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PIOTR NOWAK, *NATO POPRZEZ PRYZMAT WYBRANYCH TEORII GEOPOLITYCZNYCH [NATO FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF SELECTED GEOPOLITICAL THEORIES]*, WROCŁAW 2017, PP. 116 [E-BOOK]

Piotr Nowak is a lawyer and a political scientist from Wrocław. I have had the pleasure of watching his presentations on a number of aspects of how NATO functions during national and international conferences. Recently, I got hold of a monograph published by this young researcher entitled *NATO from the Point of View of Selected Geopolitical Theories*. To be more precise, I must admit that the book I review is actually on my hard drive, as it belongs to the publishing trend which is still fledging in Poland, as it was *self-published*, i.e. without the involvement of classic publishing offices¹. The low-cost publishing model, which allows budding artists to address a wide group of readers, gain popularity and citations, apart from its advantages, has also a few disadvantages, e.g., the lack of an editor's supervision. In the publication under review, there are some moments where lowering costs is visible² – there are some minor mistakes, e.g., repetitions or inconsistent or not entirely proper writing convention (e.g. the Cold War is capitalised, although in Polish it should not be – whereas the Second World War is written according to the Polish conventions – and *Rimland* and *Heartland* are written in small letters); or the declarations in the introduction that the publication includes 5 chapters, when in truth it has only three (excluding introduction and conclusion). The content which was supposed to be in the last two chapters was still included in the book, but in the three earlier chapters. Such a minor error, not reducing the value of the publication, would most probably be spotted by an editor. On the other hand, the flexibility which self-publishing an e-book entails means that it can be easily corrected and there is no need to withdraw printed books.

As I have already mentioned, Piotr Nowak's book is composed of three substantive chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. In the introduction, the author includes a typical

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¹ “Initially, authors do not have the slightest chance against the publishing world, and self-publishing makes it possible for them to make a market debut in an attractive, novel form”, quotation: M. Marchwicki, *Self-publishing – gdzie najlepiej opublikować swoją książkę?* [*Self-publishing – what is the best place to publish your book?*]: <https://socialpress.pl/2015/07/self-publishing-gdzie-najlepiej-opublikowac-swoja-ksiazke/>, [DOA: 8 November 2017].

² Which is understandable because it would be difficult for a young, unpopular writer to obtain funds to promote his research?

description of the structure of the work, enumerates the methods he applied³ and the literature he used, as well as research aims. The first chapter, constituting a peculiar compendium of knowledge about the history and evolution of NATO, since the ending of the Second World War until the mission in Afghanistan, was also enriched with an abridged description of its structures and the formal foundations of functioning. In effect, the chapter includes all information about NATO in a nutshell, which budding researchers and students can use to enrich their knowledge. It is also easy to read. The second chapter, on the other hand, constitutes an interesting introduction to selected geopolitical theories. In the first part, the author tries to demonstrate what geopolitics actually is, the evolution of the concept until the so-called “postmodern geopolitics” and terms which are key to understand it, such as “force” and “power”. The next chapter is a direct description of the theories which the author had chosen⁴, i.e. Zbigniew Brzeziński’s “grand chessboard” and Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations”, and the classic theories of land power by Halford John Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman. What undoubtedly is an advantage of this publication are numerous colourful illustrations which make it easier for the reader to understand the content which is under discussion. The whole aforementioned chapter should be treated as another, very interesting, theoretical introduction to the research included in the third chapter. It is the third chapter that constitutes an attempt to analyse the role of NATO from the perspective of selected (discussed in detail in the previous chapter) geopolitical theories. It is, without a doubt, an original approach to the topic which is also an occasion to present the author’s reflections on the future of NATO. He comes unscathed from the attempt – the conclusions he presents are intriguing; moreover, they show that the gossip about the death of geopolitics in the 21st century are grossly exaggerated.

Although, as I mentioned above, the publication requires some editor’s supervision (probably the author will eliminate the mistakes in the next issue), it still is an original publication, and therefore it should be recommended to a wide group of readers – even more so that the cost of an e-book is only a fraction of the cost of a regular, printed book. It should be noted that Piotr Nowak’s work is not only the author’s analysis of the future of NATO, based on selected geopolitical theories, but it is also an interesting description of them and a compendium of knowledge about the organisation itself.

³ Which he termed, probably because of inattention, “several methodologies”.

⁴ Selected due to the geographical area they pertain to.