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BOOK REVIEW

Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order, by Timothy Andrews Sayle, Ithaca & London, Cornell University Press, 2019, x + 346 pp., \$34.95 (hardback), ISBN 9781501735509

Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate, by M. E. Sarotte, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2021, xvi + 550 pp., \$25.00 (paperback), ISBN: 9780300268034

Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War, by James Goldgeier and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, eds. Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave MacMillan, 2023, xvii + 645 pp., \$129.99 (hardback), ISBN 9783031233630

Why did the NATO Alliance endure and enlarge after the end of the Cold War? Timothy A. Sayle's *Enduring Alliance*, M. E. Sarotte's *Not One Inch*, and James Goldgeier and Joshua R. I. Shiffrin's *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* all provide valuable insights that help address this question from different angles. While the bulk of Sayle's analysis focuses on the Cold War itself, Sarotte, and Goldgeier and Shiffrin focus on the post-Cold war period. Together, these three books offer a crucial baseline for policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic tasked with evaluating past policies and designing future strategies. After all, the way in which we understand NATO's evolution is not just about gaining knowledge as such. Instead, it profoundly shapes our understanding of contemporary policy options.¹ Scholars and policymakers have long mined history as a treasure trove from which to selectively extract elements to make their case. Advocates of a muscular military posture for NATO, for example, often focus on the appeasement that preceded World War II. Meanwhile, NATO sceptics worry about the arms race prior to World War I.² The outbreak of the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian war has prompted renewed political reflections on the future of Europe's security architecture. In an effort to contribute to this exercise, this review explores how these three books help elucidate the sources of disagreement regarding the contemporary value of NATO and its continued centrality to European security. Rather than zooming in on the empirical details across the 1590 pages of these works, it considers them through the lens of the general state of the literature on NATO more broadly. It focuses on three main issues: The

¹Susan Colbourn makes this point eloquently in 'NATO as a Political Alliance: Continuities and Legacies in the Enlargement Debates of the 1990s', in Goldgeier, J. and Shiffrin, J. R. I. (eds.), *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan 2023), 73–96.

²Timothy Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press 2019), 244.

challenge of treating history as diagnosis or justification, NATO's various purposes, and NATO's evolving international context. The main goal of this review is to distil a set of key lessons that can help serve as a compass, guiding scholars and policymakers to pose the right questions as they navigate the complex terrain of NATO's present and future.

NATO history as diagnosis or justification

Although not always explicitly stated, the approaches of Sayle, Sarotte, and Goldgeier and Shiffrin align with the broader tendency in the literature on NATO to blend description and evaluation.³ Sayle's *Enduring Alliance* appears to offer the most enthusiastic endorsement of NATO's continued value among the three and argues that, still today, NATO's function is best encapsulated by Lord Ismay's famous dictum; 'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down'.⁴ Even if Sayle describes NATO as an instrument to manage the balance of power in Europe, the primary subject of his book are domestic politics. Indeed, Sayle argues that, during the Cold War, the most important threat to the European balance of power was not a Soviet invasion. Rather, the primary threat came from within the domestic politics of the NATO allies: A war-averse European population, a resurgent German leader or an isolationist U.S. president or Congress. While Sayle is careful to note that limited access to archives means that we cannot truly know the sources of contemporary policy, he does hypothesize that the post-Cold War conversations are likely to at least rhyme with the archival record. In the conclusion, Sayle therefore pushes back against the notion that NATO endured out of inertia or without weighing various alternative options. Instead, he posits that the alliance endured because, time and time again, the allies simply viewed it as the most effective strategy for avoiding war altogether.

While Sayle focuses on how NATO persisted *in spite of* recurring challenges where allied publics considered rejecting the necessity of the Alliance, Sarotte examines the specific national context within the United States during the 1990s, and how it played a pivotal role in steering the evolution of the Alliance towards a more maximalist direction. In *Not One Inch*, Sarotte describes NATO enlargement through the lens of the George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton administrations and outlines how U.S. policymakers sought to balance between two priorities: Including people formerly dominated by Moscow into NATO and Western institutions; and promoting cooperation with Moscow, particularly on nuclear disarmament. She explains how, at least in part due to domestic political pressures, NATO enlargement was ultimately prioritized over the prospect of maintaining better relations with Russia, with lasting consequences for the latter. This leads Sarotte to put forward a balanced critique of NATO's enlargement in

³Evaluations of the past are often combined with prescriptions or guidelines for the future, see for example Alberque and Schreer, 'Finland, Sweden and NATO Membership', *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 64/3 (2022), 67–72; Kupchan, 'The origins and future of NATO enlargement', *Contemporary Security Policy* 21/2 (2000), 127–148. for a broader argument in this regard, see Balzacq, Dombrowski Reich, 'Is Grand Strategy a Research Program? A Review Essay' *Security Studies* 28/1 (2019), 58–86.

⁴Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 3.

that period, arguing that while it was a 'justifiable response to the challenges of the 1990s', the problem lies in 'how it happened'.⁵ Rather than sticking to a strategy of incremental partnerships, such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP), Washington proceeded with pushing for enlargement without qualifications for membership. Although Sarotte notes that today's renewed tensions between Russia and NATO stem in large part from Moscow's own choices, she expresses regret that U.S. policymakers did not demonstrate more creativity in their approach to Europe's post-Cold War security structure.

Goldgeier and Shiffrin, finally, share Sarotte's focus on NATO's evolution and enlargement in the post-Cold War period. In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement*, they bring together a collection of essays that examine and evaluate the story of NATO enlargement through the lenses of great power relations, domestic politics considerations and organizational politics, respectively. Compiling an overarching message from an edited volume is never easy. Rather than viewing this as a weakness, however, Goldgeier and Shiffrin succeed in leveraging the book's diversity of viewpoints as a strength. Specifically, *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* recognizes that any potential merits or costs of enlargement need to be assessed in reference to various stakeholder's unique perspectives. Goldgeier and Shiffrin's work thus cautions against conflating parsimony, or the quest to explain a phenomenon with the fewest possible causal forces, with mono-causality, or the idea that a phenomenon is the result of a single cause.⁶ Moreover, and relatedly, *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* is a prime example of how scholarly discourse thrives through the active engagement with opposing viewpoints and underlines the richness that emerges from such dialectical exchanges.

Though the three books under review do not decisively conclude the debate on whether NATO's endurance and enlargement can be considered a success (nor do they portray to do so), they share a commitment to two fundamental assumptions about the past's importance for understanding NATO's present and future. First, they all assume that current events are not isolated occurrences but are, instead, strongly influenced by what has preceded them. This stands in contrast to some typical approaches in political science, which use comparative case analysis to draw inferences about causation independently of historical context.⁷ In this sense, all three books serve as a useful reminder of the importance of path-dependence, or the simple fact that the choices and events in the past set a particular course that has a lasting impact on the present and future.

Second, the books also appear to share the assumption that the past can be used to learn lessons for the future. After all, it is hard to make sense of any situation without accepting that the future will, at least in some respects, resemble the past. As scholars and policymakers take note of similarities through time,

⁵M. E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2021), 3.

⁶Gunitsky, 'Rival Visions of Parsimony', *International Studies Quarterly* 63/3 (2019), 707–716; Levy, 'Too Important to Leave to the Other: History and Political Science in the Study of International Relations', *International Security* 22/1 (1997), 22–33.

⁷See also Robert Jervis, 'H-Diplo Essay 198 – Robert Jervis on Learning the Scholar's Craft' (April 2020).

however, they should be mindful not to overlook the impact of changed circumstances. Indeed, operating under the assumption that identifying a historically similar situation will fully predict future outcomes is unlikely to result in sound strategy. Furthermore, there is the well-known risk of hindsight bias, or the tendency of people to believe that a specific outcome was more obvious or foreseeable than it actually was.⁸ The meticulous detail of Sarotte's work, and its attention to detail and appreciation of complexity, serve as a compelling reminder that the choice for NATO enlargement in the 1990s, though seemingly inevitable now, was not a clear-cut conclusion at time. In this sense, Sarotte's work highlights that the course of history is never set in stone, and what appears obvious in hindsight, for better or worse, was often far from certain during the actual unfolding of events. Likewise, what seems inevitable in the present is also contingent and influenced by ongoing debates and various material forces that shape decision-making processes.⁹

These latter points highlight the challenge of drawing on history to seek for lessons rather than to merely justify pre-determined policies. Indeed, it has long been noted that decisionmakers often rely on their perceptions of the past to make decisions in the present.¹⁰ Sayle, in this regard, emphasizes how for several influential Cold War-era officials, 'the experience of war was not abstract, and it fundamentally shaped their understanding of the need for NATO'.¹¹ He further writes that 'leaders looked less to their contemporary present and future to make their policy, but to the past – their past – to understand the riddles of world affairs and guide their policy'.¹² For scholars, the task of disentangling whether decision-makers genuinely draw on history to inform their decisions, or whether they simply invoke it to rationalize pre-existing choices is not an easy one.¹³ The diversity of views that is put forward in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* also underlines that there are many lessons one can draw from history. In addition, there is the perpetual risk of confirmation bias, or the tendency to selectively focus on information that aligns with one's views and to downplay contradictory evidence.¹⁴ All of the above warn against the notion that history has any easy or straightforward lessons to teach to NATO scholars. Empirically rich books, such as the three under review, are incredibly helpful and important in this regard. Rather than offering direct parallels, they help contextualize the present to better understand it, spotting both similarities and, perhaps more importantly, differences with the past. Notably, Sarotte has challenged certain propositions circulating in today's debate about NATO membership for Ukraine, and warned against the potential dangers of 'misreading history'.¹⁵

⁸Nancy Kim, *Judgment and Decision-Making: In the Lab and the World* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing 2018), 65–83.

⁹The author would like to thank Austin Cooper for bringing this to her attention.

¹⁰Levy 'Learning and foreign policy: Sweeping a conceptual minefield', *International Organization* 48/2 (1994), 279–312.

¹¹Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 7.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³This is also what Kimberly Marten alludes to in 'NATO Enlargement: Evaluating Its Consequences', in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, eds. Goldgeier, J. and Shiffrinson, J. R. I. (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan 2023), 209–249.

¹⁴Kim, *Judgment and Decision-Making*, 219–234.

¹⁵M. E. Sarotte, 'NATO's Worst-of-Both-Worlds Approach to Ukraine', *Foreign Affairs*, 10 July 2023.

Importantly, scholars themselves are not entirely immune to the fallacies outlined above. While scholars certainly have the right to engage in policy advocacy, they should always strive to maintain a clear distinction between making an analogy and prescribing a certain response. Additionally, a fair evaluation of the merits and drawbacks of any policy should stem from an impassioned understanding of the policy as such, from the viewpoint of those involved. While the various contributions to *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* vary in the extent to which they appear to succumb to the pitfall of interpreting new evidence in line with pre-existing ideas, as a whole, all three books deserve commendation for their intellectual modesty and transparent positioning in the balance between description and evaluation. In order to draw lessons from history, accuracy and representativeness (i.e., including various perspectives) should always be prioritized. How one responds to this record is to remain a separate activity.

NATO and the means, ways and ends of foreign policy

The writings of Sayle, Sarotte, and Goldgeier and Shiffrinson underscore the value of thinking about NATO and its role for individual members in terms of means, ways and ends. Despite their distinct foci, the three books all treat NATO not as an independent actor but as an instrument of policy for its members. In other words, NATO remains fundamentally a means for individual members to achieve their *own* policy objectives or ends. This very recognition that NATO exists at the behest of its members immediately clarifies how support for NATO, and its enlargement, hinges on what one thinks NATO is supposed to do in the first place. Rebecca Moore, in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement*, echoes a similar sentiment in her chapter on Ukraine's bid to join NATO, and highlights that debates on this matter reflect the Alliance's failure to reach a consensus on 'the most critical question of all: Namely, just what it is that it is defending'.¹⁶

The three books identify, applaud and criticize various policy goals for NATO. According to Sayle, as previously alluded to, NATO is essentially a tool to manage the European balance of power. Menon and Ruger, in contrast, in *Debating NATO Enlargement*, describe NATO, and its enlargement, as a tool in an American quest to maintain 'global primacy'.¹⁷ Paul Poast and Alexandra Chinchilla, in the same volume, investigate the impact of NATO enlargement as an instrument of democracy promotion (they find little evidence of such influence). Such diverging viewpoints on what NATO is and should be defending helps clarify the underlying sources of the disagreement about further NATO enlargement going forward. If one views NATO as a means to aggregate military power to deter potential Russian efforts to achieve regional hegemony in Europe, one can raise reasonable

¹⁶Rebecca Moore 'Ukraine's Bid to Join NATO: Re-evaluating Enlargement in a New Strategic Context', in Goldgeier, J. and Shiffrinson, J. R. I. (eds.), *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan 2023), 373–414.

¹⁷Rajan Menon and William Ruger, 'NATO Enlargement and US Grand Strategy: A Net Assessment', in Goldgeier, J. and Shiffrinson, J. R. I. (eds.), *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan 2023), 165–208.

doubts about the strategic wisdom of enlargement to include Ukraine.¹⁸ If one seeks to aggregate military power to push the frontline as close as possible to Russia, one may very well reach the opposite conclusion.¹⁹ This is also the case if one views NATO as underpinning a security order rooted in the liberal democratic principles that the Washington Treaty's preamble pledges to safeguard.

In fact, the very question of what NATO is supposed to defend is also central to ongoing debates about whether the Alliance should adopt a China strategy and what this strategy should entail. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Beijing reacted negatively to the publication of NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept that commits the Alliance to undertake efforts to counter Chinese military, economic and industrial challenges. In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement*, Odgaard explains how from Beijing's perspective, concerns about NATO are not about geographic enlargement, but rather NATO's expansion into activities into areas such as cyber and space security, and humanitarian intervention. Although the bulk of scholarly work on NATO's evolution, including the three books discussed here, prioritize the study of enlargement in the geographic sense, Odgaard's chapter rightfully highlights how NATO has also widened its scope functionally. Recent calls for an economic version of the Article 5 defence pledge are but the latest iteration in NATO's ongoing debate on where the limits of its mandate lie.²⁰

Adding further complexity to this matter is the fact that individual NATO members may disagree on how to prioritize between multiple, potentially conflicting objectives. Sarotte, for example, illustrates how U.S. policymakers prioritized NATO enlargement over other issues, such as U.S.-Russia disarmament. Van Hooft highlights how the decision to maintain NATO as the central organization for European security negatively impacted Europe's indigenous military capability. Moller describes how post-Cold War NATO leaders prioritized enlargement but failed to reconcile 'the tensions resulting from expanding commitments while simultaneously drawing down military forces', and thereby 'set the stage for many of the strategic problems NATO faces today'.²¹ Despite repeated intra-alliance disagreement, however, the three books all suggest that when push comes to shove, Washington's views matter most. This in no way means that the United States always gets everything it wants. Rather, and relatedly, several authors also warn against what Jervis once called 'belief overkill'. Specifically, Jervis has long noted that while humans have tendency to believe that 'all good things go together', each strategic decision entails trade-offs.²² Opting for NATO as the central organization for European security, along with NATO enlargement, is no

¹⁸For an argument along these lines, see Justin Logan and Joshua Shiffrin, 'Don't Let Ukraine Join NATO: The Costs of Expanding the Alliance Outweigh the Benefits', *Foreign Affairs*, 7 July 2023.

¹⁹Alexander Lanoszka hints at this logic in 'Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement', in Goldgeier, J. and Shiffrin, J. R. I. (eds.), *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan 2023), 307–339.

²⁰James Politi, 'Former NATO Chief calls for Economic Version of Article 5 Defence Pledge', *Financial Times*, 10 June 2022.

²¹Sara Bjerg Moller, 'Assessing the Consequences of Enlargement for the NATO Military Alliance', in Goldgeier, J. and Shiffrin, J. R. I. (eds.), *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan 2023), 460.

²²Robert Jervis as quoted in Deborah Welch Larson, 'Learning From History', ISSF Jervis Tribute, available here: <https://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Jervis-Tribute-1.pdf>.

exception. Recognizing the existence of such trade-offs is important, as it can help policymakers mitigate undesirable consequences from the outset. Indeed, the purpose of such constructive criticism is not to be contrarian but to produce sound strategy.

Closely tied to the question on NATO's objectives or ends is the question of whether NATO represents the optimal or only means to achieve these ends. Sayle, for example, makes a compelling case for why NATO endured that pushes back against the notion that this was because 'the alliance or the allies were, in one way or another, democratic either in their membership or operation'.²³ Importantly, however, claiming that NATO endured as a tool to manage the European balance of power does not as such imply that no other tools could have obtained this same result.²⁴ Menon and Ruger, for their part, explicitly grapple with the question of alternative options to post-Cold War NATO enlargement and write that while NATO enlargement may have contributed to Central and Eastern European security and checked a resurgent Russia, alternative pathways were viable as well. Specifically, they express regret that Western Europe did not assume a more prominent role in European security as the Cold War ended. Lanoszka disagrees, and challenges critics of NATO enlargement to provide convincing counterfactual scenarios where European countries would be more secure had NATO decided against incorporating former members of the Soviet bloc. Related questions can be asked about other policy domains. Thus, if one views NATO as important to foster economic reforms in new members, the question arises whether other types of engagement could achieve these same outcomes. The bottom line here is that one cannot merely assume that something is the best option; instead, one has to actually outline this argument and address its counterfactual.²⁵ Similarly, it is often easier to criticize a policy. The question of what, if any, better options exist, for its part, is generally much harder.

Finally, thinking about NATO in terms of ends, ways and means helps clarify that even in those instances where NATO members agree on the ends, they may still prefer different ways of achieving these ends. The ways of strategy represent the pathways or courses of action chosen to align means and ends. Sarotte's work, for example, focuses on ways because she examines the implementation process of NATO enlargement, not the decision to enlarge in the first place. In doing so, Sarotte compels us to revisit the various ways NATO enlargement and membership have taken place over the past several decades. She pays a lot of attention in her narrative to the 1994 Partnership for Peace. This framework offered an alternative to full-scale enlargement by establishing more loose forms of connection between NATO, countries that were formerly part of the Soviet bloc and neutral European states. Sarotte also mentions the examples of Denmark, France, Norway and Spain to highlight that even if all enjoy the same Article 5 guarantee, they placed restrictions on their military integration within NATO. Sarotte's narrative therefore ought to encourage scholars and

²³Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 4.

²⁴Sayle at times alludes to this but does not provide decisive evidence to make this very point.

²⁵See also Jervis 'Liberalism, the blob, and American foreign policy: Evidence and methodology', *Security Studies* 29/3 (2020), 343–456.

policymakers to refrain from discussing NATO matters in simple all or nothing categories that are historically incorrect. Indeed, breaking out of such straight-jackets is arguably the most promising way to encourage policy innovation going forward. Scholarly literature on differentiated integration and differentiated cooperation within the European Union (EU), or on the practice of pursuing integration and cooperation that ‘allows states and sub-state entities to work together in non-homogenous, flexible ways’, can offer a useful starting point for related discussions about the risks and benefits associated with such practices in other institutional contexts, like NATO.²⁶

Putting NATO in context

In various ways, and as previously alluded to, the empirical richness of all three books highlights the inherently multicausal nature of history. Sayle and Sarotte skilfully elucidate how a unique combination of factors drove NATO history forward and eastward. Sayle’s emphasis on the role of individuals as policy entrepreneurs, and especially his focus on the French President Charles De Gaulle, prompts intriguing counterfactual questions about what NATO may have looked like with other individuals in charge. Meanwhile, Sarotte considers the impact of often-siloed domestic considerations, such as the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, on Washington’s Russia policy. Goldgeier and Shiffrinson, finally, speak of the value of thinking in terms of levels of analysis in assessing NATO enlargement. This recognition of complexity serves as a welcome warning against the hubris that permeates some of the literature on NATO, and especially the literature that credits or blames the United States for all the good or all the bad in this world. Instead, Sayle, Sarotte, and Goldgeier and Shiffrinson implicitly caution against assuming that the future is both fully known and controllable, even by the protagonists in Washington.

That being said, the three books do not fully escape the U.S. centrism that continues to permeate much of the literature on NATO history. Perhaps this is logical, given that the United States is undeniably a protagonist in this story, and these are English language books. Moreover, it would be unfair and unreasonable to expect one single book or scholar to do everything at once. There are important limitations of space, time and access to sources. The choice to grant so much attention to the United States has important implications, however, and highlights missed opportunities as well as avenues for future research. Sayle, for example, appears to base much of his argument on English language sources, and especially from archives in the United States and the United Kingdom. Given the centrality of Germany, and to a lesser extent France, to his narrative, one wonders if a more diverse array of continental archival input may have yielded a different story. Goldgeier and Shiffrinson perhaps missed an opportunity to include a chapter on the viewpoint of allies such as Turkey. The recent Turkish

²⁶Sandra Lavenex and Ivo Krizic, ‘Governance, Effectiveness and Legitimacy in Differentiated Integration: An Analytical Framework’, *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* Vol 57/1, 35–53; Perot and Klose ‘Spot the Difference: Differentiated Co-operation and Differentiated Integration in the European Union’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 61/1 (2023), 259–276.

resistance to Sweden and Finland's accession to NATO underscores the influence of individual players, including on the enlargement agenda.²⁷ In addition, and relatedly, interesting questions also remain about why certain countries, for a long time, opted not to join NATO – Finland and Sweden are cases in point. There is also the question of how NATO enlargement affected the relationship between NATO, Russia and other European non-NATO members (including the European neutrals). More work is needed to include such perspectives.

The choice to explore the history of Euro-Atlantic security and order through the lens of NATO, and NATO enlargement, yields important insights into the evolution of the region's military balance. Yet, this story is also intrinsically linked with the broader history of Euro-Atlantic politics and order. Admittedly, on multiple occasions, the three books do hint at this. Sayle, for instance, links the dynamics of domestic politics, economics and alliance management in his discussion of the so-called US-FRG offset crisis. Nonetheless, important questions persist about NATO's relationship with other ordering institutions, both in Europe and beyond. For many European countries, especially, the history of NATO is closely linked to the process of European integration. In fact, the 1949 Washington Treaty echoes many themes of the 1948 Brussels Treaty between the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux countries, which expressed a commitment to collaboration in 'economic, social and cultural matters and for collective self-defence'.²⁸ Moreover, both NATO and the European Community, now EU, originated in post-World War II efforts to bring stability to Europe; the former aimed to ensure collective defence (with the involvement of the United States), whereas the latter sought political stability through economic interdependence.²⁹ Besides NATO and the EU, the OSCE also comes to mind. In the present era, when long-standing Western orthodoxies about the relationship between security and economics appear increasingly contested, histories that pay attention to international security and political economy become ever more paramount to help contextualize contemporary events.³⁰

Finally, and relatedly, the books under review reflect a tendency in scholarly literature to consider NATO's evolution in geographic isolation, and to prioritize questions about changes in intra-Alliance relations and NATO's relationship with Russia. Again, as such, this is not an illogical or unreasonable approach. Nonetheless, questions persist about how the world around NATO has changed, including various allies' relationships with countries elsewhere. During the Alliance's early decades, discussions about NATO's potential role in managing the imperial possessions of several European members were crucial in delineating

²⁷Lanoszka alludes to this in 'Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement'; Colbourn makes precisely this case in 'NATO as a Political Alliance: Continuities and Legacies in the Enlargement Debates of the 1990s'.

²⁸Tony Insall and Patrick Salmon, *The Brussels and North Atlantic Treaties, 1947–1949* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge 2015), 455; Art 42.7 of the Treaty of Lisbon of the European Union effectively replaced a modified version of the Brussels Treaty. As a result, the Brussels Treaty was terminated in 2010.

²⁹Congressional Research Service, 'NATO and the European Union', 29 January 2008.

³⁰For an excellent example, see Horowitz and Götz 'The overlooked importance of economics: Why the Bush Administration wanted NATO enlargement', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43/6–7 (2021), 847–868.

the Alliance's geographic perimeter.³¹ Indeed, the Washington Treaty explicitly states that its application is limited to the 'forces, vessels of aircraft' of members 'in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France, on the territory of Turkey or on the islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic region north of the Tropic of Cancer'.³² Sayle briefly alludes to the centrality of Algeria to De Gaulle's NATO strategy, when he describes Paris' efforts in the late 1950s to restructure NATO under the leadership of a tripartite directorate consisting of France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The fact that the Algerian Departments of France were covered by the Washington Treaty, and thus by the mutual defence clause of Article 5, seems hardly an unimportant detail in the Alliance's history, however. France famously tried to have it both ways during the 1954–1962 Algerian War of Independence; on the one hand it considered the conflict part of its 'domaine réservée' where other allies had no claim, on the other hand it justified requests for material assistance from NATO allies based on the argument that Paris was defending Western interests more broadly.³³ Beyond the Algerian case, there were recurring instances where NATO foreign ministers pushed the Alliance (as an organization) to develop a larger interest in Asia and Africa. Although Sayle deserves credit for touching upon this issue, it is not entirely clear how, if at all, this interacts with his argument about the primacy of domestic politics. More broadly speaking, various activities beyond the perimeter were important drivers of allies' political strategies within NATO, and also impinged on the availability of military resources. In this sense, while the bulk of scholarly literature explores how NATO seeks to shape the world around it, an important agenda remains to be developed (further) about how the world shapes NATO.

The relationship between NATO and the world around it has, of course, always been complex. During the Cold War, many conflicts in what was then referred to as the 'Third World' were, in part, also proxy wars between NATO and the Soviet Union. This is arguably no longer the case today. At the same time, discussions about the lack of support from the so-called 'Global South' for NATO on Ukraine highlights that the world around NATO (still) matters for the Alliance.³⁴ It underscores that it is unwise to assume that NATO's problems are the world's problems, just a regional conflict in the 'Global South' might not be on the top of the agenda in many Western capitals. As the relative weight of the Euro-Atlantic area decreases in the global balance of power, NATO policymakers are compelled to reflect on how the actions of other powers shape strategic outcomes, including in the Euro-Atlantic area itself. Odgaard's chapter about China is a helpful contribution to this broader perspective. Essentially, as NATO's international context has evolved since 1949, the Alliance's strategic conversation should evolve

³¹Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow, *The Limits of Alliance: NATO out-of-area problems since 1949* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 1990)

³²Insall and Salmon, *The Brussels and North Atlantic Treaties, 1947–1949*, 460.

³³Stuart and Tow, *The Limits of Alliance: NATO out-of-area problems since 1949*, 175–245; see also Martin Thomas, *The French North African Crises: Colonial Breakdown and Anglo-French Relations, 1945–1962* (London: Palgrave MacMillan 2000), 158–178.

³⁴See also Howard W. French, 'Why Ukraine is Not a Priority for the Global South', *Foreign Policy*, 19 September 2023.

accordingly. This leads one back to the fundamental question of what NATO is defending, or on what NATO does for its individual members. Insofar as NATO is but one tool or means, if an important one, in how its members pursue their interests abroad, the question of how multiple ends, means and ways intersect deserves more scholarly attention going forward.

Conclusion

Sayle, Sarotte, and Goldgeier and Shiffrin have written masterful books about NATO's endurance and enlargement. Each of these books deserve a place on the mandatory reading list for both scholars and NATO policymakers alike. The questions these books address not only advance understanding of the parameters of contemporary policy debates, but at times also provide readers with the tools to challenge them. The books highlight the importance of the past for understanding NATO's present and future and, for the most part, remind readers that history is both inescapable as well as complex. Importantly, none of these authors claim to have the definitive answer to the questions they explore, a form of intellectual honesty that deserves commendation.

That being said, in a manner typical for the study of international relations, the books are fascinating in part for what they choose to omit. Importantly, this review has treated them as representative of a broader field, a categorization the authors have not themselves asked for. Scholars and policymakers ought to clarify whether they are talking about ends, means or ways when discussing the Alliance. In addition, more work is needed that moves beyond the viewpoint of the United States and puts NATO in international context. These books have provided a strong foundation for future research on such matters. The very fact that these books provoke so many new questions above all bears testament to the quality of the work.

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