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**John Gearson, Kori Schake, eds.**. *The Berlin Wall Crisis: Perspectives on Cold War Alliances.* Cold War History Series. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. xxi + 209 pp. $65.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-333-92960-5.

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With the Cold War now long in the past, the authors in this collection propose a new window into the Berlin Crisis. No set of problems more sharply focused our attention on Soviet-American tensions than that of Berlin in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Perhaps no series of events has been more appraised for what it tells us about super power conflict, Soviet policy making, and Cold War era crisis management. This volume draws us, instead, into the much less studied question of how the Berlin Crisis impacted upon the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and WTO (Warsaw Treaty Organization) alliances. It posits that the Crisis of 1958-1961 helps us understand Cold War strategies and policies in Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), the Soviet Union, the United States, and France. But more than that, the book suggests that the nature of the alliances crafted by these and other nations linked to the Crisis were both tested and shaped by conflict over Berlin. There are no surprises here, no dramatic reinterpretations of how we understand the Crisis or related historical processes. But this is a marvelous assembly of consistently excellent discussions of Berlin in the national strategic contexts of the key national players involved.

Constraint emerges here as a central theme of alliance and crisis. Each of the countries noted above was bound in how it reacted to Berlin by the demands of a strategic alliance. None could abandon Berlin while World War III loomed as a distinct possibility. Nations peripheral to the Crisis had more freedom of policy and diplomatic movement. Italian leaders, for example, worried about being drawn into a crisis over which they had little influence. They tried to forestall what they thought were the erroneous policies of their allies. Failed objectives on Berlin represent a second major theme in this collection. None of the states involved in the Crisis realized the goals they had identified as crucial to a successful resolution of tensions. West German leaders were unable to halt what they believed was the country's growing isolation from other western states. Until the Berlin Wall was built, East Germany could not stop the mass emigration that advertised its authoritarian political structure. France saw an end

to its effort to restructure NATO in a manner that would establish a clear power balance between itself, Britain, and the United States. The British hoped to position themselves as the European leader within NATO. And while American leaders were unable to rein in the costs (and dangers) of holding Europe, the Soviets could not break the Western alliance in any significant manner over Berlin. In each of these cases, the book's editors argue, these failures had less to do with preventing war with opponents than with the need for compromise and cooperation with allies. The story of the Berlin Crisis, then, is less the story of confrontation at the brink than of alliances tested, shored up, and changed.

A seven-page chronology of Berlin-related Cold War episodes is followed by Lawrence Freedman's concise and intelligent overview of "Berlin and the Cold War." Freedman reasons that Berlin epitomizes the Cold War, contrasting the political and economic power of the West with the repressive military might of the East. The Crisis underscored the growing divide between two Germanys--one liberal capitalist, the other illiberal socialist: "It was ideology that gave the Berlin crisis its edge, giving meaning to the balance of power and introducing a particular source of instability" (p. 3). John Gearson's "Origins of the Berlin Crisis, 1958-62" is included, according to editors, to bring readers up to speed on the origins of the Crisis and to obviate the need for subsequent chapters to repeat over and over key events. While well-written and in keeping with recent conclusions by other foreign policy scholars of the period, a chapter by Kori Schake on U.S. policies through the Crisis sheds no new light on the period. The Eisenhower administration determined policy based on a willingness to go to war on Berlin and other Germany-related issues. But when the Soviet Union did not comply with deadlines to turn over its Berlin rights to East Germany, the threat of war simply could not be sustained. Eisenhower feared confronting a small range of policy and military options were the two super powers to go to war. At the same time the Americans concentrated on trying to find a negotiated settlements with the Soviets that would satisfy both NATO allies and West Germany. At the time of the 1961 confrontation over Berlin, Kennedy wavered. According to Schake, by not sticking to a hard line militarily, the Americans lost support in NATO on Berlin and on other issues.

Chapters on British and French policy are extremely well argued, effectively researched, and offer new interpretations from a number of perspectives. In "Britain and the Berlin Wall Crisis, 1958-1962," John Gearson ties British Cold War policies in the context of the Suez Crisis to Berlin. In short, British leaders did not understand the complexities and dangers of the Berlin Crisis. Lingering failures to bring about detente with the Soviet Union, improve ties with the United States and France, and distance the nation from Germany continued to impact British politics through the 1990s. More specifically, British policy makers dramatically overestimated the nation's independence and Cold War leadership potential. According to Gearson, during the Berlin Crisis Prime Minister Harold Macmillan "dreamed of an accommodation with the Soviets which was fundamentally inimical to Britain's alliance commitments and profoundly damaging" to West Germany (p. 65). The Crisis affirms how different Britain's self-image was from its Cold War reality. By 1961 European countries were moving toward the formation of a European Economic Community. Macmillan had come to understand that Britain's future strategically was in Europe. But he could not understand Germany's potential for leadership or the possibility of Germany as an equal partner to the British. Partly as a consequence, Great Britain's voice in European politics mattered less and less after Berlin. More often than not, the British remained outside key decision making processes on European unity economically and politically.

The French experience was very different. President Charles De Gaulle read the Berlin Crisis far more astutely than did Macmillan, perceiving opportunity for France to establish strategic equivalence with Britain and the United States, as well as long term superiority over West Germany. Cyril Buffet's "De Gaulle, the Bomb and Berlin: How to Use a Political Weapon" argues that nuclear weapons represented De Gaulle's central ambition. The acquisition of nuclear arms would alter France's international status and Berlin provided the opportunity that De Gaulle required on atomic weapons. The Crisis helped convince French leaders that a nuclear force was indispensable to refusing the ultimatums of both allies and the Soviet enemy.

While each chapter reflects comprehensive multi-archival research, Hope Harrison's "The German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall Crisis" is particularly rich for the author's use of East German and Soviet archives, particularly with respect to Soviet-East German relations. In what is likely the most important historical contribution of the collection, Harrison demonstrates that East German--rather than Soviet--initiatives and policies determined the length and intensity of the 1961 Berlin Crisis, as well as the decision to build the Berlin Wall. East German President Walther Ulbricht pressured, cajoled, and, in the end, compelled Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev repeatedly over the risk of an East German collapse; largely on the basis of Ulbricht's postures, the Soviets adopted an increasingly hard line and combative set of positions on Berlin. In September 1960, discouraged by what he felt was Krushchev's patient approach to western policies on Berlin, Ulbricht began to act alone. The Soviets, for example, were "astounded" (p. 105) at East Germany's announcement that Western diplomats assigned to missions in Bonn would need East German permission to enter East Berlin. Moreover, the crises over Berlin provided a strategic opportunity for Ulbricht within the Soviet Bloc. The East German leader was not in favor of expanded contacts between Soviet Bloc countries and West Berlin. On the contrary, Ulbricht hoped to mediate and regulate such contacts, thereby controlling new aspects of East-West relations. He was determined that improved contacts between socialist countries and West Berlin not raise the latter's prestige at the expense of East Germany.

West Germany's status within the Western alliance--as relatively weak compared to the dominant partner--was not unlike that of East Germany within the Soviet Bloc. But unlike the East Germans in the Soviet Bloc, West Germany under Konrad Adenauer had no success on Berlin-related positions within NATO. As the Crisis unfolded, the Americans viewed Adenauer as intransigent and verging on the paranoid. In "The Berlin Crisis and the FRG, 1958-62," Jill Kastner concludes that Adenauer's relations with Washington and London were permanently strained by the Berlin Crisis. In fact, by 1962 the United States and France had reversed roles in the West German leader's mind: "Now Washington was the villain, erratic, unreliable and threatening to betray all of the agreements which Adenauer had so painstakingly cobbled out over the course of the 1950s" (p. 143).

"Italy and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-61" by Leopoldo Nuti and Bruna Bagnato recounts Italian efforts to prevent a war, while the final chapter in the book, "Three Hats for Berlin: General Lauris Norstad and the Second Berlin Crisis, 1958-62," by Gregory W. Pedlow, considers Berlin from the perspective of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander. Nuti and Bagnato suggest that Berlin brought a dramatic role shift in Italian foreign policy. Thanks in part to the influence of the left in national politics, Italian leaders would view Berlin as a precedent for a new post-war diplomacy of mediation in Vietnam, the Middle East, and in other international crises. In the final chapter, Pedlow argues convincingly that Norstad's inventive strategic planning allowed for unusual flexibility in the West's response to the Berlin Crisis.

Norstad simply refused the more hard line Kennedy Administration approaches to Berlin, perhaps avoiding destructive military conflicts in the process.

Thoughtfully and meticulously edited, ***The Berlin Wall Crisis*** brings together an excellent collection of originally researched studies. While shattering none of the historical shibboleths on Berlin, the volume nonetheless advances our understanding of the Crisis considerably in a context of European strategic and power politics.





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