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# Why NATO Endures

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using such weapons. Each chapter is a self-contained unit that ends with a separate bibliography and a list of applicable treaties. This approach is particularly valuable for a reader who wants to review quickly only one of the subjects covered.

The author does a good job presenting both sides of the issues surrounding these weapons. He clearly views these issues from a legal, arms-control perspective, as opposed to that of someone who might have actually to employ the weapons in combat. This is hardly surprising, given the author's background. Koplow is a professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center and director of the Center for Applied Legal Studies. He has the added credentials of service in both the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the Department of Defense.

A quick look at chapter 6, on smart antipersonnel mines, illustrates the book's strengths (which are major) and its weaknesses (which are minor). The scenario is hypothetical and involves a country called "Kafiristan." In my view, such cases are less powerful than his historical ones, such as the use of precision-guided bombs against heavily defended bridges in North Vietnam. This chapter provides a useful primer on land-mine warfare, including important definitions explaining self-destructing, self-neutralizing, and self-deactivating mines. It also discusses the two current, but competing, treaties on the subject: the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which was signed by the United States, and the more restrictive 1997 Ottawa Treaty, which the United States did not sign.

Whether one agrees or not with Koplow's conclusions, *Death by Moderation* is a valuable addition to the literature because it forces the reader to think about a number of important issues that will be around for the predictable future.

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Thies, Wallace J. *Why NATO Endures*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009. 321pp. \$90

The study of alliances is central to our understanding of international relations. Wallace Thies, a reputable NATO scholar, argues that the "iron law of coalitions"—that alliances are formed to resist enemies and do not outlast them—must be rethought because of NATO's record-breaking performance over the past six decades. The title, *Why NATO Endures*, therefore understates the sweeping conclusion of this concise and readable essay.

Thies's rhetorical technique is to document how contemporaneous observers have characterized six tumultuous incidents in NATO's existence as life-threatening crises, then to evaluate with the clarity of hindsight the alliance's self-healing tendencies. In each case, NATO emerges as a stronger alliance with improved vitality.

The analysis draws from both historical sources and political-science research to contrast traditional alliances with NATO. Thies's principal points are both simple and profound. The European alliances of past centuries were cut from different cloth than was the North

Atlantic alliance. Early alliances seemed designed to be transitory. There was no need for cooperation, integration, preparation, or even friendship among Bismarckian-era allies in a multipolar world. Offensive wars were fought for territory and treasure. However, this situation was turned on its head when two superpowers developed alliance systems in an ideological struggle where contesting armies had thermonuclear weapons and needed to be ready to fight for national survival on a moment's notice. Further, NATO's members were liberal democracies empowered to take positions independent of the United States on any number of issues and were willing to air these differences in public.

The author's well-informed encapsulation of the six "fatal" crises that NATO has weathered over the years provides scholars and interested general readers insight, perspective, and juicy anecdotes. The author's technique of laying out the problem in each case and following with "what actually happened" makes for a series of intriguing and illuminating vignettes in diplomatic history. Watching them unfold in real time, without the benefit of opened archives and clear hindsight, was not nearly as satisfying or rewarding.

A second cavil with the book's title (and the more important one) is that it is conclusive only in the past tense. The book is certainly a persuasive explanation as to why NATO *endured*. It offers a plausible countertheory for the creation of successful and enduring alliances. However, only one of the crises addresses the post-Cold War world in which we find ourselves today. Indeed, many of the circumstances that

attended NATO's creation and sustenance have either vanished or are eroding. Its *bête noire* (Russia) has ceased to be NATO's enemy for two decades, and the anxieties created by imminent destruction have been replaced by lesser threats, such as transnational terrorism and crime. It remains to be seen if the "self-healing tendencies" of democracies are sufficient to enable NATO to endure in an entirely different kind of world. The reader will benefit from Thies's well argued discussion of this point.

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Wheeler, Winslow T., and Lawrence J. Korb. *Military Reform: An Uneven History and an Uncertain Future*. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009. 256pp. \$24.95

In *Military Reform*, two national security experts reflect on initiatives intended to reform defense planning across the entire enterprise. For decades Winslow Wheeler and Lawrence Korb have observed, studied, and participated in defense reform, gaining a weathered perspective on the ideas, events, and actions taken by national security organizations within government. This work describes the conditions necessary or common in the national security environment in cases where individuals or institutions have exhibited interest in reform.

Wheeler and Korb review the issues that underpinned defense reform initiatives over several decades. They describe the actions of key individuals who championed reform ideas and the issues and stakes of those who opposed or resisted.