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This is a quarterly series of reviews focusing on recently published books dealing with topical and noteworthy national security issues. Authors and publishers interested in submitting their books on national security for review may contact the Editor at informationseries@nipp.org.

Mira Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 273 pp.

Reviewed By: Michaela Dodge
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In *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, Dr. Mira Rapp-Hooper examines the past, present, and future of U.S. alliances. She succinctly highlights contributions that alliances make to U.S. national security and convincingly makes the case that since the end of the World War II, alliances have enabled the United States to pursue a more ambitious global foreign policy at a lower cost. She uses

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counterfactual arguments to illustrate that the United States would likely have to pay a lot more in blood and treasure if it did not have an alliance posture that helps it deter and manage conflicts further away from the homeland. With regard to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the counterfactual argument is not necessarily no NATO and therefore no alliances in Europe, but rather a series of bilateral relations with each of the European countries separately. Granted, such an arrangement may not be as efficient as NATO, but the choice is not binary as the author would have us believe.

Yet, the maintenance of the alliance system cannot be taken for granted as Rapp-Hooper points out. "Today, America's alliance system is approaching insolvency, not because it is too financially costly to maintain but because American citizens and leaders are disconnected from its origins and fundamental purposes," writes the author. A proposition that U.S. alliances are in a crisis is nothing new. Criticisms of non-U.S. allies' burden-sharing arrangements are almost as old as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the largest U.S. alliance, itself. In 2011, Robert Gates, then-Secretary of Defense, stated, "The blunt reality is that there will be dwindling appetite and patience in the U.S. Congress – and in the American body politic writ large—to expend increasingly precious funds on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defense."[1] His remarks came a year after mid-term elections that saw many new members of Congress with little to no foreign policy experience asking questions about why the United States needs an Air Force, let alone comprehending the necessity of a U.S. permanent forward deployed-presence. That the United States has not been able to convincingly make the case for its alliance structure is hardly a failure of the latest U.S. administration.

And while Rapp-Hooper spends considerable time blaming the Trump Administration for the alliance state of affairs, partisan criticisms of a presidential administration are nothing new either. "One of the most striking consequences of the Bush administration's foreign policy tenure has been the collapse of the Atlantic alliance," wrote the Clinton Administration's Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Ronald Asmus in 2003.[2] Just as his criticism was misguided then, Rapp-

1. Department of Defense, "Remarks by Secretary Gates at the Security and Defense Agenda," June 10, 2011, available at https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4839.
2. Asmus, Ronald D. "Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance." Foreign Affairs 82, no. 5 (2003): 20-31. Accessed August 13, 2020. doi:10.2307/20033680.

Hooper's focus on criticizing the Trump Administration almost exclusively is misguided today. Unwillingness of some of the allies to articulate a clear purpose and benefits of an alliance with the United States to their domestic publics is not the Trump Administration's fault. And for all the Trump Administration's flaws, the fact of the matter is that allies have stepped up their contributions to NATO and that they are closer to a common understanding of Russia and China as strategic threats than perhaps at any point in post-Cold War history.

The author's by and large glossing over or extensive rationalizing of foreign policy failures of the Obama and Clinton administrations takes away from the analytical value of the book, in that she misses an opportunity to provide a more nuanced perspective on U.S. alliance politics in the post-Cold War era and lessons learned from its successes and failures. The trap of U.S. foreign policy wishful thinking is perhaps the most damaging U.S. strategic tendency with significant potential implications for U.S. alliances, yet it is not discussed in the book at all.

Where Rapp-Hooper's book shines the strongest is in its well-researched historical analysis of the origins of the alliance system and the benefits it brought to the United States over the decades. She shows that there is very little empirical evidence supporting the popular notion that alliances lead to U.S. entanglements and make it fight conflicts it wouldn't have fought otherwise. In fact, she points out, alliances helped the United States to control allies that were sometimes all too eager to engage in a conflict—and perhaps saved the United States from a larger war. Overall, Rapp-Hooper's book is an important post-Cold War contribution to our understanding of the value and purpose of U.S. alliances in U.S. grand strategy.

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William J. Perry and Tom Z. Collina, *The Button: The New Nuclear Arms Race and Presidential Power from Truman to Trump* (Dallas, TX: BenBella Books, Inc., 2020), 335 pp.

Reviewed by W. Michael Guillot
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The Button deals with one of the most consequential issues of our time. Regrettably, what could have been a balanced, focused argument on nuclear deterrence and nuclear

weapons ultimately devolves into the tired, anti-nuclear arguments of the past 30 years. The work suffers from several limitations, the first of which is a plethora of hyperbolic statements. Examples include: "We are all on the atomic Titanic…. The risk of accidental nuclear war is increasing… Very little in the way of controls… We're playing Russian roulette with humanity… There is no way to prevent a determined President from starting a nuclear war…without any provocation…[and] The system is unconstitutional, dangerous, outdated, and unnecessary."

Additionally, the book is not logically organized to make the argument against nuclear weapons; rather, it presents arguments in a haphazard way. It begins with a fantasy-based scenario that is sure to deter—that is, deter most serious nuclear scholars from reading any further. Afterward, the authors meander from hyperbole, to some nuclear history, to a host of problems with nuclear weapons, then more history, but without a clearly focused argument or adequate context. The work would have been more effective by stating its arguments up front, then answering the question posed in Chapter 9: "Why do we still have the Bomb?" Afterward, each problem or risk factor should have been addressed individually. Instead, the reader must wade through the disarray to reach the recommendations in Chapter 10.

The authors, former Defense Secretary William Perry and disarmament activist Tom Collina, argue that the United States should ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons—but until then it should restrict authority for nuclear use, significantly reduce U.S. nuclear forces and change the U.S. nuclear posture. For example:

End sole authority. The authors argue that the president alone should not have the power to authorize nuclear use. They claim a president may be unstable or be required to make a "snap" decision. Instead, Congress should be involved in any decision for first use of nuclear weapons to slow down the process and offer more decision time—except for a retaliatory strike. The president would retain sole authority to act freely and quickly to a confirmed attack. The authors seem to believe the president alone, especially President Trump, without provocation, would make a nuclear use decision without additional input. They conflate *sole authority* with *sole decision making*, ignoring the consultations that would naturally occur before authorizing nuclear use—including whether use is legal in context. Such consultations, for example, were the case with President Trump's recent decision to deny a strike on Iran. In addition, the requirement for congressional approval could create ambiguity about who is Commander-in-Chief regarding nuclear use, which clearly would raise Constitutional issues of authority. For

example, if Congress voted to use nuclear weapons without presidential approval, based on the passions of the people, who would decide? Would this ambiguity increase the risks our adversaries might misunderstand U.S. intentions and degrade deterrence? Such a situation could create a crisis within a crisis and invite preemption by an adversary and a lack of allied confidence in the United States. The authors correctly state that control of nuclear weapons is scary. This is why the United States has a sole authority policy and strict control protocols.

No Launch on Warning (LOW). Perry and Collina are absolutely terrified of accidental nuclear war based on false warning, particularly from cyber attack, or "if the Stratcom Commander was having a bad day." They recommend using nuclear weapons only in retaliation after a confirmed detonation (on the United States or allies). However, their argument discounts how a launch-on-warning (LOW) option complicates Russian assessments of war outcomes and enhances deterrence. The authors do not seem to realize LOW is a U.S. option, not an automatic response. Besides this point, a nuclear accident is not war and a nuclear war is no accident!

No First Use (NFU). The authors' argument for NFU is undeveloped and underexamined. On one hand, NFU would appear to create a more stable deterrence environment because it offers a clear declaratory policy yet retains flexibility as a national security choice. However, such a policy is only as strong as the trust among adversaries—currently in short supply—and would be highly disturbing to U.S. allies, especially if the authors' congressional approval recommendation for nuclear use is adopted. This could lead to greater proliferation. Perry and Collina also suggest limiting the first strike threat from submarines by restricting their deployment areas away from coasts. This is not logical thinking. Since submarines are supposed to be stealthy, opponents presumably would not know their location.

Eliminate U.S. ICBMs. The authors see ICBMs as simply a first strike weapon of immense danger and not worth the expense. They ignore the arguments that U.S. ICBMs are cost imposing to our adversaries and raise the stakes of an attack—thereby contributing to deterrence. Eliminating U.S. ICBMs could make Russian and Chinese targeting simpler and potentially much more effective. These missiles are the safest, least expensive leg of the triad and a worthy, affordable, deterrent to such existential threats.

Make Deep U.S. Nuclear Reductions. The authors would like the United States immediately to reduce its entire nuclear arsenal to 100 nuclear weapons and deploy only 10 nuclear submarines. They appear to place considerable trust in Russian good intentions and believe that somehow such drastic U.S. reductions would make the United States safer. How much is enough for reliable deterrence? This is a national security question, involving calculations of acceptable risk. However, Perry and Collina do not begin to wrestle with the potential risks of their recommended reductions, including the likely degradation of deterrence and assurance of U.S. allies.

Limit Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). The authors excoriate the United States for deploying BMD and blame BMD for most of our arms control problems and for Russian behavior. As with most such criticisms of U.S. BMD, the authors ignore the fact that Russia has for decades deployed nuclear-armed interceptors around Moscow in considerably greater numbers than the U.S. non-nuclear system will have, even with planned increases. The authors posit that BMD is ineffective, costly, and destabilizing. They also fear, "…if Trump believes he can intercept a missile attack he may…escalate…[and]…the more we spend the more we convince ourselves it will work." This is fear mongering. By testing BMD, we learn what works and what does not. This increased confidence in the system can potentially save many American lives and buy time to consider how best to respond to an attack. As for missile defense being destabilizing, the U.S. BMD system is tailored against the more limited rogue state missile threat and is not designed to defend against an attack from Russia or China. Clearly, the Russians are not overly concerned that their larger system is destabilizing. The authors emphasize the potential fallibility of deterrence—which should lead them to advocate for such BMD protection, but illogically, it does not. What should be the U.S. response if we successfully intercept a rogue state nuclear armed missile launched against the United States? What would be the options in the absence of U.S. BMD? The authors simply do not address such contemporary questions.

Throughout the book the authors deal in possibilities without any analysis of probabilities and the potential risks of their recommended changes. They focus on U.S. actions and culpability while seemingly downplaying or ignoring the actions and intentions of U.S. adversaries; nor do they suggest turning Russian nuclear weapons into ploughshares.

One wonders if this book reflects regret for unfinished work, missed opportunities, or perhaps the passion of a zealous anti-nuclear coauthor. It demonstrates that zealotry

for or against nuclear weapons comes at the expense of actual analysis. Those who believe eliminating nuclear weapons is feasible, desirable, and acceptable may be disappointed by its lack of serious analysis. Those who do not already advocate the elimination of nuclear weapons will be wholly unconvinced. Nevertheless, one should read this book if only to see how one-sided are the arguments of the anti-nuclear establishment.

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Michaela Dodge, *U.S.-Czech Missile Defense Cooperation: Alliance Politics in Action* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, 2020).

Reviewed by Mark N. Katz
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Michaela Dodge has written a solid account about the rise and fall of U.S.-Czech missile defense cooperation in the first decade of the 21st century. The George W. Bush Administration sought to station a radar system in the Czech Republic (as well as interceptor missiles in Poland) due to its concerns about the possibility of missile attack from North Korea and Iran. Especially fascinating is her analysis of the politics of U.S.-Czech missile defense cooperation in each successive parliamentary coalition that rose and fell in Prague when this was being actively considered.

What Dodge shows is that while the Bush Administration sought this radar system deployment due to its genuine concern about a possible missile attack on or across Europe from Iran or North Korea, even those Czech politicians and parties that wanted this U.S. deployment to occur did not share these concerns. An Iranian missile attack, much less a North Korean one, simply did not seem like a credible threat to them. But even though they did not share this U.S. concern, there were other concerns that some Czechs did have motivating them to welcome a U.S. ballistic missile defense-related deployment. One was their fear of a hostile Russia. Even though, as the Bush Administration itself argued, the planned U.S. ballistic missile defense deployments in Poland and the Czech Republic could not protect either country militarily, many Czechs saw any U.S. deployment on their territory as a political signal to Moscow about Washington's commitment to Prague's defense. But even besides their concern about Russia, many Czechs saw cooperating with the Bush Administration on ballistic missile

defense as a way of increasing Prague's value to Washington and increasing U.S.-Czech cooperation more broadly.

But as Dodge also shows, more Czechs opposed the proposed U.S. radar deployment than supported it throughout the years that it was being considered. She also describes how Moscow—which all along saw the proposed U.S. ballistic missile defense deployments in the Czech Republic and Poland as aimed mainly at Russia—conducted a vigorous influence operation aimed at stoking Czech public opposition to it. Just as with Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, it is impossible to tell whether Moscow's active measures campaign had a decisive influence or not. But there is no doubt that Moscow spent considerable energy on trying to undermine support for it in the Czech Republic.

Even so, as Dodge describes, there was a moment at the beginning of 2009 when it seemed possible that the Czech government just might accept a U.S. radar deployment, but the incoming Obama Administration withdrew U.S. support for it.

In addition to being a detailed account—especially from the Czech side—of the politics of ballistic missile defense cooperation (or the lack of it) between Washington and Prague, it is also useful to read this book as a case study of how the internal politics of a country can set the parameters of the extent to which it can cooperate with the United States. It is not clear whether more Bush Administration attention to Czech politics and a greater U.S. effort to persuade Czech public opinion would have led to the deployment going forward sooner and thus being more difficult for the Obama Administration to cancel. What Dodge's well written book shows, though, is that when Washington seeks to engage in defense cooperation with an allied nation, it needs to pay close attention to how its proposals are playing in its domestic politics. The Russians certainly are.

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