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Not one inch: America, Russia, and the making of post-Cold War stalemate : Mary Sarotte, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), xiii + 568 pp.

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Mary Sarotte, *Not one inch: America, Russia, and the making of post-Cold War stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021) xiii + 568 pp.

Mary Sarotte's key contribution in Not one inch is to redirect historiographical debates from the end of the Cold War to the post-Cold War period. As Sarotte comments, 'Telling the unruly history of the nineties as a narrative is hard but necessary' (p. 13). If we consider Kristina Spohr's delineation of 'first' and 'second' drafts of history for analyzing the 1990s, Sarotte's work provides a significant new layer. Not one inch builds on the growing academic reassessment of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) enlargement historiography by pushing the discussion from the first, into the second half of the 1990s. This multi-archival, multi-lingual, and multi-level research paired with Sarotte's gripping narration makes Not one inch a new centerpiece of debate for academics and policymakers alike.

Sarotte frames her contribution with the overarching argument that 'between the fall of the Wall and the rise of Putin, animosity between Moscow and Washington over NATO's future became central to the making of a post–Cold War political order that looked much like its Cold War predecessor—and to the unmaking of hopes for cooperation from Vancouver to Vladivostok' (p. 13). Lorenz Lüthi noted that his recent book *Cold Wars: Asia, The Middle East, Europe* (2020) was intended to be an extended memorial lecture to Cold War studies. However, contemplating 'contingencies of the continuities' from the Cold War into the post-Cold War period is an increasingly strong frame for analysis of post-Cold War international politics.[1]

Sarotte opens her narrative by looking at German reunification as the origin of the 'not one inch' narrative. As discussions of German reunification gained momentum in 1989, Sarotte outlines how Chancellor Helmut Kohl received a backchannel 'hypothesis', and potential ultimatum, from the Soviets – a united Germany would need to 'pull back from NATO' for the USSR to approve of reunification (p. 32). To get ahead of this, Kohl announced a ten-point plan with limited international consultation, blindsiding the French and leaving the Americas 'less than thrilled' (p. 33-34). Subsequently, during February 1990 United States-Soviet Union meetings in Moscow, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev presented that any expansion of NATO would be unacceptable. She shows how US Secretary of State James Baker, according to Gorbachev, answered, 'we agree with that'. In Washington, the National Security Council was concerned Baker leaned too far forward and was not in line with developing US strategy on the issue. The White House attempted to re-coordinate with Kohl and pour water on Moscow's ambitions so that there would not be any further unintended concessions associated with reunification (p. 42-43).

One strategy of obtaining further concessions from Moscow was to use economic leverage; Sarotte cites the examples of West Germany paying for Russian troops to be removed from East Germany (p. 55), to numerous G7 loans and Russian hopes for membership in the organization (p. 147). Russian leaders, despite accepting many of these offers and the clear need for extensive economic subsidies, were concerned that they would publicly be seen as taking American bribes at the expense of Russian security (p. 155). Due to the ongoing negotiated aspect of the role of NATO, Sarotte's conceptualization is that 'not one inch' was in fact a multifaceted, fluctuating process of joint complicity throughout the 1990s rather than a singular promise between Baker and Gorbachev in 1990.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and an emerging threat of nuclear proliferation in the Newly Independent States made NATO central command rethink expansion beyond a reunified Germany. Former Warsaw Pact states also came to reconsider their security, shifting focus from institutions such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE – OSCE post-1994) and EU, to full NATO membership as their anxieties of Soviet collapse grew. Fear of nuclear proliferation prompted concerns of how NATO and a new Confederation of Independent States (CIS) might

[1] N. Monteiro and F. Bartel, (eds.), *Before and After the Fall: World Politics and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 5.

interact. These worries were reflected in Gorbachev's – and then Boris Yeltsin's – hopes that Russia might be able to eventually join NATO (p. 83).

Sarotte has acknowledged that analysing alternative options for European security was relegated to her previous work, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, and as such, to the 1989-1991 period. The historiographical counterpoint here is that although states that became NATO members may conform to this narrative, smaller states such as Finland still maintained in their national security strategies as late as 1995. If we side-line debates on potential European security structures to the 1989-1991 period, counterfactual analysis may be limited in its assessments of potential NATO variations in the post-Cold War period.

Another significant policy shift highlighted by Sarotte was the change from the George H. W. Bush to the Bill Clinton administration in the United States in 1993. The Clinton administration initially promoted a new form of NATO cooperation via the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) (p. 107). Sarotte argues that this allowed the Americans to decrease the price of expansion but made it clear to Moscow that NATO would expand beyond Germany. However, by the end of 1994, due to Russian missteps in Chechnya and a growing need for action in Bosnia, US NATO PfP proponents lost out to a smaller cohort of American policymakers that vocally advocated for expansion via full Article 5 NATO membership (p. 122-123).

Despite growing support for full Article 5 expansion, Sarotte goes on to outline Clinton's hesitancy to expand NATO right away. This was partially due to US efforts to protect Yeltsin's public image for the 1996 Russian presidential elections. In essence, 1996-97 was a negotiation of what Yeltsin would request in exchange for NATO enlargement (p. 140). But with the ascension of Yevgeny Primakov as Russian Foreign Minister in 1996 and Yeltsin's sporadic health crises, Russian NATO opposition gained new impetus. The US government now needed to fend off growing pushback from Europeans, fearing that Moscow was gaining a foothold to propose an alternative plan for European security (p. 151).

While Sarotte does bring in French and German figures as supporting actors, future research on a wider European perspective of NATO would be valuable. Smaller states helped shape NATO expansion and should be included in these histories. Examples include the EU conflict management efforts in Bosnia, the Franco-German efforts to create a functional European Security and Defense Policy, or the CSCE/OSCE as a collective European endeavour. While these are understandably outside Sarotte's scope, Michael Cox's question about historiography of the end of the Cold War may still be appropriate for *Not One Inch*: 'how can we write Europeans back into their own story?' A Finnish reading of Sarotte's work raised two key questions: 1) were the 1990s truly as dismal as *Not One Inch* illustrates, and 2) are Sarotte's interpretations of smaller states' agency – such as Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari's reaction to US NATO policy or ideas of a Nordic Defense Union – credible? This reading problematizes the Great Power paradigm of a superpower-centric narrative. Sarotte readily acknowledges this limitation of her book and has posed *Not One Inch* as an invitation for further research rather than as a final word.

With this discussion in mind, Sarotte offers a historiographical conclusion that NATO expansion worked as a 'ratchet effect'. That is, where 'each turn forecloses other possibilities, making it impossible to reverse course and choose a different direction' and 'the consequences become cumulative as the sequence of decisions unfolds' (p. 20). As historiographical debates on the 1990s proceed, historians could hypothesize if the agency of smaller states confirmed or offered alternatives to this 'foreclosure of other possibilities'.

In her overarching assessment, Sarotte argues that the United States was able to coordinate negotiation strategies and aims whilst Yeltsin lost out as his goals were often compromised by his own lack of focus on the intermediary steps. This, for Sarotte, eventually led to the US government's efforts to make sure that not one inch of territory was off-limits to NATO expansion by decreasing the cost of continuous enlargement (p. 157). Despite this US success, Sarotte postulates that 'neither country made the best possible use of the thaw in the nineties. After unexpectedly being delivered

from the threat of a nuclear confrontation with each other, they let deliverance slip' (p. 15) and a new dividing line in Europe emerged. A 'post-Cold War security order that included Russia could have decreased tensions between the world's two nuclear superpowers- thereby decreasing tensions for all of Europe' (p. 195).

Alternatively, Mark Trachtenberg in his curiously under-cited commentary on NATO enlargement makes an controversial remark: 'Historical analysis in itself cannot really answer the fundamental question of how the policy of NATO expansion is to be assessed, and it is not the historian's business in any event to sit in judgment on the past'.[2] Sarotte's historiographical judgment furthers debate on the perpetual question of a contemporary historians' moral and political responsibilities when bringing the past into the present.

Not One Inch is a substantial conclusion in Sarotte's unofficial trilogy (*1989; The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall)* and fortifies her legacy as a pathbreaking historian of the end of the Cold War and the post-Cold War period. Historiography of the 1990s is indebted to the groundwork she has laid. As knowledge production on post-Cold War European security plays an increasing role in contemporary political debates, it is important that historians of the 1990s ruminate on the imprint past politics and morality may leave on emerging historiography.

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[2] M. Trachtenberg, 'The United States and the NATO Non-extension Assurances of 1990: New Light on an Old Problem?' *International Security* 45, no. 3 (2021), p. 203.