

German Unification
— *in the* —
European Context

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With a Contribution by Gert-Joachim Glaessner

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German Unity, Europe, and the World

German unification in the nineteenth century, the reader will recall (Chapter One), was never a matter for the Germans to decide by themselves. Their “middle location” among at least eight nations—France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Switzerland—and uncertain boundaries all around the would-be German nation-state made the original German unification of 1871 a destabilizing landslide for most of Europe and a matter of deep concern for the offshore international power of Great Britain. It took Otto von Bismarck three wars of unification to disentangle his Small German (Prussian-dominated) nation-state from the fetters of its European environment, if only for a while. An unsettled border toward the east and unredeemed nationalities under four empires (Prussia, Hapsburg, Russia, and Turkey) fatally drew this Bismarckian creation into the tumult of World War I, a death knell for all four empires and the occasion for Germany’s bitter defeat by a global grand alliance that brought in the United States to settle the balance in Europe.

The deeply felt humiliation of defeat and the Versailles Peace Treaty combined with a desire to recover lost territory and to reassert ethnic dominance, giving birth to a nationalistic movement of revenge and

reconquest (of eastern territories) that was led, rather appropriately, by an Austrian: Adolf Hitler. The Nazi leader succeeded in marshaling the industrial and military might of Germany in ruthless pursuit of a German racial empire over allegedly inferior breeds. Barely two decades after the end of the First World War, a Second World War engulfed Europe and decisively thrust the United States into the middle of the postwar order about to be born in Europe and the world, a political order based on collective security under the aegis of the United Nations. Long before U.S. public opinion soured on the United Nations,¹ that organization was one of the great American contributions toward a peaceful postwar world. Unlike the earlier League of Nations, which had been created and then abandoned by the United States, the United Nations was given real "teeth" for enforcing peace against aggressors: namely, the Security Council and its five permanent members—the United States, the USSR, Britain, France, and China. The aggressor nations originally envisaged for possible enforcement action were the fascist powers of World War II, in particular Germany, in the event of a revival of the power politics of the thirties. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Cold War and Soviet vetoes soon stalemated the Security Council and prevented U.N. action on a wide range of issues relevant to the conflict between East and West.²

A Product of the Cold War

Nowhere was the Cold War manifested more dramatically than in the center of continental Europe when, within little more than a year after the end of World War II, relations between the Soviets and the Western allies began to deteriorate. As the "Iron Curtain" (Winston Churchill) began to descend upon Europe, it turned liberated East European coun-

1. In large part, the American public became disenchanted with the United Nations when the rising number of Third World nations in it began to form a voting bloc, whose superior numbers deprived the United States of the control it had once exercised over the U.N. General Assembly by means of a coterie of allies and client states. The ever-present isolationist and right-wing opposition to "one-world government" became a potent force against the United Nations only with the Reagan administration which, among other things, refused to make the usual annual support payments to the organization.

2. The U.N. organization still accomplished its goals in some areas, but the conflict extended even to the question of U.N. personnel and to allegations of abuse of diplomatic privilege by communist nations for purposes of espionage against the United States. On the other hand, there were occasions such as the outbreak of the Korean War (1950) when the Soviet Union by accident failed to veto a General Assembly resolution authorizing enforcement. The Soviet representatives had walked out in protest before the vote occurred.

tries into "captive nations" and democratic coalition governments into Stalinist dictatorships. The borderline between the Western Occupation Zones of Germany and the Soviet Zone became impassable, a line of division between two hostile worlds. The insular location of the Western sectors of Berlin in the midst of communist territory—and without guaranteed land access—became the setting for more than twenty years of repeated Berlin crises, beginning with the Soviet blockade of 1948. The West German zones and West Berlin became the strategic geopolitical toehold of the Western powers in a tug-of-war over Europe with an expansive Soviet empire. It was here that the West encouraged economic reconstruction in a setting of European cooperation, under the Marshall Plan, and here that the allies authorized the creation of a West German rump state,³ the old Federal Republic (FRG), from the three Western Zones of Occupation. Thus the old FRG—and its East German counter-piece, the GDR—were clearly products of the Cold War. This is not to deny the eager cooperation of West German politicians such as the first West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, nor the fact that the allies had the good sense to let the West Germans arrange their own government and the details of economic and military cooperation more or less as the latter preferred.⁴

German rearmament and integration into NATO is perhaps the most telling example of the changing relationship between the Western allies and their erstwhile enemy. NATO had evolved from the Brussels Treaty Organization of 1947, a defensive alliance against the possible resurgence of a German military threat at a time when a Soviet threat to West European peace was not yet a primary concern. The heating up of the Cold War—the communist coups in Czechoslovakia during 1948 and the division of Germany between the hostile blocs—suggested the necessity of rearming a rehabilitated West Germany and converting it and its territory into a strategic anticommunist fortress. This was at first attempted through the creation of a European Defense Community (EDC)

3. The changing international situation also explains the substantial modifications in the policies of industrial reparations and denazification which ensued along with the Cold War.

4. There is still a surprising amount of controversy on this point. Many left-wing critics insist that the Basic Law of the FRG was the result of allied interventions and preferences, and that the West German government did not undertake its treaties and contractual obligations to the Western allies and NATO of its own free will. These critics conveniently ignore the ample popular majorities that supported Adenauer and his government throughout the fifties. Except for small numbers of ideological opponents of a pro-Western course, the West German electorate was as unlikely to pass up such unique opportunities for economic and political rehabilitation under the protection of the Western alliance as the East German electorate was in 1990.

with the same membership as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), a forerunner of the Common Market and, among other things, an attempt to bring the coal and steel resources that had supported the German war effort in two world wars permanently under international control. When the EDC failed to come off,⁵ a substitute defense organization, the Western European Union (WEU), was designed that included Great Britain to strengthen the other West European nations against the weight of a rearmed West Germany. But the best solution of the problem was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, headed by the United States, which with the waning of British power had become the new extracontinental maintainer of the balance in Europe against the Soviet challenge. The new West German army was integrated completely and at all levels into the NATO forces, so that German officers, soldiers, and equipment were available to hold off the Soviet threat without forming a national army under German command. Again, this was quite acceptable to the Adenauer government, which shared the apprehensions of Germany's Western neighbors about a resurgence of German aggressive nationalism. NATO was the perfect device, in the words of a British NATO general secretary, "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."

If the old Federal Republic for the forty-one years of its existence was largely a product of the East-West conflict, this was no less true of the German Democratic Republic, the Soviets' client state and military base in the heart of Central Europe. Just as the Americans were not quite sure of French and Italian support for the anti-Soviet alliance at the outset of the Cold War—large communist parties had emerged in both countries at the end of World War II—and for this reason had to rely more emphatically on the development of a strategic base in West Germany, the Soviets could not be sure in the long run of their East European satellites, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, not to mention Tito's Yugoslavia. They had to rely even more heavily on a rearmed East Germany as the keystone of their arch of captive nations, held in place by externally buttressed communist dictatorships and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO). And, as the reader will recall (Chapter Two), there were recurrent crises in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Poland (1956, 1980) when brutal military force, or the threat of it, appeared to be the only way to keep the Soviet empire together.

5. The EDC Treaty failed to be ratified in the French National Assembly, where fear of a remilitarized West Germany won out over the advocates of a new Franco-German partnership. French security concerns could be overcome only by adding Britain to the original six members of the ECSC and planned EDC.

Soviet Policy Toward Germany

These memories of the international realities of yesterday must have gone through the minds of many a German newspaper reader in April 1991 when parts of a press interview with ex-Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze⁶ sent chills up the spines of many Germans and East Europeans. The retired comrade-in-arms of President Gorbachev identified himself as an early (1986) advocate of German reunification. He mentioned to reporters that, toward the end of the eventful year 1989 and in the midst of the final unraveling of communist power throughout Eastern Europe, there had been enormous pressure on Gorbachev, presumably by the hard-liners in the Soviet army and the CPSU (and by the East European dictatorships), using "the psychology of great-power politics and empire," to stop all reforms and revolutions "in the manner of 1953, 1956, and 1968." The hard-liners accused Gorbachev of having brought on the escalating collapse of communist regimes with his *perestroika*. They urged him to use armed force along the lines of a revived Brezhnev Doctrine to beat down all popular protest and, presumably, to thwart any movement in the direction of German unification "with troops and border barricades, and by starting up the engines of the tanks." Indeed, losing the GDR to German unification removed the keystone of Soviet empire. Henceforth, resurgent Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Romanian nationalisms would each slip away in different directions, pushing what was left of Soviet power back to Soviet borders and, in some cases, perhaps even beyond those borders. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze did not buckle under the pressure of the hard-liners in 1989, however, and indeed countermanded any inclination in Leipzig, Prague, or Bucharest to crush insurrection, Beijing-style, with brute force.⁷

In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the CPSU, the position once occupied by Joseph Stalin, and at the 27th CPSU Congress (1986), he described the gathering internal crisis of the Soviet Union in detail. This was also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the erection of the Berlin Wall. A military parade of 8,000 East German soldiers marched

6. *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Apr. 10, 1991, reported the interview, and from there it made most major European newspapers. See *Berliner Morgenpost*, Apr. 11, 1991, pp. 1-2, and *Der Spiegel* 45, no. 16, Apr. 15, 1991, p. 41. Shevardnadze was opposed, in particular, by the Foreign Ministry and by ex-Ambassador Valentin Falin, who regarded the GDR as the Soviet victory prize of World War II.

7. As recently as April 1989, the Soviet establishment still stood firmly against any thought of reconsidering the German situation, and it was unlikely to yield until about 90% of the old Politbureau membership changed in July 1990.

down Karl-Marx-Allee in East Berlin while Erich Honecker, in his address of commemoration, called the Wall "a historical deed that laid the foundation for sustained prosperity in East Germany." Meanwhile, West Berliners were laying wreaths at the many markers along the Wall that to this day recall the East German refugees killed there, and Chancellor Kohl said in the old Reichstag auditorium next to the Wall: "As long as there is a wall, barbed wire, and orders to shoot, there can be no talk of normality in Germany." A year later, President Reagan made his appearance at the Wall and challenged Gorbachev, in one of his more felicitous German photo opportunities, to "tear down this wall" if he really meant to be serious about winding down the Cold War.

The Soviet leader was indeed serious about *perestroika* but was hardly prepared to give his blessing to German unification, either in 1986 or in 1989. In July 1987, on the occasion of an official visit to the Kremlin, West German Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker had broached the German question and received a telling earful from Gorbachev himself. The Soviet general secretary told him, as reported by TASS: "There are two German states with different social systems. Each of them learned its lesson from history and they can each make their contributions to the cause of Europe and of peace. History will decide what may happen a hundred years from now. We cannot accept any other position and, if anyone would pursue a different path, there will be very serious consequences."⁸

Relations between Bonn and Moscow had been chilly since the breakdown of negotiations over intermediate-range missiles several years earlier—in fact, so frigid that even the GDR government of Erich Honecker made great efforts to shield the German-German relationship from the climate of East-West confrontations.⁹ Soviet dogma on the German question remained well entrenched in the form in which the late Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko had formulated and reiterated it again and again during his long tenure. The "aggressive circles of the U.S." were blamed for the failure of the Potsdam resolutions, for West German

8. Quoted from *Pravda*, Jul. 8, 1987, by Hans-Peter Riese, "Die Geschichte hat sich ans Werk gemacht. Der Wandel der sowjetischen Position zur deutschen Frage," *Europa Archiv*, no. 4 (Feb. 15, 1990), 117. See also Gerhard Wettig, "Stadien der sowjetischen Deutschlandpolitik," *Deutschland Archiv* 23, no. 7 (Jul. 1990), 1070–1078, and the sources cited there. Wettig describes the Soviet acquiescence as an on-again, off-again process in which the Soviet government's attitude softened in January/February only to harden again.

9. There had also been a flap when Kohl, in a press interview, compared Gorbachev with the Nazi propaganda chief Josef Goebbels. See Stephen F. Larrabee, "The View from Moscow," in Stephen F. Larrabee, ed., *The Two German States and European Security* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 183–205.

rearmament in NATO, and for "the inclusion of the FRG in the crusade against the socialist countries" (a reference to President Reagan's campaign against the "evil empire"). These same forces now advocated "overcoming the division of Germany," but what they really meant was the "takeover of the GDR by the capitalist FRG" and the "step-by-step liquidation of the socialist order of other East European states." Any such attempt would mean war, and the Bonn pledges to achieve change "by peaceful means" were sheer deception. Similarly deceptive, according to Gromyko, were Bonn statements calling the (pre-1989) borders "provisional" and reserving their determination for a future peace conference, as well as all the talk about an "unsolved German question."¹⁰ And although relations between Gorbachev and Honecker deteriorated in the late eighties—*perestroika* being quite unwelcome in East Berlin—the Soviet leader again told Chancellor Kohl during a visit in Moscow, in October 1988, that¹¹ "the current situation is the result of history. Attempts to change what is created, or unrealistic policies to force change raise incalculable and even dangerous risks."

History on the Brink of Decision

There is still much speculation about exactly how and when the Soviet government changed its mind about letting the Germans unite. One view raises speculations in retrospect about subtle changes of wording in Gorbachev's statements in 1989 leading up to his East Berlin visit of October 7, the fortieth anniversary of the GDR, when he said, "Life itself will punish those who come too late."¹² There had been pronouncements, such as the mention of the "principle of freedom of choice" before the United Nations (December 1988), that appeared to give a green light to the other East European satellites even if they too were slow to recognize it. In February and again in June of 1989, the Soviet leader clearly abandoned the Brezhnev Doctrine of armed intervention,¹³ but even this

10. Quoted from *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, Jul. 17, 1985, by Riese, "Die Geschichte hat sich ans Werk gemacht," p. 91.

11. See Hannes Adomeit, "Gorbachev and German Unification: Revision of Thinking, Realignment of Power," *Problems of Communism* 39 (Jul./Aug. 1990), 1–23.

12. See, for example, the review of Gorbachev's statements by Riese, "Die Geschichte hat sich ans Werk gemacht," pp. 91–93. This and other phrases, at least with the benefit of hindsight, look like a warning of the change to come. See also Boris Meissner, "Das neue Denken Gorbatschows und die deutsche Frage," in Wjatscheslaw Daschtschew and Carl-Gustaf Ströhm, eds., *Die Neuordnung Mitteleuropas* (Mainz: Hase & Köhler, 1991), pp. 15–32, and his essay in *Aussenpolitik*, no. 2 (1989).

13. See Adomeit's survey, "Gorbachev and German Unification," pp. 4–5. The joint

did not necessarily apply to the GDR in quite the same way as it encouraged reformers in Poland and Hungary. The strategic importance of East Germany to Soviet defense and the 360,000 Soviet soldiers there gave the hard-line stance of the otherwise not very popular Honecker a significance not unlike that of Gibraltar for an otherwise decolonized British empire. This may well have been the ultimate dilemma of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze in the rapidly disintegrating East German situation of October/November 1989, when they refused to give in to the furious reaction of army generals and diplomats in Moscow who wanted to "send in an army a million strong to close the border" (Falin in East Berlin, November 1989). At the July 1990 party conference of the CPSU, an angry Yegor Ligachev and his party conservatives once more called for armed intervention—half a million soldiers—to secure the Soviet hold on the GDR, but it was too late. The East German cat was out of the bag, not to mention the other East European felines, and German unification had been sanctioned both internally and externally.¹⁴

The most plausible explanation still appears to be that the rapid acceleration of events, the very "history" to which Gorbachev likes to attribute so much, forced his hand and, after some confusing signals, forced him to accept gracefully a change he had not intended. The great exodus of refugees, the fall of the hated Honecker, the unexpected opening of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the SED state party, and the deterioration of the East German economy foreclosed what was undoubtedly Gorbachev's preferred choice: a reform communist GDR independent of West Germany. Even on December 3, 1989, just before the Malta summit, therefore, Gorbachev reiterated that

as a result of many international treaties, including the Helsinki Agreements, there are two German states today, the FRG and the GDR, both members of the U.N., with full diplomatic relations,

declaration by Bonn and Moscow (June 1989) is cited as the proof that Gorbachev meant to let the GDR go, although he continued to object to unification for months to come.

14. By that time, following the currency and economic union and several rounds of agreement at the "two-plus-four" meetings, a Soviet resort to strong-arm methods might indeed have precipitated war between East and West, a threat (by Shevardnadze) that had been less plausible in late 1989. Half a year later, in January 1991, if the Soviets had attempted a strong-arm coup in the absence of U.S. and some other NATO forces, it might have succeeded in the event but would have been even more of an outrage, for by then the internal union of Germany had been formally completed and the Two-Plus-Four Treaty ratified by all except the Soviets (who signed it in March 1991). The abortive military coup of August 1991 apparently was careful to leave international implications alone for the time being. The Soviet Army Group West in East Germany, in particular, showed no sign of rebellion or unrest.

sovereign states. . . . We have an interest in what is going to happen with these two states, with the world, with Europe, with our civilization. Time will tell, history will decide. But to raise the question of reunification today would not be legitimate; it would make the situation worse. . . . But the changes in the FRG and GDR do open up possibilities of cooperation, and of the development of relations and of human contacts so that all this can follow a normal procedure. Let history decide. One should not artificially trigger or accelerate processes that have not yet reached maturity.¹⁵

Two and a half weeks later, in a speech before the Political Committee of the EC Parliament in Brussels, Eduard Shevardnadze dotted the i's and crossed the t's of the Soviet change of position when he qualified the principle of "self-determination" by the two German states with an "application only in the context of the norms and principles of international law, the peculiar status of both German states, and their responsibility before the nations of Europe and the world never to permit another war to start from German soil." He added, in the form of questions, the following "conditions":¹⁶

1. What guarantees of a political, legal, or material sort can protect the security and peace of other European states from the consequences of German unity?
2. Would such a unified Germany really accept the existing borders in Europe and drop all territorial claims (for the return of lost German land)?
3. What role would such a German nation-state play in the existing military-political structures?
4. What would be its military potential? Would it be prepared to accept demilitarization, neutrality, and a mandate to restructure Eastern Europe economically and otherwise?
5. How would it act toward the presence of allied troops on German soil and with regard to the allied liaison missions and the Four-Power Agreements of 1971 (on Berlin)?
6. How would it fit into the CSCE (Helsinki) process? Would it help to overcome the division of Europe and to create a cohesive,

15. Quoted from *Pravda*, Dec. 3, 1989, by Riese, "Die Geschichte hat sich ans Werk gemacht," p. 94.

16. The formula "never to permit another war to start from German soil" repeats the formulations of previous joint statements by the SPD and the SED, as well as statements by Green pacifists. See also Riese, *ibid.*, pp. 95-97, for the statement.

nondiscriminatory legal, economic, environmental, and cultural European union, without any discrimination?

7. Would the two German states be prepared, upon reunification, to seek collective solutions agreeable to the other European states, including a European peace settlement?

As a world power, one of the major allies of World War II, and a nation that lost 27 million dead to the German war machine, the Soviet Union believed it had a right to raise these questions.

By the end of January 1990, the dynamics of the economic and political crisis of the GDR left no doubt that the situation had reached "maturity." Upon the visit of GDR Premier Hans Modrow and, ten days later, Helmut Kohl, General Secretary Gorbachev made clear the Soviet agreement in principle to German unification. Kohl returned in triumph from Moscow, proclaiming he held the "key to German unification" in his hand. Gorbachev, however, still proposed conditions for his specific assent to German unification: Soviet interests must not be irreversibly damaged by German union and, consequently, Shevardnadze's list of searching questions still represented the particular concerns of Moscow, including a desire to demilitarize and neutralize the emerging popular and economic giant in the middle of Europe. The entire fabric of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe had changed profoundly by January 1990, and the Soviet Union itself was hardly in the pink of health. Years of *perestroika* had failed to bring economic prosperity and modernization. Instead, nationalist movements and ethnic violence tore at the very fabric of the Soviet Union in the Baltic states, Moldavia, and in the south and southeast.

It would be simplistic, however, to assume that such weakness and preoccupation with problems close to home would incline a great power to yield to its long-standing antagonists. To the contrary, the Soviets' problems and weaknesses made them less willing to give away their strategic position to NATO. Fortunately, the bullying of the Reagan administration had ceased anyway and, in the crucial period from late 1989 to mid-1990, Americans, West Europeans, and especially the West Germans treated the Soviet reluctance to release East Germany or a united Germany to NATO with patience and understanding. West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, in particular, presented an agreeable compromise: West Germany would remain with NATO, which was in a process of change anyway, setting lower force levels and lower levels of readiness for combat. East Germany would leave the Warsaw Pact and join the Federal Republic economically and politically, but would not be part of NATO territory. It would be demilitarized,

barred from the stationing of NATO troops, and have its own limited territorial defense forces. The 360,000 Soviet troops stationed in the GDR, finally, would remain there for the next few years.

With such gentle persuasion, by mid-1990, the Soviet government eventually came to accept the reasoning that—since the neutralization of a united Germany was quite unacceptable to the Western powers—NATO would offer sufficient guarantees to keep a possible German military threat to the East under control. After all, the containment of a resurgent Germany had always been a second major purpose of NATO, next to containing Soviet expansion, and there was a broad consensus among all powers that Germany should not have a national army of its own and under its own command. The Kohl government itself was emphatic in its desire not to be isolated from its European neighbors on both sides and to be seen as a friendly government by the USSR.

On July 16, during Kohl's visit to Zheleznovodsk, near Gorbachev's old haunts—only days after the stormy 28th Congress of the CPSU—Gorbachev agreed that a unified Germany could belong to NATO. This was the great break facilitated by the changeover of most of the Politbureau membership. Kohl in turn accepted a cap on German troop strength of 370,000, about half the size of the West and East German forces at the time, and pledged again that Germany would possess neither nuclear, biological, nor chemical weapons. Kohl also promised 13 billion marks toward paying and supplying the Soviet troops on German soil and toward their repatriation and housing in the Soviet Union which was to be completed in 1994.¹⁷ At this moment, the process of German unification had turned the international corner, and soon the Two-Plus-Four Treaty sealed the deal. This was the moment Chancellor Kohl later referred to when he claimed, "I only had two or three weeks in which German unification became a possibility, internationally speaking."

Some observers have suggested that the agreement in the Caucasus merely reflected the existing economic ties between West Germany and the Soviet Union. It is true that East German trade with the Soviets had all along amounted to about 10–12%—two-thirds of East German foreign trade—and West German trade to another 4–5% of Soviet trade, but the Soviet Union had not played a major role in the West German economy. Nevertheless, Gorbachev's economic modernization program

17. Until the currency union, when the West German government took on the expense in deutschmarks, the GDR had paid close to 3 billion East marks annually for the Soviet stationing cost. See *Der Spiegel* 44, nos. 29 and 31, July 16 and Aug. 20, 1990. Total payments to the Soviet Union were said to be close to 50 billion marks, including trade obligations of the GDR (17 billion marks), export credits (15 billion marks), and future credit backing (5–20 billion marks). See *The Economist*, June 29, 1991, p. 43.

for the Soviet Union strategically depended on technology and high-quality imports—to the extent that they were not embargoed by the Cocom list which the Germans were insistent on revising. Germany might profit from an expansion of oil and natural gas imports from the Soviet Union to close its gap in energy supplies. West German bank credits and loans (3 billion marks in 1988) were another crucial resource for Soviet modernization. East German exports to the Soviet Union were at a high before German economic unification, at least until the deutschmark came to the GDR. After that point, continued Soviet purchases required West German hard currency loans which might never be repaid, and which increased Soviet indebtedness to Germany to great heights. As of April 1991, Germany also had more joint ventures in the Soviet Union (244, with an investment of nearly \$300 million) than any other Western state. In June 1991, moreover, a new 5 billion marks credit was agreed on and, after Zhelezdnovodsk, the German financial commitment grew tenfold. Studies from the Berlin Institute of German Economic Research (DIW) predicted a tripling of Soviet trade, of which Germany might get the lion's share.

Following Zhelezdnovodsk and the Two-Plus-Four Treaty granting complete sovereignty to a united Germany, the new Soviet-German entente reached a landmark with the signing (November 9, 1990)—one year after the collapse of the Wall—and eventual ratification (April/May 1991) of the “good neighbor” treaties between the two governments. The treaties passed the Bundestag in a rare show of unanimity. The first treaty states that it is of primary importance to “finally be done with the past, and to use understanding and reconciliation to . . . overcome Europe's division.” The twenty-year friendship treaties aimed at expanding bilateral ties and building greater trust, especially by renouncing all territorial claims and providing a framework for economic-technical cooperation and political consultation—one summit and at least two foreign ministerial meetings a year—as well as assistance in setting up the new Soviet social security system. The agreements, dubbed the Treaty on Good Neighborliness, Partnership, and Cooperation, also assured the Soviet troops of German respect and guaranteed cultural and language rights to the German-speaking minority in the Soviet Union, about 2.5 million people whose roots go back centuries and who were stripped of their Volga German Republic and dispersed by Stalin in 1945. Even though substantial numbers of German-Russians (400,000) have already migrated to Germany or are prepared to do so, the Soviet parliament has promised to reestablish the Volga German Republic, and a German-Russian deputy, Alexander Bier, has proposed a plebiscite to ascertain

the wishes of the population of the Saratov and Volgograd areas in that regard.

Attitudes of Germany's Western Allies

While West Germany's allies were at first reluctant to disentangle the German state from its international treaty and occupation status prior to 1989, the public response in most allied nations was very encouraging from the start. One month after the fall of the Wall, a *New York Times*/CBS poll ascertained that two-thirds of the American adult respondents (67%) supported a reunification of the FRG and the GDR (16% feared a united Germany might try to dominate the world). A *Business Week* and Lou Harris poll found 76% for and 16% against German unification.¹⁸ A *Los Angeles Times/Economist* poll in January 1990—when unification had become likely—however, gave a more thoughtful response. It confirmed the American level of support at 61% and added 61% among the French, but only 45% in Britain and 41% in Poland. No less than 53% of Britons feared a return of German fascism, and 38% of the French echoed this fear. But only 30% of Britons were actually opposed to German unification, and a large majority expected it to come about anyway.¹⁹

The outpouring of sentiment from average people was not quite matched at the level of the news media (see Introduction) or of official government policies—except perhaps among American politicians, where outright opposition was rare. Even the Polish-American Congress, which might have been expected to share the apprehension of the Polish government about Chancellor Kohl's prevarications regarding the Oder-Neisse line, combined its mild reminder on this issue with a clear endorsement of the German right to self-determination. Coverage of the East German scene and of the steps toward economic union was unusually strong and consistent among the U.S. news media.²⁰ The attitude in Congress and

18. See the *New York Times*, Dec. 12, 1989, and *Business Week*, Nov. 27, 1989. An earlier poll in October ascertained the support of 71% of the French, 70% of the British, 83% of the Italians, and 56% of the West Germans (!) for German unification. Cited by Richard Davy, “Grossbritannien und die deutsche Frage,” *Europa Archiv*, no. 4 (Feb. 15, 1990), 139–144.

19. See *The Economist*, Jan. 27, 1990, p. 48.

20. See especially Michael H. Haltzel, “Amerikanische Einstellungen zur deutschen Wiedervereinigung,” *Europa Archiv*, no. 4 (Feb. 15, 1990), 127–132. See also Karl Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung. Die internationalen Aspekte* (Bergisch-Gladbach: Lübbe-Bastei, 1991), pp. 21–25 and 49–58, who pays particular tribute to American support.

the White House toward German reunification, ever since the 1952 agreements (amended in 1954) which turned West Germany from an occupied country into a NATO partner with few remaining allied reservations, had always supported German aspirations on paper. This included, if in a rather halfhearted way, Bonn's insistence on leaving the final settlement of reparations and border questions to a peace treaty. Washington was certainly not reluctant to accept the solemn West German pledges of 1971 and 1975 not to contest the eastern borders by force.

When the Wall fell and German unification actually became a likely prospect, however, the Bush administration was taken by surprise. It reacted with ritual reiteration of formulas that had been used for forty years of the Cold War, formulas that seemed to endorse everything the Germans could want. Eventually, however, it dawned on the Republican establishment that the Cold War was winding down—in spite of continual warnings from conservative voices that Gorbachev was not to be trusted or was about to fall himself—and that a faltering Soviet Union, the emancipation of Eastern Europe, and the unification of Germany were potentially very destabilizing events both for NATO and for European order and peace. The extraordinary pace of events in East Germany alarmed Washington as it alarmed Moscow. We would not be far from the truth to assume that Washington, too, was fearful of any attempt to “artificially trigger or accelerate processes that have not yet reached maturity” (Gorbachev). In this climate, even Kohl's supercautious ten-point program seemed an alarming initiative and there were complaints about our not having been consulted, as there were to be at the time of the Zheleznovodsk meeting.

At the Malta summit, President Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev, appropriately tossed together by turbulent seas, agreed that there should be no precipitate measures taken that might endanger the stable order of post-Cold War Europe. At the NATO meeting in Brussels (December 4, 1989), President Bush proposed four principles regarding German unification: 1) leave the outcome of German self-determination and possible form of union open; 2) tie German unification to NATO and to the further integration of the European Community, as well as to the rights and obligations of the allied powers; 3) keep efforts toward union peaceful and gradual in the interest of general stability in Europe; and 4) embrace the principles of the Final Act of Helsinki regarding the question of borders.

A week later, Secretary of State James A. Baker met Prime Minister Modrow in Potsdam and repeated these four principles before the Press Club of West Berlin, where he also spoke of “a new architecture for a

new age,” consisting of a reformed and broadened NATO, a European Community with new links of American participation, and the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) of the Helsinki Agreements. The remarks about NATO came as no surprise, for the organization had been open to the discussion of détente and other changes since the days of the Harmel Report of 1967. More novel was the reference to the CSCE, which had long been seen as a Soviet creation and regarded with considerable suspicion in Washington. The U.S. government even signaled its support for another Helsinki summit in late 1990, provided that the Vienna Conference on the Reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) had by then produced some results. The CSCE was credited with progress in human rights and freedom of travel in Eastern Europe and, it was hoped, would have an important supporting role in the development of elections and democratic government throughout the newly emancipated states of the region.

In all this, the Bush administration was careful not to weaken Gorbachev's internal position which it had come to embrace. The Soviet leader had initially expressed his opposition to German unification and hinted that it would precipitate his downfall. When Gorbachev came around to accepting a “neutralized” united Germany, Chancellor Kohl immediately objected to German neutrality. Then Genscher devised his compromise plan for neutralizing only East Germany, and the plan was quickly adopted by the United States before most of the details had been clarified. Gorbachev in time accepted it too once he had succeeded in shoring up his support at home.²¹ Given the historical precedents of Soviet/Russian cooperation with Germany from the days of Bismarck and earlier (the Rapallo Treaty of Weimar days [1922], the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, and of course the forty years of the GDR), the Western fears of a “Stavrapallo”—an allusion to Gorbachev's old home grounds in Stavropol—form a natural part of the difficult choices confronting American policymakers. German neutrality would be only one step removed from the tradition of German *Schaukelpolitik* (policy of the swing) between East and West, and from collusion with the East against the West.

German policymakers and public opinion have credited the Bush administration, and especially the president himself and his secretary, Baker, with a major role supporting German unification through its

21. There had been considerable speculation about whether the United States could really have stopped the Germans from a neutralized, pro-Soviet, or “equidistant” course between the powers. See Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, “Will Bush ‘Lose’ Germany?” *Washington Post*, Dec. 27, 1989. An election mandate of this direction in the March elections of the GDR and a neutralist turn in West German opinion might have put the United States in an awkward position.

difficult first year. Only Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have been perceived as supporters in similar, glowing terms. On the other hand, German public opinion has also been aware of the frequently critical voices in the American press against whom the Bush administration pursued its German policy.

Great Britain and France

If Washington was able to rally to a consistent and supportive policy because the changes in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the reunification of Germany, if unexpected, corresponded more or less to long-established goals of American foreign policy, this was hardly true of France, Great Britain, and Germany's other neighbors in Europe. France and Britain, in particular, faced the prospect of a considerable shift in their respective weight in the European Community and Western alliance and, worst yet, little leverage in influencing the specific course which developments might take. For France, in particular, the option of exercising leverage through NATO—a crucial lever that was used particularly by the United States—was not available since France had left NATO in the early years of de Gaulle's presidency. France was reduced to emphasizing the leverage through the European Community which, at this point, was still mostly an economic and not a political union. Britain, by the same logic, could not use its EC leverage because the Thatcher administration was in the middle of a major rearguard battle against the EC program to "deepen" European integration after 1992, a battle in which the fear of losing British sovereignty to a European political union, currency, and central bank were joined with age-old prejudices against the French—"the poodles of the Germans" (Nicholas Ridley)—and the World War I and II animosity against the Germans. Margaret Thatcher and half her cabinet, as well as President Mitterrand, were of a generation that could vividly recall the German assault in the Second World War and that, therefore, reacted with great alarm at the prospect of revived German might and, half a year later, at the renewed entente of Zhelezdnovodsk. The two countries could have combined forces and, at the very least, delayed German unification beyond its narrow window of opportunity in mid-1990, had they been able to overcome their mutual distrust and had not the victorious superpower of the West—also led by a war generation president, but a veteran of the Pacific theater—confidently steered the Western alliance along a path of East-West reconciliation and German unification.

France, Germany's most important continental partner in Western Europe until then, was as surprised by the dramatic turn of events in 1989 as anyone. The great upheaval in Eastern Europe captured the popular imagination and, as noted above, ample majorities supported German self-determination and unification as well. Perhaps, the bicentennial of the French Revolution also helped to awaken French sympathies for the demonstrators of Leipzig who eventually brought down the communist dictatorship. On the other hand, the French commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the German invasion of their country (May 10, 1940) with many a bitter editorial and reminiscence, with appropriate comments on the "*incertitudes allemandes*," and the "*grosse Allemagne*" of past and future. But in November 1989, the Mitterrand government had emphasized the role of the four allies in any change of status of the two Germanys, when pressed by journalists who had also questioned the Soviet leader. A month later in another press interview, Mitterrand said he could not imagine that the Germans would want to sacrifice European unity to their own, but there were many voices in his administration and in the French press who could indeed.²² Worse yet, whereas the French stressed West German commitment to a "deepening" of the European Community in its present borders, the British promoted precisely the broader, East European reference points for a solution of the German question that the French feared.

Mitterrand also insisted on the democratic and peaceful nature of any progress in this direction and mentioned the need to persuade not only the four wartime allies but also the GDR, which at the time was still known to oppose unification. Perhaps he could have "guided the course of German unification," as *Le Figaro* editor Franz-Olivier Giesbert put it in his biography of Mitterrand but, instead, he just let it happen as something inevitable. French policy had long accepted the survival of the GDR as a guarantee of European stability and of the presence of the Soviet power in the midst of Europe, keeping the Federal Republic in the Western alliance. France had been the only Western ally to exchange visits at the highest level with the GDR, in early 1988, and Mitterrand chose to visit the Modrow government, after several postponements, just ahead of Kohl the week before Christmas 1989.²³ France was quite happy

22. *Nouvel Observateur*, Jul. 27, 1989. He also doubted that the Soviet Union would ever accept German unification. On French reactions to German unification, see especially Ingo Kolboom, *Vom geteilten zum vereinigten Deutschland. Deutschland-Bilder in Frankreich* (Bonn: Europa Union, April 1991), pp. 9–12, and the reprinted French magazine covers on pp. 80–106.

23. Concerned about Honecker's refusal to adopt *perestroika* in the GDR, the French government had expressed its apprehensions and had postponed its state visit twice. Mitterrand had also declared ten years earlier, during the European elections of 1979, that

with the division of Europe—despite such slogans as “one Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains” (de Gaulle) or “overcoming Yalta” (Mitterrand). The unity-bent Germans were simply “in too much of a hurry,” said Foreign Minister Roland Dumas in a press interview with *Der Spiegel* magazine (June 5, 1990). Dumas (age sixty-seven), whose father was in the Resistance and was executed by the German occupation for his activities, is also of the war generation.

The accelerating crisis of the GDR regime knocked most of these considerations of an East-West balance into a cocked hat and left the French government mute and helpless. At this point, the close and cordial relations of the entire postwar period—between Konrad Adenauer and Robert Schuman, later with Charles de Gaulle, and between Helmut Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing, far less between Kohl and Mitterrand—the Franco-German entente of the European Community, began to collide with the geopolitical rivalry between France and a prospective, considerably enlarged Germany at the center of Europe. President Mitterrand (age seventy-three) remembered the war and the Third Reich all too well, although most of his party leaders and cabinet members belonged to the two postwar generations. He pointed to the risk of “destabilizing the existing East-West balance” at a time when that balance had long been irretrievably lost. Foreign Minister Dumas, on the other hand, insisted on pressing the agenda for further European integration, which held the promise of tying down the emerging giant in constructive ways.²⁴ The French government was particularly concerned about the German commitment to the maintenance of European borders guaranteed by the Helsinki Agreements (CSCE), which the Bonn government had signed in 1975. The French government felt that Kohl's ten-point statement (November 28, 1989) should have included a pledge to respect the Oder-Neisse line and expressed genuine alarm at the flap over the border question. Like President de Gaulle, thirty years earlier, Mitterrand also made French assent contingent on the express renunciation of nuclear arms by Germany. France, however, was still building the atomic Hadès missile (range: 300 miles), which could reach much of Germany. In the conservative newspaper *Le Figaro*, moreover, Edouard Balladur raised

German unification was neither likely nor desirable. See Wilfried Loth, *Ost-West Konflikt und deutsche Frage* (Stuttgart: DTV, 1989), p. 46ff.

24. French public opinion in favor of German unification had been rising since August and was quite free of the caustic slogans concerning the “rise of a Fourth Reich” (Conor Cruise O'Brien) which could be heard in Britain at this time. But see the popular apprehensions expressed by Alain Minc, *La Grande Illusion* (Paris: Grasset, 1989) and Michel Koriman, *Quand l'Allemagne pensait le monde. Grandeur et décadence d'une géopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

the crucial Eurostrategic question of whether there would emerge a neutral, unified Germany outside of NATO and the Warsaw Pact (WTO), the worst possible scenario in the eyes of France²⁵ but the obvious preference of the Soviet Union at the time. This disagreement was a major obstacle to a renewal of the old strategic alliance of French and Soviet interests.

In the end, the Mitterrand government decided to combine cautious support for Kohl with an emphasis on European integration, the CSCE (Helsinki) organization, and working out problems on the basis of the occupation rights of the old Allied Control Council for Germany and the treaties and arrangements modifying those rights.²⁶ As the French saw it, the Kohl government and its predecessors had made a sincere commitment to European integration and could be expected to live up to its pledge within reason. The French public also maintained its generous support for German unification even though the perception of worrisome consequences was widespread. A Sofres poll ascertained that 58% of French adults were “for German reunification,” 9% against, and 28% indifferent. But large majorities saw a united Germany as economically (83% yes, 6% no), politically (70% yes, 17% no), and even militarily (44% yes, 35% no)—despite the French *force de frappe*—predominant in Europe. Young Frenchmen and Frenchwomen were significantly more positive about German unity than those over age sixty-five. In another Sofres poll, nearly half the French respondents (43%) feared that German unification would make European unification more difficult—20% thought it would become easier, 25% that it might not make a difference—and nearly that many (37%) believed it would weaken France. Another 62% believed that a united Germany would dominate the European Community. Nevertheless, a large majority of French (67%) and Germans (54%) in October considered themselves “best friends.”

British opinion on German politics and culture had long been divided along two opposite strands: a negative syndrome fed by the emotions of two world wars and a sense of competition to the bitter end—in World

25. The U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, had insisted from the beginning that a united Germany should be in NATO, but the Quai d'Orsay and knowledgeable observers believed this to be an unacceptable choice for the Soviets. See *Le Figaro*, Nov. 16, 1989. The French foreign minister feared that the Soviet Union might offer the Germans a bargain they could hardly refuse: reunification in exchange for neutralization.

26. See “Frankreich angesichts der deutschen Einheit,” by Walter Schütze, the general secretary of the Franco-German Study Group of the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI) (Paris), in *Europa Archiv*, no. 4 (Feb. 15, 1990), 133–138, and the polls reprinted in Kolboom, *Vom geteilten zum vereinigten Deutschland*, pp. 70–79, and in *Das Profil der Deutschen. Was sie vereint, was sie trennt* (Hamburg: Spiegel-Spezial, Jan. 1991), pp. 24–27. The polls range from October 1988 to January 1991.

War I Britain even banned the public performance of Wagnerian music—and a positive one based on old alliances, shared antagonists (France, the Hapsburg empire) and considerable cultural influence (e.g., in British elite education), which generally was abandoned after 1945. The discredit of German cultural influence as a result of Nazi crimes and two wars, of course, explains why many educated young Britons, but also young Americans, Scandinavians, and other Europeans after 1945, did not acquire the familiarity with the German language and German cultural figures that many of their fathers and mothers still had. As a factor running contrary to the direct effect of the wartime experience on pro- and anti-German attitudes, this deserves some emphasis. The post-war generations of Germany's neighbors might lack the well-founded hostility of their predecessors, but they were also far less familiar with the postwar Germans. In countries like the Netherlands, Denmark, or Italy, the negative views of Germany by both old and young tended to predominate.

The government of Great Britain had signed as many treaties committing it to German reunification as anyone in the alliance, in particular the Germany Treaty of 1952/54 and later agreements. Under the combative Thatcher administration, which next to Mrs. Thatcher (age sixty-four) included many members of the World War II generation, however, the sudden prospect of unification was received with a belligerent attitude worthy of a threat of renewed German attack on the British isles. One British observer, Richard Davy of Oxford, suggested three specifically British elements behind the strong reaction, all relating to World War II and the British reluctance to become involved with the continent. Great Britain was never conquered and occupied by the Germans and, for that reason, never experienced the many forms of collaboration and proximity that have colored most of the other continental neighbors' feelings about the Germans for the last fifty years. Distance and late entry into the European Community also gave Great Britain an outsider status among continentals and a marginal position vis-à-vis the Franco-German duopoly. Finally, Davy mentioned the mythology in public opinion and television concerning the Second World War as a high point of British history after which economic decline and the erosion of British influence in the world are seen to have occurred.²⁷ The rise of defeated Germany to prosperity and power was perceived as the counterpoint to the humbling of British imperial pride, even though the latter had very little to do with the former. To be sure, there had been earlier German challenges to

27. Richard Davy, "Grossbritannien und die deutsche Frage," *Europa Archiv*, no. 4 (Feb. 15, 1990), 139–144.

British dominance in the twentieth century, especially in 1914 and 1939, but Great Britain had always won the contest. If Britons now felt subjectively they were the losers vis-à-vis their German competitors, moreover, it could only be a matter of economic prowess and not of military posture or the "return of German fascism," as a majority of Britons said they feared. The Gulf War finally deflated the myth of a German military threat to Great Britain, argued so passionately by Nicholas Ridley and Conor Cruise O'Brien, and turned the issue into British complaints about German cowardice and unwillingness to fight.

The warnings of O'Brien in the *London Times* (Oct. 31) and of Lord Rees-Mogg in *The Independent* (Dec. 4) were extreme enough to generate a reaction. O'Brien had predicted the rise of a Fourth Reich that might "rehabilitate racial theories" and erect a monument to Hitler in every town. Or, as he added as an afterthought in the *Times* (Nov. 17), it would at least resemble the empire of Bismarck and the Hohenzollerns. Rees-Mogg conjured up the rise of a "German Age" but expressed the hope that it would not be characterized by the swastika and by concentration camps. A number of notable journalists and politicians such as ex-Prime Minister James Callahan (Labour) pointed out the democratic record of forty years of West German government or pleaded to give the Germans a chance to show what they would actually do.²⁸ The extreme contrasts between these alternative futures, in any case, tended to obscure the real issues relevant to British options in regard to future cooperation with Germany and the European Community. The wild speculations about the presumable intent of future German governments and their supporters also obstructed any realistic discussion of the real problem of German unification for the European allies: the size of the German population and economy.

The younger generations and British businessmen had long suffered under the Thatcherite reluctance to become involved with the continent and continental nations like the French and the Germans. Like the younger generations on the continent, they exhibit far less pride in the British nation and empire than that which still motivates their elders of the Ridley and Thatcher generation. They have little fear of the measures for further integration of the European Community and are anxious not to be left out when European economic opportunities resulting from these measures beckon. They tend to view the European Community as promising a tide of prosperity that will raise their ships as well.²⁹

28. See Bernard Levin in *The Times* (London), Nov. 2, 1989, and James Callahan, *ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1990. Also see *The Economist*, Jan. 27, 1990, and Peter Jenkins in *The Independent*, Feb. 1, 1990.

29. With Prime Minister Thatcher, the transitional thinking of Manchesterism and

The Thatcher administration reacted at first with anger to Kohl's ten points of November 28, 1989, reading a curiously patronizing interpretation of the "responsibility of the allies for German reunification" into the appropriate clause (art. 7) of the Germany Treaty of 1952/54: "Until the final regulation in a peace treaty, the signatory states will work peacefully towards the realization of their common goal: a reunified Germany with a liberal democratic constitution like that of the FRG and integrated into the European community of nations." There was a strong feeling that the allies should have been consulted, and even Egon Krenz did not escape criticism for "having opened the Wall" without consulting the Soviets. Better counsel soon prevailed, however, as events escalated during the following two months. By February 1990, when even the Kremlin had approved unification in principle, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was ready to spell out a more pragmatic approach—the secret Thatcher seminar of experts on Germany was meant to brief Mrs. Thatcher on German "national attributes" for an impending Kohl visit—which concentrated on *how* and no longer on *whether* unification would take place. A "confederative arrangement" between the FRG and the GDR might slow down the process by which Thatcherite England felt it was being pulled into European integration. Slowing it down and reinforcing the status quo by leaving some Soviet troops in the GDR would "force us to appraise the current situation correctly," she said in an interview with *Der Spiegel* magazine (March 27, 1990). A closer relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union, on the other hand, was an alarming development and needed to be avoided. The CSCE, NATO, and even the Warsaw Pact might provide sea anchors in the approaching storm, calming the effect of the forces of change on the status quo.

The replacement of Mrs. Thatcher with John Major in the fall of 1990 put an end not only to her campaign against further European integration—it was preceded by the Venice EC summit at which she had pretended to be a victim, surrounded by malevolent continentals scheming to take advantage of British sovereignty—but also to the official hostility to the Kohl government and to German unification.³⁰ Her

imperial pride seemed to be combined with a personal dislike for Germans and for Chancellor Kohl in particular. Her tendency to orient her international policies toward the superpowers, moreover, has inspired both a kind of jealousy in regard to the growth of a special relationship between Washington and Bonn and an exaggerated desire to support Gorbachev by avoiding steps that might embarrass him. In a January 1990 interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Mrs. Thatcher somehow connected the possible disequilibrium in the European Community, resulting from German unification, with dire consequences for Gorbachev himself.

30. In some circles, British-German backbiting had taken on amazing forms. In a curious counterpoint to the Chequers seminar on German national "characteristics," West German

successor by no means abandoned Britain's reservations about the European financial and economic plans, but preferred early and active involvement to a defensive rearguard battle. By means of visits to various European leaders, particularly Chancellor Kohl, Prime Minister Major set out to take a direct hand in shaping the anticipated EC measures and, in the process, discovered some of the commonly held interests of Britons and Germans. His initiative was gratefully received in Bonn where the German policymakers had really been at a loss regarding well-considered responses to British hostility.³¹

Canadian opinion on German unification did not differ notably from that in the United States. In Italy and the Benelux countries there was a mixture of supportive and very critical comments. Some voices in the Italian press, in particular, expressed great apprehension of the political and economic power of a united Germany. In the ensuing discussion of which countries among the numerous World War II belligerents ought to participate in the final peace settlement, the Italian government also tried to put in a claim, presumably on the basis of the argument that it, too, fell under hostile German occupation in the last year of war, lost 40,000 casualties to Nazi occupation, and ought to ask for reparations from its erstwhile Axis ally. This claim was not accepted by the powers of the "two-plus-four" group.

One of the first governments to raise objections to possible German unification plans was the Likud government of Israel, whose Prime Minister Itzak Shamir, already in November 1989, had remarked on American television that "a strong and united Germany might again try to annihilate the Jewish people." He was soon echoed by former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon: "We must not forget what the Germans did to us when they were united." Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel added, in *Der Spiegel* magazine early in 1991, that "we Jews cannot consider a unification of Germany. We have to think twice about the implications." These opinions, however, were soon contradicted by other Jewish voices, such as the Israel-born Munich historian Michael Wolffsohn who, in his book

business managers were at one point reported discussing publicly the alleged inferiority of the British "business culture" or entrepreneurial climate, with predictable consequences of mutual recrimination and countercharges.

31. Chancellor Kohl's first response to the disclosures about Ridley's statements and the Chequers seminar was appropriate but not particularly constructive. He was reported to have called them, with a chuckle, "rather silly." See also the discussion of various top-level Anglo-German relationships, from the warmth between Chancellor Brandt and Edward Heath to the new entente of Kohl and Major, in *The Economist*, March 9, 1991, pp. 51–52. The same issue also describes the contribution of British television to the anti-German stereotypes of the nation.

No Need to Fear Germany [Keine Angst vor Deutschland], criticized German intellectuals Günter Grass and Walter Jens who use Auschwitz as a "political means of buying souls against reunification." Wolffsohn argued that the German division was the result of the "rivalries of power politics and ideology," and not of a moral judgment, and that there is no logical nexus connecting Auschwitz and reunification. There were other voices on both sides, including sober accounts of the forty-year history of Bonn's efforts to give restitution both to individual survivors and to the state of Israel—which has resulted in the "special relationship" of the two peoples, if not without some flaws, breakdowns, and misunderstandings on both sides.

The prospect of German unification even lit a fire under the last communist premier of the GDR, Hans Modrow, to reverse decades of anti-Zionism, nonrecognition of Israel, and support for Arab terrorist groups. Since early February 1990, representatives of the GDR and of Israel had been at work in Copenhagen, preparing the ground for diplomatic relations. Israel insisted that the GDR must recognize, for the GDR population, the German responsibility for the holocaust and agree to restitution for the victims. In mid-February, then, the GDR premier wrote President E. Bronfman of the Jewish World Congress that "the GDR accepts the responsibility of the whole German people for the past . . . crimes against the Jewish people" and indicated "a willingness to grant solidary material support to former Nazi victims of persecution of Jewish origin." This completed the German acknowledgment of the responsibility for the holocaust—the newly elected government of Lothar de Maizière followed suit—and reinforced the German-Israeli relationship in time for the actual measures of the unification that had so troubled some Jewish observers. A poll of 1,200 Israelis conducted by Hebrew University of Jerusalem in May 1990—on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of West German-Israeli diplomatic relations—revealed that two-thirds of Israelis considered the German-Israeli relationship "normal." Eight years earlier, only one-third of Israeli adults had said so. Even more significant was the finding that a substantial majority, 57% (it had been only 40% in 1982) of Israelis no longer held "today's Germans" responsible for the holocaust. This was, of course, not the end of critical voices, which would be heard again at the time of the Zheleznovodsk meeting, along with Nicholas Ridley, when Britain's Chief Rabbi, Lord Jacobovits made a public appeal for international guarantees to prevent "a resurgence of German militarism" and to ensure that never again would "hate propaganda, religious oppression, or the persecution of

minorities be tolerated, or excused by the claim, as used by the Nazis, that these were purely German matters."³²

The Hapsburg Spell Without the Empire

While it was a matter of first priority to look at the policies and attitudes of the great powers and West European leaders toward German unification, that only explains the past and is hardly enough to gauge the future role of a united Germany, now that the unification has taken place. The drastic changes in Eastern Europe, and increasingly in parts of the Soviet Union, constitute an extraordinary opportunity for German economic power (and, perhaps also, political influence) to expand into the great vacuum and willy-nilly to develop a hegemonic position in the East. Such a shift of politicoeconomic power from the old FRG to the East—possibly implied also by the choice of Berlin as the capital—would increase German leverage in the European Community and in the Western alliance far beyond the effect of simply adding the old GDR to the FRG. To assess the likelihood of such a development, however, we first need to understand the present and historical attitudes of the various East European neighbors toward the Germans, and German efforts to woo them. Second, we must assume that as the economic recovery of a united Germany or, rather, of the former GDR, proceeds on schedule, the eventual result will be an economically strong Germany, say at the pre-1990 level of the old FRG. And, third, we must assume that German-East European relations in the future will be cooperative and not inhibited by a possible German relapse into imperialism or an East European turn toward dictatorship and autarky.

The aspect that raises the greatest problem is the geopolitical configuration of the great changes in Eastern and Central Europe and in German-Austrian, -Polish, -Czech, -Yugoslav, and -Hungarian relations. It was here, after all, that Hapsburg rule and the other pre-1914 empires began to unravel more than a hundred years ago amid the stirring

32. Wolffsohn's book was published in 1990 by Straube of Erlangen, Bonn, and Vienna. See also Rainer Zitelmann in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Nov. 27, 1990, as well as the historical review of German-Israeli relations by Jitzhak Ben-Ari, "Israel und die Bundesrepublik. Eine Bilanz besonderer Beziehungen," *Das Parlament*, supp. B15/90, Apr. 6, 1990, pp. 3-7, and Niels Hansen, "Verbindungen in die Zukunft, 25 Jahre diplomatische Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Israel," *ibid.*, pp. 8-18. Lord Jacobovits is quoted in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Jul. 29, 1990.

The Quest for European Security

We appear to have gotten a little ahead of our story about the international context of German unification, but for a reason: it would be rather misleading to describe the structures of European security before a full awareness of the profoundly different context that is to be served by the German and other European security policies is established. In the chronology of German unification, nevertheless, we do have to begin with the structures of yesteryear that, by now, have registered the extraordinary changes of 1989–1991. In the beginning, the great shock of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the inner-German borders, as will be remembered, caused such a reaction among some of Germany's Western allies that they invoked long-forgotten—at least by the German public, which believed that the occupation had ended and that West Germany had regained sovereignty back in 1955—occupation rights. The Germany Treaty of 1952 (art. 11) between the Adenauer government and the three Western allies had indeed provided for the abrogation of the Occupation Statute of 1949 and the end of the Allied High Commission for Germany, and the intended “transfer of sovereignty” had occurred after some delay with the admission of the FRG to NATO on May 5, 1955. But there had been allied reservations from the beginning, “regard-

ing the allied rights and responsibilities" with respect to "Berlin and to Germany as a whole," including German reunification and a final settlement in a peace treaty. The ratification of the Germany Treaty triggered prolonged debates over German rearmament and the constitutional obstacles to it and, in the FRG, it was not completed until 1953, long after the treaty had been accepted by the appropriate authorities in Great Britain and the United States.

French agreement was even harder to obtain. In fact, the whole enterprise faltered when the French National Assembly, on August 30, 1954, rejected the European Defense Community (EDC), which would have placed the German military forces into the same six-nation framework that had been created for the European Coal and Steel Community and would soon form the Common Market. In place of the EDC, which did not include Great Britain, a seven-nation group including Britain was devised at the Fall 1954 Foreign Ministers' Conference in London and was called the Western European Union (WEU). The Paris treaties finally completed German accession to NATO and thereby put the Germany Treaty into effect.

The allies had also reserved the right to station military forces and to provide for possible emergencies regarding the protection of those forces—a provision (art. 5[2]) that lapsed when the FRG adopted its own emergency legislation in 1968. Article 7 of the Germany Treaty also pledged the FRG to abide by the principles of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and obliged all signatories to work toward the "common goal of German reunification in freedom" and toward the conclusion of a peace treaty for all of Germany.¹ West German membership in NATO meant that the FRG made considerable forces available to Western defense against a possible Soviet or Warsaw Pact attack. These forces, however, up to the highest command levels, were completely integrated into the multinational NATO structure so as to avoid leaving a German army under German command to pursue German objectives—such as liberating East Germany or the Oder-Neisse area. West German defense ministers and generals participated regularly in the meetings of the NATO Council, its Military Committee, and in the integrated command structure. German membership in WEU overcame French fears of West German rearmament and facilitated acceptance of German entry into NATO by exacting certain pledges of arms control from the FRG, such as the one against the production of nuclear, biological, or chemical (ABC) weapons in the FRG.²

1. Additional treaties between the FRG and the three Western allies regulated the further stationing of allied troops, the West German contribution toward their maintenance, and other matters resulting from war and occupation.

2. See Helga Haftendorn and Lothar Wilker, "Die Sicherheitspolitik der beiden

When the Thatcher cabinet and the Mitterrand administration in their first reaction to the collapse of the Wall resurrected the notion of reserved rights, better counsel soon prevailed in Washington. The presidential advisers and the U.S. State Department evidently took the long-range view that such a stance would make for dissension within NATO and might push the Germans into the neutralist camp if not into collusion with the Soviets at this extraordinary moment in history. American policymakers also saw in Bonn a reliable partner within the establishment of a free and unified European Community of the future, which might possibly extend far into Eastern Europe.³ As President Bush reported at the NATO summit in late 1989, the United States was prepared to endorse a possible German unification, provided that Germany remain in NATO and be part of the intensified European Community, that the allied rights and responsibilities be respected, and that the unification process be peaceful and gradual and not challenge the postwar boundaries in Europe (such as the Polish and Czech borders with Germany). The Bush administration envisaged the final liquidation of allied occupation rights and the establishment of full German sovereignty, including a free choice of alliances—Kohl had left no doubt as to how his government would respond, and the American line further strengthened his resolve against Soviet insistence on German neutrality. The American policy was also designed to soften the impact on German and international opinion of the ambassadorial-level meeting of the quadripartite Allied Control Council (December 11, 1989) that had been called by the Soviets to reassert the residual occupation rights.

The Two-Plus-Four Negotiations

At the "open skies" meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Ottawa (February 13, 1990), after months of persuading the French and the British to go along, a series of "two-plus-four" meetings among the two German governments and the four wartime allies was launched to deal with the "external aspects" of German unification. The "internal unification" would be left to the two German states, the allied foreign ministers decided. While "internal unification"

deutschen Staaten," in *Deutschland Handbuch. Eine doppelte Bilanz 1949–1989* (Munich: Hanser, 1989), pp. 605–620.

3. See Elizabeth Pond, *After the Wall: American Policy Towards Germany* (New York: Priority Press, 1990), chaps. 4–6, and Karl Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung: Die internationalen Aspekte* (Bergisch-Gladbach: Bastei-Lübbe, 1991), pp. 49–58.

proceeded at its own speed, the two-plus-four group met subsequently in Bonn (May 5), East Berlin (June 22), Paris (July 17), and finally Moscow (September 12), where the final agreement was signed. The meetings involved considerable conflict over timing and such questions as borders, new European security arrangements, the status of occupied Berlin, and various Soviet proposals.⁴ After the Bonn meeting, for example, the West Germans expressed their alarm at the Soviet emphasis on separating the "internal" and "external" aspects, with Moscow evidently wishing to postpone the latter and thus deny the Germans the self-determination they wanted. At the Paris meeting, Polish Foreign Minister Skubiszewski was also invited, and the Oder-Neisse line was fixed in a Five-Point Declaration pledging the Germans to recognize this border in a treaty following the completion of unification. The earlier Western emphasis on the containment of Soviet power softened as soon as the Soviets dropped their opposition to united German NATO membership—that is to say, when President Gorbachev met with Kohl in Zheleznovodsk in mid-July. Frequent meetings between the Soviet, American, and West German foreign ministers did much to prepare the ground for the sudden agreement in July⁵ and the subsequent Treaty on German Sovereignty (Two-Plus-Four) of September 12, 1990. The unexpected acquiescence of the Soviet Union—and the revelation of Nicholas Ridley's views—helped to overcome the last resistance of the British government as well. The final treaty was accompanied by a letter to the wartime allies, in particular the Soviet government, signed by both German representatives. This letter assured the Soviets that a) the East German expropriations of 1945–1949 (under Soviet occupation) would not be rescinded and b) the territory of the former GDR would not see NATO maneuvers or have non-German NATO troops stationed there.

The treaty itself once more guaranteed all the German borders and linked them with the peaceful future European order. The two Germanys, and united Germany, pledged to forswear any territorial claims and promised to eliminate all wording to the contrary (for instance, arts. 23[2] and 146) from the Basic Law.⁶ The two German governments,

4. At the meeting in East Berlin, for example, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze proposed to limit German troops to 250,000 (half of the West German contribution to NATO) and to provide a five-year period during which all treaties of either Germany and especially those regarding their membership in NATO and the Warsaw Pact were to continue in force. The proposal was defeated.

5. See especially Wilhelm Bruns, "Die Regelung der äusseren Aspekte der deutschen Einigung," *Deutschland Archiv* 22, no. 11 (Nov. 1990), 1726–1728.

6. These articles, which had of course been meant for German unification only, were viewed as possible openings for German imperialistic expansion (e.g., if German Oder-Neisse or Sudeten refugees should appeal to them as a basis for "admission" of their Eastern territories to the FRG).

furthermore, confirmed their earlier declaration "that [from now on] only peace will emanate from German soil" and that any actions disturbing peaceful relations between nations, particularly "preparing for aggressive war," would be proscribed by German law and the Constitution. German arms, the two governments pledged, would never be used again except under these constitutional restrictions and according to the U.N. Charter. The treaty also repeated the German renunciation of the "manufacture, possession, and control" of ABC weapons and reiterated Kohl's promise at Zheleznovodsk, and the West German statement at the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations in Vienna two weeks earlier, placing a cap of 370,000 soldiers on German land, air, and naval forces (345,000 in the army and air force). The treaty also provided for the removal of Soviet troops from German soil by the end of 1994 and stipulated that, until that time, the Germans could only station territorial defense troops there that did not belong to NATO or other military alliances. The Western allied troops stationed in Berlin before the conclusion of the treaty were permitted to remain there until the final withdrawal of the Soviet army. After 1994, foreign troops and nuclear delivery systems could no longer be in the former GDR—only German conventional troops. In other words, the East German area would become a neutral and nuclear-free zone.

The treaty specifically left "the rest of united Germany" free to belong to any military alliance. It also terminated all remaining rights of the four powers with respect to Berlin and "Germany as a whole" and any practices or quadripartite agreements pertaining thereto: "united Germany shall have accordingly full sovereignty over its internal and external affairs."⁷ As the late Wilhelm Bruns pointed out, the "two-plus-four" negotiators were quite successful in resolving most of the pressing questions of the international context of German unification, except for showing the way to a new security system. There was, however, a concern that Soviet consent to this settlement might be no more reliable than Gorbachev's and Shevardnadze's stay in office. The Soviet leaders had not consulted their opposition—influential opponents such as Yegor Ligachev and Valentin Falin—and had neglected to persuade the wider Soviet public and its representatives that the agreements between Kohl and the Soviet president were in the best long-term interest of the Soviet Union.⁸

7. For the German text, see Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung*, pp. 260–268. The letters of Genscher and de Maizièrre, on the German side, and an exchange between Genscher and Secretary of State Baker follow (pp. 269–273), regarding property claims of U.S. citizens in East Germany. There is also Shevardnadze's statement of September 20, 1990, before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet, together with the official Soviet interpretation of what had transpired.

8. Bruns, "Die Regelung," pp. 1730–1732. Bruns still had his doubts about whether

Foreign Minister Genscher, in a concluding statement evidently aimed at Germany's smaller European neighbors—which had been excluded from the “two-plus-four” meeting and which at one point had clamored for participation—still promised to present this “final settlement” to the CSCE Foreign Ministers' Conference in New York early in October and to the CSCE summit meeting to follow so that “every CSCE participant will recognize that the final settlement is wholly consistent with CSCE principles.”

The treaty and the full sovereignty of united Germany were to enter into force as soon as the treaty was ratified by all six signatories. Such agreement was quite likely to be forthcoming so long as the process of bilateral contacts and multilateral meetings and agreements continued apace. The Soviet Union and united Germany were already working on their Good Neighbor, Partnership, and Cooperation Treaty—which reiterated the basic ideas of the Kohl-Gorbachev statement of June 13, 1989. In a remarkable passage (art. 3), it obliged the Germans “not to give any military assistance or aid to any attacker” of the Soviet Union (or vice versa) but to resolve the conflict under the rules of the United Nations or other collective security organizations; this was signed on September 13, 1990, by Genscher and Shevardnadze. There were two further agreements on the conditions of Soviet troop withdrawal and German financial support for this action (October 9 and 12). The Two-Plus-Four (Moscow) Treaty was ratified within a few months by the three Western allies and united Germany and, after some acrimonious debates, by the Supreme Soviet in early March 1991 (at which time it became effective).

It bears repeating that, contrary to German apprehensions, the Western allies made practically no painful demands on Germany—the recognition of borders, the limitation of German forces and ABC armaments, and the German preference for membership in NATO were never really a matter of dispute among the governments involved. The U.S. government, in fact, was instrumental in calming British and French fears and in turning a quadripartite decisionmaking process *about* Germany into reasonably consensual discussions *with* the two German governments. The Germans were also fortunate to be spared the long-threatened peace conference with all their wartime enemies—which probably would have been a time-consuming and expensive process—and the Moscow Treaty became the final peace treaty. The Soviet (and Polish) demands, while perhaps more painful, had already been conceded in bilateral contacts such as the Zhelezdnovodsk meeting before the final session by the German government.⁹ To the Soviets under Gorbachev, it would seem,

the still-inexperienced decisionmaking process of the Supreme Soviet would bring this matter to a conclusion, since the German question probably paled before other policy necessities in Soviet eyes.

9. Polish concerns regarding the Oder-Neisse line were laid to rest at the Paris meeting.

the great attraction of German cooperation was that it promised Soviet access to Europe and the West, economic aid for *perestroika*, and a key to the “European house.” Hence, forty-five years to the day after the beginning of the Potsdam Conference, on July 17, 1990, the extraordinary new understanding of Zhelezdnovodsk between Germany and the Soviet Union¹⁰ had at least the potential of, say, close economic cooperation between Japan and China, between an economic locomotive and an endless train of resources. This potential, which of course is still uncertain of realization at this moment—especially in view of the centrifugal forces tearing at the Soviet Union—was bound to raise uneasy reflections in London and Paris, even though no one at the time questioned the Western democratic character and loyalties of the Federal Republic. The source of European apprehension, as before, appeared to be not the discernible intentions or even the military power of united Germany, but the magnitude of the emerging economic colossus.¹¹

At the Security Crossroads in Europe

In the preamble of the Two-Plus-Four Treaty, there are several clauses referring to European security needs in the midst of the breakup of the prior system of three decades of *détente* and deterrence between NATO

German and other European press reactions echoed the profound significance of the Zhelezdnovodsk meeting between President Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl, who probably also owes his December election victory to it. See *Der Spiegel* 44, no. 30, Jul. 23, 1990, pp. 16–27, and *Le Monde*, *Le Quotidien de Paris*, *The Economist*, and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* for the dates following July 17, 1990.

10. Former French Foreign Minister Jean-François Poncet, after a rather positive assessment in a *Spiegel* interview, added: “It is possible that some people in Moscow are thinking of a German-Russian double hegemony over Europe—an outdated, nonmodern, Little European idea.” *Der Spiegel* 45, no. 30, Jul. 23, 1991, p. 23. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of the week after Zhelezdnovodsk was quite typical in its suspicious reactions to the restoration of German sovereignty. The editorials reflected the difficulty of conceiving of a sovereign nation-state of the size of Germany which did not hanker for nuclear weapons and power politics. See also the *Daily Telegraph* and Sweden's *Dagens Nyheter* for that date.

11. Bonn's negotiating strategies were sorely challenged by Moscow's earlier suggestions that perhaps all European nations should vote on German unification and, later, when Shevardnadze first proposed to postpone the resolution of the “external aspects” of unification in a move seemingly designed to foil united German NATO membership (May 5). Genscher's counterstrategy was to reinforce the CSCE, thereby giving the Soviet Union an institutionalized role in European security, to submit German arms reductions to the CFE negotiations in Vienna, and to offer a non-NATO former GDR—all *before* the Soviets could feel too isolated and cornered to respond to Kohl's offer of financial aid and economic cooperation.

and the Warsaw Pact: There is mention of the U.N. "principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples," of the principles of the Final Act of the CSCE (Helsinki Agreements), of "a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe," and of taking "account of everyone's security interests." The contracting governments, moreover, proclaimed their readiness to adopt "effective arms control, disarmament, and confidence-building measures" and to set up "appropriate institutional arrangements within the framework of the CSCE." But there was no mistaking the great uncertainties on nearly everyone's mind that came with the passing of the Cold War. What would take the place of the East-West stalemate, the face-off at Checkpoint Charlie—which was dismantled and shipped to the Smithsonian Institution—or at the Fulda Gap, through which the tanks of the Warsaw Pact had been expected to cross the German mountain ranges for more than three long decades?¹²

Already in late 1989, a secret intelligence report from the U.S. Defense Department had disclosed that "for the past several years" the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies had been incapable of quickly launching a massive attack—however much the "slanting" rhetoric of the "evil empire" may have demanded it for the domestic purposes of the Reagan administration. The rationale for Western strategy and troop deployment was long out of date. Back in mid-1990, the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) had not yet been dissolved, although most of its smaller members could no longer be counted upon. Still, there was the mighty Soviet military, and most observers took it for granted that the two main defense organizations, East and West, would continue to exist, albeit with intensified and progressive measures of disarmament and détente. A second possible scenario would have joined the two together in a permanent common security conference that would ensure that the steps of disarmament would be mutually balanced and verified. This was greatly facilitated by the "open skies" agreements disclosed at the NATO summit in mid-December 1989 and confirmed at Ottawa in mid-February 1990: a kind of *glasnost* of disarmament, the agreement permitted military inspection by overflight so that major troop movements and deployments could be observed by the other side. A third scenario foresaw the replacement of both defense organizations with a new, all-inclusive system of European collective security such as the CSCE, which included

12. See especially the pre-1990 literature, such as Stephen F. Larrabee, ed., *The Two German States and European Security* (New York: St. Martin's, 1989); Mary Kaldor, Gerard Holden, and Richard Falk, eds., *The New Détente: Rethinking East-West Relations* (London and Tokyo: Verso and the U.N. University, 1989); and James R. Golden et al., eds., *NATO at Forty: Change, Continuity, and Prospects* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1989). Also see Wolfram Hanrieder, *Deutschland, Europa, Amerika* (Munich/Vienna/Zurich: Schöningh, 1991), chap. 4.

all thirty-four (with Albania, thirty-five) of the interested nations, including two superpowers.¹³

After some passage of time, it became clear that the WTO would collapse and, in fact, that the entire Soviet empire had for many years already been much too weak to mount the kind of attack for which the American taxpayer had wasted billions of dollars. As Wolfram Hanrieder has suggested, the fading of the chief object of NATO's "double containment," the Soviet threat, put the onus of justification on those who continued to impose the containment on the other object, Germany. By fall of 1991, the Soviet Union was clearly unraveling as an empire with respect to some of its own union republics, not to mention former East European satellites, and had disappeared before the year was out. In March 1990, before this point had been reached, the foreign ministers of most East European governments made it clear to their Soviet WTO partners that they were far more afraid of a neutral Germany between the blocs, even a disarmed one, than they were of a united Germany under the double containment of NATO. In fact, some of them (especially Poland) began to explore—to the great surprise of the Soviets—whether they might join NATO themselves, or at least become associated with it. The point was that NATO continued to be strong while the WTO and the Soviet Union were no longer able to function as a significant counterweight. The Soviet decision to come to terms at Zheleznovodsk signaled a wholesale Soviet retreat from East-Central Europe. The Moscow Treaty, once ratified, terminated all Soviet military agreements with the GDR, began the gigantic Soviet troop withdrawal, and permitted the East German army to be absorbed by the West. After a while there were even some authoritative Soviet voices, such as the historian Vyacheslav Dashichev, an adviser of Mikhail Gorbachev, who also thought German NATO membership was preferable to neutrality, or the status of a "loose cannon" between the blocs.¹⁴

13. See the internal discussion in the Soviet Union reported by Wolfgang Pfeiler, *Die Viermächteoption als Instrument sowjetischer Deutschlandpolitik*, Interne Studie no. 25 (St. Augustin: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 1991), pp. 58–70. The basic Soviet position had been to seek a neutralized Germany between the blocs or, alternatively, a neutral and drastically disarmed Germany—solutions viewed with alarm for different reasons by East and West Europeans, not to mention the Germans. Soviet and WTO resistance to NATO membership for a united Germany ranged from the idea of linking reunification with the dissolution of NATO, to German "dual membership" (!) for at least five years, to arrangements of mere "association" with NATO, perhaps analogous to the "French solution" of political but not military association. One proposal aimed at further maintenance of Soviet troops in East Germany, or continued four-power control of the former GDR while permitting "internal unification," or even joint NATO-WTO troop contingents stationed there.

14. See Pfeiler, *Die Viermächteoption*, pp. 64–67. Hanrieder's argument appears in *Deutschland, Europa, Amerika*, pp. 446–448.

As the Soviets gradually came around to their new position of accepting German NATO membership, they also adopted an increasingly more positive image of Germany. Still, the Soviets and all the East and West Europeans—except for the Thatcher government in Britain—assumed that NATO, too, would change profoundly from “its old confrontational stance and its policy of putting weapons of mass destruction into German hands” into a more political structure.¹⁵ The East European desire to find reassurance with NATO continued unabated through the first half of 1991, if always mindful not to antagonize the Soviets by seeming too eager. Each of the Eastern nations made its own ambassador to Belgium simultaneously a diplomatic liaison with NATO and its committees. The “in-between Europeans” also appealed to WEU for security guarantees, their sense of urgency no doubt intensified by the murderous civil war in Yugoslavia. Finally, at their Copenhagen meeting (June 6, 1991), the NATO foreign ministers invited the East European governments *and the Soviet Union* to intensify their contacts with NATO, particularly at the higher levels of the officer corps (pointedly including the Soviet Union) but short of actual association. The abortive Soviet military coup of August 1991 witnessed even closer collaboration when the Polish and Czechoslovak military leadership traded intelligence with NATO about whether or not the remaining 300,000 Soviet troops in East Germany, especially in the eastern border regions, threatened to fight among each other or would bolt and battle their way home through Poland or the CSFR. NATO also considered setting up a NATO Cooperation Council for purposes of institutionalized consultation with the East Europeans and the Soviets, all of whom would be members. East Europeans have been among the most ardent supporters of NATO and of the U.S. role in Europe which they have viewed as a counterweight against Soviet power and against destabilization from within. They were hoping for some NATO action to oppose ethnic violence in Yugoslavia and elsewhere,¹⁶ although this was not an option acceptable to France, which (not being a NATO member) would prefer to leave such actions to the European Community or WEU.

15. The quote comes from an interview given by Evgeniy Primakov, another Gorbachev adviser and spokesman, on June 19, 1990, in Pfeiler, *Die Viermächteoption*, p. 68. The Thatcher government, after a week of bitter recrimination, finally applauded the decisions of Zhelezdnovodsk for the sake of NATO but feared it would speed up the pace of European union.

16. Hungarian dignitaries still tell about the attempt by former Soviet Defense Minister Dimitri T. Yazov, early in 1991, to blackmail the Hungarian government into signing a “friendship treaty” that would have forsworn any Western alliance, on pain of the last troops the Soviets had in Hungary not being withdrawn. Hungary also permitted NATO aircraft to cross its territory on the way to the Gulf.

Adjusting NATO to the New Requirements

The role of NATO indeed began to change by its own lights at the Turnberry (Scotland) meeting of the NATO Council on June 7–8, 1990, when the assembled defense ministers agreed to address directly their WTO colleagues, who were simultaneously gathering in Moscow, hoping to turn their military pact into a political union. The “message of Turnberry” was a hand of friendship and cooperation extended to the Soviet Union and the East European nations. The same message was repeated at the NATO summit in London (June 6), where a number of proposals were made for restructuring NATO. Among other things, it was proposed that both NATO and the WTO states issue a joint declaration renouncing armed aggression, and the Soviets and other WTO states were invited to address the NATO Council and to maintain diplomatic relations with it. The London summit also suggested a revision of NATO strategy, aiming at the reduction of nuclear arms and abandonment of the strategy of forward defense.¹⁷

To understand the altogether positive reactions to this “turning point”—not counting the groans from the military-industrial complexes on both sides¹⁸—we need only recall that, as recently as May 1990, NATO had canceled a huge force maneuver simulating its response to a Warsaw Pact ground attack. There had been small, combat-readiness maneuvers on both sides all the while that the negotiations in Vienna and Geneva were dragging on. Still under arms were 4.1 million men in East and West Germany (only about one-sixth of them Germans), 13,000 tanks, 1,200 fighter planes, and substantial numbers of short-range and tactical nuclear weapons. On the other hand, some NATO defense experts were already calling for unilateral force reductions—e.g. to fewer than 100,000 in the case of American troops (U.S. Senator Sam Nunn)—and for a phasing out of short-range and tactical nuclear arms, over which the West German government had been in conflict with Great Britain and

17. See Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung*, pp. 77–80, and Hanrieder, *Deutschland, Europa, Amerika*, pp. 446–447. In the end, both sides also agreed to withdraw their troops some distance from the old combat zone in order to minimize accidental encounters and provocation. The “message of Turnberry” is reprinted in Kaiser, pp. 225–226; the London Declaration is reprinted in *Europa Archiv*, no. 17 (Sept. 1, 1990), D456–460.

18. The negative reactions were just as strong in the Soviet army and defense industry as in their Western counterparts. In the CPSU, in particular, the conservative forces were rallying for their all-out assault on Gorbachev at the imminent 28th CPSU Congress. With Boris Yeltsin’s election as president of the Russian Federation, and the declaration of sovereignty by the latter, the conservatives believed Gorbachev to be vulnerable.

the United States only a year earlier.¹⁹ Understandably, Soviet and WTO generals found the pace of change rather overwhelming and pleaded for guarantees of Soviet security and limits on German freedom. As Shevardnadze replied to them, in an interview with *Pravda* (June 26, 1990), "the time has come to understand that neither socialism nor friendship, good neighborly relations, and respect can be built on bayonets, tanks, and bloodshed."²⁰

By this time, Foreign Minister Genscher had made great and continuous efforts to tie together the Soviet and East European security interests manifested through CSCE with the repeated assertion of the future *political purposes* of NATO. It is true that the United States and Great Britain at first viewed CSCE and Genscher's promotion of it with considerable suspicion, particularly his apparent earlier assumption that in time CSCE would take over NATO's security function in Europe. But he gradually changed his mind back to principal reliance on NATO, and there can be no doubt that the Soviets felt greatly reassured during the crucial months of February through June of 1990 by the German emphasis on the CSCE. In fact, it may well have been this reassurance that persuaded them in July to drop their hard-line resistance to permitting a united Germany to stay in NATO—and, by implication, to let the GDR leave the WTO and be absorbed, with some restrictions, into the Western alliance.

The political purposes or goals that would sustain NATO in the future—after its military character was scaled down as a result of the reduction of forces committed to by its members—had been spelled out before in repeated statements emphasizing the North Atlantic community of Western, democratic nations and its interest in arms control, disarmament, and the peaceful resolution of international conflict.²¹ Most

19. In April 1990, American forces had barely started to bring back eight of the sixty-four cruise missiles of the INF missiles the United States had agreed to scrap. The Soviets also had gotten rid of the first INF missiles they had promised to eliminate under an agreement that dated back two years. The decision to modernize the next-smaller nuclear missiles had precipitated determined opposition from the Kohl government in April 1989. In spring of 1990, NATO, or rather the United States and Britain, finally gave in to the Germans on this account and, in 1991, decided to phase out the short-range and tactical nuclear weapons as well.

20. Reprinted in Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung*, pp. 239–241. The Soviet foreign minister sought the solution in drastic arms reductions, especially of the united Germany, and in a strengthened CSCE process.

21. See especially the Harmel report of 1967. But there were similar statements throughout the forty-year history of the organization. By June 1990, Chancellor Kohl admitted freely that CSCE would not replace NATO, but he still thought CSCE was a most important process linking the North American and European governments with the construction of the future Europe.

recently, the Brussels summit of the heads of NATO governments, in May 1989, had spoken of the goal of an international community, "based on the rule of law in which all nations join together to reduce world tensions, settle disputes peacefully, and search for solutions to issues of global concern, including poverty, social injustice and environmental burdens, on which our common fate depends." At the London Summit Declaration of July 6, 1990, the heads of the sixteen NATO governments proposed to the WTO member states a joint declaration that would include²²

- an assurance not to consider each other adversaries
- a commitment to nonaggression
- a reaffirmation of the intention to refrain from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

Finally, we can find some of the political role also in President Bush's definition of the global "new world order," in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly and in a toast to retiring General Secretary Javier Pérez de Cuellar in which he pointed out that the Cold War and East-West ideological rivalry had dominated and poisoned U.N. debates for decades:

But the passing of this rivalry has enabled the U.N. to assume its proper role on the world stage. . . . Where institutions of freedom have lain dormant, the U.N. can offer them new life . . . [since they] play a crucial role in our quest for a new world order, an order in which no nation must surrender an iota of its own sovereignty, an order characterized by the rule of law rather than the resort to force; the cooperative settlement of disputes, rather than anarchy and bloodshed, and an unstinting belief in human rights.

Among other things, Bush referred to the peaceful settlement of border disputes and to the ethnic rivalries and hostilities that sprang up after the demise of communism. The president's speech was evocative of the hopes expressed for the League of Nations by President Woodrow Wilson in 1918 and by Harry S. Truman in 1945 for the United Nations, and

22. *Report on Arms Control and Disarmament and on Changes in the Balance of Military Power 1989/1990 (1 July 1989–30 June 1990)* (Bonn: Federal Republic of Germany, Press and Information Office, March 1991), pp. 12–13.

perhaps of his own dreams when he was the American U.N. ambassador under President Nixon.

While these pronouncements fall short of a clarion call into the political future of NATO, they have to be set within the context of the other processes of East-West reconciliation and the existing organizations of the European Community—particularly the latter, since the dramatic changes had so far been confined almost entirely to the East-West confrontation in Europe, and there was some irritation in Washington at the European insistence that there was a distinctive “European security interest” separate from the global security interests of the United States and the United Nations. In the first eight months of the unification process alone (November–July), there were four bilateral meetings between President Bush and Chancellor Kohl, three between Kohl and Gorbachev, eleven between Secretary of State Baker and Genscher, eight between Baker and Shevardnadze, three between Baker and Gorbachev and, of course, two summit meetings between the presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union. For years there had also been the negotiations on conventional arms reduction (CFE) and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) in Vienna, the direct negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union about strategic nuclear arms (START) and shorter-range missiles, and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament (CD) as well as U.N. debates and special commissions (UNDC) on the appropriate subjects. But the process was slow and the current readiness for solutions considerably ahead of the schedules of conferences and subjects such as nuclear test bans, the elimination of chemical and biological weapons, and nuclear nonproliferation.²³ Progress at the various disarmament meetings often awaited breakthroughs in bilateral contacts and might have taken years more if the unraveling of Soviet control in the East and enlightened responses in Washington had not pushed things along.

By the same token, bold steps in bilateral negotiations were frequently not forthcoming because the intelligence-gathering process was slanted—as revealed, for example, during the Senate hearings on the nomination of Robert Gates for CIA director and probably replicated often on the Soviet side—or because the glacial progress in Geneva or Vienna discouraged them.²⁴ On the other hand, well-planned summit meetings of world

23. *Ibid.*, pt. 2.

24. As late as May 10, 1990, at a meeting of the Nuclear Planning Group at Kananaskis, Canada, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney still would not consider the disintegration of WTO sufficient reason for abandoning the basic nuclear deterrence strategy of the West. Other defense ministers, notably the German minister of defense, were ready to scrap the short-range missiles. In the meantime, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were pressing for the dissolution of the WTO at a mid-June meeting in Moscow.

leaders such as Gorbachev and Bush often served as deadlines for achieving definite disarmament agreements ready to sign on the appointed day. The pressures against the reluctance of the military-industrial complexes to scale back the high cost of continuing engagement also built up quickly on all sides. In the United States, for instance, where Senator Sam Nunn and Representative Patricia Schroeder have estimated the annual cost of maintaining the American commitment in Europe at \$160 billion a year—there has always been a concern that the West Europeans have not borne their share—there was Nunn’s proposal to scale back American forces to 75,000–100,000 soldiers and not just to the 195,000 set by the administration. The 400,000 allied troops and 200,000 dependents had also been costing the German treasury a considerable amount.²⁵ The American budget deficit naturally makes the large sums at issue a great attraction to budget cutters and to popular forces clamoring for a “peace dividend.” To quote Democratic Senator Kent Conrad (North Dakota), “the West Germans are paying to keep Soviet troops in East Germany at the very time we are paying to keep our troops in West Germany to protect them against Soviet troops in East Germany. That makes no sense.” He was speaking while the Senate was voting to save the B-2 bomber and two battleships from the budget axe.

Again, this scenario was likely to be replayed a hundredfold in the Soviet Union, in cases of resistance both from the military establishment and from the defense industry. Soviet resistance, for example, nearly scuttled the Two-Plus-Four Treaty, German unification, and the great CFE disarmament agreements of October 3, 1990, when the military argued that the CFE pact might prevent the Soviets from countering the U.S. military buildup in the Gulf, only 700 miles away, by concentrating Soviet forces in southern Russia. Fortunately, its objections were overcome and the Gulf War eventually revealed itself not to be an American feint for a knockout blow and invasion of the Soviet Union, after all.²⁶

25. Involved were land and base facilities with a real-estate value of \$28 billion and an annual rental value of \$800 million. Some \$500 million a year were needed to keep up the allied forces in Berlin as well as another 120 million marks a year to pay for maneuver damage—not to mention the \$550 million needed to maintain the Soviet troops for five years in a united Germany, or the sums that had been paid by the GDR to the Soviets for this purpose (2.8 billion East marks a year). See the *Washington Post* (national weekly edition), Jul. 23–29, 1990, p. 16.

26. The disarmament meeting in New York between Secretary Baker and his Soviet colleague Shevardnadze (October 3, 1990) capped seventeen years of CFE negotiations. It resulted in the scrapping of 2,900 NATO tanks, 23,000 WTO tanks, and 26,900 WTO artillery pieces in order to reach levels of 20,000 tanks, 30,000 armored vehicles, and 20,000 artillery pieces on each side. The United States had insisted on this agreement before the December CSCE summit could occur. It is worth mentioning that, notwithstanding some press voices, statements by key Democratic politicians in Congress, as well as popular

On the other hand, as Henry Kissinger pointed out, the remaining strategic nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union after a START agreement would still be ten times the size of the British and French nuclear forces combined and not necessarily subject to the same handicap that continuing domestic turmoil has placed upon Soviet conventional forces.²⁷

The noble competition between Bush and Gorbachev in slashing conventional and nuclear arms in a big way, as announced at the time of this writing, should go a long way toward resolving the financial problems of both superpowers.²⁸ In the meantime, of course, the possible division of some Soviet nuclear arms among several independent union republics—the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and others—has further complicated the situation. The question of how the West could prepare itself for all eventualities, including the possible resurgence of Russian military might under a post-Yeltsin military dictatorship, is no cause for complacency either. The failed military coup and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union forced the United States and NATO to take cognizance of the fading of a familiar enemy and of the diminished capacity and will of its remnants to invade the West. The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, even hopes to rid his federation of nuclear weapons, in the long run, although Russian missiles were still aimed at the United States in October 1992, according to Marshall Yevgeny I. Shaposhnikov, the CIS military commander. What mission does this leave for NATO? Unfortunately, at this point, a baker's dozen of Third World countries, beginning with Iraq, stand at the threshold of nuclear armament, poised to be the next deadly challenge to their neighbors and the West. How can we close the barn door of nuclear proliferation again, or stop the raging bulls that have escaped?

To round out the discussion, nevertheless, we need to consider also the

rumblings, the White House has not taken umbrage at the new German financial assertiveness in supplying Soviet aid as a *quid pro quo* for removing the last obstacles to German unification. Nor did President Bush have any objection to the Japanese renewal of its pre-Tiananmen loan program to China (\$5.8 billion).

27. See Kissinger's article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 22, 1990. He was also concerned that the German renunciation of nuclear arms might, in case of Soviet attack, once again place responsibility for bailing out a nuclear-free Germany on the United States, which would have to risk the nuclear devastation the Germans escaped by means of their renunciation. See also Werner Weidenfeld and Josef Janning, eds., *Global Responsibilities: Europe in Tomorrow's World* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation, 1991), pp. 96–111 and 161–195.

28. The WTO's tanks and artillery were divided in such a way as to leave about two-thirds with the Soviet Union, between 7% and 9% each with Poland, Bulgaria, the CSFR, and Romania, and about 4% with Hungary.

optimistic view of European security which was expressed late in 1990, to the embarrassment of the British government, first by the British Minister of Defense Procurement, Alan Clark, and then by the retiring director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), Admiral Sir James Eberle, a former NATO commander, who said in his valedictory address:²⁹ "Having accomplished its aim of bringing the division of Europe to a peaceful end, there remains one final task for NATO, that would lead to the fulfillment of the political ideals of its founding fathers . . . namely to create the conditions for its own dissolution."

Eberle's statement was said to be much closer to the position taken then by France, Italy, and united Germany in preparation for the EC summit late in 1990 and focused on the creation of a West European defense organization (WEA) grafted onto the European Community's WEU. The former RIIA director believed that NATO had outlived its usefulness and that its defense-planning functions should be progressively turned over to WEU and the European Community. Whereas the British government believed that NATO alone could guarantee transatlantic cooperation in defense, Eberle thought that the United States would continue to be involved in European stability simply because of its major economic interests there. To that end, he pictured WEU as an integral part of the EC structure and not just a NATO auxiliary.

This differed, if only by degree and tendency, from the evolving American point of view as expressed, for example, at an American Assembly gathering in Harriman, New York, on May 30, 1991. As reported in advance of publication of the papers³⁰ presented there, NATO structures should be revised and not reinforced, but "the U.S. should support a European defense structure as a complement to NATO, perhaps the WEU, which might, in due course, become the focal point for European contributions to actions outside Europe." CSCE was viewed as a useful "complement" to NATO that might "build military transparency," monitor human rights, and resolve or mediate regional conflicts.

29. *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Dec. 23, 1990. It should be noted that this innocent view of European security was evidently expressed well before the impact of the Gulf War had sunk in. The Gulf War dramatized the issue of Third World dictators acquiring ABC weapons and blackmailing the Western industrial nations.

30. *Rethinking America's Security: U.S. Interests in the 1990s*, 79th American Assembly (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1991), pp. 11–13, and Graham Allison and Gregory Treverton, eds., *Rethinking American Security: Beyond Cold War to New York Order* (New York: Norton, 1992). The report called nuclear proliferation "a major threat" and called for a test ban and for outlawing the possession of ABC weapons outside the nuclear club.

NATO and WEU

A brief summary might help to guide the reader through the political maze of European security questions after the great changes of 1990/91 in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, after Zheleznovodsk and German unification, after the CFE pact of October 1990, and after the dramatic events of 1991. The core of NATO strategy, forward defense along the old-Iron Curtain, lost its German locale and its *raison d'être*. The Soviet Union lost much of its capability for constituting a threat—in particular, its capacity for a quick strike and, eventually, its very cohesion. On the other hand, even if only the Russian Federation under a reactionary regime were left, a possible renewal of the threat cannot entirely be excluded. Its nuclear might still makes it the dominant military force in Europe and the only power capable of destroying the United States,³¹ although the CFE pact, by putting East and West on an even level, put an end to decades of WTO conventional superiority over NATO. The mutual de-escalation decided in the fall of 1991 will make the military threat quite tame by about 1995. Since the final demise of WTO, moreover, Eastern Europe has become a denuclearized buffer zone between NATO and what remains of the Soviet Union. Eastern Europe is particularly in need of the stabilizing effects of the NATO presence without which its democratic and economic development—to which the European Community, CSCE, and individual investors are expected to contribute—might be engulfed in ethnic conflict and domestic coups.

Given the range of social and economic problems in Europe, NATO as a military organization lacks the required capacity for problem-solving and will require help from WEU, the European Community, CSCE, or a combination of these to address the problems of Europe effectively. One feasible option would be to combine CSCE as a broader, problem-solving organization—its tasks are still to be clarified—with NATO, which would engage in crisis management, conflict resolution, collective security, maintenance of existing borders, and prevention of wars both within the larger European area and with respect to outside threats, such as instability in Eastern Europe or Iraq's aggressive designs. To that end, it

31. In the words of the American Assembly report (p. 11): "if increasing economic disruption and disintegration results in civil war, frightening questions arise whether centralized command and control of 30,000 nuclear weapons spread over half a dozen republics can be maintained." There is also the "risk of nuclear artillery shells or advanced conventional weapons finding their way into the international arms bazaar."

would seem, NATO would require a new political mission,³² but also a well-equipped, well-organized core of conventional troops, including some for rapid deployment at trouble spots within and on the periphery of Europe in order to counter hostile troop concentrations with superior force. The plans for a NATO rapid reaction force—which could also serve WEU, as France and the Europeans at Brussels contend—envisage four mobile divisions of about 70,000 troops each, under a British commander, and equipped with American combat helicopters and fighter planes. The rest of NATO forces in Europe might be scaled down from twenty-three to sixteen divisions in seven army corps, including six of multinational composition stationed in Central Europe. One division will be purely German and under German command, stationed (as agreed with the Soviets) in Potsdam, East Germany. One will be British and another, in Southern Europe, might be under Italian leadership.

The Gulf War and the Yugoslavian imbroglio dramatized the problems of linkage between U.S. and regional European security interests, problems that could not be solved by establishing a "Eurogroup" within NATO (of which France and Spain are not members) or by "refunctioning" WEU, as proposed by the Dutch, for intervention in the Yugoslav civil war. Tying U.S. nuclear power into the European security system—keeping the Americans "in"—seems as important and continuing a goal as "tying down" the military potential of a united Germany. The latter goal, in fact, requires the former. Since the Russians have already gone "out" of Central Europe of their own accord, the old goal of "keeping them out" seems redundant now and could be replaced, up to a point, by aid, cooperation, and even joint action against third parties that threaten peace in the region. Finally, in place of a strategy of flexible response, with its tactics of "direct defense" and "deliberate escalation," it might be better to return to using nuclear arms—especially with the as yet uncoordinated French and British forces—but only as a last resort.

The impact of the Gulf War on rethinking European security strategy produced unexpected results not only because of Germany's constitutional doubts and the widely shared conviction that NATO's mission could not simply be broadened to deploy its military forces outside the NATO area. For a while, attention shifted to the nine-member WEU—Ireland, Denmark, and Greece are the three EC members that do not

32. The early call for a newly formulated political mission for NATO came particularly from the NATO General Secretary and former West German Defense Minister Manfred Wörner. See *Die Welt*, Jan. 13, 1989. Wörner's critics, however, argue that NATO has always been political and that its networks of consultation keep it so.

belong to WEU, but it does include non-NATO France. The long years of inactivity and minuscule staff support made WEU's willingness to organize Europe's response in the Gulf "something of a joke," to quote a NATO specialist, even though it was widely credited with one notable contribution: coordinating naval operations. In mid-1991, in any event, the British government still supported a strong role for WEU, if not as a stand-in for NATO or as a duplication of the rapid reaction force (RRF) agreed on for NATO. With some Italian support, the British proposal envisaged WEU as a link between the European Community and NATO, subordinate to but "autonomous" from the latter, as their "Atlanticist" contribution to the Maastricht summit on the future of the European Community. It was a solution sure to please Washington and those EC members who were hesitant to deepen the Community in this respect.

But the Germans and the French seized the initiative for a defense force to result from European political union—in fact, following up article 1 of the draft treaty for a new European Community which defines its objective as "the assertion of European identity in the world, in particular by implementing a common foreign and security policy which will ultimately include a common defense." Their proposal reiterated their intent, expressed in a joint letter to the European Community a year earlier, to make WEU "an integral part of the European union process" by entrusting it with "full or part responsibility for working out decisions and measures concerning the Union's defense and security" (as their draft article 2 put it and which could of course be amended). The European Community and WEU, moreover, were to be brought closer together by moving WEU headquarters from London to Brussels and establishing closer cooperation and consultation between them. Initially, the Germans had thought to mediate between the two camps, while the French seemed intent on pushing the United States entirely out of Europe, just as the British strove to keep America engaged there. The Franco-German initiative immediately won the support of Italy, Spain, and Belgium, as well as that of EC Commission President Jacques Delors, but not that of Denmark and the Netherlands. From the British point of view, the European Community is itself in the process of considering applications from neutralist Sweden and Switzerland for future membership, and is a less likely choice because of its preoccupation with the process of "widening" or "deepening" European economic integration in the near future. Such a plan was more within the mandate of CSCE, but the sheer size of that thirty-five-member organization makes it difficult to generate a consensus for action. To overcome this impasse, also, the United Nations could be enlisted in support of sanctions and even military action to counter Iraqi aggression against neighboring Arab

states—an option which was greatly preferred by the Europeans and which was, after all, within the original mandate of the world organization. After the Gulf War and the Soviet postcoup evolution of 1991, however, the tendencies toward a pulling away from American hegemonic control among the West European EC nations, the East European and Soviet republics, Japan, China, and the U.N. members in general were greater than ever.³³

The exaggerated hopes raised by the Gulf War, or more likely by the publicity put out about it, soon gave way to European pessimism about extinguishing the smoldering fires of nationalism and ethnic hatred in Yugoslavia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The German reaction to the Gulf War is in a number of respects more significant than their reaction to the nationality conflict in Yugoslavia where, the *New York Times* editorials notwithstanding, the German government had attempted to mediate between Serbs and Croats in the same ineffectual way as the other EC countries.³⁴

The Gulf action, on the other hand, did not only land the Kohl government between angry pacifist reaction at home and pressure to participate from the allies; more significantly, it confronted the German government with questions of German national identity, an economic rather than a military mission,³⁵ and the future of Germany. How would it have looked to Germany's suspicious neighbors and the world if the first major action of the united country had been a military foray involving massive killing of Third World (Iraqi) soldiers? Unlike Ameri-

33. On the Franco-German proposal, see Jacques-Amalric and Jean-Pierre Langellier in *Le Monde*, Oct. 17, 1991, and the editorial in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Oct. 27, 1991, p. 12. The Franco-German initiative also invited non-WEU members Denmark, Ireland, and Greece to join, and took the trouble to inform Washington of its new proposals. See also the in-depth feature on the subject in "Defense," *The Economist*, Sept. 1, 1990, pp. 1–18. The latter spelled out the situation in mid-1990, as seen by British opinion, including London's skepticism about a "new, all-European security order" (p. 16) and the CSCE's capacity for decisive action within the unpredictable world at the time—in short, the need to keep America involved and the Germans tied down, and to worry about developments in the former Soviet Union (pp. 17–18).

34. Again, Genscher and others hoped the CSCE might be able to live up to its collective security and conflict-resolving mission, but the organization was still too unwieldy and this particular issue was very difficult to decide: repeated truces arranged by the European Community and its emissaries were broken by both sides, again and again.

35. Another in-depth feature in *The Economist*, Sept. 28, 1991, pp. 21–24, an assessment of the "new world order" after the Gulf War and the postcoup developments in the former Soviet Union, approvingly quotes Edward Luttwak to the effect that world economic competition, after the patriotic celebrations of victory in the Gulf, is once more taking the place of the politico-military struggle for supremacy: "the pursuit of adversarial goals with commercial means." The failure of American negotiators in the GATT negotiations, consequently, signaled the growing independence of the EC nations.

can and British reactions to the deeds of their own troops, German public opinion would have mercilessly exposed and been revolted by the brutality of war, and Germany's neighbors would have crucified the German government and its troops. Also very important was the likely reception of a German military participation by the Soviet public and by Soviet hard-liners who, as mentioned earlier, suspected the Western Gulf troops to be planning a major attack on an enfeebled Soviet Union. Given Soviet memories of the allied invasion of 1918 and the German assault of 1941/42, it would have been a huge blunder for the German government to send troops to the Gulf at this precise moment, when the Soviet Union had not even ratified the Two-Plus-Four and the Soviet Troop Repatriation treaties. Ratification by the Supreme Soviet took place only in March and in the first days of April 1991, having been held up by the objections of suspicious hard-liners in Moscow.³⁶

The Role of the CSCE

The question still remains: How does the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Helsinki organization better known for its assertion of human rights and promotion of social and cultural cooperation, fit into the European security scenario? Is it, as German Foreign Minister Genscher put it in his address to the U.N. General Assembly on September 25, 1991, just a matter of "expanded responsibilities" to be given CSCE to render it "capable of action"? Or did he already prejudge the question, on this occasion, by calling on the U.N. Security Council to "adopt a clear, unequivocal position so that the fighting can be stopped" in Yugoslavia? Genscher also paid tribute to the "continued efforts of the Western alliance [NATO] to ensure stability throughout Europe," and he promised that the German Constitution would be changed so that, in future, united Germany could fulfill its security obligations under the U.N. Charter.³⁷ Even Secretary Baker is on

36. Furthermore, aside from the more superficial criticisms of German "cowardice" and "disloyalty" to the Western alliance, the thought may well have crossed some minds among the irreconcilable critics of German unification that this would be the perfect way to push the Germans into making bullies of themselves again, a self-fulfilling prophecy of the first water.

37. Genscher's promise was received critically in the German press, which promptly reminded him that such a constitutional change required qualified majorities in the Bundestag—that is to say, SPD cooperation, which the government was unlikely to obtain. See *Mainzer Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 26, 1991, for example.

record with a "joint statement" with Genscher (May 12, 1991), proposing, as he had done in December 1989, that closer relations between NATO and East European governments be organized through CSCE: "NATO will support the CSCE in meeting security demands in Europe," read their finalized proposal, in which a "North Atlantic Cooperative Council" of regular meetings between NATO and the "liaison nations" in Eastern Europe was specified (October 2, 1991). Indeed, most continental nations, West and East, set great store by the "CSCE process," but it appears to be a slow, cumulative process of building up the all-European (and North American) house brick by brick, rather than a quick, prefabricated building project designed for imminent functions such as keeping the peace or protecting national minorities.³⁸

This is not to deny that the CSCE has been a major factor behind the multilateral development of political freedom and cooperation in Eastern Europe since its inception with the 1975 Final Act of Helsinki. For the GDR, in particular, the CSCE's emphasis on international contacts and cooperation along with the promotion of human rights and quasi-democratic discussion subtly began to undermine Honecker's restrictive system and to trigger acute conflicts over the gaps between constitutional promise and performance.³⁹ A state that rigidly isolated its citizens from the outside world could not but be continually embarrassed by discussions of *Rechtsstaat* (government of law) and international law, or of free mobility in other socialist states (e.g., in 1973)—not to mention the contacts with Western countries and organizations such as the European Community, NATO, WEU, CFE, and the Council of Europe, even in the early years (1969–1975). In the seventies, the CSCE played an important role in advancing East-West détente against a background of tentative cooperation between Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon, thus permitting Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* to bring about a rapprochement between Bonn and the main WTO governments—most of all the Soviet Union, which paid a high price in concessions at Helsinki (1975) and at later meetings in Belgrade (1977) and Madrid (1988).⁴⁰

38. See the account and documents of the early years of CSCE in *Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (KSZE). Analyse und Dokumentation 1965–1972*, and the follow-up volume for 1973–1978, both edited by Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Wolfgang Mallmann, and Christian Meier (Cologne: Wissenschaft & Politik, 1973 and 1978).

39. Rolf Reissig, "Der Umbruch in der DDR und der Niedergang realsozialistischer Systeme," *Biss Public* 1 (Jan. 1991), 35–64, esp. 41. See also the chronology of CSCE activities in *Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit*, vol. 2, pp. 977–1001, which details themes and contacts with EC and other Western organizations, and the six-language "phraseology" of the Helsinki, Belgrade, and Madrid meetings in *KSZE-KVAE* (Bonn: Auswärtiges Amt, 1987).

40. See Hanrieder, *Deutschland, Europa, Amerika*, pp. 237–254, and Robert Tucker, *The Nuclear Debate: Deterrence and the Lapse of Faith* (New York: Holmes & Meier,