Editorial

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This summer in Warsaw, Poland, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will hold its biannual summit. The agenda, as one might imagine, is packed with issues. For the last 15 years, the venerable security alliance has been focused on the 'war on terror' and counter-terrorism more broadly. For NATO, this took the shape of a multi-year deployment under a United Nations mandate in Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was a difficult mandate to fill. The alliance was pushed to its limits. Allies split over the need for NATO to be involved so far away from the organization's borders. There were squabbles over contributions and caveats. There was frustration with a seeming lack of progress. When NATO ended the ISAF mission in December 2014 many analysts felt that much of the mission was for naught. However, 2 years later the shaky government still holds power, the military continues to keep insurgent forces at bay and the people of Afghanistan have more access to medicine, infrastructure and education than at any point in the last 30 years. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has a long road to travel and only time will tell whether or not NATO's contribution made much of a difference in the long-run.

In the meantime, NATO is now preoccupied back in Europe with the resurgence of a revisionist Russia that forcibly seized Crimea from Ukraine and threatens some of NATO's smallest and militarily weakest allies at the organization's easternmost border. But the shape of this challenge is not a traditional military threat. Instead, the Kremlin has used irregular combat forces, coupled with a sophisticated propaganda effort, as well as offensive cyber-attack capabilities to challenge NATO's ability to reach consensus and defend allies. As policy-makers gather in the Polish capital city, it is suiting that this edition of IPR

offers us an excellent discussion of Stephanie Hoffman's book *European Security in NATO's Shadow*. IPR is also fortunate to have NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary Jamie Shea writing from the field about NATO's current posture and the challenges the organization faces.

Although the NATO summit in Warsaw is a prominent event, as always IPR has a diversity of contributions. Alexandra Russo offers us an excellent review of comparative regionalisms. The study of regions expanded in the 1990s and is now essentially a subfield of the discipline of International Relations, but in many ways remains the domain of specialists rather than a core part of the field. Russo illuminates the concept of regionalism across different geographic spaces and places it in the broad scope of IR.

The global financial crisis began 8 years ago, yet we are only now starting to get insider views of the crisis. At a time when the world economy remains weak, Europe is facing increased fiscal pressures in the wake of the refugee crisis, and the film *The Big Short* highlighting the egregious practices of Wall Street and the possibility of a second crisis has captured imaginations it is only fitting that Giuseppe Ammendola provides us with an insightful and analytical review of Ben Bernanke's memoir on the financial crisis and its aftermath.

As always, it has been a pleasure putting together this edition of IPR. The editorial team always welcomes feedback and if you're considering a submission to IPR please do contact us.

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