

# Transforming NATO in the Cold War

Challenges beyond deterrence in the 1960s

*Edited by*

**Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist,  
and Anna Locher**

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Based on original documents from the archives of NATO and member nations, the 12 essays in this collection focus on the expansion of NATO's political role rather than its military and force planning functions. These essays show how, in the context of the Berlin crisis, NATO dealt with the twin challenges of Gaullism and détente, evolving into a more political and less hierarchical alliance later in the decade. Focusing on the multilateral dynamics of NATO's political deliberations rather than on national policies, the book explores the role of small allies that could "wag the dog" and underscores the importance of democratic consensus in the successful reinvention of NATO in the 1960s. Integrating insights from social and cultural history, the book also examines the role of transnational groups in NATO's transformation and shows that NATO's nuclear dilemmas were driven as much by domestic and social changes as by technological factors and elite considerations. The conclusions about the resilience of political NATO highlight the importance of common norms and values, of institutional flexibility and adaptability, and of transgovernmental and transnational groups to the cohesion of NATO in a period of a declining threat.

This book will be of much interest to students of international history, Cold War studies, and strategic studies.

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# Preface

In August 2004, the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich sponsored a conference on NATO in the 1960s. The theme centered on the changes in NATO from a US-dominated military alliance in the 1950s to a more political relationship in which the European allies loomed larger than they had in NATO's first decade. This is not a new perception; NATO historians over the years have recognized the ways in which the organization has evolved from its inception in 1949. What distinguishes this book from other contributions to NATO scholarship in this decade are new approaches to the 1960s, ranging from newly accessible sources to innovative concepts.

First, the scope and depth of research in the archives have increased. The authors have taken full advantage of records that were not available to earlier historians. Among the sources tapped are the NATO archives opened in the past few years. Although the records are not complete, they cast light on key problems of the 1960s. As the Cold War recedes into the past, member nations have quickened the pace of declassification of documents relating to the alliance. The language capabilities necessary to exploit these opportunities are present in abundance among the contributors to this collection.

Second, the focus of this volume is not on the familiar Soviet–US or NATO–Warsaw Pact confrontations but on the transformation of the alliance in the 1960s from the military orientation of the 1950s to a more nuanced relationship that modified some of the disparities between Europe and the United States. The Cold War did not dissolve, as some historians believed likely in the 1960s. But its hold over the alliance dissipated after the end of the Cuban and Berlin crises. The subsequent relaxation of tensions between East and West permitted the influence of transnational groups to interact with the national interests of NATO members. Transforming NATO – to use the language of the title – meant giving voice to the smaller nations as the Wise Men's advice of 1956 became the accepted wisdom of the Harmel report in 1967. It is noteworthy that the United States, while not invisible in the book, does not dominate its chapters.

Third, US scholars working on the 1960s are conspicuous by their absence. Out of 12 studies in this volume, representing scholars from eight NATO countries and three from Switzerland, only two are from the United States. The question arises: why are there not more? This is a subject I have addressed in the



past, particularly in an *American Historical Association Newsletter* on the occasion of NATO's 25th anniversary and at a conference in Kansas City on the occasion of the alliance's 40th anniversary.<sup>1</sup>

In 1974, and again in 1989, I found reasons for the relative lack of interest among US historians in NATO's history: the treaty initially was subsumed as a subject of research under the Truman Doctrine; NATO was an ongoing alliance with no immediate termination in sight; and archival records were not available. These deterrents are not valid today. Interest in NATO as an institution is no more alive among US scholars than it was a generation ago. That there is a wealth of material open to scholars and a variety of new interpretations possible is made clear in this book. Fortunately, European scholars have recognized what their US counterparts have neglected. I like to think the intellectual excitement a book of this quality should generate might revive NATO scholarship in the United States.

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## Note

- 1 "After Twenty-Five Years: NATO as a Research Field," *American Historical Association Newsletter* 12 (November 1974), pp. 6–7; "After Forty Years: Reflections on NATO as a Research Field," in *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe*, ed. Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 15–23.

# Acknowledgments

This book evolved in the context of the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP: [www.isn.ethz.ch/php](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php)). In an attempt to shed new light on the achievements and failures of the two Cold War alliances, the PHP brings together a network of scholars and academic institutions to collect, analyze, and interpret formerly classified documents from Eastern European and NATO records. In 1999, the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich, as one of the founding members of the PHP, initiated an international NATO history project that aimed at providing new scholarly perspectives on the transformation of NATO from the US-dominated military alliance of the 1950s to the more political and participatory alliance of the late 1960s.

The opening of the NATO archives in 1999, together with the release of documents in NATO member archives, promised a wealth of new material for such a project. The research for the chapters in this book was originally undertaken for a conference held at the ETH Zurich in August 2004 that brought together an extensive mix of leading NATO scholars and young academics from ten countries. The original texts were rewritten based on the discussion during the conference and the editor's comments. Thus, this book represents the final product of what for us has been an exiting and stimulating collaboration among a group of friends and colleagues.

We have been extraordinarily fortunate to have been assisted by many people and in a variety of ways, from the development of the conference concept through to the publication of the book. We thank Lawrence Kaplan, Gustav Schmidt, and Vojtech Mastny for sharing their insights at the conference. We would like to thank all the conference participants who presented their views and provided useful comments. In addition to the authors of this volume, they are Bruna Bagnato, Ralph Dietl, Vincent Dujardin, Daniele Ganser, Robin Gendron, Mary Halloran, Oliver Benjamin Hemmerle, Michael Kieninger, Ine Megens, Daniel Möckli, Erwin Schmidl, Heide-Irene Schmidt, David Tal, and Bruno Thoss.

Many of the book's chapters have drawn on sources from the NATO archives in Brussels. While all archive staff members have been unfailingly helpful to all of us, we wish to extend our special thanks to Paul Marsden for sharing his insights with the group gathered at the conference in August 2004. Our thanks

go also to Jennifer Gassmann and Thomas Holderegger from the Center for Security Studies for their invaluable help with the organization of the conference.

We are delighted that our project ended up in the capable hands of Andrew Humphrys at Routledge, who has handled the review and production process with great skill. We wish to extend our thanks also to Victor Mauer, the co-editor of the CSS Studies in Security and International Relations series, for his support of the project. Finally, we thank Michelle Norgate and Christopher Findlay for their excellent editorial assistance. While we are indebted to all those mentioned above, the final responsibility for any errors is ours alone.

Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, and Anna Locher  
Center for Security Studies  
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**Part I**

# **Introduction**

# 1 New perspectives on NATO history

*Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, and  
Anna Locher*

This book about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the 1960s concentrates on the political dimension of the alliance. Most studies on NATO have centered on the alliance's deterrence and defense functions, that is, on how changing perceptions of the Soviet threat and the military balance informed NATO's debate on military strategy and force planning. Far less attention has been paid to how NATO evolved into a forum of political consultation and cooperation and how it reacted to the challenges beyond deterrence that culminated in a debate about the future political order in Europe. NATO's political roles go back to the foundation of the alliance itself and are rooted in the unsettled nature of the postwar order in Central Europe. The alliance's role in keeping the Anglo-Saxon powers engaged on the continent and in ensuring West German integration into an emerging Europe is well documented.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-1960s, however, the key political challenges had shifted from keeping "the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down" (Lord Ismay) to designing political structures that would allow the multilateralization of détente and accommodate the demands of an economically revived and politically more assertive Europe.

The 1960s are the crucial decade for studying the political dimension of NATO, not least because at the time the future of the alliance seemed uncertain. As NATO's twentieth anniversary in 1969 approached, one member – France under President Charles de Gaulle – seriously seemed to consider using its right under Article 13 of the North Atlantic Treaty to cease its alliance membership. De Gaulle's opposition to military integration and central nuclear control is also well documented. At the heart of the Gaullist challenge to NATO, however, was the questioning of NATO's political legitimacy: was NATO, dominated by the United States, the right political forum for achieving German and European unity, for proceeding with détente with Eastern Europe, and for negotiating a lasting European settlement? De Gaulle was convinced that the Europeans had to assume political leadership outside of NATO's structures.<sup>2</sup> The fact that policy makers in Bonn and other European capitals at times raised the possibility of dissolving NATO and the Warsaw Pact as an alternative model for designing a new European order stirred considerable anxiety in NATO's corridors.

The founders of the alliance, in the context of the early Cold War, had not

conceived NATO in the tradition of a classical defense coalition of sovereign states. NATO was founded as an alliance of like-minded states with a common heritage – shared democratic values and common interests – that combined the defense of values with the defense of territory.<sup>3</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty represented a compromise between the European aim of securing US guarantees to deter and defend Western Europe in case of a Soviet military attack, on the one hand, and Washington’s goal of encouraging (Western) Europe’s economic reconstruction and democratization as a means of curbing Soviet political influence in Europe, on the other.<sup>4</sup> It was the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 that catalyzed NATO’s militarization. The Korean War shifted the focus from the political to the military field – from Soviet intentions to Soviet capabilities – thus jumpstarting a process of military integration that resulted in the buildup of a centralized command structure and the nuclearization of NATO. The evolution of NATO’s strategic thinking dominated NATO’s cooperative efforts for the remainder of the 1950s.<sup>5</sup>

Policy makers at that time – like scholars in later periods – paid much less attention to the expansion of NATO’s political functions and consultative procedures than to the development of its military and force planning efforts. While the peaceful coexistence policy of Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev put the issue of how to approach détente onto NATO’s agenda in 1955–56, a series of international crises in Asia and the Middle East, along with a growing perception that the locus of the East–West confrontation was shifting from Europe to the global south, led to conflict among the allies over “out-of-area” issues. As a consequence, the perception took hold within NATO that the changing patterns of East–West as well as West–West conflicts demanded a strengthening of the political dimension of the alliance. The 1956 exercise and report of the “Three Wise Men” represented a first attempt to strengthen NATO as a forum for transatlantic political consultation and cooperation – a development that was met with French opposition once de Gaulle had returned to power in June 1958.<sup>6</sup>

By the end of its first decade, NATO had entered a phase of transition that led to a widespread perception of crisis and a pronounced public and governmental debate about the future of the alliance. Disagreement over NATO’s political role built up through the Berlin and Cuban missile crises and erupted in January 1963, when de Gaulle announced his veto to Britain’s admission to the Common Market, rejected US Polaris missiles, and signed a treaty of friendship with German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. The malaise of the mid-1960s revolved around such important questions as the management and application of nuclear power, out-of-area issues – including Vietnam – and the perception of a decreasing Soviet threat. Once France had left NATO’s military structures in the spring of 1966, the transformation of NATO into a more political and less hierarchical alliance became possible. The new balance between its military and its political functions, as recorded in the public statement of the landmark 1967 Harmel report, would carry NATO into the post-Cold War world.<sup>7</sup>

This book distinguishes itself from earlier studies in that it focuses on topics pertaining to NATO’s political dimension and in that it invites an assessment of

the alliance's role in the debate and design of a new political order in Europe. In general, the evidence presented here broadens the scope of existing analyses in at least three ways: first, most of the authors have benefited from the release of new archival material. Since the opening of NATO archives in 1999, a wealth of newly declassified material on NATO has become available in Brussels, as well as in many archives of the member states. Studies on the history of NATO require multinational and multi-archival research, as demonstrated by the exemplary multi-volume project on the history of NATO from 1949 to 1956, launched by the Military History Research Institute (MGFA) in Germany in the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> This fresh scholarship on NATO at times challenges earlier readings of the alliance and reveals the valuable contribution of new sources and perspectives to a fuller appreciation of the complex intra-West interactions during the Cold War.

Second, in an attempt to complement research focusing primarily on the NATO policies of key member states, the contributions of this volume explore the multilateral dynamics of NATO's political deliberations. Analyses of NATO as a multilateral forum for political consultation tend to shift the focus from the East–West conflict to the West–West conflict and from a situation where the superpowers had the initiative to a situation where the small allies seized the opportunity to “wag the dog.” Trans-governmental coalitions emerged that shaped the political agenda, sometimes with a decisive impact on the domestic policy making process of key member states.<sup>9</sup> Third, integrating insights gained in other fields of study, such as international relations and social and cultural history, some of the chapters of this book examine the perceptions of transnational actors. Investigations into transatlantic elite networks and anti-nuclear protest movements can enrich our understanding of NATO's political impact. Arguably, the transformation of NATO was driven as much by domestic political and social changes as by great power policy initiatives.<sup>10</sup>

The book consists of four main sections. Part II analyses NATO as a pluralistic security community (Karl Deutsch) and discusses the extent to which NATO's survival beyond the 1960s was the result of a common political culture. Introducing the section, *Jeremi Suri* argues that a set of shared values, which transcended the actions of US and West European leaders, allowed for the continued prosperity of NATO into the 1970s. According to Suri, the alliance fulfilled two vital political functions during the second half of the Cold War. On the one hand, NATO provided a vehicle for overcoming the unavoidable disunity of the Western states by assuring acceptable West German participation in European politics, by keeping the United States and Britain engaged militarily and politically on the European continent, and by facilitating the emergence of a West European identity. On the other hand, the alliance successfully leveraged the political order among the Western states as the basis for building new bridges to Soviet-dominated Europe, in effect legitimizing the process of East–West normalization. By the late 1960s, Suri concludes, NATO's commitment to democratization and détente had proved as important as the military functions that had underpinned the initial formation of the alliance.

NATO politicians were in fact concerned about the alliance's democratic image, which was very much at stake in its handling of the delicate psychological warfare issue. Roused by the Berlin crisis and West German fear of isolation, Bonn proposed at the end of the 1950s the development of an offensive political warfare capability within the NATO structure. West Germany's proposal, *Giles Scott-Smith* notes, transcended NATO's established political role and radically challenged the identity of the alliance. But since London opposed a psychological warfare agency within NATO, and since Washington's reaction was only lukewarm, Bonn proposed to work through an independent private group. As Scott-Smith demonstrates, the establishment of the private and transnational "Interdoc" network provided the West Germans with an outlet for their concerns about Eastern bloc propaganda, in effect giving them an alternative to an offensive psychological warfare capability within NATO. Within the alliance, psychological warfare remained in the hands of the military for use in times of conflict only. Psychological warfare never made it into a formal NATO body, Scott-Smith concludes, because it clashed with NATO's democratic values.

Transatlantic elite networks, *Thomas W. Gijswijt* argues in his contribution, were a key characteristic of the Atlantic political culture. Elite networks like the Bilderberg Group were deeply concerned about the cohesion of the alliance, and with their activities they contributed to Western unity and to a basic consensus on transatlantic cooperation. Gijswijt traces the influence of this private informal network of high-level policy makers on NATO decision making, demonstrating how the Bilderberg Group played a key role in forming the international response to the Franco-German treaty. Supplementing rather than replacing official NATO gatherings and procedures, the Bilderberg conventions, according to Gijswijt, formed part of the overall fabric of the Atlantic alliance. Transatlantic elite networks provided Washington with an effective instrument to legitimize its leadership role while offering the Europeans an opportunity to understand and influence US policy. The participants' list of the Bilderberg meetings, which included such influential NATO personalities as Washington's Undersecretary of State George Ball and NATO Secretary-General Dirk Stikker, confirms the important role of the network in shaping ad hoc coalitions that could be used as leverage to influence national policy making.

Part III deals with the two challenges – Gaullism and détente – that resulted in a fundamental disagreement about the legitimacy of NATO's political role. De Gaulle's demand that NATO move to a tripartite directorate – which challenged the United States and embarrassed and infuriated the smaller allies – put the issue of the alliance's political leadership up for discussion. And Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum brought conflicting détente policies to the fore, which in fact seemed to prove that incompatible visions of Europe's future had emerged within the alliance. Within this context, *Christian Nuenlist* discusses the political debates among NATO ambassadors in Paris and NATO foreign ministers from 1958 to 1963. Political consultations on the Berlin crisis and on the related issue of East–West détente revealed serious intra-bloc tension among Western allies. Nuenlist argues that NATO political consultations dramatically



deteriorated in the second half of 1959, both because of de Gaulle's anti-NATO stance and because of Eisenhower's policy of bilateral détente with Khrushchev. Reconciling superpower détente and alliance politics became increasingly difficult for the United States as NATO's hegemonic leader. Comparing Eisenhower's record of political consultation with NATO on East–West relations with Kennedy's, Nuenlist concludes that Kennedy was more successful than Eisenhower in managing détente within the NATO forum. In addition, Secretary-General Dirk Stikker's handling of the NATO Council encouraged substantial multilateral political debates within NATO, whereas the restless efforts of his predecessor Paul-Henri Spaak to improve political cooperation within NATO produced less concrete results.

*Erin Mahan* narrates the battle between Kennedy and de Gaulle over power politics, international economics, and NATO strategy in the context of the escalating Berlin crisis. Mahan offers a comprehensive account of how the Berlin crisis led to the emergence of incompatible, if nebulous, US and French visions for the future of Europe. The Berlin crisis convinced de Gaulle that France would have to withdraw from military NATO, once the direct threat to the city had passed, and it bolstered his determination to veto Britain's membership application to the Common Market as a means of minimizing Anglo-Saxon influence in Bonn. In Washington, by contrast, tension over Berlin persuaded Kennedy that a war with the Soviet Union could be avoided only through his grand design of a unified Western Europe, tightly bound economically and militarily to the United States. Mahan blames both leaders for establishing too many linkages between economic policy and security policy – connecting nuclear sharing with British entry into the Common Market – so that the two policy areas became difficult to separate.

The question of how NATO insiders coped with the alliance's internal crisis between 1963 and 1966 is the topic of *Anna Locher's* chapter. The French stance in NATO triggered crisis perception and “crisis talk” at NATO's routine political meetings, and among NATO and national officials from January 1963 on. This talk anticipated, and prepared the alliance for coping with, the 1966 crisis following France's withdrawal from NATO's military command. While de Gaulle used Secretary-General Manlio Brosio as a channel for informing the allies about his next moves, small allies, led by Canada and Belgium, initiated a debate about the future of the alliance that paved the way for the understanding that NATO was necessary beyond 1969 and would continue, even if France were to leave the alliance. NATO's multilateral discussions were an expression of the general malaise that had beset the alliance since the early 1960s and thus highlighted the need for reform. But at the same time, Locher emphasizes, this West–West bargaining process produced methods of crisis management and a set of ideas that proved instrumental to the successful transformation of NATO towards the end of the decade.

Part IV addresses NATO's perennial nuclear dilemmas. The focus of the three chapters, however, is neither on the evolution of NATO's nuclear strategy nor on the history of the Multilateral Force (MLF).<sup>11</sup> Rather, the contributions in

this volume concentrate on the political aspects of NATO's nuclear challenge, exploring the role of anti-nuclear protest movements, the delicate balance of political interests in the evolution of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), and the interconnection between NATO's nuclear sharing schemes and the negotiation of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Addressing the nuclear issue from the perspective of social history, *Holger Nehring* locates the fundamental dilemma of the alliance in the diverging perceptions of security within Western societies from 1955 on. For the anti-nuclear weapons protesters, Nehring argues, NATO's nuclearization would not contribute to a "long peace" (John Lewis Gaddis). Analyzing the discussion of NATO within the protest movements against nuclear weapons in Britain, West Germany and France, Nehring is struck by the degree to which the protest movements framed NATO's nuclear issues as national problems. While Britain and West Germany both experienced large-scale anti-nuclear protest movements between 1955 and 1963, France had no strong protest movement. This can be explained by de Gaulle's unilateral nuclear policy, which became the symbol for the stabilization of the French state. While protesters in all countries regarded the NATO crisis as severe, only a vocal minority among them in Britain and France wanted their countries to leave NATO. By 1963, in the wake of the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the anti-nuclear weapons protest movements began to transform into broader protest movements that culminated in the violent protests of 1968.

The long petering out of the MLF project and the parallel, initially almost unrecognized rise of the NPG is the subject of *Andrew Priest's* chapter. The campaign of the MLF "theologians" in the State Department to bind West Germany more permanently into the alliance through the MLF is well-known. Priest argues that support for the MLF remained only lukewarm in many countries because the question of control – of central importance to national nuclear sovereignty – was never solved and because the MLF was perceived as anti-détente in the domestic political debates of some NATO countries. After the unofficial demise of the project in December 1964, US Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara introduced, in May 1965, the idea of a select committee of NATO defense ministers to discuss nuclear problems and to share expertise in the nuclear field. Gradually, West Germany was won over to the idea, the demands of the smaller allies that the new committee would not be a trilateral affair were accommodated, and the Soviet Union decided not to oppose a "software solution." The NPG, Priest concludes, represented a significant change in NATO's political and military structures that facilitated a consensus on flexible response and made progress on the NPT possible.

Connected with the issue of NATO's nuclear sharing, if much broader in scope and with wider-ranging implications, was the search for a nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Examining the "triangulations" between Bonn, Washington, and Moscow that were necessary to make the NPT possible, *Oliver Bange* notes that a majority of European statesmen saw the NPT as a means to perpetuate Germany's non-nuclear status. While Johnson had decided by late 1966 to move ahead with bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union and

had confronted the allies with the Soviet–US draft treaty as a *fait accompli*, policy makers in Washington and elsewhere realized that West Germany had to be compensated by an expansion of its role in NATO’s nuclear policy making that would at least amount to limited sovereignty over nuclear weapons on German soil. Given this context, Bange argues, the nuclear ambitions of the ruling conservatives in Bonn and their opposition to the NPT became an obstacle to both the NPT and Ostpolitik. Progress became possible only after Willy Brandt, who understood that the success of his Ostpolitik depended on West Germany’s participation in the NPT, had won the West German elections of September 1969. Bange thus shows how the NPT negotiations and the parallel rise of the NPG legitimized NATO’s political role and facilitated the reconstitution of political NATO.

Part V of the book addresses the perception of NATO in the domestic politics of selected member states and the impact of these domestic perceptions on national policies within the alliance. *Jonathan Søborg Agger* examines the factors that motivated the Danish government to promote NATO’s role as an instrument for peace. At the request of the United States, Denmark suggested that NATO should promote East–West détente, and it proposed a European security conference in May 1966. The Danish initiative was partly driven by a genuine interest in détente – prompted by an increased interest of the East bloc in détente, by a Western unwillingness to leave the propaganda value of détente initiatives to the Warsaw Pact, by the wish to pre-empt de Gaulle’s 1966 Moscow trip with a multilateral initiative, and by a fear of the possible outcome of bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and West Germany. However, domestic factors also provide an explanation for the Danish push for a multilateral détente. According to Agger, public support for NATO was being eroded in Denmark by stirrings of détente in Europe and by the unpopular US war in Vietnam. Thus, it was considered essential that NATO should become a modern, progressive organization that embraced East–West dialog in order to sustain public support into the 1970s. Further, Agger notes, Danish policy makers wanted to avoid a showdown with France, not least because of Paris’s considerable influence over Denmark’s membership application to the Common Market.

The crucial effects of the decreasing public support for NATO, with regard to national perceptions of NATO and to policies within NATO, are also evident in the case of Italy, examined by *Leopoldo Nuti*. Italy’s traditional firm reliance on the alliance was mitigated during the 1960s by frustration in Italy over its nuclear ambitions, US involvement in Vietnam, and a growing perception of instability in the Mediterranean. Since the 1950s, Italy had tried to achieve nuclear status through NATO. By the late 1960s, however, the success of the NPG was more than offset in the eyes of Italian policy makers by the bitter pill of the NPT, which sanctioned a permanent, discriminating division between the five nuclear states, on the one hand, and Italy as a non-nuclear state, on the other. According to Nuti, the Italians feared that the NPT was the price the United States had to pay to get out of Vietnam. The US preoccupation with

bilateral superpower détente and with finding a way out of Vietnam forced Italy to sign the NPT, work out its own limited détente with the East, and shift to a policy of “equidistance” in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. While NATO remained crucial as Italy’s insurance against domestic *revirements* and Soviet pressure, Nuti concludes, NATO gradually became less useful for promoting Italy’s interests in other fields.

Building on some of the major findings presented in the chapters of this book, *Andreas Wenger*, in the concluding section, offers a more general assessment of NATO’s transformation in the 1960s. Tension over NATO’s political legitimacy, induced by de Gaulle, accumulated between 1958 and 1963. The Berlin crisis forced NATO into a transition phase that witnessed the emergence of contradictory visions of a new European order, while at the same time suppressing open disagreement until the direct threat by the Soviet Union had passed. De Gaulle’s *double non* of January 1963 refocused NATO members’ attention from the East–West crisis to the future of NATO at a time of détente. In the period from 1963 to 1966, NATO dealt with France’s dissent and managed to isolate Paris within the alliance. At the same time, policy makers began to realize that domestic changes within the members states demanded a reform of NATO’s form and functions. NATO’s transformation culminated in the trilateral talks and the Harmel exercise of 1966 to 1968, which strengthened the alliance’s political functions and transformed its institutional structures. Wenger argues that the essence of NATO’s transformation from the integrated military alliance of the 1950s – dominated by the United States – into the less hierarchical and more participatory alliance of the late 1960s was political: the new NATO emerged as a tool that anchored the multilateralization of détente during the early Helsinki process in the multilateral structure of the alliance and that welcomed the emergence of a more assertive political voice of an enlarged Europe through the European Economic Community.

The early 1960s exposed NATO to unprecedented tension; there was a real possibility that NATO would cease to exist after its twentieth anniversary. By the mid-1960s, however, it had become clear that the new NATO would persist into a time of détente. NATO, accepting the risk of fragmentation, had successfully managed the arduous task of reinventing itself to adapt to a rapidly changing international environment. The political structures of the alliance had absorbed a great deal of dispute and disagreement, and the alliance had lived through instances of great-power unilateralism, while also witnessing a considerable degree of anti-hegemonic behavior. But through all of this, NATO had provided a working environment in which a world of diffusing power could be organized into a world of diffused responsibility.

In addition to addressing different themes and providing varying perspectives, the chapters of this book draw three overarching conclusions that explain the resilience of political NATO in a period of a decreasing military threat. First, the importance of common norms and values – of soft power in addition to hard power – emerges in a majority of the contributions in one form or another. The effects of a

“habit of consultation,” as these effects accumulated in NATO’s institutions and in associated transatlantic elite networks, brought about a sense of a community of values and interests among the allies that facilitated NATO’s political role. While the impact of norms on concrete policy decisions is often hard to pin down, democratic values certainly transcended the declaratory level of policy and shaped the policy making cultures within and outside NATO’s institutional structures.

Second, over time, NATO’s decision-making process integrated and expanded elements of democratic consensus building. Political consultations within NATO were marked by continuing consideration of the balance between bilateralism and multilateralism and between genuine consultation and post-fact information. The United States had to learn to lead by persuasion, rather than by control; the Europeans, in turn, were able to exert considerable influence on NATO’s political structures, even with regard to the highly contentious issue of nuclear sovereignty. The growing political influence of the smaller allies, both within NATO’s multilateral framework and in bilateral and trilateral bargaining processes, is evident in most of the contributions in this book. Moreover, coalitions of transgovernmental and transnational actors were at times able to decisively influence domestic politics in key member states. Transatlantic elite networks facilitated personal contacts between policy makers on a regular basis, which in turn contributed to the formation of ad hoc coalitions that allowed quick reactions to often fluid and ambiguous policy challenges.

Finally, many chapters emphasize the importance, at the time, of institutional flexibility and adaptability to the successful integration of the often disparate political interests of the alliance’s members. The focus of the individual chapters ranges from a detailed analysis of the multilateral gatherings of permanent representatives and ministers to the workings at the level of NATO working groups and committees. Moreover, the chapters bring the NATO secretaries-general Paul Henri Spaak, Dirk Stikker, Manlio Brosio, and the national ambassadors to NATO back into the picture as influential actors. The alliance’s institutional structure was flexible enough to accommodate the growing assertiveness of West Germany, to meet the increasing demand of the smaller allies for transparency and consultation, and to keep France in NATO’s political bodies, while leaving open the possibility of its return to NATO’s military bodies.

A close look at NATO’s transformation during the Cold War of the 1960s helps us to understand why NATO was able to avoid a sudden collapse in 1989–91 and why the alliance continued expanding its political role and evolving into a organization that was able to deal with the broader management of security in the 1990s. Although the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 entailed the first invocation of Article V in the alliance’s long history, NATO, in the context of the US war against terror, is currently once again struggling to redefine its political role. While the current international environment and the character of today’s security problems are remarkably different from the Cold War setting, policy makers and analysts might find it useful to look back and reflect on what it takes to successfully manage an alliance of democracies that is facing a long-term but primarily political threat.

## Notes

- 1 See Lawrence Kaplan, *NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance* (New York: Twayne, 1994).
- 2 See e.g. Frédéric Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Maurice Vaïsse, *La grandeur: Politique étrangère du général de Gaulle, 1958–1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Michael Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).
- 3 Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 329; George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–50* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), pp. 397–414.
- 4 See e.g. John English, “‘Who Could Ask for Anything More?’ North American Perspectives on NATO’s Origins,” in *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years*, vol. 2, ed. Gustav Schmidt (London: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 305–20; Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis, 1949–1956* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993); André de Staercke, edited by Nicholas Scherwen, *NATO’s Anxious Birth: The Prophetic Vision of the 1940s* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985); Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947–1949* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1977).
- 5 Andreas Wenger, “The Politics of Military Planning: The Evolution of NATO’s Strategy,” in *War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West*, ed. Vojtech Mastny, Sven G. Holtsmark, and Andreas Wenger (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 165–92; Beatrice Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France, and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949–2000* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997); Richard L. Kugler, *Laying the Foundations: The Evolution of NATO in the 1950s* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1990).
- 6 Christian Nuenlist, “Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Political Cooperation in NATO: Western Reactions to Khrushchev’s Foreign Policy, 1955–63” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Zurich, 2005).
- 7 Anna Locher, “Crisis – What Crisis? The Debate on the Future of NATO, 1963–66” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Zurich, 2006); Helga Haftendorn, *NATO and the Nuclear Revolution: A Crisis of Credibility, 1966–1967* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Andreas Wenger, “Crisis and Opportunity: NATO’s Transformation and the Multilateralization of Détente, 1966–1968,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 1 (2004), pp. 22–74.
- 8 Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (ed.), *Entstehung und Probleme des Atlantischen Bündnisses*, vols 1–6 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998–2005).
- 9 Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
- 10 Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Andreas Wenger and Jeremi Suri, “At the Crossroads of Diplomatic and Social History: The Nuclear Revolution, Dissent and Détente,” *Cold War History* 1, no. 3 (2001), pp. 1–42.
- 11 See e.g. Jane E. Stromseth, *The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO’s Debate Over Strategy in the 1960’s* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); Helga Haftendorn, “Das Projekt einer multilateralen NATO-Atomstreitkraft (MLF): Vademecum für die Glaubwürdigkeit der nuklearen Strategie? Das ‘Nukleare Patt’ und die Zweifel an der Glaubwürdigkeit der nuklearen Abschreckung,” *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 54, no. 2 (1995), pp. 417–51.



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