A Roundtable on Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons that Nearly Destroyed NATO*

Jayita Sarkar, Heather Marie Stur, Elizabeth C. Charles, William Hitchcock, Aaron Bateman, and Susan Colbourn

Introduction to Roundtable on Susan Colbourn's *Euromissiles*

Jayita Sarkar

Susan Colbourn's *Euromissiles* powerfully exemplifies the complex history of transatlantic relations during the latter half of the Cold War, underscoring the importance of nuclear weapons in US foreign and military policies in Europe. In the present moment of the Ukraine War, that should surprise no one. However, she powerfully argues that Euromissiles are misunderstood and forgotten more than other notable episodes of twentieth-century international history involving nuclear weapons, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Colbourn's book is a *tour de force.* It provides a much-needed archive-based corrective to our understanding of the late Cold War, particularly the complexities of transatlantic relations the reverberations of which are palpably felt till this day. She remarkably straddles multiple historiographical worlds from diplomatic and political history to social history, presenting an in-depth vertical story where the top-down and the bottom-up perspectives are effectively interweaved. Rarely has a book on transatlantic relations also presented a clear-eyed analysis of anti-nuclear peace movements that had gripped civil society in Europe and North America at the time. Kudos to Colbourn for presenting her actors in their own light, whether those were striding across the corridors of power or jostling on the streets to protest the powerful.

Euromissiles joins a new body of historical scholarship on Euro-American relations, particularly alliance politics, during the Cold War. Colbourn's monograph exemplifies this shift: this body of scholarly work eschews a predominantly US-centric approach, presenting European actors' interests and goals in interactions with those of their American counterparts.[1] It thus presents multiple sides of the story, expanding the lens of analysis horizontally and vertically. Naturally, all four reviewers on this roundtable have showered high praise on Euromissiles and Colbourn's penmanship.

Aaron Bateman calls the book "a meticulously researched and masterfully written history of one of the most significant periods in the Cold War transatlantic alliance." He highlights the depth and nuance with which Colbourn analyzes non-American and non-elite actors. The predominance of the "power of perception" irrespective of technical realities stand out to him.

Elizabeth Charles' beginning anecdote about her smart neighbor's lack of awareness of NATO only drives home the significance and timeliness of *Euromissiles.* Like myself, Charles also found the "stories of antinuclear activists and protests" in the "Deploy" section "most intriguing." As I highlighted at the beginning of this introduction, the emphasis on popular protests against nuclear weapons make the book stand out in the midst of other books on NATO, transatlantic relations, and alliance politics.

Heather Stur's essay reminds the readers how palpable the threat of nuclear weapons was in 1984 through the BBC television film, *Threads*. Unlike *Dr. Strangelove* and *Failsafe*, both released in 1964 while the world was still reeling from the Cuban Missile Crisis, *Threads* was about the devastation of people's lives by nuclear war— not a techno-scientific dystopia of a mad scientist and a trigger-happy general, or a military operator's decision to stick to the nuclear war manual against revised orders from the top. Stur thus underscores the role of fear that permeates Colbourn's "engaging and highly readable" account.

William Hitchcock, while praising the book's innovative approach and emphasis on contingency, "regrettably" notes that the author "did not work in French archives," leading to France being "largely absent from the book." Hitchcock finds that Colbourn's ability to draw various strands of analysis from NATO, US, British, Canadian, and German archives a strong contribution to the historiography and our understanding of the events of the period. His essay underscores the timeliness of the book and Colbourn's "wise" decision to end the book in 1989 during the pivotal moment of the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

In her thorough response, Colbourn attends to Hitchcock's point about French primary sources. France being a unique case among NATO countries, thanks to its Gaullist policies in the 1960s but improved though measured relations with the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, is already the subject of many excellent studies by scholars based in France and elsewhere. The absence of French sources does not diminish the significance of Susan Colbourn's excellent monograph. Hers is a true transatlantic history of the late Cold War years through a close reading of recently declassified documents from North America and Western Europe.

Rightfully, there is broad consensus among the four reviewers that Colbourn's *Euromissiles* is a thoughtful and in-depth study of the role of nuclear weapons in relations between the United States and its allies in Western Europe— a subject that has grabbed headlines with the ongoing tragedy in Ukraine, but not fully understood in presentist media analyses. I share the reviewers' admiration for Colbourn's book and am looking forward already to her next book, which she hinted at in her response.

Note:
1. See for example, Timothy Andrews Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Post-War Global Order* (Cornell University Press, 2019).

Review of Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO*

Heather Marie Stur

In 1984, a year after the United States began deploying Pershing II missiles to U.S. Army bases in West Germany, the BBC released a terrifying movie called *Threads*. Set in Sheffield, *Threads* begins with ordinary citizens going about their days as military aircraft soar across the sky and television news programs report on increasing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union over Iran. As the reports become more alarming, municipal government officials in Sheffield put disaster response plans into action, encouraging citizens to stock up on food and build bunkers at home if possible. But the residents of Sheffield, and British citizens in general, soon learn that no preparedness plan can cushion the blow of nuclear weapons. As a NATO ally, Britain in *Threads* bears the fallout, literally, of war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Susan Colbourn's engaging and highly readable *Euromissiles* provides the historical context for nuclear apocalypse films like *Threads*. Colbourn tells the story of the U.S.-Soviet arms race and negotiations to limit weapons from the perspective of America's NATO allies, the countries where the United States deployed the missiles pointed at the Soviet Union. It was the latter issue that made Western Europe nervous. That might seem counterintuitive, but Colbourn's impressive research in six countries beyond the United States makes it clear how anxious NATO members were as American and Russian leaders made plans to downsize their arsenals.

The negotiations didn't include the subject of Western European security. As the superpowers agreed to work towards weapons parity, West German leaders and other NATO allies lost confidence in America's willingness to defend them against the Soviets. Early negotiations sought to limit weapons that could harm the United States, but the Soviet Union could still keep missiles trained on Western Europe.

At the end of 1979, the United States and NATO offered Warsaw Pact nations their "dual-track decision." In an effort to sway the Soviet Union to remove its missiles from Europe, the United States offered to continue arms limitations talks while also threatening to deploy more weapons to Western Europe if the Russians failed to comply with arms control agreements. The dual-track decision emerged partly in response to Soviet SS-20 Sabers, intermediate-range ballistic missiles with a five-thousand-kilometer range that put the capitals of Western Europe within striking distance.

When talks broke down in the early 1980s, the United States positioned five hundred ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles in NATO countries, triggering a wave of anti-nuclear protests throughout Western Europe. Soviet disinformation campaigns fueled Western European anti-nuclear sentiment (70). Colbourn's writing deftly evokes the tension of the era, and *Threads* depicts what might have happened had the "Euromissiles crisis" gone beyond the brink and erupted into nuclear war.

Euromissiles is a Cold War story, but it highlights continuities in international relations regarding balances of power and alliance politics. The notion of parity in nuclear weapons harkens back to the Congress of Vienna and the idea that a balance of power would secure peace in the post-Napoleonic world. In 1814, the "great powers" were Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia, with France consigned to nominal great power status because of Napoleon's actions. Lesser powers, including Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, and Portugal, sent delegates to Vienna but did not have the bargaining power of the big five. Yet not long after the meeting, old antagonisms chipped away at the resolve of the great powers to maintain balance in foreign affairs. The Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, and the Great Game in Central Asia reflected the breakdown of the Congress of Vienna's ideals.

The final break occurred in June of 1914, when World War I began. Hoping once again to end all wars, the great powers, this time with President Woodrow Wilson leading the charge, attempted to establish a framework for collective security with the League of Nations. While the league did not necessarily emphasize a balance of power, its focus on negotiation rather than war to solve differences was the latest expression of the desire for peaceful international relations.

Peace remained elusive, however, as the world erupted in war for the second time in two decades in the late 1930s. When World War II ended in 1945, only two great powers remained: the United States and the Soviet Union. The postwar division of Europe into eastern and western blocs was a nod to the balance of power idea, as was America's policy of containment. Under this doctrine, first articulated in the Truman administration, the United States would seek to contain communism within its existing borders, preventing its spread but not trying to roll it back.

Neither the Iron Curtain nor containment made Americans feel secure. In the spring of 1949, the United States and its Western European allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to bolster collective security against Soviet aggression. Later that summer, the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb, eliminating America's nuclear advantage and creating the first example of parity in the arms race. In 1955, the Soviet Union brought its East Bloc satellites into the Warsaw Pact. It was another type of balance, but it was built on mutual suspicion and was thus a reflection of the tension that marked the early Cold War world.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev took the world to the brink of war twice in the early 1960s, with the Cuban Missile Crisis and the building of the Berlin Wall. In the aftermath of those events, the superpowers experienced a cooling of tensions, and as the United States moved to adopt the policy of flexible response, both powers began focusing again on achieving balance in weapons holdings and on arms limitations. Viewed from their perspectives, negotiations aimed at nuclear parity looked like efforts to maintain world peace. But Colburn shows that from the viewpoint of America's NATO allies, U.S. acceptance of nuclear equality with the Russians left them feeling vulnerable in the face of the Soviet missiles threatening them. Colburn notes that Western Europeans had reasons beyond Russia's weapons arsenal to worry about Soviet aggression. In pursuit of their goal of being a dominant world power, the Russians had built up their navy and aided revolutionary activities around the globe, including in Angola, where they joined forces with Cuba (51).

By giving voice to America's NATO allies on the subject of nuclear arms limitations, Colbourn adds another layer of legitimacy to the post-revisionist school of Cold War historiography. While Cold War revisionists place the blame for the era's tensions and insecurity on the United States and what they deem America's imperialistic adventurism, Colbourn confirms the findings of John Lewis Gaddis and other post-revisionists that the Russians were also involved in military expansion and power grabs aimed at establishing global hegemony.

Like the great powers of the nineteenth century, the superpowers of the twentieth century acted in self-interest in times of tension and times of détente. In the

arms limitations talks of the 1970s, American and Russian officials considered the options that seemed best suited to their own national security, but when the United States did not take the security of its NATO allies into account, Western Europeans had cause for concern about Soviet militarism. Not only did talks not limit Soviet troops, missiles, or nuclear weapons positioned in Europe, parity looked like the United States had lost ground. If Soviet missiles were no longer in range of the United States, would the Americans defend Western Europe if Russia attacked it? In a broader sense, if there were separate security arrangements for the United States and the Soviet Union versus Europe and the Soviet Union, then what was the point of NATO?

The dual-track decision was meant to assure Western Europe that the United States could support nuclear parity while also standing firm on its commitment to the defense of NATO countries. It proved untenable after just four years, and the arms race escalated when the United States deployed missiles to Western Europe in 1983. The world seemed once again to be on the brink of nuclear war. Although the U.S. missiles were meant to project America's willingness to defend NATO allies against Russia's nuclear proliferation, Western European citizens protested their deployment. In England, members of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp formed a fourteen-mile-long human chain of about seventy thousand protesters that extended from a Royal Air Force base storing nuclear weapons to an ordnance factory in Burghfield, West Berkshire. As it turned out, more missiles did not make citizens feel more secure.

In 1986, the United States and the Soviet Union returned to the bargaining table, and in December of 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which banned missiles with launch ranges of up to five thousand kilometers. If both parties adhered to the terms of the treaty, the world might be relieved of the tension that had weighed on it since 1945. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Cold War appeared to be over.

The reason for NATO's existence was gone, but the alliance did not die with it. On the contrary, NATO membership expanded as former Warsaw Pact nations clamored to join the security collective. Colbourn brings *Euromissiles* to a close in the twenty-first century with a grim reminder that weapons proliferation is still a source of friction between the United States, Russia, and NATO. In August 2019, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty, and Russian authorities declared the treaty "formally dead" (266). Then, in February of 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. At the time of this writing, that war still rages.

It may be unintentional, but one of the most intriguing contributions Colbourn makes with her superb book is that she induces readers to question the concept of a periodization of the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from the ashes of World War II in 1945 as the only remaining great powers, but their struggles over security, hegemony, and alliances were not very different from previous great power antagonisms. NATO was founded to defend against Soviet expansion, but at its core, it is a military alliance like many before it. Neither NATO nor U.S.-Soviet animosity disappeared after 1991. President Vladimir Putin justified his country's war in Ukraine on the basis of security, just as Joseph Stalin justified the Soviet Union's control of the Eastern Bloc. The great power politics and alliances of the post-1945 time period remain part of international relations in 2023. Only a shift in who the great powers are will signal the dawn of a new era.

Review of Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons that Nearly Destroyed NATO*

Elizabeth C. Charles[1]

Picture it. Alexandria, Virginia. Late February 2022. I have a very smart neighbor with a Masters in Public Health. She is 30. Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine a few days earlier. We were out walking our dogs, and she asked me what NATO was and why it mattered. To be fair, she knew NATO had something to do with Europe and U.S. foreign policy, but she didn't have much context for what was happening. We had a long history lesson that afternoon on our dog walk.

For those who might not have a neighbor who specializes in Cold War history, a copy of Susan Colbourn's new monograph, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons that Nearly Destroyed NATO*, will serve them just as well. This book provides an approachable history of NATO during the Euromissiles crisis that details how the alliance dealt with threats from the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. Writing the history of NATO is a complex task. Colbourn explains the fissures in the alliance and the imbalance in members' influence and shows how these issues affected strategic considerations like flexible response; the Euromissiles crisis and the 1979 dual-track decision (whereby NATO would modernize its missiles in Europe but would not deploy them if arms control talks succeeded); and the Reagan administration's push for the zero option (the elimination of all INF missiles by both sides). She analyzes individual interests of NATO stakeholders and explains how the missile deployments affected alliance members in different ways.

Colbourn's concise book details the complexity of the "transatlantic history of the Euromissiles, from the arms race's origins in the early 1960s to the final days of the Cold War" (3). She draws numerous threads together to tell a compelling history of how NATO, the United States, and the Soviet Union grappled with the Euromissiles, antinuclear protests, internal political debates, and the negotiations that eventually resulted in the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987. She does an excellent job of synthesizing what mattered most to different actors at the various stages of the Euromissiles crisis. In her introduction she writes that her book is a "history of diplomacy and alliance politics, of social movements, and of strategy; it is about nuclear weapons and nagging fears, and about politics, both high and low" (4).

Unlike the more fragmented accounts of the dual-track decision, Colbourn's story of the Euromissiles crisis, which uses material garnered from extensive multi-archival research, weaves together stories from different perspectives. She writes about various issues, from protesters like the Greens' Petra Kelly to West Germany's struggles over deployments and security, NATO's fears about the loss of U.S. strategic protection and the decision-making of the Reagan administration, and how Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev reached an accord on INF missiles. Her analysis of the interactions between these actors and their struggles to protect their nations' interests, from the genesis of the Euromissiles crisis to its resolution and the end of the Cold War, is her book's most important contribution to the scholarship in this field.

Colbourn's book goes beyond great stories with compelling historical narratives, however. It also provides us with an in-depth look at the complexities of strategic decision-making, including the confrontations between and political compromises made by the United States and its NATO allies. In hindsight, we know how much Europe and the world changed from the dual-track decision in 1979 to 1989 and 1991. But when the Soviets replaced their aging

missiles with the SS-20s, no one anticipated that the NATO response would dominate strategic decision-making until the INF Treaty was signed in 1987. Nor did anyone participating in the debates about the dual-track decision in the late 1970s envision the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Colbourn divides her book into three parts, each with a concise preamble and conclusion. Each chapter is then smartly divided into subsections, enabling the reader to connect all the threads running through the narrative. The first part, "Decide," provides a foundational history and an understanding of how NATO decided to counter the Soviet SS-20s and how, after much wrangling and compromise, it arrived at the dual-track decision in December 1979. This section provides a firm understanding of how NATO "struggled to find a balance between detente, arms control, and defense policies" from the 1960s through the 1970s (14).

The discussion of how NATO's policy of flexible response evolved and enabled NATO to carve out "a political role as an alliance dedicated to more than deterring and, if needed, defending against Soviet aggression" demonstrates the complexities of NATO history. Flexible response meant different things to different groups. While the goal of countering a growing Soviet nuclear arsenal aimed at the heart of Western Europe pushed some toward détente, others believed that "providing a range of escalatory options added to the importance of nuclear weapons deployed in Europe, or theater nuclear forces, as an essential link between conventional troops and the strategic arsenal of the United States" (31). The state of a country's economy and the size of its defense budget also played a significant role in policymaking, as did the issue of burden-sharing.

The chapters in the "Decide" section also cover the Nixon-era SALT talks with the Soviets and how they affected European security. The chapter rightly titled "Fiasco!" deals with the neutron bomb in the Carter administration. Colbourn links how these issues impacted decision-making over the dual-track to broader security and defense concerns involving both nuclear and conventional weapons.

Chapter 5 covers the complicated deliberations of the NATO High Level Group and the Special Group in the lead-up to the dual-track decision. These groups determined what types of systems should be deployed to counter the Soviet SS-20s, how many missiles were needed, where they would be based, and how to pursue arms control while simultaneously planning for deployments. By September 1979, both groups had produced reports. The "High Level Group recommended a deployment program with a mix of 572 Gryphons and Pershing IIs to be stationed in five countries: Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, beginning in 1983." The Special Group set parameters for arms control negotiations, with the goal of "avoiding unconstrained competition, reducing the significant disparity between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the long-rage theater systems, and adopting tangible and realistic proposals in order to combat the anticipated Soviet efforts to use the vague promises of disarmament to throw a spanner in the works" (99–100). By December 1979, the NATO countries had agreed to the dual-track decision, even in the face of domestic political constraints and protests. The political support of all members, from the weakest to the strongest, was necessary to show "that NATO remained undaunted and undivided" in the decision to modernize to counter the Soviet SS-20 threat (108–9).

Part 2, "Deploy," explores the antinuclear protest movement and the political and strategic controversies that surrounded the decision to deploy the U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles to NATO allies in November 1983—missiles that would be deployed only if negotiations with the Soviet Union failed. Colbourn writes that "as the Western allies tried to preserve sufficient support to see the planned deployments through, they confronted a growing conversation about the central tenets of their security policy: the nature of the Soviet threat; the protection afforded by the United States; the wisdom of defending themselves with weapons capable of unimaginable destruction; and the likelihood their constituents would continue to live with this system" (112). The debates around these major concerns plagued the four years between the decision and the deployment of the Euromissiles.

What I found most intriguing about the "Deploy" section is how Colbourn weaves the stories of antinuclear activists and protests throughout these chapters to help address the different political considerations various NATO countries faced. More broadly, these protest stories and the sheer, record-breaking numbers of people in Europe and the United States who demonstrated against nuclear weapons in the 1980s are astonishing. The deployment debates also brought into question the "core principles" of NATO's existence: "the wisdom of relying on the United States for protection, the severity of the Soviet threat, and the logic and morality of nuclear deterrence" (154). Perhaps most importantly, the debates spread to "pundits, former policymakers, and sitting officials," entered the mainstream media, and raised questions about the fundamental basis of the NATO decision. The negotiation position within the dual-track decision provided political cover for Western leaders to move ahead with the November 1983 deployments even as hundreds of thousands of people in Western Europe and the United States remained opposed.

The final section, "Destroy," examines the period between the Soviet walk-out at the INF negotiations in Geneva in November 1983 and the signing of the INF Treaty in Washington in December 1987 a mere four years later. These chapters explain how Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) impacted Thatcher's concerns over the tenets of nuclear deterrence and how Shultz worked to start new arms control talks with the Soviets, which began in March 1985. They also address the sweeping arms control proposals at the Reykjavik Summit in October 1986 and what NATO and Western European security might look like if the zero option succeeded and the U.S. missiles had to be removed and destroyed.

While many historians have discussed the Reagan-Gorbachev and Shultz-Shevardnadze summits and the Nuclear and Space Talks, Colbourn does an excellent job of building on the archival record to provide an analysis of why all of this mattered to NATO members. Gorbachev's role in the story, she argues, was instrumental, as were the various levels of skepticism and concern with which U.S. and Western leaders assessed Gorbachev's arms control proposals. With Gorbachev's decision in March 1987 to untie the Soviet arms control package, making concessions that the Soviet military leadership pushed against, and proposed a double zero on INF, "Western European governments panicked. A double zero solution, removing both shorter-range and longer-range INF, could easily be the first step toward the complete denuclearization of Europe" (231).

Gorbachev's double-zero offer placed West Germany in a particularly difficult position. Helmut Kohl hoped that even with the INF Treaty, "some shorter-range missiles would remain. But that outcome was hardly politically viable" (232). Colbourn examines how Kohl's government would deal with "the seventy-two Pershing IAs owned and operated by the West Germans but fitted with US-owned nuclear warheads. Kohl hoped to keep these missiles outside of the superpowers' talks, even as the Soviets pressed for their inclusion" (233).

While U.S. and Soviet negotiators continued to work out INF treaty specifications in Geneva, the West German government pondered how to handle these

weapons. By August, Kohl had agreed that if the United States and Soviet Union came to terms on the INF weapons, the West Germans would give up the Pershing IAs as well. With this resolution, and inspection protocols in place, Gorbachev traveled to Washington in December 1987 with much fanfare, and he and Reagan signed the INF Treaty eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons.

The final chapter of *Euromissiles* deals with the complicated question of the modernization of short-range nuclear forces (SNF) based in West Germany. With the INF Treaty, weapons with a range of 500 to 5500 kilometers were set to be eliminated; but a small number of weapons with a range under 500 kilometers remained in NATO territory "to ensure the continuation of the alliance's strategy of flexible response" (241). From 1988 to 1989, SNF issues dominated NATO discussions and again divided the alliance.

Colbourn adeptly tackles these big issues, explaining the different positions and the centrality, politically and geographically, of the Federal Republic of Germany. Margaret Thatcher argued for modernization because SNF were "critical to ensuring that NATO remained a nuclear alliance in Europe." German vice chancellor Hans-Dietrich Genscher, on the other hand, believed that "modernization could jeopardize the prospects to remake relations with the Soviet Union, and with it, the entire European order." The fissures in the alliance, similar to those in the debates in the late 1970s over the dual-track decision, emerged again. Could and should NATO modernize and preserve its nuclear deterrent and its dependence on the United States for strategic security?

While NATO members debated these issues in an attempt to have a resolution by its fortieth-anniversary summit in Brussels in May 1989, events in Eastern Europe made some of these concerns moot. As Colbourn explains, "the pace and scope of the transformations sweeping across Europe weakened the arguments in favor of modernizing NATO's short-range nuclear forces. How could the United States justify the deployment of short-range missiles equipped with nuclear warheads aimed at countries undergoing massive political changes like the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Poland?" (257–8). After the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War started to recede, NATO would need to redefine its strategic considerations and security concerns.

To circle back to my conversations with my neighbor: how does one explain to current college students or Generation Z or Alpha, who grew up in a post-Berlin Wall, post-Cold War world, how real and tangible the desperate fear of nuclear war was in the 1980s? As a child of the 80s, I remember the palpable feelings of distress about possible nuclear war. We are the generation of *War Games*, *Spies Like Us*, *The Day After*, *Red Dawn*, *The Hunt for Red October*, *Top Gun* and the like. Yet such popular culture disseminated and reinforced ideas about a nuclear apocalypse and the Soviet menace, so college students who read Colbourn's new monograph are certain to understand the context in which decisions about nuclear missiles were made. And they would enjoy her stories of protesters and antinuclear activism, which provide a compelling account of the people who pushed to stop INF deployments to Europe in 1983 and why they worked so diligently against the nuclear arms race.

Since the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 by Putin, understanding the history and context of NATO, with all its complexities and contradictions, is more important than ever. The concerns over European dependence on the United States for security are resurgent, and this book provides much-needed historical context on how this system emerged and why it has lasted. Colbourn provides an astute analysis of how the alliance dealt with the Euromissiles, and in doing so provides broader historical perspectives about the significance of NATO alliance politics, decision-making, and cooperation and conflict within this coalition.

Note:
1. Elizabeth C. Charles is a historian at the Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State. These views are her own and not those of the Department of State or of the U.S. government.

The Club Everyone Wants to Join

William Hitchcock

Susan Colburn's excellent, nuanced, and timely account of the Euromissiles crisis of the 1980s makes both a historiographical and methodological contribution to Cold War history. Its argument—that the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles to Europe nearly wrecked the very alliance the missiles were intended to defend—adds to recent transatlantic scholarship on NATO and the last phase of the Cold War.[1] The book's method, too, is instructive: when considering the demise of the Cold War order, Colbourn insists, historians must recover contingency and context and avoid the enormous temptation to read the decade through the lens of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the robust competition among historians to explain why the Cold War ended, we sometimes forget that the political actors of the era had no idea how close they were to the transformational events of 1989. We must recover the fears and anxieties leaders felt then and acknowledge the risks and daring political choices they took in that decade, unaware of how their policies might influence the course of history.[2]

Colbourn emphasizes this point early and often. "This book is about fear" (8), she writes; and though the book certainly goes deep into the intricacies of inter-allied negotiations and the technical details of arms control, that sense of fear never lifts. The stakes of the Euromissiles debate seemed enormous to the policymakers involved, and although we know how the story ends—with the remarkable superpower treaty of 1987 that abolished intermediate-range nuclear weapons and marked a tectonic shift in the Cold War landscape—this outcome was beyond imagining when the story began in the late 1970s.

While it might have been tempting to tell the story of the Euromissiles deployment as one of Western cohesion, overcoming domestic opposition to the missiles while compelling the Soviets to admit defeat in the strategic arms race, Colbourn rejects that approach. Her analysis emphasizes the fragility of the Western alliance, its permanent state of internal crisis, and the near-death experience of NATO during the Euromissiles dispute. She makes a powerful case that the path from the 1979 decision to deploy the missiles, to the INF Treaty of 1987, and finally to the end of the Cold War two years later, was not a straight one. In fact, it was not even visible to those who felt their way along it in real time.

The book lays out the narrative in three substantial sections. Part 1 reveals the enormous role German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt played in bringing the alliance to face the strategic challenge presented by the Soviet deployment in 1976 of a new intermediate-range missile, the SS-20. Schmidt, who had long considered himself a strategic thinker, feared that by expanding their nuclear arsenal and achieving not just parity with the Americans but superiority in "theater" nuclear weapons, the Soviets would make the price of a nuclear war far too great for the Americans ever to contemplate, and this in turn would allow the Soviets to use their enormous conventional military might to intimidate and bully the Western Europeans into some kind of neutralism or accommodation with Moscow.

Coming in the waning days of détente, Schmidt's October 1977 speech in London calling for a redress of the strategic balance triggered a major debate that would shape the alliance for the next decade. Colbourn's attention to the Germans is valuable here, as we see that NATO could never be called simply an American-dominated alliance. It was a partnership in which key member-states, especially the Germans, could force the pace and direction of strategic planning. The contentious road to NATO's 1979 "dual-track" decision, which committed the alliance to start deployment of Pershing II and Gryphon missiles while also offering the Soviets a wider range of arms control negotiations, led the alliance into a major storm it did not at all expect.

Part 2 provides perhaps the most innovative chapters, for it knits together the parallel stories of the transatlantic anti-nuclear movement with the domestic and intra-alliance politics of getting the member-state parliaments to approve the deployments of the new weapons. Here Colbourn returns to her theme of fear, which gripped Europeans as they contemplated a widening of the nuclear arms race and the deployment of missiles that had the express purpose of destroying European cities. Deeply concerned about the possibility that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the election of Ronald Reagan portended a deterioration of superpower relations, many European activists concluded that more missiles in Europe could only increase the likelihood of a catastrophic war.

Yet for all the genuine power of the peace movement and the entirely understandable anxiety of millions of Europeans about the possibility of nuclear war, by 1983, the German, British, and Italian governments had all managed to win—just barely—parliamentary support for the deployment of the missiles, having successfully made the case that without them, NATO would fall to pieces, the Americans might withdraw their shield from Europe, and the Soviets could dictate terms to a much-weakened Europe. "At the ballot box," Colbourn writes, "the center held" (194).

In part 3, Colbourn links the Euromissiles crisis to the story of the end of the Cold War. She shows how, having twisted themselves into knots getting the Pershings and Gryphons into place, the Western allies found themselves in a rapidly changing political landscape. Ronald Reagan had not turned out to be the warmonger many feared, while in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev emerged as a new kind of Soviet leader: humane, intelligent, and willing to negotiate a halt to the arms race in good faith. While the road to the INF Treaty, signed in late 1987, is well-known, Colbourn wisely carries the story through to 1989, showing that the problem of nuclear weapons in Europe, and especially in Germany, posed yet another major problem for NATO: should a nuclear doctrine designed for the Cold War be scrapped entirely now that the Cold War was over? That debate has yet to be resolved.

This is by no means the first book on the Euromissiles and the consequences of the prolonged inter-allied debate that surrounded them.[3] We have long known the basic narrative of events. But this book, drawing on NATO, U.S., British, German, Canadian and non-government sources, brings together various strands of analysis. In particular, it highlights the major role of the West Germans in shaping the policy outcomes of the Western alliance; it brings into clear relief the impact of anti-nuclear social movements in raising the stakes of the deployment decision; and it demonstrates the crucial role of individual leaders like Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Mikhail Gorbachev across the years of the crisis. Regrettably, Colbourn did not work in French archives. France, a nuclear power in its own right, and its president in these years, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, are largely absent from the book. And the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact states are treated here chiefly through the eyes of Western actors, using Western sources. These are gaps that still need to be filled by future scholarship.

Nonetheless, *Euromissiles* does a great service by placing this particular crisis within the larger context of NATO's tumultuous history. NATO has been in a state of perpetual crisis more or less since its founding in 1949, from divisions over the question of German membership in the 1950s, to arguments over flexible response and France's partial withdrawal in the 1960s, to the tangled issues of détente and Ostpolitik in the 1970s, all the way to NATO expansion in the 1990s. In this sense, the Euromissiles debate formed just another chapter in the ongoing Western strategic disagreement over essential questions. Should NATO ever use nuclear weapons to "save" Europe, even if such weapons would kill millions of Europeans? What was the right balance between détente and deterrence? Did NATO strengthen the European member states or weaken them by making them too reliant on an American nuclear shield? Was NATO in fact a democratic alliance at all if so many members of the public opposed the nuclear arms race and the deployment of American soldiers and bases across Europe? Arguments over these questions have defined the NATO alliance for much of its seventy-five-year history.

And yet the very fact that NATO member states could engage in these strategic debates is a sign of the alliance's resilience—and good fortune. Without a real war to fight, the member states had the luxury of occasionally treating NATO like a highbrow think-tank. That luxury vanished on February 24, 2022, when Russia unleashed a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, dramatically escalating its ongoing war, which had begun in 2014. Suddenly, NATO had a war to wage. And it has withstood the test, so far. Though Ukraine is not a member of NATO, the alliance saw Russia's invasion as a dire and imminent threat to European security and acted accordingly. NATO states have channeled enormous amounts of weapons to Ukraine, helped train Ukrainian armed forces, and most of all provided a firm and united front to oppose any expansion of Russian aggression in, for example, the Baltic states.

Some have argued that NATO is somehow responsible for the Russian invasion because it expanded into Eastern Europe in the 1990s and early 2000s, thereby provoking Russia into taking merely "defensive" actions to protect its periphery.[4] This interpretation willfully refuses to explain why Russia's desire for security requires the abduction of thousands of Ukrainian children, the cold-blooded torture and murder of Ukrainian civilians, the officially approved use of rape as a form of warfare, the incessant shelling of schools, apartment blocks, and residential neighborhoods, the violation of every norm and law of war on the books, and the menacing of Russian's neighbors with nuclear threats, cyberwar, and invasion. Perhaps something other than the NATO membership of, say, Bulgaria might be at work.

Paradoxically, the bestial Russian aggression in Ukraine has given NATO a new lease on life, and in April 2023 it welcomed long-neutral Finland into its ranks. Sweden will follow soon. NATO is the club everyone wants to join. Since 2022, an alliance known chiefly for internecine quarrels and strategic disputes has been compelled to join a real fight. We may only hope, for all our sakes, it wins through.

Notes:

1. Two important recent books on NATO, its crises, and its expansion are Timothy Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca, NY, 2019); and Mary Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven, CT, 2021). Earlier work includes Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York, 2004); and Lawrence Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (Westport, CT, 2004).

2. For an elegant statement on the uncertainty of historical perception see Francis J. Gavin, "Thinking Historically: A Guide

for Strategy and Statecraft," *War on the Rocks*, Nov. 19, 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/thinking-historically-a-guide-for-strategy-and-statecraft/. An excellent example of centering contingency during the end of the Cold War is Mary Sarotte, *The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall* (New York, 2014).
3. Jeffrey Herf, *War by Other Means: Soviet Power, West German Resistance, and the Battle of the Euromissiles* (New York, 1991); Leopoldo Nuti et al., eds, *The Euromissiles Crisis and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford, CA, 2015); Christoph Becker-Schaum et al., eds., *The Nuclear Crisis: The Arms Race, Cold War Anxiety, and the German Peace Movement of the 1980s* (New York and Oxford, 2016).
4. The most notorious but not the only statement of this view is John Mearsheimer's "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 93, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2014): 77–89. For an interview with Mearsheimer, see Isaac Chotiner, "Why John Mearsheimer Blames the U.S. for the Crisis in Ukraine," *The New Yorker*, March 1, 2022. Mearsheimer repeated his belief that "the United States is principally responsible for causing the Ukraine crisis" in a lecture last year. See "The Causes and Consequences of the Ukraine War," lecture at the Robert Schuman Centre of the European University Institute in Florence, Italy on June 16th, 2022, https://www.eui.eu/news-hub?id=john-mearsheimers-lecture-on-the-causes-and-consequences-of-the-ukraine-war.

Review of Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles*

Aaron Bateman

Russia's heinous invasion of Ukraine has forced NATO leaders to face head-on very difficult questions concerning European security. Today, the alliance looks stronger than ever, but there is much uncertainty about the future. Certainly, there are divergent transatlantic views on what a resolution to the war in Ukraine would look like and how support for Kyiv could be sustained over the long haul. Weighty political decisions concerning these topics will, of course, not be made in a vacuum. NATO leaders will have to closely consider the wants and desires of their respective voting populations. Consequently, old fault lines in the alliance could quickly become apparent. NATO has long been a fragile alliance that has experienced many crises of confidence. As policy practitioners and scholars consider the future of the alliance, it is an opportune time to look back at the Euromissiles Crisis of the 1980s to understand how and why the alliance ultimately prevailed in what became one of the most significant inflection points in NATO's history.

Susan Colbourn's new book, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons that Nearly Destroyed NATO*, is a meticulously researched and masterfully written history of one of the most significant time periods in the Cold War transatlantic alliance. Impressive does not even begin to adequately describe her archival work, which spans collections in Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States. Weaving together a narrative that is simultaneously diplomatic, social, and political history was no easy feat. The book is divided into three well-organized sections: Decide, Deploy, and Destroy, taking the reader through the complexities of détente and the decision to deploy intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe in response to the Soviet SS-20s, and ending with the dramatic shifts in the 1980s that led to the dismantlement of these weapons with the INF Treaty.

Colbourn vividly explains how the Soviet Union's deployment of SS-20 road-mobile intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) spawned a crisis in Europe over the so-called Euro-strategic balance and NATO's flexible response nuclear doctrine. When contemplating the deployment of U.S. Pershing-II IRBMs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs), Western European politicians had to weigh not only strategic-military and political considerations associated with the American security umbrella, but also the growing anti-nuclear movements in Europe. Consequently, the road to arms control was a long and winding one, and Colbourn introduces much depth and nuance to the role of European politicians and non-governmental actors in what would ultimately become the INF Treaty of 1987. Hers is an invaluable addition to the growing body of scholarship on Cold War arms control.

Perhaps most importantly, the book expands the narrative of the Euromissiles crisis, which is oftentimes truncated to the period between President Jimmy Carter's dual-track decision in 1979 and the signing of the INF Treaty in 1987. Colbourn shows that the tensions in Europe surrounding the Euromissiles ran much deeper. Going back to the Harmel report of 1967, NATO members had to delicately balance the pursuit of détente with the need for defense. Pursuing the former without threatening the latter became a difficult task. And prospective arms control agreements oftentimes exacerbated European fears about a decoupling of American security from that of its allies across the Atlantic. Since NATO's purpose was to "keep the Soviets out, the Americans in, and the Germans down," broader European fears of West Germany losing confidence in the transatlantic security framework served as a consistent source of anxiety in alliance affairs.

Relaxation of tensions with the Soviet Union in the form of détente created fundamental challenges for the justification of NATO's continued existence. Colbourn points out that the allies' relationship with the Soviet Union was one of the dilemmas that defined NATO's structure of crisis through the Cold War, because if "the threat posed by the Soviet Union appeared to wane, so too would the case for NATO" (5). In the wake of the 1967 Harmel report, NATO's mission was succinctly defined as defense, deterrence, and détente. However, improvement of relations with the Soviet Union made it difficult for European politicians to secure popular support for defense capabilities needed for deterrence.

Moreover, arms control, a key element of détente, held the potential to undermine the alliance's strategy of flexible response that, officially, included a range of escalatory options from conventional, tactical nuclear, and strategic. Colbourn points out that flexible response was not truly "flexible" when it was introduced; nevertheless, nuclear weapons in Europe played a *visible* role in coupling Europe with the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal. Thus, *Euromissiles* is an important reminder of the power of perception, oftentimes divorced from technical reality, in Cold War nuclear matters.

American acceptance of parity through détente only exacerbated European anxieties about the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee. The severity of this situation become more apparent when in 1977 West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt decided to air his concerns about the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in public. Clearly, Schmidt believed that President Jimmy Carter and his immediate predecessors had ignored European security concerns about SALT. In this context, the Soviet deployment of a new class of Soviet IRBMs in Europe threatened to further erode extended deterrence.

Schmidt's speech in 1977 is a key element in the genealogy of the dual track decision of 1979 and the origins of the Euromissiles Crisis. By elucidating the significance of these political upheavals in the 1960s and 1970s, Colbourn points out that the tensions surrounding the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Western Europe in the 1980s were not unique in alliance affairs. Rather, the difficulties between the Reagan administration and Western Europe concerning the security of the latter were only a continuation of longstanding issues surrounding the very foundation of NATO's strategy.

The decision to deploy intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe while simultaneously pursuing arms

control to limit them in no way diminished the growing anti-nuclear opposition in Europe. It is perhaps easy to forget that the early 1980s were a time of widespread and intensifying nuclear anxieties. Even if NATO leaders could reach something approaching a consensus on nuclear matters, they would still have to contend with constituents who were vehemently opposed to the introduction of any new nuclear weapons in Europe. Colbourn explains that contrary to statements in the 1980s, there was not a single, homogenous peace movement. Rather, a wide swath of society in the United States, Canada, and Europe mobilized because of a fear of nuclear war. These anti-nuclear movements could not be ignored by politicians making critical decisions about arms control and the deployment of nuclear forces in Europe. Consequently, public diplomacy became a vital tool for both Washington and Moscow in trying to convince Europeans of their respective arms control positions.

In the context of growing anti-nuclearism, Colbourn shows that U.S. defense planners were considering a range of emerging technologies that "seemed to offer a silver-bullet solution that might solve the perennial dilemma of how to craft a strategy that was affordable and acceptable" (156). Although it is only a brief section in the book, she sheds light on U.S. defense planners' delicate balancing act between drawing attention to Air-Land Battle (a new high-tech U.S. operational concept) and not leading people to believe that this new doctrine could somehow reduce the importance of nuclear weapons in Europe. The 1980s were a transformational period not only in arms control and nuclear forces, but also in the enhancement of U.S. military power. New developments in space technologies used for communications, intelligence, and navigation as well as the information revolution were shaping the views of American, and allied, defense officials on the future of warfare. However, nuclear weapons in Europe remained important not only for practical strategic-military considerations, but also for the political objective of maintaining a cohesive transatlantic alliance.

In the context of growing anti-nuclearism, Colbourn shows that U.S. defense planners were considering a range of emerging technologies that "seemed to offer a silver-bullet solution that might solve the perennial dilemma of how to craft a strategy that was affordable and acceptable" Although it is only a brief section in the book, she sheds light on U.S. defense planners' delicate balancing act between drawing attention to Air-Land Battle and not leading people to believe that this new doctrine could somehow reduce the importance of nuclear weapons in Europe.

This political reality aside, technological and doctrinal transformations in this time period would visibly play out on the battlefield during the First Gulf War and what would be labeled the Revolution in Military Affairs. Colbourn elucidates the significance of these developments within the context of debates over nuclear weapons and arms control in the 1980s. These strategic shifts remain a topic that is ripe for greater historical inquiry as relevant documents in the United States and Western Europe are increasingly available.

The prospect of improving East-West relations looked bleak early in Ronald Reagan's first term, when it appeared to many observers that the new administration was vehemently opposed to arms control in all forms. With no progress in negotiations over INF forces, the United States and its allies moved forward with Pershing II deployments in West Germany, prompting a Soviet suspension of arms control negotiations. Yet not even two years later the Soviet Union would be back at the negotiating table—a development due, at least in part, to substantial Soviet fears of Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a large-scale missile defense program. SDI became a significant stumbling block to forward momentum in nuclear arms talks between Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. Famously, in Reykjavik in 1986 Reagan and Gorbachev seriously talked about eliminating *all* of their nuclear weapons, but this groundbreaking proposal fell apart due to disagreements concerning SDI.

To break through the U.S.-Soviet arms control stalemate over SDI, Gorbachev de-linked it from INF negotiations, paving the way for the INF Treaty of 1987. This episode once again raises a longstanding question in the Cold War historiography: what exactly was SDI's role in superpower relations? Colbourn observes that the Soviets untied the arms control package—i.e., de-linked SDI from INF—because of concerns about Pershing IIs and for economic reasons. She is quite right, but advisors to Gorbachev had also concluded that the Soviet Union could develop asymmetric measures to counter a deployed strategic defense system.

Nevertheless, key Soviet officials were still concerned about SDI after the signing of the INF Treaty, and it remained a contentious issue in START negotiations into the early 1990s. Implicit in Colbourn's observations about SDI and arms control is that there was not one homogeneous Soviet view of SDI. Rather, Soviet officials held a range of views concerning SDI's technological feasibility and its potential impact on the military balance—just like their American counterparts. Moreover, in explaining Gorbachev's rationale for accepting such an imbalanced treaty, skewed in the United States's favor, Colbourn compellingly argues that the deal was the product of the Soviet Union's economic challenges, Gorbachev's own struggles with alliance management, and Soviet officials rethinking Moscow's place in the world. These factors were as important as the deployment of U.S. INF forces in Europe.

The landmark INF Treaty in 1987 was not, however, the end of the saga of nuclear crisis in NATO's history. Alliance leaders quickly turned their attention to the prickly issue of short-range nuclear forces (SNF). Officials questioned whether Bonn would continue to accept the deployment of SNF on German territory. If it did not, what would be the implications for NATO? However, the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification would largely push anxieties about SNF to the sidelines. This time period would not, of course, be the last test of alliance cohesion.

Finally, Colbourn adds much depth to our understanding of the level of complexity and contingency in the events leading up to the INF Treaty in 1987. She points out that policymakers have recently treated the popular narrative of U.S. INF weapons deployments forcing the Soviets to the arms control negotiating table as a replicable model for dealing with adversaries today. However, she compellingly argues that the true INF story is far more complex, which provides an important, and *needed*, caution for policy practitioners who are looking to Cold War history to find a formula for addressing current geopolitical challenges. In sum, *Euromissiles* is a must read for diplomatic historians, scholars of the Cold War, students of alliance dynamics, and policymakers.

Author's Response

Susan Colbourn

Since submitting the final manuscript for *Euromissiles*, I have often quipped that I would never read any of the reviews. These four reviews are a reminder why that was never—and could never be—more than a passing joke. It is a wonderful experience to see how others read and

respond to a book you have spent so much time working on, especially when they are scholars for whom you have a great deal of respect.

I am grateful to Aaron Bateman, Elizabeth Charles, William Hitchcock, and Heather Marie Stur for taking the time to be part of this roundtable, and I am flattered to see that they found so much to like about *Euromissiles*. Thanks also go to Jayita Sarkar for penning the introduction and, of course, to Andrew Johns for making this roundtable happen. It is a particular joy to have this roundtable appear in the pages of *Passport*. SHAFR has been my professional home since graduate school, and this project—including (or perhaps, more accurately, *especially*) my focus on NATO as more than a U.S.-led institution—has been shaped in critical ways by conversations I have had in and around SHAFR.

The history of the Euromissiles is rather curious. It is a story that is well known, yet almost entirely forgotten. For a generation that lived through raucous public debate over the Euromissiles and widespread nuclear anxiety fueled by films like *Threads*, the stakes seem obvious and the significance clear, even if individual perspectives lead people to wildly different conclusions about why this "last battle of the Cold War" mattered.[1] For those who came of age later, someone like Charles's smart, dog-walking neighbor or a student in my classes at Duke, the Euromissiles are virtually unknown.

To be sure, major episodes in the story are staples of courses surveying twentieth-century U.S. foreign relations or international history post-1945. I am not about to suggest that the diplomacy of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev is understudied or fading from public memory. But it is often stripped of critical context, including why and how those missiles ended up there in the first place, before Reagan and Gorbachev signed the historic 1987 agreement to get rid of them. Why it all mattered is even less obvious to a younger generation not already intimately familiar with the implicit logic that underpinned so much of the Cold War and how it was waged in Europe.

I wrote *Euromissiles* primarily with that younger audience in mind. I wanted to take a piece of history that is immensely complicated, bogged down in acronyms and technical jargon, and make it accessible. Put another way, I wanted to explain the history of the Euromissiles and why it mattered in a way that any interested person could follow even if they didn't have a clue what NATO is, let alone what a Euromissile is or what the heck extended deterrence is. For that reason it is especially gratifying to have *Euromissiles* described here as "engaging and highly readable" and "approachable."

Because my target audience is so young, *Euromissiles* often follows a basic narrative familiar to those who already know what a Euromissile is. Much of what I cover, as Hitchcock rightly notes, is well-trodden historical ground and draws on the work of earlier writers, be they journalists, analysts, political scientists, or historians. I am hardly the first person, for instance, to suggest that the chain-smoking West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt played an integral role in shaping how this history unfolded! But even as I recount familiar episodes, *Euromissiles* pushes back on the conventional chronology and scope of how we often understand that story, something I was happy to see Bateman highlight in his review.

Euromissiles is not, I should be clear, a comprehensive history of the so-called "Euromissiles Crisis." It is a transatlantic history, revolving around NATO. That is not a commentary on how significant I think the Soviet Union or the Warsaw Pact is in the story. If anything, that choice reflects the opposite feeling. The Warsaw Pact's side of the story deserves equal treatment, with the same probing of strategy-making, of disagreements between allies big and small, and even of the role played by public opinion and popular sentiment, which took on different forms east of the Iron Curtain, where there were many more state-imposed constraints. I quickly concluded that I was not the person to do that archival work and to do it justice, certainly not on my own. Luckily, I happen to know someone working on related questions. Simon Miles and I are currently gathering archival material for a co-authored history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in which we plan to tease out the dynamics at play between the two alliances, their strategies, and their force postures, including in this tumultuous period.

Before turning to the present, I want to briefly discuss three items that arise in the four reviewers' comments. The first is about the role that antinuclear protestors play in my narrative, particularly in part 2. I am pleased to see Charles and Hitchcock highlight this as one of the book's "most innovative" features. It mattered to me to give these protestors voices of their own and to break out of some of the old ways of characterizing the "peace movement" as monolithic or always in opposition to politicians and other elites in the transatlantic policy space. As I show in part 2, challenges to NATO's existing strategy came from a variety of places and often featured improbable alignments. It is a message that dovetails with other, even more recent work, like Stephanie Freeman's *Dreams for a Decade*, that collectively, I hope, will reframe some of the debates about who is responsible for the end of the Cold War and whether that is the question we should be fixated on.[2]

The second item is Hitchcock's lament that there is not more about France in the pages of *Euromissiles*. For any historian of NATO grappling with the period post-1966, France is a difficult beast. How do you deal with a player that is both in and out, a country with successive governments interested in the diplomatic equivalent of having their cake and eating it too? In *Euromissiles*, I do incorporate material from the French foreign ministry archives, along with the diplomatic memoirs of leaders like Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, though there could easily have been much more. (I am happy to pledge that my next book will include more French material, and that I will endure the hardship of spending more time in Paris to make good on that promise!) But the fact remains that France was unusual in many ways that bear directly on the story of the Euromissiles.

France did not belong to many of the allied committees in which decisions were made, an organizational fact that meant discussions sometimes switched committees to make sure the French were – or were not – in the room when something was debated. When France did engage the issue, policymakers often did so in channels outside of and distinct from NATO. For instance, Frédéric Bozo has written about the fascinating discussions between French and West German officials in the 1980s to see how Paris's nuclear deterrent might offer extra protection to the Federal Republic of Germany to augment that of the United States.[3]

Implicitly, Hitchcock points to another challenge of writing the alliance's history that is only getting harder as NATO adds new members. If you decide to write NATO's history as an international story, as I did, there are always tough choices about where you draw the line. Which country's perspectives and priorities do you incorporate and foreground? And which end up on the cutting room floor as victims of word counts or narrative cohesion? Hitchcock might have made a similar critique that there is not enough Belgian, Dutch, or Italian material in *Euromissiles*, let alone other non-basing countries whose perspectives I discuss only in passing.

As someone who is committed to challenging stereotypes of the alliance as nothing more than an extension of U.S. foreign policy and who intends to write more about NATO in the future, I think about how to incorporate the viewpoints of the various member states a lot. How do you

do justice to the diversity and complexity of experiences of thirty-one different member states (and counting) while also acknowledging that all members of the alliance were not created equal? And, as a writer, how do you do so in a single narrative package that is compelling, engaging, and easy to read?[4] If I wrote a history of NATO that had as much Iceland as the United States, it would probably seem more than a little off.

The third item I want to address is Stur's reference to periodization and how we understand the Cold War. One of the bizarre things about writing a book is how much your thinking can sharpen and crystallize long after publication. Stur highlights implicit ideas about chronology and continuities that are almost certainly the early inklings of my next book project: an international history of efforts to transcend the Cold War division of Europe. Its basic premise starts from a thought experiment. What happens to our understanding of Europe's post-1945 development if we put 1989 at the center of a historical narrative, not at the beginning or the end of two distinct periods?

It is perhaps most telling that all four reviewers devote space to Russia's war against Ukraine, particularly its most recent phase following the full-scale, gruesome, and war-crime-laden offensive launched by Russian forces in February 2022. The questions I deal with in the book are not historical trivia or problems relegated to the past; we are seeing both their consequences and continuations play out in real time today. Once more, NATO has been galvanized because the threat from Moscow is real and palpable.[5] The fact that Russia has waged a brutal war against Ukraine—not a NATO member state, despite the alliance's vague promises to one day let Kyiv in—but avoided targeting allied convoys and depots is a prime illustration of old debates about when, where, and how deterrence might work.

In the handwringing over what to supply the Ukrainians, we see familiar disagreements about escalation risk and how to strike a balance between achieving objectives and avoiding unimaginable and horrific outcomes like nuclear war. And in the conversations over the much-lauded but perhaps non-existent *Zeitenwende* are the legacies of decades of diplomatic efforts to harness German power without risking a repeat of the first half of the twentieth century. It is for all of these reasons that I don't intend to stop writing the alliance's history any time soon. NATO's past still has plenty to tell us about the present—and the future.

I worry, however, that the history of the Euromissiles will be seen not as crucial pre-history and context to help make sense of European security today. Instead, it seems more likely to be revived and repackaged in the context of Great Power Competition (a term, it seems, that has been all but trademarked by official Washington) with the People's Republic of China. On this issue, I hope the message *Euromissiles* sends is a note of caution. I hope my obsession with contingency and uncertainty, conforming as it does to age-old stereotypes about historians, highlights the risks of believing that the Euromissiles offer a convenient script for the United States to rerun in the Pacific against Beijing.

Notes:
1. Maynard W. Glitman, *The Last Battle of the Cold War: An Inside Account of Negotiating the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty* (New York, 2006).
2. Stephanie L. Freeman, *Dreams for a Decade: International Nuclear Abolitionism and the End of the Cold War* (Philadelphia, PA, 2023).
3. Frédéric Bozo, "The Sanctuary and the Glacis: France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Nuclear Weapons in the 1980s (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22, no. 3 (Summer 2020): 119–79; and Bozo, "The Sanctuary and the Glacis: France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Nuclear Factor in the 1980s (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22, no. 4 (Fall 2020): 175–228.
4. On this particular challenge of being a historian of NATO, see my response in "Seven Questions on . . . NATO History," *Passport: The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Review* (Jan. 2023), 29.
5. In the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, I have fleshed this argument out in Susan Colbourn, "Putin's Aggression Toward Ukraine May Boost NATO," *Washington Post*, February 9, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/02/09/putins-aggression-towards-ukraine-may-boost-nato/, and in Susan Colbourn, "The Kremlin Saves NATO (Again)," Cornell Press, February 17, 2023, https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/susan-colbourn-kremlin-saves-nato-euromissiles-nuclear-weapons-blog-02-2023/. The idea of a waning threat from Moscow as particularly damaging to NATO's structures—and my thinking on that chronic challenge—draws heavily on Timothy Andrews Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca, NY, 2019). For the 1960s as a prime illustration of this phenomenon, my thinking has also been shaped by Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ, 2018).