exacerbated by the West. The attack would then be rebuffed by a Soviet-led counteroffensive.

Soviet and East European strategists subscribed to these scenarios even though they knew what NATO's force levels and plans actually were. Their knowledge of these matters was greatly facilitated by the efforts of the East German intelligence service, which systematically penetrated NATO's structures. The feats of this agency have been described, with ample condescension, by the former chief of the service, Markus Wolf.<sup>118</sup> Preliminary scrutiny of his agency's surviving documents warrants the hypothesis that, unless proven otherwise, all of NATO's important secrets were compromised.<sup>119</sup> What difference this unintended transparency made in view of the preconceptions of East German and Soviet intelligence analysts and political leaders is, of course, another question.

Although the two alliances' respective threat perceptions were similar in many respects, the Warsaw Pact's offensive strategy included a feature that NATO's defensive strategy lacked. Warsaw Pact preparations to repel the West's hypothetical attacks progressively became an empty ritual. The Pact's military exercises eventually focused on little other than the massive, Soviet-led thrust into enemy territory that was immediately to follow. This remained the crux of all Warsaw Pact planning until Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to introduce a defensive strategy in 1987.<sup>120</sup> That attempt caught the alliance unprepared, throwing it into disarray and eventually precipitating its demise—a self-inflicted disaster eloquently recounted in William Odom's *Collapse of the Soviet Military*.<sup>121</sup>

*vo vtoroi polovine XX veka* (The military doctrine of the USSR and Russia: Understanding the notions of "threat" and "victory" in the second half of the twentieth century) (Moscow: Rossiiskii Nauchnyi Fond, 1994).

118. Markus Wolf, *Spionagechef im Kalten Krieg: Erinnerungen* (Munich: List, 1997), is more comprehensive than the English edition. See also John O. Koehler, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* (Boulder: Westview, 1999).

119. Analysis of these documents is under way within the PHP.

120. Both Christoph Bluth, *New Thinking in Soviet Military Policy* (London: Pinter, 1990), and Derek Leebaert and Timothy Dickinson, eds., *Soviet Strategy and New Military Thinking* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), assessed the changes while they were still in progress.

121. William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Did the Warsaw Pact fall apart because of or despite the West's massive armament program during the Reagan presidency? The internal documents of the Pact member states show a mounting concern about the erosion of the alliance's offensive advantages as a result of NATO's technological and organizational advances. The growing sense of being embattled, reminiscent of the Bolsheviks' early feelings of "capitalist encirclement," antedated the Reagan administration, but was heightened by its arrival. Norman Friedman makes the important point that advances in conventional weaponry, rather than nuclear arms, are what enabled the West to translate its technological superiority into a formidable asset.<sup>122</sup> The military standoff thus became the Cold War's finale.

This momentous turn of events is inexplicably ignored in John S. Duffield's otherwise excellent account of the evolution of NATO's conventional force posture.<sup>123</sup> Duffield highlights the stability of the alliance's posture during the last two decades of the conflict, and he convincingly attributes earlier changes in the posture to such variables as balance of power, the allies' priorities (reflecting their national experiences and capabilities), and the pull of NATO's institutions. But the book's title, *Power Rules*, belies what actually happened in the end. The peaceful demise of NATO's adversary showed, if anything, that power did not rule.

Did the Cold War's happy ending vindicate those who wanted nothing to do with either alliance? Lawrence S. Wittner praises not the people in uniform but the ordinary people in the street who marched in support of nuclear disarmament.<sup>124</sup> Matthew Evangelista stresses the ability of the "unarmed forces" of the transnational community of scientists to make their governments more sensitive to the peril of the weapons they themselves had developed.<sup>125</sup> In effect, NATO and its Western opponents complemented each other. The left-wing critics in the West provided innovative ideas that helped spur Soviet leaders to respond to the challenge by revising their notions of security and inadvertently collaborating in their own demise.

The change came none too soon for NATO. Thomas Halverson's study of NATO's "last great nuclear debate"—regarding the need for short-range nuclear missiles to maintain the strategic balance—strongly suggests that the

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122. Friedman, *The Fifty-Year War*, pp. 445–466.

123. John D. Duffield, *Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO's Conventional Force Posture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

124. Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle against the Bomb*, Vol. 2, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954–1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

125. Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

end of the Cold War spared the alliance an embarrassing split.<sup>126</sup> By revealing deep national differences about what was sufficient for security, the debate shattered the consensus about the “deterrent continuum,” a notion that was definitively put to rest by the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which eliminated U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range missiles. By doing away with a whole class of nuclear armaments, this landmark treaty reversed the seemingly inexorable growth of the respective arsenals.

In earlier years the NATO–Warsaw Pact talks on the “mutual and balanced” reductions of their conventional forces (MBFR) had been an exercise in futility.<sup>127</sup> But the lack of progress in MBFR did not prevent the successful conclusion of the coterminous Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which, with its emphasis on human rights, is now acknowledged to have made an important contribution to the downfall of the Soviet bloc. No less important was CSCE’s achievement in promoting “confidence-building measures:” transparency of military exercises, clarification of military doctrines, exchange of information about defense expenditures, and, as emphasized by John Freeman, on-site inspections—all of which helped to redefine traditional notions of security. Lifting the shroud of secrecy that had long enveloped the Warsaw Pact was the historic accomplishment of the CSCE’s Stockholm conference in 1986.<sup>128</sup>

The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, concluded in late 1990 by NATO and the Warsaw Pact after the fruitless MBFR talks had been merged into the fruitful CSCE, provided for large reductions of both sides’ (especially the Warsaw Pact’s) forces in Europe. The treaty thus critically links the Cold War with its aftermath. It ignored the hallowed principles of “crisis stability” and alliance equilibrium that had undergirded arms-control discussions when the Cold War was expected to last indefinitely.<sup>129</sup> Instead, the CFE Treaty introduced a unique regime of military restrictions and obligations on which, as Richard Falkenrath argues in his impressive study, Europe’s security has been resting ever since. By the time the document was signed, however, the Cold War was already over, proving that true, lasting détente followed not from military standoff but from political accommodation.

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126. Thomas E. Halverson, *The Last Great Nuclear Debate: NATO and Short-Range Nuclear Weapons in the 1980s* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

127. This is probably why relatively little of note has been written about them since John C. Keliher, *The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions: The Search for Arms Control in Central Europe* (New York: Pergamon, 1980).

128. John Freeman, *Security and the CSCE Process: The Stockholm Conference and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991).

129. Richard A. Falkenrath, *The Origins and Consequences of the CFE Treaty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

## **Conclusion**

Post–Cold War writings about NATO and the Warsaw Pact have no longer been marked by concerns about the relevance of their findings for current policy. Taking a longer view, scholars have been better able to distinguish the lasting from the ephemeral. By drawing on new evidence, they have been able to give more definite answers to some of the old questions that could previously be only speculated about—such as those concerning threat perceptions and the realities behind them. Above all, new questions have been asked.

In light of those questions, some of the old topics seem less important, and certain topics that generated interest in the past are being reexamined for different reasons. The nuclear postures of the two alliances, adopted for contingencies that never came to pass, are worth studying not so much for their intended purposes as for the distorting effects they had on policy. The way that conventional military power was wielded during the Cold War merits more attention today because of the greater political utility of conventional forces. So does the subject of “soft power”—the economic, cultural, moral, and other nonmilitary assets that, in their own way, shaped interactions between and within the two alliances.

The new history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact is about these multifaceted dimensions of security that came to the fore as a result of the Cold War. They are crucial if we want to understand not only why the Cold War remained cold, but also why it lasted so long and why it ended the way it did. They help explain why the Warsaw Pact lost the fight while NATO did not quite win it. By giving a new meaning to security, the Warsaw Pact–NATO rivalry defined both the Cold War and the international order that has followed it.