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Introduction by Thomas Schwartz, Vanderbilt University

It may be hard for some of us to believe, but the Euro missile crisis, which so aggravated the politics of the West, began almost four decades ago, and is now legitimately the province of significant historical research. This volume of essays, based on a conference held in Rome, is an attempt at examining the crisis in its many dimensions, both the more familiar diplomatic and political as well as social and cultural aspects. The articles take advantage of recently opened archival collections in the major countries involved as well as examining the politics of some of the lesser-known participants such as Norway, the Netherlands, and Italy. The three reviewers are all enthusiastic about the volume’s contribution, considering it “highly stimulating volume,” “an impressive and convincing collection of state-of-the-art research,” and quite simply, “the best volume on this subject in any language.”

As impressed and enthusiastic as they are, each reviewer has a slightly different take on the volume. Bernd Schaefer’s is partially biographical, as he was in university at the time, and recalls the years covered in the volume as “a memorable and gloomy experience.” He praises the contributions of Holger Nehring, Maria Eleanora Guasconi, and Kristina Spohr for capturing some of popular currents and political decision-making surrounding the crisis, although he argues that the West German policy debates are under-represented in the volume, a criticism also shared by Jan Hansen. Schaefer also praises the volume’s varied treatment of Soviet policy during the crisis, and is most impressed with Svetlana Savranskaya’s essay on Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, whom Schaefer sees as the central historical figure tying the book’s title together, having helped to bring both the Euro Missiles crisis and the Cold War to an end.

Jan Hansen praises the interdisciplinary approach of the volume and is particularly impressed with many archival collections and different languages they reflect. Although he criticizes the volume for its underrepresentation of the cultural history of the crisis as compared to diplomatic and political history, Hansen singles out Helge Danielsen’s article on the role of the Norwegian leader Johan Jorgen Holst for “how fruitful” a treatment of diplomatic history can be. Holst initially supported the dual-track solution but later changed his mind and worked toward a new conception of ‘common security,’ something which Hansen later suggests may hold a clue to a “grand narrative of the Euro missile crisis.” In his view, the volume underlines how detached decision-making elites were from “vast segments of the population” who no longer accepted the “binary division” at the heart of the Cold War. Given our contemporary discussion of how elites in America and Europe are disconnected from the concerns of their populations, especially over the impact of immigration and globalization, this insight may deserve greater attention as a way to understand this era.

Stephanie Freeman’s contribution reflects her own wide-ranging and deep research into the archives and her youthful detachment from some of the passions that affect older historians of the subject. (Full disclosure: I was her undergraduate adviser at Vanderbilt.) Freeman, who has recently completed an outstanding dissertation on nuclear abolitionists and the end of the Cold War,¹ has an intensive and deep familiarity with the both the sources and the central historiographical questions the volume addresses. Although she praises the volume for its highlighting of newly available European sources, she points out the relative weakness in treating the American side of the crisis. The contributors neglect the nuclear freeze movement, one of the largest protest groups in U.S. history. There is also a lack of sophistication in understanding the alliance

politics of the dual track decision, in which American leaders deliberately encouraged the Germans to make requests in order to allow the American response to be domestically more palatable. Taking issue with some of the historiography of the anti-nuclear movement, Freeman highlights the degree to which East Europeans distrusted the Western peace movement’s relative sympathy with Soviet policies. Freeman also highlights a key omission in the volume, namely a clear connection between the Euro missiles crisis and the end of the Cold war. One might respond by saying “Mikhail Gorbachev,” but that question still remains to be examined.

In the immediate years after the Cold War ended, when commentators could seriously talk of an “end to history,” the intense political and social convulsions of the 1980s seemed rather pointless, all sound and fury signifying nothing. Enough time has now passed for us to realize that there were extremely important issues at stake during these years, and that is vital for us to have scholarly historical treatments of this era. This volume is a significant contribution to that effort.

Participants:

**Thomas Schwartz** is Professor of History and Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He is currently working on a study of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. 

**Stephanie Freeman** earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Virginia in May 2017. She will be a postdoctoral fellow at the Dickey Center at Dartmouth in 2017-2018. She is currently working on a manuscript that examines the role that nuclear abolitionists played in the end of the Cold War. Her article “The Making of an Accidental Crisis: The United States and the NATO Dual-Track Decision of 1979” was published in *Diplomacy and Statecraft* in June 2014.

**Jan Hansen** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the Humboldt University of Berlin (History of Western Europe and Transatlantic Relations). He studied history and philosophy at the Humboldt University, where he graduated in 2009. After research fellowships at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn and the German Historical Institutes in Washington, DC and Paris, he was awarded a Ph.D. by the Humboldt University in 2014. Jan Hansen’s general area of research is the social and cultural history of the Cold War with a special emphasis on anti-nuclear protests. He is the author of *Abschied vom Kalten Krieg? Die Sozialdemokraten und der Nachrüstungskonflikt (1977–1987)* (2016) and coeditor of *Making Sense of the Americas: How Protest Related to America in the 1980s and Beyond* (2015).

**Bernd Schaefer** is a Senior Scholar with the Woodrow Wilson International Center’s Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) and a Professorial Lecturer at George Washington University, both in Washington D.C. He was a Visiting Professor with Tongji University and East China Normal University in Shanghai, Pannasasta University in Phnom Penh, and the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul; also a Fellow at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, the National University of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, the German Historical Institute in Washington D.C. and the Technical University of Dresden. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Halle in Germany and a MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School. His recent publications include *1965 - Indonesien and the World* (Gramedia, Jakarta 2013), *Coming to Terms: Dealing with the Communist Past in East Germany* (Stiftung Aufarbeitung, Berlin 2011), *The East German State and the Catholic Church, 1945-1989* (Berghahn Books, New York 2010) and *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974: Global and European Responses* (Cambridge University Press, New York 2009; ed. with Carole Fink).
The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War is a collection of essays that seeks “to move the academic debate on the crisis beyond the rather stringent limits of discussing who was wrong and who was right and to ask new questions that can deepen our historical understanding of the dynamics of this last phase of the Cold War” (2). It accomplishes this aim by drawing on newly available and underutilized sources to examine the Euromissile crisis from an impressive array of national perspectives from both sides of the Iron Curtain. In addition to considering the roles that traditional state actors played in the crisis, the book also touches on the influence that non-state actors, particularly anti-nuclear activists, had on the implementation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) dual-track decision, which consisted of a proposed modernization of the alliance’s long-range theater nuclear forces (LRTNF) and a simultaneous offer of U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations on these forces. Essays examine the relationship between Eastern European dissidents and Western European peace activists and the similarities and differences between peace movements in the East and West.

The book is divided into four parts. The first section consists of David Holloway’s excellent introductory essay on the early years of the Euromissile crisis, in which he considers the Soviet rationale for deploying SS-20 missiles beginning in 1976; NATO’s motivations for responding to the Soviet deployment with the 1979 dual-track decision; and the Soviets’ failed efforts to use the peace movement to derail NATO’s proposed deployment of Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in Western Europe. Although this essay primarily provides background for the more narrowly focused chapters that follow it, Holloway concludes the essay with a compelling argument that there was not a “war scare” in Moscow in late 1983 (23). Challenging the conventional interpretation that Kremlin leaders thought that the Reagan administration was preparing to launch a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union, Holloway draws on the testimonies of Soviet General Staff officers to demonstrate that Soviet leaders did not fear an imminent American nuclear attack in the fall of 1983.

The second part of the book features five essays that examine the Euromissile crisis from the perspective of the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries. Taken together, these chapters analyze the entire decade of the crisis, from the decision of Soviet leaders to begin deploying SS-20s in 1976 to Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev’s untying of the Soviet arms control package in 1987 and pursuit of a separate agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF). The eight essays that comprise the third part of the book analyze the interactions between the United States and Western Europe during the process of formulating and implementing the NATO dual-track decision. Five of the essays are case studies that examine the respective roles played by Great Britain, France, Norway, Italy, and the Netherlands during the Euromissile crisis. These chapters largely focus on the period between the beginning of the Soviet deployment of SS-20s in 1976 and the start of NATO deployments of Pershing IIs and GLCMs in late 1983.

The final five essays form a less coherent group than those in parts II and III, but appear under the heading “civil society, public opinion, and the battle of ideas” (viii). Idesbald Goddeeris and Malgorzata Swider’s essay


2 For the conventional view, see, for example, Benjamin B. Fischer, A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare (Langley: Center for the Study of Intelligence of the CIA, 1997).
and Holger Nehring’s chapter address peace movements in the 1980s.3 Maria Eleonora Guasconi uses public opinion polls to examine Western European views on NATO, the anti-nuclear movement, the possibility of war, and U.S. policies in the early 1980s.4 Although she states that public opinion influenced foreign policymaking by “affecting political leaders’ sense of what was permissible, narrowing the range of options and the means to implement the goals, and, in some cases, influencing the coalition-building process among elites,” she does not provide concrete examples to support this argument (285). Bernd Rother illuminates the divisions among members of the Socialist International over the NATO dual-track decision, and Wolfgang Schmidt convincingly argues that the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (better known as the Palme Commission) did not play a major role in facilitating the conclusion of the INF Treaty.5

A major strength of this volume is that its contributors marshal sources from archives across the globe to illuminate the heretofore-underappreciated roles played by leaders from smaller NATO countries in the formulation and implementation of the dual-track decision. Drawing on newly declassified documents from the Norwegian Ministry of Defense, Helge Danielsen elucidates Johan Jorgen Holst’s influence on both the modernization and arms control tracks of NATO’s decision.6 She demonstrates that Holst served as “a ‘broker’ or mediator” within the NATO High Level Group discussions on theatre nuclear force (TNF) modernization (220). Holst also continuously pushed for a credible arms control track, ultimately prompting eleventh hour alterations to the language of the dual-track decision in December 1979. In a compelling essay that draws on Italian, American, and German archival sources, Leopoldo Nuti highlights Italy’s importance in the Euromissile affair.7 Anxious to improve their country’s standing in NATO and revitalize Italian foreign policy, Italian leaders agreed in 1979 to deploy U.S. cruise missiles, which satisfied the West German government’s demand that it not be the only continental European country to host U.S. missiles. Despite growing public opposition, Italy followed through with the planned INF deployments beginning in 1984. Based on access to French President François Mitterrand’s private papers, Frédéric Bozo’s essay reveals Mitterrand’s influence on the implementation of both tracks of the dual-track decision.8 Bozo demonstrates that Mitterrand’s January 1983 speech to the West German Bundestag reinforced the West German government’s position in favor of proceeding with the planned INF deployments. Mitterrand later served as an “honest broker” between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Gorbachev, successfully persuading each leader of the other’s willingness to negotiate INF reductions (204). In her essay on Gorbachev’s learning, Svetlana Savranskaya draws on Soviet documents to similarly portray Mitterrand as an important

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8 Frédéric Bozo, “France, the Euromissiles, and the End of the Cold War,” 196-212.
intermediary between Reagan and Gorbachev.9 By spotlighting Norwegian, Italian, and French leaders’ contributions to the formulation and implementation of the dual-track decision, this volume expands scholars’ conception of the key actors in the Euromissile crisis.

Other contributors to this book pose insightful new questions about the Euromissile crisis that transcend the existing literature’s traditional focus on the Soviet rationale for deploying SS-20 missiles; NATO motivations for responding to the Soviet deployments; and NATO alliance dynamics during the crisis. For example, Malcolm Byrne examines the Warsaw Pact’s response to NATO’s dual-track decision, as well as the effects of the Euromissile crisis on the Eastern bloc.10 Drawing on documents from former Warsaw Pact members’ archives, Byrne demonstrates that while the Warsaw Pact publicly attempted to pursue a unified strategy to stop the NATO deployments, private disagreements among members undermined the effectiveness of their campaign. Byrne contends that the Euromissile crisis spotlighted and exacerbated a number of tensions that were weakening the Warsaw Pact. In an excellent essay that considers the views of Poles towards the Western European peace movement in the 1980s, Goddeeris and Swider demonstrate that Polish exiles, Solidarity members, and other Polish dissidents had a negative attitude towards the Western peace movement due to its reluctance to criticize Soviet repression in Eastern Europe and aggression across the globe. Unlike dissidents in other Eastern European countries, the Poles generally did not cooperate with Western European anti-nuclear activists in the early 1980s. By showing that Eastern Europe possessed a diversity of views towards the Western peace movement, Goddeeris and Swider convincingly challenge the view that the 1980s peace movement connected Eastern European dissidents and Western European activists in a cause that bridged the Iron Curtain’s divide.11

Yet this volume’s reexamination of “old issues” based on the “now-available primary sources” at times simply reaffirms existing interpretations due to contributors’ privileging of newly available European sources over recently declassified U.S. documents (2). Jonathan Haslam, Kristina Spohr, and Bozo endorse the conventional view that in 1979 the Western European leaders imposed the arms control track on the Carter administration, which viewed the proposed arms control negotiations merely as political cover for Western European governments to accept new missile deployments.12 Haslam’s and Bozo’s arguments that the arms

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9 Svetlana Savranskaya, “Learning to Disarm: Mikhail Gorbachev’s Interactive Learning and Changes in the Soviet Negotiating Positions Leading to the INF Treaty,” 85-103.


control track was foisted on U.S. President Jimmy Carter at the January 1979 Guadeloupe Summit do not take into account the Carter administration’s Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM)-38 review of the TNF issue in the summer of 1978, which culminated in Carter’s acceptance of a Special Coordination Committee recommendation that the United States should pursue an integrated approach of LRTNF modernization and arms control. Carter administration officials’ statements at October 1978 bilateral meetings with British and West German officials and the November 1978 North Atlantic Council meeting also show that they favored an integrated approach to redressing the TNF imbalance in Europe. While Spohr discusses the PRM-38 review, she argues that the Carter administration was reluctant to pursue arms control in early 1979, specifically noting that it was the West Germans who demanded the creation of the NATO Special Policy Group (SPG) on LRTNF arms control. Yet Spohr does not engage Carter administration documents that show that U.S. officials were not irritated by the West Germans’ request for an SPG, but had encouraged them to make such a proposal in the first place. Thus, a close examination of U.S. documents demonstrates that Carter administration officials recognized the importance of an arms control track in 1978 and worked with their European counterparts to advocate a dual modernization-arms control response to the Soviet SS-20 deployments.

Although the editors “have tried to encompass all of its [the Euromissile affair’s] most significant episodes” in selecting the nineteen essays that comprise this book, there are some notable gaps in the volume’s coverage of the crisis (2). There is virtually no discussion of the American freeze movement, which is surprising in view of the editors’ aim to examine the “interplay” between government decision-making and the individuals and organizations protesting the renewed nuclear arms race (8). In light of the ongoing declassification of Reagan administration documents, a chapter on the freeze activists’ influence on U.S. arms control policy would have been an asset to this volume. In addition, this collection of essays focuses heavily on the period between the


14 U.S. Objectives in Bilateral Consultations on Theater Nuclear Issues, 8 September 1978, JCPL, RAC Project NLC 31-147-7-14-3, 1, 4; State Department Memorandum for Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, 17 October 1978, JCPL, RAC Project NLC 132-49-5-1-5, 1, 4; Cable, State Department 292218, 17 November 1978, 3, National Security Archive, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb301/doc05.pdf.


beginning of Soviet deployments in 1976 and the start of NATO deployments in 1983. Thus, the INF negotiations that began in March 1985 and culminated in the 1987 INF Treaty receive relatively short shrift. While Elizabeth C. Charles and Savranskaya do a nice job of illuminating the influences on Gorbachev’s INF negotiating approach, it would have been useful to include a chapter on the U.S. negotiating strategy in the same period.17

A number of contributors highlight the Euromissile crisis as the last “phase,” “chapter,” or “battle” of the Cold War (2, 197, 309, 322). The book’s title suggests that the Euromissile affair played an important role in the end of the Cold War. Yet the volume does not offer a clear and concise thesis explaining the precise significance of the Euromissile crisis in the Cold War’s endgame. Nevertheless, the wide range of national perspectives examined in this book, as well as the contributors’ use of recently declassified documents from archives around the world, make this volume a valuable contribution to the literature on the late Cold War.

The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War fills a gap. Although scholars from various disciplinary contexts have published for many years on the controversies over the nuclear arms build-up in the early 1980s, we still lack an overview that brings together as many different perspectives as possible. This volume edited by Leopoldo Nuti and others brilliantly manages to do so partly by reiterating what we already know from previous literature and partly by shedding new light on the topic. Its primary aim is to historicize contemporary interpretive patterns and “move beyond the heavily partisan controversies that during the crisis and in its immediate aftermath shaped the intellectual and political debate,” as the editors claim in their introduction (2). The strengths of the book are obvious: it has a laudable interdisciplinary approach, it looks at many different countries in both East and West, and it employs recently opened archival material in multiple languages.

While the book’s authors try to understand better the multifaceted dynamics of the Euromissile crisis as well as its impact on the end of the Cold War in 1990-91, the latter plays only a minor part. Largely focusing on discussions within the Eastern and Western alliances, with individuals, state bureaucracies, or social movements as main actors, the authors generally overlook the time period from 1979 (when NATO passed the dual-track decision) to 1983 (when this decision was implemented and the first missiles were deployed). Most of them offer forceful analyses (going well beyond the blow-by-blow retelling of events) and stress larger trends adding up to a larger picture of the early 1980s, as sketched by David Holloway in his readable introductory survey of the Euromissile crisis.¹ The chapters which follow this introduction are organized into three parts. The first traces how the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact acted in the face of Western rearmament, paying special attention to the role played by Mikhail Gorbachev after 1985. The second part explores the military-strategic discussions among members of the Western alliance and presents intriguing insights into national debates on nuclear weapons in Great Britain, France, Norway, Italy and the Netherlands (Germany is conspicuously absent). Finally, the third part engages in a serious discussion of the societal dimension of the Euromissile crisis.

This book thus puts the focus on diplomatic and political history. Cultural history perspectives are underrepresented. Only two chapters, written by Holger Nehring and Ildesbald Goddeeris/Małgorzata Świder, show the potential of such an approach.² This does not mean, of course, that political and diplomatic histories are less important to understanding the Euromissile crisis. The chapter by Helge Danielsen on the role of Johan Jørgen Holst from Norway in international security discussions is a good illustration of how fruitful such a focus on diplomatic decision-making is, especially when accompanied by analysis of newly available documents.³ Danielsen argues that Holst was an exemplary representative of the transatlantic elite shaping the dual-track decision in NATO’s High Level Group. Coming from an academic background, he held high positions in the Norwegian Ministry of Defense and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally


however, he changed his mind, quit his government job and became director of the Institute of International Affairs in Oslo and a close advisor to the Palme Commission, elaborating a new conception of ‘common security.’ Danielsen restricts his enquiry to Holst’s time in government. But it is Holst’s biographical discontinuity that makes him so interesting for understanding the relationship between political and academic spheres.

What we can learn from this book is that international politics were closely interwoven with societal developments and vice versa. One cannot reasonably separate the nuclear debate on the international stage from the various national and transnational peace movements of the 1980s. The case of the German Social Democrats, for example, illustrates how key protagonists of the dual-track policy had to take into account growing opposition within their electoral base. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt felt pressured to appease criticism from within his own party (which was torn apart by internal controversies), not least by pushing the U.S. administrations under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan to adhere to the NATO decision’s arms control track. In this book, Maria Eleonora Guasconi rightly explains that opinion polls from the time indicate a gap between governments and their electorates. Nevertheless, when talking about statistics derived from opinion polls, it should be noted that such data has to be interpreted as the result of contemporary constructions, as Benjamin Ziemann highlights elsewhere.

Particularly intriguing are the chapters by Goddeeris/Świder and Nehring. Goddeeris and Świder investigate the reaction to Western protests against deployment in Poland. They show that the Polish debate departed from a fundamentally different conceptualization of ‘peace,’ which stressed not only the absence of war but also the realization of values such as freedom and human rights. They study how Polish elites in West European exile as well as members of the independent trade union Solidarność had their difficulties with the peace movements on the other side of the Iron Curtain. This was not least the case because “peace” was a key propaganda term in the Soviet sphere of power. At its core, this chapter proves that even allegedly universal concepts such as ‘peace’ and ‘nonviolence’ were defined and understood quite differently by people in varied contexts.

Nehring additionally considers peace movements in both East and West Germany. In his luminous chapter, he argues that activism in the early 1980s should not merely be regarded as motivated by criticism of the nuclear arms build-up. Rather, it should be seen as the result of profound socio-cultural transformations that had their roots in the 1960s and 1970s. Understood from this angle, peace movements emerged from the perceived “uncoupling of German (both East and West) and superpower (both US and Soviet) conceptions of international security” (309). Nehring insists that peace activities did not fade away after deployment had

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begun. However, their lasting impact lay in changing cultural norms about nuclear warfare, nonviolence and civil disobedience. This led to a shift in what was thinkable and doable for state actors. This engagement thus had a subtle impact on the end of the Cold War, Nehring claims.

Paying tribute to the remarkable qualities of this book is an easy task. However, the book leaves room for some questions. I will mention very briefly only three such lacunae here. First, the Euromissile crisis was a battle of ideas, as the book demonstrates, but also a conflict that manifested itself on the streets, thereby shaping the daily lives of ordinary people. It yielded a protest culture of its own, marked by posters, signs, and pop cultural manifestations as well as bodily protest actions and other performances. They deserve closer investigation than is offered in this book. Second, many chapters tend to downplay the importance of emotions. To be clear, some authors do stress that fears and anxieties over atomic Armageddon fuelled the widespread uneasiness with NATO’s decision. But there were more emotions in play than nuclear hysteria. One need only think of the sense of togetherness that characterized the peace movements and which generated its cohesion and unique protest culture. One could likewise mention the distrust in technological modernity and progress that brought the protesters to the streets, or the feeling of disappointment that, according to Bernhard Gotto, played an important role as an immaterial resource for activists.8 In short, the history of emotions has a lot to offer to the historiography of the early 1980s.

Third, I was wondering how all the different chapters could be bound together and what a grand narrative of the Euromissile crisis might look like. From my point of view, evidence suggests that NATO stumbled in this crisis and faced such heated domestic opposition because the Cold War order no longer functioned properly.9 The debates were therefore not only driven by the uncoupling of European and American security interests, but first and foremost by the declining salience of the binary division at the center of the Cold War. Vast segments of the population in the West (and maybe even in the East) viewed the Cold War as anachronistic long before it had actually come to an end. They did not comprehend why their leaders still demonized the Soviets. To them, the North-South divide appeared more urgent. This is why they claimed that the East-West antagonism should be overcome. Seen from this angle, the Euromissile crisis was the result of a disconnect between Western governments and their electorates with regard to the fundamental validity of the Cold-War system.

But these are just minor suggestions for expanding on the work in this superb study. What we have in front of us is an impressive and convincing collection of state-of-the-art research on the last decade of the Cold War. It will remain authoritative for many years.

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When I began my university studies in 1982 in the Southwest German town of Tübingen, I could not even faintly imagine reviewing in any future a stimulating volume titled “The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War.” To see the terms “Euromissiles” and “end of the Cold War” contained in one phrase, like in the title of this highly stimulating volume edited by Leopoldo Nuti, Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey and Bernd Rother, would have been utterly absurd. The editors deserve praise for having published the best volume on this subject so far in any language.

The first half of the 1980s in particular was a memorable and gloomy experience, especially among the higher-educated cohort of West Germany’s younger generation. While in my university environment I belonged to a tiny minority that considered Bonn governments correct to support Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) deployment if the Geneva talks failed, there also existed a somewhat larger leftist minority which viewed the Soviet Union as defensive and the U.S. as aggressive. Then there was the vast majority that was deeply moralistic and sincerely afraid of nuclear war. It propagated unilateral Western departure from the arms race and the abandonment of INF in Western Europe. On top of that, there existed an emerging, deep and lasting sense of anti-Americanism across universities not just in West Germany (Maria Eleanora Guasconi’s volume piece on European public opinion in the 1980s catches some of those sentiments).1

Holger Nehring’s2 mild essay on peace movements places some of those currents in a balanced context, without re-litigating from a partisan perspective the fierce public ideological trench wars in 1980s West Germany (as some other scholars have done). Overall, West German policy debates in particular are somewhat under-represented in the volume for the period of the 1980s - though it features Kristina Spohr’s3 well-researched piece on NATO’s nuclear policies and the rift between Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and President Jimmy Carter, as well as Bernd Rother’s4 innovative article on the bitter ‘family row’ within European Social Democracy over the 1979 dual-track decision on parallel preparations for INF deployment and negotiations to avoid the former. Highly insightful country case studies are presented on Great Britain

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4 Bernd Rother, “Family Row: The Dual-Track Decision and Its Consequences for European Social Democratic Cooperation,” 331-347.
As it is well known, governments in Bonn, London, Rome, and Paris did not adhere to arguments of moral disarmament, were mostly in sync with U.S. administration policies, supported missile deployment, and gained majority support within their domestic electorates. Marilena Gala’s contribution does not fail to correctly outline Western coherence on the government level. While hers is the only essay that deals with the Reagan administration, the volume contains on the other hand multiple diverse and stimulating analyses on the Soviet Union, its SS-20 decisions, calculations, and unwanted repercussions (David Holloway, Dmitry Adamsky, Jonathan Haslam, Elisabeth Charles). A very perceptive chapter by Malcolm Byrne deals with impact of Soviet heavy-handedness on Warsaw Pact members.

Otherwise, however, the book remains mostly silent on Washington’s intentional and inadvertent contributions to crisis mode, to transatlantic rifts below government level, as well as to war scares during President Ronald Reagan’s first term between 1981 and 1984. The October 2015 National Security Archive publication of the finally declassified June 1990 “President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board” report on the “Soviet ‘War Scare’,” unfortunately coming too late for the volume under review, marks a stern case in point: When Reagan was internally briefed in 1984 on the ‘Able Archer crisis’ of 1983, he reacted with the word “scary” (sic).

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6 Frederic Bozo, “France, the Euromissiles and the End of the Cold War,” 196-212.


8 Giles Scott-Smith, “The Netherlands between East and West: Dutch Politics, Dual Track, and Cruise Missiles,” 251-270.


13 Elisabeth Charles, “Gorbachev and the Decision to Decouple the Arms Control Package”, 66-84.


From hindsight knowledge, and in light of the second Reagan administration whose Soviet counterpart was a Mikhail Gorbachev instead of a gerontocrat, the years before 1984 are now sometimes portrayed as a necessary precursor to the end of the Cold War. This is retroactive determinism that cannot substitute for a sober analysis. Still, in 1989, when the George H.W. Bush administration came into office in Washington, it aimed at overcoming what was perceived as Reagan’s and his advisers’ purported naivety towards Gorbachev between 1985 and 1988. Accordingly, the Bush people purged the Republican administration’s ranks along those lines. This occurred in the first half of 1989 - and tells one of the many facets of the tale about the path ‘toward’ the end of the Cold War.

This leads me to my favorite article and in a way the centerpiece of the book, Svetlana Savranskaya’s excellent essay on “Learning to Disarm: Mikhail Gorbachev’s Interactive Learning and Changes in the Soviet Negotiation Positions Leading to the INF Treaty.” Here we learn why it was thanks to Gorbachev that the phrases “Euromissile crisis” and “end of the Cold War” can today be mentioned in the same sentence. Savranskaya’s simple truism is the heart of the matter: “Gorbachev came to power in the spring of 1985 with a strong desire to stop the arms race, but a rather vague program of how he was going to do it” (100). This mere vision and his subsequent efforts distinguished him from any other leader past and present, East or West, who, due to his country’s arsenal, had impact on the arms race. To overstate Mikhail Gorbachev’s active and passive, explicit and implicit, role towards ending the Cold War is an impossibility.

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