NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc Conflicts

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S. Victor Papacosma

Description

Essays on Cold War tensions within NATO and the Warsaw Pact

There is no shortage of literature addressing the workings, influence, and importance of NATO and the Warsaw Pact individually or how the two blocs faced off during the decades of the Cold War. However, little has been written about the various intrabloc tensions that plagued both alliances during the Cold War or about how those tensions affected the alliances’ operation. The essays in NATO and the Warsaw Pact seek to address that glaring gap in the historiography by utilizing a wide range of case studies to explore these often-significant tensions, dispelling in the process all thoughts that the alliances always operated smoothly and without internal dissent.

The volume is divided into two parts, one on each alliance. An introductory essay by S. Victor Papacosma spells out the themes addressed in the individual essays and the volume’s coherent historiographical contribution. They include, but are not limited to, military and political matters, the consequences of World War II for the non-Western world, the role of individuals in shaping historical events, and the unintended consequences of policy choices and developments.

The international group of contributors brings to bear considerable policymaking and academic experience. In approaching the Cold War–era alliances from a new angle and in drawing on recently declassified documentation, this volume adds to the literature in recent international history and will be of interest to scholars in such fields as U.S. foreign relations, European diplomatic history, and security and defense studies, among others.

Visit the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security site for more information and news related to NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

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About the Author
Mary Ann Heiss, a specialist in the history of U.S. foreign relations with a particular
The Journal of Military History. NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc Conflicts (review). Ingo Trauschweizer. The Journal of Military History. As S. Victor Papacosma states in the introduction, NATO “accommodate[d] diversity better than the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union did not have the perceived all-powerful capacity to impose total discipline on its lesser allies” (pp. xiv–xv). Lawrence S. Kaplan suggests the book’s broader application: NATO outlasted the Warsaw Pact but has since failed to redefine its mission. The essays under review illustrate how both alliances addressed significant internal problems in the past. Together, they raise fundamental questions that may serve as guidance for those who hope to lead.