

# **Die deutsch-amerikanische Sicherheitspolitik in der Phase der Wiedervereinigung 1989/90**

**or:**

## **A story of German International Emancipation through Political Unification\***

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The re-establishment of German unity in 1990 marked the end of the Cold War in Europe. With the end of the Cold War many expected the end of NATO – the Alliance that had been formed to secure Western Europe against the threat of Soviet Russia. Yet the unification of Germany in 1990 under NATO auspices helped establish the strategic conditions that legitimised the United States' continued military and political presence on the European continent to the present day. And one might argue that German unification, the way it happened, ensured NATO's survival and transformation.

While Moscow's influence beyond its borders was significantly reduced – at the latest after the Warsaw Pact's disbanding on 1 July 1991 and the Soviet Union's disintegration by the end of the year – the scene appeared to be set for an American unipolar era. By 2004, after two rounds of NATO enlargement, the Alliance had extended itself into former Soviet territory via the inclusion of the Baltic states. The boundary of the Atlantic Alliance was now at a distance of 'less than one hundred miles' away from St Petersburg; and as a consequence the Russians held a deep sense of embitterment. They saw themselves as having lost out strategically to the West.<sup>1</sup>

However inevitable these developments may look by hindsight, it was not a forgone conclusion. NATO – seen by many as the United States' vehicle for leadership in Europe – did not come to first encompass the territory of a unified Germany and later to offer membership to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic (in 1999), then Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania five years later due to an American pre-meditated imperialist drive.<sup>2</sup>

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1 See Kristina Spohr: Precluded or Precedent-Setting? The 'NATO Enlargement Question' in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990–1991, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, 4 (2012), pp. 4–54. Quote from Mary Elise Sarotte: Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990, in: *Diplomatic History* 34, 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 119.

2 See Spohr: Precluded, pp. 47–54. Cf. Mary Elise Sarotte: Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to 'Bribe the Soviets Out' and Move NATO in, in: *International Security*

The story of 1989/90 specifically, which I will focus on, is a story of contingencies and a story of many turning points. More, it is a story of institutional change and changing power-political dynamics. In the process of German unification against the backdrop of drastic changes in the political complexion of Eastern Europe nothing was preordained. In 1989, when George Bush took office, nobody foresaw that barely two years later Europe's map would show a united Germany at its heart, and one within NATO.

Looking through the lens of U.S.-German security relations, I am going to concentrate on three 're-ordering moments'<sup>3</sup> in 1989/90 and their impacts, to explore and explain how this very outcome materialised:

- Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Ten Point Programme of 28 November 1989
- the superpower Malta summit and U.S. President George H.W. Bush's meeting with Kohl in Laeken on 3 December 1989
- West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's Tutzing speech of 31 January 1990.

In doing so, I will show that the German-American partnership was marked by pushing and pulling on both sides, by mutual influencing, and a sharing of ideas and ideals. For the Kohl government, driving the unification process offered the prospect of real international emancipation after four decades of political inferiority and lacking full sovereign powers. For the Bush administration, backing the unification process became an opportunity for a transatlantic re-ordering moment – at the expense of a Soviet Union in retreat. Bush did not simply seek to ensure continuity and preserve NATO in the midst of dramatic change; the Americans came to use NATO as the device to shape the post Cold War era.

But interestingly, the transformed NATO that emerged – with more importance attached to political values and arms control – represents, what I would like to call, a *Genscherised* version of the Alliance. And this was the public expression of competing visions of Europe's post Cold War security architec-

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35, 1 (Summer 2010), pp. 110–137; Sarotte: Deciding to be Mars, in: Policy Review no. 172, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/111966> (accessed 1 Apr. 2014); Robert M. Gates: *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won The Cold War*. New York 1996, p. 492; Ronald D. Asmus: *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. New York 2002, p. 6; Ulrich Weisser: *Sicherheit für ganz Europa*. Stuttgart 1999, pp. 23–59; Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry: *The Unraveling of the Cold War Settlement*, in: *Survival* 51, 6 (Dec. 2009–Jan. 2010), p. 50; Mark Kramer: *The Myth of the No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia*, in: *Washington Quarterly* 23, 3 (Apr. 2009), pp. 29–62.

3 On different ideas of 'ordering moments' or 'punctuational moments', see Mary Elise Sarotte: *The Wall Comes Down: A Punctuational Moment*, in: Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro: *Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11*. Ithaca and London 2011, p. 14. Cf. Deudney and Ikenberry: *The Unraveling*, p. 42.

ture: That of Genscher who had lobbied hard for a cooperative European security order under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); and the vision of Bush (and eventually Kohl), which reflected an Atlanticist outlook and entailed NATO's perpetuation.

### I. *'Partners in Leadership'*

When Bush was inaugurated as president of the U.S. in January 1989 there were clear signs that major changes were afoot in Eastern Europe. During spring, the negotiated revolutions in Poland and Hungary gained pace. Significantly, Soviet Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev held onto his policy of acknowledging the right to self-determination for Eastern European satellite states – their freedom to choose national reformist paths without the threat of Soviet military intervention.<sup>4</sup>

In April, Bush seized the opportunity to declare that 'The West can now be bold in proposing a vision of the European future. [...] We dream of the day when Eastern European peoples will be free to choose their system of government and to vote for the party of their choice in regular, free, contested elections. And we dream of the day when Eastern European countries will be free to choose their own peaceful course in the world, including closer ties with Western Europe. And we envision an Eastern Europe in which the Soviet Union has renounced military intervention as an instrument of its policy'.<sup>5</sup>

One month later, on 31 May 1989 in Mainz, when the Germans themselves did not yet dare to think such thoughts, his public statement appeared to imply that German unification was becoming an explicit goal of his administration. 'The Cold War', he said, 'began with the division of Europe. It can only end when Europe is whole. [...] we seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe.'<sup>6</sup> Bush believed evidently in the stability of West Germany and did not hold atavistic fears. In fact, he went out of his way to call the semi-sovereign West Germany the United States' 'partner in leadership'.<sup>7</sup>

4 See Mark Kramer: The Demise of the Soviet bloc, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 83 (Dec. 2011), pp. 850–852.

5 Remarks to citizens in Hamtramck, Michigan, 17 April 1989, [http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=326&year=1989&month=4](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=326&year=1989&month=4) (accessed 24 March 2014).

6 Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz, 31 May 1989, [http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=476&year=1989&month=5](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=476&year=1989&month=5) (accessed 24 March 2014).

7 Ibid. See also Mick Cox and Steven Hurst: 'His Finest Hour?' George Bush and the Diplomacy of German Unification, in: *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 13, 4 (2002), pp. 132–133 who portray Bush as a bold visionary in his approach to 'Germany'. For a slightly more cautious assessment of Bush's statements on Germany, see Bernard Weinraub: Bush Urges East to Join in Ending Division of Europe – Asks Political Freedom – President in West Germany, Also Calls on Soviet Bloc to Raze Berlin Wall, in: *The Washington Post* [henceforth WP], 1 June 1990, pp. 1 +A13.

In spite of this language, and in spite of four decades of close relations between the U.S. and FRG and the customary ritual of emphasising mutual trust as well as the Americans' decades-long verbal commitment to German unity, a measure of suspicion about the potential of Germany's go-it-alones and Bonn's steadfastness as an ally persisted among some of the Washington political elite. After all, if Americans had looked with suspicion unto the Federal Republic's growing political emancipation via Willy Brandt's *Neue Ostpolitik* approach in the 1970s, they were faced in the 1980s with mounting West German popular resentment towards NATO military manoeuvres and the concentration of U.S. nuclear weapons on West German soil all the while having to stomach from 1985 the people's increasing enthusiasm for the new Soviet leader: Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>8</sup>

In autumn 1989, as popular unrest was stirring in the GDR, the question, whether or not the Germans might make a deal with Soviets, loomed large in the background – for some in the U.S. administration at least. Would Bonn consider the option: unification for neutrality? This might end Bonn's bonds with NATO and EC, and reduce Washington's influence in Western Europe. Worse, Raymond Seitz, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, for example could not help but publicly wonder in a Congressional hearing on 3 October 1989: had not history shown that a unified, unbound Germany had led to instability and chaos in Europe, if not to say: war?<sup>9</sup>

To be sure, such American historical worries about German go-it-alones were not entirely delusional. After all during the course of 1989–90, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher would not always define German self-interest solely in terms of close co-operation with the U.S; nor would Bonn always consult with Washington. And just as the Anglo-American special relationship was no starry eyed alliance of two equal partners, the American-German tandem too was driven by its own, peculiar power political dynamic – one between superpower and its semi-sovereign, though increasingly assertive, ally – by the particular combination of personalities involved, and by the highly unusual circumstantial setting of the global Cold War endgame and geopolitical realignments that German unity would inevitably bring. There existed thus from the outset potential for friction between these two 'partners in leadership'.

8 See Frank Costigliola: An 'Arm Around the Shoulder': The United States, NATO and German Reunification, 1989–1990, in: *Contemporary European History* 3, 1 (1994), pp. 92–95.

9 See U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, *Developments in Europe*, October 1989. 101st Cong., 1st sess., 3 Oct. 1989, p. 14. <http://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1989-foa-0046?accountid=12084> (accessed 24 March 2014).

*II. The Fall of the Wall, Kohl's Ten Points and Baker's Four Principles*

In the immediate aftermath of the sudden opening of the Berlin wall on 9 November 1989, Washington did little to advocate reunification as a solution to the German problem. There was the obligatory American rhetoric about freedom and democracy as used by Secretary of State James Baker in numerous interviews after the dramatic night in Berlin, but not much else.<sup>10</sup> As Thomas L. Friedman of the *New York Times* wrote '... in contrast with the pivotal role the United States played 40 years ago in shaping the postwar European order that now seems to be coming apart, Washington finds itself more of a bystander – astonished, enthusiastic and concerned. Twice in the last 24 hours, Secretary of State James A. Baker 3<sup>rd</sup> found himself being slipped notes from aides informing him of major changes in Eastern Europe that only a week earlier no one had imagined, let alone predicted. [...] a policy review that Mr. Baker ordered three weeks ago on how the United States should relate to changes in East Germany will have to be tossed out and begun anew.'<sup>11</sup> President Bush in turn was criticised for his lack of jubilation by the U.S. media.<sup>12</sup>

With the inner German borders open, the question of national unity loomed large. More broadly, the Cold War order had come to an end; and the collapse of this very order demanded a response.<sup>13</sup> Washington had to consider the impact of the German developments on Europe's security architecture at one level; and on superpower relations, especially on the talks on strategic arms reductions (START) as well as on the Vienna negotiations on conventional forces reductions (CFE) that were complicated by the fact that the Warsaw Pact was already eroding on another.

The prospect of German unification opened up various avenues towards a new, re-ordered Europe: 1) that of a future order built on NATO which potentially was compatible with 2) the ongoing process of European integration and the possibility of the EC's future extension eastwards, in other words the reassertion of the established Western structures; or 3) that of a new pan-European security system which might grow out of the CSCE process and even do away with the two Cold War defence alliances.

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10 Mary Elise Sarotte: *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton and Oxford 2009, pp. 54–55

11 Thomas L. Friedman: U.S. Enthusiastic, but has Concerns: New Order in Eastern Europe Astonishes Washington, in: *The New York Times* [henceforth NYT], 11 Nov. 1989, p. 1.

12 Melvyn P. Leffler: *Dreams of Freedom, Temptations of Power*, in: Jeffrey A. Engel: *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: the Revolutionary Legacy of 1989*. New York 2009, pp. 136–138; Cf. Timothy Naftali: *George H. Bush*. New York 2007, p. 85; Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice: *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*. Cambridge, MA, 1997, p. 105.

13 See Craig R. Whitney: *Redefining Europe: As the Revelry Goes On, Politicians Ponder The Ramifications of Changes in Germany*, in: NYT, 11 Nov. 1989, p. 1

Still, in mid-November a mood of caution and restraint continued to rule in the White House. Bush, who feared nothing more than a violent and bloody military crackdown by the Soviets, certainly did not want Gorbachev to believe that he was provoking disorder and that the demonstrations all over Eastern Europe had been an ‘American project’. In Western media portrayal and public perception, he hoped at least he would be recognised as being ‘steady and prudent and able’, even if no visionary. He had been criticised ‘for not doing enough’, but he felt that ‘things are coming our way, so why do we have to jump up and down, risk those things turning around and going in the wrong direction’.<sup>14</sup> Generally happy about the trajectory of events, but always careful, Bush telephoned Kohl on 17 November, once the immediate initial international shock over events in Berlin had receded, to warn against any ‘grosse Rhetoric’. The U.S. president stressed that in order to avoid ‘unvorhersehbare Reaktionen in der DDR und der Sowjetunion’ [müsse man] ‘auch davon absehen, über die Wiedervereinigung oder einen Zeitplan zum Abriß der Mauer zu reden’. He pledged close consultations as he sought to grasp all the nuances of the chancellor’s position on the German question, but at the same time made clear that it was impossible to meet for talks in the two weeks prior to his planned Malta summit meeting with Gorbachev on 2–3 December.<sup>15</sup>

This pointed to Bush’s reluctance to commit himself in any concrete manner to the Germans regarding unification, before he had spoken with Gorbachev. He clearly wanted to gain time and more certainties before he would act – in part presumably also because of domestic, Congressional noises that amidst the euphoria over revolutionary change in Eastern Europe reflected a nervousness vis-à-vis the increasingly vigorous and vocal German enthusiasm for unity.<sup>16</sup> It is noteworthy that the envisaged lengthy telephone conversation for 27 November between Kohl and Bush to personally exchange thoughts on Germany’s future and thus for the Americans to stay on top of the developments did not take place.<sup>17</sup>

Instead, and what changed the course of events massively was the surprise announcement on 28 November of Kohl’s Ten Point programme with which he forced German reunification onto the international agenda. In his speech, that

14 George Bush: *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings*. New York 2013, pp. 446, 451, Bush and Scowcroft: *A World Transformed*, pp. 148–149.

15 Hanns Jürgen Küsters und Daniel Hofmann (eds): *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit – Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramts 1989/90*. München 1998 [henceforth DESE], Dok. Nr. 93, p. 539.

16 See U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *The Future of Europe*, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 17 Jan. 1990, pp. 79, 80. See also U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Threat Assessment; Military Strategy; and Operational Requirements*, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 25 Jan. 1990, p. 229.

17 DESE, Dok. Nr. 93, pp. 539–540.

was part of the *Bundestag*'s ordinarily scheduled budget debate, the chancellor first quickly genuflected before, EC, NATO and CSCE, before listing his ten points. The list of points in their presentation as a package appeared like a plan for unification that bypassed the victor powers. Indeed, this 'plan' to achieve unity in free self-determination focused on supporting reforms inside the GDR, steps towards confederative structures with the aim of creating a federation, while emphasising the need to anchor these developments in the pan-European process and East-West relations.<sup>18</sup> One might thus argue that in contrast to the *Deutschlandpolitik* approach of the Social Democrats' *Ostpolitik* architect Egon Bahr, which had been founded on the idea of '*Wandel durch Annäherung*', Kohl was now pressing for *Annäherung* (between the two Germanies) through *Wandel* (inside the GDR).

Kohl had put forth his own concrete plans for Germany, albeit without a timetable, knowingly taking the risk that the allies and his neighbours might not like being presented with such a German *fait accompli*. For him unification was no longer an empty, rhetorical aspiration, but a real possibility. Crucially, in regard to security arrangements, nothing explicit was said on NATO. This upset some Western allies. As a consequence Horst Teltschik, the chancellor's close national security advisor, 'was at pains to stress that Federal German membership of NATO was not in question'.<sup>19</sup>

With his ten points, Kohl seized leadership in the unification process. And he consciously took advantage of circumstances for the Germans to shape events largely on their own while the United States seemed to hang back. Nevertheless, Washington appeared to support Kohl's move superficially at least.<sup>20</sup> On 29 November, the day after Kohl's pivotal *Bundestag* address, James Baker held a press conference in Washington at which he presented American conditions for supporting German unification in an effort to gain some control over the direction of events.

Baker did so by formulating four principles:

1. U.S. support for German self-determination without endorsing specific outcomes

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18 Helmut Kohls' Ten-Point Plan for German Unity (November 28, 1989), [http://www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=223](http://www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=223) (accessed 25 March 2014).

19 Keith Hamilton and Patick Salmon (eds): *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series III, Vol 7, German Unification 1989/90. Abingdon 2009 [henceforth DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90], doc. 59, p. 140.

20 According to *The Washington Post*, State Department spokesman Margaret Tutwiler said 'it would be going too far' to say the U.S. endorsed Kohl's plan, but unification as the German people's deepest aspiration was 'a goal that we and [West Germany] have long shared.' Marc Fisher: Kohl Proposes Broad Program For Reunification of Germany, in: WP, 29 Nov. 1989, p. 1.

2. the enduring membership of a unified Germany of NATO and the European Community
3. a peaceful and gradual movement towards unification
4. the need for the terms of the Helsinki Final Act being observed on the question of postwar boundaries<sup>21</sup>

The second principle was obviously the Americans' chief concern. If Germany was to unify, it had to be kept inside NATO. The Alliance thus should play a key role in the post Cold War security order. A German-Soviet bargain of 'neutrality for unification' would have to be avoided at all costs. Washington's essential role more immediately however would be to persuade the Soviets and Western Europeans – who had private reservations – to accept German unification.

Significantly, Bush kept quiet; and little leaked from the White House not least due to 'the Bush administration's tendency [...] to decide policy moves with only minimal involvement of the "experts" in the bureaucracy'.<sup>22</sup> Given Baker's speech, speculation was ripe: Was the Bush administration already pursuing serious, realisable objectives if not to say, a bold goal especially in regard to NATO's future in a post Cold War Europe? Or did the four principles, including the conditionality regarding NATO, provide an instrument to put a firm brake on a potentially fast moving process?

It appears that the American president was primarily concerned about the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Peace and stability had to be preserved in Europe, and nobody could be certain how the USSR would react. Bush's visionary statements of early summer 1989 that the U.S. administration could 'contemplate reunification more readily than many Europeans', had receded into the past, as Kevin Tebbit of the British embassy in Washington saw it. All evidence pointed to recent events having a 'sobering effect' as 'American attitudes [veered] towards more caution'.<sup>23</sup> Tebbit also doubted whether the Americans had a 'perfect blueprint which strikes the right balance between the various competing objectives: supporting the Germans in general and Kohl in particular; influencing the pressure for unification in the hope of controlling the speed and achieving it on Western / US terms; while not antagonising the Soviet Union and enabling the evolution of Eastern Europe generally to continue.'<sup>24</sup>

Uncertainties persisted during the last November days. The German-American partnership was therefore somewhat strained. Kohl had clearly pushed for an enhanced independence of action and looked for his own room for manoeu-

21 DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 76, p.173, fn 2. See also Karl Kaiser: Deutschlands Vereinigung: Die internationalen Aspekte – mit den wichtigen Dokumenten. Bergisch Gladbach 1991, Dok. Nr. 14, p. 169.

22 DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 76, p. 173.

23 Ibid. p. 174.

24 Ibid. p. 175.



vre, while the Bush administration with its four principles sought to get into a position of being able to influence and steer the unification process. Washington, as Frank Costigliola so aptly put it a decade ago, was trying to keep ‘an arm around [Bonn’s] shoulder’.<sup>25</sup> But did the Americans do so as a friend? Or as a guardian or keeper?

### *III. Malta and Laeken*

What truly affected the U.S. president’s thinking and shaped his outlook on German and security affairs, was the Malta summit. In other words superpower diplomacy superseded the U.S.-German axis, and also any other potential Western power alignment.

Until Malta, Bush – since entering the White House almost a year earlier – had not held a presidential meeting with Gorbachev. In fact, in an effort to break with his predecessor Ronald Reagan’s Soviet policies, Bush’s first foreign visit had been to China. He had not planned a superpower summit until one year into his presidency – as he had decided in early 1989 to pause and re-evaluate the significance of the changes taking place in the USSR and its wider empire.<sup>26</sup> But with the acceleration of (transformative) events in Eastern Europe, the Chinese use of force against protestors in Beijing, and the fall of the Berlin wall, superpower relations had gained significance in Bush’s mind and he initiated the explicitly informal parley.<sup>27</sup>

In Malta on 2 and 3 December, Bush and Gorbachev jostled on only two brief occasions over German unification. What was said, however, was more important than has been understood so far. Bush, as he explained his views on West German unification politics to Gorbachev, distinguished between Kohl’s enormous emotional response – his passionate rhetoric – and his own generally cautious approach. Indeed, he himself did not want to be seen as grandstanding – and for this reason, as he mentioned several times, he had not jumped up and down the wall.<sup>28</sup> The U.S. president kept emphasising that

25 Costigliola: *Arm*, p. 87.

26 Engel: *The Fall*, pp. 26–29. See also Don Oberdorfer: *Eased East-West Tensions Offers Chances, Dangers*, in: *WP*, 7 May 1989, p. 1

27 Bush: *All the Best*, p. 433; George H. W. Bush Presidential Library [henceforth GBPL]: ‘First Expanded Bilateral Session with Chairman Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, 10:00-11:55 a.m., 2 Dec. 1989, pp. 1–2, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014); Bush and Scowcroft: *World Transformed*, p. 131. See also Bill Keller: *Bush Will Meet Gorbachev to Get ‘Better Acquainted in Talks at Sea Next Month’*, in: *NYT*, 1 Nov. 1989, p. 1.

28 GBPL, ‘First Restricted Bilateral Session with Chairman Gorbachev of Soviet Union’, 12:00-1:00pm, 2 Dec. 1989, p. 5, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

America had ‘tried to conduct [itself] with restraint’.<sup>29</sup> Yet, American involvement in Europe was undeniable, not least via its leadership in NATO; and above all else, Bush made clear, the U.S. ‘cannot be asked to disapprove of reunification’.<sup>30</sup> This was key. No triumphalism but no opposition: Bush had come out in support of the German people and implicitly Kohl’s political manoeuvre.

What Gorbachev said was equally momentous. As for ‘reunification on the basis of self-determination’, he and Bush agreed that it was best for Germany to be unified on the basis of such mutually acceptable ‘democratic values’: self-determination, openness and pluralism.<sup>31</sup> Gorbachev further reassured Bush that the USSR ‘under no circumstances would start a war’.<sup>32</sup> Gorbachev in other words had abolished the Brezhnev doctrine. There would be no repeat of Soviet military interventions as had occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in Hungary in 1956. Buoyed that no hostile Soviet reaction to a push for reunification was to be expected, the U.S. countered general Soviet sentiments – shared in Britain and France – that nothing should upset the stable status quo: the reality of two Germanies.<sup>33</sup> In doing so, Bush broadly tipped the diplomatic balance towards German unification.

He probably also felt emboldened, because on the question of what would happen to NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Gorbachev had very early on merely suggested that it was for ‘history [to] decide.’<sup>34</sup> This is not to deny that the Soviet leader in the last summit-session did promote ideas for a ‘Helsinki II summit’ and ‘new criteria for this new phase’ because he looked for the Warsaw Pact and NATO to ‘change to a more political than military nature’.<sup>35</sup> But nothing tangible was agreed and no particular security option eliminated.

After Malta then, Bush was ready to endorse unification and side with chancellor Helmut Kohl. Moreover, in pursuit of the protection of America’s own

29 GBPL, ‘Second Expanded Bilateral Session’, 4:35-6:45 p.m., 3 Dec. 1989, p. 6, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20\\_Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20_Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

30 Ibid.

31 GBPL, ‘Second Expanded Bilateral Session’, 4:35-6:45 p.m., 3 Dec. 1989, pp. 9–10, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20\\_Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20_Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

32 GBPL, ‘Second Expanded Bilateral Session’, 4:35-6:45 p.m., 3 Dec. 1989, p. 2, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20\\_Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20_Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

33 GBPL, ‘First Restricted Bilateral Session with Chairman Gorbachev of Soviet Union’, 12:00-1:00pm, 2 Dec. 1989, p. 5, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20\\_Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20_Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

34 Ibid.

35 GBPL, ‘Second Expanded Bilateral Session’, 4:35-6:45 p.m., 3 Dec. 1989, p. 7, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20\\_Summit--Copies\\_from\\_HW\\_Bush\\_Archives.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Malta%20_Summit--Copies_from_HW_Bush_Archives.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

interests, the U.S. president, with newfound insight into Gorbachev's position, could also pursue the perpetuation of NATO. And so he would.

As soon as he had left the Mediterranean island, Bush met with Kohl. On the evening of 3 December – incidentally the eve of the NATO Council meeting – the two leaders had dinner in Laeken near Brussels. This was their first face-to-face meeting since the wall had fallen. Given that Kohl with his Ten Points had consciously launched a surprise initiative, without any consultation,<sup>36</sup> just days before Bush had been due to meet the Soviet leader as well as all the heads of NATO states, the U.S. president might have been indignant. But this was not the case.

Kohl diplomatically thanked the U.S. president for 'die ruhige Reaktion der USA' towards [his, Kohl's] ideas and promised 'daß er nichts tun werde, was unvernünftig sei'. He stated that West Germany was an integral part of the EC and NATO; West Germany's position in the alliance and community was firm. He further insinuated that he was thinking of a gradual process of unification and a timeframe of 10 years – unlike Henry Kissinger who had four days earlier in a German TV interview spoken of 'Wiedervereinigung' within two years. This to the chancellor's mind was too much of a 'wirtschaftliches Abenteuer'. Kohl said nothing though about a future unified Germany's alliance membership, or any other potential European security system. He only expressed his dedication to further European (EC) integration – a process that should come to encompass the Eastern Europeans. And with regard to the CSCE, he was quick to emphasise that the 1975 Helsinki Final Act's most significant aspect for unification '[lag in den] Möglichkeiten der friedlichen Vereinbarung von Grenzänderungen' (by which he meant the inner German border, less so the Oder-Neisse line<sup>37</sup>). Bush welcomed these 'Gedankengänge', for earlier he had explained that 'Man müsse eine Formel finden, die Gorbatschow nicht in Bedrängnis bringe und den Westen trotzdem zusammenhalte'.<sup>38</sup>

The effect of the meeting was that having been pushed by Kohl's Ten Points into a reactive position, Bush (after Malta and Laeken) could at the NATO Council attempt to get the U.S. back into the role of a pro-active policy-shaper. And that he did – by telling the allies that 'it was time to provide the architecture for continued change'.<sup>39</sup> More, at the news conference after the Council meeting, he stated 'The United States will remain a European power [...] And that means that the United States will stay engaged in the future of Europe and

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36 See Alan Riding: Bush Says Soviets Merit West's Help to Foster Reform – Tells Allies That U.S. Will Keep Significant Forces in Europe, in: NYT, 5 Dec. 1989, p. A17.

37 On the border issue, and the Helsinki principle on the inviolability / peaceful changeability of boundaries and Kohl's thinking, see DESE, Dok. Nr. 120, p. 639.

38 DESE, Dok. Nr. 109, pp. 602–604.

39 Quote from Sarotte: 1989, p. 79.

in our common defense. ... I pledge today that the United States will maintain significant military forces in Europe as long as our allies desire our presence as part of a common security effort.' He reiterated specifically NATO's traditional support for unification, but stressed that it should occur peacefully and gradually and 'in the context of Germany's continued commitment to NATO and an increasingly integrated European community'.<sup>40</sup>

#### *IV. Intra- and inter-government divergences*

If the chancellor and U.S. president had achieved a personal rapprochement post-Malta over the direction of the path to resolve the 'German question', Kohl appeared to suffer a setback with Baker only 9 days later, when they breakfasted together in Berlin on the morning after the unfortunate quadripartite ambassadors' meeting of 11 December in the Allied Kommandatura. The West German government was not best pleased that in spite of all the treaties and declarations made by the three Western allies over the past decades, they were prepared to let their ambassadors sit down with Moscow's representative in an old fashioned four-power parley, even if the actual topic of discussion had been narrowed down to merely touch on Berlin (not Germany as a whole). The symbolism of this meeting could not be lost on anyone.<sup>41</sup>

In his discussion with Baker, Kohl went out of his way to emphasise his trust in and desire for support from the U.S., and he insisted: 'Er spiele gegenüber den USA mit offenen Karten.' Close relations with Washington formed a key pillar in his policy. Yet, in an unveiled threat he alluded to the age-old Russian dream of an alliance with Germany and the potential for Soviet suggestions of a German withdrawal from NATO. And later on in their talks, Kohl went further by pointing out 'Auch für uns gebe es eine Innenpolitik, und hier gebe es Gruppierungen, die die Neutralisierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland anstrebten.' [...] 'Er [Kohl] habe stets deutlich gemacht, daß die Westbindung Teil unserer Staatsräson sei.'<sup>42</sup>

Kohl, unsurprisingly, was 'irritated' over events in Berlin, as Baker would later recall.<sup>43</sup> This was in part because of the quadripartite ambassadorial session that the Bonn government perceived as a plain affront by the 'big four',

40 Alan Riding: Bush Says Soviets Merit West's Help to Forster Reform: Tells Allies that U.S. Will Keep Significant Forces in Europe, in: NYT, 5 Dec. 1989, p. 1+A17.

41 Werner Weidenfeld et al.: Geschichte der deutschen Einheit. Vol. 4, Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit: Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90. Stuttgart 1998, pp. 179–187. See also Craig R. Whitney: 4 Powers to Meet on German Issues – Bonn-East Berlin Ties Prompt First Such Talks Since '72', in: NYT, 11 Dec. 1989, pp. 1+A7.

42 DESE, Dok. Nr. 120, pp. 639, 641.

43 James A. Baker: Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992. New York 1995, p. 171.

and in part because of Baker's presence in Berlin at the very same time, which seemed to offer a high-level American endorsement to the quadripartite occasion. But it was also because the U.S. secretary of state undertook an unannounced meeting with the East German leaders – indeed straight after his speech to the Berlin Press Club in West Berlin entitled 'A New Europe, a New Atlanticism: Architecture for a New Era'. While Baker's speech – that 'outlined proposals for transforming the military organisation to a political alliance' – received the headlines in the GDR as much as in the FRG, France and America that the Bush administration was cautioning the German chancellor over the unfolding events' speed, and asked the Kohl government to bear in mind the need for moderation, Baker's meeting with East German Premier Hans Modrow in Potsdam left the impression that with this move the Americans tried to 'shore up [the GDR] government' until the elections.<sup>44</sup> The Baker trip to Berlin could thus be seen like a slap to Kohl's face, and many did. It was in that regard a PR disaster – and this barely ten days after the chancellor's cordial private dinner with the U.S. president in Laeken.<sup>45</sup>

The U.S. administration, it seemed, did not act cohesively. But neither did there exist a uniform approach to 're-unification' in Bonn in late 1989. In West Germany all issues related to the 'German question' were highly sensitive: First, the situation inside the GDR was very much in flux. Second, nothing firm in regard to the actual unification *process* and the shape of the future security order in Europe had been settled as yet. And third, Kohl had to consider electoral politicking: federal elections were due before January 1991, while East Germany was gearing up for its first free elections planned for 6 May 1990. The chancellor realised however that his emotional connection with ordinary East German citizens and his ability to woo West German voters in his role as the potential 'father of unity' offered new opportunities to shape events.<sup>46</sup> Still, he knew he was not alone in this ambition to bringing the nation together. A 'multilevel competition for the creation of a durable political order in all of Germany'<sup>47</sup> between key West German political protagonists as well as their parties – Kohl's ruling Christian Democratic Party, his coalition partner Genscher's Liberal Democratic Party, and Willy Brandt's Social Democratic Party – was already in full swing and affected the nature and tactics of the

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44 Quotes from Thomas L. Friedman: Baker in Berlin, Outlines Plan To Make NATO a Political Group, in: NYT, 13 Dec. 1989, pp. 1+A18.

45 DESE, Dok. Nr. 125, p. 658 and esp. its fn. 1; James A. Baker: Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989–1992. New York 1995, pp. 171–172. For the speech, see Lawrence Freedman (ed.): Europe Transformed: Documents on the End of the Cold War. London 1990, pp. 397–398.

46 See Serge Schmemmann: Leaders of the 2 Germanies Meet – Symbolic Reconciliation Cheered, in: NYT, 20 Dec. 1989, pp. 1+A16.

47 Sarotte: 1989, p. 87.

*Wiedervereinigungspolitik* conducted by Kohl's coalition-government – both on the domestic and international platforms.

Significantly, not long after 9 November, Foreign Minister Genscher had already embarked on his own parallel diplomacy to Kohl's – putting forth his more CSCE-centric approach. In a private discussion with Bush on 21 November – a week prior to Kohl's announcement of his Ten Points – the German foreign minister had taken quite an ambivalent line whilst making far-reaching suggestions. To be sure, he had spoken of West Germany's unwavering loyalty to NATO ('never change a winning team, never change a winning concept'). But, he had then underlined the need 'den *politischen Charakter* der Allianz zu stärken und zu verbessern. Das Bündnis müsse sich mehr den Fragen der Abrüstung und Rüstungskontrolle und kooperativen Sicherheitsstrukturen zuwenden'. And he had emphasised that a European peace order ought to be brought about via the Helsinki process (rather than through the NATO military alliance).<sup>48</sup>

After Kohl's momentous speech, Genscher made similar remarks behind closed doors to Mitterrand, Shevardnadze and Gorbachev on 30 November and 5/6 December. He emphasised that Bonn could not renounce the Atlantic Alliance for a long time and that U.S. presence in Europe was vital for the continent's stability. Yet, '[beiden Bündnissen] komme zunehmend eine politische und abrüstungspolitische Dimension hinzu'.<sup>49</sup> And intra-German rapprochement should be embedded in the rapprochement between East and Western Europe for which the CSCE process was providing the stable framework.<sup>50</sup>

Genscher – in divergence from Kohl – drew on positions from the 1970s and 1980s, which had always bestowed some Western suspicion of 'Genscherism' or *Zweizügigkeit*<sup>51</sup> – of a lacking loyalty to the West. Without going as far as Egon Bahr, who declared unity and NATO to be mutually exclusive and proclaimed the SPD's goal not the preservation of NATO, but 'die staatliche Einheit'<sup>52</sup>, Genscher certainly appeared to be looking to work with the Soviets in ways that would *integrate* them somehow into a comprehensive post Cold War settlement, namely via a collective European security structure.

48 Andreas Hilger (ed.): *Diplomatie für die deutsche Einheit: Dokumente des Auswärtigen Amts zu den deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1989/90* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte). München 2011 [henceforth DDE:DAA], Dok Nr. 8, p. 44. Italics are mine. Note: Baker publicly outlined in Berlin on 12 Dec. (three weeks after Genscher spoke to Bush) plans to make NATO a more political group. Friedman: Baker in Berlin, p. A18.

49 DDE:DAA, Dok. Nr. 13, p. 75.

50 DDE:DAA, Dok. Nr. 11, 12 and 13, pp. 56–80.

51 On 'Genscherism', see Josef Joffe: *The Secret of Genscher's Staying Power: Memoirs of the Slippery Man*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 77, 1 (Jan./Feb. 1998), pp. 148–154.

52 Bahr: *Ich weiss gar nicht wieviel Zeit wir haben*, in: *Die Zeit*, 9 Feb. 1990; Bahr: "Bei der Ausweitung der NATO gibt es keine Einheit", in: *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 2 Feb. 1990.

### V. Genscher's Tutzing speech and its political fall-out

By January 1990, the majority of East Germans demanded unification. The GDR government under Hans Modrow had to admit its near financial insolvency to Kohl (as much as to the Soviets), which effectively reflected East Germany's loss of any residual political viability. The East German election date was moved forward to March.<sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, the 'big four' grappled each with questions of *process*: how to best address the issue of their remnant allied reserved rights; and how to deal most diplomatically with the Germans regarding the resolution of their national question. In the White House the mood was shifting. At this point, no matter of diplomacy and security was considered more important than German unification. Indeed, a glance at the front-page stories of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* confirms this point. Hardly a day went by when 'Germany' did not feature.<sup>54</sup> 'Creeping unification' had to be avoided, for, so the thinking amongst Bush's advisors went, if the process became too drawn out, the Kremlin might find too many opportunities to trade its acceptance of unity for concessions of Bonn (including on unified Germany's NATO membership).<sup>55</sup> Kohl too changed tack from what he had initially believed to be a relatively slow, gradual unification process<sup>56</sup> – starting with German-German rapprochement and culminating in merger – to pushing for speedy intra-German unification on his terms. Indeed, he was determined to prevent any further four-power activity without his involvement.<sup>57</sup>

In this context, the gaps began to grow between Kohl's visions for German unity and his political foci, and Genscher's. Crucially, the latter's activities as he sought a *visible* political platform and policy niche to shape, could no longer be contained in the secret world of backchannel diplomacy.

On 31 January 1990 Genscher went on the offensive. With his speech at the *Evangelische Akademie Tutzing* he put his personal stamp on German affairs in what he saw as his area of competence: Germany's positioning in Europe's evolving security architecture. More specifically, he used his remarks to pub-

53 DESE, Dok. Nr. 158, pp. 754–755. See also Serge Schmemmann: Vote Is Moved Up By East Germans; Coalition Widened: Ballot Is Set For March – All Parties Agree on the Early Election, Showing Anxiety About Public's Mood, in: NYT, 29 Jan. 1990, p. 1.

54 See William H. Webster: statement, January 23, 1990, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Threat Assessment; Military Strategy; and Operational Requirements, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 57–61.

55 Marcus Mabry: Twice as Good: Condoleezza Rice and Her Path to Power, pp. 117–118. See DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 109, p. 231; Zelikow and Rice: Germany Unified, pp. 158–160.

56 On cautiousness, gradualism and a kind of 'Slamlomfahrt' towards unity, DESE, Dok. Nr. 120, p. 637.

57 DESE, Dok. Nr. 141, 151, 157 +157A, 158, pp. 700, 727–735, 749–751, 753–756.

licly reinforce his CSCE approach. In spelling out these ideas, Genscher stood in stark contrast to Kohl who had thus far only cautiously engaged with security questions. During the chancellor's talks with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates the previous day in Bonn, the issue of unification and specific unity-related future security arrangements, i.e. NATO, had not even been addressed.<sup>58</sup>

It must be noted, that Genscher had worked on his speech largely alone and had *not* cleared it with the chancellery.<sup>59</sup> Considering Kohl's bold seizing of political initiative via his Ten Point Bundestag speech three months before, Genscher possibly felt compelled at this point to take *his* opportunity in Tutzing – the very location where Egon Bahr had uttered the by now historical words on *Wandel durch Annäherung* in 1963. Needless to say, considering Genscher's career as foreign minister had begun during the heyday of *Neue Ostpolitik* in 1974, it should have come as no surprise that this long-term advocate of resolving the German problem in an all-European context would proceed to promote visions that treaded carefully in areas affecting Soviet sensitivities.<sup>60</sup> He stated that 'In view of developments within COMECON and the Warsaw Pact it will be necessary to give special attention to the security interests of the Soviet Union'. The West should abstain from interference in Warsaw Pact matters, such as Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian demands for Soviet troop withdrawals.<sup>61</sup>

Genscher was clearly primarily concerned with defusing any objections Moscow might have regarding German re-unification. Seeking to avoid any suggestions of an instigation of major power balance shifts, he went on to suggest: 'Sache der NATO ist es, eindeutig zu erklären: Was immer im Warschauer Pakt geschieht, eine Ausdehnung *des NATO Territoriums nach Osten, das heißt, näher an die Grenzen der Sowjetunion heran, wird es nicht geben*. Diese Sicherheitsgarantien sind für die Sowjetunion und ihr Verhalten bedeutsam. ... Vorstellungen, daß der Teil Deutschlands, der heute die DDR bildet, in die militärischen Strukturen der NATO einbezogen werden sollte, würden die

58 DESE, Dok. Nr. 153, p. 741, Teltschik: 329 Tage, p. 123. See also DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 105, pp. 223–224, DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 109, p. 231.

59 Richard Kiessler, and Frank Elbe: Ein runder Tisch mit scharfen Ecken: Der diplomatische Weg zur deutschen Einheit. Baden-Baden 1993, pp. 79–80. See also Robert L. Hutchings: American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of US Policy in Europe, 1989–1992. Washington, DC 1997, p. 111; Zelikow and Rice: Germany Unified, p. 177.

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

61 Quoted from the Tutzing speech as printed in, Freedman (ed.): Europe Transformed, p. 440. On Central-Eastern European troop withdrawal demands, see also DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 129, p. 263.



deutsch-deutsche Annäherung blockieren.' The important thing was to clearly define the future role of the two alliances, which, so he continued, would move away from confrontation to cooperation and then become elements of cooperative security structures throughout Europe.<sup>62</sup>

The German foreign minister had dropped a political bomb. His formulations suggested harnessing a uniting Germany in an inoffensive (all-)European security-framework that would ultimately emerge as *a new system* out of the structures of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Significantly, there was no mention in the speech on the future of U.S. nuclear weapons and Western (foreign) forces in Germany. Both however were necessary to keep NATO's defence and deterrence capabilities intact; and, it was quite clear, as Vernon Walters, U.S. ambassador in Bonn had told Kohl a week earlier, '[daß] der Kongress [...] amerikanische Truppen in Europa nur unter dem NATO-Schirm belassen [werde]', wobei die 'Frage der deutschen Mitgliedschaft in der NATO [...] eine Entscheidung der Deutschen' allein sei. Kohl, then, had evaded the issue and merely declared 'hierüber müsse in engster Partnerschaft gesprochen werden.'<sup>63</sup>

If in early February competing views existed between the German chancellor and his foreign minister, the American administration did not hold an entirely uniform position over the post Cold War security order either. While NSC/White House staff at this stage envisaged a united Germany in NATO, some State Department bureaucrats were more pessimistic. The latter even contemplated U.S. and Soviet military withdrawal from Germany and potential German withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command structures.<sup>64</sup>

Baker seemed to adopt Genscher's viewpoints and evidently so without clear instructions from White House. After discussions on 2 February, both Genscher and Baker appeared in front of the world media 'in full agreement': Genscher stated that there was 'no intention to extend the *NATO area of defence and security* toward the East.' When pressed by journalists on the details, he specified that 'no halfway membership this way or that. What I said is that there is no intention of extending the NATO to the East'.<sup>65</sup> Genscher had thus somewhat clarified his Tutzing formula, and gotten Baker to agree. *Political NATO membership* should be enjoyed by *all* of Germany, whereas *militarily* the GDR would remain outside NATO. References made during these German-American talks in regard to the delimitation of the Alliance's eastern extension

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62 Kaiser: Deutschlands Vereinigung, Dok. Nr. 23, p.191; see also Freedman (ed.): Europe Transformed, pp. 440–441. See also Kiessler and Elbe: Ein runder Tisch, p. 246.

63 Quoted from DESE, Dok. Nr. 141, p. 699.

64 See Costigliola: Arm, p. 95; cf. Cox: His Finest Hour?, p 136.

65 Quote from Zelikow and Rice: Germany Unified, p. 176. [The italics are mine to emphasise the specifics].

did leave the territories east of the GDR altogether untouched. The question of NATO expansion beyond Germany did not seem a political concern at this time.<sup>66</sup>

Practical specifics and issues related to this vision's implementation were largely left unaddressed. One key difference over procedural matters did however emerge. While Baker pressed for the 2+4 process as the primary framework within which to negotiate and resolve Germany's security arrangements, Genscher continued stressing the role of the CSCE in this process and his desire to see the pan-European forum institutionalised via two summits in 1990 (in Paris) and 1992 (in Helsinki).<sup>67</sup>

A week later, Baker was in Moscow. Here, in his meetings with Gorbachev and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, he conveyed Genscher's ideas under guise of presenting U.S. considerations on Germany's future.<sup>68</sup> Choosing a slightly narrower phraseology to that of his German counterpart, Baker offered Gorbachev the guarantee 'daß – wenn die Vereinigten Staaten ihre Anwesenheit in Deutschland im Rahmen der NATO aufrecht erhalten – die Jurisdiktion oder militärische Präsenz der NATO in östlicher Richtung um keinen einzigen Zoll ausgedehnt wird'.<sup>69</sup> With these words, Baker effectively suggested that NATO's article 5 defence cover would not stretch to GDR territory. Crucially, he offered this guarantee of NATO's self-limitation in return for Soviet consent to continued American troop presence in the FRG, *not* in exchange for the Kremlin's consent to German unification. That German unification would occur was apparently taken for granted.

No later than 9 February – the day Baker spoke with Gorbachev in the Kremlin – Bush began calling the shots. He saw things somewhat differently. In a letter to Kohl on the 9th he explained that the continued presence of U.S. forces on German soil and the continuation of nuclear deterrence were 'critical to assuring stability in this time of change and uncertainty.' He suggested to Kohl that 'a component of a united Germany's [NATO] membership could be

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66 See DESE, Dok. Nr. 159, p. 756. 'Genscher habe bekräftigt [...]. Deutschland werde in der NATO bleiben. Die NATO solle nicht auf das Gebiet der DDR ausgeweitet werden. Dies solle gegenüber der Sowjetunion versichert werden.' It must be noted however that in Genscher's subsequent talks with his British counterpart Douglas Hurd (on 6 Feb.) and Soviet colleague Eduard Shevardnadze (on 10 Feb.) he made more far-reaching comments on NATO's potential future territorial delimitation. He told Hurd 'that when he talked about not wanting to extend NATO, that applied to other states besides the GDR'. See Spohr: Precluded, pp. 18–32. Quote in DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 129, pp. 261–264, esp. p. 262.

67 DESE, Dok. Nr. 159, pp. 756–757. See also Teltschik: 329 Tage, pp. 128–129.

68 DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, Doc. 124, p. 255; Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolij Tschernjajew (eds): Michail Gorbatschow und die deutsche Frage: Sowjetische Dokumente 1986–1991. München 2011 [henceforth MGDF:SD], Dok. Nr. 71, p. 312.

69 MGDF:SD, Dok. Nr. 71, p. 312.

a *special military status* for what is now the territory of the GDR'. 'Such a commitment', he believed, 'could be made compatible with the security of Germany, as well as of its neighbours, in the context of substantial, perhaps ultimately total, Soviet troop withdrawals from Central and Eastern Europe.' And to make NATO more palatable to Moscow, rather than offering the Soviets a CSCE based order, the Alliance should 'have a changing mission, with more emphasis on its political role'.<sup>70</sup>

Bush's presentation of his rationale regarding the Alliance and his practical suggestions showed how the new language could ensure the protection and defensibility of all of unified German territory whilst hopefully serving as a means to overcome Soviet objections to a full all-German NATO membership. In contrast to Baker's (and Genscher's) phrasing, which firmly ruled out any kind of military NATO expansion, Bush's language potentially ruled every option in. This shift in wording implied a significant change in policy – from a more defensive to a more assertive U.S. stance.

By mid February then, the White House seemed to have decided that unification was to be achieved absolutely and unequivocally on Western, if not to say American terms. NATO was not only intended to survive, but it would serve as the American vehicle to ensure the leading role of the U.S. in post Cold War European security.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time, Bush's thinking appeared to have adopted Genscher's ideas on a transformed, more political NATO.

Washington made clear that the only way forward in dealing with all external matters related to unification was not via a Helsinki II process (as Genscher and Gorbachev had proposed), nor via a peace conference, but the much smaller 2+4 talks. The latter formula eliminated the much-dreaded quadripartism, and instead placed the Germans (1+1) as equals in the driving seat of negotiations with the 4 victor powers.

In West Germany meanwhile, Genscher's vocal expressions of his pan-European visions created a row with Defence Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg who accused Genscher of driving demilitarisation. Kohl interestingly backed his foreign minister in this domestic spat;<sup>72</sup> and this concerned Washington. In Bush's view the German chancellor now had to be brought into line. It was

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70 DESE, Dok. Nr. 170, pp. 784–785.

71 See Bush: All the Best, pp. 460–461. See also Costigliola: Arm, pp. 101–102. According to Costigliola who referred U.S. House of Representatives – Committee of Armed Services meetings in Feb. March and April 1990, the Bush administration also believed that a 'robust US military role through NATO, particularly with nuclear weapons, helped counter any German temptations to develop a full panopoly of modern armaments'.

72 Kaiser: Deutschlands Vereinigung, Dok. Nr. 27, pp. 197–199. Zelikow and Rice: Germany Unified, p. 204; Teltschik: 329 Tage, pp. 151–152; DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 154, p. 307, fn. 6. See also Spohr: Precluded, pp. 33–36.

imperative ‘to get Kohl to agree that a united Germany would be a full member of NATO and a participant in its integrated military structure, and to state that *publicly*’. Moreover, Kohl should also agree ‘on the necessity of the continued presence of US troops on German soil’, and ‘to the continued necessity for the stationing of US nuclear weapons [there]’, though at present on these two points private assurances were considered acceptable and also more likely than public statements.<sup>73</sup> On 25 February Bush, Baker and Kohl delivered the first crucial point in their public message in Camp David. Significantly, Genscher had been deliberately excluded from these talks and left at home.<sup>74</sup>

But Genscher did not give up straight away. He stuck with his long-term idea of institutionalising the CSCE well into late March – for instance in talks with Baker and Shevardnadze in Windhoek on 21 and 22 March. While Baker told his German colleague that he welcomed the clear result in the GDR elections three days earlier, for ‚dies würde die Frage der Mitgliedschaft des vereinigten Deutschlands in der NATO erleichtern’, Genscher emphasised the importance of a CSCE-summit. ‘Ein neuer Rahmen und neue Strukturen seien erforderlich, da der Warschauer Pakt auseinanderzufallen drohe.’ Moreover, the U.S. should become ‘ein Teil einer gesamteuropäischen Struktur’. Baker reacted stand-offishly, while discretely threatening: the CSCE must not lead to a discrimination of NATO – ‘die “raison d’être” für amerikanische Präsenz in Europa’.<sup>75</sup> It is noteworthy that around this time on the German side positions appeared at least a little bit in flux. Teltschik in an internal memorandum for the chancellor on how to approach German security issues with the Soviets referred to the CSCE option, too. He wrote that even if Bonn obviously continued to push for all-German NATO membership, ‘[könnte dabei a]rgumentativ ... auf folgende Überlegungen zurückgegriffen werden, die innerhalb der Bundesregierung zum Teil noch abgestimmt werden müßten’, nämlich u. a. ‚daß im Rahmen der KSZE und des Rüstungskontroll- und Abrüstungsprozesses neue, übergreifende Strukturen der Sicherheit in Europa geschaffen werden’.<sup>76</sup>

On 23 March at the WEU Assembly in Luxembourg, Genscher however overstepped Kohl’s mark<sup>77</sup> by suggesting: ‚Die den Völkern Europas von den Bündnissen gewährte militärische Sicherheit muß in einem ersten Schritt durch kooperative Sicherheitsstrukturen verstärkt werden. In einem zweiten Schritt müssen die kooperativ strukturierten Bündnisse in einen Verbund gemeinsamer kollektiver Sicherheit überführt werden. Sie schaffen neue Strukturen der Si-

73 DBPO III, VII GU 1989/90, doc. 154, pp. 307–308 [Italics are mine].

74 DESE, Dok. Nr. 192, 860–873; Sarotte: 1989, pp. 126–127.

75 DDE:DAA, Dok. Nr. 22, pp. 109–113.

76 DESE, Dok. Nr. 228, pp. 973–974.

77 On the WEU speech, see Teltschik: 329 Tage, pp. 182–183, 186.

cherheit in Europa, von denen sie überwölbt werden, in denen sie schließlich aufgehen können.<sup>78</sup>

Kohl, confronted with Genscher's multi-dimensional Soviet policy, was apparently especially furious over this WEU speech. According to Teltschik, Kohl, full of rage, wrote a letter to Genscher, making clear ,daß er [Kohl] seine [Genschers] Aussagen [über die Auflösung der Bündnisse] nicht teile und nicht zulasse, daß die Bundesregierung durch solche öffentlichen Erklärungen auf Positionen festgelegt werde, die er nicht unterstützen könne'.<sup>79</sup>

Whether Genscher had tried to bypass Kohl or whether he was window dressing to keep the Soviets on board, is difficult to judge. It was probably a mixture of both. Either way, a united position on how in the longer term German and European future security arrangements should look was clearly eluding Bonn.<sup>80</sup> After the WEU incident, however, Genscher would stay more or less silent. West German officials from the chancellor downward began meanwhile to publicly present Kohl's (Camp David) position: the broad agreement on all-German NATO membership being pursued by all key actors as an *immediate goal*.

In the event, political realities of late spring 1990 actually superseded more and more Genscher's distant CSCE dream. Any parallelism between the more narrowly conceived German developments and the wider European CSCE process had long gone. The latter's future direction looked quite uncertain and would most certainly be preceded by Germany's unification.

The Soviets in turn felt increasingly pushed into the corner, suffering economic woes and political uncertainties at home. All-German NATO membership would be difficult to resist, not least because the White House stood firm to ensure this. In fact, Bush's diary entry of 24 February is very telling. He had noted: 'Kohl, I think recognizes the key role of the United States, and I think we have a disproportionate role for stability. We've got strong willed players – large and small in Europe – but only the United States can do this... [...] I don't want to see us fettered by a lot of multilateral decisions. We've got to stand, and sometimes we'll be together with them; but sometimes we'll say we differ, and we've got to lead, so we should not be just kind of watered down, picking up the bill, and acquiescing in a lot of decisions that might hurt us ... I've got to look after the U.S. interest in all of this without reverting to a kind of isolationistic or peace-nik view on where we stand in the world.'<sup>81</sup>

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78 For the speech, see Genscher: *Unterwegs*, pp. 258–268, esp. pp. 265–266. See also Hoover Institution Archives: Zelikow-Rice Papers 1989–1995, Box 1, Letter, Zelikow to Genscher, 24 January 1995, p. 5

79 Teltschik: *329 Tage*, pp. 182–183.

80 DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, doc. 180, p. 353.

81 Bush: *All the Best*, pp. 460–461.

To be sure, in a meeting in Washington on 17 May, Kohl affirmed on his part that he saw eye to eye with the U.S. president. ‘Die NATO sei nicht nur eine militärische Frage’, he held, ‘sondern eine Grundfrage des Selbstverständnisses Europas und Deutschlands. Die NATO-Mitgliedschaft sei kein Preis, den er für die deutsche Einheit bezahlen werde.’ Genscher on the same occasion promoted NATO’s ‘Entdämonisierung’ for the sake of the Soviets, and suggested ‘[daß] die deutsche Zugehörigkeit zur NATO nicht als Prinzip diskutiert werde. In der Schlussakte von Helsinki sei das Recht jedes Staates verbrieft, einem Bündnis anzugehören oder nicht anzugehören’. And now it was necessary to emphasise the relevance of the first part of this line: ‘the right to remain in an alliance’. (There was no longer any Genscherite talk about NATO’s dissolution in the long run.)<sup>82</sup>

Various domestic pressures, the issue of international credibility and the fact that the U.S. and West German governments had firmly closed rank over the security question, led, it appears, ultimately to Gorbachev’s sudden and surprising consent to granting unified Germany the *right*<sup>83</sup> to freely choose its alliance membership at the Washington superpower summit on 31 May–1 June 1990.<sup>84</sup>

Now, pragmatism and realpolitik demanded serious bargaining with the Soviets: over the exact details of all-German NATO membership and the price tag that would come with it. At that juncture, Kohl and Genscher finally pulled at the same string and revealed that Bonn would have both ‘deep enough pockets’ and political cleverness to understand that the time had come for them to use cheque-book diplomacy to effectively wrap things up on their own. The Soviet turnaround on explicitly consenting to unified Germany’s NATO membership and towards showing a genuine willingness to work out the details came thus at the Soviet-German summit in the Caucasus in mid-July. In Archys, Kohl and Gorbachev sealed Germany’s NATO fate and with it the future European security order. In fact, Kohl managed to merely having to concede to minor limits on NATO’s future: no foreign – only German – NATO troops would move into former East German territory after the Red Army had withdrawn, and German forces would not be equipped with nuclear weapons.<sup>85</sup>

82 DESE, Dok. Nr. 278, p. 1130. Cf. the U.S. record which is distinctly shorter on these points, GBPL, ‘Memorandum of Conversation, Kohl and Bush, May 17, 1990 11:40–12:55 p.m.’ p. 4, [http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/memcons\\_telcons/1990-05-17--Kohl%20\[2\].pdf](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/memcons_telcons/1990-05-17--Kohl%20[2].pdf) (accessed 1 April 2014).

83 Note the common theme in Gorbachev’s actions regarding the German question in 1989/90 to refer to and concede to the Germans the right (à la Helsinki) to self-determination [i.e. unification] and to choose their alliance membership. Note also Genscher’s suggestion on 17 May as per the previous footnote.

84 Spohr: Precluded, p. 46.

85 DESE, Dok. 350, p. 1345; DBPO III, VII, GU 1989/90, doc. 218, pp. 434–435. On the question of cheque-book diplomacy, see also Sarotte: Perpetuating, pp. 133–135. That

What acted as a catalyst for the successful outcome of the Soviet-German talks was, however, neither just the June superpower summit nor the prospect of Deutsche Marks, but NATO's London Declaration of 6 July. Indeed, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze would both later highlight that London was critical for Soviet acceptance of German unity within the Alliance and for the two men's ability to override domestic political opposition, seeing the new German realities could be presented as part of the transformation of the western alliance that had seized being the Cold War foe of the past.<sup>86</sup>

In London NATO presented its revised military strategy. The Soviet Union was no longer considered a threat. The alliance pledged never to use force first and proposed a nonaggression pact with Warsaw Pact members. Moreover, it invited all those states including the USSR to send diplomatic liaison missions to NATO; a process designed to start opening informal channels for closer association of some kind – but with eventual outcomes only to be determined by all someday in the future. At this stage Eastern European NATO membership was neither being offered nor asked for.<sup>87</sup>

This metamorphosis of NATO into a more political institution had been largely pushed for in Brussels by the Americans; yet it appears that the seeds of the idea for the more 'political nature' of the alliance might have been first planted in Bush's mind by Genscher's words back in their discussion in November 1989. And surely Genscher's many public verbalisations of his alternative, integrative vision of a pan-European security system under the auspices of the CSCE combined with his successful mollifying *Moskaupolitik* throughout the winter and early spring had left their mark on U.S. thinking and actions.

### Conclusions

By the end of 1990 the European map had been redrawn. Communism had collapsed in all of the Soviet former satellites; a united, fully sovereign Germany had re-emerged at the heart of Europe; and more, this unified Germany was a NATO member. One year later, the Soviet Union had disintegrated. Four years later the Red Army had withdrawn from the former GDR, while U.S. troops remained in the Western part of Germany. German-American relations clearly played a key role in this outcome, especially in 1989/90.

As I have shown with my focus on my three 're-ordering' moments, this was however not a relationship in which the American superpower and U.S. presi-

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chancellor Kohl had already been well aware of his special political lever – the 'power' of (West) German cash – in February 1990, see DESE, Dok. Nr. 192, pp. 868–869.

86 Hutchings: American Diplomacy, p. 135.

87 For the London Declaration, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_23693.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23693.htm) (accessed 1 April 2014). See also, Asmus: Opening NATO's Door, pp. 11–17.

dent Bush simply dominated, and Bonn acted as the semi-sovereign junior partner. The power-dynamic kept changing. Both sides pushed and pulled as both pursued their national interests. Both sought to influence each other, undertook friendly persuasion, while exchanging ideas as well as pursuing ideals.

It was the West German chancellor with his Ten Point Programme who made unification an operational policy goal and forced the pace of international politics. By putting himself into the driving seat of the unification process, he achieved real international emancipation for Germany. The Kohl government came to negotiate, bargain and effectively act on par with both the U.S. and USSR (as well as the two European victor powers).

The Bush administration in turn, after gaining reinsurance from Gorbachev in Malta that no hostile reactions would ensue over developments in Germany, not only backed the unification process. But Washington then took the opportunity to use 1989/90 as a transatlantic re-ordering moment – at the expense of a continuously weakening Soviet Union. Crucially, Bush did not pursue a post Cold War settlement that was radically new and entailed a new international architecture. Faced with dramatic change in divided Germany and challenging new pan-European collective security visions, he opted for ensuring European stability via NATO's continuity. NATO became his device to shape the post Cold War era, and above all, to legitimately cement the American military presence and Washington's continued leading role in Europe.

Still, the transformed, more *political* NATO that emerged and included a fully sovereign united Germany was not simply an American creation. In its new form it represented a *Genscherised* version of the Alliance. In this vein, this changed NATO was in 1990 very much seen – by Washington and Bonn as much as Moscow – as part of the long-term solution of overcoming the East-West divide. It was not intended as an American tool to simply squash the Russians at an opportune moment, as current Muscovite memory politics over NATO's post-Cold War eastern enlargements would suggest.