

Precluded or Precedent-Setting?

The “NATO Enlargement Question” in the
Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy
of 1990–1991

❖ Kristina Spohr

Introduction

When in 2004 the three former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Russian city of St. Petersburg, as Mary Sarotte has noted, found itself at a distance of “less than one hundred miles” from the border of the Atlantic alliance.¹ From the Russian government’s perspective, NATO was no longer simply encroaching on Russia’s traditional sphere of influence, a trend that leaders in Moscow bitterly resented.² The admission of the Baltic countries into NATO meant that the Western Cold War military alliance now extended into former Soviet territory. In the mid-1990s, when NATO enlargement first emerged on the political agenda, Russian commentators and policymakers, joined by some Western analysts and former U.S. diplomats such as Jack F. Matlock, Jr., claimed that during the diplomacy over German unification in the first half of 1990 senior U.S. officials had explicitly promised that NATO would not expand into the former Soviet bloc—promises that, according to these commentators, would be broken if countries like Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were brought into the alliance.³ In 2000 Mikhail Gorbachev

1. Mary Elise Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 2010), p. 119.

2. See Ulrich Weisser, *Sicherheit für ganz Europa* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1999), pp. 23–59.

3. For Russian views, see, for example, “Kohl: Interessen Russlands berücksichtigen,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 4 February 1996, p. 2; and Michael R. Gordon, “The Anatomy of a Misunderstanding,” *The New York Times*, 25 May 1997, p. E3. For Western views, see U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Policy toward NATO Enlargement: Hearing*, 104th Cong.,

chev, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), lamented that “now half of central and eastern Europe are members, so what happened to their [the Americans’] promises? It shows they cannot be trusted.”⁴ Memory politics has clearly played a significant role in post-Soviet Russia’s *Westpolitik* since the mid-1990s. Moscow’s deep-running feelings of having lost out strategically in the post–Cold War world ensured that the proposed NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia in 2008—a prospect that was treated coolly at NATO’s April 2008 meeting in Bucharest and then removed from the agenda altogether by the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war—would spark yet another wave of these allegations and would foster vivid discussion in the media.⁵

On the other side, James Baker and Philip Zelikow of George H. W. Bush’s administration are among those who have forcefully denied that any such “gentlemen’s agreements” or “deals” were made in 1990. They have offered two counterarguments to the predominantly (Soviet) Russian views that have been expressed in hindsight and in specific historical circumstances. First, anything said between Baker and Gorbachev about NATO in the winter of 1990 was relevant only in regard to Germany and the resolution of the German question—not Eastern Europe. Above all, Baker’s specific promises on limiting “NATO’s jurisdiction” to West Germany (FRG) were not legally binding pledges. Second, the language used and ideas floated during the U.S.-Soviet bilateral talks were speculative statements that evolved and transformed as the negotiations progressed. Some of the early phraseology was superseded in the so-called 2+4 negotiations that led to the signing of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany in September 1990. Gorbachev did in the end acquiesce in German unification in NATO, albeit with special provisions for the territory of the former East Germany, codified in legally binding language that says nothing about NATO’s future in Eastern Europe.⁶

Given the issue’s serial reappearance in the political discourse over the past two decades and given Russia’s simmering resentment toward NATO

2nd Sess., 20 June 1996, p. 31; Michael McGwire, “NATO Expansion: ‘A Policy Error of Historic Importance,’” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (January 1998), pp. 23–42; Uwe Klufmann, Matthias Schupp, and Klaus Wiegrefe, “Absurde Vorstellung,” *Der Spiegel*, No. 48 (23 November 2009), pp. 67–68; and Jack Matlock, review of 1989: *The Struggle to Create Post–Cold War Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), in *Cold War History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (September 2010), pp. 577–578.

4. “Gorbachev: US Could Start New Cold War,” *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 6 May 2008, p. 4.

5. *Ibid.* See also George Friedman, “Georgia and the Balance of Power,” *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 55, No. 14 (25 September 2008), p. 24.

6. See Philip Zelikow, “NATO Expansion Wasn’t Ruled Out,” *The New York Times*, 10 August 1995, p. A16; James A. Baker, *Drei Jahre, die die Welt veränderten: Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), pp. 180–184, 202; and Gordon, “The Anatomy,” p. E3.

countries, the argument over correct memories looms large.⁷ The scholarly debate on the “NATO (enlargement) question” and its roots has only just begun. Archival documents from all countries involved are now more accessible and can be consulted in conjunction with the existing large memoir literature, numerous official histories, and the many books covering German unification that have touched on the issue largely in passing.⁸ These materials offer new insights into what exactly was said in early 1990 and by whom, allowing scholars to gain a better sense of why former Soviet political actors and Russian policy makers believe that in the 1990s and 2000s Western leaders went back on their predecessors’ word. Scholars also can determine whether the Russian perception has any merit. At the heart of the matter, then, lies the question: What, if anything, was said or happened during unification diplomacy that was meant to affect NATO’s future shape and purpose?

In a 2009 article, Mark Kramer—who constructs his argument primarily on the basis of Soviet archival sources from the Gorbachev Foundation and the Russian State Archive of Recent History along with some declassified German records—effectively confirms Fred Oldenburg’s hypotheses (put forward thirteen years earlier). Kramer debunks as myth the official Russian claim that the U.S. government, and perhaps some other Western governments, gave explicit guarantees against future NATO expansion to include Eastern European countries if the USSR consented to Germany’s full membership in NATO after unification.⁹ Sarotte, in her 2009 monograph *1989: The Struggle to Create Post–Cold War Europe* and in an article published a year later in which she makes use of the James Baker papers, offers a more guarded yet bolder analysis.¹⁰ She agrees with Kramer that no *formal* prohibition against NATO’s movement eastward was codified in any treaties, but she claims that Baker, and soon after him West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, made *implicit* promises to Gorbachev in early February 1990 that limited the alliance

7. On Russian–Western relations and NATO in the 1990s, see Kristina Spohr Readman, *Germany and the Baltic Problem: The Development of a New Ostpolitik, 1989–2000* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 124–147.

8. For a historiographical overview of the state of German unification scholarship and sources, see Kristina Spohr, “German Unification: Between Official History, Academic Scholarship, and Political Memoirs,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (March 2000), pp. 869–888; Michael Cox, “Another Transatlantic Split? American and European Narratives and the End of the Cold War,” *Cold War History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 2007), pp. 121–146; and Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward?” esp. p. 121n7. For detailed lists of available archival sources (unpublished and published) and memoirs up to 2009, see Mark Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (April 2009), pp. 29–62, esp. 56–57nn10–11.

9. Kramer, “The Myth,” p. 55; and Fred Oldenburg, “Deutsche Einheit und Öffnung der NATO,” *Bericht des BIOst*, No. 52 (1996), pp. 1–29.

10. Sarotte, *1989*. Parts of her book’s conclusions and its third chapter are incorporated into Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward?”

to the FRG.¹¹ These assurances, she claims, pushed Gorbachev toward publicly granting his consent for internal German unification to proceed free from any interference by the postwar occupying powers (“his part of the bargain”). In return however, he failed to get any assurances in writing from either Baker or Kohl on NATO’s future delimitation, and later, during the intense negotiation process over unified Germany’s NATO membership, he missed other opportunities to challenge the United States (and Germany) on the alliance issue.¹² The Soviet leader, Sarotte argues, acted naïvely and unwisely and was ultimately outmaneuvered by Kohl and Bush. Gorbachev, in Sarotte’s depiction, was inept in not closing deals when they looked possible and eventually was “bribed” out of Germany.¹³ She then postulates that, with German unification, NATO had begun to move eastward. Indeed, she implies—and hence in some ways appears to sympathize with the growing post–Cold War Russian bitterness toward the West in the wake of the various NATO enlargement rounds—that Germany’s full NATO membership, assented to by Gorbachev, was, in effect, a precedent-setting enlargement of the alliance into former Warsaw Pact territory (and later to former Soviet territory).¹⁴

In spite of their forceful and well-argued cases, both Kramer’s and Sarotte’s interpretations raise more questions than they answer. To be sure, both of them are clear in how they see the issue of the promises that NATO should remain limited after German unity—the root of later Russian grievances. In their view no legally binding pledges prohibiting NATO from moving eastward were made either during four key bilateral talks in February 1990 (the talks on which they focus their studies) or later.¹⁵ As will become evident in what follows, I agree with them. Yet, Sarotte and Kramer say relatively little about the nature of the spoken promises made and the perceptions these might have created, and they do not sufficiently discuss whether the Russians are justified in believing that Gorbachev in 1990 became entrapped by Western rhetoric and cash and that Western countries intentionally deceived him. To pose the question another way: Did Western countries genuinely lack any desire to overcome the East–West divide via new pan-European

11. See Sarotte, 1989, p. 200.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–115, 200, 205–208. For the characterization of the Soviet Union as having been “bribed” out of Germany, see Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 492.

14. See Sarotte, 1989, p. 209; and Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward?” p. 140.

15. The four primary meetings are those between Baker and Hans-Dietrich Genscher on 2 February 1990; Baker and Gorbachev on 7–9 February; Kohl and Gorbachev on 10 February; and Kohl and Bush on 24 February.

security constructs? Were U.S. (and West German) officials solely interested in cementing the West's Cold War victory by expanding "Western" influence into Eastern Europe via a viable and transformed NATO?

If we take Russian grievances seriously and if we are to understand the spirit of the time in 1990, we must revisit the following key questions: Who gave what kind of assurances and in which context in 1990? What were the motivations and intentions of the political actors involved? What can be said about Soviet actions and reactions? And what about subsequent *perceptions* of what happened and what they meant in the longer run? These questions need a much more differentiated treatment than has so far been offered.

One of the problems is that Kramer's and Sarotte's works have concentrated mostly on the two superpowers' diplomatic interactions during the unification process; that is, the interactions between the main actors of the United States, President George H. W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, and their Soviet counterparts, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Yet, the superpowers could not decide alone. The West Germans also figure into Kramer's and Sarotte's analyses but are perhaps not accorded the central role they deserve. This includes not only the actions of Kohl (whose political activities in regard to Moscow and Washington Sarotte has admittedly subjected to closer scrutiny with her thorough use of the published edition of a selection of declassified chancellery documents¹⁶), but crucially those of the federal foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, as well.

It is well known that Kohl and Genscher did not see entirely eye to eye over their strategies and tactics as they sought first to secure German unity and then to forge adequate future security arrangements for the united country in a changing Europe. Both men carried their own personal history, held their own visions, and pursued goals and ambitions that were as much institutionally as politically driven. When they presented and disseminated their views in the winter of 1990—not least hoping to capture the imagination of the East Germans in the run-up to the East's first free elections in March of that year—and competed with each other to be seen as the "father of unity," they both involved themselves wholeheartedly in intense bilateral diplomacy with the USSR and the United States as they worked toward gaining Moscow's consent for unification (under Western terms as far as possible). Their rivalry pushed them to seek closer ties with their counterparts overseas than

16. Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hofmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit—Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), henceforth cited as DESE.

they were able to forge at home, despite being in a coalition government.¹⁷ This meant that a common policy line for the West German government took a long time to emerge. Mixed messages were sent, and these made Germany seem less predictable. In this regard, as we explore the most controversial high-level talks that dealt with Germany's and Europe's post-Cold War security arrangements, we must bear in mind that what Kohl and Genscher said was carefully monitored both in Moscow and in NATO capitals.

In addition to the declassified chancellor's papers, a German edition of the published collection of declassified Soviet documents from the Gorbachev Foundation has recently appeared, and the Zelikow-Genscher correspondence of 1995 can now be read together with almost 270 files released by the Auswärtiges Amt (AA) as well as British Foreign Office materials.¹⁸ These sources allow us to reexamine from a German perspective some of the crucial bilateral meetings in unification diplomacy that took place in February and March 1990 between West German, U.S., and Soviet leaders, as well as the activity surrounding the talks. Several discussions involving Genscher shed light on Soviet/Russian arguments that far-reaching Western assurances were given on NATO's territorial future.

Indeed, it was the German foreign minister who, with a view to helping resolve the "German question" smoothly and peacefully, first put "security" and "NATO" on the international agenda. It was also Genscher who, in his strong desire to lay the foundations for a post-Cold War pan-European security architecture and to secure Moscow's public consent to German unification during what he feared might be a relatively short window of opportunity, was the most active political agent in trying to woo Soviet leaders by making the most far-reaching proposals and promises. In the process, he caused in

17. See Spohr, "German Unification," pp. 882–884. Cf. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 237.

18. Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolij Tschernjajew, eds., *Michail Gorbatschow und die deutsche Frage: Sowjetische Dokumente 1986–1991* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011); hereinafter referred to as MGDf:SD. Many of the documents in this collection are significantly truncated versions of the original documents stored at the Gorbachev Foundation archive. We may safely assume that Western records of the meetings are more useful in reflecting what was *actually* said, whereas Russian records reveal more of what Soviet leaders (or note takers) *believed* was said. The Zelikow-Genscher correspondence is stored in the Hoover Institution Archives (HA), Zelikow-Rice Papers 1989–1995 (ZRP), Box 1. I requested in 2009 the declassification of dozens of files under the scheme "Aktenfreigabe aus Anlass des 20. Jahrestages von Mauerfall und Wiedervereinigung," in the Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin (PAAA). In response to the requests from me and from others, selected items from 267 files were released. In late 2011 Oldenbourg published a volume that gives historians the opportunity to consult a selection of these documents. See Andreas Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie für die deutsche Einheit: Dokumente des Auswärtigen Amtes zu den deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1989/90* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011). British Foreign Office materials are available in Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Volume 7, German Unification 1989/1990* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009); hereinafter referred to as DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90.

mid-February 1990 a major intra–West German controversy involving Kohl and Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg over the future and nature of unified Germany’s alliance membership.

Language mattered—more than has perhaps so far been acknowledged—and a close textual analysis is needed to fathom the real meaning of what was said in public and in private conversations, with which intentions and constraints, and to what effect. Thus, bearing in mind the wider context of 1990, when circumstances surrounding the German (and with it the European security) question were very much in flux and many different visions and strategies were tested and tried, we must ask again who influenced whom, how, and why.

Early Positions on Unification

At the beginning of 1990, the Cold War order—the antagonistic, bipolar structure of military power that had characterized world politics for forty years—was rapidly coming undone. The Communist regimes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania had been toppled, and in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the Berlin Wall had fallen on 9 November 1989. Tens of thousands of East Germans were moving each month to West Germany, where, as time went on, unease was growing over the huge influx of refugees. The East German economy was in turmoil, threatening the state’s existence. The FRG and its Western allies were keen to foster the restoration of some kind of political stability in the GDR and to achieve a sense of predictability to the situation. Although the issue of German reunification had come to predominate on the international political agenda, the other, wider concern was the rapidly changing security environment in Eastern Europe. After all, even if the Warsaw Pact was still largely intact, the Soviet glacis in Eastern Europe was melting away fast, and no one quite knew how to fill the emerging security vacuum.¹⁹

In West Germany, relations within the government coalition—Chancellor Kohl’s Christian Democratic Party (CDU) and the Free Democratic Party

19. On German events, see, for example, Andreas Rödter, *Deutschland einig Vaterland: Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009), pp. 50–117; and Sarotte, 1989, pp. 11–87. On Central–East European developments, see, for example, Mark Kramer, “The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions Within the Soviet Union (Part 1),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2003), pp. 178–256; Mark Kramer, “The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions Within the Soviet Union (Part 2),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (2004), pp. 3–67; and Mark Kramer, “The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions Within the Soviet Union (Part 3),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2004–2005), pp. 3–96.

(FDP)—quickly grew strained over the “German question” after Kohl, to everybody’s surprise, presented a 10-Point Program to the Bundestag on 28 November 1989 for achieving German unity. Through this initiative Kohl sought a domestic political advantage heading into the 1991 federal elections and also endeavored to take the lead on the crucial *Deutschlandpolitik* issue ahead of Genscher, the FDP, and the opposition Social Democrats (whose party figurehead and former chancellor, Willy Brandt, was the hero of *Ostpolitik*). Moreover, Kohl was hoping to steer the still ambivalent opinion of ordinary East Germans from domestic reform toward the formation of a “single state.” With his bold move to shape unification policy, Kohl further wished to prevent the four occupying powers from seizing the diplomatic initiative above the Germans’ heads. Crucially, on security issues, his program did not explicitly mention the FRG’s Western anchor: NATO.²⁰

By early 1990 the majority of East Germans were demanding unification, depriving the GDR government under Hans Modrow of any credibility. As a result, the date of the first free East German elections was moved forward to March. Modrow’s admission to Kohl (and to Soviet leaders) that East Germany was nearing financial insolvency reflected the GDR’s loss of any residual political viability. In the meantime, the four occupying powers grappled with how best to address the issue of their international legal rights and how best to deal diplomatically with the Germans regarding the national question. In these circumstances, Kohl changed tack from what he had initially believed would be a relatively slow unification process—starting with German-German rapprochement and culminating in merger—to pushing for speedy intra-German unification on his terms.

With the onset of electioneering in the GDR, tension between the FDP and CDU began to grow. Gaps appeared between Kohl’s vision of German unity and the aims of Genscher, who sought his own political platform and policy niche to shape. Still, despite the emerging differences, both men felt that the main priority for foreign policy was to secure Moscow’s official consent to the rapidly evolving unification process.²¹

What they did not know, was that at an ad hoc meeting of Gorbachev’s advisers in the Kremlin on 26 January the Soviet leader had proclaimed that he now believed unification to be ultimately inescapable.²² Gorbachev’s tactical priority thus shifted from preventing the unification process to slowing it down. The USSR’s best levers, he believed, were its allied occupation rights

20. See Spohr, “German Unification,” pp. 873–876.

21. See Rödder, *Deutschland*, pp. 147–193; and DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 122, pp. 250–251; and DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 123, pp. 251–254.

22. MGDF:SD, Doc. 66, p. 289. Compare Kramer, “The Myth,” p. 46, who puts the emphasis on Soviet optimism and Gorbachev’s continued belief that he could slow down unification.

and the Soviet troops stationed in the GDR. The forum in which Gorbachev envisaged dealing with all things German was what he described as talks of the “five” or “six” (the four wartime Allied powers and the FRG and possibly also the GDR, making “4+2”—a sequence that would soon be inverted).²³ Whatever the outcome might be, “it was most important that no one should expect for unified Germany to join NATO.”²⁴

Gorbachev’s recognition of unification as an effectively unstoppable process marked a fundamental change in Moscow’s position on the German question.²⁵ Nevertheless, optimism prevailed in the Kremlin. Soviet leaders were convinced that time was on their side to shape the unification process and with it the future European geopolitical and geostrategic order. The Warsaw Pact could still thrive, and the USSR could forestall any erosion of Soviet security interests. To the extent that NATO membership and the alliance’s future were discussed, they were talked about only in relation to Germany. As Kramer has rightly pointed out, “neither Gorbachev nor any of his advisors even thought to bring up the question of the expansion of NATO to other Warsaw Pact countries beyond East Germany. This was simply not an issue at the time.”²⁶ Similarly, in the Modrow-Gorbachev talks four days after the Kremlin meeting, with unity now seen as the final step in a long process of growing together, the two leaders referred to all-European developments in the context of which German issues had to be dealt with and suggested that military neutrality of the GDR and FRG was a key concern. NATO was not mentioned even once.²⁷

Meanwhile, Kohl was only cautiously broaching security questions. On 30 January, in talks with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and Deputy National Security Adviser Robert Gates in Bonn, he hailed Washington’s proposal for the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations that would limit U.S. and Soviet forces in the central zone to 195,000 troops. The proposal, to be announced by Bush in his State of the Union address on 1 February, would leave the United States in the driving seat in the arms reductions negotiations. Gorbachev, by going along with it, could save face both at home and aboard because he would be able to announce Soviet troop withdrawals as part of the treaty negotiations, thus avoiding the impression that the reductions resulted from East European

23. MGDF:SD, Doc. 66, pp. 289–290.

24. MGDF:SD, Doc. 66, p. 287.

25. On this point I concur with Rödder. See Rödder, *Deutschland*, pp. 195–199.

26. Kramer, “The Myth,” p. 45.

27. MGDF:SD, Doc. 67, pp. 292–304, esp. 300–301. See also DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 111, p. 233, which notes that “We now have Gorbachev’s statement recognizing that German unification will take place”; and DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 114, p. 237.

pressure. Keen to ensure continued U.S. coupling to Europe while alleviating American skepticism toward the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Europeans' drive for a summit later in 1990, Kohl backed the plan, which implied the withdrawal of half of Soviet troops from the GDR, a move that would greatly enhance Germany's security. However, the plan did not address the issue of unification or specific future security arrangements.²⁸

Foreign Minister Genscher first raised German unity and security as a public issue when he spoke at the Evangelische Akademie Tutzing on 31 January. Because of the longer-term fallout from Genscher's speech, a close study of his language is necessary. According to Genscher's aides Richard Kiessler and Frank Elbe, the foreign minister worked on the speech largely alone and did *not* clear it with the chancellery.²⁹ He possibly felt compelled to seize the opportunity after having been caught off guard by Kohl's 10-Point speech three months before. Genscher was hoping to put his personal stamp on German affairs in what he saw as his area of competence, namely, Germany's position in Europe's evolving security architecture. Considering that Genscher's career as foreign minister began during the heyday of *neue Ostpolitik* in 1974, it was no surprise that this long-term advocate of resolving the German problem in an all-European context would promote visions that treaded carefully in areas affecting Soviet sensitivities.³⁰ As he put it in Tutzing: "In view of developments within [the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance] and the Warsaw Pact it will be necessary to give special attention to the security interests of the Soviet Union."³¹ Moreover, he warned that the West should avoid interfering in Warsaw Pact matters, such as Czechoslovak and Hungarian demands for Soviet troop withdrawals.³²

Genscher was primarily aiming to defuse any objections Moscow might

28. DESE, Doc. 153, p. 741. See also Horst Teltschik, *328 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), p. 123. On Kohl's caution and uncertainties regarding how German unity could be reconciled with NATO, see DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 105, p. 223; and DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 109, p. 231.

29. Richard Kiessler and Frank Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch mit scharfen Ecken: Der diplomatische Weg zur deutschen Einheit* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1993), pp. 79–80. See also Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of US Policy in Europe, 1989–1992* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997), p. 111; and Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 177.

30. See Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), pp. 299–323. For an evolution of Genscher's CSCE ideas in his public speeches, see Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Unterwegs zur Einheit: Reden und Dokumente aus bewegter Zeit* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991).

31. Quoted from the Tutzing speech as printed in, Lawrence Freedman, ed., *Europe Transformed: Documents on the End of the Cold War* (London: Tri-Service Press, 1990), p. 440.

32. On Central-Eastern European troop withdrawal demands, see also DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 129, p. 263.

have regarding German reunification. Seeking to avoid any suggestions of an instigation of major power balance shifts, he stated:

What NATO must do is state unequivocally that whatever happens in the Warsaw Pact there will be no expansion of NATO's territory [*des NATO Territoriums*] eastward, that is to say, closer to the borders of the Soviet Union. This security guarantee is important for the Soviet Union and its conduct. . . . Any proposals for incorporating the part of Germany at present forming the GDR in NATO's military structures would block intra-German rapprochement. The important thing is to define the future role of the two alliances clearly. They will move away from confrontation to cooperation and will become elements of cooperative security structures throughout Europe.³³

Genscher's formulations thus suggested harnessing a uniting Germany to a benign all-European security framework that would ultimately emerge as a new system out of the structures of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. He made no mention of the future of U.S. nuclear weapons or Western (foreign) forces in Germany—both of which would be necessary to keep NATO's defense and deterrence capabilities intact.

The speech was generally well received. Horst Teltschik, Kohl's closest adviser in the chancellery, saw it as a positive step toward securing Soviet consent to German unity, even if he interpreted the proposals as somewhat restrictive and defensive vis-à-vis the USSR. Teltschik wrote in his diary that Genscher "was driving in pegs, a worry I did not share."³⁴ To be sure, in an entry three days earlier Teltschik had emphatically expressed his disagreement with Genscher, who in an interview with *Bild am Sonntag* on 28 January apparently rejected demands by the CDU that in a united Germany the East German territory become part of NATO: "That would be the end of our quest for unity. Those who seek to extend the border of NATO to the Oder and Neisse are shutting the door for a united Germany. Our remaining in NATO is, however, uncontested."³⁵ Teltschik then asked: "How should that work in practice: one united Germany, of which two-thirds [the FRG] within NATO, and one-third outside?"³⁶ Kiessler and Elbe in their memoirs gloss over the issue by claiming that *Bild* misrepresented Genscher's position when it shortened his much lengthier answer. They insist that the foreign minister advocated NATO membership for Germany as a whole.³⁷ But this was not

33. Freedman, ed., *Europe Transformed*, pp. 440–441. See also Kiessler and Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch*, p. 246.

34. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 123.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Kiessler and Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch*, p. 79.

how the interview was perceived at the time. Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice contend that "Genscher's idea was comprehensive, but it was unclear how a *united* Germany would be absorbed in NATO if the alliance would, like allied forces themselves, be limited to the old FRG."³⁸

Genscher's ultimate aim of pan-European security structures was not far from the thinking of a significant strand within the SPD, especially the former *Ostpolitik* architect Egon Bahr. In that sense Genscher through his Tutzing formulations could be seen as trying to achieve an indirect rapprochement with sections of the SPD. The language he used and the ideas he apparently conveyed were, at least on the surface, rather similar to those advanced by Bahr, who likewise believed that pan-European security structures would grow out of CSCE. Bahr held, however, that the resolution of the European security problematique would have to *precede* German unification; even though soon after Tutzing he conceded that the European security system might not come as fast as German unity.³⁹ This latter position was closer to Genscher's vision of some kind of temporal parallelism between the processes of German-German unification and the evolution of a satisfactory security architecture at the heart of Europe.⁴⁰ Over one key principle—NATO's future role and place—serious ideological discrepancies persisted. Genscher, despite his emphasis on disarmament and his language of "pan-European structures" and "peace order," was firmly committed to NATO as the Western anchor for the FRG at least in the short term, whereas Bahr remained wedded to his more nationalist line. On 19 January 1990 Bahr had proclaimed that the SPD's goal would be "not the preservation of NATO, but German state unification." Unity and NATO were mutually exclusive, in his view.⁴¹

Soviet leaders presumably welcomed Genscher's language—in particular the phrases referring to an all-European security architecture via the CSCE, the limitation of NATO's future territories, and the minimal eastward expansion of the alliance's military structures. But the Tutzing speech entailed no legally binding guarantees to anybody. Moreover, any references to NATO's limitations—vague as they were—pertained solely to the "German question."

38. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 175; emphasis added. Cf. William Tuohy, "United Germany Won't Leave NATO, Bonn Says; Europe: West Germans Rule Out Neutrality, But No Western Troops Would Be Stationed in Eastern Sector," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 February 1990, p. 1. See also Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 713–714, which presents his thoughts as more pro-NATO than those of Kohl.

39. "Entwurf für eine Entschliessung des Parteitags," notes of Egon Bahr, 13 November 1989, and "Betr: Sitzung der AG Deutschlandpolitik am 16.11.1989," both in Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Depositum Egon Bahr, Box 314.

40. "Entwurf für eine Entschliessung des Parteitags." See also "Bahr: ich weiss gar nicht, wieviel Zeit wir haben," *Die Zeit*, 9 February 1990, p. 9.

41. "Bahr: 'Bei einer Ausweitung der NATO gibt es keine Einheit,'" *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 2 February 1990. See also Parlamentarisch-Politischer Pressedient, No. 23 (1 February 1990), p. 2.

Germany alone was on the forefront of everybody's mind, a view later also promoted by Kiessler and Elbe as well as by Genscher himself in the memoirs they published well before Russian allegations about broken promises began to surface.⁴²

Still, the "Tutzing formula" or "Genscher plan" contained elements that caused controversy and consternation. First, if we take the most far-reaching view, Genscher's words could conceivably be interpreted as explicitly precluding certain future security arrangements (i.e. future NATO membership) for Eastern Europe.⁴³ Second, although he denounced neutrality and pledged that "we will remain a member of NATO" (an organization that, he said, would, "according to the will of its members, continue to exist because the alliances continue to have a peace-keeping and stabilizing function"), serious practical questions about the nature of unified Germany's future in NATO persisted.⁴⁴ Because NATO's "territory" and "military structures" were not meant to be moving beyond the existing internal German East-West boundary, how in Genscher's view would NATO defense guarantees (Articles 5 and 6) have functioned?

Genscher's anodyne and inconclusive formulations leave much room for speculation. But even if his remarks were perceived as delphic and begged future clarification—he was famous for his *Zweizügigkeit* or what was referred to as "Genscherism"—he could in *realpolitik* terms be seen as taking a firm stance by setting down crucial security political markers at a time when the situation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was fluid.⁴⁵ He undoubtedly did this to secure Moscow's official green light for the Germans to be able to pursue internal unification on the basis of the right to self-determination. That a future unified German state should remain somehow tied to NATO was secondary, not least because Genscher's hope was that cooperative European security structures would ultimately supersede the "old" (Cold War) alliance system. The Tutzing formula kept multiple paths open and thus granted sufficient room for maneuver as Soviet-German-American triangular diplomacy got under way. Moscow's acceptance of East German membership in NATO in one form or another—as the United States soon desired—seemed in Genscher's eyes barely possible.⁴⁶ Even for his most immediate political aim—persuading the Soviet Union to concede that Germans could unify—

42. Kiessler and Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch*, pp. 79–85; and Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 714.

43. See Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, p. 112.

44. Freedman, ed., *Europe Transformed*, pp. 439, 441.

45. On "Genscherism," see Josef Joffe, "The Secret of Genscher's Staying Power: Memoirs of the 'Slippery Man,'" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (January/February 1998), pp. 148–154.

46. DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 115, p. 239.

Genscher appeared to expect that he needed to apply a full set of diplomatic tactics with support from the FRG Foreign Ministry.

The thinking in the chancellery did not seem entirely divorced from Genscher's. An internal memorandum written by Peter Hartmann two days prior to Genscher's speech includes language similar to that used by the foreign minister. The "security of a unified state," Hartmann said, could be resolved only within the framework of "overarching security structures." Yet, in contrast to what formed the essence of Genscher's longer-term vision, Hartmann actually considered it "no more than an empty formula."⁴⁷

Hartmann believed that the Soviet Union would almost certainly seek the withdrawal of all foreign troops from a unified Germany. Demilitarization might thus become one of the most problematic future issues, especially in light of "particular domestic political tendencies"—namely, the SPD's and Genscher's disarmament proposals that were likely to be pushed hard as the GDR election campaigns heated up. The chancellery feared that references to arms reductions might play into Moscow's hands, placing Kohl in a difficult negotiating position vis-à-vis Soviet leaders, who might insist on trading unification for partial German demilitarization.⁴⁸

Reflecting this concern, Hartmann warned that "political NATO membership [would] become questionable the very moment Germany became de facto militarily decoupled from other NATO member-states." At a minimum, he said, "[g]iven the present circumstances," the FRG should "continue its NATO membership (including all military responsibilities toward FRG territory by its partners)." In contrast to Genscher's Tutzing formulations, which appeared to exclude NATO forever from the GDR, Hartmann promoted "a special status [*Sonderstatus*] for the (reduced) GDR forces" under NATO's umbrella, leaving room to decide in the future what this "special status" might entail.⁴⁹

Yet, even if Soviet leaders consented to the idea, it was not a long-term solution. A unified Germany needed secure defense structures that could be achieved only in conjunction with other European partners. The formula "overarching security structures" would ultimately fail to resolve the dilemma. An alternative, a unified state with some troops under NATO and some under Warsaw Pact command, was also seen as untenable, regardless of whether the alliances became more political in nature. The only thing that did seem certain to Hartmann was that West German–Soviet bargaining would have to produce a security framework for a united Germany that involved NATO.

47. DESE, Doc. 151, pp. 727–735.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 733–734.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 734.

The main concern the chancellery had was whether the FRG would be willing to fulfill the demands the Soviet Union was likely to put forth.⁵⁰

Much thus hung on the Soviet Union's next moves, as well as on the U.S.-Soviet and Soviet-West German high-level talks in Moscow planned for early February. Prior to these meetings, however, the governments in Bonn and Washington worked toward greater coordination of their positions both internally and externally because they hoped to be able to placate the Soviet Union in the face of the rapidly evolving situation in Germany connected with the GDR's ongoing economic (as well as political) collapse. On 2 February 1990, two days after Genscher delivered his Tutzing speech, he flew to Washington to discuss the unfolding security issues with Secretary of State Baker.

Genscher's Next Moves

At the meeting with Genscher, Baker refrained from presenting his own ideas and instead offered an open ear. Full records from the meeting have not yet turned up in either the U.S. or the German archives, but memoir accounts and the public press conference after the meeting all suggest that Baker embraced Genscher's viewpoint. After the meeting, Genscher emphasized to waiting journalists that he and Baker had been "in full agreement" and that they had "no intention of extending the *NATO area of defense and security* toward the east." When pressed by journalists for details, he insisted there would be "no halfway membership this way or that. What I said is there is no intention to extend NATO to the East."⁵¹ Genscher had thus partly clarified his Tutzing formula. He now appeared to suggest that membership in NATO's political councils should be enjoyed by *all* of Germany, whereas NATO's integrated military command would not encompass eastern German territory. Failing to contradict Genscher, Baker thereby gave his consent to this formula. Practical issues related to implementation were left unaddressed. Yet, references made during these U.S.-West German talks with regard to the delimitation of NATO left the territories east of the GDR untouched. NATO expansion beyond Germany simply did not seem a political concern at the time.

Despite the two foreign ministers' public display of agreement over NATO, there was less harmony between Baker and Genscher regarding the role of the CSCE and the potential 2+4 process in resolving the European se-

50. *Ibid.*, p. 735.

51. Quoted from Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 176; emphasis added.

curity architecture conundrum. This emerges from Baker's separate cable to Horst Teltschik, transmitted via U.S. ambassador Vernon Walters, in which Baker enumerated his differences with Genscher. Given the well-known tensions between Kohl and Genscher and the chancellor's relative lack of enthusiasm for relying on the CSCE as a forum of pan-European security negotiations, Baker probably wanted to ensure that Kohl was fully informed about what the foreign minister had told him. Genscher, the cable notes, had urged Baker to reassure the Soviet Union about NATO's future territorial limitations with regard to Germany in his upcoming talks in Moscow. This was not particularly controversial because Baker, too, was keen to defuse any sense of discrimination in Moscow. He also was satisfied that Genscher had spoken against German neutralization and for a unified Germany in NATO. Still, Genscher had emphasized that he saw the CSCE as the primary vehicle for new security arrangements and wanted to institutionalize it. He was much more hesitant about future negotiations on Germany's security using a framework that would involve the four occupying powers and the two Germans, a process Baker had promoted. Genscher had, however, expressed willingness to consider such a process *after* the 18 March GDR elections. Later he claimed in his memoirs that he had been a strong advocate of 2+4 from the start, but in fact it was Baker who pressed for 2+4 and who now hoped to enlist Kohl's support.⁵²

After the trip to Washington, Genscher went on a diplomatic offensive in Europe to promote (or perhaps test) his views. On 6 February in a meeting with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd in Bonn, Genscher spoke with unusual frankness about his ideas. More details thus emerged on what lay behind his thinking concerning NATO's and Germany's future and his motivations vis-à-vis Moscow. According to the British notes, Genscher acknowledged the need for discussion of German unification's implications for NATO and the European Community but said he preferred to avoid too much planning in a vacuum. With Europe's future political framework subject to dynamic processes such as the GDR elections, "we should not work on the basis of blueprints," he argued. However, the military consequences of the reduced threat in Europe could be discussed straight away. He rejected the neutralization of (unified) Germany outright, asserting that the Bonn government "wanted neither to extend nor to leave NATO." The two alliances should instead become "integral parts of all-European structures." Genscher called for "the integration of the European Community and, in parallel, the develop-

52. DESE, Doc. 159, pp. 756–757. See also Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 128–129, which does not comment on the NATO issue and merely expresses his surprise at Baker's move.

ment of the CSCE process,” and he stressed that the CSCE would help the Soviet Union save face and would be “an important vehicle for helping the Soviet Union to come to terms with the erosion of the Warsaw Pact.”⁵³

Genscher’s emphasis on pan-European collective security structures was not new, but on the more immediate question of Germany’s position in NATO he went further than he had before, stating—without evoking any comment or reaction from Hurd—“that when he [Genscher] talked about not wanting to extend NATO, that applied to other states besides the GDR. The Russians must have assurance that if, for example, the Polish Government left the Warsaw Pact one day, they would not join NATO the next.”⁵⁴ The West German notes from the meeting at this point curiously include a mention of Hungary instead of Poland, with Genscher explaining:

The West could do a lot to alleviate the current developments for the USSR. The declaration that NATO has no intention to expand its territory eastward would be particularly important. Such a declaration should not be focused solely on GDR, but would have to be of a general nature. For example, the USSR would need assurance that Hungary, after a change of government, would not become part of the Western alliance.⁵⁵

Given these comments (whether about Poland or Hungary), it is difficult to uphold Kramer’s and Sarotte’s arguments that West German officials, when lobbying for NATO’s territorial limitation to the FRG, were focusing solely on German soil in isolation and that the formulations regarding NATO’s expansion were thus narrowly conceived. Although the West German and British records diverge on which East European country was mentioned, they both indicate that Genscher in his meeting with Hurd explicitly made statements that went over the heads of East Europeans and against their potential future desires to join NATO. One might argue that Genscher was referring only to the prospect of *immediate* NATO enlargement to Poland (his phrase “the next day” is important in this regard) and that he did not necessarily preclude the possibility for eternity. Still, his words raise the question whether in his quest to secure Germany’s unification (and all-German political membership in NATO) he was ultimately willing to make preemptive promises to Moscow that were more far-reaching than he had so far let on, in effect closing NATO’s door to the USSR’s western neighbors, at least in the short term,

53. DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 129, pp. 261–264, esp. 262.

54. *Ibid.*

55. “Mützelburg an Ministerbüro; Betr: Gespräch BM mit dem britischen AM Hurd am 6. Februar 1990,” 7 February 1990, p. 3, in PAAA 178.927E. (The “E” in the archive number of this and later PAAA references stands for “Einheit.”)

if in return the Soviet Union would accept a united Germany in the Western alliance.⁵⁶

Of course, Genscher had no political authority to speak for NATO as a whole (and indeed he did not necessarily speak even for Kohl), nor had he voiced any of these more far-reaching ideas in public or in front of Soviet leaders. But, nervous about Moscow's reactions to Western insistence on unified Germany's membership in NATO, he was keen, it appears, to spread his broader ideas on NATO's limits among Western allies and to influence their thinking. Although his political motivations remain open to speculation, we can be certain that Genscher knew he was operating in an international environment in which opportunity structures were changing almost daily, political developments as much as politicians' thinking and actions were very much in flux, and any agreements or treaties with the Soviet Union (and Western occupying powers) concerning Germany were still far off. Genscher was walking a tightrope between taking action and reacting.

Kiessler and Elbe aptly liken Genscher's behavior to that of an "insect" putting out its feelers and testing the ground—that is, trying out different things with different people.⁵⁷ Yet, with his *public* remarks, the West German foreign minister was seeking to put *his* stamp on the evolution of Germany's future security affairs. Leaving aside his tactics and his testing of various ideas *away from the media glare*, he was firmly committed to a transformed future European security framework under the CSCE in which a unified Germany would find a home, an arrangement that would have Moscow's support. On the assumption that existing alliances would soon become subsumed in a new security structure, he possibly granted less practical significance to the various issues and details surrounding NATO: its changing shape, mission, and future territorial reach.⁵⁸

Baker's Talks with Soviet Leaders, February 1990

As Baker prepared for his talks in Moscow (7–9 February), his preliminary thoughts and policy regarding NATO were shaped to a great extent by Genscher. Even though the U.S. State Department's principal deputy assistant secretary of European affairs, James Dobbins, insisted to the British ambassador in Washington, Sir Antony Acland, that Baker had not blessed Genscher's outlook and had merely accepted it as the best available, the reality

56. Cf. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, p. 112.

57. Kiessler and Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch*, pp. 78–79.

58. Cf. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 120–121.

is that Baker—in his meetings with Shevardnadze and then Gorbachev—conveyed Genscher's ideas under the guise of presenting U.S. considerations on Germany's future.⁵⁹ Baker refined Genscher's original formulas based on his own understanding of their meaning. In adopting Genscher's views on what had to be guaranteed in regard to NATO's future, Baker chose phrasing that was somewhat narrower than Genscher's.⁶⁰ Baker told Gorbachev:

We understand that it is important not only for the USSR but also for other European countries to have guarantees that—if the United States maintains her military presence in Germany within the NATO framework—there will be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction or military presence one inch to the East.⁶¹

With these words, Baker implied that NATO's Article 5 (the common defense guarantee) would not extend to GDR territory. More, he offered this guarantee on NATO's military self-limitation in return for Soviet consent to a continued U.S. troop presence in the western part of Germany. This presence would be necessary because a neutralized Germany—an option seemingly favored by Moscow—might not behave in a benign fashion. Crucially, Baker did not offer any guarantees in exchange for Moscow's consent to German unification.

Only later in the conversation did Baker link German unification to a comment about NATO's non-expansion of its military structures beyond FRG territory. He elaborated: "We are of the opinion that the consultations and discussions in the framework of the '2+4' mechanism must give guarantees that the unification of Germany does not lead to the extension of NATO's military organization to the East."⁶² Baker presented these words with the caveat that the West Germans had not yet agreed to the 2+4 procedures and that this approach—which implied all-German political NATO membership, but the non-extension to GDR territory of both NATO's defense commitment ("jurisdiction") and NATO forces—was not necessarily the best. That German unification per se would occur was seemingly taken for granted. With future discussions clearly expected, Baker said he thought the more likely outcome was that Genscher rather than Kohl would come around to accepting the 2+4 mechanism because Kohl faced electoral pressure and a potentially growing nationalist clamor. Gorbachev largely claimed

59. DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 124, p. 255; and MGDF:SD, Doc. 71, p. 312.

60. On Baker's understanding of what Genscher had told him, see Letter, Zelikow to Genscher, 24 February 1995, pp. 2–3, and Letter, Zelikow to Genscher, 17 April 1995, pp. 3–4, both in HA ZRP, Box 1.

61. MGDF:SD, Doc. 71, p. 312.

62. *Ibid.*

to share Baker's view of the situation and affirmed that the German unification process presented itself as a new reality to which one had to adapt.⁶³

Gorbachev could take little of tangible importance from his talks with Baker. When, toward the end of the conversation, Baker again mentioned that a unified Germany in NATO with the guarantee that the alliance's "jurisdiction and forces will not extend to the east beyond the current line" was surely preferable to a unified Germany cut loose from any alliances and without U.S. forces, Gorbachev's answer was lackluster.⁶⁴ He said he would "discuss all of these matters in depth" with his advisers—even if he also noted that "it is clear that the extension of NATO's zone would be unacceptable." Baker agreed with this latter statement. Gorbachev made nothing of it. Instead, he remained noncommittal, claiming that the situation simply had to be monitored, all options thought through, and no conclusions could as yet be drawn.⁶⁵

Crucially, Gorbachev seemed to lack his own political conception of Germany's fate. In contrast to what he had talked about with his closest political aides in late January, he did not now mention or demand all-German neutrality, nor did he set the precondition of parallel U.S. and Soviet troop withdrawals. He indicated instead that he thought the presence of U.S. forces in Europe might play a moderating role. Above all, he did not make any express statements against unified Germany's (political) membership in NATO as he had two weeks earlier. Baker's loose consent to Gorbachev's statement in turn was also without much substance. Indeed, it was unclear exactly what he had agreed to.⁶⁶

Gorbachev appears not to have been ready to accept Baker's security formulas and "guarantees" as they stood. From Baker's perspective, the Soviet leader's presentations were all part of the diplomatic chess game, which implies that Baker's own actions were not intended as binding promises.⁶⁷ He was primarily focused on paving the way for the Soviet Union's explicit consent to the ever-accelerating intra-German unification process and the 2+4 framework as a mechanism to resolve the "German question's" external aspects including NATO membership. The fact that nothing emerged in writing about Germany's future security arrangements, was hence not unexpected

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 313–314.

64. Cf. Baker's verbatim quote in his letter to Kohl: "or would you prefer to see a unified Germany to be tied to NATO, with assurances that NATO's jurisdiction would not shift eastward from its present position." See DESE, Doc. 173, p. 794.

65. MGDF:SD, Doc. 71, pp. 315–316.

66. *Ibid.* Cf. MGDF:SD, Doc. 66, p. 287.

67. See Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 161.

and, indeed, even desirable. Despite being pleased by the political flexibility Gorbachev had demonstrated over Germany, Baker must have been relieved that the Soviet leader had not pushed him to accept any security-policy deals. After all, Baker himself was presenting policy concepts still under consideration within the U.S. administration. President Bush would have to have the final word. Moreover, Baker could speak neither for NATO as a whole nor for the West Germans, who just one day later were going to hold their own talks with the Soviet leaders.

In view of later Russian complaints about Western broken promises concerning NATO's eastern enlargement, it cannot be emphasized enough that the often-quoted Baker-Gorbachev discussions dealt solely with Germany and German territory, not with any other Warsaw Pact country. At no point did the talks address the future exclusion of Eastern Europe (beyond the GDR) from NATO. Gorbachev was still grappling with the official granting of Soviet consent to German unification and struggling to picture the nature of future all-European security structures. He continued to believe that existing military alliances had to change fundamentally or be dissolved. Whereas he realized that intra-German developments were moving at extraordinary speed and were slipping away from his grasp, he seemed to feel under much less time pressure to resolve key security questions. In early February the specifics of "NATO and its future size, nature and role" simply did not appear as the most pressing questions and thus did not feature as high on Gorbachev's agenda as was later made out. It hence seems plausible that for this reason he refrained from directly engaging with Baker's offer and language on this point.⁶⁸

Meanwhile back in Washington, Bush and his National Security Council (NSC) staff were speedily moving away from the Baker-Genscher line. As Mark Kramer has elucidated in some detail, it suffices to state here that U.S. officials (even at the State Department) began to consider the reference to a curtailed NATO "jurisdiction" impractical in military-strategic terms and too restrictive for further diplomatic bargaining. The Baker-Genscher phrasing raised alarm bells about two questions, in particular: What would be the value (and role) of NATO's pledge of mutual assistance to Germany in case of aggression (Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty) if the pledge did not cover all

68. Interestingly, in Gorbachev's later memoir account of German unification, where he warns against the 1990s polemics regarding the NATO enlargement issue, he emphasizes his fixation on the realities of the existence of the Warsaw Pact and NATO in 1990 and argues that he had no reason to address the security issue beyond the "German question." See Michail Gorbatschow, *Wie es war: Die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1999), pp. 103–104.

of Germany's territory? And what would be the military status of any territory that was left uncovered?⁶⁹

On 9 February Kohl had received a letter from Bush, who used "new" formulations to describe NATO's territorial and functional aspects in a future united Germany. The new formula had been adopted to resolve the Article 5 conundrum. Bush expressed delight over Kohl's recent rejection of neutrality and his pledge that Germany would stay in NATO, and the president suggested that, in return, "a component of a united Germany's membership could be a special military status for what is now the territory of the GDR." He believed that "such a commitment could be made compatible with the security of Germany, as well as of its neighbors, in the context of substantial, perhaps ultimately total, Soviet troop withdrawals from Central and Eastern Europe." Bush further explained that although NATO itself would change by taking a more political role, the continued presence of U.S. forces on German soil and the continuation of nuclear deterrence were "critical to assuring stability in this time of change and uncertainty."⁷⁰

Bush's detailed presentation of his rationale and practical suggestions showed how the new language would ensure the protection and defensibility of all territory in a unified Germany and would overcome Soviet objections to all-German membership in NATO. Bush's letter ditched the "non-expansion of NATO's 'jurisdiction'" phrasing in favor of a "special military status" for the eastern part of Germany. In contrast to Baker's (and Genscher's) phrasing, which ruled out NATO military expansion to eastern Germany, Bush's wording potentially ruled in every option. The shift in wording thus potentially implied a change in policy from a more defensive to a more assertive position. Manfred Wörner, the NATO Secretary General and a former West German CDU politician, had been the first to use the phrase "special military status" publicly, in a speech on 8 February, and it appears that the White House simply adopted this formulation, "which allowed for NATO coverage to the former GDR."⁷¹ Considering that a week earlier Hartmann in his internal chancellery memorandum had already proposed the implementation of a "special status" for East German forces, Kohl was unlikely to be flummoxed by Bush's proposals.

Before Baker left Moscow, he, too, received a copy of Bush's letter. When speaking to the press immediately after his discussions in the Kremlin, he

69. See Kramer, "The Myth," pp. 49–50. See also Letter, Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, p. 3, in HA ZRP, Box 1.

70. DESE, Doc. 170, pp. 784–785.

71. Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, p. 3; and Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, pp. 186–187. For the Wörner speech, see Freedman, ed., *Europe Transformed*, pp. 462–466.

changed his tone slightly. Baker pointed out that with a united Germany in NATO “you will have the GDR as part of that membership,” and he called for “some sort of security guarantees with respect to NATO’s forces . . . or the jurisdiction . . . moving eastward.”⁷² But when Baker summarized his meetings’ key points for Kohl in anticipation of the West German chancellor’s talks in Moscow, he stuck to his (and Genscher’s) older language and views. He quoted verbatim his question to Gorbachev regarding Germany’s status vis-à-vis NATO and the Soviet leader’s response that any extension of NATO’s zone would be unacceptable. Baker concluded that “by implication, NATO in its current zone might be acceptable” and that Gorbachev “was not locked in” to a position. Soviet acceptance of German unification (with the FRG in NATO) thus looked possible, and the prospects of the 2+4 mechanism and a broader CSCE framework would give the Soviet leader cover at home. Highlighting the centrality of U.S.–West German partnership, Baker ended his letter with a plea: “We will need to coordinate closely.”⁷³

Soviet–West German Discussions, February 1990

As Kohl prepared for his talks in Moscow, he had to sort through these two U.S. perspectives and also to keep abreast of Genscher’s statements and activities. In addition, Teltschik had prepared a briefing paper for him titled “Gesamteuropäische Sicherheitsarchitektur—Sicherheitspolitik der Bundesregierung auf dem Weg zu deutschen Einheit,” which listed the already well-known aims: to achieve all-European stability, to recognize neighbors’ security interests, and to safeguard the indispensable presence of U.S. troops in Europe. Moreover, Teltschik emphasized certain political cornerstones for security. In countering Genscher’s logic, he was arguing against unified Germany’s partial demilitarization. The unified state should remain a member of NATO and the Western European Union (WEU). But whereas neither NATO units nor institutions should be shifted beyond the existing inner-German border, Teltschik’s proposal allowed by implication for German non-NATO forces to be stationed in East Germany.⁷⁴ This view was closer to Bush’s position than to either Genscher’s or Baker’s. Domestic institutional rivalry between the

72. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 184.

73. DESE, Doc. 173, pp. 793–794.

74. DESE, Doc. 166, pp. 771–776. The document is undated but had comments scribbled on it dated 7 February 1990.

chancellery and the AA and to a lesser extent between the State Department and the NSC staff was mirrored in trans-governmental coalition building.⁷⁵

Whatever Kohl's aides may have thought, where exactly did the chancellor himself stand? First and foremost, he wanted to gain Soviet consent to unification while ensuring that Germany stayed in NATO. Mindful of handling Soviet interests with care, he thought that new CSCE institutions might serve the security interests of Europe as a whole. But he did not believe they could substitute for the alliance. He also knew that U.S. and British officials were uneasy about Genscher's keenness for the Helsinki process and disarmament—a major theme also in the foreign minister's election campaign. In these circumstances, Kohl had to consider the possibility that Gorbachev might propose to him the removal not only of U.S. forces (in parallel to Soviet troop withdrawals) but specifically of U.S. nuclear weapons from German soil as the price for allowing unification to move ahead: the feared unification for neutrality *quid pro quo*.⁷⁶

Despite Bush's and Teltschik's separate efforts to steer the chancellor's negotiating position, Kohl at his meeting with Gorbachev on 10 February chose to follow the Baker-Genscher line. He started out by highlighting his understanding of the Soviet leader's domestic sensitivities and concerns about Soviet security interests. But he then referred to Germany's post-1918 history and Rapallo in explaining why the federal government would not accept the neutralization of Germany. Although for the most part the Soviet and West German transcripts are identical, they differ slightly in the phrasing regarding NATO. "Naturally NATO could not expand its territory to today's territory of the GDR," Kohl is noted as saying in the German transcript.⁷⁷ According to the Soviet record, the chancellor said, "NATO should not expand its sphere of activity."⁷⁸ Both texts reveal that in delineating NATO's future boundary the chancellor was referring solely to (eastern) Germany, making no mention of other Warsaw Pact countries. However, there is one significant difference in nuance that must be noted. In the FRG record, Kohl appears to use restrictive language regarding Germany and future NATO coverage—language more far-reaching than what Genscher had agreed to with Baker and what Baker had mentioned to Gorbachev. Indeed, Kohl's phrasing (in German) possibly denied all-German political and military membership in NATO (something

75. See, for example, Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, p. 114.

76. On Kohl's calculations as relayed by Teltschik, see DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 136, pp. 274–278.

77. DESE, Doc. 174, esp. pp. 798–799.

78. MGDF:SD, Doc. 72, p. 322.

Kohl clearly did not intend). The Russian text, however, merely repeats the Bakerite “non-extension of jurisdiction and forces” idea. Thus, if we assume the German notes are a more accurate rendition of Kohl’s words but that the Russian transcript is what Gorbachev actually heard, the Soviet leader would not have noticed these differences in language. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that Gorbachev did not react in any meaningful way to the points Kohl made, saving the chancellor from being pinned down on the issue. Leaving matters open for future negotiations, Gorbachev simply thanked Kohl for his thoughts.⁷⁹

Later in the conversation Gorbachev suggested that a unified Germany could adopt a “nonaligned” status, like India or China. Kohl, not surprisingly, responded with a distinct lack of enthusiasm. In a spirit of compromise Gorbachev then emphasized the need for cooperation and trust, and he floated Baker’s idea of the 2+4 mechanism to resolve the external issues, a proposal that Kohl welcomed. The meeting ended with Kohl’s summary of what he saw as their key points for the media. He wanted to highlight that “in parallel with the unification process *in* Germany,” which he clearly now took to be unstoppable under the aegis of the Germans’ right to self-determination, “satisfactory solutions would have to be found regarding the question of the alliances.” Gorbachev stressed their mutual agreement that German internal unity was for the Germans themselves to decide.⁸⁰ As if to bolster Gorbachev in his decision to announce in public his support for an independent intra-German unification process, Kohl took the opportunity to engage in some checkbook diplomacy intended to reassure the Soviet leader, promising that Bonn would honor the GDR’s economic commitments to the USSR.⁸¹

Whatever Gorbachev’s motivations, his formal *and* public consent to letting the Germans unify—or, as Teltschik later wrote, the Soviet leader’s transfer of the key for unification to the Germans—was the one tangible and crucial result from the Moscow meetings.⁸² Once the world media were alerted to the “sensational” news by the Germans, it quickly became a binding fact.⁸³ However, it would be presumptuous to say, as Sarotte has done, that Gorbachev kept to his side of the bargain—granting unification—while the Western

79. *Ibid.*, p. 323; Cf. DESE, Doc. 174, p. 799. On the differences between the Soviet and West German transcripts, see also Alexander von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands—Ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel* (Berlin: Links, 2002), pp. 242–244, 250–252. See also Kramer, “The Myth,” pp. 49–51.

80. DESE, Doc. 174, p. 805–806; and MGDF:SD, Doc. 72, p. 330.

81. MGDF:SD, Doc. 72, p. 331. Cf. DESE, Doc. 174, p. 805.

82. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 142–144, esp. 144.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 143. For the West German–Soviet joint statement of 10 February, see Freedman, ed., *Europe Transformed*, pp. 472–475.

governments reneged on theirs, leaving Gorbachev unrewarded.⁸⁴ Gorbachev had not pressed for any assurances or security guarantees regarding NATO's future size and nature. Moreover, the simple fact is that no "security-deal" of any sort—not even a partial deal—was made in Moscow. Gorbachev had merely granted to Kohl and allowed the publicizing of what he had already come around to accepting at the Kremlin meeting on 26 January and had mentioned to Modrow four days later: that the ongoing intra-German unification process had the USSR's blessing.⁸⁵

This is not to deny that the public presentation of the key to unity during the West German–Soviet summit was facilitated by the Western rhetoric on NATO's future reach (first presented by Baker, then reinforced by Kohl). Because of the intensity of diplomacy and the repetition of U.S. promises by the West Germans, these assurances gained a certain weight and credibility, presumably creating a spirit of mutual willingness to compromise and to offer concessions. Yet, Kohl's as much as Baker's words to Gorbachev on NATO's future were at this stage no more than speculative propositions to be taken up in detail in future negotiations including 2+4. The security features of a unified Germany and Europe continued to be open questions that still needed to be resolved.⁸⁶

Gorbachev at this time still opposed a unified Germany in NATO. He hoped for German neutrality, the disbanding of the existing military alliances in East and West, and a pan-European solution that would exclude the United States. That he did not choose to pin down either the U.S. secretary of state or the West German chancellor on the NATO issue was perhaps due less to false beliefs (or hopes or naïveté or poor negotiating skills or a lack of wisdom) than to his general sense that he did not need to pin anything down at this point.⁸⁷ A security deal was not his objective during the February bilateral meetings. Gorbachev acted in the belief that he still held the levers to shape the future security framework, and he saw no reason at this stage that he even needed to adopt a bargaining position.

Genscher's actions must be taken into account in light of the West's potential signals and promises that might have affected perceptions, political calculations, and approaches in Moscow in early February. Whereas Kohl and Baker concentrated on NATO and its German limits in their comments to

84. See Sarotte, "Not One Inch Eastward?" pp. 131–132.

85. Cf. also Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 189. Pointing to the Modrow meeting, they suggest that this was less of a decisive move on substance than Teltschik perhaps believed.

86. See DESE, Doc. 174, p. 806; DESE, Doc. 175, p. 809; and Baker, *Drei Jahre*, pp. 183–184.

87. Sarotte faults Gorbachev for "naïveté" among other things in "Not One Inch Eastward?" pp. 128, 131, 138.

Gorbachev, Genscher—who met with Shevardnadze in parallel with the talks between Kohl and Gorbachev on 10 February—chose to focus on his favored theme, which perhaps was also a little more congruent with Soviet thinking: the CSCE and its summit planned for late 1990.⁸⁸ Genscher told Shevardnadze that he considered Germany's integration into future European security structures important for Germany's neighbors. Making—in contrast to Kohl—all-German political NATO membership non-negotiable, Genscher said the German government was “aware that a unified Germany's NATO membership would raise complicated questions.” He then said he believed that “NATO would not expand to the East,” even though the future GDR government would also have a say in the matter. “One would have to come to an agreement with the USSR. And perhaps it would then emerge, that a solution would not be too complicated.” He added: “If Soviet troops stayed behind in the GDR, this would not be our problem.” Considering that their discussion affected specifically the GDR and German soil, it is noteworthy that Genscher, in emphasizing the need for mutual trust, averred that “concerning the non-expansion of NATO, this should apply *generally*.”⁸⁹

Using the same phrase he had used in his meeting with Hurd four days earlier, when he had mentioned that NATO's non-expansion should “be of a *general nature*” and not focused just on the GDR, Genscher may have decided to draw a (NATO) line to the exclusion of Eastern Europe (either at the Elbe or the Oder-Neisse). If he expected tough negotiations regarding a satisfactory special military status for East Germany, he may have been trying to soften Moscow's stance on the German question by including views about the future security status of states that bordered on the Soviet Union and were keen to escape the Soviet orbit, especially Czechoslovakia and Hungary. It is noteworthy that he invoked his Postdam speech, made three days before (which Shevardnadze claimed to have read and to have forwarded to Gorbachev). In Potsdam Genscher had suggested that in the face of East European developments, specifically the Czechoslovak and Hungarian demands for Soviet troop withdrawals, “NATO could make a major contribution to stability if it declared unambiguously: Whatever happened in the Warsaw Pact, an extension of NATO territory to the East, that is to say closer to the borders of the Soviet Union, will not take place.”⁹⁰ Genscher's words to Shevardnadze were obvi-

88. See Teltchik, *328 Tage*, p. 141. Cf. DESE, Doc. 175, pp. 809–810.

89. “Drahterlass, Telko Nr. 1374 an BM Delegation, D2, Dr Kastrup; Betr: Gespräch mit AM Schewardnadze (10.2.1990 im Kreml)—Fortsetzung zu Plurez 1373,” 11 February 1990, pp. 3–5, in PAAA 151.641E; emphasis added.

90. Genscher, *Unterwegs*, p. 246. In the speech, Genscher mistakenly implied that Poland, too, was seeking the withdrawal of Soviet troops. In reality, Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government in Warsaw at that point was calling for Soviet troops to stay in Poland until the status of Germany was resolved. Polish officials did not begin seeking reductions and withdrawals until the late summer and early autumn.

ously not intended for eternity, nor were they legally binding. Moreover, Shevardnadze would not have known what Genscher had said to Hurd. Hence, the phrasing must have seemed to apply solely to the former GDR.

Genscher's verbalized thoughts were most likely part of his diplomacy tactics: he was simply sounding out Moscow. But Genscher also genuinely believed in what *he* promised. For him, his vision needed to come true to gain the desired Soviet consent to German unity, including continued membership in NATO, and ultimately to overcome the East-West divide. Shevardnadze told Genscher that "one believed all the foreign minister's [Genscher's] words."⁹¹

In this light, whatever the nature of Genscher's statements made behind closed doors and whatever the exact meaning Shevardnadze would have taken away from the rather opaque phrasing, Genscher's utterances, together with Kohl's and Baker's words, may well have fostered a Soviet expectation of Western restraint and concession-making in security policy questions.⁹² Even though Shevardnadze was uneasy about the pace of reunification, he was presumably pleased by Genscher's proposals involving the CSCE and NATO.⁹³ Still, Shevardnadze undoubtedly realized that Kohl was ultimately the one who held the *Richtlinienkompetenz* in West German foreign policy and that he might not embrace Genscher's (or Baker's) visions.

Either way, the legally binding deals on German defense- and security-related matters lay ahead, and it was obvious that ideas floated in the early bilateral talks were likely to be superseded. Genscher, Kohl, Baker, and Bush certainly were fully aware of this dynamism, and so were Soviet leaders at the time.

In short, in early to mid-February Gorbachev (as well as Shevardnadze) displayed no interest in seeking guarantees and driving hard bargains on key issues such as the nature of Germany's future membership in NATO, the future location of NATO's eastern boundary, or the geopolitical status of Eastern Europe more generally—even though Baker, Kohl, and Genscher had touched on these very matters during this period. Furthermore, given the differing outlooks among Soviet leaders and their varied language in 1990, the later assertions by some of them that NATO's future non-expansion to Eastern Europe was explicitly promised (and the promise accepted by Moscow) in

91. Ibid.

92. Handwritten notes taken by Shevardnadze's aide Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze during the meeting with Genscher (sketchy notes in two separate types of notebooks) make no mention of NATO enlargement and give no indication that Shevardnadze attached any special significance to Genscher's phrasing. I am grateful to Mark Kramer for sharing his knowledge of the content of Stepanov-Mamaladze's notebooks, which are stored in the Hoover Archives at Stanford University.

93. On Shevardnadze's perception of where developments were heading, which put him into a fatalistic mood, see DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 143, p. 288.

February 1990 is curious to say the least. These claims ignore the reality that specific Western propositions represented neither a firm governmental line nor a concrete guarantee of any sort. To the extent that Western leaders made actual commitments, their intent was to fulfill them, not to renege on them. Gorbachev in turn had *not* made any official demands or followed up on any. He simply focused on what seemed the most exigent issues. Moreover, given the dynamic developments in early 1990, *both* Soviet and Western political actors were still trying to keep their options open. Western governments managed to gain some key concessions at a time when Soviet leaders seemed to be trying to look away from the realities that were beginning to unfold.⁹⁴ What drove the various individuals' steps in this intense, fast-moving political game was a mixture of idealism and pragmatism, personal ambition and the pursuit of national interests, and questions of what was feasible and what desirable.

From mid-February 1990, the pace of events—dictated by the accelerating process of reunification, which now had Moscow's consent—forced the resolution of the German question's external dimensions. At a meeting of NATO and Warsaw Pact foreign ministers in Ottawa on 11–12 February, right after the bilateral talks in Moscow, Baker induced his colleagues to accept the 2+4 framework for consultations between the two Germanys and the four occupying powers, with initial contacts among mid-ranking ministers prior to the GDR elections.⁹⁵ In a telephone conversation with Kohl on 13 February, Bush emphasized that the time had come for the FRG and the United States (and the Western powers more generally) to begin deciding which issues were non-negotiable and which allowed for greater flexibility vis-à-vis the USSR.⁹⁶

Concrete Policies and Choices

The Bush administration began to focus on 2+4 and its implications and sought to devise a consistent internal position. U.S. officials wanted to ensure that although eastern German territory would get a “special military status,” a future unified Germany would be fully integrated into NATO both politically and militarily.⁹⁷ The West German government, too, engaged in some deeper soul searching on the issue. Not only did Genscher and Kohl, the AA and the

94. See Baker, *Drei Jahre*, p. 184.

95. DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 145, pp. 291–293. See also DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 146, pp. 293–294.

96. DESE, Doc. 180, pp. 826–828.

97. See Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, pp. 194–197, 208–211.

chancellery, have to form a coherent West German security policy position at the highest level; they also needed to get Stoltenberg and his defense ministry and the two coalition parties on board—no easy feat, given the ongoing election campaign.

On 14 February, during the founding meeting of the Arbeitsgruppe Aussen- und Sicherheitspolitik des Kabinettsausschusses Deutsche Einheit, Stoltenberg confronted Genscher about the latter's report on the sessions in Moscow and Ottawa.⁹⁸ These remarks followed from the opening address by the Foreign Ministry's political director, Dieter Kastrup, who had raised the conundrum of NATO membership for unified Germany and the separate alliance-border question by invoking Baker's formulation that "NATO jurisdiction" should not extend to GDR territory.⁹⁹ Stoltenberg challenged Genscher over the details of his proposal to exclude the GDR from NATO military coverage in a unified Germany. The defense minister vehemently opposed what he perceived as a step toward the demilitarization of eastern Germany and the curtailment of NATO's security guarantee (Article 5). He proposed the stationing of a German territorial army on eastern German territory outside the NATO framework. In response, Genscher said that in his talks with Baker and Shevardnadze he had not precluded the extension of an Article 5 guarantee to all of Germany.¹⁰⁰ He claimed that even though he opposed the stationing of NATO forces in the GDR he supported the extension of NATO's defense guarantee for all of Germany. He thus distinguished his own formulation from Baker's much more restrictive "NATO jurisdiction" phrase. Yet Genscher disagreed with Stoltenberg's conclusion that GDR territory would be defensible only if Bundeswehr forces detached from NATO's command structures were stationed there. Genscher feared that such deployments would stir wide opposition both at home and abroad and would be rejected if taken to the negotiating table.¹⁰¹

As for the U.S. military presence in Europe, Genscher saw the NATO treaty as a precondition. Thus he warned against linking the issue of the presence of Soviet (and East German) troops in the GDR to U.S. forces in the

98. "Betr: Kabinettsausschuß 'Deutsche Einheit' hier: Erste Sitzung des Unterausschusses 'Außen- und sicherheitspolitische Zusammenhänge' am 14.2.1990 im AA," 15 February 1990, in PAAA, 198.450E.

99. *Ibid.*; and DESE, Doc. 182, pp. 830–831.

100. Cf. Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, p. 720. Genscher suggests that even his formulation in the Potsdam speech of 9 February ("das vereinte Deutschland müsse der NATO angehören") included the application of Article 5, whereas on the extension of NATO structures to the GDR he had "signaled flexibility." On the legal intricacies of the differences between "*Geltungsbericht des NATO Vertrages*" (*neu erworbene Staatsgebiet*) and "*NATO Schutzgarantie*" (Article 5 and Article 6 and the meaning of "*Gebiete*") as assessed by the AA, see "Arbeitspapier: Rechtliche Aspekte in Bezug auf NATO Vertrag bei Herstellung der Deutschen Einheit, gez. Eitel," 19 March 1990, in PAAA, 198.447E.

101. Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, p. 720.

FRG. Despite speaking against shifting any Western troops to GDR soil, Genscher was keen to ensure a continued U.S. military presence in the FRG, independent of what might happen with Soviet and GDR armed forces in eastern Germany.¹⁰² He made no open demands for Soviet troop withdrawals, apparently assuming that Soviet leaders themselves would come to find a long-term military presence untenable in a united Germany, not least because the stationing costs would be too high both politically and financially.¹⁰³

Because Genscher and Stoltenberg diverged in their views about the future practical (military) functioning of NATO's Article 5, clarification was needed. Genscher used the older, narrower Bakerite formulations on NATO's territorial and defense coverage in subsequent media interviews and conference statements, allowing speculation about Germany's defensibility to fester.¹⁰⁴

Reinforcement came from an unexpected source: the chancellor. Kohl told the Bundestag on 15 February that a unified Germany must not be neutralized or demilitarized. It should remain tied to NATO, which ought to take on a greater political role. Yet, neither NATO units nor institutions (or installations) should move eastward into the former GDR. Saying nothing explicit about Article 5 (the so-called *NATO Zuständigkeiten im NATO Schutzbereich*), Kohl did not develop the point.¹⁰⁵

The next day, Stoltenberg made his spat with Genscher public by going to the press. Warning of a serious strategic error, he spoke against any weakening of NATO. He argued that to ensure Germany's military defensibility via Article 5, non-NATO-assigned Bundeswehr troops should be shifted to eastern German soil, with the size of these conventional forces to be determined in Vienna as part of the CFE negotiations.¹⁰⁶ Genscher responded by advocating his long-term European security framework vision in which the two increasingly integrated military alliances could eventually cease to exist. NATO, he declared, should under no circumstances be expanded to the east. Furious with Stoltenberg, Genscher insisted that the defense minister's views were "private." By pointing yet again to Baker's language (which had already been overhauled in the United States) and to Kohl's promises that Soviet security

102. Ibid. See also DESE, Doc. 184, pp. 833–834; and Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 148–149.

103. Cf. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 189.

104. See the comments Genscher made at the SIPRI-IPW conference in Potsdam on 9 February in Genscher, *Unterwegs*, pp. 242–256. See also Zelikow to Genscher, 24 February 1995, p. 4; and Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 149.

105. Karl Kaiser, ed., *Deutschlands Vereinigung? Die internationalen Aspekte* (Bergisch Gladbach: Bastei Lübbe, 1993), Doc. 27, pp. 197–199. Cf. Zelikow to Genscher, 24 February 1995, p. 4.

106. See, for example, "Stoltenberg will ein Deutschland in der NATO," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, 17 February 1990, p. 1; and "Stoltenberg warnt vor 'strategischem Irrtum,'" *FAZ*, 19 February 1990, p. 1.

interests had to be respected, Genscher emphasized that promoting the extension of Western troops' presence in Germany's east risked disrupting the unification process. Because of the FDP's full support of Genscher, the media were rife with speculation over the stability of the CDU-FDP coalition.¹⁰⁷

Kohl was eager to resolve the dispute and compelled the two ministers to come up with a joint announcement. The "Genscher-Stoltenberg declaration" of 19 February largely followed (or referred to) the chancellor's statement made in the Bundestag four days earlier. The declaration made no mention of NATO's "territory" and specified instead that neither NATO-assigned nor non-assigned Bundeswehr troops would be stationed on the soil of the former GDR. The statement made no mention of NATO's Article 5 and the practicalities related to it.¹⁰⁸ Genscher's line of advocating partial (i.e., GDR) demilitarization (and de facto neutrality) had prevailed. Kohl had sided with him, presumably not least for the sake of coalition solidarity. But this did not mean that the actual problems had disappeared. Their resolution was merely postponed to a later time. The details of the GDR's (and thus unified Germany's) security and political status would have to be decided in concert with the new, freely elected East German government and the four occupying powers.¹⁰⁹

Genscher's short-term public political victory failed to generate a synchronized German government position. No one was certain what Kohl himself thought or why he had allowed Genscher to bulldoze Stoltenberg.¹¹⁰ In Teltschik's view, the Genscher-Stoltenberg declaration had granted a preemptive "public concession" to the Soviet Union, which nobody in Moscow had even yet demanded.¹¹¹ Given Gorbachev's and Shevardnadze's varying and at times contradictory positions, Stoltenberg saw Soviet policy as still lacking a clear direction and was adamant that any concessions would be premature.¹¹²

By this point it was evident that Germany's future security arrangements could no longer be discussed in the abstract. With Kohl slated to meet Bush at

107. See, for example, "Zwist im Kabinett über militärische Zukunft," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 February 1990. Cf. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 151–152; and Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, pp. 203–204. See also Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 732–733.

108. Kaiser, ed., *Deutschlands Vereinigung?* Doc. 28, pp. 199–200. See also "Kohl schlichtet Kabinettsstreit zwischen Genscher und Stoltenberg," *FAZ*, 19 February 1990, p. 1.

109. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 204.

110. See DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 154, p. 307n6. See also on this episode, Rafael Biermann, *Zwischen Krenl und Kanzleramt: Wie Moskau mit der deutschen Einheit rang* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997), pp. 492–495; and Weidenfeld, *Außenpolitik*, pp. 260–263.

111. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 152.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 153. See also Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 732–733. Genscher glosses over the affair altogether and paints a rather harmonious and benevolent picture of the events and personal interactions, a depiction belied by the declassified records.

Camp David a week later, and with the 2+4 mechanism about to begin while work on intra-German unification was steaming ahead, the issue had gained political urgency. West German officials knew that the United States, the sole ally to support unification from the outset, wanted a defensible, unified Germany in NATO with merely a special status for the GDR. To keep Washington on board, Kohl would have to deliver a firm public commitment to the alliance during his visit to the United States.¹¹³

Coordinating Western Positions

The Western allies had watched with some unease the public bickering in Germany. Bush in a telephone conversation with Margaret Thatcher immediately before his meeting with Kohl said he needed to hear “from the horse’s [Kohl’s] mouth and in the clearest and most specific terms” that unified Germany was committed to NATO membership, “including the continued integration of German forces in NATO and the retention of American troops in the FRG.” He doubted that the “demilitarization” of East Germany—as Genscher’s proposal appeared to be—“was a good idea.” Thatcher agreed and pointed out that demilitarization would not necessarily suit Gorbachev either. She argued that “he would want to be able to keep some forces in the GDR: that was probably the only way of persuading him that a united Germany should be in NATO.”¹¹⁴ The continued presence of Soviet forces in Germany—even as a bargaining tool—was, however, a prospect that did not go over well with Bush.¹¹⁵

In the meantime, NSC staffers and State Department officials also worried about the “increasing talk”—especially in West German newspapers—about the possibility that unified Germany might withdraw from NATO military structures (pursuing the French solution) and request that foreign troops leave its soil. Such a move would spell the effective end of NATO and the rationale for a U.S. presence. The fear in Washington was that in an election year the Germans might succumb to nationalist-pacifist thinking and would approach the NATO issue accordingly. U.S. officials wanted to make sure that Kohl understood these concerns. In their view, the CSCE had some promise but “could not provide a substitute for NATO in protecting [Western] security in the real world.”¹¹⁶

113. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 154, pp. 307–310.

114. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 155, p. 311.

115. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 207.

116. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 154, pp. 307–309. Cf. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 250.

Thus, for Bush, a crucial goal of the Camp David meetings was to get Kohl to issue a public affirmation of Germany’s commitment to full membership and participation in NATO’s integrated military structures. If the West did not stand firm now, the Soviet Union might exploit the situation in 2+4 and veto unified Germany’s NATO membership. The Soviet leaders’ procrastination was perceived as a sign of either putting off hard decisions about Germany or of playing for time to get the NATO issue to affect the outcome of the German (federal) elections, drawing out the resolution of German security matters.¹¹⁷ Indeed, Shevardnadze in an interview in *Izvestiya* had argued that the resolution of security issues—for which the USSR had numerous options other than NATO—might take years. Soviet leaders certainly did not seem ready to accept the Western NATO line.¹¹⁸

Despite increasingly serious problems at home, Gorbachev was not yet forced to accept anything. On the contrary, he could reasonably hope to secure useful limitations on united Germany’s participation in Western security arrangements as the Genscher-Stoltenberg statement had already suggested, and time was not necessarily working against him. Furthermore, he could hope that by pressing for an all-European solution and multilateral CSCE negotiations, things might slow down and in some unexpected ways “cast up new opportunities” for the USSR.¹¹⁹ Far from relying on alleged NATO deals made in early February that were conjured up years later in Russian rhetoric, Gorbachev in reality saw the diplomatic bargaining over German security as still lying ahead.

Regardless of whether the Soviet Union was consciously adhering to a delaying strategy, the outcome of the Camp David weekend talks (on 24–25 February) made such a strategy much more difficult.¹²⁰ Bush succeeded in persuading Kohl to shift course, and the two leaders closed ranks. Genscher was not among the West German participants, whereas Baker was present for the U.S. side.¹²¹ During the first meeting, Kohl left open the issue of the nature of Germany’s NATO membership. Despite arguing that neither NATO forces nor non-NATO-assigned Bundeswehr troops should be moved onto GDR territory and despite acknowledging that complete Soviet troop withdrawals could not happen overnight, he categorically ruled out the possibility

117. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 154, p. 309.

118. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 153.

119. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 156, p. 316. See also DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 154, p. 310.

120. See DESE, Doc. 192, p. 860–873; DESE, Doc. 193, pp. 873–874; and DESE, Doc. 194, pp. 874–877.

121. See Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward?” p. 135, where she speculates about why neither Kohl nor Bush invited Genscher.

that Soviet troops—even after initial CFE troop reductions—could remain indefinitely on German soil.¹²² He expected a transitional period and emphasized that there must be no special military status for the unified German state (i.e., the whole of it should be covered by Article 5, though when and how this coverage would come fully into effect remained an open question). Kohl pressed Baker on the meaning of his reference to the non-extension of NATO's jurisdiction, and during the second round of talks Kohl urged Baker to discard that phraseology and to clarify the issue in public by explaining that all he had meant was that NATO forces could not be extended to the GDR. Baker consented to Kohl's request.¹²³ The chancellor, now satisfied, evidently conceded that Bundeswehr troops not assigned to NATO could be stationed in the GDR in the future. He thus effectively circumvented a central aspect of the Genscher-Stoltenberg declaration—the assumption that the GDR would become demilitarized after Soviet troop withdrawals.¹²⁴ By highlighting at the joint press conference “that a unified Germany should remain a full member of NATO including participation in its military structure,” that “U.S. military forces should remain stationed in the united Germany and elsewhere in Europe as a continuing guarantor of stability,” and that “in a unified state the former territory of the GDR should have a special military status,” Kohl demonstrated that he had adopted Bush's policy and language and had abandoned the Genscher line. The U.S. and West German leaders were adamant that from now on they would stick to this position, which would have to find its way into the 2+4 treaty.¹²⁵

In private, the two leaders were confident that Gorbachev would not be able to continue to insist that Germany must be kept out of NATO. Kohl pointed out to Bush that in the eyes of Gorbachev—for whom so much of the Soviet Union's prestige was at stake over the German question—the U.S. president was the sole equal negotiating partner, with or without the 2+4 forum. The chancellor in turn had no doubt that ultimately his Deutschmarks would be needed in the bargaining with Moscow over Germany's future security arrangements and especially Soviet troop withdrawals from the GDR. Kohl argued that Gorbachev's and Shevardnadze's statements were part of the diplomatic poker game—and it was becoming obvious who held all the trump cards.¹²⁶ As Teltschik summed up in his diary, at

122. DESE, Doc. 192, p. 868.

123. DESE, Doc. 194, p. 877.

124. Ibid.

125. “Joint News Conference Following Discussions with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany,” 25 February 1990, in George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=1585&year=1990&month=2.

126. Rödder, *Deutschland*, p. 247. See also Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et*

Camp David "one of the decisive pegs [on security] had been very firmly rammed in."¹²⁷

The meeting records and subsequent memoirs clearly show that Bush and Kohl never believed that as part of the upcoming discussions with Gorbachev over Germany and the NATO question they would be expected to offer assurances to Moscow that East Europeans would be indefinitely prohibited from joining NATO. The issue of NATO enlargement never came up as a separate topic, and the German security issue was not addressed as part of a wider alliance-enlargement discourse. Instead, the discussions focused on resolving the Cold War "German question" and ending the four-power rights and were held within the narrow confines of German unification diplomacy, in the context of which full German NATO membership was bound up with the transformations of the nature, role, and strategy of the alliance. Views on the future shape of Europe's security architecture remained inchoate.

Subsequent Twists and Turns

After the intense, high-level diplomatic activity in February, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze over the next four more months continued to speak out against full German NATO membership. They proposed other options, including all-German neutrality or at least a demilitarized zone in Germany, German membership in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the simultaneous destruction of both alliances, and the establishment of a pan-European security structure.¹²⁸ They vacillated between the various arguments, not only because of nuances in their personal outlooks and differing political tactics, but also because of deeper divisions in Moscow between reformists and traditionalists, all of whom put pressure on Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. Even though institutional reforms allowed the two men to act largely outside CPSU structures and to reach decisions on an ad-hoc basis via a small trusted inner circle, some of the other actors in Moscow still carried weight.¹²⁹ Gorbachev's closest advisers, Anatolii Chernyaev and Georgii Shakhnazarov, were amenable to allowing unified German NATO membership, but the German experts in the Soviet Foreign Ministry and CPSU Central Committee around Valentin Falin

l'unification allemande: De Yalta à Maastricht (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005), p. 254. On the Camp David talks and Kohl's hunch about how bilateral unification diplomacy would evolve, see DESE, Doc. 194, pp. 868–869, 877. See also Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, pp. 212–215; and Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 253–255.

127. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 162.

128. See, for example, DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 205, p. 400.

129. "Betr: Briefwechsel mit AM Schewardnadze," 19 March 1990, in PAAA, 151.641E.

were vehemently opposed.¹³⁰ The latter group had only begrudgingly tolerated Gorbachev's consent to unification via self-determination. Keeping an eye on the USSR's geopolitical and security interests, they continued to insist on all-German neutrality.¹³¹ Gorbachev and Shevardnadze operated between the two fronts in Moscow and also tried to keep close contact with West German and U.S. leaders in the run-up to the June U.S.-Soviet summit in Washington and the July West German-Soviet summit in the southern USSR. Both the United States and West Germany were seen as special partners.

Still, Shevardnadze tended to play hardball by presenting throughout the spring his anti-NATO views. Gorbachev in turn could be heard criticizing the alliance, though without ever totally refusing full German NATO membership. As the weeks passed, no firm single line emerged on the Soviet side. This was received with optimism by Western officials, who read these signs as movement in the Soviet position.¹³² Soviet suggestions such as Yulii Kvitinskii's comment to Kohl on 22 March that the *Germans* should find a solution to the NATO problem raised hopes that Soviet reticence was a bargaining tactic, rather than a flat unwillingness to budge.¹³³

Soviet officials frequently pointed out to the West Germans the difficulty of selling a unified Germany in NATO to the Soviet public and military establishment and even to Warsaw Pact countries (all of which were increasingly supportive of German NATO membership, an option they considered more reassuring than an unbound neutralized German state at Europe's heart).¹³⁴ Kohl and his Western partners were aware of the Soviet leaders' problems in justifying external changes.¹³⁵ With a keen interest in keeping their trusted man, Gorbachev, in power and in completing reunification as soon as possible, the West Germans saw nothing to gain from too forcefully pushing the process of international unification diplomacy, if such moves would endanger Gorbachev's political survival. By late March secessionist pressures, reflected in the unfolding Lithuanian crisis, and growing hardline critiques of Gorbachev's policies were rapidly intensifying inside the USSR.¹³⁶ Kohl and Bush knew that the shaping of the post-Cold War order in Europe along Western

130. Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 3)," pp. 17–19.

131. Ibid. See also "Fernschreiben Nr. 1042: Betr: Erklärung des SAM zur sowjetischen Deutschlandpolitik vom 13.3.1990," from FRG embassy in Moscow, 14 March 1990, in PAAA, 140.728E; and Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, p. 230.

132. See, for example, "Betr: Sowj. Sicherheitsinteressen, gez. Neubert," 14 March 1990, pp. 4, 7, in PAAA, 140.728E; DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Docs. 191, 192, 196 (p. 385), 197 (p. 202), 198, 202; and Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 155, 165, 184, 186–187, 194–195, 201.

133. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 180–181.

134. Ibid., p. 201.

135. See DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 156, p. 316.

136. See Kramer "The Collapse (Part 3)," pp. 20–41; and von Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, p. 310.

lines had to be pursued sensitively to avoid undermining Gorbachev's position.

Although Gorbachev and Shevardnadze dragged their feet on the German NATO issue and hoped against hope that they could somehow prevent the GDR's entry into the alliance or at least achieve a more watered-down NATO solution, a unified position proved equally elusive on the Western side.¹³⁷ Only the United States had a settled position. Sticking to the principles ironed out at Camp David, U.S. officials wanted NATO's Article 5 to apply from the moment when unity and full sovereignty would come into force. To make that provision feasible, Bundeswehr forces outside the NATO framework would be deployed on eastern German territory.

The French, because of their own peculiar position in the alliance and their focus on European integration, said relatively little regarding NATO but crucially were not obstructive.¹³⁸ The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which from the outset was keen on a unified Germany in NATO and Article 5 coverage of the GDR, readily embraced the U.S. position, but Prime Minister Thatcher had well-known misgivings about unification in general. Yet, given the way political realities had evolved and given the strong U.S. leadership on the issue, her suspicions had begun to fade by late spring. She emerged as a strong advocate together with the FCO in pressing for a common Western position in favor of full German membership in NATO (not least as a kind of insurance policy against the USSR).¹³⁹

The position of the West Germans (the dominant force on the German side, inasmuch as internal unification increasingly meant the absorption of the GDR via Basic Law Article 23) remained the most complex.¹⁴⁰ Kohl stuck to what he had agreed to at Camp David and sought to push the timetable. Genscher, however, continued to pursue his own line, which he believed was best for ensuring completion of the unification process. This disjuncture did not abate even after Kohl's policies seemed vindicated by the resounding victory of the Allianz für Deutschland (the CDU's sister party) in the March GDR elections.¹⁴¹

Genscher's instincts and political ambitions continued to push him to ad-

137. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 159, p. 321.

138. MGDF:SD, Doc. 95, pp. 421–431; and Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 237. Cf. Bozo, *Mitterrand*, pp. 255–266.

139. See, for example, DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Docs 156, 162, 165 (p. 328). See also Bonn AA to London embassy, "Fernschreiben No. 1002. Betr: Gespräche AM Douglas Hurd mit BK und BM am 15.5.1990," 14 May 1990, in PAAA, 178.054E.

140. Teltschik noted on 6 March that the coalition had finally found agreement on the Article 23 route. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 168.

141. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Docs. 167 (pp. 331–332), 180, 184 (p. 360).

vocate a long-term vision of an all-European security architecture via the CSCE.¹⁴² He also was determined to calm Soviet leaders and to avoid any unnecessary provocation as he tried to soften Moscow's apparent intransigence by offering a more conciliatory pan-European security approach. He recognized that, for practical reasons, it made sense to press for a united Germany in NATO at least in the short run, even though he kept insisting that no alliance forces should be stationed in eastern Germany.¹⁴³ His broader long-term goals (CSCE) and his acknowledgment of short-term necessities (NATO) were largely incompatible, as became evident in late March when he undertook a number of political go-it-alones (*Alleingänge*).¹⁴⁴

On 21 March, at a meeting during Namibia's independence ceremonies in Windhoek, Genscher reassured Baker that whereas European structures (of which the United States would be a part) were important in view of a collapsing Warsaw Pact and the dangers of the balkanization of Europe, this did not mean they should give up existing organizations such as NATO.¹⁴⁵ Baker thus was led to believe that in Genscher's mind the CSCE was intended "to supplement NATO, not replace it," signaling a firm commitment to the alliance.¹⁴⁶ Genscher highlighted his worries about a *cordon sanitaire* between the USSR and NATO. Even though German neutrality had to be avoided, East European desires for closer ties with the alliance should be deflected. Baker agreed.¹⁴⁷ By this point, unlike earlier, Western leaders sensed that NATO could be seen as a viable solution to security dilemmas not only by Germans but also by East Europeans who, as Baker pointed out, might want to join the alliance in some capacity. The only priority, however, was to resolve the NATO issue for Germany. Genscher and Baker did not wholly foreclose NATO as a future option for Eastern Europe, but they wanted to bury the issue for now—not least to avoid upsetting Soviet officials while international unification diplomacy entered a crucial stage. Genscher appeared to hope that

142. See his speech in Postdam on 9 February 1990 at the SIPRI-IPW conference, at which he calls for a "magna carta" of a new European stability order via the CSCE process, in Genscher, *Unterwegs*, pp. 242–256.

143. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 184, pp. 360–361. Comp. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 205, p. 403.

144. See German embassy at NATO to AA, "Fernschreiben No. 421, Betr: Künftige Sicherheitsstrukturen in Europa—hier: Stand der Meinungsbildung im Bündnis," 27 March 1990, in PAAA, B130, 13526E.

145. "Vermerk—Betr: Gespräch BM mit AM Baker am 21.3.1990 in Windhuk," 28 March 1990, p. 3, in PAAA, 178.928E. Cf. Letter, Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, p. 5.

146. Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, pp. 5–6.

147. Regarding central Europeans' NATO desires, Genscher said, "Dies sei eine Frage, an der wir gegenwärtig nicht rühren sollten." See "Vermerk—Betr: Gespräch BM mit AM Baker am 21.3.1990 in Windhuk," p. 6. Cf. Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie*, Doc. 22, pp. 109–113.

his pan-European visions, once realized, would ultimately make obsolete any East European interest in NATO.¹⁴⁸

Indeed, in talks with Shevardnadze the next day and in a public speech at the WEU Assembly in Luxembourg on 23 March, Genscher emphasized above all else the role of the CSCE.¹⁴⁹ At the meeting with Shevardnadze, Genscher lobbied for "one Europe" in the future, which would be the result of a step-by-step process. He told his Soviet colleague that "one Germany" should not wait for "one Europe," but that the various parties needed "to establish rules for the one Germany that would lead to where we wanted the one Europe to be."¹⁵⁰ The gist of what he said both in Windhoek and in Luxembourg was that "NATO with its present forms and functions would be needed only for a transitional phase of unspecified duration until the military pacts could be absorbed into a cooperative European security order."¹⁵¹ In Luxembourg, Genscher was particularly radical in suggesting that after step one—in which the alliances would become more political and turn toward cooperation—step two would entail conversion of the alliances into an association of common collective security (*Verbund gemeinsamer kollektiver Sicherheit*).¹⁵²

These three presentations reflected typical Genscherite fudge. On the one hand he wanted to go his own way, proposing his own longer-term goals around the CSCE, which he hoped would eventually supersede the institutional remnants of the Cold War (including NATO). On the other hand, he hewed to the government line in pressing for German membership in NATO. The latter position seemed not only increasingly *achievable*, but also increasingly *necessary* in the short run. To underline this approach while accommodating Soviet concerns and sweetening the NATO pill, Genscher reiterated in his letter to Shevardnadze on 29 March Bonn's genuine efforts—as promised by Kohl in Moscow in February—to uphold the GDR's economic commitments to the USSR.¹⁵³

Kohl, confronted with Genscher's multidimensional Soviet policy, was

148. "Vermerk—Betr: Gespräch BM mit AM Baker am 21.3.1990 in Windhuk," pp. 4–6.

149. On the WEU speech, see Teltschik, *328 Tage*, pp. 182–183, 186.

150. "Vermerk—Betr: Gespräch BM mit AM Baker am 21.3.1990 in Windhuk"; and "Betr: Gespräch BM mit AM Schewardnadze am 22.3.1990 in Windhuk," 26 March 1990, p. 6, in PAAA 178,928E. Cf. Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie*, Doc. 22, pp. 113–120.

151. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 184, pp. 360–361. Interestingly a sentence with a similar statement on the two alliances' dissolution into new structures was excised from the AA record of the Genscher-Shevardnadze talks in Windhoek. See *ibid.*, n. 150.

152. For the speech, see Genscher, *Unterwegs*, pp. 258–268, esp. 265. See also Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, p. 5.

153. "Drahterlass telko Nr. 441," in PAAA, 151.641E; and "Betr: Brief AM an AM Schewardnadze," 28 March 1990, p. 2, in PAAA, 151.641E.

apparently furious over the WEU speech. According to Teltschik, Kohl wrote an angry note to Genscher making clear “that he did not share [Genscher’s] views [advocating the dissolution of the two alliances] and would not allow for the federal government to be tied down via such public declarations of positions that he could not support.”¹⁵⁴ After all, Kohl had recently insisted in a short discussion with Genscher, Rudolf Seiters, and Stoltenberg that he as chancellor reserved the right to make all final decisions on key security questions, particularly over the reach of Article 5, the extension of conscription into GDR territory, and the future presence of nuclear weapons in Germany.¹⁵⁵

Whether Genscher had tried to bypass Kohl or was merely trying to keep Moscow on board is difficult to judge. The reality was probably a mixture of both. Either way, a united position on long-term German and European security arrangements was still elusive in Bonn.¹⁵⁶ But at least broad agreement now existed among all key actors that all-German NATO membership must be an immediate goal. At a meeting with Hurd on 12 March, Genscher had declared that the Soviet Union would in the end accept Germany’s presence in NATO. He had also explicitly stated that “in the last analysis Articles 5+6 would apply.”¹⁵⁷ Foreseeing a transitional phase in which Soviet forces would be present in the former GDR—to be codified in a bilateral Soviet-German stationing treaty—he nonetheless continued to insist that Articles 5 and 6 would apply only after Soviet troops had left, and that at that point only the *Bundesgrenzschutz* (i.e., no Bundeswehr troops) would deploy to the east.¹⁵⁸

On these specifics Kohl had so far said nothing precise, even if, as most observers assumed, he was close to the U.S. stance.¹⁵⁹ Teltschik had indicated to the British on 23 March that in his view Germany would have to embrace the Bundeswehr’s extension to the east. British and U.S. officials sensed that Kohl himself had been moving in that direction since the Camp David meeting.¹⁶⁰ Kohl averred on 29 March at the Anglo-German Königswinter Conference in Cambridge that “Articles 5 and 6 should apply to all of Germany from

154. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 183; and DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 184, p. 360. Genscher’s memoirs make no mention of this episode, and no record of such a letter can be found in the available FRG Foreign Ministry files. My enquiries in the PAAA confirmed this lack of evidence. I am grateful to Mr. Piening for all his help. Compare Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 752–754.

155. Teltschik, *328 Tage*, p. 179.

156. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 180, p. 353.

157. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 167, pp. 330–334; “Mützelburg an Ministerbüro, Vermerk, Betr: Gespräch BM mit britischen AM Hurd am 12.2.1990,” 15 March 1990, p. 2, in PAAA, 178.054E.

158. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 170, pp. 338–339.

159. *Ibid.*, p. 338; and DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Docs. 184, 186 (pp. 359–361, 364).

160. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Docs. 184, 186 (pp. 360, 364).

the moment of unity," and he argued that the question of where to obtain "reasonable military resources to make this security guarantee to East Germany's territory credible" was "a secondary issue to which a reasonable answer would be found."¹⁶¹ Four days later, the Federal Security Council (Bundessicherheitsrat) confirmed that, in order to make credible the extension of NATO's defense obligation in the GDR, some kind of Bundeswehr presence (even during the transitional phase) would have to be established. From early April the chancellor was thus fully in line with the U.S. position.¹⁶²

Although West German officials from the chancellor downward embraced Kohl's position, Genscher stayed publicly silent, as he had since the WEU incident.¹⁶³ Behind closed doors however, Genscher did not settle easily into Kohl's fold. At a meeting with U.S. senators on 4 April, he still talked about the non-extension of NATO's defense territory eastward.¹⁶⁴ The British noted that Kastrup was maneuvering too. At a political directors' meeting on 10 April he refused to endorse the Anglo-American description of the "agreed position" on a unified Germany's status in NATO. To be sure, Kastrup admitted that Kohl was in line with the Anglo-American tandem. But Kastrup claimed that the future status of the former GDR and the deployment of nuclear and conventional forces on German soil were still being considered in the coalition. Pressed hard, he explained in a more conciliatory manner that what mattered above all was securing Soviet consent to German membership in NATO.¹⁶⁵

Suspicious over Genscher and the AA persisted, and they resurfaced in the context of Shevardnadze's "decoupling proposal" of 5 May suggesting that external unification negotiations be pursued at a much slower pace and separately from the internal processes.¹⁶⁶ U.S. and British officials now feared that if this represented a price for granting German unity, Genscher might go for it.¹⁶⁷ To everyone's relief he did not. Despite Genscher's desire to achieve a speedy and peaceful wrapping up of all aspects of unification (approaching to his vision), he proved a loyal Western ally. Moreover, he reassured everyone

161. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 187, pp. 365–366.

162. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 184, p. 360; and Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 233.

163. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 233.

164. "Vermerk (unreadable signature) Betr: Besuch BM in Washington 4.–6.4.1990," 5 April 1990, in PAAA, 178.928E.

165. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 192, p. 376; Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, p. 6; and Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 233.

166. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, p. 248.

167. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Docs. 197 (pp. 386–387), 201 (pp. 392–393).

that Shevardnadze's comments were window dressing and a form of international posturing to fend off political opponents at home.¹⁶⁸ In reality, the Soviet Union—wanting to be seen as a partner of the West and to benefit from economic aid—had few levers left.¹⁶⁹ Soviet leaders felt increasingly short of options, leading ultimately—as Kohl had predicted four months earlier—to Gorbachev's consent at the Washington superpower summit on 31 May–1 June 1990 to having Germany freely choose its own alliances.¹⁷⁰

From then on, all efforts seemed to move toward concluding German unification. Soviet leaders knew that all-German NATO membership could no longer be avoided, even if they held on to Warsaw Pact realities and possibly perhaps even Genscher's words. Genscher, too, knew that German developments had far outpaced the wider European CSCE process and that the latter's future direction looked quite uncertain and would most certainly be preceded by Germany's unification. Pragmatism and realpolitik demanded bargaining with Moscow over the price tag and the details of all-German NATO membership, and this finally bought Genscher and Kohl together.

The Soviet Union's turnaround in Germany's NATO membership and being genuinely willing to work out the details of the transitional phase came at the Soviet–West German summit in the USSR's Caucasus mountains after NATO's "London Declaration" on 6 July. The declaration, both Gorbachev and Shevardnadze later claimed, was a critical catalyst for Soviet acceptance of German unity within the alliance and for the two men's ability to override domestic political opposition by presenting the new German realities as part of the transformation of an alliance that had ceased being an enemy of the USSR.¹⁷¹ In London, NATO leaders had revised the alliance's military strategy and declared that the Soviet Union was no longer a threat. They also pledged never to use force first and proposed a nonaggression pact with Warsaw Pact members. They invited all Warsaw Pact countries to send diplomatic liaison missions to NATO, a process designed to start opening informal channels that might lead to a closer association of some kind—but with eventual outcomes left for the future. At this stage East European membership in NATO was neither being offered nor being sought.¹⁷²

At the summit with Kohl, Gorbachev still referred to the non-extension of "NATO military structures," but the phrase was not accepted by the West Ger-

168. Kiessler und Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch*, pp. 124–130; and Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, pp. 250–254.

169. See Spohr Readman, *Germany*, pp. 16–18.

170. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 279–285; and Sarotte, 1989, p. 167.

171. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, p. 135.

172. See Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 11–17.

mans. Nevertheless the expansion of NATO's military structures was to remain fairly restricted as part of the agreed "special military status" for the GDR: only non-NATO Bundeswehr troops and territorial defense forces would be sent to former East German territory while Soviet troops remained in situ. German NATO troops would not move in until after the Soviet forces had withdrawn, and the German forces would not be equipped with nuclear weapons.¹⁷³

These results of the talks plus more German cash (as bargained for by Soviet leaders) paved the way for the September signing of the 2+4 Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany.¹⁷⁴ The first part of the treaty's Article 5 defining the "special military status" of former GDR territory stipulates what had been agreed to in the Caucasus for the transitional period up to 1994. The second part, with stipulations for the post-1994 period, changed somewhat because of Western allies' concerns: it held that after Soviet withdrawal the only soldiers ordinarily permitted in eastern Germany would be from German units, including units assigned to NATO, but that the scope for future NATO military activity by non-German NATO troops on GDR soil (i.e., what constituted such forces' so called deployments as opposed to "stationing") was to be left to the Germans to interpret, rather than categorically forbidden.¹⁷⁵

These restrictions settled the disposition of German security issues once and for all. The treaty contained no provisions barring other Warsaw Pact countries from eventually pursuing membership in NATO (the subject was not even broached). Genscher on a few occasions had implicitly and explicitly touched on NATO delimitation from Eastern Europe (beyond the GDR), largely as part of his promotion of the CSCE as an institutional process that he hoped would supersede both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But as the feasibility of these pan-European ideas faded, Genscher, too, gave up on the grandiose schemes and began to pursue the Germany-only focused NATO policy, using language in line with Kohl's. Hence, it is not surprising that the unification treaty included nothing on the shape of Europe's wider security structures.

Net Evaluation

In the late 1990s scholars opposing NATO's eastern enlargement and denouncing it as a U.S.-led decision aligned themselves with claims by Russian

173. DESE, Doc. 350, p. 1,345; and DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 218, pp. 434–435.

174. On the economic bargaining that led to additional German payments to the USSR, see, for example, Stephan G. Bierling, *Wirtschaftshilfe für Moskau* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), pp. 71–100, 332–333. See also Sarotte, 1989, pp. 186–193.

175. DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, Doc. 237, p. 466. See also Rödder, *Deutschland*, p. 271.

political commentators and former Soviet officials in regard to broken Western promises: namely, that “top-level assurances” had been offered during the German reunification process by the United States that NATO would not be expanded into Eastern Europe and that a “non-aligned buffer zone between NATO’s eastern border and Russia” would be ensured.¹⁷⁶ Contemporary Russian-Western relations and NATO’s post-Cold War politics thus became entangled with the history of German unification diplomacy, the interpretation of which became a “weapon” in contemporary memory politics. Did the West really deceive Soviet leaders by making pledges in early 1990 that it had no intention of upholding?

At the beginning of this article, I set out to explore whether the historical evidence supports the claims that NATO’s eastern movement beyond Germany was prohibited by promises made in the winter of 1990 and, if so, how and why these promises came to be broken. If, however, no binding pledges on NATO’s territorial limitation were in fact made, then my next task was to ask why a perception to the contrary had arisen, leading to such strong public expressions of a deep sense of “betrayal.”

Using a new combination of declassified materials, my research supports Oldenburg’s, Kramer’s, and Sarotte’s earlier findings that no legally binding pledges of any sort were ever made to Soviet leaders by any Western policymaker either in the winter of 1990 or at any later point to foreclose NATO membership for East European countries (or even for former Soviet republics). With regard to Germany, binding assurances on the newly unified state’s security arrangements via NATO were not codified in the 2+4 treaty until September 1990. The “costs” (i.e., German “guaranteed payments”) associated with the “GDR’s special military status” and Soviet troop withdrawal were laid out in four bilateral German-Soviet treaties signed in the immediate aftermath of German unification. None of the treaties included any mention of NATO that went beyond German territory. If no *de jure* promises on NATO’s future membership and size were made, then there was nothing that subsequently could be judged as having been “betrayed.” Whether NATO enlargement decisions *per se* should be seen as wise moves, with the alliance exporting and fostering stability, or as foolish and deeply contested moves in their provocation of Russia and their impact on Russian-Western relations, is an issue I am not taking up here.

The fact that no binding commitment or pledge was ever offered does not deny that during the unification negotiations key U.S. and West German political actors—in particular Baker, Genscher, and Kohl—did make com-

176. MccGwire, “NATO Expansion,” p. 1,285.

ments to Soviet officials that the might have been interpreted as more far-reaching and thus perhaps more consequential in terms of Soviet perceptions than has so far been acknowledged. In February 1990, with a focus on the German context alone, Baker, following his understanding of Genscher's Tutzung formula, spoke about the "non-extension of NATO jurisdiction." Kohl likewise referred to the "non-extension of NATO territory" (or non-extension of "NATO's sphere of activity" or "NATO structures and units") beyond the FRG. Genscher, in his talks with Hurd, made suggestions that NATO's territorial non-extension was to apply "*more generally*" (to Eastern Europe), and in his meeting with Shevardnadze he also hinted at this, albeit only indirectly. As the West sought to gain Soviet consent to intra-German unification, the use of language may possibly have created the impression that a spirit of Western concession-making existed, possibly with NATO as part of a unification deal. On 10 February, after Baker and Kohl had met with Gorbachev, Kohl managed to get from Gorbachev explicit approval of internal German unification processes. But Gorbachev's willingness to move ahead on the issue was due less to the Western leaders' statements regarding Germany and NATO than to a position change that had already occurred within Gorbachev's innermost circle in late January on the basis of the realization that unification as such had become effectively unstoppable.¹⁷⁷ But if Gorbachev's consent to unity was less of a concession and less the result of Baker's, Kohl's, and Genscher's statements in rapid succession than Sarotte has implied, the way the statements were phrased and the contexts in which they were offered did help to mollify Soviet leaders and calm their nerves, ensuring smoother diplomacy.

After the first public success, Baker and soon Kohl from mid-February onward were to align with Bush's position on German security issues. This involved a linguistic shift from the non-extension of NATO or NATO's jurisdiction eastward to the idea that GDR territory would be given a "special military status." With this shift in rhetoric, politics changed, too, because the discussions about the external aspects of German unification (including the issue of security arrangements) increasingly concentrated on Germany alone. The treatment of the question of Germany's future as part of the wider question of Europe's future security architecture disappeared, just as the limitation of NATO's territory mentioned in the early February language had vanished.

If Kohl, soon after Baker, went along with Bush's line and began to think about the uses and application of checkbook diplomacy to sweeten the

177. This view of Moscow's position change is also suggested by Kohl (who has now seen the Soviet records) in his *Vom Mauerfall zur Wiedervereinigung: Meine Erinnerungen* (Munich: Knauer, 2009), p. 190; and by Rödger, *Deutschland*, pp. 195–197.

“Germany in NATO” pill for the Soviet Union, Genscher remained the odd man out. In principle he accepted and even promoted the NATO security option for unified Germany in the short term, but he remained wedded throughout March and into April to his pan-European vision. For some, this stance raised questions about his loyalty to the West. Genscher hoped that an evolving CSCE would ultimately absorb and thus allow for the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in a post-Cold War world in which the East-West divide would be truly overcome. This visionary outlook may mean that his allusions, in his meeting with Hurd, to the foreclosure of NATO’s enlargement *beyond* German soil to other Warsaw Pact countries were not meant to undercut the East Europeans’ potential desires. He genuinely believed in his all-European vision, which he thought would benefit Germany’s eastern neighbors. But the problem was that over time this option was fading. Moreover, had the East Europeans known about Genscher’s musings, which went over their heads and potentially foreclosed future security options, they undoubtedly would have resented them.

Genscher’s comments were not intended as mere tactical window-dressing designed to extract concessions from the Soviet Union on the basis of false promises and with an agenda of ultimately seeking the expansion of NATO to the East. Visionary pursuits and mollifying tactics surely went together. But in realpolitik terms, and with a deep loyalty to a Germany anchored in the West and an abhorrence of any suggestion of “*Schaukelpolitik*,” Genscher found that his vision was failing to yield tangible results by the spring and summer of 1990. As the CSCE looked less and less likely to evolve in the ways he desired, as the NATO option became in the short term ever more politically realistic and achievable for the Germans, and as Soviet leverage went into steep decline, Genscher adapted to the changing realities and began to support Kohl (and Bush). He did not simply act like a master diplomat with a mix of personal vision and pragmatism; his actions and motivations were equally affected by coalition politics, election tactics, and international opportunity structures.

The display of such different viewpoints and strategies by Western actors during the intense and extremely rapidly evolving unification negotiations must have created certain Soviet perceptions and raised questions about Western intentions, possibly tempting Soviet leaders to lean toward Genscher’s visions, which perhaps seemed most congruent with their own desires. However, they were well aware that Genscher represented only one view, and it would be foolhardy to argue that a multi-pronged Western approach, fostering transnational institutional and personal alliances, was a consciously chosen political tool to mislead Soviet officials about real Western aims. Within

the Soviet Union itself, different protagonists also presented different perspectives. Some of these actors may have been pursuing their own policies, but others may have been trying to sow rifts within NATO.

To be sure, Soviet leaders were—as Kohl had predicted at Camp David—increasingly outmaneuvered, especially by Kohl and Bush with their increasingly bold political action and less so by Genscher with his more cautious, defensive, and possibly more Soviet-friendly line. Still, neither course was taken in pursuit of a long-term NATO enlargement strategy or was intended to trumpet a Cold War victory. As the positions began to merge, they merely represented Western levers for achieving rapid German unity on Western terms. All-German NATO membership was the one aspect that every relevant leader had started to focus on by the summer. They were not focusing on whether a newly shaped NATO could later extend further toward the USSR (Russia). A united Germany in NATO was not a preconceived stepping stone for later enlargements, though by this point Western officials presumably saw advantages in not *legally* prohibiting future steps.

The Russians have with hindsight presented a supposedly unified Soviet position—that of having been betrayed in February. But if no *de jure* pledges were made, no pledges could have been broken or “betrayed.” The numerous comments that were made—regardless of whether they were tactical or more serious or perhaps visionary and far-reaching—were part of a negotiating process. The process served less as a real extractor of concessions than some historians have claimed. Gorbachev initially looked at the “Germany in NATO” issue as one that he hoped could still be avoided altogether. Believing that time was on his side and that he could control the unification process and with it the future European geopolitical order, he never engaged with the “assurances” in any meaningful manner. It was not that he was too naïve, or that he lacked the wisdom and determination to pin down Western leaders when he made deals as Sarotte has suggested. Fixated on the German problem, Gorbachev’s own thinking apparently did not go beyond asking for German neutrality. This and the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact were Soviet maximum goals. Seeking legally binding assurances about a future boundary or imaginary eastern red line of NATO was not a Soviet objective. Gorbachev showed no interest in such matters. During the Washington and Caucasus summits, as well as during the 2+4 ratification process, the question of Eastern Europe’s future security arrangements in a NATO context was not even raised.

These observations are important because they show that the story is less one of actions by the West than of inaction by Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders. All of the protagonists had to deal with a dynamic situation in which

developments seemed to be speeding up. By the late summer of 1990, Moscow no longer viewed NATO in a hostile fashion. An air of idealism about a more peaceful world and more harmonious East-West relations prevailed, and this sense of cooperation increased after the international community, and specifically Moscow and Washington, began to shift their attention to the crisis caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. This helps explain why a similarly consensual and ultimately passive Soviet position also emerged for late 1990 and 1991. Soviet leaders consented to the CSCE's Charter of Paris of November 1990, which stipulated that the Central and Eastern Europeans (like the Germans before) could choose their own alliances.¹⁷⁸ By default this made NATO an option, particularly after the Warsaw Pact was disbanded on 1 July 1991 and uncertainty grew about political stability in the USSR. There was no talk then about broken Western promises. Moreover, leaders in Moscow (both Gorbachev and his political rival, Russian President Boris Yeltsin) never demanded that the Baltic countries—during their push to secede and reclaim their independence in August 1991—sign away the prospect of joining NATO in the future. The future shape of the alliance was simply not a great worry at the time either to Soviet or to Russian leaders, and indeed not to the Baltic countries themselves, all of which—given the political circumstances—initially looked to the “Finnish solution” as the most likely security option.¹⁷⁹ In sum, Soviet leaders were not a forceful *demandeur* of legally binding promises on NATO's delimitation because their priorities and immediate concerns lay elsewhere.

If NATO enlargement was not precluded in the context of German unification diplomacy and its immediate aftermath, what about the suggestion that the achievement of the united German state in NATO was a precedent-setting enlargement of the alliance? NATO did move eastward with Germany's absorption of the GDR and its enlarged *Staatsgebiet*. But the number of members stayed the same, and the circumstances of how this territorial “enlargement” of the alliance came about were unique. Hence, one cannot speak of enlargement in the classic sense.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, events in 1990 were not accompanied by a typical enlargement discourse. NATO and its nature, mission, and role surely underwent changes in 1990 and 1991, but neither the alliance

178. The “Charter of Paris for a New Europe: A New Era of Democracy, Peace, and Unity” was signed in Paris on 21 November 1990 by the CSCE member-states.

179. See Edijs Bošs, “Aligning with the Unipole: Alliance Policies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 1988–1998,” Ph.D. Diss., University of Cambridge, 2010, pp. 52–64. See also, for example, “Das Imperium ist nicht zu retten,” *Der Spiegel*, No. 15 (9 April 1990), pp. 17–19.

180. See “Arbeitspapier: Rechtliche Aspekte in Bezug auf NATO Vertrag bei Herstellung der Deutschen Einheit, gez. Eitel,” 19 March 1990, in PAAA, 198.447E.

nor its key members gave any indication that as soon as the German question had been resolved NATO would go on an "expansionist" drive. Nor at this point were Eastern European countries queued up to knock on the alliance's door.¹⁸¹ Instead, a changed NATO was initially seen as part of the solution of overcoming the East-West antagonism, based on the assumption that the USSR would somehow stay intact. In 1990, nobody in the West counted on the Soviet Union's disappearance by the end of 1991. Achieving a unified Germany in NATO was thus not a predetermined precursor to future enlargement rounds. The diplomacy of German unification, including the resolution of Germany's security arrangements (which ultimately also led to NATO's transformation), was one thing; the story of Eastern European states later joining NATO was quite another.

As I have explained in much greater depth elsewhere, the violent breakup of Yugoslavia exposed the institutional weakness of European organizations (the European Union, WEU, and CSCE/Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), causing NATO as an international actor to emerge in a new light. These unforeseen events and the changing political climate and circumstances from 1991 to 1994 caused NATO increasingly to be seen as a desirable security option for Central and Eastern Europeans. In turn, U.S. officials, after initially opposing enlargement into Eastern Europe, began by 1994 to look at NATO as a vehicle for stabilizing southeastern Europe. Given this evolution, we must avoid rewriting history and with hindsight creating a linear development from the maneuvering of unification diplomacy to an imperialist NATO drive to the east. German unification, in the way it happened, ensured NATO's survival and transformation. But NATO as the shaper of Europe's security architecture became relevant only after 1993, and enlargement was driven mainly by Germany not by the United States, contrary to what the later anti-NATO claimants' undertone suggests.¹⁸²

As the 1990s unfolded, Russian perceptions of having been betrayed and squashed by NATO and the United States (leading effectively to the creation of a late twentieth-century "stab in the back" legend) stemmed from a feeling of having strategically lost out after the collapse of the USSR and the ending of the Cold War. More recently, Russian memory politics and bitterness have been tied to the perception of NATO as a U.S. instrument of power projection. If we take the Baltic case, we can see how this perception worked for both sides in the story of NATO enlargement. In the early 1990s, during the Russian-Western honeymoon period, the European Union in particular (but

181. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, pp. 6–17.

182. See Spohr Readman, *Germany*, pp. 135–142.

also NATO) were seen as the “institutional West” and as organizations whose membership would provide prosperity and stability. But by the late 1990s, as Moscow’s “near-abroad” rhetoric intensified and hostility toward the West began to grow, the Baltic governments increasingly turned to the United States for security, with NATO seen largely as Washington’s prolonged European arm.¹⁸³ The memory politics over NATO’s enlargements to the east signal not an interest in uncovering what really happened in 1990 and beyond but an effort by Russian officials to use history to legitimize current political positions.

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183. See *ibid.*, pp. 180–195; and Boss, *Aligning with the Unipole*, pp. 191–196.