

## Book Review

*Published in the Journal of American History, volume 94, no. 2, September 2007*

*Transatlantic Relations at Stake: Aspects of NATO, 1956–1972.* Ed. by Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher. (Zurich: Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research, 2006. 257 pp. ISBN 3-905696-12-6.)

At critical points in their histories, international and regional institutions have to adapt successfully to changing conditions or they become irrelevant and die. The sad experience of the League of Nations shows that tendency. The defense pact we call the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has also been buffeted by the winds of change over its sixty-year existence. The essays in *Transatlantic Relations at Stake* represent a report card on the challenges that NATO faced from 1956 to 1972 and its responses. The authors, a distinguished group of predominantly European and Canadian scholars, give mixed grades, but the general picture is clear. Despite serious problems during this period, the alliance overcame them and marched into the 1970s in relatively good shape.

Some of the essays provide significant reinterpretations of familiar questions. David Tal, for instance, going against the conventional grain, attributes delays in the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to intra-alliance differences. Others fill in historiographical gaps, such as Bruno Thoss's analysis of NATO consultation during the Berlin crisis of 1958–1962, in which he shows that U.S. tendencies to inform rather than genuinely consult, had detrimental effects on the allies beyond those pointed out in French president Charles de Gaulle's criticisms. Still others look at new subjects. Bruna Bagnato provides fascinating information from the private diary of NATO secretary-general Manlio Brosio on his dim views of U.S. initiatives concerning détente. Vincent Dujardin gives an equally insightful account of Belgian foreign minister Pierre Harmel, the author of the 1967 NATO report on defense and détente that bears his name, and concludes that Brosio and Harmel were of different minds on how to manage transatlantic relations.

Similar to many books that have their origins as conference papers, this collection lacks a unifying argument. That said, the editors did their best to group disparate pieces, written with varying stylistic clarity and analytical depth, into three sections. Still, they might have gone beyond summarizing and organizing the individual pieces and brought the essays together thematically. What were the consequences for transatlantic relations of the macro-level defense issues described in the first section? What were the chief connections among arms control, de Gaulle, and détente, which the editors describe as the central issues discussed in the book's second section? What was the cumulative impact on NATO of powerful individual personalities, such as Brosio or Harmel, discussed in the third part? The book's conclusion—"Reflections on the US and NATO in the 1960s"—written by the preeminent U.S. scholar of NATO, Lawrence S. Kaplan, is a thoughtful, well-written overview, but would better serve as an introduction. Despite those minimal criticisms, the collection brings fresh perspectives, new sources, and sharp analyses to the contentious issues of the "long decade" of the 1960s.

By indirection and as a whole, this collection might suggest future inquiries that would address how well or how poorly NATO has adapted to the end of the Cold War, and, more significantly, how the NATO currently under reinvention will adapt to the new

mission of conducting out-of-area operations in global trouble spots such as Afghanistan. Can it sustain the military and political stresses that such operations entail? But those questions are for a future collection of essays.

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*Note: The views presented here are the reviewer's and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Government.*