

# H-Diplo | ISSF

**Forum 32 (2022) on Special Issue: "NATO: Contested Histories and Future Directions."**

Edited by Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Andrews Sayle and Christian Ostermann. *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (December 2020): 763-1038.

Editor: Diane Labrosse | Commissioning Editor: Thomas Maddux  
Production Editor: George Fujii

Published on 10 February 2022  
<https://issforum.org/to/Forum32>

## Contents

---

Introduction by James Goldgeier, American University .....	2
Review by Andrea Chiampan, NATO Defense College, Rome .....	5
Review by Alexander Lanoszka, University of Waterloo .....	13
Review by M.E. Sarotte, Johns Hopkins University .....	16
Response by Sergey Radchenko, Johns Hopkins University, Timothy Sayle, University of Toronto, and Christian Ostermann, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars ...	20

## Introduction by James Goldgeier, American University

---

The editors of this special issue on NATO have put together a fabulous set of essays that contain a great many new insights and information about the alliance from leading scholars in this field. Covering both the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, the articles together shed light on how the alliance has managed differences, how it has adapted, and how it has grown, including through its post-Cold War enlargement to the East, one of the most consequential policy pursuits of the past three decades, and one that has generated a tremendous amount of intellectual, political, and emotional reaction.<sup>1</sup>

The essays written by an equally distinguished group of scholars in this forum highlight the core concerns of the special issue. Andrea Chiampan addresses the domestic politics that drove decision-making, the longevity of the alliance long after its Cold War adversary imploded, and the ability of NATO to postpone internal differences to another day. Alexander Lanoszka is particularly interested in the role of individual beliefs at key moments. Finally, M.E. Sarotte utilizes her deep research on NATO enlargement to address several of the papers, for example, asking questions about the relationship between President Bill Clinton and Russian leader Boris Yeltsin as described in Sergey Radchenko's essay.<sup>2</sup>

Chiampan in his discussion of enlargement focuses in part on the possibility of Russian membership in NATO, a topic addressed by Radchenko in his essay and one that is under-addressed in the literature, since it is usually dismissed as either unworkable or highly undesirable. On nuclear weapons (an issue that Sarotte discusses as well), Chiampan discusses at length Timothy Sayle's article highlighting how little allies understood of the U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals as well as Andreas Lutsch's piece on the 1979 dual-track decision, for which "the zero option was little more than a 'believable façade'."<sup>3</sup> It might be interesting to compare how this "believable façade" resulted in the signing of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with the lack of any progress on what we might call the "unbelievable façade" of Russian membership in NATO that was discussed on and off from 1991-2001. Finally, Chiampan praises

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the pieces under review here, the growing scholarship on NATO enlargement includes James Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Brookings, 1999); Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (Columbia University Press, 2004); Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40:4 (Spring 2016): 7-44; Kimberly Marten, "Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," *European Journal of International Security* 3:2 (June 2018): 135-161; Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr, eds., *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security After the Cold War* (Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2019); "Special Issue: Legacies of NATO Enlargement: International Relations, Domestic Politics, and Alliance Management," eds. James Goldgeier and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, *International Politics* 57:3 (June 2020); M.E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Sergey Radchenko, "Nothing but Humiliation for Russia': Moscow and NATO's Eastern Enlargement, 1993-1995," in "Special Issue: NATO: Contested Histories and Future Directions," eds., Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Andrews Sayle and Christian Ostermann, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (December 2020) [hereafter JSS]: 769-816. Sarotte's most recent contribution on the subject is her book *Not Once Inch*.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Andrews Sayle, "A Nuclear Education: the Origins of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group," *Journal of SS*: 920-957; Andreas Lutsch, "The Zero Option and NATO's Dual-Track Decision: Rethinking the Paradox," *JSS*: 957-990.

Susan Colbourn's analysis of key NATO reports, which is another reminder of the role that domestic politics play in alliance deliberations and outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the Sayle and Lutsch articles that Chiampan describes, Lanoszka notes that Jeffrey Michaels traces the early Cold War analysis of the Soviet Union to the experiences decision-makers had with Nazi Germany's blitzkrieg strategies.<sup>5</sup> Lanoszka also focuses on the fears of the George H.W. Bush administration as the Cold War ended, comparing Joshua Shiffrin's argument about U.S. fears of alternative European security frameworks with the argument put forward by Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz that U.S. prosperity was tied up with the prospects for Eastern Europe joining NATO.<sup>6</sup> Lanoszka also rightly calls for more work on the decision-making in other allied capitals regarding NATO's post-Cold War enlargement given the stakes involved for each of them and for European security writ large.

These reviews all make clear that given its combination of long-standing expertise and new sources to produce nuanced and insightful analyses, the special issue is a must-read for those who are interested in European security.

### Participants:

**James Goldgeier** is a Robert Bosch Senior Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a professor of international relations at American University's School of International Service, where he served as dean from 2011-17. He is the chair of the State Department's Historical Advisory Committee.

**Sergey Radchenko** is at Cardiff University. He has written on Sino-Soviet relations (the subject of his Ph.D. thesis and a later book), on Soviet and Chinese foreign policies, on atomic diplomacy (a subject on which he has authored a book on with his Cardiff colleague Campbell Craig), and on Cold War crises. In addition he has published work on Mongolian and North Korean history and continues to have interests the international politics of Central Asia and in contemporary Sino-Russian relations and Russian Foreign policy.

**Timothy Sayle** is at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto. He is the author of *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Cornell University Press, 2019). He has co-edited two volumes: with Jeffrey A. Engel, Hal Brands, and William Inboden *The Last Card: Inside George W. Bush's Decision to Surge in Iraq* (Cornell University Press, 2019); and with Susan Colbourn, *The Nuclear North: Histories of Canada in the Atomic Age* (University of British Columbia Press, 2020). His research on NATO, Canadian-American relations, and intelligence issues has been published in a number of journals.

---

<sup>4</sup> Susan Colbourn, "Debating Détente: NATO's Tindemans Initiative, or Why the Harmel Report Still Mattered in the 1980s," *JSS*: 897-920

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Michaels, "Visions of the Next War or Reliving the Last One? Early Alliance Views of War with the Soviet Bloc," *JSS*: 990-1013.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Eastbound and Down: The United States, NATO Enlargement, and Suppressing the Soviet and Western European Alternatives, 1990-1992," *JSS*: 816-846; Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement," *JSS*: 847-868.

**Christian F. Ostermann** is at the Wilson Center and is Director of the History and Public Policy Program; Cold War International History Project; North Korea Documentation Project; and the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project. A historian of contemporary U.S. foreign policy and Germany, Ostermann is the author of numerous articles and document editions. His most recent book is *Between Containment and Rollback: The United States and the Cold War in Germany* (Stanford University press, 2021).

**Andrea Chiampan** is the Eisenhower postdoctoral fellow at the NATO Defense College (NDC) in Rome. Chiampan holds a PhD in International History from the Graduate Institute of Geneva. Before joining NDC, Chiampan was a postdoctoral fellow at King's College London, New York University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He will join the History Department at the University of Toronto as Marie Skłodowska Curie postdoctoral fellow in 2021-2022. His research focuses on interactions and intersections of politics, diplomacy, and nuclear technology during the Cold War. Portions of his research have appeared in several journals including *Diplomatic History*, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, the *International History Review*, and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*.

**Alexander Lanoszka** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo and the Balsillie School of International Affairs. He has published on alliance politics in such peer-reviewed journals as *International Security*, *International Affairs*, and *Security Studies*. His first book *Atomic Assurance: The Alliance Politics of Nuclear Proliferation* (Cornell, 2018) examines whether the United States has been as effective in suppressing the nuclear ambitions of its treaty allies as often claimed. His second book *Military Alliances in the Twenty-first Century* is due to be published by Polity in 2022. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton University.

**Mary Elise Sarotte** is the inaugural holder of the Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Distinguished Professorship of Historical Studies at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. She is also a research associate at Harvard University's Center for European Studies. Sarotte earned her AB in History and Science at Harvard and her Ph.D. in History at Yale University. She is the author or editor of five books, including *The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall* and *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2014). Her current book in preparation is *The US and the Expansion of NATO*.

**Review by Andrea Chiampan, NATO Defense College, Rome**

---

This Special Issue of the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, which was edited by Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Sayle, and Christian Ostermann brings together a formidable group of researchers to re-examine some of NATO's most "contested histories" and ambitiously ponder on potential implications for NATO's role in today's world. The specter of war on the continent, the troubled co-parenting of nuclear weapons, the emergence of détente and the centrifugal forces it liberated, the end of the Cold War and the identity questions it prompted, and the controversial expansion eastward, these were but some of the challenges the allies faced during their 72-year partnership. As more recent hurdles relating to NATO's "obsolescence" recede, this diverse collection of essays that reflect on the past with a look to the future proves successful, and quite timely too.<sup>1</sup>

Creating a cohesive argument from an edited collection of essays is always a difficult task and this special issue is no exception. But there are at least three points that I believe cut across several essays quite nicely.

The first, unsurprisingly, is the centrality of individual countries' domestic politics in the making of NATO's own policies, but also for Russia's response to those policies. Whether this meant Russian leader Boris Yeltsin seeking domestic legitimacy as the defender of Russia's national interest against Western encroachment, President Bill Clinton's embracing of expansion as a bold new vision that could help bolster his own domestic standing, President George H. W. Bush's navigating around Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's tough position in late 1990, or German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt attempting to appease the pacifist and anti-nuclear trends in his own party (the Social Democratic Party, SPD) vis-a-vis the strong Atlanticist stance of his government coalition partner (the Free Democratic Party, FPD), domestic politics constantly loomed large on East-West interactions.

The second trope is inherently connected with the question of why NATO endured as long as it did, and most importantly, why it outlived the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The answer is that several U.S. administrations – including the Bush administration – were persuaded that U.S. preeminence in Europe remained an undisputable goal of U.S. grand strategy due to the obvious economic and security advantages it delivered. This meant that NATO should continue to exist, but it also meant that alternatives would not be tolerated. In this sense, any European-led arrangements or threats of the EC (European Community) venturing in alternative security arrangements were interpreted to run against U.S. interests. This was true in the 1960s, when the U.S. endeavored to prevent nuclear proliferation in Western Europe and placate West Germany's desires to be more involved in nuclear decision-making by offering consultation as consolation prize. It remained true in the early 1990s, as the Bush administration moved rapidly to suppress challengers (foes or allies alike) in order to ensure the sustained U.S. preeminence in post-Cold War Europe.

The third recurring theme is the transatlantic partnership's ability to adapt and surpass numerous crises thanks to NATO's consultation bodies. Thanks to NATO, the allies were able to smooth out their differences, for the most part. But most importantly, NATO developed over time a better self-defense mechanism. The allies were able to accept their differences, and, rather than resolving them, they found that sweeping them aside, perhaps wrapped in an elegant statement or even better a study, would work just as well.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Trump on NATO: 'I Said It Was Obsolete: It's No Longer Obsolete'," *The Washington Post*, April 12, 2017.

This is why from an outside perspective NATO appeared to be in a constant state of crisis (or rather bargaining). Discussions about substantial differences that could not be smoothed out were consistently – but very effectively – postponed, until they reemerged anew only to be postponed yet again.

In this review, I will restrict my focus to two topics: NATO's (first) expansion; and the interplay between nuclear weapons and détente. For this reason, I will focus mostly on the essays by Radchenko, Shifrinson, Sayle, Susan Colbourn, and Andreas Lutsch.<sup>2</sup>

NATO's expansion is undoubtedly the star of the show. Why did NATO decide to expand? Did this, in turn, jeopardize any chance of cohabitation with Russia? Is Russia's current nationalistic and hostile stance in any way the result of expansion? And if so, was expansion then a mistake or simply the result of a calculated risk to assert, once and for all, a U.S. 'preponderance of power'? Or perhaps yet, was it another example of the consequences of entangling alliances? The debate marches on with significant scholarly disagreement. But surprisingly, it does so in the context of an emerging historiographical consensus. Despite being broadly familiar with the debate at hand, I have learned a lot from the engaging essays penned by Radchenko, Shifrinson, Andres Kasekamp, and Liviu Horovitz and Elias Götz.<sup>3</sup>

Shifrinson is yet again successful in persuading his readers that the Bush administration extensively considered expansion – contrary to previously held views that placed the origins of the expansion decision firmly within the Clinton administration. Thanks to the work of Sayle, Mary Sarotte, and Shifrinson, I believe most scholars today would consider this contention uncontroversial.<sup>4</sup> And yet, Shifrinson takes this contention two steps further.

First, the Bush administration not only considered expansion, but by 1992 also reached a consensus that this was a desirable step. In other words, it is reasonable to assume that had Bush been re-elected, expansion may

---

<sup>2</sup> Sergey Radchenko, "‘Nothing but Humiliation for Russia’: Moscow and NATO's Eastern Enlargement, 1993-1995," in "Special Issue: NATO: Contested Histories and Future Directions," eds., Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Andrews Sayle and Christian Ostermann, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43/6-7 (2020)[hereafter *JSS*]: 769-816; Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, "Eastbound and Down: The United States, NATO Enlargement, and Suppressing the Soviet and Western European Alternatives, 1990-1992," *JSS*: 816-847; Susan Colbourn, "Debating Détente: NATO's Tindemans Initiative, or Why the Harmel Report Still Mattered in the 1980s," *JSS*: 897-920; Timothy Andrews Sayle, "A Nuclear Education: the Origins of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group," *JSS*: 920-957; Andreas Lutsch, "The Zero Option and NATO's Dual-Track Decision: Rethinking the Paradox," *JSS*: 957-990.

<sup>3</sup> Shifrinson, "Eastbound and Down"; Radchenko, "‘Nothing but Humiliation for Russia’"; Andres Kasekamp, "An Uncertain Journey to the Promised Land: The Baltic States' Road to NATO Membership," *JSS*: 869-897; Liviu Horovitz and Elias Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement," *JSS*: 847-869.

<sup>4</sup> Mary E. Sarotte. "How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993-95." *International Security* 44:1 (2019): 7-41; Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40:4 (2016): 7-44; Mary Elise Sarotte, "Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origins of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990," *Diplomatic History* 34:1 (2010): 119-40; Timothy A. Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

have still taken place. While this view will likely prove controversial in many circles, I find the evidence provided simply too persuasive to ignore. Second, Shiffrinson argues that expansion made sense in the administration's view as a result of at least two concerns. The first involved future Russian revanchism and nationalism, the second related to the advancement of European cooperation that could erode U.S. preeminence in the continent. This point, which is also raised by Sayle in his *Enduring Alliance*, is particularly important in our understanding of the transatlantic partnership and the study of alliances.<sup>5</sup> The argument is convincing for many reasons, not only because it has been penned by two fine scholars, but also because it squares perfectly with previous U.S. attitudes towards excessive forms of European cooperation in the security realm (and elsewhere) suggesting a logical continuity in the U.S. search for preeminence and power in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Radchenko's exceptionally captivating article delineates Moscow's own views on enlargement. Radchenko argues very persuasively that the Yeltsin government was not opposed to expansion in principle and in fact hoped that membership could reinstate Russia in a global leading position – even as a junior partner – next to the United States. Yeltsin believed that Russia could regain its superpower status – or something as close to it as possible – through NATO. Very interestingly, Radchenko also points out that this search for power legitimacy – one that incidentally also underpinned the Soviet Union's desire for détente in the late 1960s – did not find expression only as a desire for membership. If rejected as partners, as they were, the Russian policy makers could draw just as much legitimacy from portraying themselves as defending their national interests vis-à-vis an unreasonably aggressive West. President Vladimir Putin did not invent anything new.

Radchenko's story is also one of missed opportunities. The Clinton administration, Radchenko writes, underestimated its own centrality in the shaping of legitimacy narratives in Russia and “missed the opportunity to bring Russia into NATO” (772) or at least develop a more productive relationship. This, of course, begs the question of whether this would have been possible or even desirable. With the benefit of hindsight, I would argue it would have been highly desirable, but at the time this would have essentially meant rewarding Russia for losing the Cold War. More importantly, if we are willing to play with counterfactuals, how could the Clinton administration have squared Russia's membership with Eastern European demands? How could NATO have incorporated an ally with a gigantic and independent nuclear arsenal? Finally, what of Russia's domestic centrifugal and anti-Western forces? It is possible to argue that these were fed by the missteps in the Clinton-Yeltsin relationship, but it is also certain that they had significant strength on their own and followed to some extent their own trajectory of legitimacy.<sup>7</sup> Judging what the Clinton administration could have done differently goes beyond the historian's purview. But once the premise of expansion had been accepted, it seems to me that any hope of cooperation with Russia would have proven to be hard to achieve. Put another way, despite having misunderstood its role and missed important signals and opportunities, the Clinton administration was caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The Cold War winner did what it could to cement its power projection along a trajectory started

---

<sup>5</sup> Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*.

<sup>6</sup> Paul van Hooft, “Land Rush: American Grand Strategy, NATO Enlargement, and European Fragmentation,” *International Politics* 57:3 (2020): 530–553.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Lanoszka, “Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement,” *International Politics* 57:3 (2020): 451–570.



at least in 1945, while the defeated successor to the Soviet Union suffered what it must: the expansion of NATO to its very borders.

Another interesting contention by Radchenko invites scholars of international relations to reflect on methods. We are used to reading that idealism and international liberalism guided the Clinton administration (and others to follow). And it was this idealism that drove NATO eastward.<sup>8</sup> And yet, Radchenko points out, one may just as well argue it was a calculated realist strategy to reshuffle the balance of power in the West's favor after winning the Cold War that drove the Bush and Clinton administrations to close the 'last gap' in Eastern Europe. Is this perhaps a compelling cautionary tale for students to avoid relying excessively on rigid theoretical frameworks when attempting to explain messy historical events?

Then there is the question of broken promises – plural. Did the Bush administration promise Russia that NATO would not expand beyond incorporating a unified Germany? Did the Clinton administration promise, or at least lead Russia to believe, that Russian membership was *really* in the cards and that Partnership for Peace (PfP) would not transform into membership for Eastern European countries as quickly as it did, and especially not without Russia alongside them? From my point of view, the answer seems to be, 'yes, kind of.'

Shiffrinson has shown elsewhere that the Bush administration unequivocally led Russia to believe that there was a deal: united Germany in NATO in exchange for no further expansion.<sup>9</sup> Whether this constituted a promise or not, and whether the Bush administration did so with the open intention to deceive may remain up for debate, but the quid pro quo was evident to all participants. I wonder to what extent the same can be said for the Clinton-Yeltsin discussions about PfP and expansion.

Another fascinating theme featured in this special issue is the Alliance's struggle to find a balance between the centrality of nuclear weapons to its security needs with the politics of détente with the Eastern bloc throughout the Cold War period. On the one hand, the allies struggled to reach a cohesive position with regard to the strategies governing the deployment and employment of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the politics of détente emerging in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis generated great opportunities, but also divisions amongst the allies. This was true in the mid-1960s, when the allies – and West Germany in particular – viewed some of the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson administration's initiatives towards relaxation as a sign of a weaker commitment to extended nuclear deterrence. This was also true in the mid-to-late 1970s, when the European allies, having fully embraced détente, strove to find just the right balance between nuclear guarantees and arms control. In the 1980s, détente became both a "contested history" and contested policy, as the Reagan administration appeared all too willing to tilt the balance towards security with many of the allies haphazardly clinging to what was left of détente and placing excessive political capital in the Geneva negotiations. And it was not just the Reagan administration on one side, and the European allies (and Canada) on the other. In the 1980s, the contested history of détente marked fault lines in many

---

<sup>8</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of US Primacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2018): 32; John J. Mearsheimer, "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security* 43:4 (2019): 23, 33.

<sup>9</sup> Shiffrinson, "Deal or No Deal?"



directions, including between Western governments and their constituents organized in large anti-nuclear movements.

The articles by Sayle, Colbourn, and Lutsch develop their narratives against this contested détente background.<sup>10</sup>

Sayle's article is outstanding and particularly useful for my own research. Sayle argues that after years of intra-Alliance misunderstandings on what nuclear weapons should do, when, how, and in what scenario, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara finally realized that much of the allies' frustration derived from an astounding lack of knowledge of the composition of the U.S. and Soviet arsenals. This was certainly the result of extreme secrecy that shrouded nuclear weapons policy in Washington and, dare I say, distrust of the allies' secrecy protocols and standards. This patronizing attitude on Washington's part was not entirely without reason, but ultimately it fed into that narrative of doubt in extended deterrence that the French President Charles de Gaulle was quick in exploiting.

West Germany's position was particularly delicate. Most of NATO's shorter-range nuclear weapons were deployed on its territory, but the Federal Republic had little control, knowledge, and say in nuclear employment policies. Ultimately, Sayle argues, McNamara decided that U.S. interests could be best met by offering the allies a "nuclear education" (922). This concept of nuclear education perfectly captures not only the spirit of McNamara's efforts through the 'McNamara Committee' and later the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), but also the overall patronizing and controlling attitude of the U.S. towards the allies when it came to nuclear weapons. It took a number of centrifugal forces that opened the nuclear 'Pandora's Box' and threatened to undermine that complete U.S. control on all things nuclear to nudge McNamara down the path of nuclear information sharing as a potential solution. Was this an honest realization that the policies of the past were perhaps flawed, or rather a quite ingenious maneuver to address the allies' demands without conceding anything too substantial?

Whatever the motive, the policy was not only successful, but it also carried important unintended consequences that would play out in the mid-to-late 1970s, when a new round of nuclear anxiety emerged. Thanks to McNamara's initiatives, this time around, the allies did have the knowledge and confidence to take the lead. The result was no less messy and illogical than any policy that preceded it, but the 1979 dual-track decision would not have been possible without this newfound competence and standing for West Germany within the NPG.

Lutsch's article focuses precisely on NATO's 1979 dual-track decision. In particular, Lutsch maintains that the reluctance by NATO members to exclude the possibility of a 'zero outcome' for Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) negotiations even as NATO governments claimed that the new weapons were needed to close a deterrence gap was due to Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's domestic needs to preserve the social-liberal government coalition and deflect the attacks of the anti-nuclear movement, but also Schmidt's desire not to alienate completely the Soviet Union and derail détente. According to Lutsch, the zero option was little more than a "believable façade" (978) that was intended for public and Soviet consumption, whereas the goal

---

<sup>10</sup> Sayle, "A Nuclear Education," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (2020): 920-957; Colbourn, "Debating Détente," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (2020): 897-920; Lutsch, "The Zero Option and NATO's Dual-Track Decision," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (2020): 957-990.

remained deployment. The zero option had also a stabilizing effect for the Alliance as a whole, as several countries (most notably Belgium and the Netherlands) had reasons of their own to cling to the zero option. By extension, the arms control track of the dual-track decision was also ancillary and secondary to deployment, designed again to retain public support if possible. Lutsch also argues that the non-exclusion of the zero option was, in retrospect, a mistake that sowed the seeds of erosion of support for NATO's defense and security policies in West Germany and elsewhere in Europe in the late 1980s and 1990s.

However, while I do agree with Lutsch on the centrality of Schmidt and West Germany in this story and I might also concede that many (but not all) NATO members understood the zero option as a façade, I disagree with Lutsch's thesis on the origins of the dual-track decision – which is at least a very positive sign that the historiographical debate on the Euromissile Crisis is, unexpectedly, alive and well.

This is not to say that NATO officials intended the dual-track decision as an 'arms control first, deployment if we must' endeavor – they did not. But the Euromissile debate that preceded, accompanied, and followed the 1979 decision was mostly an arms control debate and only tangentially (even accidentally) a military and security debate about the credibility of deterrence and the best weapons to achieve it.

Put simply, the Euromissile story was, first and foremost, an arms control story. I believe this is the case for two main reasons. Firstly, the debate about Soviet medium range weapons did not suddenly appear in the late 1970s. In 1969, at the opening of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) negotiations, Schmidt – then the FRG's Defense Minister – insisted that less-than-strategic Soviet weapons should be included in any agreement if it was to receive West German support. Most European allies concurred. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger himself, aware of this conditional acceptance of SALT, promised time and again that Soviet medium-range weapons would be included. To be sure, they were not. The debate continued behind closed doors and evolved into the so-called 'gray area' issue that occupied much of NATO's attentions in the mid-1970s. It was against this background that Schmidt called, yet again, for a solution to the 'Eurostrategic' (i.e., 'gray area') problem. This does not mean, of course, that Schmidt never foresaw or desired a deployment solution to this perceived problem. But undoubtedly, the gaps and imbalances he was concerned about were not gaps and imbalances in deterrence but in SALT and the disparity of treatment strategic and non-strategic weapons – he had been saying this since 1969, it is hard to imagine he suddenly meant something different in 1977.

The second reason concerns the cruise missile. Put simply, without cruise missiles, there would have been no dual-track decision. Had it not been for the cruise missile's hijacking of the modernization debate, Washington would have had its way and introduced a minor tweak to the weapons assigned to SACEUR and retirement of obsolete warheads. In fact, the 1974 modernization studies went in the direction of more reliance on U.S. strategic weapons rather than European-based systems. Had it not been for the Western Europeans' sudden fascination with the cruise missile, the modernization process would have been fantastically unmemorable and uncontested. But what does the cruise missile have to do with arms control? Everything!

Cruise missile were pushed through the research and development (R&D) backstage by Kissinger, who wanted a bargaining chip for the follow-up SALT negotiations. Furthermore, the fascination of Western Europeans with the cruise missile was also the result of two factors, both of which were inherently connected to SALT. First, by 1975 the missile had effectively stalled the superpowers' negotiations. Second, several of the figures who were gravitating around the nascent neoconservative movement and utterly opposed to

détente, SALT, and Kissinger, advertised the weapon as the ‘weapon of the future’ at every chance, precisely within those more informal defense circles that Lutsch discusses, such as the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), or the so-called ‘Euro-American Workshop’ organized by the RAND Corporation and the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik* (SWP), or the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*. Well before the Euromissile debate had moved into the High-Level Group (HLG) and evolved into a security and hardware debate, it had already for decade monopolized the attention of many defense experts as an arms control problem; Schmidt was one of them.<sup>11</sup>

Colbourn’s article is only tangentially concerned with nuclear weapons (the facts it narrates take place in the aftermath of the Euromissile crisis), but also deals with the intricacies of NATO’s concerns with public appearance, public diplomacy, and domestic politics. Colbourn’s thesis is centered on the very intriguing idea of ‘contested détente’.<sup>12</sup>

Colbourn delves deep into the meanderings of two of NATO’s favorite endeavors: conducting studies and drafting statements. Given the nature of these documents, Colbourn’s painstaking effort deserves to be commended.

More importantly, this article examines how and why the 1967 Harmel Report’s parallel formula of defense and dialogue endured, focusing on the Alliance’s 1984 reappraisal of East-West relations, also known as the ‘Tindemans Initiative.’ The initiative was perhaps the perfect example of how truly contested détente was at the time, scarred as it was by the collapse of the Geneva negotiations, the bellicose tones of President Ronald Reagan’s rhetoric, and the deployment of new nuclear weapons (INF) in Europe. And yet, even at a time in which détente seemed dead, the ‘Washington Statement on East-West Relations’ that resulted from the Tindemans Initiative was a crucial re-affirmation of the parallel approach to security and détente that NATO had officially embraced in 1967. This represented another important success for NATO’s consultation even at a time of heightened division between the “realists” and the “conciliators” (916), which Colbourn impressively presents in great detail. To be sure, she also correctly notes that the statement was in no way successful in reconciling competing interpretations of détente across the Atlantic (and the English Channel).

The interesting question here is what prompted NATO to stick to this double philosophy (security and détente) at a time in which the United States had denounced détente publicly and the tension between the superpowers was running high?

Whenever scholars deal with NATO, bureaucratic inertia has to be taken into account. But Colbourn presents a more subtle analysis that focuses on two levels: domestic politics and East-West relations. Colbourn argues that the Tindemans Initiative was “undoubtedly a public relations exercise, designed to bolster the Alliance’s image” (916). Belgium, the Netherlands, and West Germany had suffered significant turmoil in face of the INF deployments and needed to restore confidence in the peace-facing side of the Alliance. To some extent, this was also a message directed to the Warsaw Pact, however, in the hope that superpowers’ negotiations could resume. One is left to wonder whether this urgency for returning to the negotiating table

---

<sup>11</sup> I discuss all of these themes in my book manuscript entitled *Flawed Architects, Heterogeneous Engineers*.

<sup>12</sup> Colbourn, “Debating Détente,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (2020): 897-920.

was also geared to appease domestic opposition, or if it represented a more genuine sense of uneasiness with the state of East-West relations in 1984 – I believe the latter was the case.

Ultimately, the 1984 Washington Statement offers a perfect example of that key characteristic that allowed NATO to endure for over seven decades: the ability to sweep irreconcilable differences under the rug. Détente remained fundamentally contested until the end of the Cold War.

In conclusion, Radchenko, Sayle, and Ostermann have put together an impressive collection of essays. Among the several collective studies published on and around NATO's seventieth birthday, this is no doubt among the best ones.<sup>13</sup> Depth of analysis, diversity of topics and events covered, and a multidisciplinary approach are the core strengths of this special issue. I believe several of the essays included in it will become important readings in graduate courses syllabi across the world.

---

<sup>13</sup> Other examples include John R. Deni and Sten Rynning, eds. "NATO at 70: Balancing Collective Defense and Collective Security." Special issue of *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 17:2 (June 2019): 135-267; Thierry Tardy, ed., "NATO at 70: No Time to Retire, NDC Research Paper No. 8 - January 2020; and, Linda Risso, ed., *NATO at 70: A Historiographical Approach* (London: Routledge, 2020).

## Review by Alexander Lanoszka, University of Waterloo

---

Leading experts from history and political science have pulled together a special issue on NATO in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*. This is a must-read for those interested in European security, alliance politics, and, more broadly, international security cooperation. There is much to learn from it given the impressive range and volume of documents cited. Considering the depth and breadth of this special issue, my remarks will necessarily be confined to a few points.

One theme that emerges throughout the special issue is the role of decision-makers' beliefs at key inflection points. Jeffrey Michaels compellingly shows that experience of the last war—specifically, the blitzkrieg strategies that Nazi Germany used to devastating effect in Western Europe in 1940—shaped how political and military leaders understood the Soviet threat early in the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> Timothy Sayle neatly describes the information that U.S. decision-makers felt comfortable giving Western European allies with regards to nuclear weapons and nuclear strategy over the course of the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> An unfortunate result of this highly selective and restrained provision of information was that it compounded the uncertainty of those leaders on how the United States related to their own countries' security. This very uncertainty created a permissive space for different, even misguided beliefs about U.S. security guarantees to circulate even at the highest echelons of power in Western European capitals. And so the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group in 1966 helped allay what concerns they had in such a way as to provide reassurance. Still, as Andreas Lutsch shows in his richly argued piece on the dual-track decision, apprehensions regarding Soviet military deployments and the tilting nuclear balance in Europe continued to percolate, shaping West German leaders' approaches on arms control in the late 1970s and through the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Following the end of the Cold War, amorphous fears informed by historical experience also were influential in decisions relating to NATO enlargement. For Joshua Shiffrin, U.S. decision-makers were unnerved by the prospect of a competitor security organization like the Western European Union (WEU) that could supplant NATO and thus push the United States out of Europe. As such, they took steps to ensure NATO's primacy in European security discussions as early as the latter half of the George H. W. Bush administration.<sup>4</sup> These worries are interesting and puzzling: was the WEU truly a plausible competitor to NATO? Or was this a figment of people's imagination in Washington, D.C.? I thus found Liviu Horovitz and Elias Götz's piece to be a useful and important complement to Shiffrin's eloquent, well-documented essay. For Horovitz and Götz, the nature of the threat that haunted U.S. decision-makers at the time was really the following: that with many newly independent countries now in political and economic transition, in a region that had been

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Michaels, "Visions of the Next War or Reliving the Last One? Early Alliance Views of War with the Soviet Bloc," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (December 2020) [hereafter *JSS*]: 990-1013.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Andrews Sayle, "A Nuclear Education: The Origins of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group," *JSS*: 920-956.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Lutsch, "The Zero Option and NATO's Dual-Track Decision: Rethinking the Paradox," *JSS*, 957-989.

<sup>4</sup> Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Eastbound and Down: The United States, NATO Enlargement, and Suppressing the Soviet and Western European Alternatives, 1990-1992," *JSS*: 816-846.

witness to so much violence and instability over the course of the past century, U.S. prosperity was at risk. Democracy and capitalism needed to be safeguarded, even in the absence of a clear great power adversary. Events in the early 1990s in and around Europe's periphery lent credence to such views.<sup>5</sup>

Still, much more research needs to be done on NATO enlargement. One line of inquiry that I think would be worthwhile involves examining what different European leaders—especially those of Western Europe—thought. The conventional wisdom is that, up until the 2008 Bucharest Summit, if the United States really wanted to see other countries join NATO, then its overriding influence in the Alliance would have turned that preference into reality. Other European countries—including the 'big three' of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—would largely follow suit.

Yet the contributions in this special issue raise questions as to how valid this conventional wisdom really is. If NATO enlargement was ultimately a political project on the part of the United States to ensure that NATO would have no (friendly) rivals, then why did France, Germany, and the United Kingdom not understand this project for what it was—a power move made at their possible expense? Why, to put it in another way, did Paris allow for the WEU to be effectively neutered in this way?

One hypothesis is that France's ambitions for the WEU were never really that significant. Paris was not prepared to rekindle its interwar role of trying to provide security to the countries located between Germany and Russia. Indeed, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe may have been similarly disinclined to reprise their status as recipients of French security guarantees considering how well—or rather, how poorly—that had turned out for them in the late 1930s.<sup>6</sup> For its part, the United Kingdom likely shared the U.S. preference for keeping NATO the key pillar of European security, in part because it, too, made major investments in that alliance and in part because it, too, may have wanted to thwart certain alternatives. A closer look at French (and, more generally, Western European) decision-making—of the sort that Lutsch has done with West German alliance diplomacy in the context of the dual-track decision—is warranted for getting an even stronger handle on these issues.

Another possibility is that Western European countries themselves saw opportunities in NATO enlargement. Apparently, horse-trading characterized some of the NATO enlargement decisions. At the 1997 Madrid Summit, despite some doubts about enlarging the Alliance beyond Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, French President Jacques Chirac wanted Romania and Slovenia to join, with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl taking the view that the Baltic states should not be excluded if those two countries were to become members.<sup>7</sup> The result may have been a log-rolling coalition, with different European countries favouring particular subsets of countries rather than the whole set. The final outcome may not have been what

---

<sup>5</sup> Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement," *JSS*: 847-868.

<sup>6</sup> The classic text on this issue is Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-1936: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from Locarno to the Remilitarization of the Rhineland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Tomas Janeliūnas, *Foreign Policy Analysis of a Baltic State: Lithuania and 'Grybauskaitė Doctrine'* (London: Routledge, 2021): 60.

any country truly wanted even though it represented these basic political bargains. But of course, this observation invites the question as to why this sort of horse-trading was necessary in the first place.

None of these conjectures, to be sure, are meant to be a criticism. Any strong piece of scholarship, or collection thereof, should inspire further inquiry. As part of an exciting body of scholarship has recently emerged on the politics surrounding NATO, this special issue in *Journal of Strategic Studies* is no exception to that rule. Indeed, it is an essential contribution that I hope will be the basis of even more excellent research.



**Review by M.E. Sarotte, Johns Hopkins University**

---

The editors of this substantial—275 pages!—and hugely informative special edition, namely Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Andrews Sayle, and Christian Ostermann, deserve commendation for their hard work. The collection abounds with insights and is a must-read for anyone interested in the topic.<sup>1</sup> Given the space constraints on this review, it will not be possible to talk about each of the ten lengthy contributions (nine articles plus an informative introduction by the co-editors) in a substantive manner. (There are also two unrelated articles attached at the end of the journal issue). As a result, this somewhat idiosyncratic review will instead highlight a few pieces and arguments that caught my eye; but all of the contributions are worth reading in their own right.

The co-editors kick off the volume with, as mentioned, a useful overview. It provides concise summaries of each of the subsequent articles. Readers pressed for time will find that, simply by reading this introduction alone, they will have gained a sense of the main threads of the arguments in each contribution to this special issue.<sup>2</sup>

Then, the collection proper begins with an important and substantial article by Radchenko, which emphasizes that the controversy over NATO enlargement needs to be understood in conjunction with the “legitimacy narrative of the Russian political elites.”<sup>3</sup> He explains this argument as follows: “President Boris Yeltsin and his foreign policy team sought domestic legitimacy from being perceived (domestically and internationally) as defenders of Russia’s ‘national interests’ against Western encroachment” (772). With this claim, Radchenko rightly connects the debate over potential NATO enlargement to Yeltsin’s domestic concerns, particularly to his desire to win a second elected term as president. The article then explores relevant aspects of internal Russian politics, such as the way that, in parliamentary elections in December 1993, “the party that came first in the elections for the new Duma was the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which was infamously neither liberal nor democratic, but by all appearances fascist” (782). It was clear that Yeltsin had a serious domestic policy challenge on his hands, and worried that NATO expansion might undercut his ability to master it.

---

<sup>1</sup> There is, of course, no lack of reading on the debate over NATO expansion. Readers seeking a brief overview of the public debate at the time might start with George W. Grayson, *Strange Bedfellows: NATO Marches East* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999). Or they might wish to look at some of the theoretical debates in Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, “The Promise of Institutional Theory,” *International Security* 20:1 (Summer 1995), 39-51; John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19:3 (Winter 1994/1995): 5-49; and William C. Wohlforth, “Realism and the End of the Cold War,” *International Security* 19:3 (Winter 1994/1995). For critical takes on expansion, see John Lewis Gaddis, “History, Grand Strategy, and NATO Enlargement,” *Survival* 40:1 (Spring 1998): 145-151; Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); and Dan Reiter, “Why NATO Enlargement Does Not Spread Democracy,” *International Security* 25:4 (Spring 2001): 41-67.

<sup>2</sup> Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Andrews Sayle and Christian Ostermann, “Introduction to the Special Issue, NATO: Past & Present,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Special Issue, 43:6-7 (December 2020) [hereafter *JSS*]: 763-768.

<sup>3</sup> This quotation comes from *JSS*, 765, in the introductory essay coauthored by Radchenko, summarizing the Radchenko contribution to this special issue. His single-authored article is Radchenko, “‘Nothing but Humiliation for Russia’: Moscow and NATO’s Eastern Enlargement, 1993-1995” *JSS*: 769-815.

Radchenko's emphasis on the connection between domestic and foreign policy is convincing. The connection is also of particular interest to this reviewer, as I witnessed a similar dynamic in debates over NATO expansion during the presidency of Bill Clinton, particularly during the 1994 Congressional midterm election year. Since Radchenko was working not only in Russian sources but also with Clinton Presidential Library documents I declassified through successful appeals to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP), it was heartening to see his work in these sources independently yielding findings similar to my own (as described in my forthcoming book *Not One Inch*.)<sup>4</sup> The Radchenko article is also strong on the internal power struggle at the top in Russia during the mid-1990s, particularly the shift from Andrei Kozyrev to Evgenii Primakov as foreign minister, and the way that this struggle relates to debates over NATO expansion. His article additionally draws attention to the connection between NATO enlargement and the disintegration of the former Yugoslav state.

In short, I learned a great deal from the article. If I were going to quibble with any aspect of it—and I hesitate to do so—I might challenge his characterization of the relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin. Radchenko sees Clinton as becoming so “personally invested in Yeltsin’s success” that Clinton was simply “infatuated with the Russian president” (772). My own take is that the relationship was more nuanced throughout Clinton’s time in office, and that it disintegrated badly toward the end, particularly during and after the Kosovo crisis of 1999.

Another article that this reviewer found particularly interesting is Sayle’s piece, “A Nuclear Education.”<sup>5</sup> The article offers a fascinating portrayal of the way US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara concluded that “US interests could be best met by offering the allies a nuclear education that included much more information about the US nuclear arsenal” (921). Put differently, McNamara’s attitude to the correct balance between secrecy and cooperation developed over time in intriguing ways.

Sayle, the author of the fine recent book *Enduring Alliance*, explores the background to this development in detail.<sup>6</sup> He focuses on the “massive disparity in how much the United States (and to a more limited extent the British and the Canadians), on one hand, and the European allies, on the other, knew about the nuclear deterrent that supported NATO” (922). By the era of the Kennedy Administration, American leaders realized that such lack of understanding among European allies about the extent of the “atomic striking power that the US would bring to bear in support of NATO in a general war” was no longer acceptable (922). The reason, Sayle argues, was that the lack of information available to European leaders created a sense that some

---

<sup>4</sup> M.E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2021); see also Sarotte, “How to Expand NATO,” *International Security* 44:1 (2019): 7-41. For specific details on the declassified documents, see the ISCAP appeals log with the relevant case numbers (indicated by my name and the Clinton Library as the source); <https://www.archives.gov/declassification/iscap/status-log-description.html>; see also the National Security Archive overview of the collection, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-10-02/clinton-yeltsin-relationship-their-own-words>.

<sup>5</sup> Sayle, “A Nuclear Education: The Origins of NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group,” *JSS*: 920-956.

<sup>6</sup> Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

countries might be better off developing their own nuclear weapons, a development that Washington wanted to avoid.

The result was the creation of policies designed to educate Europeans about the extent of that striking power. As Sayle shows, there were “legal and practical limitations on the sharing of American nuclear war plans” that had to be overcome in the course of developing these policies (923). And then there were the concerns of members such as Denmark and Norway, who “made clear they wished not to station any such weapons on their soil” (929). Another factor was domestic public opinion, particularly in West Germany, which opposed to the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Sayle insightfully explores how policymakers such as Carl Kaysen, Deputy National Security Advisor in the Kennedy era, came up with practical goals for the nuclear education of allies. These included making clear to European allies that Americans would “‘hold on to what we have’ rather than share it; ‘explain to the Europeans how it defends them’” and make painfully obvious to allies “‘how fearfully expensive it would be for them to get an effective nuclear armory and how unnecessary it is’” (933). These insights help to set later debates among NATO allies in context.

Similarly, the remaining articles all offer worthwhile insights. A few that jumped out at me, in the order of appearance in the journal, included the piece by Joshua Shiffrin, emphasizing that the goal of the George H.W. Bush Administration policy was “sustaining US preeminence.”<sup>7</sup> As with the Radchenko piece, it was interesting and heartening to see a scholar coming to similar conclusions to my own, in this case to my 2010 article “Perpetuating US Preeminence.”<sup>8</sup> Further on in the journal, Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz, in their co-authored piece, bring in important economic considerations to our understanding of the Bush Administration’s approach to NATO expansion.<sup>9</sup> And Susan Colbourn, author of a much-anticipated forthcoming book on the Euromissiles crisis, shows the long history of fights between Washington and European leaders over how to respond to challenges from Moscow.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, Ruud van Dijk and Stanley Sloan (the latter being the author of another must-read work on NATO history, *Defense of the West*), similarly

---

<sup>7</sup> Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, “Eastbound and Down: The United States, NATO Enlargement, and Suppressing the Soviet and Western European Alternatives, 1990–1992,” *JSS*: 821.

<sup>8</sup> Sarotte, “Perpetuating US Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to ‘Bribe the Soviets Out’ and Move NATO In,” *International Security* 35:1 (Summer 2010): 110-37.

<sup>9</sup> Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz, “The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration wanted NATO Enlargement,” *JSS*: 847-868.

<sup>10</sup> Susan Colbourn, “Debating Détente: NATO’s Tindemans Initiative, or Why the Harmel Report Still Mattered in the 1980s,” *JSS*: 897-919; Colbourn, *Euromissiles: A Transatlantic History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, forthcoming).

explore another issue that was anything but new: the tension between NATO's proclaimed democratic values and the reality of member-states falling short of democratic ideals.<sup>11</sup>

In short, there is an abundance of riches in this collection, more than can be discussed in the space available here. Readers are strongly encouraged to make time to go through this special issue.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ruud van Dijk and Stanley R. Sloan, "NATO's Inherent Dilemma: Strategic Imperatives vs. Value Foundations," *JSS*: 1014-1038; see also Sloan, *Defense of the West: Transatlantic Security from Truman to Trump* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

## Response by Sergey Radchenko, Johns Hopkins University, Timothy Sayle, University of Toronto, and Christian Ostermann, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

---

It is difficult, as Andrea Chiampan notes here, to review edited collections. And it is even more difficult for us as editors to respond to praise and criticism. The reviewers find much in the Special Issue that they deem praiseworthy. “Quite timely,” “exceptionally captivating,” “outstanding,” “hugely informative,” “essential”; such are some of the generous epithets they use to describe it. We are grateful for this warm reception even as we recognize shortcomings of the Special Issue, in particular the difficulty of patching together a range of excellent but very different papers in ways that bring out big themes about NATO: what, in the end, does history really tell us about this remarkably resilient alliance?

Chiampan is not far off target when he quips here that the “key characteristic that allowed NATO to endure for over seven decades [is] the ability to sweep irreconcilable differences under the rug.” NATO’s remarkable adaptability has helped it bounce back from the point of irrelevance more than once, defying concerns about the credibility of allied commitments, perennial problems with information-sharing, the gap between its ostensible values and the actual policies of some member states, and even doubts about the very purpose of the alliance, especially as the Cold War wound down in the late 1980s. Contributions to this (very substantial) Special Issue offer snapshots of alliance politics at different points in history and do not attempt to present anything like an over-arching narrative.

The reviewers skilfully picked up on one or two themes, however. Both Chiampan and Mary Sarotte highlight the centrality of domestic constituencies. Sarotte draws attention to the importance of the 1994 Congressional midterm elections in shaping President Bill Clinton’s agenda in relation to NATO enlargement, a theme that she explores in greater detail in a forthcoming book.<sup>1</sup> She finds echoes of this argument in Radchenko’s discussion of how Russian President Boris Yeltsin had to engage with his domestic detractors, including by hijacking their agenda of standing tall and proud in the face of Western encroachment.<sup>2</sup>

Another theme is NATO’s place in U.S. grand strategy. Alexander Lanoszka, in particular, challenges Joshua Shiffrin’s core argument about Washington’s fear of losing ground in Europe to potential competitors, and the importance in this context of building up NATO as a key vehicle for assuring continued US primacy in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Lanoszka asks why, if this were the case, the British, the French, and the Germans did not understand that the U.S. was attempting to cling on to power at their expense. He contends that Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz – who highlight the importance of security concerns and economic agendas in driving U.S. NATO policy – offer a potential counterpoint to Shiffrin’s piece.<sup>4</sup> (Such complementarity was indeed foreseen by the editors). Meanwhile, Chiampan largely endorses Shiffrin’s take, arguing that “several U.S. administrations – including the Bush administration – were persuaded that U.S. pre-eminence

---

<sup>1</sup> M.E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Sergey Radchenko, “Nothing but Humiliation for Russia’: Moscow and NATO’s Eastern Enlargement, 1993-1995,” in “Special Issue: NATO: Contested Histories and Future Directions,” eds., Sergey Radchenko, Timothy Andrews Sayle and Christian Ostermann, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43:6-7 (December 2020) [hereafter *JSS*]: 769-816.

<sup>3</sup> Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, “Eastbound and Down: The United States, NATO Enlargement, and Suppressing the Soviet and Western European Alternatives, 1990-1992,” *JSS*: 816-846.

<sup>4</sup> Liviu Horowitz and Elias Götz, “The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement,” *JSS*: 847-868.

in Europe remained an indisputable goal of U.S. grand strategy.” Sarotte finds echoes of this debate in her own earlier work.

Chiampan criticized Radchenko’s controversial piece for its pie-in-the-sky counterfactuals, such as that Russia should have been given a role in NATO. He justly questions how this could ever be done without undermining the alliance or in the face of opposition from Eastern Europe. Sarotte disagrees with Radchenko concerning his claims that Clinton was “infatuated” (772) with the Russian president. The nuanced relationship had its ups and downs, she argues.

One of the challenges of writing about NATO is that it has accumulated a sizable historical baggage. Not all of this history is readily translatable into present-day lessons: Europe’s security landscape looks very different today from what it looked like during the Cold War. Yet, as editors we made the decision to include pieces that focused on NATO’s Cold War history, going back to the earliest days of the alliance. We believe in the importance of continued engagement with this earlier history in order to understand how NATO changed but also how it did not. This is not always the approach of scholars of contemporary NATO affairs, and so we are pleased to see the reviewers acknowledge the validity and importance of the Cold War chapters in making the special issue complete.

Once again, we thank our authors for their thought-provoking contributions, and the three reviewers, Andrea Chiampan, Alexander Lanoszka, and Mary Sarotte, for their engagement with and constructive criticism of the Special Issue.