

DISSOLUTION

THE CRISIS OF COMMUNISM
AND THE END OF EAST GERMANY

Charles S. Maier

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

DD289

M34

1997

C. 2



Copyright © 1997 by Princeton University Press
Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, Chichester, West Sussex

All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Maier, Charles S.

Dissolution : The crisis of Communism and the end of
East Germany / Charles S. Maier.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-691-07879-3 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Germany (East)—Politics and government—1989–1990.
2. Communism—Germany (East). 3. Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands.
4. Germany—History—Unification, 1990. 5. Opposition (Political science)—

Germany (East). I. Title.

DD289.M34 1997 943.1087'8—dc21 96-39995 CIP

This book has been composed in Berkeley with Benguiat Display

Princeton University Press books are printed on acid-free paper and meet the
guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production

Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources

Printed in the United States of America

by Princeton Academic Press

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

FOR PAULINE

writer took a train from Prague to Dresden two days later. Calculated in dollars but purchased in depreciated crowns, the first-class Czech rail ticket cost less than the German taxi, its meter now ticking away in deutsche marks, from the Dresden train station to the hotel a kilometer away. East Germans had landed in the capacious monetary arms of their once and future countrymen—but their economic difficulties had hardly ended. The now expensive Dresden taxi driver would not face competition from the cabbie in Stuttgart or London, but the Leipzig computer firm or the Rostock shipyard was no longer shielded.

2 + 4 = 1: THE DIPLOMACY OF UNIFICATION

East Germans had rarely made their own history, but they had often had a larger role in its construction than Western onlookers imagined. What role, though, could they play in the final euthanasia of their republic? The East German government had far less influence than it hoped. The new officials of the GDR initially expected that their reform course would guarantee their status vis-à-vis their West German counterparts. In fact the leadership continued to be marginalized between November 1989 and the summer of 1990. The opening of the Wall immediately reduced one resource for bargaining that the GDR regime still held. After all, its major asset vis-à-vis the Federal Republic had been the capacity to open and close the spigot of movement and human rights more generally. But if the East German regime faded into fecklessness, the GDR's populace as a whole, if mobilized in the streets, as again in January, or at the polls in mid-March, could still retain a major collective influence.

Two issues proved critical between autumn 1989 and summer 1990. The first was substantive and involved the final lodging of a united Germany within the North Atlantic alliance; if the West and the West Germans insisted on continued German adherence to NATO, the Soviets might still choose to exert a veto. The second issue was procedural and involved the very pace of the fusion. Hesitations about German unification that might be harbored by GDR residents, or by non-Germans, were expressed coyly in terms of tempo. Reluctant participants or onlookers could not decently deny German self-determination outright—it had been inscribed as a goal in Western declarations ever since the war—but they might contest the speed of the process. Unable to say “stop,” they might plead “slow down.” Would

not a rush to unification upset the delicate European order and destabilize the relations on a continent where both sides had made a fetish of stability? Between a stately andante of gradual confederation and an impetuous allegro, so the reluctant observers argued, the stake was the continued prospect for European security. *Takt* and tact, tempo and prudence must hang together. The very preoccupation with tempo, however, provided the East German crowds with a capacity for collective agency that their fading regime was losing. Mass migration to the West or further demonstrations in the East would signal to Kohl and to the non-German powers that progress must continue. Demonstrations could force the process of negotiations until elections confirmed popular aspirations. The unwillingness of any outside power to deny ultimate unification allowed popular mobilization to render the flow of history less viscous. As Chancellor Kohl was to tell CDU delegates convening in West Berlin in mid-December, “The developments in the GDR will be shaped by the people there; they can't be planned at the green baize table or according to a date book.”⁶³

As early as November 20, the Leipzig demonstrators had chanted: “We are one people,” not just “We are the people.” Despite the suspicion of intellectuals affiliated with the civic movements, the slogan did not emanate from opportunistic late-comers to the popular upheaval or nationalists crossing from the West. Surveys of 2,000 demonstrators revealed by mid-December that a third were strongly for unity, another third more for it than against. Of the demonstrators on December 11, half had participated seven times, that is at least since late October; indeed 30 percent claimed to have been at the church prayers for peace before October 9. About 85 percent were Leipzig residents, and most were workers or white-collar employees. A third were women. Although Leipzig was a university town, student participation ranged only from 4 to 17 percent in December: the SED, whose members tended to remain at home, effectively constrained protest from student ranks. Those on the streets, in short, were committed and mature members of the local workforce. Until the emerging political parties took up campaigning at the marches in early 1990, the crowds and their slogans expressed generally held aspirations—and these became increasingly oriented toward unification. For the Leipzig historian Hartmut Zwahr, this aspiration was neither surprising nor undesirable: the crowd's national aspiration emerged naturally, almost archaically, and to many intellectuals, West as well as East, even embarrassingly from the deprivation of national and democratic rights that this stolid citizenry had hitherto en-

dured. "Before them hovered a vision of the nation-state that Europe, perhaps no longer needed and which, despite the division of Germany, the normal change of generations seemed to have removed from view in West Germany."⁶⁴ "Germany: united fatherland": the shout thus had its logic—but also its echoes. "German unity will come, earlier than anyone presumed," wrote Rolf Schneider in *Der Spiegel*, now accessible, like all the West German media, to the East German intelligentsia, "It will come and many Germans are themselves uncomfortable, justifiably and for good historical reasons."⁶⁵

Indeed each of the major nations concerned with the upheaval in Central Europe saw the potential for unification immediately even if their leaders talked in terms of continuity and reform. After the opening of the Wall, West Germans hastened to a public meeting before West Berlin's Schöneberg City Hall, summoned by Mayor Walter Momper, who, ten days earlier, had predicted along with so many others, a separate and democratic GDR. Willy Brandt heralded the end of the "unnatural division" of Germany and promised that "what belongs together will grow together." Chancellor Kohl cut short his visit in Warsaw and hopped an American plane in Hamburg to get to a Berlin that was not yet accessible to German carriers. Germans were moved, the Soviets cautious. Gorbachev urged Kohl to avoid precipitating events and to help avert "chaos." The chancellor thanked Gorbachev in his remarks and praised their personal relationship, demanded the right of self-determination for all Europeans and Germans, and argued for "thoughtful step-by-step" advance.⁶⁶ Before a larger spontaneous crowd at the Gedächtniskirche, he responded more freely to the cheers: "A free German fatherland lives. A free, united Europe lives." To the press conference in Bonn the next day he insisted that the East Germans must decide what they wanted, but "I have no doubt what they want. There can be no doubt that the Germans want the unity of their nation." His remarks reconfirmed the linkage between united Germany and a European commitment that he had already emphasized to the Bundestag as the premise of his diplomacy on the day before the Wall opened: "We are no wanderers between East and West, and we have learned from the history of this century. Reunification and integration with the West, German policy and European policy, are like two sides of the same medal."⁶⁷

Of the non-German powers the United States was most prepared to welcome unification. Certainly the Bush administration reacted to the dramatic events in Berlin with proper caution. Secretary of State James Baker told Genscher that unrestricted travel was not unification; and the president said

that he did not want to gloat to the Russians—he was not an emotional kind of guy, he told reporters.⁶⁸ Still, the American government would see unification as the reward for steadfast resolution, and not just as a frightening development to be delayed as long as possible. Indeed Americans had continued to believe in eventual unification in a way that even Germans had largely ceased to do: as State Department official Rozanne Ridgway commented in March 1989, unification was "the subject that all Americans are interested in and no German cares about."⁶⁹ The Republican Party in the postwar era had traditionally been more moved by the need to draw upon German strength and solidity in the NATO framework than it had over any lingering memories of Germany's prior aggressions. If one asked "middle-American" travelers on a flight back from European vacation, they thought of Germans as the non-English-speaking Europeans most similar to themselves. No overtones of Henry Jamesian complexity shadowed the German experience most Americans had enjoyed. U.S. visitors liked the sociability of beer drinking; the Germans were friendly to students; they would not overcharge tourists as Latin peoples allegedly might; they were clean; they did not have the French hang-ups about insisting on their language; the cities were physically spiffy and not so large as to feel threatening. To be sure, the left of the Democratic Party, intellectuals, academics, and most adults of Jewish background had not mentally transmuted Auschwitz into Colonel Klink's layabout Stalag. They had longer historical memories and some, though certainly not all, might fret about the potential danger of a reunified Germany; nonetheless, the American political class generally felt that Germany was a tried and true democracy.⁷⁰ They had been reassured by Helmut Schmidt and Chancellor Kohl's successful fight for upgraded missile deployment in the early 1980s against the significant left opposition within the Federal Republic. In the months of late 1989 and early 1990 American policy circles would support unification with frank enthusiasm, as if the child that they had helped to nurture to such robust stature was finally to make his own way in the world. Bush especially supported unification, in private and public. "Let Europe be whole and free," he told a German audience on June 1. "We seek self-determination for all of Germany and for Eastern Europe." "There is in some quarters a feeling," he recognized in a Montana press conference on September 18, "—well, a reunified Germany would be detrimental to the peace of Europe, of Western Europe some way; and I don't accept that at all, simply don't." Five weeks later he told R. W. Apple of the *New York Times*, "I don't share the concern that other countries have about a reunified Germany."⁷¹

An Agenda Emerges

Members of the National Security Council (NSC), including Robert Blackwill and his young staff who monitored European developments, shared President Bush's straightforward stance, which was so unencumbered by the shadows of the Third Reich. State Department advisers were more oriented toward signals from the European foreign offices, and contextualized German policy in a larger matrix of unavowed hesitations. When younger NSC staff members had suggested in early 1989 that in light of the rapidly disappearing sense of confrontation, it was time for the United States to raise again the issue of German and of continental division, State Department advisors threw cold water on the idea: "There is no more inflammatory and divisive issue, and it serves no U.S. interest for us to take the initiative to raise it."⁷² In the spring of 1989, from Moscow to Washington, there was a heightened expectancy that the fundamental issues of German and European division might soon emerge again: indicatively the *London Economist* raised the unification issue directly in its June 17 issue. "A common thread ran through every wish [for unification]: the wishers did not mean it. Or rather, they did not need to wonder whether they meant it; for it couldn't happen. This comfortable hypocrisy is no longer available."⁷³ Still, the *Economist* recognized that the outcome was up to the Russians. American policy makers were not prepared to make any serious effort to put unification on the agenda before the crisis of the GDR. Why should they, so long as Germans seemed to have adjourned the possibility with customary pieties?

Americans would support unification, of course, so long as the price was not an enforced German neutrality. Such a condition would mean that the Russians won as much as they lost and, cold war score cards aside, might also result in an unmoored and unpredictable giant. Unification within the NATO framework, however, would amount to a tremendous shift in the balance of power—unless the Soviet Union were no longer thinking in terms of a fundamental rivalry. Would the Soviets be willing to surrender a separate and friendly East Germany, this major acquisition of World War II? Would they be willing to do so if the new united Germany did not leave NATO? Even if Gorbachev believed, as he told the UN in December 1988, that the countries of East Europe had "freedom of choice," would his military establishment and more conservative Communists really accept a renunciation of the prize that had been so costly to attain four decades earlier?

And did freedom of choice really go so far as to encompass unification? This seemed to strain all credulity. After the event, various Soviet foreign-policy experts said that from early on during Gorbachev's tenure they began thinking about overcoming the "unnatural" division of Germany (see p. 221). But entertaining long-term prospects and overcoming the inertia of a massive and complex policy bureaucracy were different matters. When Kohl visited Moscow in October 1988 Gorbachev had not actively discouraged, but did not respond to Kohl's comment that all Germans had maintained an underlying community persisting despite the boundaries. In February 1989, the then head of the chancellery, Wolfgang Schäuble had declared that Bonn's policy must content itself with the safeguarding of communication between the peoples East and West. Still, Gorbachev could and would eventually wrench Soviet policy along with tremendous alacrity. The question was when and under what form he would allow unification to be put on the table. The East German protesters had demonstrated that they might determine the nature of rule within their country. Only the Soviet Union—as a signator of the still valid 1945 agreement and the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement, and as the possessor of decisive military force in East Germany—could finally determine whether the country stayed in being or ceased to exist. But it would not do so without weighing the transformation that had taken place, the dissolution of the East German frontier, and the evident shakiness of its government.

The clearest protests against unification emanated from London. Margaret Thatcher had cautioned against emotional reactions in a public speech on November 13 and told Bush that the West must make plain that "German reunification is not a matter to be addressed at present." Thatcher repeatedly argued in late fall that consolidation of democracy in the DDR and Eastern Europe was the top priority and that premature talk about reunification would endanger this possibility. Indeed it might undermine Gorbachev and his reforms. This reluctance would remain the continuing theme of British policy through the coming winter and even led—it was charged—to covert appeals to Gorbachev to stand firmer against the rush to unity.⁷⁴

Unless British foot-dragging had support in Paris, however, it would remain ineffective, as had every British effort to slow down the fate of Franco-German convergence since 1950. And the French were unwilling to come out openly against the momentum of events. Mitterrand would doubtless have been happy to have the process move far more slowly; although he publicly stated on November 3 that he did not fear unification, he warned against making Gorbachev insecure and stressed the priority of the Euro-

pean Community. Through early 1990, he would coyly encourage the Soviets to take the lead in opposing Germany in NATO. Still, the Elysée and French diplomacy were not prepared openly to block West German aspirations unless Gorbachev took a harsher line. Although French commentators occasionally fretted about the emergence of a Germany that would dominate their long-term partnership, the only alternative for Paris was to pretend to benevolent sponsorship of the emerging unified Germany, while reassuring the Soviets of their special concern. The result was a pattern of velleity, not a policy of veto. The Germans easily sensed Mitterrand's ambivalence, but Kohl, as an admirer of Adenauer, understood how critical it was for Germany's international status to have a supportive France at his flank. France and President Mitterrand in particular would require a reaffirmed commitment to the European Community, ultimately, as an implicit quid pro quo, support for the negotiations that yielded the Maastricht Treaty.⁷⁵

As Bonn statesmen understood, however, a general benevolent attitude toward unification could quickly sour if the Federal Republic appeared too brusque or clumsy. Suaveness was crucial; declarations of support for "Europe" must be heartfelt and constant. "Europe" would be the mantra—whether the Community for the West or the CSCE for the East—even while Germany was the goal. Kohl's task was to keep the Western allies from becoming upset at too quick a move toward unification. He must also respect East German wishes; indeed, what would finally emerge must have been unclear. Unification, after all, did not preclude a whole spectrum of intermediate confederal type agreements that a still existing East Germany could enter into. Most important for Kohl, though, was to reassure the Soviets that a new united Germany would not constitute a threat. All this meant that the Americans would welcome, the French would not veto, and the British could not veto unification: only Moscow could still impose a halfway solution. For that reason on November 16 the chancellor returned to a cautious line: the East Germans would decide their future for themselves. Visiting Washington, Foreign Minister Genscher even cut short President Bush's speculative question about the possibility of German reunification, which he declared was being talked about more outside his country than within it.⁷⁶

As of late November, then, different strategies were emerging: the British stressing East German liberalization as a goal to set against unification and the four powers as the framework to decide the issue; the Americans emphasizing that the future of Germany was a matter for the Germans to decide;

the West Germans flagging the new institutions to emerge from Ostpolitik and the Helsinki accords as the appropriate frame of reference; the French and Soviets waiting. Could opponents of a quick unification have mobilized a more effective opposition? The politics of memory was perhaps on their side; misgivings were vaporous and diffuse: editorials in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* said there was no pressure for unification. At the Christmas reception held by the Council on Foreign Relations, George Kennan pleaded to an audience of members, and to the children (my own included) they had brought to hear the legendary diplomat, against political unification: let there be cultural unity instead.

Against the backdrop of these multiple and confused voices, Chancellor Kohl moved to capture the initiative lest the hesitations of the Europeans enmesh him in a two-Germanies policy. As his policy adviser Horst Teltschik noted, the discussion at home and abroad was becoming more intense but also more diffuse. Even the friendly Americans' stress on self-determination and their assurance that they would accept unification (the message Genscher heard from Baker) remained nonspecific. But there was an encouraging intimation from the Soviets. Teltschik was informed by Nikolai Portugalov of the international department of the Soviet Central Committee that Moscow was speculating about all sorts of alternatives—"even the almost unthinkable"—though for the midterm it would prefer a possible confederation. Encouraged by this conversation, Teltschik urged Kohl to propose a scenario for unification. If he did not claim the lead, then the FDP or SPD might preempt the issue. (For domestic politics, the fact that the former was the CDU coalition partner made little difference: the chancellor and his own party needed to set the agenda.) On November 24 and 25 Teltschik's staff worked intensively on a draft statement that Kohl would present before the Bundestag in connection with the budget debate.⁷⁷ Three days later the chancellor set out a ten-point program that might encompass a treaty community and move toward a federal system within a unified Germany, while embedding any new framework within the European community and in an all-European framework. Along with the unprecedented length of his tenure—as of 1996, the most enduring since Bismarck's—the November 28 speech establishes Kohl's claim to historic achievement. It overshadowed the proposals of the enfeebled GDR regime without seeming overtly hostile; it established reunification as a goal toward which an uncertain public in the West, and a possibly yearning one in the East, might repair; it wrapped up these objectives in European Community and East-West rhetoric so no suspicion could exist that Kohl

wanted to rupture Ostpolitik. It accredited the Christian Democrats with a clear initiative in light of the following year's elections, placing the SPD in the position of having to support the speech or risk seeming antinational. And it captured the foreign policy momentum from his own FDP foreign minister, who, nonetheless, graciously told the chancellor: "That was a great speech, Helmut."⁷⁸

Kohl's speech had its risks. He felt that there could be no consultation with allies before announcing the ten-point program. Opinion abroad wavered. Mitterrand was angered—"Mais, il ne m'a rien dit! Rien dit!"—but ostensibly deferred to German self-determination.⁷⁹ The Socialist Party defense minister, Chévènement, more resolutely opposed, alluded to lack of Soviet and American sympathy. In fact Bush was nonchalant. And the Russians? Gorbachev came to his Malta shipboard meetings with Bush with no well-articulated plan for Germany, asking only that the movement of history not be rushed. Throughout the next weeks and months, foreign malaise would be signaled by complaints of haste and pleas for gradualism. No one supposedly wished to oppose the historical transformation outright, but they felt uneasy with the pace. But which tempo, the American policy architects asked themselves, would better guarantee a stable outcome? A gradual unification, or a rush to seize the moment before the onset of possible East German disillusion or West German concern about costs or rising resistance to Gorbachev in Moscow? Might not haste avert waste?

When the president and chancellor conversed at Brussels on December 3, Kohl told Bush that he did not want to press, but that time was working for federation (i.e., a degree of unity beyond mere confederation), although it might take five years. The United States, so Bush emphasized in his own address at Brussels, welcomed German unity if it were compatible with four points (which in fact were closer to seven): respect for self-determination; a continuing German commitment to NATO and the European Community and the remaining treaty rights of the Allied powers; a gradual pace; and confirmation of the European borders according to the Helsinki Final Act. The chancellor must have been pleased with the president's support: unification would become in effect an American and German project that would have to bypass the British and not make life difficult for the Soviets, who were welcome as partners "as all the countries of Europe to become part of a commonwealth of free nations." The Italians and British demurred indirectly from this endorsement, but the Dutch joined the American affirmation.⁸⁰

Momentum Stalls

The NATO powers might apparently close ranks, but Gorbachev was having second thoughts about the West German initiative. When Genscher came to Moscow in early December, the Soviet president criticized Kohl's ten-point plan and the chancellor's failure to inform Moscow about the initiative; "the talk was unpleasant for us both," he recalls. The Soviet president insisted that Modrow's state must remain independent and allegedly pledged to the Central Committee on December 9 that the Soviet Union would not abandon the DDR. Modrow, barely a week in power and just concluding the traumatized SED party congress of December 8 and 9, claimed to welcome Kohl's idea of a confederal "treaty community," but pleaded that all outside forces resist "offering up [East Germany] on the altar of reunification." Kohl himself sought to reassure the Soviet leader and wrote him on December 14 that the real source of instability in the GDR was not the West German agenda but the East German refusal to reform. Bonn, he promised, did not wish to take advantage of the present weakness and confusion of the East German state.⁸¹

Without a resolute signal from Gorbachev, those Soviet advisers hostile to unification could slow down the thrust toward unification. Preparing an address for the political committee of the European Parliament on December 19, Shevardnadze retreated from a forthright approval of unification in the face of resistance from Bondarenko at the European Department of the Foreign Ministry, Falin at the Central Committee, and then, just before his presentation, from Kvitsinsky at the Bonn embassy. German self-determination, Shevardnadze ended up declaring, was not to be the only consideration in the process ahead; any new "national formation" would have to be squared with the Helsinki process and the CSCE, which guaranteed the stability of existing states.⁸²

The uneasy reaction to events and the murky alternatives that Shevardnadze proposed did not fundamentally differ from the prevailing mood at year's end in Western Europe (indeed even briefly afflicting White House and State Department policy advisers). Each NATO ally of the Federal Republic had questions as to what outcome was desirable. Mitterrand, too, probed the feasibility of alternatives even if ultimately prepared to let the Germans prevail. In early December Thatcher perceived the French president to be as inwardly reluctant about unification as she was. He and his

foreign minister, Roland Dumas, would stress the inviolability of the German-Polish border as if to use the issue (so at least the chancellor's assistant felt) to retard unification. Let us go slow, Mitterrand pleaded to Bush when they walked the beach together at St. Martin. Strengthen the CSCE and the Helsinki process; enclose any emerging German federation in European structures.⁸³ These ideas were widely shared. Some association of East and West Germany certainly lay ahead, but might not confederation be less destabilizing than an outright fusion? Would not a long period of transition be desirable? Should not the Germans solicit the goodwill of all interested powers, West and East? Should the Germans not be respectful of or perhaps defer to "Europe" even in a matter of great concern for themselves?

Such hesitation, whether voiced explicitly by intellectuals and journalists or pondered *sotto voce* by public officials, could not be deemed surprising. The forty-five year framework of bipolar stability in Europe had after all kept the peace despite both side's dissatisfaction with its limits. A united Germany possessed a potential for dynamic disturbance, no matter how sincerely it professed peace and democracy. German division had turned out to be a major feature of the international order in which, after all, a wary peace had survived. Did continued peace require continued division? No issue in Europe could have been more suffused by memories or clouded by the aura of the past. Might "Europe" in fact emerge as an inertial force conjured up to frustrate the Germans?

Europe, as represented by the CSCE, was not the only recourse for those seeking to slow events; in January 1990 the Soviets appealed to the four powers, signers of the Yalta and Potsdam accords and the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971, as the custodians of Germany's international status. What the Germans did not want was any revival of residual claims on the part of the victors. For this reason the notion that any "peace conference" might ultimately seal the process of unification remained anathema in the months to come. After one embarrassing lapse, the Americans backed them up. In December Baker had reluctantly agreed to a Soviet request for the four powers' ambassadors to confer in Berlin for the first time since 1971. Despite the innocuous agenda, the conspicuous meeting at the site of the old Control Council piqued Genscher, who resented the evocation of the occupation status.⁸⁴ Still, there was no way around involving the four: they would have to be mobilized to avoid the more cumbersome process of giving every other possible player in East and West Europe a voice. No one quite saw the way ahead, however, at the end of the remarkable year, 1989.

The Process Resumed

It was the sudden erosion of credibility for the East German government in mid-January that impelled the major actors to overcome their hesitation. Once again, as in October and November, the crowds in East Germany exerted a decisive push on events. This time the demonstrators were angry and no longer waiting upon churchmen and intellectuals to articulate demands for "dialogue." Fury at the Modrow government's apparent reluctance to shut down internal security policing brought Berlin crowds rampaging at Stasi headquarters. As explained in chapter 4, Lothar de Maizière pulled the East German CDU out of the coalition, and the subsequent crisis ended only with the ministry further hobbled and elections moved up to March 18. Kohl had no interest in resuscitation. By late February he told Bush that the Modrow collapse had impelled him to accelerate the careful ten-point plan of just two months earlier.

American policy makers adjusted their assessments according to the process of decomposition they were watching in Central Europe. The NSC staff in late January became convinced anew that the time had come to move quickly toward unification—delay would encourage deals to neutralize Germany, whereas the Soviets, so the NSC urged, would now accept a rapid outcome. Baker's closest State Department advisers, Robert Zoellick and Dennis Ross—who served as head of the policy planning staff—were arriving at the same conviction: "we need to shift to a 'fast-track' unification sequence," they advised the secretary. Germans, however, would resent a four-power negotiation so long as the Soviets might veto a settlement between the Germans; hence their proposal to combine four-power negotiations with direct German-German talks once the March elections were held—a two-plus-four framework. Not all their colleagues thought this scenario feasible; the European bureau argued that four-power tutelage might alienate the Germans but, as Zoellick countered, exclusively intra-German negotiations might allow Moscow to pressure Bonn into accepting some degree of neutrality in return for unification. Moscow and the GDR were both proposing the removal of foreign forces from Germany; Bush remained convinced that it was in the United States' interest to maintain a substantial (if reduced) American military presence in Europe. (The potential dissolution of the Warsaw Pact did not change that incentive; indeed, it meant that the United States might maintain European forces without facing the same countervailing power it had for the past forty years.) The key was that Mos-

cow could play the spoiler, whether engaged in four-power negotiations or excluded. Bush decided that the simultaneous negotiations allowed for the more predictable outcomes for both force reduction and the continued viability of NATO.⁸⁵

Only the Soviets could have insisted on a different outcome—and they were not prepared to do so. In the very weeks when the Russian leader had to decide whether to use force in Lithuania, he had to review the German options as well. In fact, the Soviets made a fundamental decision against holding up events in late January, when Gorbachev bypassed conventional Politburo channels and convened his close advisers on Germany: his chief policy aide Chernyaev, Shevardnadze, Prime Minister Ryzhkov, Yakovlev and Falin, the two men responsible for the party's International Department, and several others. For four hours they debated Russian options. Chernyaev was most ruthless about the situation; there was no choice but to deal with Kohl. Modrow and the SED possessed no authority, Gysi's PDS did not really exist and had no future; the West German SPD was playing politics with the issue; only the chancellor was reliable and wanted to preserve a European dimension to his policies. Falin and his deputy, Fyodorev, supported by the reformer Yakovlev, looked to an SPD option. Gorbachev summarized the upshot: to establish a group of six to negotiate (the four occupation powers and the two Germanies) rather than convene a massive conference, to deal principally with Kohl but invite Modrow and Gysi to Moscow and keep lines open to the SPD.⁸⁶

When Modrow visited Moscow on January 30, Gorbachev nominally endorsed his concept for step-by-step unification, entitled, in the words of the GDR's national anthem, *Deutschland—einig Vaterland*. The East German premier announced it two days later, without bringing it to the Round Table and even before his government of national responsibility was formally confirmed by the Volkskammer. Inside East Germany, speakers from the civic movements and the Volkskammer criticized Modrow for pressing ahead with a plan for unity. In fact, he felt he had no choice: by late January he had time to experience the GDR's economic vulnerability and domestic political disintegration; his state could not retain its autonomy even within a larger confederation. Moreover, even Soviet support was in question. In view of the mass demonstrations against the Stasi, the continued exit of citizens, and the coalition crises of the previous weeks, staunch Soviet support would be crucial for lending Modrow sufficient credibility to negotiate as an equal in his upcoming talks with Chancellor Kohl. The Soviet "Germanists" likewise supported a firm Moscow stand on behalf of the GDR. But

although Gorbachev formally endorsed Modrow's initiative, Modrow took away the impression of a flagging commitment to the GDR. Kochemasov, tending the Russian embassy in East Berlin, chafed at his government's passivity and Gorbachev's vacillation: Modrow, he claimed, was inwardly disappointed and Moscow's lukewarm support would provide no buttress for the dissolving GDR. When the East German leader met the chancellor unofficially at the Davos conclave of economic leaders on February 3, Kohl was personally solicitous but did not develop or repeat earlier assurances of economic aid. For Kochemasov and Modrow, Gorbachev missed an important opportunity to slow down the rush toward unification in early February. On the other hand, Gorbachev, like Kohl, must have understood that the domestic basis of the East German regime had virtually evaporated. Even Modrow had admitted to the Soviet leader in his January 30 visit that the majority of the GDR population no longer supported the idea of the existence of two German states. "The arguments that we have used to date are just no longer effective." Not merely gradual confederation, but rapid merger loomed ahead.⁸⁷

Falin and Kochemasov offered no positive alternative, but their dismay with Gorbachev was not irrational, for he remained inconstant in a situation where only the Soviets could have propped up the continued existence of the DDR. "I am in complete despair," Chernyaev confided to his diary on March 3. "The state is falling apart and there is no new beginning in sight."⁸⁸ Where could the East Germans find support? The East German leadership received aid from Bonn, but largely to dissuade East Germans from migrating westward en masse, not to make the fading East German regime viable. The British and the French might have hesitations about a rush to unity, but they had no real leverage unless they convinced Washington that hesitation was justified. Margaret Thatcher was clearly opposed to the rapid pace, and her adviser Lord Ridley probably voiced her opinions (although he had to be removed for the price of his frankness) when he said Germany would dominate Europe and the French were acting as Kohl's lapdog. Thatcher's meeting with Mitterrand on January 20 yielded no concrete result. Only the Soviets might have put a stick in the spokes. Later in the spring Thatcher and Mitterrand would come close to encouraging their doing so.

The most obvious spokes to poke at were those concerning NATO. Was it plausible that Moscow would permit a confederal or unified Germany to adhere as a whole in NATO? Would a new unified Germany or even a continuing West Germany inside an all-German confederation be allowed to keep nuclear weapons on its soil? Might not the Soviets give way on unity

in order to extract neutralization and removal of foreign troops? Foreign Minister Genscher sought to address the issue of the alliance in his repeatedly reworked speech at the Protestant Academy of Tutzing on January 31: "German Unity in the European Framework." The site was auspicious, for Egon Bahr had defined the thrust of Ostpolitik at Tutzing as "change through rapprochement" two decades earlier. The speech was also important for Genscher's own delicate personal role in the unification process. Although he was continually in negotiations, stressing Germany's collaboration with its allies, he and his small Free Democratic Party ran the risk of being marginalized by the chancellor's initiatives in the progress of events. Loyal to Kohl, Genscher still fretted that the chancellor might miscalculate, whether through insensitivity about the Polish border, or supposedly by proposing a confederal alternative he believed already bypassed by events. Genscher was particularly sensitive if the four powers made any gesture of settling the German issue on their own. On the other hand, any effort at a revived peace conference or even a major CSCE gathering to negotiate unification would become a cumbersome source of delay and open up such issues as reparation. His own East German origins, moreover, made him respond to the momentum of events with genuine emotion, as was evident when he had the chance to return to Halle after thirty-seven years and speak in the market church that his family had sometimes attended and tell his East German audience that unity must be their decision.

Tutzing involved a more substantial address since it took up the NATO issue, but with some of the same ambiguities that had sometimes characterized his earlier policy. Bush's NSC staff read the speech as a proposal to run Europe's security frontier down the middle of a united Germany, which would remain nominally in NATO but unable to base NATO defense units in its eastern or ex-GDR region. Whatever German units would ultimately be garrisoned in the ex-GDR would then, presumably, have to be detached from the NATO command. Genscher himself—perhaps responding precisely to this interpretation—emphasizes that his major intent was to insist that the whole of united Germany must belong to the alliance, although the GDR territory might enjoy a separate status outside NATO's military structures. Ultimately, Genscher suggested, NATO and the Warsaw Pact might both work toward a cooperative relationship.⁸⁹

Genscher, his collaborator said, "moved in those weeks with the caution of a giant insect who cautiously feels out the environment with his antennae, ready to move back if he detects resistance, and then immediately to try his feelers in another place."⁹⁰ Genscher's assistant Frank Elbe, who pre-

ceded his boss to Washington, felt that Baker's aides, Zoellick and Ross, responded positively to his explanation of the Tutzing formula; in return they urged the emerging six-power (two plus four) format for negotiation on the German question. As Elbe escorted his boss from Dulles airport for a half-day's conference first with Baker and then with Bush on February 2, Genscher agreed as long as it was to be two plus four and not four plus two. Since the foreign secretary stressed a united Germany's commitment to NATO, the two American leaders proved happy enough with this formula. Indeed Baker let pass the proposed special status that Genscher envisaged for the GDR without objection.⁹¹ The White House staff remained wary, and so did its German counterparts in the chancellor's office. Kohl's personal adviser, Teltschik, was skeptical of two security regimes on one territory; nor did he want the FDP minister seizing the foreign policy initiative. The chancellery staff in Bonn, and the NSC staff in Washington each preferred a negotiation that tended to subordinate the other allies and alternative foreign-policy agencies at home. The State Department and the West German foreign minister, on the other hand, envisaged more European involvement, the elevation of CSCE, and the subordination of NATO; Mrs. Thatcher certainly cared about NATO and not CSCE but wanted Germany docile within it, and worried about the Anglo-American relationship. But this was idiosyncratic: the real question was whether the division of Europe would be overcome by an enlarged West Germany within NATO and patronized by the United States, or by a new somewhat vague and cross-bloc security arrangement. Only the Soviets could resolve this issue.

Wherein lay Russia's interest? Experts in the policy institutes envisaged great economic advantages from cooperation with a grateful united Germany.⁹² Old-line Communists, appalled at the bleeding away of Soviet power, could not conceive that Moscow benefited from facilitating German unification. Shevardnadze certainly did not share their visceral reaction, but he still wanted to limit German options. As the Western leaders began a series of trips to Moscow in early February, the Soviet foreign minister told Baker on February 7, that a united Germany would be a potentially nationalist and dangerous country unless neutralized and disarmed. Baker responded that Germany's future was more calculable if it remained within a NATO where U.S. forces guaranteed stability. Two plus four would facilitate this upshot; and NATO jurisdiction, as Genscher had proposed, could remain out of the territory currently comprising the GDR. Most surprising, Gorbachev said he shared Baker's reasoning although he preferred four plus two, whereas Baker insisted that two plus four placed German self-

determination, and not the old victors' alliance, at the center of the process. "We don't want to see a replay of Versailles, where the Germans were able to rearm themselves," the Russian leader told Baker, but he asked for time for decision.⁹³ Gorbachev had indicated the most flexible Soviet position to date, but Baker himself had to back off a bit. Rather than limit NATO's protective zone to the western portions of a unified Germany, his staff told him to include all Germany within the alliance sphere. What could be bargained for was to keep NATO troops from being based eastward in the territory of the current GDR—and German resources to pay for the downsizing of Russian power and hopefully the reconversion of a failing industrial base.

Ultimately Gorbachev must have thought there was little option on the German issue unless he was prepared to reverse glasnost and perestroika at home. The fate of Russian reform traditionally hung on its willingness or unwillingness to allow self-determination in its "near abroad." Consistency for perestroika hinged on self-determination for the Baltics and the satellites. Perhaps he felt all the heady freedom of a surfer on the crest of a rising wave: he could ride boldly and conspicuously or be churned under.

Wherein lay American interest? The European desk of the State Department remained closer to Shevardnadze or to the West Europeans' preference for gradualism and multilateral frameworks. The White House staff, however, wagered on Kohl and the record of German democracy. They believed that strong American support for unencumbered unification within NATO would assure a less disruptive united Germany than a neutralized uncommitted nation. Following their advice, Bush wrote Chancellor Kohl, as he and Genscher now made the flight to Moscow on February 10, that the United States would not let the Soviets use the four-power mechanism to neutralize or impede German unification. Go for it, the president wrote in effect, but make sure you remain in NATO. East Germany could enjoy, he wrote borrowing the phrase of Manfred Wörner, the German secretary-general of NATO, a special military status. Russian troops would go home; American ones would stay out.

Kohl exploited Washington's benevolence with alacrity. He told Gorbachev that united Germany would claim no eastern territory beyond the GDR and that he "could imagine" that NATO jurisdiction would not have to extend to GDR territory—a concept close to Genscher's Tutzing proposal of ten days earlier. The FRG was willing to assume East German economic obligations to the Soviet Union. To the delight of Kohl and Teltschik, Gorbachev apparently accepted the scenario and emphasized that the Soviets felt it was up to the Germans to decide on unification. Alliance status could

be firmed up in negotiations to come, the Soviet leader said; he understood, though, that German neutrality was unacceptable to the chancellor. "This is the breakthrough!" recorded Teltschik in his diary. "What a meeting!"⁹⁴

The Kohl-Gorbachev discussion indicated that the heads of government and their enthusiastic security advisers might outrace their painstaking and cautious foreign offices whether in the United States, the Soviet Union, or Germany. In each country diplomacy moved on parallel tracks, but more briskly in the executive offices: Teltschik and Kohl outlined a concept for unification more directly than Genscher; Gorbachev and Chernyyayev more boldly than Kvitsinsky and certainly the hostile Falin, and for a time in late spring with greater ease than even the usually cooperative Shevardnadze; Bush and the NSC pressed unity with fewer preoccupations than the European desk of the State Department. On closer scrutiny, however, the generalization needs refinement. On the German side, Genscher remained too authoritative a diplomat to be simply eclipsed, and he was hardly constrained by excessive caution, although he wanted to expedite unification by Soviet agreement and had never expected how much Gorbachev was prepared to concede. Neither did Secretary of State Baker allow himself to be boxed in by State Department professionals; he consistently demonstrated a capacity to place himself slightly ahead of the curve, to exploit the opportunity to envisage formulations already in the works but which he might nail down as his own. With his intuitive capacity to run before the wind, Baker adopted the two-plus-four formulation, floated originally by French Foreign Minister Jobert and advanced in Washington by his staff assistants, Zoellick and Ross. "Two plus four" had the formulaic virtue of promising to serve either as a brake or accelerator: stress the "two" and it gave the Germans the initiative; stress the "four" and it allowed France or Russia to slow down the process. Indeed, when first floated by Baker's staff, the NSC advisers believed it was becoming a formula for slowing down the Germans, not encouraging them.⁹⁵

Beyond all the chances for individual virtuosity and inventive formulation, one could perceive in these months the eclipse of policy-making apparatuses that had become the administrators of the cold war status quo. The foreign policy bureaucracies that had worked out all the mutual restraint that had made four decades of cold war bearable were being bypassed by a leadership that realized a burst of speed might yield decisive changes. This was the diplomacy of headiness; it partook of the same ebullience that had brought down the Wall. Did it have a danger? The German foreign minister believed it might. While Genscher demonstratively welcomed his

chancellor's announcement in Moscow on February 10, that Gorbachev had just agreed that the Germans must and could decide for themselves when and how to become a united nation, he remained preoccupied about the surrounding conditions. Developments would reveal, Genscher has written—even as he has put the firmest possible emphasis on his NATO loyalties—that a cautious procedure which signaled to the Soviets a concern for their security interests would be more fruitful than the “objectively correct but naked demand that ‘Germany must be a member of NATO.’” If that was what was desired, the Soviets must be reassured on the attendant issues they found so critical, including the exclusion of allied military forces from the territory of the former GDR. This last concession, which Baker himself had approved after his conversation with Genscher, was fraught with difficulty enough to produce the most serious rifts within the German government and potentially with the Americans. That my own government might create difficulties in the negotiations—so Genscher has claimed—“seemed impossible to me, but this bitter experience was not long in materializing.”⁹⁶

Resistance Again

CSCE foreign ministers assembled at Ottawa on February 11 to 13, ostensibly to talk about mutual troop reduction in Europe, but more urgently to confirm the two-plus-four procedure for negotiations. Ottawa, however, revealed the Allies' second thoughts as well as serious division between the Chancellery and the Foreign Office in Bonn. Teltschik hinted to Scowcroft in Washington that Kohl might not be in agreement with Genscher, and Bush asked Baker to have Genscher confirm his chancellor's support. Genscher was angry at what he deemed an effort to discredit him and derail the negotiations, and the situation had to be clarified with telephone calls to Kohl and then by Kohl to Washington. Was Genscher right to be suspicious? The NSC and presidential advisers believed that their German counterpart Teltschik had not behaved improperly, whereas Genscher was willing to make unnecessary concessions by excluding eastern Germany from NATO jurisdiction.⁹⁷ Genscher claims that his formulas allowed for the ambiguity needed to bring Moscow to agreement. The tension, rooted in diverse personal approaches, German political party rivalries, and the overlapping conduct of diplomacy, would persist, but never become disabling. Baker and Shevardnadze reached a compromise on Soviet forces outside

Russia and American forces in Central Europe. They would each have 195,000 in a central zone and the Americans could keep another 30,000 in Britain and Italy. Gorbachev could claim equality; Bush could claim he retained an American edge to compensate for the proximity of the Soviet troops based on Russian territory. Just as important Baker negotiated an announcement for a two-plus-four process: FRG and GDR foreign ministers would meet with the four powers to discuss the external aspects of unification and security. The lesser powers assembled at Ottawa were not happy but had little choice.

Nonetheless, the Ottawa decisions provoked a quick reaction as the Europeans above all worried how quickly they were being rushed along and as NATO allies asked for a widening of the discussions. Concerned with the unraveling of the two-plus-four agreement, Genscher refused to accommodate their concern: “You are not part of the game,” he insisted.⁹⁸ Bush himself publicly conceded that events had moved very quickly. The Soviets certainly felt uneasy about being pushed into a chess game, to cite Shevardnadze's metaphor, with five-minute time limits. Now they issued a Foreign Office pronouncement declaring that a united Germany could not claim NATO membership. The French, who had benevolently watched the unification process, reasserted their own importance but showed signs of doubt that they might continue their tutelary role with a powerful united Germany. Europe must take care of herself, Mitterrand said, but French officials were preoccupied that in fact France might have to do so without familiar American support. Mrs. Thatcher was happy to exploit French second thoughts and, warning that unified Germany would emerge more influential than Japan, she urged President Bush to make a deal that would let Russian troops stay in eastern Germany.

No onlookers were cheered by Chancellor Kohl's refusals in these weeks to endorse the East German-Polish border unconditionally as a frontier for united Germany. Kohl knew that he could not challenge the Oder-Neisse line, but he was not prepared to offend the conservative currents in the CDU and Bavarian CSU, which resented the loss of Silesia. He argued that only a united Germany could definitively confirm the new border, although East Germany had accepted its own frontier in a treaty with Poland in 1950, and Willy Brandt's 1970 treaty with Warsaw had ruled out any change by force of the East German border.

What role did American policy makers urge? They were preoccupied by both the NATO issue and the pitfalls that the two-plus-four process might entail. Our best documented account at this point is that left by Zelikow and

Rice, proud of their role in expediting unification that emerged and convinced all along that they might secure a Germany without restrictions on NATO participation.⁹⁹ In this respect, they agreed with the German chancellor's staff. Teltschik wanted to push his boss toward a stronger insistence on a united Germany's NATO role, and so too did the Ministry of Defense under Gerhard Stoltenberg of Schleswig-Holstein. Kohl, however, did not want a conspicuous disavowal of his foreign minister and he encouraged a joint ministerial declaration on February 19, which stipulated that neither NATO units nor non-NATO West German units would be moved into East German territory. The chancellor had his eyes on the upcoming East German elections. A public break with Genscher on which the Soviets would have to comment might well delay the momentum toward rapid unity and set back the CDU's electoral prospects as the advocates of quick unification and make the SPD's more neutralist stance appear more promising.

The White House and Chancellery staffs, however, both wanted to move beyond the halfway jurisdiction formula advanced by Genscher and never precisely amended by Baker. Press Kohl for a pledge, the NSC urged as the chancellor was about to come for talks to Camp David, to stay in NATO's military command and to include all German territory in the alliance's jurisdiction, even if some force restrictions in the East were conceded. Moscow might not like such a declaration, but Moscow was weak. So as not, moreover, to allow the Soviets more leverage, it was desirable to confine the writ of the "four" in the two-plus-four talks, while letting the German-German discussions forge ahead toward unity. The State Department agreed in part: two-plus-four, Zoellick and Baker advised the president should not be designed to take on substantive negotiations but to become a mechanism for finalizing the border and the end of residual four-power rights; the Germans themselves must decide their alliance and defense commitments. Still, State argued, the two-plus-four procedure must have enough jurisdiction so the Soviets do not make their own end run with Bonn.¹⁰⁰

Kohl was riding high at Camp David on February 24–25. He enjoyed the woodsy informality and appreciated the baseball cap he received, even if after the lengthened day of his transatlantic flight and important conversations he could not remain awake through the president's late-night movie. "Everyone is confused but me," he told the Americans, referring to the contending voices at home. Calm down about the Oder-Neisse line, he advised; it was not a serious question, and do not accept Poland's call to be included as a member of a two-plus-five parley. Germany had paid a lot of reparations to Poland, Israel, and individuals. He agreed with the Americans—but it

would have been hard to find a more pro-German partner!—to restrict the role of the four-power talks, which should get under way substantively only after the March 18 elections had demonstrated what Germans wanted and should wind up before the CSCE met in Paris in November. As for NATO, the chancellor understood NATO forces should not be moved forward into East German territory, but all of Germany would come under the NATO guarantee. Teltschik pressed for public clarification of this issue, and Baker agreed; Genscher was to be bypassed. The chancellor certainly wanted U.S. forces to remain in Europe, and the president wanted an end to the public musings about German neutrality. "We prevailed," he said, "and they didn't. We can't let the Soviets clutch victory from the jaws of defeat." Kohl agreed. "The time for games had passed." Let the Russians now name their real price tag for agreement.¹⁰¹

Germany's neighbors did not see the Polish border issue so cavalierly, but the issue was finally left behind. In his post-Camp David press conference, Kohl again refused to pledge acceptance of the frontier on behalf of the future united Germany, although Bush clearly stated he regarded the Oder-Neisse line as settled by mutual agreements. As international indignation heated up about the chancellor's reluctance to confirm what had long seemed to be FRG policy, Kohl tried to retreat, proposing to trade coordinated Bundestag and Volkskammer declarations in return for Polish renunciation of reparation claims against the Federal Republic and rights for the ethnic Germans still in Silesia (more of whom claimed this status all the time). The coupling of these issues seemed crude blackmail to most observers, including critics at home, and in a Bundestag declaration on March 8, Kohl did declare that Poland's right to live in secure borders would not be questioned by Germany now or in the future. As for the recent demand that Poland renounce any reparation claims, the Germans now accepted that the earlier Polish renunciation in its 1950 treaty with East Germany was binding for the future. When Polish premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki visited the White House on March 21 and 22, Bush promised to intervene privately with Kohl. Responding to the Polish premier's call for a border treaty to precede unification, the president explained that a treaty could not be written by a unified Germany that did not yet exist. But he did explain that the substance of a future recognition of the border might be inserted into West German and East German parliamentary declarations. Within a day Bush secured from Kohl agreement that the future treaty's confirmation of the German-Polish border would be cleared with Warsaw in advance. East German and West German legislatures formally declared their commitment to

the current border; and at the two-plus-four negotiations on July 17, the status quo was confirmed anew.¹⁰²

After a month of inflamed statements, the issue faded. Kohl and other Germans later claimed it was only an artifact of internal politics: faced with the multiple elections of 1990, the chancellor could not alienate the right wing of his coalition. Neither did he wish to give the nationalist Republikaner a talking point. For all his intense focus on achieving unification, the chancellor remained fundamentally attuned to German domestic politics. By the standards of Realpolitik his wager paid off; he could neutralize his own right wing without insuperably derailing the unification process. Despite the unease and temporary ill will, Bonn's hesitations on confirming the future frontier could have exerted a more serious impact only if Russia and Poland had been in closer alignment. But the Poles realized that, in terms of their economic future, it would be Germany that was critical.

Nonetheless, despite his self-professed interest in history, Kohl sometimes found it difficult to sense the echoes still resonating from the 1933–45 era. For him the Oder-Neisse border represented one of those postwar obligations that the Federal Republic must live with. He had no desire to alter the frontier and was prepared to consult with the Poles on any issue of relevance that arose out of unification. But he did not want to hold such discussions in Warsaw; “he had the impression,” so he unburdened himself to Mitterrand on March 14, “that every people’s feelings but the Germans’ were being taken into consideration. . . . Not only the spirit of the Poles, but of the Germans had to be taken into account.”¹⁰³ Having let out his anger, however, the chancellor could move on.

Modrow had returned to Moscow on March 5 and 6. The two governments resolved to intensify their economic collaboration and move toward trade based on world prices. Insofar as he trusted the Soviet leader, Modrow must have felt cheered by Soviet support. Gorbachev told Modrow that the West Germans could not simply stampede to unification. Reading the protocol of the meeting, one has the impression that the Soviet leader was not really measuring his words; there was a spontaneous reaction to his feeling foreclosed by the rush of events. Gorbachev had asked Bush—so he informed Modrow—that if a united Germany in NATO was no threat to peace, why might it not then join the Warsaw Pact. Moscow had also insisted that the process of unification proceed responsibly: “it could not be in the interests of the GDR, nor of the FRG, to let it become chaotic. The people of the GDR had their pride and dignity and the GDR’s achievements were well known to everyone. The FRG had to think carefully, not play

the bull in the china shop [Elefanten im Porzellanladen] and not become the hostage of political ambitions.”¹⁰⁴ For all his excited objections to the rash pace of events, however, Gorbachev did not suggest to Modrow that German unification was avoidable. “The experiences that the GDR had gained,” he said instead, “and the accomplishments of the Soviet-GDR relationship over the decades would have to be brought into and further developed in the relationship between united Germany and the Soviet Union. That could only happen in a process that proceeded by stages.” Again tempo was crucial. The East German leader came back from Moscow believing that Gorbachev meant well but was indecisive; in fact, Modrow’s conviction that Gorbachev did not understand the GDR’s economic plight, so Moscow’s ambassador Kochemasov felt, was one reason Modrow accepted the Currency Union.¹⁰⁵

Shevardnadze and then Gorbachev told the press that all-German membership in NATO would be unacceptable and that Kohl’s aspirations to achieve unity by means of Article 23 rather than 146 was also out of bounds. Veteran Russian diplomats felt that this stiffened stand had come too late. The Soviets were pressing for an early beginning to the two-plus-four procedure at the same time that State and NSC officials were holding detailed talks designed to circumscribe the two-plus-four agenda. According to the Americans, four-power rights over Berlin (which would have to be surrendered), German borders (which were already deemed inviolable), and German forces inside the GDR might be discussed in the two-plus-four format. But Germany’s NATO membership, the role of NATO nuclear weapons in the Federal Republic, the size of the Bundeswehr, and the recourse to article 23 were all decisions that were Germany’s own. The Russians did not attempt to force a broad discussion at the first preparatory meeting on March 14; from Washington’s point of view Paris and London were more troubling as London hoped a peace treaty might emerge from the negotiations.¹⁰⁶

With so many second thoughts being aired, the chancellor’s ebullient persona succumbed to doubt and pessimism. The tension of the electoral campaign was great. He enjoyed campaigning for his party’s Alliance for Germany in the GDR, but the polls still suggested an SPD plurality would overwhelm his East German allies. Kohl reaffirmed his preference for article 23, and at Cottbus near the Saxon border on March 13, he announced that his monetary union would allow the East Germans a one-for-one exchange against East marks that had no real objective value. But to Teltschik he talked of having to go home rebuffed. The stunning electoral victory of March 18, however, reinfused his energy, and he now envisaged reaching

agreement on unification by the fall, and completing the procedure in 1991. If every party was committed to the German right to self-determination, the elections suggested that it would be obstructive to block the outcome. Genscher now endorsed the chancellor's NATO position by dropping his earlier intimations that the East German territory might be partially exempted from NATO's security sphere, while Kohl moved to give the French a bon-bon by promising further collaboration on the political integration of the European community. The full-dress two-plus-four meeting was postponed to May 5.

As momentum resumed, the East Germans were to find themselves totally marginalized. For the first time they had a government that owed its existence to free elections, and it hardly accounted for anything. De Maizière's party had campaigned in effect for unification; the Soviets were hardly resisting. The key Foreign Ministry officials, now former parsons turned Social Democratic politicians, put what little political capital they still held behind pleas for the CSCE and sympathy with the emerging post-Communist neighbors. Markus Meckel, the Lutheran pastor of the SPD, who claimed the East German Foreign Ministry in the de Maizière Great Coalition, believed that he might make the GDR the champion of a strengthened CSCE that overcame the two alliances.¹⁰⁷ Genscher appreciated his contributions because they seconded his emphasis on reassuring the Russians. But the East German foreign policy of bridging East and West made little difference when they were no longer separated. Hans Miselwitz, another pastor from the peace movement, was named parliamentary state secretary, a position introduced as counterpart to the long-standing key official in FRG ministries. The Social Democratic pastors inherited a foreign service of 3,000 employees, 2,500 with diplomatic status, 500 or so adjunct staff. The West German foreign service had about 6,000, but only half the number of diplomats.¹⁰⁸ West German CDU circles envisaged their task to be that of winding up any East German foreign policy whatsoever. Soon the embassies were shutting down, and staff members at the cubic, modernist ministry on Marx-Engels Platz were taking up pensions or training for other jobs. Meanwhile an effort to work in common with Czech and Polish representatives to enhance the standing of the CSCE was vetoed in Washington. East German negotiators felt the standing of their state ebb daily by May and June as border-crossing formalities were given up. George Bush told de Maizière when he visited Washington at the beginning of June that the East Germans, or at least the SPD Foreign Office officials, were playing an obstructive role in the two-plus-four process. The East Germans felt that their

contribution to the process was ignored when, to great fanfare, Checkpoint Charlie was opened up (and lifted off by crane) on June 22. The Czechs even asked their East German colleagues on July 10 whether it still was worthwhile to negotiate with the GDR. After Kohl met Gorbachev in mid-July, a British Foreign Office official told the president of the Volkskammer that her republic was no longer a player that could negotiate.¹⁰⁹ In effect, so the message was, she should lie back and think of Germany.

Striking a Bargain

Could the Soviets still demand neutrality? Returning home from his service as ambassador in Bonn, Kvitsinsky believed that Germany might earlier have been compelled to leave the military organization of NATO, much as de Gaulle had walked out years before. By April 1990, so he claims to have decided, neutrality was no longer an option, but perhaps membership in both alliances might still be sought; at the least Genscher's Tutzing formula should be retained. Gorbachev had responded positively to Baker's argument that a neutral Germany, potentially volatile and less anchored in the democratic West, was potentially more dangerous for Russia. But just to roll over and allow the United States and Germany to have unification on their terms seemed humiliating. Such a surrender offered a foothold for the enemies of perestroika as a whole, especially Yeagor Ligachev. Even Gorbachev thus found he could not go along and declared he was ready to risk all the arms control negotiations under way rather than let Germany in NATO. Let the Germans work toward their social and economic union; Soviet consent on security and international recognition, he insisted, was still crucial.

For the Russians their own status as a world power was in question. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had argued that the Soviet Union could complete its reforms, federalize the Soviet Union, and move toward German unification without these changes representing "defeat." But as they debated, it was hard not to worry whether they were relinquishing the "greatness" that had been purchased with their country's immense wartime sacrifices. Were the Germans and Americans not rubbing their nose in their own weakness? How much unraveling could Moscow allow? After elections in Lithuania returned a majority for the national movement, Rukh, that Baltic republic had declared its independence from the Soviet Union in March 1990, while the Soviets sought to undermine Lithuanian resolve with economic sanctions and military pressure. Confronting the outright secession of the Bal-

tics at the same time as German unification, Gorbachev himself briddled; he did not want to be reproached with the liquidation of the Soviet Union's great-power status.

Suppose the Russians did not yield? What would be the situation? De facto economic unification and confederation negotiated between the two Germanies, but the continued stationing of Soviet troops in Eastern Germany and an unresolved international status? The Soviet presentation at the May 5 two-plus-four meeting was hardly encouraging. For progress to continue, the Russians now seemed to insist, a treaty had to confirm four-power rights, rule out NATO membership, give the CSCE a voice on supervising the German military situation, and even have a role in overseeing German politics to avoid any neo-Nazi resurgence. These issues would doubtless take time; meanwhile the two Germanies might work on their internal unification. What on earth then might the two-plus-four communiqué, envisaging that unity would occur "in an orderly way and without delay," really mean?¹¹⁰

How should the West react? The American team pushing unification wanted speed because they were not sure that Gorbachev could remain influential long enough to sanction unification. The NSC staff members writing papers, advising Bush, Scowcroft, and Baker, were exhilarated by their opportunity to seal victory in the cold war. By April the early differences concerning tactics that had divided foreign service career officers, such as Raymond Seitz, James Baker's major advisers, Dennis Ross and Robert Zoellick, and White House NSC staffers led by Robert Blackwill, had largely been overcome: there was agreement on two plus four with four as circumscribed and delayed as possible. The position that Washington had defended since 1947 was now to be rewarded; history—to use the language of Bismarck—was rustling by and they could grab her hem. Perestroika was a precarious window of opportunity; the Baltic clashes showed it might close. Exploit the opening while one could. The NSC staffers argued that, if need be, the Soviets could be placed before a fait accompli by the Western allies, who should declare that they were renouncing their occupation rights and challenging the Soviets to do the same or run the costs of trying to hold on to their own.

On the West German side the rivalries were sharper but held in check. Kohl wanted unification quickly, completely, and with unrestricted NATO membership. Teltschik backed this approach, and added to it a competitive spirit: his boss and not the FDP foreign minister, too subtle and ambiguous, must remain the major player. Genscher played loyally but resented the

Chancellery's effort to marginalize his role, within the cabinet committee on unification and the working group on security policy. Genscher, seconded primarily by Dieter Kastrup, the political director of the Foreign Office, drew different conclusions from Gorbachev's mercurial views and precarious position than did Teltschik or the White House allies. Might not the speed to which the Americans aspired tend instead either to undermine Gorbachev within the Politburo or to make him bridle? Genscher believed that emphasizing the East-West CSCE and allowing the new territories to retain a special status would make it easier for the Soviet leader to sell unification within a Soviet foreign policy establishment that still mixed professional Germanists alongside perestroika enthusiasts. Genscher also lay greater emphasis on soothing Polish sensibilities.¹¹¹ Since he has written his memoirs in the knowledge that the West won big—unification under article 23, with unencumbered NATO membership for united Germany—Genscher has left us a narrative of these months that downplays any difference on fundamentals with the chancellor's advisers. But at the time the Americans and the chancellor's office feared Genscher was too responsive to Soviet hesitations, even though when he encountered resistance from his chancellor and the Americans he backed away.¹¹² Neither Kohl nor Bush was in a mood to temporize. When the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* ran a story on May 8 that Genscher agreed with the Soviets about the value of separating internal unification and international aspects, Kohl was apparently furious and dressed down his foreign minister.¹¹³

In fact the Russians were in a quandary. They might delay the four-power confirmation of unification, but the Germans would knit together their economic and soon their political institutions. The hard line that Moscow had advanced at the two plus four on May 5 yielded only an ambiguous communiqué. Chernyaev was scathing about those who resisted a deal on unification. The Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Kvitsinsky, returning home after the two plus four to become deputy foreign minister, was unhappy about the concessions that had been made but also aware that his government's confusions left little to rescue. Increasingly crucial was the financial calculation. Since earlier calculations of a profitable Soviet, FRG, and GDR "triangle" had been overtaken by events, West German economic assistance seemed increasingly necessary. Soviet military leaders were scornful of the compromises on Germany, but their pressure was countered by the acute financial realities. Just as it had constrained the GDR and Poland, indebtedness to the West now cut deeply into Soviet options. Moscow had accumulated foreign debts of about DM 24 billion or about \$16 billion, a

quarter of it owed to German sources. Shevardnadze had been delegated to plead for credits from Kohl on the eve of the two-plus-four meeting of May 5: perestroika could not be carried through if the ruble collapsed: might not the Germans therefore, so he had to plead, guarantee loans of DM 20 billion? Kvitsinsky had deep misgivings about undermining the foreign minister's leverage by making him play the role of mendicant—but the financial plight seemed determinative. "The Soviet Union stood on the edge of state bankruptcy. . . . Our government had simply no concept of how to lift the country out of the crisis or how even to develop exports and generate foreign currency. The request for a finance credit could thus just be the beginning of a long chain of similar requests that would lead to greater and greater humiliations and lead the western side to ever more unpleasant political counter demands."¹¹⁴ Less than two weeks later, on May 16, Kohl proposed to Bush that the United States join him in economic credits, envisaging a German loan of DM 5 billion. But the president refused in view of the Lithuanian situation and congressional unhappiness with the Soviet pressure on that small emerging nation. Kohl warned Bush that this position might fatally undermine Gorbachev, but the president felt he could not yield. It was up to the Germans to become the Russians' bankers. It would not be easy, Bush pointed out, for the Russian supplicants to shut the door on German national aspirations if they hoped to open the purses of the Federal Republic.

Teltschik flew to Moscow with the president of the Dresdner Bank and the spokesman for the Deutsche Bank, weaving together financial and political talks. President of the Council of Ministers Ryzhkov told the delegation that it would be disastrous to go back to central planning but that in light of needed grain imports and falling oil prices as well as rising disposable incomes at home, new foreign credits were necessary. Teltschik responded that the chancellor wanted to be helpful: "he regarded the conversation in Moscow not only as a contribution to solving the problems of economic cooperation but as a significant component of an overall solution that had to be reached this year for the German question." But the Germans wanted to participate in a multilateral consortium; other lenders such as Italy, France, and Spain preferred bilateral agreements. When Gorbachev received Teltschik and the bankers, he too stressed the precarious outlook for perestroika over the next few years. Teltschik said that Kohl wanted to follow unification with a general treaty with the Soviet Union that would establish the basis for a peaceful new Europe, and it was agreed that Kohl would visit the Russian leader in the Caucasus toward the middle of July.

Gorbachev understood that such a visit would have to result in a major agreement if popular hopes were not to be dashed.¹¹⁵

This did not mean, however, that the Soviet military and security establishment was prepared to cede major issues. When Baker came to Moscow on May 16–17, he found Shevardnadze "overwhelmed" and unable to cut through the issues. Hardly a surprise in light of the furious pace of the foreign minister's diplomacy: "Flights abroad and receptions in Moscow followed each other in uninterrupted sequence and had to be carefully prepared. Often I thought"—so Kvitsinsky recalls the pace of summer 1990—"for what end all this hecticness?"¹¹⁶ The Americans came in part to negotiate the conventional force levels in Europe (CFE), but the Soviets had not yet resolved their own disagreements and wanted to address the limits on a German army in the two-plus-four format. Baker's aide Zoellick now offered a nine-point plan in an effort to persuade the Soviets to drop their veto on Germans in NATO. It promised talks on everything, guarantees about German weapons, forces, and borders, an enhanced role for the CSCE, and a pledge not to move NATO forces into former GDR territory for a finite period. But Kvitsinsky did not simply yield. The Soviet military leadership was digging in its own heels and not yet to be overridden, and the diplomat warned even the domestic aspects of unification would not be easy to arrange if the issue of military alignment remained unresolved. Gorbachev himself said that allowing Germany into NATO would be the end of perestroika. He repeated his request for \$20 billion in loans and credits.¹¹⁷

Despite the apparent stalemate on unification, Soviet financial distress assured that difficulties were not insuperable. Genscher believed that ultimately the Soviets would concede and that Shevardnadze was prepared to negotiate calmly. In a long talk at Geneva on May 23, the Soviet foreign minister now said his government wanted a speedy resolution of the German problem. He emphasized the "simultaneity" of the international and the domestic aspects of unification, not to ransom the latter to the former as the Germans and Americans might fear, but to accelerate the whole process. Genscher suspected that the Russians were on the verge of conceding the issue of NATO membership, and as a sweetener he argued that Moscow would profit more from a united Germany than it had from two divided states. Germany—so Kohl had written Gorbachev the previous day—was prepared to offer DM 5 billion on its own and help secure more in a multinational effort. Shevardnadze's suggested German troop limit of a quarter million soldiers was unacceptably low, Genscher declared, but a united Germany's forces would remain less than the combined complement of the two

current states. The key was not to impose limits on Germany alone but on every country's forces in the "central zone," including the Soviet Union's western military districts. Genscher refrained from citing figures; he argued that troop strength was an issue for the Vienna CFE negotiations, but was prepared ultimately to see the number resolved in the two-plus-four framework. The symbolic issue of maintaining Soviet war memorials in German territory could be satisfactorily resolved, Genscher reassured Shevardnadze, as could a limited transitional presence of Soviet troops in the eastern areas of the unified Germany.¹¹⁸

Was Gorbachev then prepared to strike a bargain? The Russian's alternatives were not happy. To renounce Germany was unpalatable and deeply threatening to Soviet conservatives; Poland and Hungary and Czechoslovakia were already lost to communism, even to reform communism. The Baltics would be emboldened to complete their secession—in Lithuania's case declared in March, but suspended pending negotiations. But to block a German settlement would shut off aid prospects from the West and preclude further reform as well. What advantages would the Soviets extract if domestic unification proceeded and they insisted on blocking formal international ratification? Even if the SPD won the German elections scheduled for December, the Soviets would appear as a disgruntled spoiler, self-excluded from a German settlement as they had been from the treaty with Japan in 1951, and cut off from their major potential creditors for the sake of maintaining demoralized troops in East Germany.¹¹⁹

The Russian leader still basked in the admiration of Americans when he arrived for his second meeting of the year with Bush on May 30. Let Germany belong to both alliances or to neither, he first suggested to his White House hosts. But to their surprise he conceded that CSCE principles allowed countries to choose their own military alignments. Had he thought through the issue more legalistically, he need not have yielded such an admission. Germany, he might have parried, was to become a single sovereign country enjoying CSCE guarantees, if and only if the alliance question was settled as a precondition. But Gorbachev had already consented that a sovereign united Germany should emerge at the end of the process. The president telephoned Kohl to say that the Russian leader "kind of agreed" Germany could decide on joining NATO according to the Helsinki accords. Kohl did not seem to grasp the breakthrough. A vital concession granted halfheartedly, perhaps even without full awareness of its implications, thus hardly registered on the leader to whom it was of supreme importance. Of course it could be retracted, but the Americans nailed down the language for the

public press announcement on June 3: Bush announced that he and Kohl agreed a united Germany should be part of NATO; Gorbachev did not, but he nonetheless recognized that alliance membership was a matter for the Germans to decide. In fact the Soviets had turned a corner. They moved on from the alliance question after May 30.¹²⁰

German troop limits and the changing nature of NATO still remained to be worked out; the two-plus-four directors met again on June 9 to discuss the borders of a united Germany, which would include the territory of the FRG, the GDR, and all Berlin. Articles 146 and 23 of the Basic Law, which provided for incorporation of those German territories unable to join the FRG in 1949—already invoked for the Saar in 1955 and to be used for the East Germans in 1990—would thereafter be removed from the constitution. At Shevardnadze's request, Genscher journeyed to Brest, where the Soviet foreign minister's brother had fallen in summer 1941 during the early days of the German attack. The Soviet host expressed his concern that if Germany was to belong to NATO, the alliance must significantly evolve. Genscher again alluded rather vaguely to a new relationship with the Warsaw Pact. In fact, as both men understood, the East European alliance was rapidly dissolving. How then might Moscow balance an enhanced NATO; and how could the Soviet leadership persuade its population that a united Germany in NATO was not a real setback for Soviet security? "Give us time to convince our people," Shevardnadze pleaded; but Genscher insisted that the international aspects of unification must advance apace with the internal progress. The two men grew angry and Shevardnadze said that the Potsdam Agreement of 1945 would remain in force if there were no agreement. The essential, however, was that he be able to insist Russia still had imposed some limits on the power of a united Germany: how large an armed force did Germany insist on? Genscher estimated 350,000 to 400,000. "Transformation" of NATO and a troop ceiling, still to be agreed, were left as the possible bases of an agreement. The atmospherics of cordiality were restored a week later, when Shevardnadze received a warm welcome in Münster.¹²¹

But the two-plus-four discussions of June 22 did not go smoothly. The Soviets were anticipating a challenge from hard-liners at their upcoming Twenty-eighth Party Congress and did not want to appear compliant. The East Germans were annoyed because the Americans made a media event out of the removal of Checkpoint Charlie, which, they felt, ignored their people's role in opening the Wall.¹²² Following "long and difficult internal debate," Soviet decision makers formulated a hard-line draft treaty text based

largely on Bondarenko's and Kvitsinsky's efforts to capitalize on the continuing Soviet troop strength in Germany. The tough document had the tone of a peace treaty, such as it might have been imposed shortly after the war. It provided a two-year probationary period for united Germany before terminating four-power rights. Among the restrictions envisaged, for five years the country would remain divided between the two alliances with troops of all four powers remaining in place in their respective territories. The armed forces of the to-be-merged FRG and GDR would remain based only in the western and eastern edges of their halves of Germany and together would be limited to 200,000 to 250,000, without offensive capacity or authorization. Besides renouncing the development of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons, Germany was not even to participate in NATO discussions of nuclear strategy. The Germans were to accept all prior denazification ordinances, as well as prohibit any resurgence of neo-Nazi activity.¹²³

East German Foreign Minister Meckel and Defense Minister Rainer Eppelmann, another parson, endorsed a similar scheme; let the East Germans keep a special force under an independent command: a proposal that the West Berlin *Tagesspiegel* derisively chalked up to either personal vanity or the pipedream of two peacenik pastors.¹²⁴ For Meckel, the continuing, if fading hope was to create an East Central European security zone: a CSCE enclave where GDR authority might find its last vocation. Even the old Communist hands at the East German Foreign Office began to develop the concept as an innovative framework for Central European disarmament. But it got nowhere: the potential Polish and Czech partners remained cool. It was unclear even that the Soviets really agreed on fighting for an overlapping security condominium in Germany. Shevardnadze's planning chief, Sergei Tarasenko, had confided to Genscher's aide Elbe in Münster that the Germans could in effect disregard any Russian reversions to a hard stance, and Shevardnadze and Baker had been far closer to agreement in Copenhagen, three weeks earlier. What did the Soviets really intend?

When Baker confronted Shevardnadze on the evening of June 22, his Soviet counterpart agreed that the proposal was tough, but claimed that there was tremendous domestic opposition to unification. If Germany were to remain in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Russian minister desperately wanted a sign from the upcoming London NATO meeting that there could be new security bridges across the alliances and strengthening of the CSCE. Baker replied that he thought some transformation of NATO would ensue but that ultimately America would concede a unified Germany its sovereignty. The United States would retain its troops in Europe because

it had always been asked to. Americans thus had to prepare an innovative agenda for the London NATO summit in order to reassure Shevardnadze that NATO was transforming itself. As part of that assurance, Shevardnadze forwarded a proposed NATO–Warsaw Pact joint declaration whose provisions would still exclude the GDR territory from NATO protection, remove American nuclear forces from Europe, and all American forces as well as Soviet forces from Germany—all steps that would have essentially enfeebled the alliance and which European members of NATO as well as the United States had resisted for decades. To help strengthen Shevardnadze at home, Washington had to craft a response that seemed conciliatory but did not undermine the canons of security. The proposals worked out among State, Defense, and the NSC postponed a quantitative commitment on conventional disarmament, but did advocate a further round of cuts under CFE II (Conventional Forces in Europe) negotiations, removal of U.S. nuclear artillery, and new strategic doctrines that would replace flexible response and forward defense. The new proposals also stipulated permanent liaison missions for Warsaw Pact countries and NATO linkages with CSCE.

The essentials survived the various agency scrutinies, and the West Germans were delighted with Bush's initiative. Mrs. Thatcher clearly was not. What was the point of security if NATO brought the adversary of yesterday so close to the “innermost councils of our defense and preparedness?” Mitterand was also uneasy with weakening the reliance on a nuclear deterrent for the defense of Europe. The Germans agreed to a troop limit of 370,000 that might be cut down to 350,000. The summit endorsed much of the concept, including a move toward multinational corps. Bush presented the new resolutions to Gorbachev, who was also waiting to learn about economic aid. Bonn's DM 5 billion package was approved, but the Soviets were looking toward a total of \$15 to 20 billion. This question was debated at the Houston meeting of G-7 leaders. Thatcher did not like the idea of unrestricted aid; Bush too was unwilling to support such a large infusion without pressing for economic reforms. For now the only agreement was for a special IMF study of Soviet economic needs.¹²⁵

With Kohl's visit to Russia imminent, the time had come to settle. The Soviets had raised a hard line intermittently at the two plus four: in Bonn in early May and in Berlin in late June. But Shevardnadze had always seemed disconcerted by it, and Gorbachev had made decisive concessions on May 30. Both Soviet leaders preferred being adulated as liberal reformers in the West than opposed as hard-liners. They yearned for an easy transition to the new era, and they understood that they could forestall unification only by

standing in the way of overwhelming German public opinion. Not prepared to use force, they would be excluded participants from a de facto national union, left only with delapidated barracks in the East and excluded from their creditors' largesse. Only their opponents at home really wanted the hard line they had flirted with on June 22; and the leadership managed to face down their bitter criticisms at the Twenty-eighth Party Congress in early July. "Why was the Soviet Union making concessions on every front? . . . the idea of a common European house was a phantom."¹²⁶ Gorbachev avoided foreign policy and prevailed on domestic issues. He endorsed his reformers' plans for a 500-day economic reform. The conservatives were hardly routed in the long run, but Gorbachev seemed to dominate.

The union treaty between the two halves of Germany went into effect on July 1 and the economically linked states were now hard at work on their political treaty. With the party congress behind him, Gorbachev was set to receive Kohl in the Caucasus on July 15–16. The West Germans hurried from Houston to Russia. In the late night telephone conversation that Gorbachev granted him, Falin desperately sought to reverse his leader's course: oppose article 23, oppose German membership in NATO, or at the very least ("minimum minorum") remove nuclear weapons from German territory. He got short shrift: "I fear the train has already left," responded Gorbachev as he hung up.¹²⁷ Under the brilliant sun and stars at Archys among the high peaks of the northern Caucasus—more remote and alpine than the Americans' wooded getaway at Camp David—Gorbachev told Kohl that he had been encouraged by the political transformation of NATO, which allowed a new situation. He gave the chancellor a position paper that would preclude the military structures of the alliance from being extended to the GDR so long as Soviet troops remained, and he wanted to keep troops in the GDR for three to four years, even while allowing united Germany full sovereignty and membership in NATO. In fact, the Germans could keep nonassigned troops in the East from the outset, affiliating them to NATO once the Soviets left. The Soviets, who earlier had envisaged a transitional renunciation of four-power rights, now announced their readiness to relinquish them immediately on a final settlement in the two-plus-four process. For the second time, Teltschik exulted to his diary: "The breakthrough is accomplished. What a sensation." Later Kohl told Gorbachev that he needed 370,000 men to prevent reversion to a professional army. The Soviets had preferred 350,000 but gave way. (The Germans and Soviets would sign a declaration of intent on August 30; the numbers would still have to be formally worked

into the Vienna CFE negotiations.) The essential, so Gorbachev insisted, was that German unification be not an isolated phenomenon, but "part of our whole orientation toward a new Europe."¹²⁸ He was putting the best face possible on the agreement he could, but was correct nevertheless. The key to Germany's international role would remain the condition of European relations as a whole. German wealth and power, after all, had become imposing even before unification: it was the integration of Germany in stable international structures and the robustness of its democratic regime that alone could keep German power a force for cooperation and not crude hegemonic ambition.

The foreign ministers of the two-plus-four convened the next day in Paris—their remaining tasks cast somewhat in shadow by the dramatic agreements in the Caucasus. They took note of the German-Soviet agreement, added their collective assurance on the permanence of the western Polish border, and prepared to ready the accords of the six for a Moscow signing on September 12. Unification and the attribution of complete sovereignty would follow without a formal peace treaty. Shevardnadze told Bush that it was the assurances emanating from the London NATO conference and the July 2 party congress that had turned the situation around from June 22. Only the East Germans felt crestfallen; they had been left out in the cold. There was to be no scope for East German initiatives. Meckel, who had tried to preserve an independent Central European initiative, later admitted that with respect to foreign policy, after June there was nothing to do but wind up (*abwickeln*) the GDR.¹²⁹ Criticized by the West German press for his efforts at an autonomous diplomacy, he was rather isolated. With his Foreign Office colleagues he bleakly surveyed the unachieved initiatives since April. Carl Christian von Braunmühl, seconded from the FRG Foreign Office to assist Meckel, criticized the GDR's foreign service officers who had not reacted sufficiently to the rapid progress of events. Unification had overtaken them, and Kohl had in effect negotiated directly with Russia, leaving them aside. The East German SPD hope for an atom-free Central European security zone would be unrealized. The effort to use the time until unification to conduct an independent foreign policy had failed; the government possessed no real authority. Press commentary pointed this out.¹³⁰ Yet, of course, it had been East Germans who in October and November and then the previous January had started this extraordinary chain of events. Then they had played catalytic roles, had really acted as agents of transformation. In the six months since, they had reverted once again to become if not mere

objects of history, at best bystanders—a less oppressive history, to be sure, but little more heedful of their role than it had been before 1989.

On August 23, 1990, the Volkskammer set October 3 for its merger (or *Beitritt*) into the Federal Republic. The five former Länder of the GDR, dissolved by the regime in the 1960s, were to be reestablished legally and to hold new state elections on October 14. Each resurrected Land meanwhile also requested incorporation by virtue of article 23, following the procedure by which the Saar had reentered the Federal Republic in 1956. In the complex interlocking of treaty agreements, the two German states had agreed earlier in the year to regulate many of the outstanding issues with a Unification Treaty, slated for completion by the end of August. Negotiations for this pact were to follow completion of the “currency, economic and social union” confirmed by the first “State Treaty” in May. The diverse issues to be settled—claims to restitution of collectivized property, electoral procedures, extension of the federal-state tax-sharing arrangements—were highly complicated. On the West German side, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, assisted by an interministerial task force, was determined to achieve a comprehensive agreement in time for the CSCE meeting slated to wrap up the formalities of German unification on the international level. His East German counterpart, the industrious, young parliamentary state secretary, Günter Krause, and de Maizière, found themselves recapitulating the earlier humiliating experiences of Hans Modrow, as Schäuble announced at their first formal session in July: “We don’t want to be coldhearted about your wishes and interests. But this is not the unification of two equal states.”¹³¹

The weak East German government did not survive the negotiations without crises and division. De Maizière wanted to preserve a great coalition to take his country into the FRG, but the East German Social Democrats were restive. They threatened to walk out over tax issues, and their finance minister Walter Romberg was dismissed because he demanded that all East German receipts be kept within the territory of what would be the ex-GDR, while de Maizière held that the East would get more from West German fiscal subventions if it threw its taxes into the national pot. The eastern Social Democrats also objected to the emerging compromise for the first all-German elections that Schäuble wanted to hold before year’s end. German parties had to reach a minimal threshold of votes to share in the proportional division of votes for parliamentary representatives: the East German “Bündnis 90” as well as the old PDS believed they would lose their representation if they had to collect 5 percent among both states’ electorates, and the East German Social Democrats would not have mourned the

disappearance of these competitors. Nevertheless, it was agreed that for the first unified election the 5 percent hurdle would be tallied separately in each half of reemerging Germany: the CDU was not averse to preserving the PDS rather than see its votes go to the SPD. The East Germans resisted the FRG’s desire to take control of Stasi documents (and limit punishment of earlier informers); instead they established an independent authority to control access and sponsor scholarly evaluation. As divisive as the other issues, the differing access to abortion also endangered agreement, until it was agreed the day before scheduled signing of the treaty that the more liberal stipulations of the GDR (which allowed a woman to terminate pregnancy in the first trimester without restriction) could remain valid for East German women for at least two years after unification.¹³²

The Germans finally had to produce a general treaty of friendship with the Soviets, which was easy, then a pact to settle East Germany’s residual economic obligations, and finally a transition treaty that governed the conditions for the basing and later withdrawal of Soviet troops in Germany. This effort was where the Soviets hoped to extract as much hard cash as possible. They had sent a bill on September 5 up to DM 36 billion (\$20 billion). Kohl offered DM 8 billion under various claims; Gorbachev demanded a minimum of DM 11 billion plus transportation and maintenance costs, and he threatened to hold up signature of the two-plus-four “Final Settlement.” In a renewed weekend of haggling between finance ministers and then national leaders, an existing German offer of DM 12 billion plus a DM 3 billion credit was settled. This treaty was initialed on September 27.

Meanwhile the two-plus-four agreements—the treaty concerning the concluding regulations relating to Germany—had been completed by the foreign ministers in Moscow on September 12, but not without a last-minute crisis. Germany was to recover sovereignty; its borders included the current West, East, and Berlin. What rights might NATO claim in East Germany? Based on the Caucasus agreement, Kvitsinsky’s language prohibited any NATO troops from being either stationed or deployed in eastern Germany before the Russians left in 1994, and would exclude non-German NATO forces or atomic weapons thereafter. The British, and indeed the American negotiators, were willing to live with the veto on U.K.-U.S. garrisons, but they did not wish to accept the restriction on deployment, which they interpreted as a veto on NATO maneuvers in the East. The Anglo-American objections irritated both the West Germans and de Maizière, who believed that the British stonewalling (they overlooked the U.S. difficulties with the text) represented a last-minute effort to postpone signature of the

pact. After desperate midnight conferences, it was agreed that the restriction on deployment would remain, but to be interpreted when necessary by the Germans. The September 12 treaty culminated the two-plus-four process and announced the impending end of the four powers' residual occupation rights. At a CSCE meeting on September 26, the governments took official note of these agreements, including the renunciation of four powers' prerogative as of the date of unification: midnight October 2–3.¹³²

World War II was over; so too was the cold war. Hard-liners in Moscow got another chance to ventilate their criticism of Soviet diplomacy as the Supreme Soviet formally debated the vacating of its friendship treaty with the East German state that had actually disappeared a day earlier. So too with the ratification of the new treaty of friendship with the FRG. But as Kvitsinsky—one of the tenacious fighters for as favorable a settlement as possible—wrote in a draft speech for his minister, it was not the treaties that had doomed East Germany. "The death sentence of the GDR was signed in the moment when it was decided to open the border. The treaties merely mirrored the changes, inevitable after that point and foreseeable. When the Berlin Wall fell no single voice in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had been raised to preserve it. Why did one now seek to reach the impossible and to roll back history. There was no way back."¹³³

Shevardnadze and Gorbachev, supported by Chernyaev and gradually by Kvitsinsky, had granted to the Germans the unity they wanted. But the disappearance of two Germanies, the reappearance of a unified national state, was not just the consequence of the fall of the Wall. It was also the result of the general disarray that overtook the Communist system: the decrepitude of its economics, the obsolescence of its military alliance, the firm support of the White House for an aspiration that many Germans and Americans had actually ceased to believe in, and the odd couple of Kohl and Genscher: the former understanding how to press for a maximal solution while reassuring his allies that he believed in Europe and promising the Soviets he would pay for their difficult transition; the latter assuaging the professional foreign services, who fretted about borders and security and the memories of history.

This author left a historians' conference in Berlin in mid-December 1990. With the withdrawal of residual Allied control over the city, Lufthansa was to recover the right to fly in and out of Berlin, which had been awarded to Pan American after World War II. In the interim decades, Lufthansa flights

to and from the United States terminated or began in Frankfurt. I flew out on one of the last Pan-American flights—one of the little perquisites of conquest that disappeared only shortly before the airline itself. Three and a half years later I wandered through the halls of the American commandant on the Clay Allee, now being emptied by our final departing military units. A photographic exhibit traced the American presence from the ruins of 1945 and the airlift provisioning of 1948 to Kennedy's electrifying visit of 1963, and then to the present. Now, in summer 1994, the halls were emptying. Soviet troops too had been departing in the four years, abandoning their dilapidated barracks, selling their medals and caps for a bit of ready cash to American tourists, unloved in their period of transition. Their empty compounds stood desolate in Brandenburg and Potsdam, Jüterbog and elsewhere. An imperial era was closing, perhaps for Americans, certainly and far more bleakly for the Russians.

If not ending, at least being redefined. The Russians in the next five years would see their control even over Soviet space disintegrate. By 1991 the Soviet Union itself had fragmented, and it was far from clear whether Moscow would reconsolidate control or even economic leadership over the vast territories of its former state. After bipolarity, the governing structures of international politics became murky. Ethnic conflict flared even in Europe; liberals hoped that nongovernmental agencies might organize a transnational civil society; business and political leaders emphasized the potential of regional economic groups: the European Community, the North American Free Trade Area, East Asia, or the Pacific littorals. If development toward such regional markets continued, Germany might become the motor of European and East European development. But before the period in which it might exert the economic leadership in Europe and East Europe, it had to traverse a difficult transition at home.

Germany controlled its own territory and its own capital—or did it? Like all nominally sovereign countries, it was absorbing unwanted migrants who sought work or asylum, and witnessing periodic outbreaks of intolerant xenophobia. Germany had become a whole nation, even as nations appeared to be losing their grip on economic transformations that encroached on even the best organized of societies. The history that had climaxed on October 3, 1990, belonged irrevocably to a slowly disappearing world of organized alliances, of clear demarcations among states and systems and ideologies. That history was ending: not just the cold war, but the reassuring territorial organization of societies and nations. The Germans had recov-

ered their 137,400 square miles (350,000 square kilometers) of national space, a tract the size of Montana; the United States had bested the Soviets—real achievements that might, however, quickly seem insubstantial as the agenda of world history began to transform itself, just as it had after the defeat of National Socialism in 1945. Indeed, the victories of both 1945 and 1989–90 had been major historical achievements; they made life far less oppressive for millions. But no such emancipation or constitutive moment ever removes the press of new problems.

**Six**

Anschluss and Melancholy

Souvenirs de l'est
Souvenirs qui me restent
Que me reste-t-il de mes souvenirs de l'est?
Un sourire, un geste . . .
Une chanson qui proteste
Que me reste-t-il de mes souvenirs de l'est?

—Patricia Kaas, French chanteuse

BETWEEN TWO BERLINS, 1990

One souvenir of the East that might remain was a piece of the Berlin Wall. Although it did not go up for sale officially until January 21, 1990, local entrepreneurs seized their opportunity and their chisels earlier. They hammered off fragments, added spikes of rusted barbed wire, then mounted each jagged miniature on a stained wood base and peddled them to tourists. West German public agencies embedded votive shards in plexiglass cubes to present to foreign dignitaries. And as early as Christmas 1989, the American shopper could buy a two-ounce chip of the Wall in Boston's Filene's Basement for \$12.95. It was packed in a maroon velvet jewelry sack inside a special commemorative box and accompanied by an inspirational pamphlet:

"The Wall is Gone!" And from this rubble rose a new symbol for tomorrow, an icon for future generations; the Berlin Wall . . . dismantled. History is a look backward, a reconciliation of times and lives gone by. Now we are faced with the glowing view before us. It is the stuff of dreams. It is the blue sky that sails just out of view. Grip the artifact and in your hand is the past and future. Let your fingers wander slowly across its battered surface. You can tell the balance