

The Cold War Alliances - Seen from Within and “From the Other Side”

The military aspects are the least known and least understood aspects of the Cold War, mostly because the military documents are still being withheld. To bridge this gap, the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP) aims to declassify, evaluate, and disseminate these sources. It promotes the access to archives in both NATO and former Warsaw Pact countries. On the basis of this new evidence, the project provides novel analyses and interpretations of the Cold War alliances, with an emphasis on the mutual threat perceptions and their relationship to military plans and to the cycles of détente and militarization. In the long term, the PHP aims at writing a comprehensive history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact under a parallel perspective.

Established in 1999, the PHP is funded by three partners: the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research in Zurich, the National Security Archive in Washington, and the Institute of Military Studies in Vienna. It also cooperates with the Cold War International History Project in Washington and, since recently, with the Italian Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies, and several associates in Central and Eastern as well as Western Europe. The Czech-born American scholar Vojtech Mastny, senior fellow at the Woodrow



Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact

Wilson Center in Washington, coordinates the project.

In the first two years, the Eastern countries were the PHP's main priority:

- At the PHP's request, the Czech defense minister and Bulgarian and Hungarian counterparts ordered the declassification of almost all military documents from the Cold War period. PHP researchers are the first to have surveyed these sources. Many thousand pages of Czech, Bulgarian, and Hungarian documents have been obtained – including a 1964 Warsaw Pact war plan from the Czech military archives,

which was published on the PHP homepage in May 2000 together with related documents and analyses, supplemented with a collection of U.S. war plans from the early 1960s. The publication has received extensive media coverage throughout Europe.

- Mainly drawing from Bulgarian archives, the PHP's second document collection was dedicated to the growing centrifugal tendencies among the allies and the end of the Warsaw Pact (1985-91).
- The East German records in Freiburg and Berlin have been systematically researched. The records of meetings of the Warsaw Pact's main policy-making bodies have been published online in May 2001.
- A Swiss-German-Austrian research group within the PHP has been launched to study the records of Stasi intelligence on NATO; its aim is to learn how much was known about NATO in the Warsaw Pact.

The results of the PHP's search for Cold War military records have varied from country to country. For real or alleged security reasons, many archival sources on the history of the two Cold War alliances

PHP Research Group at the CIS

Besides direct funding, the **Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research** at the ETH contributes to the PHP in manifold ways. In terms of research, a group consisting of Andreas Wenger, Anna Locher, and Christian Nünlist is focusing on an international history of NATO's political transformation under conditions of hegemonic decline from 1956 to 1967. In 2001, PHP researchers will survey U.S., Canadian, and NATO archives on the parallel crises in NATO and the Warsaw Pact in 1964-69. In addition, the group has surveyed the GDR records in Freiburg and Berlin and is taking part in the efforts to declassify the Stasi documents on NATO.

In terms of services, the Center's **International Relations and Security Network (ISN)** runs the PHP website, which adds a historical dimension to the ISN, whose aim is to promote open access to information on security policy. The PHP's innovative web publication, based on a non-profit academic electronic platform, benefits the academic community by multiplying the results of research in readily accessible form; and it benefits the archives by drawing the interest of historians to their holdings.

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php>

remain inaccessible. NATO itself only began to open its archives in May 1999 and is still rather restrictive; the most open NATO countries are presently the United States, Canada, and Norway. Ten years after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the former Warsaw Pact countries except for Russia and Poland have largely declassified their Cold War records – a process that the PHP was able to accelerate or even trigger. Yet, as the communist regimes in Eastern Europe were collapsing, an unknown number of the then sensitive military files were carted away to Russia where they remain sealed, as do Soviet Warsaw Pact files along with nearly all Soviet military records from the Cold War era. Unfortunately, the accessibility of these records in Moscow has deteriorated after a brief period of openness in the first half of the 1990s. The PHP tries to cope with this difficult situation by initiating and supporting an oral history project carried out by Russian military historians. In Poland, too, interviews have been conducted with the military leadership of the Cold War period, including the generals W. Jaruzelski and F. Siwicki.

Although the project is at present still rather asymmetric regarding the origin of the sources made available through the PHP, the cooperation with Western European scholars and institutions is picking up momentum. With its most recent partner, the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies (CIMA), a group of Italian Cold War historians, the PHP has attracted significant expertise in the field. In addition, the project has filed declassification requests for the NATO ministerial minutes from the U.S. State Department. In order to live up to the project's "parallel" claim, the U.S. versions of NATO minutes will be published online together with the records of the main Warsaw Pact committees.

In the long term, the PHP aims at writing a parallel history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact as an international cooperative undertaking based on new archival evidence. A fresh look at the Cold War's military alliances promotes a new understanding of the linkage between military power and political purpose. Ideally, this will help advance an essentially new meaning of security. ■



Christian Nünlist, Prof. Vojtech Mastny, Prof. Andreas Wenger and Anna Locher at the 2nd PHP Workshop in Zurich in December 2000 (from left)

2nd PHP Workshop in Zurich, 1-2 December 2000

In December 2000, the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research hosted the PHP's Second Annual Workshop in Zurich. Participants from 15 countries, partners, and associates as well as representatives of potential partner institutions, shared their experiences and reported on the state of declassification in their respective countries. For the first time, Russian associates participated in the event. Due to rigid declassification rules in Russia, PHP and the Moscow Institute of Military History reached an agreement on cooperation that focuses primarily on specific topics and on oral history. Furthermore, the participation of scholars from Norway, Italy, and Germany signaled the interest on the side of NATO historians to become involved in a truly international undertaking, placing itself in the tradition of what is known as "New Cold War History," with its novel scholarly perspectives on the Cold War period.

Upcoming PHP Conferences

- **Romania in the Warsaw Pact:**
28-30 September 2001 in Bucharest, Romania.
- **The Cold War in the Mediterranean:**
5-6 October 2001 in Cortona, Italy.
- **Third Annual PHP Workshop:**
8 October 2001 in Florence, Italy.

Contact

For more information please contact:

Anna Locher & Christian Nünlist
Research Assistants
php@sipo.gess.ethz.ch

Or visit the PHP website at
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php>