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The Baltic Nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century

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of the group's powerful role in the Nato policy process.

Writing from the perspective of one who has observed the organization at close quarters, Bland details the historical antecedents of the committee, how the present structure was developed, and how it has used its influence within the alliance. By itself, this historical analysis fills an important gap in literature about Nato. What gives the book its potential influence in the current debate, however, is the final chapter, in which Bland draws together the threads of structure and policy to postulate a seminal change in the structure of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Fully cognizant of and drawing upon the serious proposals that have been made within the debate over the relevance and future role of Nato in European defense, Bland concludes that a structure for European security cooperation is likely to be possible only within the Atlantic alliance. To avoid splitting the alliance along national or political lines, he suggests forming a regional military structure to support a reinforcement strategy. Allied Command Europe would be abolished and Nato's military forces organized into five major Nato commands: Atlantic Command, Northern European Command, Central European Command, Southern European Command, and Strategic Reserve Command. With appropriate nations grouped into relevant major Nato commands, the need for the post of SacEur (to this point always

an American) would dissolve and the post could be abolished. In such a radical realignment the Military Committee would assume a much more prominent role.

The Military Committee is an important book which deserves careful study by all who participate in the debate over the future of Nato. Although Nato is restructuring itself along less radical lines at the moment, unless the alliance is willing, as Bland points out, to look carefully at its basic structure, the essential political cohesion of the decades-old alliance could be in jeopardy.

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Hidden, John and Salmon, Patrick. *The Baltic Nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Longman, 1991. 224pp. (No price given)

During the profound transformation of political and economic relationships in Europe, a reexamination of the relative significance of peripheral and border areas is in order. At such times, the catalyst for dramatic developments has often appeared on the margins of the European state system. Given the conditions of uncertainty and erosion of long-standing security arrangements, even diminutive states and nonstate actors may momentarily play roles far out of proportion to their relative standing in the international community. Thus, the march of fundamental change

occurring in Europe—German reunification, the end of the Cold War, dissolution of the Soviet Union, and transformation of former East Bloc states—demands a reassessment of these “marginal” areas in order to identify emerging trends with the potential to influence the broader security environment.

At least four regions around the periphery of the erstwhile Soviet empire warrant fresh examination: the Russian Far East, Soviet Central Asia, the Balkans, and that region which Roman Szporluk has recently recast with the appellation, “Far-Eastern Europe.” The book under review contributes enormously to a reassessment of the evolving role of the standard bearers in the latter region—the newly independent Baltic states.

While there are many specialized studies of Baltic history and of Soviet policy toward these nations, few have focused on the broader implications of independent Baltic States operating in a transformed Europe. Furthermore, an understanding of the history of their status under international law is essential. The Baltic independence movements drew heavily from that source for political leverage in their dialogue with the Soviet center and as a source of legitimacy on the world stage. Hiden and Salmon are particularly well situated to place recent events in the context of historical and diplomatic perspectives because of their previous research and their ability to draw upon the resources of the Baltic Research Unit at Bradford University. They have produced a remarkably balanced presentation of

the critical variables and lessons of Baltic historical experience and have illuminated the meaning of the experience in the present context.

These lessons center around a number of key observations. First is the assertion that the experience of independence and state-building between 1920 and 1940 remains relevant in contemporary terms and differentiates these states from other republics of the former Soviet Union. The authors highlight the striking parallels between the domestic and international situation obtaining in the early 1920s and today. Second, they reconsider the timely issues of whether small states are viable and how they function within the European political system. They argue that on the basis of reasonably successful efforts at state-building and trade development during the first independence period, the Baltic states of today can make it politically and economically. Third, they make a strong case that full restoration of sovereignty and the end of the Cold War are essential preconditions for attainment of real security, economic prosperity, and resumption of the role of the Baltic states as a bridge between East and West.

While exploring these themes, the authors prove especially adept at highlighting salient factors which are sometimes overlooked. For example, they are careful to delineate how the geographic, religious, political, and economic divisions between Lithuania and Latvia-Estonia gave rise to very different approaches to the independence drive and state-building.

The book suffers only from the unavoidable problem of having gone to press before the final act in the process of achieving independence had played out. The discussion ends with a postscript appended in the wake of Gorbachev's spasmodic attempt in January 1991 to restore by force central authority and control in the Baltics. Information available after this period could have fleshed out the means by which "Green" politics provided a vital basis for the rebirth of Baltic nationalism, the different approaches to the minority rights issue, the disruption of the Baltic economies through withholding of energy resources and rerouting of transit trade, and the dramatic erosion of Soviet-CIS military power in the region. Despite these subsequent developments, the authors managed to forecast trends with a high degree of success.

Hidden and Salmon have provided a foundation for addressing the critical question—as important now as in the past—of what role the Baltic states will play in a changing environment: forward outpost of German influence and dominance, Russia's window on the West, a reconstituted buffer zone, or mediator and bridge between East and West. They remind us of the potential to overlook, while fixating on developments in the CIS, the distinctive role of the Baltic states. As a guide to the relevant issues, this concise and authoritative synthesis is strongly recommended.

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Sokolsky, Joel, J. *The Fraternity of the Blue Uniform: Admiral Richard G. Colbert, U.S. Navy and Allied Naval Cooperation*. Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1991. 77pp. \$7.50 (available from Naval War College Foundation Gift Shop, Naval War College, 686 Cushing Road, Newport, R.I. 02841-1207)

This eighth volume in the Naval War College Historical Monograph Series covers the career of Richard Geary Colbert, the thirty-first president of the College. The author has traced and ably discussed Colbert's assignments from 1948 to 1973 that were directly concerned with international affairs.

Beginning with the assignment in 1948 as flag lieutenant and aide to Admiral Richard Connelly, commander in chief of U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, each tour described contributed to Colbert's understanding of United States maritime strategy and the need for closer cooperation with allied and other free-world navies. During his subsequent tours of duty in the Navy's "state department" (the international affairs division of Naval Operations (Op-35)), Colbert worked on a variety of problems under the direction of Rear Admiral Bernard Austin, and then indirectly for Rear Admiral Arleigh Burke.

In 1956, the recently promoted Captain Colbert was a student in "Naval Warfare 1" at the Naval War College, and had been selected to remain for the next academic year as a student in "Naval Warfare 2." Earlier, while in Washington, Colbert had