may also be due to Anglo-American cultural differences. In Washington, once an acute crisis ended, the relationship with Britain may not have been remembered as all that important. It is also interesting to note that British studies of the Anglo-U.S. relationship are far richer than American studies of the same subject. Britain, a long-term ally of the United States in World War II and the Cold War, is often taken for granted by American historians. More unreliable or more powerful allies than Britain, like France and Germany, usually attract more scholarly attention in the United States. However, a study of Anglo-U.S. relations often reveals something that may not have been intended in the first place; namely, an accurate account of U.S. reactions to an international crisis. During a crisis, U.S. officials usually interacted more closely with British leaders than with any other power, as Ashton’s study confirms. Hence, by examining Anglo-U.S. relations, American historians may discover a great deal about their own national leaders.

Social scientists often reject what they regard as an excessively realist approach in historical analyses of high politics. In reality, historians give us a multidimensional picture—including bureaucratic politics, public opinion, the domestic situation, and the cultural and ideological issues behind many conflicts of interests. Moreover, international crises, such as those covered in this volume, are the time when decision-making is most heavily centralized at the top. Public opinion, Congress, and the influence of other domestic, international, economic, and social imperatives are of less importance during such crises. Ashton is therefore to be commended for consciously having taken on board the non-realist aspects of the issues that influenced decision-makers, although he states that the “concept of the national interest remained the most important of the range of factors that informed the perception of policy makers in London and Washington” (p. 226). Ashton’s aim was to produce a perceptive study of the Anglo-U.S. relationship from 1961 to 1963, and he has successfully achieved that goal in this book.


Reviewed by Christian Nuenlist, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich

In 1961 Dean Rusk confessed, “When I go to sleep, I try not to think about Berlin.” During the early Cold War, Berlin was a constant irritation for Moscow—and caused nightmares in the West. The Berlin crisis of 1958–1962 has been studied in detail, but this new volume of essays offers a more complex view of its impact on Cold War alliances. Yet, the title of the book is slightly misleading in two respects. First, the nine chapters all rightly deal with the entire second Berlin crisis (1958–1962)—not just with the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961. Second, eight of the chapters focus on the Western alliance, whereas only one contribution sheds light on “the other side.” This is deplorable, considering that crucial evidence has been unearthed in Russian, German,
Czech, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Polish archives over the past decade. The Berlin crisis was a turning point in the Warsaw Pact's shift from a defensive to an offensive strategy in Europe. Ironically, the Berlin crisis led to an unprecedented militarization of the Warsaw Pact—despite Nikita Khrushchev's efforts to demilitarize and stabilize the Cold War in Europe.

In two introductory chapters, Lawrence Freedman and John Gearson elucidate the importance of Berlin in the Cold War and the historical background of the Berlin problem. The subsequent chapters outlining the national perspectives of the major Western actors are based on multi-archival research and emerge within the framework of the Nuclear History Program in the late 1980s and 1990s. Even though most of the essays have appeared earlier in journals or monographs, the synoptic view of complex intra-alliance politics is extremely valuable. Khrushchev's challenge in Berlin demonstrated how difficult it was to maintain alliance cohesion. As the editors emphasize, concerns about relationships with allies determined the choices made by all the major countries. The United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany all failed to achieve their central objectives on Berlin (p. xi).

Kori Schake compares Dwight D. Eisenhower's calm response to a crisis that was viewed as a political provocation with John F. Kennedy's more vigorous reaction to a challenge perceived as a military threat. She argues the Kennedy administration's readiness to compromise after the building of the Berlin Wall damaged U.S. relations with the West European allies. Schake wonders about the “difference between the assertive military actions by the US in the two months preceding the Wall and their timidity following it” (p. 318). Kennedy's new approach also prompted the Europeans to question the practicability of the new strategy of flexible response.

Gregory Pedlow analyzes General Lauris Norstad's three-hatted role as U.S. Commander-in-Chief Europe, NATO Supreme Commander, and supervisor of the tripartite military planning staff LIVE OAK. Although Norstad's influence on Kennedy was limited, he was the predominant military figure in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and a pioneer in the development of the doctrine of flexible response. However, his views on NATO strategy and the Berlin crisis greatly differed from those of the new Kennedy administration and were unacceptable for the latter.

Other contributions to the volume include John Gearson's critical assessment of Harold Macmillan's détente policy with Moscow at the expense of West Germany. An account by Cyril Buffet deals with Charles de Gaulle's quest for parity with Washington and London, and Jill Kastner portrays Bonn's changing role from Washington's most loyal to an increasingly isolated ally within NATO.

The most original piece is the analysis of Italy's role in the crisis, by Leopoldo Nuti and Bruna Bagnato. The Italian government asserted its right to participate in all forums on international security issues by virtue of its new nuclear responsibilities (in 1958, Italy became the first country on the European continent to permit the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range ballistic missiles on its territory). From 1958 to 1961, Italy had four different cabinets and wavered between timid steps toward an improvement of relations with Moscow and a tougher approach. In addition to presenting the complex Italian scene, Nuti and Bagnato show how President Giovanni
Gronchi tried to mediate between the West and Moscow to bring about an opening toward the Left in Italian politics. Gronchi conducted an almost personal foreign policy, relying on the advice of the Italian ambassador to Moscow, Luca Pietromarchi. Nuti and Bagnato conclude that Italy, though not a major player during the crisis, at least managed to pursue a more independent line with regard to East-West relations. Because the documents of the Italian Foreign Ministry have not yet been declassified for the period after 1957, the authors, unfortunately, had to rely solely on U.S., French, and British records as well as on other public and private Italian archival collections.

Hope Harrison claims to offer a more positive example of the bargaining power of the “weak” to influence stronger allies. Hers is the only chapter in the volume dealing with the Warsaw Pact and is based on extensive research in Russian and German archives. Harrison develops the provocative argument that the East Germans pushed the reluctant Soviet Union into building the Wall, but she overstates the East German tail’s ability to wag the Soviet dog.

The book as a whole offers a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of the Berlin crisis, adding a new appreciation of the importance of non-superpower actors in the Cold War. The editors and contributors make a convincing case that the crisis was as much one in West-West and East-East interactions as it was in East-West relations.


Reviewed by Anna Locher, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich

The French-American relationship in the early 1960s has often been told as a story of diametrically opposed foreign policy goals. Erin Mahan in her slim but rich book develops a more complex account of the “cold alliance.” In explicit contrast to the standard interpretation, Mahan seeks to move beyond notions of conflicting designs. By examining the strategic and economic decision-making processes in Paris and Washington, she elaborates the political bargaining character that made up the U.S.-French relationship. Her accessible study offers a novel account of the links between international economy, defense strategy, and power politics. A major strength of the book is its clear interpretive framework. Mahan starts her discussion with the economic constraints of both countries—in France, the Algerian war and the burdens of an immense agricultural sector; in the United States, persistent economic recession and severe balance-of-payments deficits—and convincingly relates them to the strategic aspects of the troubled partnership.

Mahan develops her argument in eight autonomous chapters. An ambitious but rather roughly sketched introduction leads in medias res; it covers also the historical background and includes a perhaps too brief discussion of the literature. Following a *tour d’horizon* focusing on the protagonists of the narrative, Mahan dwells on the