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# Review of NATO's Conventional Defenses and Review of The Politics of European Defense Cooperation: Germany, France, Britain, and America

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Review by: Robert B. Charlick

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## Book Reviews: International Relations

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others, trade is dominated by long-term contracts so that there is no single price structure to guide stabilization schemes; and in yet other cases products are sensitive to price competition from synthetics or are produced in many grades that are difficult to classify and regulate. Whatever the specific reason, price stabilization schemes often confront economic obstacles that reinforce the political obstacles discussed above.

All of these factors and many more are addressed in Finlayson and Zacher's analysis, which makes a valuable contribution both to the literature on North-South commodity bargaining and to the broader theoretical literature of the field of international political economy. Either contribution would have been welcome, but the authors' success in linking the two makes *Managing International Markets* an especially impressive achievement.

VINCENT A. MAHLER

*Loyola University, Chicago*

**NATO's Conventional Defenses.** By Stephen J. Flanagan. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1988. 172p. \$34.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

**The Politics of European Defense Cooperation: Germany, France, Britain, and America.** By David Garnham. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1988. 224p. \$29.95.

After forty-five years the invasion of West Germany from the East has finally begun. But contrary to the fears of Western defense analysts, it is an invasion of cars and pedestrians, not of tanks, that is joyously breaching the Berlin Wall. Unfortunately, NATO's fortieth anniversary came too soon, stimulating a raft of scholarship that may now need to be reworked in the light of momentous recent events in Eastern Europe.

Works by Flanagan and Garnham respond to the question, How can Europe be defended in the coming era of declining U.S. hegemony and of European reluctance to employ nuclear weapons to fight wars? The authors respond in different ways. Garnham focuses on European defense cooperation as a way of enhancing the role European powers can play in their own defense, particularly in the management of nuclear risks. Flanagan explores the question much more broadly, examining the prospects

for evolving a consensus on more effective strategies and tactics, on reforms in European conventional defense, and on cooperation. But the uniqueness of this book is his attention to technology, particularly to nonnuclear emerging technologies, as a means of maintaining an acceptable balance and of increasing stability in times of crisis.

Both works are thoughtful, clearly written, and rich in their scholarship. Both illuminate key areas of basic knowledge well. Flanagan shines in his discussion of strategy, notably of different conceptions of "deep strike" strategies including Follow on Forces Attack (FOFA) and in his brief overview of the technologies that might support them. Garnham presents an excellent succinct discussion of bilateral defense policy relations between the principal actors (the United States, Britain, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany) and offers a useful introduction to the possibilities and limitations of multilateral defense cooperation as well. Garnham's book, although it may be too basic for scholars, is a good candidate for assignment to advanced undergraduates or graduate students. Flanagan's work, as part of the International Institute for Strategic Studies series, is geared more to specialists and assumes knowledge that may stretch general readers (MLRS, for example, is never defined).

Events subsequent to the writing of these works—the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, changes in Soviet military doctrine, and the startling developments in Eastern Europe—have shifted the ground considerably since these projects were undertaken. In terms of these works the developments are fortuitous, for neither author has produced a convincing answer to the basic question of how a viable defense of Europe can be achieved in the politicostrategic climate they describe. Garnham demonstrates that European Defense Cooperation has been growing but that cooperation also contains irreconcilable problems. These problems are traced to national preferences to limit coproduction for national economic reasons that include the development of national technological competence. They are also rooted in the fact that faced with any real risk of war with the Soviet Union, the Federal Republic, and Britain prefer to link their fate to the United States rather than to each other and to France. Yet Garnham concludes his book with the recommendation

that Europeans take on more of the role of the nuclear guarantor and that the United States retain a significant role in supporting conventional defense. Given political sensitivities in Germany about the use of nuclear weapons for any purpose other than deterrence, this realignment of alliance tasks seems highly unlikely. In fact, it may only prove feasible in a context of a greatly reduced assessment of the Soviet threat; for as Trevorton has wisely pointed out in a recent Council on Foreign Relations book, *Western Approaches to the Soviet Union* (1988), at very low levels of risk one becomes less finicky about the insurer. In this evolving context West Germany might even be willing to bet its fate on a "European pillar" dependent largely on a French nuclear guarantee. In this new context Garnham may be correct to dispel the fear of German "Finlandization" or "equidistancing" that the French and U.S. observers associate with improved inter-German relations. Given the extreme political weakness and prospect for chaos in the East, Germany would have little difficulty deciding to stay "anchored" in the West.

Flanagan's argument is more cautious and nuanced. After reviewing NATO's forward defense strategies and arguing that emerging technologies to enhance firepower countering numerically superior forces could be very helpful, he leads us to understand that for largely technical reasons these very technologies offer little prospect of success in the near term. Flanagan wisely incorporates political and economic considerations as well. Rejecting emerging technologies as a "magic bullet," he concludes that NATO can only make incremental improvements in defense of its territory—and then only if Europeans believe that these changes will not increase their financial burden, increase the risk that deterrence will fail (as some perceive longer-range applications of FOFA may), and will not weaken the linkage to the U.S. nuclear guarantee. These are modest opportunities indeed. Fortunately, in the emerging context, even these modest gains may seem sufficient; and the fixation of the U.S. guarantee may decline as a criterion.

While timing has ultimately helped both authors' arguments, it has also been unkind in two significant ways. Both books would have been better for being able to consider from some distance the defense policy implications

of the INF agreement and the unfolding Conventional Forces Talks. Both suffer, as well, in their discussions of French defense policy, for not having had access to Richard Ullman's revelations (*Foreign Policy* [1989]) of 15 years of close Franco-American nuclear cooperation. This must certainly alter how we understand the roles French conventional and nuclear forces would likely play in a European war. Errors in timing, however, are inevitable in this fast-moving and fascinating field.

ROBERT B. CHARLICK

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**The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905.** By Aaron L. Friedberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. 329p. \$29.95.

Aaron Friedberg has written an important book on British imperial decline that indirectly illuminates a question of current public debate—the United States' experience of relative decline. Those who are concerned either with the historical case or its present analogue will profit from the acuity with which Friedberg poses his questions and the subtlety of his historical narrative. Not everyone, however, will be convinced that he has successfully challenged the conventional wisdom that Britain reacted adeptly to the problems of imperial decline.

This conventional view, as Friedberg accurately lays it out (pp. 292–95), is that Britain clearly understood its situation of relative economic and imperial decline around the turn of the century and rationally engaged in a triage of its excessive international commitments. Britain's astute strategy of appeasing most of its potential enemies, switching from "splendid isolation" to loose alliances to contain German power, helps explain "why the British empire lasted so long"—as Paul Kennedy has put it. By implication, Britain's successful strategic retrenchment is a model for a similar strategy on the part of the United States.

Friedberg challenges this view, arguing that Britain understood the reality of its relative decline in only a halting and partial way. Due in part to this intellectual failure in measuring its power in the economic and military