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# A Community of Interest: NATO and the Military Assistance Program, 1948-1951

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this as a highly whimsical piece of wishful thinking, Hough points out that the generational change about to occur within the Kremlin is likely to result in a more innovative foreign policy whose architects are likely to be more self-confident and more willing to engage in quiet diplomacy as long as they are treated with dignity as mature, responsible equals in international affairs.

Nicely complementing the author's much larger book, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (a revision of Merle Fainsod's classic, *How Russia is Ruled*), *Soviet Leadership in Transition* is a well-researched and engrossing study of the Soviet political system.

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Kaplan, Lawrence S. *A Community of Interests: NATO and the Military Assistance Program, 1948-1951*. Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, Historical Office, 1980. 251pp.

The Military Assistance Program (officially the Military Defense Assistance Program—MDAP), was approved in the fall of 1949 and contained provisions authorizing the President to extend \$1 billion in military aid to America's allies in Western Europe. This was, in the context of the early cold war, a substantial commitment on the part of the United States, and the Truman administration's proposals generated considerable controversy within the United States and between the United States and its European allies. Moreover, the implementation of the arms aid program played an important role in shaping the structure of the Atlantic Alliance.

However, the Military Assistance Program has the misfortune (from a historiographic point of view) of being sandwiched between more revolutionary or enduring projects such as the European Recovery Program, the

North Atlantic Treaty, and the assignment of American ground forces to NATO. As a result, the Military Assistance Program's influence on the Atlantic Alliance has never been the subject of careful study and analysis. Fortunately, Lawrence Kaplan's *A Community of Interests: NATO and the Military Assistance Program, 1948-1951* fills this important gap for students and scholars of the early postwar period. In addition, by detailing the Pentagon's part in the formulation and implementation of the MAP, the author highlights the significant political and diplomatic role played by the fledgling Defense Department in shaping U.S. foreign policy during the early years of the cold war.

The author views the early history of the Military Assistance Program as a troubled one: its purpose was blurred by including aid for the NATO allies in a larger, globally oriented, assistance package; its relationship to other postwar programs was not adequately coordinated; and the preparation of the MDAP was subject to bureaucratic politics, interdepartmental rivalries and heavy congressional criticism. Moreover, because the military aid program was a part of an evolving alliance relationship where the roles of the European and American partners remained unclear, its development was further hampered by transatlantic strains and stresses. The United States, eager to avoid entangling overseas commitments, hoped that arms aid from the United States would spur the Europeans to greater defense efforts, help restore the military balance on the continent, and ultimately reduce the need for a long-term American commitment. On the other hand, the Europeans—beset with the problems of economic recovery, political instability, overseas commitments, the Soviet menace and latent fears of Germany—hoped that U.S. assistance would be a substitute for increased defense spending on their

part and would involve the United States more closely in European security.

As a result of these problems the Military Assistance Program had an awkward, stumbling beginning. Indeed, it was not until after the shock of the Korean war in June 1950 that U.S. military aid to Europe began to have a salutary effect on the improvement of European defense capabilities. The Mutual Security Act of 1951 created the Mutual Security Agency and a Director of Mutual Security within the executive branch. These moves consolidated economic assistance and arms aid into a single package, led to greater coordination within the U.S. Government, provided a clearer definition of purpose, and spurred greater efforts by the Europeans. However, the aftermath of Korea also witnessed an American troop commitment to NATO, the opening of the German rearmament question, and proposals for a European Defense Community. These other events overshadowed the work of the Mutual Security Agency and have been the subject of most scholarly works on the period.

Yet despite its relative obscurity and shaky beginnings, the Military Assistance Program played an important role in shaping the Atlantic Alliance and aiding European rearmament. It must be remembered that when the North Atlantic Treaty was approved by the U.S. Senate in July 1949 it was a paper pledge that contained no content or form. In fact, the MAP was the first tangible evidence of the United States' commitment to European security and implementation of the arms aid program was closely linked to the development of NATO's organizational structure and the first defense strategy for the North Atlantic area. The effect of military assistance on European economic recovery was also significant: American arms aid allowed the Europeans to undertake a considerable

rearmament effort without undermining their economic recovery. In fact, Kaplan argues with some force that the Military Assistance Program had a more lasting effect on the strengthening of the European economies than did the Marshall Plan.

*A Community of Interests* is the third of a multivolume history of the Defense Department. Professor Kaplan's analysis of DOD's rivalry with the State Department for influence within the Government, of the military's fears that aid for Europe would sap America's own armaments, and the diplomatic role played by the Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs) provides fresh insight into the development of the Pentagon as an important force in foreign policy decisionmaking.

But if its narrow focus is one of the major strengths of this book, it is also its chief flaw. The author's treatment of senatorial objections to the original draft of the military aid bill is a case in point. While Kaplan correctly maintains that senators led by Arthur Vandenberg, John Foster Dulles, and Walter George opposed the Truman administration's arms aid plan on constitutional and fiscal grounds, their opposition actually went much deeper and embraced substantive strategic issues. As Vandenberg explained in the Foreign Relations Executive Session hearings on the MDAP, his chief objection was to the Administration's belief that France would be the bulwark of the continental defense system and that the French should receive the lion's share of U.S. assistance. Vandenberg, Dulles, and George countered the executive branch's view by pressing for the inclusion of Western Germany into NATO's rearmament program and the reinvigoration of German industrial might as the key element in European defense. The MDAP's requirement that overall assistance for Europe be limited to \$1 billion and that 80 percent of the monies appropriated be withheld by the

President until the alliance had developed an integrated defense plan is traceable to these three senators and their convictions about Germany. The subsequent influence of the German question on NATO's development (discussed in detail by the author) indicates the centrality of this issue and it is unfortunate that Vandenberg's, Dulles', and George's role in raising it in connection with the Military Assistance Program could not have been highlighted. Although it may be a relatively minor point, it does indicate the limits of an otherwise detailed and well-documented work.

Kaplan's own work in the Pentagon's historical office during the early 1950s is one of the strengths of this book. He brings to this study firsthand knowledge of the issues and personalities that shaped postwar American foreign policy and his conclusions about the long-term effect of decisions made during the 1948-1951 period of American diplomacy are particularly interesting. *A Community of Interests* is a well-written book that makes an important contribution to the scholarship of a critical phase in U.S. diplomatic and military history.

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MacDonald, Charles G. *Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the Law of the Sea: Political Interaction and Legal Development in the Persian Gulf*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980. 226pp.

Professor MacDonald of Florida International University describes, in not inconsiderable detail, the contributions of two developing countries to the development of the law of the sea. The work is explicitly "policy-oriented"; law is viewed, not as something unto itself, but as an ordering mechanism in a political context. Accordingly, the first chapter (about one-fifth of the volume) is

devoted to such nonlegal topics as the geography, history, recent politics, and economics of the Persian Gulf. Thereafter, MacDonald integrates legal positions, negotiations and agreements into a surrounding policy environment.

Such a study of the law of the sea contributions of developing countries is especially useful. The very international nature of international law and relations calls for an appreciation of the positions and perspectives of other countries; too much, our own studies look at problems from the United States' point of view. By setting his sights, more or less, from two Persian Gulf states, the author helps us understand how the law of the sea looks to others. He examines interests in the Persian Gulf (transportation, exploitation of offshore resources, coastal state security, preservation of the marine environment, the maintenance of order), claims to authority over and agreements concerning territory and resources in the area, and the positions of Iran and Saudi Arabia in the First (1958), Second (1960) and Third (1973-

) Law of the Sea Conferences. He concludes that the "most significant contribution of the Persian Gulf practice of Iran and Saudi Arabia has been their imaginative and pragmatic application of 'equitable principles' in the delimitation of continental shelf boundaries." This is a way, he argues, that the practice of these two states could contribute to the effective solution of offshore disputes in other regions.

Sometimes, of course, strengths are also weaknesses. The profusion of contextual data (e.g., statistics on crude petroleum production, itemized expenditures under Iran's Fifth Development Plan) while helping us understand the rationale for legal positions, also makes for a hotchpotch and occasionally for difficult reading. Furthermore, the description of positions of developing countries, while especially useful for our better understanding of the world, is