

FROM ARMS CONTROL TO NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION ENLARGEMENT

The Evolution of US Foreign Policy on the Cold War Alliance

***DE LA LIMITATION DES ARMEMENTS A L'ELARGISSEMENT DE L'ORGANISATION DU  
TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD***

*L'évolution de la politique étrangère américaine concernant l'Alliance*

A Thesis Submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies  
of the Royal Military College of Canada  
by

Philippine Smith, MA  
Captain

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

October 2025

©This thesis may be used within the Department of National Defence but copyright for open publication remains the property of the author.

To my family and friends who supported me throughout.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the support of my supervisors Professor Joel Sokolsky and Associate Professor James McKay who provided me with insight and advice over the years to keep the thesis moving forward. I would also like to thank the Chair of the War Studies program, Associate Professor Sarah Hill and the Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr Jean-Marc Noël, who provided invaluable support and who were central in ensuring the thesis reached defence. I would like to thank the thesis committee members who provided me with insightful feedback: Dr Beddoe (Chair), Professor David Haglund, LCol Andrew Brown, and Maj Mike Fejes. I would like to thank my mother for the editing support she provided. Finally, I would like to thank the Royal Kingston United Services Institute for the scholarship support they provided.

## Abstract

The Russia-Ukraine war has highlighted tensions between those who argue the war was caused by NATO enlargement and those who argue the war illustrates why NATO had to enlarge. This thesis examines NATO enlargement in the transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War European security framework and argues that NATO's first round post-Cold War enlargement was the result of path-dependent decisions. The US and the USSR were engaged in arms control negotiations until the fall of the Berlin Wall, but priorities changed once the US realised it had to support German unification to avoid Germany giving up NATO membership for Soviet support for unification.

This thesis uses process tracing within a path dependent framework. As post-Cold War NATO enlargement is a single-N case or a single decision-making process, this framework does not engage in comparative historical analysis and focuses instead on which incremental events led to a sequence of critical junctures that locked in the path to post-Cold War NATO enlargement, whether the outcome was considered optimal or suboptimal. Sources include declassified material from presidential libraries and the National Security Archives, newspaper articles, government reports, and academic literature.

This thesis concludes that post-Cold War NATO enlargement was not premeditated but did align with the European foreign policy of the US. The Clinton administration pushed for completion by NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1999 and concerns were left out of the decision-making process. It was the result of a sequence of events and critical junctures that prioritised NATO enlargement.

## Résumé

La guerre en Ukraine souligne les tensions entre ceux pour qui la cause de la guerre se trouve dans l'élargissement de l'OTAN et ceux qui disent que la guerre est précisément la raison pour laquelle l'OTAN devait intégrer de nouveaux pays membres. Cette thèse examine l'élargissement de l'OTAN dans le cadre de la transition entre la guerre froide et l'après-guerre froide et des discussions sur la nouvelle architecture de sécurité européenne. L'argument central est que le premier élargissement de l'OTAN après la guerre froide s'explique par les décisions prises selon la théorie du sentier de dépendance. Les Etats-Unis et l'Union Soviétique étaient engagés dans des négociations sérieuses sur la limitation des armements jusqu'à ce que la chute du mur de Berlin change la trajectoire des événements. Les Etats-Unis réalisèrent alors qu'ils devraient soutenir l'Allemagne pour éviter qu'elle n'abandonne l'OTAN en échange du soutien des Soviétiques envers l'unification.

Cette thèse utilise le traçage de processus dans le cadre de la théorie du sentier de dépendance. Ce cadre théorique ne propose pas de comparaisons historiques étant donné que le cas de l'élargissement post-guerre froide de l'OTAN est un cas unique. Le sentier de dépendance permet de se concentrer sur les événements incrémentiels qui ont mené à des moments critiques et qui ont contribué à la limitation des alternatives jusqu'à l'aboutissement de l'élargissement de l'OTAN, que ce choix ait été optimal ou pas. Cette thèse s'appuie sur des documents déclassifiés des archives présidentielles et des National Security Archives, ainsi que d'articles de journaux, de rapports gouvernementaux, et de la littérature académique.

Cette thèse conclut que l'élargissement post-guerre froide de l'OTAN ne faisait pas partie d'un plan prémédité de la part des Etats-Unis, mais qu'il s'aligna avec sa politique étrangère européenne. La présidence de Bill Clinton poussa pour que l'élargissement soit terminé pour le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'OTAN en 1999, sans inclure les préoccupations qui ne furent pas intégrées dans le processus décisionnel. Ce fut le résultat d'une série d'événements et de moments critiques qui a mis la priorité sur l'élargissement de l'OTAN.

## Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction - NATO Enlargement and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tensions</b> .....	1
<b>2 Literature Review</b> .....	6
<b>Alliances: NATO as a Cold War Tool</b> .....	7
<b>Arms Control: The Primary Concern of Cold War Diplomacy</b> .....	10
<b>German Unification: A Sudden Strategic Shift</b> .....	15
<b>NATO Enlargement: Planned or Reactive?</b> .....	17
<b>3 Theory and Methodology</b> .....	26
<b>Theory</b> .....	26
<b>Methodology</b> .....	30
<b>4 From Arms Control to German Unification</b> .....	33
<b>5 Soviet Challenges at the End of the Line</b> .....	61
<b>6 The Path to Post-Cold War NATO Enlargement – Critical Junctures and Path Dependency</b> .....	91
<b>Critical Juncture 1: The Fall of the Berlin Wall</b> .....	93
<b>Critical Juncture 2: German Unification</b> .....	94
<b>Critical Juncture 3: The End of the Soviet Security Framework</b> .....	96
<b>Critical Juncture 4: The Initiation of NATO’s Plans for Eastward Enlargement</b> .....	97
<b>Critical Juncture 5: Issuing of Invitations to Begin Accession Negotiations</b> .....	98
<b>Critical Juncture 6: US Senate Ratification of NATO Enlargement</b> .....	100
<b>7 Conclusion: Path Dependency and NATO Enlargement</b> .....	103
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	109

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1: Critical Juncture 1</b> .....	94
<b>Figure 2: Critical Juncture 2</b> .....	95
<b>Figure 3: Critical Juncture 3</b> .....	97
<b>Figure 4: Critical Juncture 4</b> .....	98
<b>Figure 5: Critical Juncture 5</b> .....	100
<b>Figure 6: Critical Juncture 6</b> .....	101
<b>Figure 7: Critical Junctures and Decisions</b> .....	102

## List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ABM Treaty	Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
Big Four	France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CoCom	Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DoD	Department of Defense
DPC	Defence Planning Committee
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EC	European Community
ESO	European Security Organization
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FNS	Force stratégique nucléaire
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
MLF	Multilateral Force
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIS	Newly Independent States
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSC	National Security Council
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
NSPG	National Security Planning Group
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PFIAB	President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
PoC	Programmes of Cooperation
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative
SFRC	Senate Foreign Relations Committee
SNF	Strategic Nuclear Forces

SNOG	Senate NATO Observer Group
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TBTT	Threshold Test Ban Treaty
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USDP	US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
V4	Visegrad Four (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia)
WEU	Western European Union

## Glossary

Term	Definition
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. <sup>1</sup>
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: formally established in Helsinki on 3 July 1973, led to the Helsinki Final Act on 1 August 1975. <sup>2</sup>
Glasnost	A policy introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 to promote open discussions about Soviet issues to promote democratisation and revitalise Soviet economics and politics. <sup>3</sup>
Helsinki Final Act	The 1975 Helsinki Final Act was signed by 35 nations and concluded the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It dealt with four “baskets” of issues, including the “Decalogue” that governed the behaviour of nations towards their citizens and each other. <sup>4</sup>
Hot Line Agreement	The “Memorandum of Understanding Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link” was the first bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union for emergency communications in a military crisis that would “threaten the security of either of the states involved” at a “rate which appeared to preclude the use of normal consultative procedures”. <sup>5</sup>
NAC	The North Atlantic Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. All NATO member countries have a seat, and it is chaired by the NATO Secretary General. The NAC can meet at different levels: Permanent Representatives, foreign and defence ministers, and heads of state and government. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, “Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs),” *Statistical Terms Glossary*, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, “Our History: The Helsinki Process,” n.d.

<sup>3</sup> EBSCO, “Gorbachev Initiates a Policy of Glasnost,” *Research Starters*, 2026.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, “Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs)”; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act (1975); Department of State Office of the Historian, “Helsinki Final Act, 1975,” *Milestones: 1969-1976*, n.d.

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Memorandum of Understanding Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link (1963).

<sup>6</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “North Atlantic Council (NAC),” *About Us*, 2024.

NACC	The North Atlantic Cooperation Council was established in 1991 as a multilateral political consultation and cooperation with CEE countries following the Cold War. It was replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997. <sup>7</sup>
OSCE	The 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe established permanent institutions and operational capabilities for the CSCE, and Heads of State or Government at the 1994 Budapest Summit renamed the CSCE to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. <sup>8</sup>
Ostpolitik	Chancellor Willy Brandt's Eastern policy for détente with the Soviet Union. <sup>9</sup>
Perestroika	Gorbachev's policy for reforming the Soviet Union to transform and adapt it with the goal of maintaining its viability. <sup>10</sup>
SDI	The Strategic Defense Initiative was proposed by President George H.W. Bush on 23 March 1983 as a three-tiered defensive system that "intercept a target missile in the boost, midcourse and terminal phases of its flight". <sup>11</sup>
START	The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was signed on 31 July 1991 between George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev and addressed limits on intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy (long-range) bombers. <sup>12</sup>
START II	The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II was signed on 3 January 1993, was a complement to START I, established limits on strategic weapons that were to be implemented in two phase, and created the Bilateral Implementation Commission (BIC) as a forum for this. <sup>13</sup>
Washington Treaty	The Washington Treaty, also known as the North Atlantic Treaty, was signed on 4 April 1949 by 12 founding members, and comprised 14 articles including Article 5 on collective defence. <sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1991-1997)," *About Us*, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "Our History: The Helsinki Process."

<sup>9</sup> Bernd Rother, "Introduction to the Willy Brandt Document Collection," *Wilson Center*, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> The National Security Archive, "Perestroika in the Soviet Union: 30 Years On," 2025.

<sup>11</sup> US Department of State, "The Strategic Defense Initiative in Retrospect: The Past, Present, and Future of Missile Defense," *Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance*, 2023; Sharon Watkins Lang, "Strategic Defense Command/Strategic Defense Initiative," *The Eagle March* (2007).

<sup>12</sup> Arms Control Association, "START I at a Glance," *Fact Sheets*, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Arms Control Association, "Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II)," *Treaties*, n.d.

<sup>14</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *The North Atlantic Treaty (1949)*; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Founding Treaty* (2022).

WEU

The Western European Union originated in the 1947 Treaty of Dunkirk and the 1948 Treaty of Brussels and was formally created on 23 October 1954. Though it operated alongside NATO, it focused on coordinating defence activities among its European members and the Treaty on European Union integrated it while maintaining its institutional independence, until the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) took over its operational and political work and it was disbanded in 2011.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Alyson JK Bailes and Graham Messervy-Whiting, “Death of an Institution. The End for Western European Union, a Future for European Defence,” *Egmont Paper*, 2011; EBSCO, “Western European Union Is Established,” *Research Starters*, 2026; Western European Union, “Modified Brussels Treaty (Paris, 23 October 1954),” 1954; Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security, “Western European Union (WEU),” n.d.

## 1 Introduction - NATO Enlargement and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tensions

The Russia-Ukraine war has renewed the debate on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) enlargement. When Russia annexed Crimea and sent forces into the Eastern Ukraine in 2014, it sent shock waves through NATO. The Russia-Ukraine war is taken as a marker of the success or failure of NATO enlargement when assessing the post-Cold War history of NATO and has led to discussions on whether NATO enlargement provoked Russia and led to the conflict. This inevitably leads to additional debate about the reasons for NATO enlargement, how it happened and why. Critics such as Switzer and Mearsheimer are pointing the finger at NATO enlargement as the cause of the war, arguing that there was plenty of warning that Russia would consider it a hostile act, yet the West actively supported pro-Western movements in Ukraine and never retracted the statement that Georgia and Ukraine would become NATO members.<sup>16</sup> Others, such as Radoslaw Sikorski, former Polish Defence Minister, argue that the countries that joined NATO were sovereign rational states with legitimate security interests and joined for "common defense, for common protection", as more recently demonstrated by Finland and Sweden joining NATO in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war.<sup>17</sup> While the pro-enlargement debate during the 1990s had won out, support for extending to Ukraine was not unanimous<sup>18</sup> and despite multiple assurances and documents that appeared to set Ukraine up for NATO membership,<sup>19</sup> Ukraine was not offered a Membership Action Plan at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest despite a strong push by President George W. Bush for Ukraine to begin the process of joining NATO.<sup>20</sup> Moscow's stated reason for the invasion of Ukraine was that NATO had expanded its borders towards Russia.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the Russian invasion, the June 2022 NATO Strategic Concept and the October 2022 US National Defense Strategy identified Russia as a growing strategic threat.<sup>22</sup> Russia's actions renewed the early post-Cold War fear that should the Soviet Union recover, it would "outmatch German power".<sup>23</sup> Was the Russia-Ukraine war a manifestation of ill-guided or well-planned NATO enlargement? Furthermore, why would NATO enlarge to include post-Communist states whose political and economic systems were not firmly entrenched in democracy and market economics, and were not considered wealthy as compared to NATO member states?

This thesis argues that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of incremental, path-dependent decisions marked by six critical

---

<sup>16</sup> Tom Switzer, "Why NATO Expansion Explains Russia's Actions in Ukraine," *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, July 24, 2024; John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, no. September-October (2014): 77–80.

<sup>17</sup> "Fareed Zakaria GPS" (CNN, 2022), sec. 10:10.

<sup>18</sup> Ishaan Tharoor, "A Fateful Summit 15 Years Ago Hangs Over the NATO Meeting in Vilnius," *The Washington Post*, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> 1997 Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with NATO, 2008 Bucharest Summit announcing that Ukraine would join NATO, the 2009 Declaration to Complement the Charter in 2009 reaffirming the 2008 decision and the Annual National Programme as the key instrument.

<sup>20</sup> ND International Security Center, "The Addition of NATO Members Over Time (1949-2024)," 2023; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO Member Countries," 2024; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Bucharest Summit Declaration," 2008; Henri de Grossouvre and Côme Carpentier de Gourdon, "The Nato Summit In Bucharest," *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 12, no. 3 (2008): para. 85.

<sup>21</sup> Georgia Gilholy, "Putin: Blame NATO for the Ukraine War," *National Security Journal*, September 2, 2025; Tom Balmforth, "Russia Accuses NATO, EU of Waging 'Real War' on It via Ukraine," *Reuters*, September 25, 2025; Paul Kirby, "Why Did Putin's Russia Invade Ukraine?," *BBC*, August 13, 2025; Jan D. Walter, "Did NATO Expansion Drive Russia to War?," *Deutsche Welle*, June 25, 2025.

<sup>22</sup> United States Department of Defense, 2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, including the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review (2022); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept," 2022, 4.

<sup>23</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic Monthly* August (1990): 41.

junctures: the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO's plan for eastward enlargement, the issuing invitations for accession negotiations, and the US Senate's ratification of enlargement. Prior to Europe changing paths after the fall of the Berlin Wall, both the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were seriously engaged in arms control negotiations. The US became concerned that it had to support German unification to avoid Germany giving up NATO presence in return for Soviet support for unification. This led to discussions on the future of NATO and the European security framework gaining momentum until events led up to the US Senate's ratification of the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement. While US foreign policy and presence in Europe functioned through the intermediary of NATO, Germany wanted to push NATO's border further east, away from its own border. In a PBS Newshour interview with Jack Matlock<sup>24</sup> and Henry Kissinger<sup>25</sup> during the 1994 CSCE Budapest Summit (which marked the shift to the OSCE), Matlock responded to the question of where the pressure inside NATO was coming from for a quick expansion by saying that his understanding was that the Germans were the "principal advocates".<sup>26</sup> Kissinger affirmed this by stating that the reason for a quick expansion was because the border of NATO had become the eastern border of Germany, though he qualified this with the assessment that the border that would be at threat was actually the eastern border of Poland.<sup>27</sup>

During the Cold War, the US's goal was to preserve its security and economic wellbeing in the face of communism and nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> NATO had been created as a tool to protect West European countries from the encroachment of communism by the USSR, so once the Cold War was over, there was an initial belief that the alliances' original purpose had disappeared. Despite this, NATO persisted and even went on to enlarge. Byun describes how the US was determined to engage in "grand strategic retrenchment" after the Cold War because NATO's *raison d'être* had ceased to exist once the USSR ceased to exist. By not retrenching, Byun argues that the US assumed more responsibility than necessary in counterbalancing allies' military vulnerability. It is true that NATO may have been intended as a "stopgap measure" or a "temporary expedient" during the Cold War. President Dwight D. Eisenhower stated in 1951 that if "in 10 years, all American troops stationed in Europe for national defense purposes have not been returned to the United States, then this whole project [NATO] will have failed."<sup>29</sup> President John F. Kennedy came to see the American military commitment to Europe as "inescapable" because a "third force had not emerged to provide a counterweight to the Soviet Union" and NATO was the price to be paid for the double containment problem<sup>30</sup> – keeping the "Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down" as NATO Secretary General Lord Ismay purportedly said.<sup>31</sup> If as Volker Rühle<sup>32</sup> explains,

---

<sup>24</sup> Career Foreign Service Officer, including Director Soviet Affairs at the US State Department and Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

<sup>25</sup> Positions included US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor under President Nixon, Secretary of State under President Ford, and faculty member at Harvard University.

<sup>26</sup> Robert MacNeil, "30 Years Ago Today: Kissinger on Russia & NATO Expansion Dec. 5, 1994 PBS Newshour, w/ Jack Matlock" (UCLA Irv Drasnin and Xiaoyan Zhao Drasnin Communication Archive, 1994), secs. 00:02:34-00:03:02.

<sup>27</sup> MacNeil, secs. 00:04:02-00:04:40.

<sup>28</sup> Francis J Gavin, "Blame It on the Blob? How to Evaluate American Grand Strategy," *War on the Rocks*, 2020; Hal Brands, "Rethinking America's Grand Strategy: Insights from the Cold War," *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 45, no. 4 (2015): 7–16.

<sup>29</sup> Justin Logan and Joshua Shifrinson, "A Post-American Europe," *Foreign Affairs* August (2024).

<sup>30</sup> Joshua Shifrinson and John Schuessler, "The Shadow of Exit from NATO," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (2019): 41, 44.

<sup>31</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO Leaders - Lord Ismay," *NATO Declassified*, n.d.

<sup>32</sup> German politician affiliated with the CDU, served as German Defence Minister from 1992-1998.

President Bill Clinton, Strobe Talbott,<sup>33</sup> Les Aspin,<sup>34</sup> and Bill Perry<sup>35</sup> were not supportive of NATO enlargement in 1993 but that the US eventually came to support the project.<sup>36</sup> What led to the US shoring up Western Europe even after the US no longer had to help Europe build up its defenses against the Soviet threat and rebuild after WWII (with West Germany even joining NATO in 1955 due to “European concerns about West Germany’s vulnerability to Soviet countermeasures”)?<sup>37</sup> Why did NATO continue to exist (and even enlarge) after the Cold War?

There may in fact be continuity in US foreign policy across the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. According to Mastanduno, NATO enlargement under the Clinton Administration appears consistent with a strategy for the “preservation of the United States’ pre-eminent global position”.<sup>38</sup> This support can be found in the Republican and the Democratic party platforms, as well as the US national security strategies (1988-1996/1997). This implies that the goal of US grand strategy – namely, the preservation of its pre-eminent global position – never changed and NATO was a tool that enabled this policy.<sup>39</sup> US national interest and security were tied semantically across these documents by the concepts of democracy, open markets, and American leadership, and NATO enlargement seemed consistent with this objective.

To respond to the debate over whether the Russia-Ukraine war was a manifestation of ill-guided or well-planned NATO enlargement, it is necessary to demonstrate that the process was an emergent outcome and not premeditated. The problem of enlargement requires looking further back to the end of the Cold War and the post-Cold War period to understand what changes allowed the Cold War to come to an end, how NATO factored into this, and what occurred after the Cold War because of these events. By contextualising NATO enlargement and understanding who or what was involved, it will provide a framework for the analysis of the dynamics behind NATO enlargement, considerations of any possible ramifications, and a better-informed understanding of how enlargement dynamics may have interconnected with political factors.

The major change to the geopolitical landscape was of course the end of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, which, coupled with Russia’s economic and political problems, meant that the US had lost

---

<sup>33</sup> Reporter, Ambassador-at-large and special adviser to the Secretary of State Warren Christopher for New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, Deputy Secretary of State.

<sup>34</sup> Member of the US House of Representatives from 1971-1993, US Secretary of Defense 1993-1994.

<sup>35</sup> Then Deputy Secretary of Defense under Aspin, later Secretary of Defense 1994-1997.

<sup>36</sup> Volker Rühle, “Opening NATO’s Door,” in *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, ed. Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr (Washington D.C.: Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2019), 223.

<sup>37</sup> Joshua Byun, “Stuck Onshore: Why the United States Failed to Retrench from Europe during the Early Cold War,” *Texas National Security Review* 7, no. 4 (2024): para. 28; Logan and Shiffrinson, “A Post-American Europe,” para. 6; Shiffrinson and Schuessler, “The Shadow of Exit from NATO,” 40.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Mastanduno, “Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War,” *International Security* 21, no. 4 (1997): 51.

<sup>39</sup> Marjorie Hershey, “What Is a Party Platform? Here’s How They’re Made and What You Should Pay Attention To,” *PBS News*, 2024, para. 3; The American Presidency Project, “Republican Party Platform of 1988,” *Republican Party Platforms*, 1988; The American Presidency Project, “1988 Democratic Party Platform,” *Democratic Party Platforms*, 1988; The American Presidency Project, “Republican Party Platform of 1996,” *Republican Party Platforms*, 1996; The American Presidency Project, “Republican Party Platform of 1992,” *Republican Party Platforms*, 1992; The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States (1988); The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States (1991); The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States (1993); The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1994); The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1995); The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1996); The White House, A National Security Strategy for A New Century (1997).

its biggest immediately identifiable threat and NATO's *raison d'être* as collective defence against the Soviet threat.<sup>40</sup> Mearsheimer even described it as the "Soviet threat [that] provides the glue that holds NATO together".<sup>41</sup> The end of the Cold War surprised everyone in not only happening, but happening as fast and peacefully as it did.<sup>42</sup> While Fukuyama wrote that the end of the Cold War signalled the "unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" in the absence of viable alternatives,<sup>43</sup> the end of the USSR as the "ideological glue" for US European foreign policy strategy left a conceptual gap for what the world would look like in the absence of the Cold War. Several former Soviet states and Warsaw Pact members were on Europe's doorstep immediately looking to get out of the sphere of influence of Russia and hoping to join both NATO and the European Community (EC). Nearly all the aspirants have since joined the now European Union (EU) as well as NATO.<sup>44</sup> Though NATO enlargement was not divorced from the wider European context at the time, enlargement is perplexing when viewed in isolation. NATO enlargement has "created new interests involving weak, vulnerable states that are much harder to secure".<sup>45</sup> In 1998, George Kennan<sup>46</sup> referred to American support for NATO enlargement as "a tragic mistake" which would unnecessarily result in a new Cold War.<sup>47</sup> Kennan believed the US was not suited to being an imperial power and he wanted to get the US out of "the position of abnormal political-military responsibility in Western Europe which the war had forced upon us" as soon as possible.<sup>48</sup> The concept of a viable European defence community as an alternative to NATO was discussed over the years in various forms, but this stoked US concern that a Franco-German alliance (perhaps even with Russia) would lead to the US being kicked out of Europe.<sup>49</sup>

This thesis rests on path dependence theory and hypothesises that German unification formed a critical juncture that made it possible to conceptualise US-Soviet relations through a different framework than arms control negotiations. NATO enlargement subsequently emerged as the dominant organisational framework through a series of critical junctures that progressively eliminated alternatives through subsequent events and decisions that cumulatively made enlargement inevitable. This would mean that

---

<sup>40</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The Brussels Treaty" Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence (1948); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *The North Atlantic Treaty*; North Atlantic Council, Directive to the NATO Military Authorities from the North Atlantic Council (1956).

<sup>41</sup> Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," 47.

<sup>42</sup> As Hubert Védrine points out, the consequences of the end of the Soviet Union, were well-managed in the case of Central Europe due to the attraction of the European Union, but badly-managed in the Balkans and the Caucasus. *Vie publique, "Déclaration de M. Hubert Védrine, Ministre Des Affaires Étrangères, Sur Les Relations Internationales Depuis l'effondrement de l'URSS, Les Équilibres Géostratégiques et La Sécurité Internationale, Paris Le 3 Novembre 1999,"* 1999.

<sup>43</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest* Summer, no. 16 (1989): 3.

<sup>44</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with the European Union," *What We Do*, 2024; European Commission, "EU Enlargement," *Policies*, n.d.; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Enlargement and Article 10," *What We Do*, 2024.

Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia are members of the EU and NATO. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine are applicant countries to the EU, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine have all declared their aspiration to become NATO members.

<sup>45</sup> Logan and Shiffrin, "A Post-American Europe," para. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Career Foreign Service Officer, including US Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1952 and US Department of State's first Director of Policy Planning.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "Foreign Affairs; Now a Word from X," *The New York Times*, May 2, 1998, para. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Byun, "Stuck Onshore: Why the United States Failed to Retrench from Europe during the Early Cold War," para. 30.

<sup>49</sup> Byun, "Stuck Onshore: Why the United States Failed to Retrench from Europe during the Early Cold War"; Shiffrin and Schuessler, "The Shadow of Exit from NATO."

NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of critical junctures that made it the dominant position after decades of US-Soviet relations articulated around arms control negotiations, even in the face of alternatives. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on alliances, arms control, German unification, and NATO enlargement to examine the US understanding of alliances and its significance for NATO, the frequency and context of arms control negotiations during the Cold War, the historical reasons for German unification, and the variety of dynamics at play behind NATO enlargement. Chapter 3 presents path dependent methodology and explains that process tracing across six critical junctures will be used to examine decisions points that moved the trajectory of NATO's future closer to enlargement. Chapters 4 and 5 form the body of the thesis and use extensive primary sources to examine the discussions and motivations at the heart of the evolution from arms control negotiations to post-Cold War NATO enlargement. Chapter 6 overlays the six critical junctures on the historical examination of events to illustrate the decisions that were taken and how they foreclosed alternatives at each step. Chapter 7 concludes by summarising the key contributions of the literature, the insights provided by the primary sources, and the contributions path dependency and critical junctures bring to the literature.

## 2 Literature Review

The Cold War, which came on the heels of two world wars and a great depression, was characterised by ongoing arms control discussions that made the Cold War more pressing because of the real and potential destructive power of nuclear weapons. The quick and peaceful end to the Cold War from the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, to German reunification in 1990, and the end of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991, meant both the global and continental security frameworks of the past forty-odd years (1947-1991) had to be reshaped. Despite the disappearance of the communist threat and the USSR, NATO did not disappear. This was not for lack of alternatives having appeared throughout the years, from the Western European Union (WEU) and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) (later the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)) to the Maastricht Treaty's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (of which the WEU and European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) were components), a European defence community failed to materialise as an alternative to NATO to occupy the centre of the European security framework.

The scope of the literature on the Cold War and post-Cold War is broad. Examples of authors that have written on the Cold War, the US, and the Soviet Union from different perspectives include John Lewis Gaddis, Odd Arne Westad, and former CIA Director and White House staff member Robert M. Gates. While there are numerous authors that have written on these topics, the purpose is not to provide a literature review of all Cold War writings but to illustrate some of the approaches that have been taken in studying the Cold War.

For example, Gaddis, whose fields of interest are described as including Cold War history and Grand Strategy, has published in-depth analyses on these topics, including *"The Cold War: A New History"*, *"Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War"*, and *"The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations"*.<sup>50</sup> Gaddis's approach focusses strongly on the American perspective, with an emphasis on George Kennan's influence (as Kennan's biographer),<sup>51</sup> as well US presidents and close advisors throughout the Cold War. In *"The United States and the End of the Cold War"*, Gaddis addresses how successive US presidents managed the relationship with the Soviet Union, while in *"The Cold War: A New History"*, he examines Cold War history to explain how it was possible to come so close to nuclear war with the Cuban missile crisis with a USSR that turned out to be "as weak, as bumbling, and as temporary" as it was.<sup>52</sup> In *"Strategies of Containment"*, Gaddis explores US national security policy since WWII from the angle of strategy, as in the "process by which ends are related to means, intentions to capabilities, objectives to resources".<sup>53</sup> Gaddis provides extensive details, but while he does address Cold War events outside of the US and Europe in *"The Cold War"* for example, it remains a very US-centric view of events.

---

<sup>50</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2005); John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>51</sup> A.B, "A Conversation with Kennan's Biographer John Lewis Gaddis," *The Economist*, November 28, 2011.

<sup>52</sup> The National Security Archive, Memorandum of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and Károly Grósz, General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party - Moscow, 23-24 March 1989 - Excerpt (1989).

<sup>53</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, 7-8.

Westad provides a different perspective on Cold War history and events in “*The Cold War: A World History*” and “*The Cold War and America's Delusion of Victory*”,<sup>54</sup> focussing on truly world events as well as providing a more critical analysis of the US’s actions. Westad’s approach in “*The Cold War*” is to consider the Cold War a global phenomenon, and he delves into the social and political drivers and dynamics of the era, both those that led to the Cold War and those that occurred during the Cold War. In “*The Cold War and America's Delusion of Victory*”, Westad argues that the US failed to capitalise on winning the Cold War, and that it should have dealt with the Soviet Union/Russia better than it did, concluding that the West and Russia may have been more secure had the possibility been left open for Russia to join the European Union and NATO.<sup>55</sup> Westad’s approach is less US-centric and addresses global events from the Cold War, demonstrating that it was not only a US-USSR rivalry.

In “*From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*”, Gates provides a very different perspective of Cold War events due to the roles he occupied. His account of events is more intertwined, providing first-hand and participant-observer perspectives. The nature of his positions means that he also recounts the Cold War from the US side, addressing events such as the Third World or the Velvet Revolutions in Eastern Europe from an outsider’s perspective. He argues that the USSR was in fact an “evil empire” and that Americans were the ones who “paid the price to match the empire’s military might”.<sup>56</sup>

The multitude of topics that fall under the Cold War umbrella means that it is a necessity to identify the specific area under consideration, at the risk of otherwise delving into far too many broad historical accounts of events that do not support pointed analysis. Therefore, this thesis focusses on four broad categories that contextualise overarching perspectives relevant to post-Cold War NATO enlargement:

1. Alliances
2. Arms control
3. German unification
4. NATO enlargement

### **Alliances: NATO as a Cold War Tool**

As Kupchan points out, over time American alliances have tended to be tools of warfare rather than deterrence.<sup>57</sup> How has the US historically considered its alliances, and how does NATO fit into the American understanding of alliances? Lippmann describes how US foreign policy followed the isolationism promoted by the 1823 Monroe doctrine<sup>58</sup> and the desire to avoid “entangling alliances” as declared by President Jefferson in 1801, until WWII.<sup>59</sup> Aside from participation as an “associate” in WWI to circumvent criticism from Republicans in Congress about joining an alliance, it was not until the 1941

---

<sup>54</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); Odd Arne Westad, “The Cold War and America’s Delusion of Victory,” *New York Times*, August 28, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Westad, “The Cold War and America’s Delusion of Victory,” paras. 8–9.

<sup>56</sup> Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 1034–35.

<sup>57</sup> Strategic Studies Quarterly, “On Great Power Conflict: Entangled or Untangled Alliances? An Interview with Charles A. Kupchan,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* Winter (2019): 3.

<sup>58</sup> President James Monroe.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943), 12, 16.

Atlantic Charter and Pearl Harbor that it became evident the US could no longer operate independently of the European powers.<sup>60</sup> Post-WWII US foreign policy underwent a strategic shift following the publication of Kennan's "Long Telegram",<sup>61</sup> NSC-68,<sup>62</sup> and President Truman's containment doctrine supported by the Marshall Plan (which was rejected by Molotov in 1947 over concerns about US influence) and by the Berlin airlift in 1948 to overcome the blockade by the Soviets.<sup>63</sup> After the Prague coup led to the *grande peur* that "seized Europe" in 1948, the March 1948 Brussels Treaty and the June 1948 Vandenberg Resolution allowed the Truman Administration to "pursue a collective self-defense arrangement under Article 51 of the United Nations charter", which led in turn to the negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949.<sup>64</sup> Ruggie describes this multilateralism as "historically unprecedented".<sup>65</sup> Following the Cold War, Haass describes the US as having the "lion's share of the burden of promoting international order",<sup>66</sup> while Huntington describes the West as engaging using institutions, military power, and economic resources to assert its interests.<sup>67</sup>

As an explanation for the shift towards a foreign policy resting on alliances, Lippmann and Nuechterlein both explain that the fall of France in 1940 demonstrated that France, and more widely Western Europe, were vital to the American national interest.<sup>68</sup> Wertham further specified this, writing that the "Nazi invasion and conquest of France [...] caused U.S. officials and intellectuals to rethink the nature of international politics and America's place in it."<sup>69</sup> Lippmann argued that the borderland between Russia and Great Britain, including Germany, could not be treated as a *cordon sanitaire* as the Treaty of Versailles had done; the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) were "beyond the reach of American power" and had to be neutralised.<sup>70</sup> Calleo also considers the US to have a "strong predilection for isolationism" but that this shifted away from unipolarity by 1947 due to the Soviet bipolar threat that pushed the US towards multilateral alliances to prevent nations from being "enslaved" by the Soviets.<sup>71</sup> Chace, on the other hand, considers the US to have continued to avoid entangling alliances during the Cold War, as they allowed it to "act unilaterally in pursuing an activist and interventionist role in the

---

<sup>60</sup> Mira Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2020), 20–22.

<sup>61</sup> George F. Kennan, "George Kennan's Long Telegram: The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," 1946.

<sup>62</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, NSC-68 - Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (1950).

<sup>63</sup> Address of the President of the United States, Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey (1947); United States Department of State, Statement by Molotov (Paris, 2 July 1947) (1947); Roger G. Miller, *To Save a City: The Berlin Airlift 1948-1949* (Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998), 21–23.

<sup>64</sup> Alan K. Henrikson, "The Creation of the North Atlantic Alliance, 1948-1952," *Naval War College Review* 33, no. 3 (1980): 13; John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 42.

<sup>65</sup> Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era*, 43, 45.

<sup>66</sup> Richard N. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), 6.

<sup>67</sup> Samuel P Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* Summer (1993): 40, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2624272>.

<sup>68</sup> Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, 125, 132–33; Donald E. Nuechterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 79.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020), 3.

<sup>70</sup> Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, 148–49, 151.

<sup>71</sup> David P. Calleo, *Follies of Power: America's Unipolar Fantasy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6–7.

Western Hemisphere” and to pursue the “national interest with the democratising mission”.<sup>72</sup> Chace proposes a “new internationalism” that would be based on limited collective security and a revision of “outdated economic, political, and military arrangements”.<sup>73</sup> Snyder’s examination of alliance formation and management offers some insight into NATO dynamics of relevance to this thesis. He defines alliances as primarily an instrument of national security policy,<sup>74</sup> which aligns with the description of NATO’s purpose for the US in this thesis. Snyder and Diesing propose that alliances in a bipolar system mean that the smaller states do not offer reciprocal support but serve as power and security assets that receive unilateral security guarantees from the superpowers.<sup>75</sup> They also propose that interests are inherent to the power structure of a bipolar system, so the creation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact did not create new interests, even if they fulfilled other functions such as facilitating military and political collaboration.<sup>76</sup> This helps explain why the US would have seen a benefit in enlarging NATO to smaller, weaker states as they did not fundamentally alter the inherent power structure. Snyder suggests that the alliance security dilemma of how firmly to commit and how much support to give is weak because abandonment is highly unlikely in a bipolar system where there is no state powerful enough to make realignment possible.<sup>77</sup> As will be seen later, the desire to avoid a resurgence of German power may be explained by this dynamic, where commitment to NATO could be maintained by ensuring Germany did not play a role in power realignment.

The question of NATO’s strategic utility is also debated. Rapp-Hooper argues that the US has a record of “remarkably successful” formal alliances across Europe and Asia, despite skepticism regarding their utility and the justification of the cost.<sup>78</sup> Carpenter suggests that the difference between a military alliance and a collective security organisation has been misunderstood, as the former are “selective and exclusionary” and have an identifiable adversary, while the latter are “as inclusive as possible”.<sup>79</sup> Carpenter argues that this has implications for the post-Cold War trajectory as conflating the two would mean that NATO would need to admit “virtually all European nations”, making it a hybrid and effectively close to what Clinton stated as the “strongest alliance in history [...] directed no longer against a hostile bloc of nations, but instead designed to advance the security of every democracy in Europe”.<sup>80</sup> According to Rapp-Hooper, the reason these alliances are questioned is because Americans are disconnected from the origins and purpose of alliances as a foreign policy tool.<sup>81</sup> Layne is critical of the premise that the US should be involved in preventing regional instability in Europe, arguing that CEE has historically been a peripheral region for American security and that the US has been “invariably” drawn into Europe’s wars.<sup>82</sup> Tonelson is also critical of the connection between NATO enlargement and American foreign policy, arguing that while European stability, security, and prosperity would improve American safety and prosperity, it is a foreign policy that needs to take into account cost, risk, feasibility, whether the right

---

<sup>72</sup> James Chace, *The Consequences of the Peace: The New Internationalism and American Foreign Policy* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 172, 175–76.

<sup>73</sup> Chace, 7–11, 17.

<sup>74</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 5.

<sup>75</sup> Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 30.

<sup>76</sup> Snyder and Diesing, 426; Glenn H. Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 121.

<sup>77</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 466, 483–84.

<sup>78</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America’s Alliances*, 1–7.

<sup>79</sup> Ted Galen Carpenter, “Strategic Evasions and the Drive for NATO Enlargement,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998), 17.

<sup>80</sup> Carpenter, 17–18.

<sup>81</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America’s Alliances*, 14–15.

<sup>82</sup> Christopher Layne, “Why Die for Gdansk? NATO Enlargement and American Security Interests,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998), 53–54, 57, 59, 63.

tools have been chosen, and whether the goals are clearly defined and mutually compatible.<sup>83</sup> According to Tonelson, this would require NATO to clearly answer whether Russia was to be “viewed as a friend or an actual or potential threat”.<sup>84</sup>

What the alliance literature shows is that a recurrent perspective is that the US was wary of “entangling alliances” until WWII, at which point it realised it could no longer avoid multilateralism and ignore Europe (Calleo, Lippmann, Nuechterlein). The 1948 Brussels Treaty and 1948 Vandenberg Resolution opened the door to collective self-defence arrangements and the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, at which point US foreign policy integrated the notion of countering communism and the Soviet Union. If US alliances can be considered a successful policy (Rapp-Hooper), it has also been because they have not prevented the US from pursuing its interests around the world (Chace) as an instrument of national security policy (Snyder). Smaller states do not risk altering power structures because they are not powerful enough to create alternatives (Diesing, Snyder), which implies that there is no contradiction with admitting smaller, weaker states into an alliance with the goal of making the alliance stronger, even if some argue alliances with CEE countries serve no purpose as they are peripheral to US interests and outside of its reach (Layne).

When considered alongside my hypothesis that the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement was not premeditated but the result of critical junctures, the alliance literature points to alliances being a tool of foreign policy to promote national interests, that can be achieved even with smaller, weaker countries joining the alliance. This means that NATO enlargement makes sense regarding it being a tool of foreign policy, but what needs to be clarified is how NATO enlargement could be seen as promoting US national interests if it was not premeditated. This implies that there was an implicit or explicit understanding that enlargement was beneficial to the US, even if it was not originally identified prior to events putting the option of enlargement on the table.

Having examined the background of American thinking on alliances and its role in the world, as well as what that means for NATO, the next section will examine the role arms control played throughout the Cold War in informing the American perspective of the conflict, and the role of the Alliance.

### **Arms Control: The Primary Concern of Cold War Diplomacy**

This section explains how US foreign policy in Europe shifted from a focus on arms control with the Soviet Union to German unification and NATO’s role in the post-Cold War order. The previous section examined how alliances are a foreign policy tool (and in the case of NATO enlargement, meant it was beneficial to the US) and now the purpose is to examine how arms control was considered another tool of Cold War foreign policy until it was no longer immediately relevant for the larger strategic goal of winning the Cold War.

The nuclear question was a pressing one throughout the Cold War and was central to discussions on arms control. Despite efforts by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to lure the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) away from the US and NATO such as the 1952 Stalin Note,<sup>85</sup> the FRG joined NATO in 1955, and the USSR responded by creating the Warsaw Pact.<sup>86</sup> The escalation of relations between the FRG and the USSR came to a head in October 1957 when Yugoslavia recognised the GDR, which led to

---

<sup>83</sup> Alan Tonelson, “NATO Expansion: The Triumph of Policy Incoherence,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998), 42.

<sup>84</sup> Tonelson, 43.

<sup>85</sup> Peter Ruggenthaler, “The 1952 Stalin Note on German Unification,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 4 (2011): 172–212.

<sup>86</sup> United Nations Treaty Series, Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance (1955).

the FRG applying the Hallstein Doctrine,<sup>87</sup> rejecting diplomatic relations with any state that recognised the GDR. The 1958 Berlin Crisis was the result of Nikita Khrushchev<sup>88</sup> not trusting that the FRG would remain non-nuclear despite the 1954 Paris Agreements that addressed German rearmament,<sup>89</sup> the creation of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1957 for the peaceful use of nuclear materials and technologies<sup>90</sup> and the US proposal for a Multilateral Force (MLF) in 1958 that sought to “remove some of the incentives for an independent nuclear capability” through “greater participation in the management of the American deterrent”.<sup>91</sup> Khrushchev sought to persuade the FRG to renounce its access to nuclear weapons by issuing an ultimatum on the status of West Berlin, arguing it was in GDR territory.<sup>92</sup> The failure of negotiations led to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 by the Soviets, solidifying the division of Germany.<sup>93</sup>

*Détente*<sup>94</sup> and *Ostpolitik*<sup>95</sup> are considered a turning point in the literature as they opened the door to discussions that bore fruit in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the Helsinki Final Act. The USSR had superior conventional strength, but the US had strategic superiority thanks to its technology. The initial deterrence policy of “massive retaliation” under Eisenhower evolved into a policy of “mutually assured destruction” (MAD), which overlapped with a policy of “flexible response” that offered more options to the US administration in case of conflict.<sup>96</sup> The approach based on superior nuclear weapons required

---

<sup>87</sup> Angela E. Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 40, 49.

Stent describes the Hallstein doctrine as Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s Ostpolitik. Adenauer sought to reassure the US that the FRG was a “reliable member of the Western alliance” by positioning the FRG as speaking for the whole of Germany and refusing to “have diplomatic relations with any state that recognized the GDR”, which the FRG considered an “illegitimate state”. Stent, 5.

<sup>88</sup> First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1953-1964, Premier of the Soviet Union from 1958-1964.

<sup>89</sup> The Organisation of Collective Self-Defence, Paris Agreements 23 October 1954 I. Four Power Conference - Paris, 23 October 1954 (1954); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Paris Agreements Documents Relating to the Accession to the Treaty of the Federal Republic of Germany,” 1954.

<sup>90</sup> EUR-Lex, Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (1957).

<sup>91</sup> Keith W. Baum, “Treating the Allies Properly: The Eisenhower Administration, NATO, and the Multilateral Force,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1983): 86.

<sup>92</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*, 70–72.

<sup>93</sup> Konrad Adenauer - Staatsmann des freien Deutschlands- Sankt Augustin: ACDP, “Reactions to the Construction of the Berlin Wall (August 1961),” 1961.

<sup>94</sup> Angela Romano, “Détente, Entente, or Linkage? The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union,” *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 4 (2009): 1–2.

A period of easing of tensions during the Cold War between the two blocs that Romano argues the Soviets attempted as early as the 1950s when they advanced proposals for a conference on European security problems, but which was met with suspicion over fear they were using it to solidify territorial and political realities, and which the FRG rejected since it would only consider free elections and full sovereignty as a solution to the German question. As a result, it was only under President Lyndon B. Johnson’s initiation in 1966 and the signing of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that *détente* effectively began.

<sup>95</sup> Arne Hofmann, *The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 104, 107, 109, 114.

The eastern policy initiated by Willy Brandt, who was chancellor from 1969-1974, is described by Hofmann as having sought “dynamic flexibility” that helped in the formation of *détente* ideas that moved away from waiting out the GDR and pursued coexistence that would weaken communism by exposing it to “change and differentiation” through East-West contacts that Brandt had been promoting since 1949 and was able to put in place once he became chancellor.

<sup>96</sup> David S. McDonough, “Nuclear Superiority or Mutually Assured Deterrence,” *International Journal* 60, no. 3 (2005): 811–16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070200506000314>.

continuous nuclear build-up, which was extremely expensive. Stent highlights the decline in economic growth in the late 1960s that led the Soviets to seek *détente* with the West,<sup>97</sup> and led to what Fitzgerald describes as the USSR moving away from nuclear weapons as a war-fighting and war-winning strategy of which Pipes provides an overview.<sup>98</sup> *Détente* initially occurred on a bilateral FRG-USSR basis with the 1969 German-Soviet natural gas contract, the 1972 Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States and the Soviet Union (Renunciation of Force Treaty), and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) (that produced the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) Treaty and SALT I).<sup>99</sup> It was followed by a shift toward multilateral negotiations on European *détente* following Leonid Brezhnev's<sup>100</sup> 1973 visit to Bonn,<sup>101</sup> where the Soviet proposal for a pan-European security conference took hold in the context of *Ostpolitik* and a Western desire to undermine the Brezhnev doctrine.<sup>102</sup> Stent points out that Western skepticism over Soviet intentions was balanced by the fact that it brought the Soviets to the table to discuss Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR), and discussions eventually led to the August 1975 Helsinki Final Act.<sup>103</sup> Pipes, who was later central to National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 75, was critical of *détente*, arguing that it was impossible because of the "persistent tradition of Russian expansionism" that was in no way related to a sense of security or a need for buffers and merely a desire to exploit the desire of the West to lift the burden of the Cold War and separate Western Europe from its dependence on the US, and that the Soviets saw it as a tool to restrain American technology.<sup>104</sup>

The challenges and limits of alliances, and more specifically NATO, illustrated the tensions between US strategic interests and foreign policy. Rapp-Hooper argues that the utility of US allies was partially based on how they could support a strategy of forward defence,<sup>105</sup> but as Mearsheimer points out, the deterrent aspect of forward defence allies was impacted by the shift from massive retaliation to flexible response, as it would allow superpowers to fight a "conventional war or a limited nuclear war in Europe",<sup>106</sup> particularly once the Soviets caught up in Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs).<sup>107</sup> This led to critiques of NATO such as Walter Lippmann who referred to it as "no longer a genuine military investment but an expensive and deteriorating ruin" and David Calleo who referred to it as a "kind of

---

<sup>97</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*, 166, 169–71.

<sup>98</sup> Mary C. Fitzgerald, Research Memorandum: Changing Soviet Doctrine on Nuclear War (1986); Richard Pipes, "Soviet Military Strategy," *American Foreign Policy Newsletter* 7, no. 4 (1984): 8–9.

<sup>99</sup> The American Presidency Project, "Text of the 'Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,'" 1972, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/text-the-basic-principles-relations-between-the-united-states-america-and-the-union-soviet>; United States Department of State, "Interim Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Certain Measures With Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms," *Past Treaties and Agreements*, 1972.

<sup>100</sup> General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from 1964-1982.

<sup>101</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*, 195; Michel Tatu, "Decision Making in the USSR," in *Soviet Strategy in Europe*, ed. Richard Pipes (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1976), 50.

<sup>102</sup> Department of State Office of the Historian, Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon (1972); Michael Cotey Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 9.

<sup>103</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*, 196–97; Thomas W. Wolfe, "Soviet Military Capabilities and Intentions in Europe," in *Soviet Strategy in Europe*, ed. Richard Pipes (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1976), 163–64.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Pipes, "Détente: Moscow's View," in *Soviet Strategy in Europe*, ed. Richard Pipes (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1976), 5–10, 13, 23; Richard Pipes, "Rethinking Our Nuclear Strategy," *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 1978, 26.

<sup>105</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 51.

<sup>106</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "Prospects for Conventional Deterrence in Europe," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 1985, 162.

<sup>107</sup> McDonough, "Nuclear Superiority or Mutually Assured Deterrence," 816.

Noah's Ark , but no one in it expects any rain" <sup>108</sup>. This was not the first time NATO's credibility had been called into question, as France had left NATO's integrated military command in 1966<sup>109</sup> after it failed to establish a triumvirate with the US and the UK in 1958, largely aimed at the employment of nuclear weapons.<sup>110</sup> According to Rapp-Hooper though, the role of forward defence allies was bolstered once the US realised it could not rely on nuclear capabilities to limit its forward basing requirements.<sup>111</sup>

The earlier discussions and negotiations during *détente* saw a renewed lease of life under General Secretary Gorbachev, who was open to "reducing tensions with the West", recognising the "unsustainable nature of the arms race and the pressing need for economic and political reforms."<sup>112</sup> This highlighted the tension between maintaining deterrence and moving toward disarmament. Kissinger believed the deterrence dilemma was created because of the assumption that it was necessary to rely on nuclear weapons to compensate for Soviet conventional strength and suggested that a policy of limited nuclear war would better align NATO policy and military power, particularly given the Western reluctance for conventional military build-up.<sup>113</sup> Pipes critiqued the position of proponents of *détente* whom he argued had become accustomed to "largely meaningless summit meetings and arms control negotiations" and were threatened by President Reagan's refusal to engage in them.<sup>114</sup> Nuechterlein explained how Reagan pursued a parallel path of "greatly expanding" US conventional and strategic nuclear forces while re-engaging with SALT negotiations under the new banner of START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks); this would allow the US to control the growth of nuclear weapons and "reduce the likelihood of military confrontation" by shifting from the MAD policy, which had been appropriate for a policy of passive containment, to one of active missile defence, characterised by the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).<sup>115</sup> Pfaltzgraff described Reagan's actions as going beyond containment to "attempt to exploit vulnerabilities in the Soviet Union".<sup>116</sup> Emphasising the strategic and economic aspect of SDI, McDonough explains that Reagan's proposal for SDI intended to shift from nuclear weapons as deterrents, to a system of interception and destruction of ballistic missiles, which Popescu argued would also force the USSR to divert resources to their own ballistic missile defence program. This was in line with NSDD 32 "U.S. National Security Strategy" and NSDD 75 "U.S. Relations with the USSR", as well as with the US goal of "defunding" the Soviet Union since it had managed to gain access to Western public and private sector financing through several mechanisms over the years to fund its activities.<sup>117</sup> As Beschloss and Talbott

---

<sup>108</sup> Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*, 24.

<sup>109</sup> Cotey Morgan, 24–27.

<sup>110</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, "The Unsolved Problems of European Defense," *Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 4 (1962): 520.

<sup>111</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 61.

<sup>112</sup> General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from 1985-1991, President of the Soviet Union from 1990-1991.

Bahaa G Arnouk, *Global Hegemony: A Strategic Illusion - NATO Expansion, Nuclear Promises and the Death of Strategic Trust*, 2025, 122–23.

<sup>113</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, "Strategy and the Atlantic Alliance," *Survival* 24, no. 5 (1982): 195–96.

<sup>114</sup> Richard Pipes, "On the National Security Council Staff," in *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, ed. Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H Marlo (Lexington Books, 2016), 131.

<sup>115</sup> Pipes, 170; Ronald B Frankum, "Military Display," in *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, ed. Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H Marlo (Lexington Books, 2016), 377–79, 398–410; Nuechterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s*, 190–91.

<sup>116</sup> Richard Allen et al., "Beyond Containment? The Future of U.S.-Soviet Relations," *Policy Review* Winter (1985): 19.

<sup>117</sup> McDonough, "Nuclear Superiority or Mutually Assured Deterrence," 820; Ionut Popescu, *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy: How American Presidents Succeed in Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 105; Norman A Bailey, "Defining the Strategy," in *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, ed. Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H Marlo (Lexington Books, 2016), 149–51;

argue though, after Gorbachev picked up the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) talks again in 1987, his amenability to Reagan's "zero option" on not deploying a new generation of INF, led to concern over risking the complete denuclearisation of Europe, which Reagan responded to by pledging to leave Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF) in Europe and to upgrade the US Lance missiles based in the FRG, much to the disappointment of Helmut Kohl<sup>118</sup> who feared it would make the FRG a target.<sup>119</sup> Kissinger argued that keeping INF on European soil tied Europe's nuclear defence to the American strategic deterrent and would "reduce the possibility of selective Soviet nuclear blackmail against Europe", and he also pointed to Reagan's focus on limiting weapons of mass destruction while maintaining "lower, agreed, and verifiable levels of forces".<sup>120</sup>

The link between US nuclear strategy, arms control, and the USSR is illustrated by the role German unification played in marking a turning point in arms control discussions. The 1989 Brussels NATO summit was critical in that negotiations between the US, the FRG, and the USSR continued regarding modernisation and SNF in the face of a FRG that was pushing back against a decision on SNF, which risked showing a lack of agreement within the Alliance in time for its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>121</sup> Colbourn and Bush both highlight the delicate position Kohl found himself in, with a thin majority in his government that meant he was pushing for a settlement of agreements on conventional forces prior to negotiations on nuclear arms negotiations and missile modernisation to avoid splitting his government.<sup>122</sup> Following numerous proposals by Gorbachev, President Bush responded by proposing a policy that would move beyond containment, namely reducing conventional forces and the Open Skies regime.<sup>123</sup> While the eventual document agreed upon postponed a decision on a follow-on to the Lance missiles until 1992 and that discussions on SNF would aim for a partial reduction following agreement on conventional forces, this soon became irrelevant as Colbourn points to the impact of the "transformations sweeping across Europe".<sup>124</sup> Bush and Scowcroft explain that the shift in focus away from the USSR and arms control was due to developments in the Warsaw Pact, which would allow the US to "influence the situation in Eastern Europe".<sup>125</sup> Once it became apparent that the US was no longer confronted by a nuclear-armed Soviet Union, the formerly impossible German unification agenda could take precedence and arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union were no longer on the agenda. This complete reversal was symbolised by the 1991 Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act (also known as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program) that was created to "assist Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine to eliminate or reduce weapons of mass destruction".<sup>126</sup>

---

Roger W. Robinson, "Reagan's Soviet Economic Take-Down Strategy," in *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph* (Lexington Books, 2016), 343–48.

<sup>118</sup> German politician affiliated with the CDU, Chancellor of West Germany from 1982-1990, Chancellor of Germany from 1990-1998.

<sup>119</sup> Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (New York, Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994), 35–36.

<sup>120</sup> Kissinger, "Strategy and the Atlantic Alliance," 196, 198.

<sup>121</sup> Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO* (Cornell University Press, 2022), 513–19.

<sup>122</sup> George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 64–65; Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO*, 520–21.

<sup>123</sup> Jeffrey A Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), 136–37, 139, 199–203.

<sup>124</sup> Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO*, 528, 532.

<sup>125</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 38–39; Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO*, 524.

<sup>126</sup> William C. Potter and John M. Shields, "Lessons from the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program," *Asia-Pacific Review* 4, no. 1 (2007): 35.

As illustrated in this section on arms control, concerns that the impact of German unification was a central issue throughout the Cold War heavily influenced significant events that led to escalation and *détente*, then nuclear force negotiations up until the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War disrupted arms control negotiations, which leads to the question of why NATO was not dismantled. To address this, the next section will examine the literature on German unification to explain its impact on NATO and path dependent decisions.

### German Unification: A Sudden Strategic Shift

As has been touched upon in the previous section, German unification was an issue that persisted throughout the Cold War and influenced positions on both the Western and Soviet sides. This section will examine the literature on German unification and the background to why it was central to Cold War dynamics and the post-Cold War order, and how this was connected to NATO.

Germany had long been a geopolitical problem for Europe. As Stent explains, Germany was “too strong to be contained by its neighbors after 1871, not strong enough to impose hegemony before 1871”, and during the Cold War, the question of its proper boundaries and role were up for debate.<sup>127</sup> Stalin’s goal after 1945 had been to ensure that “Germany could never again threaten the Soviet Union” and he had supported the dismemberment of Germany.<sup>128</sup>

As previously mentioned, the USSR unsuccessfully sought to lure the FRG away from NATO and the US prior to the FRG joining NATO in 1955, even if, as Stent writes, the USSR supported the concept of German unification in principle.<sup>129</sup> According to Calleo, German unification became a genuine concern under Chancellor Willy Brandt’s<sup>130</sup> *Ostpolitik* (which suspended the Hallstein doctrine) throughout the 1970s, even if he determined unification was “impossible for the foreseeable future” due to the political, military, economic, and ideological support the GDR received from the USSR.<sup>131</sup> This support was essential to the GDR’s existence, without which the FRG would have a much stronger pull. The importance of *détente*’s connection to the German question is brought up by Hofmann, who explains that Brandt considered the German question to be indissociable from *détente* as with the goal of overcoming political tensions.<sup>132</sup> Though several treaties were signed in the early 1970s as part of *Ostpolitik* and efforts towards *détente* (the 1970 Moscow Treaty, the 1970 Warsaw Treaty, 1971 the Four Powers Agreement on Berlin, and the 1972 FRG-GDR Transit Agreement<sup>133</sup>), the Nixon Administration was concerned that *Ostpolitik* would ratify the status quo in Eastern Europe as opposed to Brandt’s intent of weakening the ties between Eastern Europe and the USSR.<sup>134</sup> Prior to *Ostpolitik*, the State Department did not consider German unification a threat to US interests as Germany would still require the US nuclear umbrella and would therefore avoid confronting the US,<sup>135</sup> but according to Haftendorn, the 1975

---

<sup>127</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*, 2–3.

<sup>128</sup> Stent, 1, 3–4; Geoffrey Roberts, “Stalin at the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam Conferences,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 4 (2007): 17.

<sup>129</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*, 25.

<sup>130</sup> German politician affiliated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), Chancellor of West Germany from 1969-1974.

<sup>131</sup> David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 174.

<sup>132</sup> Hofmann, *The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik*, 122.

<sup>133</sup> United States Department of State, The Moscow Treaty (12 August 1970) (1970); United States Department of State, The Treaty of Warsaw (7 December 1970) (1970); United States Department of State, Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (September 3, 1971) (1971); Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Transitabkommen (1972).

<sup>134</sup> Department of State Office of the Historian, Memorandum of Conversation (1970).

<sup>135</sup> Research Memorandum, Rapallo? (1963).

Helsinki Conference solidified the territorial status quo in Europe.<sup>136</sup> In keeping with this line of thinking, when Vyacheslav I. Dashichev<sup>137</sup> presented a paper in November 1987 with six solutions to the German question, he was denounced and accused of “defeatism” when he suggested that a unified, neutral Germany would be the best option for the USSR.<sup>138</sup>

By the end of the Cold War, discourse on German unification had evolved and the question of NATO’s future – and by extension the US’s future in Europe – became enmeshed in the future of Germany. The US was supportive of Kohl’s efforts, as Bush and Baker describe having created a “Western cocoon” around Kohl to ensure he did not abandon NATO in favour of ensuring support for unification from Gorbachev, and Kissinger was described as having advised Bush not to obstruct German unification aspirations.<sup>139</sup> This support for German unification was not uniform initially, as Bush was described as having been the first to come on board when there were early disagreements between the NSC and the State Department, the 1989 US Eastern Europe strategy (Comprehensive Review of US-East European Relations, NSR-4<sup>140</sup>) did not recognise the importance German unification would take, and the July 1991 G7 summit highlighted divisions over the help that should be offered to the USSR.<sup>141</sup> Bush and Scowcroft argued that it was American efforts to engage bilaterally and within NATO that provided the shift to a post-Cold War strategy and a non-threatening strategy for Gorbachev to present to the Politburo, including a May 1990 speech on the launch of the NATO strategy review, and the June 1990 declaration for the Soviet public.<sup>142</sup> The weakening of the Soviet position is illustrated in Stent’s argument that the 1989 Bonn Declaration’s statement that the FRG and the USSR would continue to seek to overcome the division of Europe may have contributed to Gorbachev’s understanding that the division of Germany would not be forever, that the Soviet Union would have to employ force to prevent unification, and that Gorbachev would have to support unification if he wished to maintain East-West cooperation and his reforms.<sup>143</sup>

What did this mean for NATO? According to Von Plato, German unification was not the goal but the “vehicle” for the US’s new Europe policy where NATO was the only tool in which the US had a political influence.<sup>144</sup> Engel highlights how the alternatives to keeping the US in Europe would have been Gorbachev’s “common European home”, a Franco-German axis without US and Soviet power, or German

---

<sup>136</sup> Helga Haftendorn, “The Unification of Germany, 1985-1991,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume III*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 333.

<sup>137</sup> Advisor to Gorbachev.

<sup>138</sup> These were: the continuation of the status quo; a unified, neutral Germany; a unified Germany integrated into the Western alliance; departure of East and West Germany from the Warsaw Pact and NATO and their continued existence as two neutral states; a confederation between the two neutral German states; and the conclusion of a peace treaty with both German states, maintaining them in the two alliance system.

<sup>139</sup> Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War*, 138, 188.

<sup>140</sup> The White House, National Security Review - 4: Comprehensive Review of US-East European Relations (1989).

<sup>141</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, paras. 190, 293, 300, 504; The American Presidency Project, “Remarks at the Oklahoma State University Commencement Ceremony in Stillwater,” *George Bush 41st President of the United States: 1989 - 1993*, 1990, para. 10.

<sup>142</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 300; George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, “Soviet-United States Joint Statement on Future Negotiations on Nuclear and Space Arms and Further Enhancing Strategic Stability, 1 February, 1990,” *Public Papers*, 1990.

<sup>143</sup> Angela E. Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), paras. 77–79, 80–81; Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History, “Joint Declaration by Helmut Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev (Bonn, 13 June 1989) - Gemeinsame Erklärung von Helmut Kohl Und Michail Gorbatschow (Bonn, 13. Juni 1989),” *Presse- Und Informationsamt Der Bundesregierung*, 1989, 5.

<sup>144</sup> Alexander Von Plato, *The End of the Cold War? Bush, Kohl, Gorbachev, and the Reunification of Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 330–31.

neutrality in exchange for unification.<sup>145</sup> Ullmann, on the other hand, argued that NATO should be replaced by a European Security Organization (ESO) as NATO would be purposeless after the Cold War, and potentially harmful.<sup>146</sup>

German unification changed the parameters of the strategic stability achieved during the Cold War. Before the end of the Soviet Union, Asmus was concerned that the USSR would continue to be a nuclear power, while Mearsheimer was concerned that a unified Germany and the Soviet Union would be the most powerful states in a nuclear-free Europe, which in all cases meant Germany was a potential threat that should be kept within NATO.<sup>147</sup> Rostow states that the intent was to prevent one government from controlling Russia and Germany and dominating the Eurasian land mass.<sup>148</sup> Once Germany was unified and within NATO, the question turned to the future of NATO, as Kohl's stance was that Germany could not "remain indefinitely Europe's eastern border".<sup>149</sup> This section examined the literature on the dynamics behind German unification during the Cold War, and why it became the central issue at the end of the Cold War to explain the US pivot away from arms control discussions to unification and NATO enlargement.

The next section will examine the literature on post-Cold War NATO enlargement. This will tie together the three previous sections on alliances, arms control, and German unification to examine how the literature addresses NATO's ability to adapt after the end of the Soviet Union.

### **NATO Enlargement: Planned or Reactive?**

NATO was initially a Cold War tool but persisted and enlarged after the Cold War. Why did it become a viable tool for the post-Cold War European security environment? This thesis hypothesises that German unification formed a critical juncture that made it possible to conceptualise US-Soviet relations through a different framework than arms control negotiations. NATO enlargement subsequently emerged as the dominant organisational framework through a series of critical junctures that progressively eliminated alternatives through subsequent events and decisions that cumulatively made enlargement inevitable. This would mean that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of critical junctures that made it the dominant position after decades of US-Soviet relations articulated around arms control negotiations, even in the face of alternatives. This hypothesis is tested by using process tracing primarily from the perspective of the US, with input from other countries at critical moments as required, articulated around the critical junctures of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 1998 US Senate ratification of NATO enlargement to include the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. This bookends events during that period to examine how path dependency can explain the outcome of NATO enlargement once the threat of the USSR had disappeared through decisions that were made at these critical junctures and which directed subsequent decisions along a path that eliminated alternatives. This means that at any branch of a critical juncture, it should be possible to identify a decision that was taken in the face of an alternative, which subsequently led to a different path. If NATO enlargement was planned, there should be an absence of debate and a clear linear path to a decision that

---

<sup>145</sup> Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*, 313–14.

<sup>146</sup> Richard H. Ullman, *Securing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 63, 67.

<sup>147</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, *German Unification and Its Ramifications*, R-4012-A Rand Corporation (1991); Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," 40–41.

<sup>148</sup> Allen et al., "Beyond Containment? The Future of U.S.-Soviet Relations," 36.

<sup>149</sup> Daniel S. Hamilton, "Piece of the Puzzle: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Architecture After the Cold War," in *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, ed. Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2019), 18–19.

supports enlargement. If it was reactive, decision-making should be characterised by debate over the merits of each path and ambiguity over the direction that events will take.

The historical reasons for NATO coming into existence found their origin in the post-WWII environment where American foreign policy meant ensuring Europe's security to guarantee American security. Nuechterlein proposes that national interests are the product of a political process based on interest groups, bureaucratic structures, political factions, and the President's assessment of the impact on national interest,<sup>150</sup> which implies that an outcome (such as the creation of NATO, or NATO enlargement) is the result of several factors coming together, not the goal of only one party. Rapp-Hooper points out that after WWII, while the US had only endorsed the 1948 Brussels Pact (which laid important groundwork for NATO), the Truman Administration had begun to consider the necessity of a peacetime transatlantic defence pact that would keep the US safe.<sup>151</sup> The initial proposal had been along the lines of the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (also known as the Rio Pact), which permitted the exercise of individual or collective self-defence per Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, stating that "an armed attack by any State against an American State shall be considered as an attack against all the American States", and which Rapp-Hooper describes as having formed the basis of NATO's Article 5.<sup>152</sup> Secretary of State Dean Acheson<sup>153</sup> emphasised that it would not change the "relative constitutional position of the President and the Congress", and the Senate voted in favour of the North Atlantic Treaty in July 1949 based on the recognition that a "secure and independent Western Europe" was necessary for US peacetime national security by preventing Soviet "encroachment" and "intimidation" on war-weakened countries.<sup>154</sup>

The strategy to support American foreign policy included what Stavridis and Shunk et al explain as US military alliances to forward deploy troops to ensure deterrence as the "most credible signal of U.S. commitment to a nation or region".<sup>155</sup> Warren highlights the reliance on nuclear deterrence and the disconnect between significant drawdowns that had left the Army unprepared for initial campaigns in both World Wars and the Korean War, and as a result, "US foreign policy and national strategy objectives often exceeded [conventional] military means".<sup>156</sup> Rapp-Hooper points out that it was the 1950 Korean War that led to the realisation that NATO would require durable military infrastructure, which led to the establishment of a headquarters in Paris, US troops in Europe, a unified command, alliance-dedicated troops, a supreme allied commander, and negotiations on German rearmament and its eventual admission into the alliance.<sup>157</sup> This reactive outcome was not par for the course though, as the 1950-51 Great Debate caused by congressional opponents to Truman argued there was no "overt Communist threat in Europe", any defence of Europe could best be accomplished using naval and air power, and they opposed sending four additional US Army divisions to Europe without congressional approval.<sup>158</sup> According to Rapp-

---

<sup>150</sup> Nuechterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s*, 7.

<sup>151</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 27.

<sup>152</sup> Organization of American States, *Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and Final Act of the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security (1947)*; Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 29–30.

<sup>153</sup> Lawyer, Secretary of State in the Truman Administration.

<sup>154</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 30; Nuechterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s*, 81.

<sup>155</sup> David (Col.) Shunk, Charles (Lt. Col.) Hornick, and Dan (Maj.) Burkhart, "The Role of Forward Presence in U.S. Military Strategy," *Military Review* July-Augus (2017): 58; James (Admiral Ret') Stavridis, "The Anvil and the Lighthouse: Why Forward Deployments Are Vital," *Proceedings* 148, no. 7 (2022): para. 5.

<sup>156</sup> Jason W. Warren, "Insights from the Army's Drawdowns," *Parameters* 44, no. 2 (2014): 6.

<sup>157</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 32.

<sup>158</sup> Charles A Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 305, 311–12; Glen J.R. Jackson, "The Great Debate: An Examination of Conflicting

Hooper, the North Atlantic Treaty was a new template for American defence treaties that began as a “strong political guarantee and the promise of airpower” and became a “vast multilateral military structure [with the US] making significant material commitments to continental Europe”.<sup>159</sup>

NATO’s existence did not preclude discussions on the European security framework, but the US was always at the centre of these discussions. During the Cold War, the State Department identified FRG policy as “confidence in the ability and the will of the United States to defend” it from Russia no matter the form that may take.<sup>160</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski<sup>161</sup> was concerned about the US potentially becoming irrelevant to a “divided but secure West Europe, faced by an increasingly independent East Europe”, and in 1965, he suggested a “future cooperative community” with the US and Russia at the periphery (which interestingly implies that both the US and Russia would not have been considered central to the European security framework), and Western and Eastern Europe at the core to “provide a more constructive and politically appealing image of tomorrow than a troubled Western partnership implicitly based on the notion of continued European partition”.<sup>162</sup> At the time, Brzezinski believed that German unification would be the “last and not the first act in the evolutionary unification of the European continent”,<sup>163</sup> which would have meant that European stability did not rest on German unification but that unification would have been the product of stability – the opposite of how the Cold War played out. In 1969, Kissinger argued that weaker allies were moving ahead with their own policies because of the protection provided by the senior partner, but a new international order would require significant American contribution as it disposed of the “greatest single aggregate of material power in the world”.<sup>164</sup> According to Kissinger though, NATO was the only alliance that met the criteria of a successful alliance: a common objective, a degree of joint policy, some technical means of cooperation, and a penalty for noncooperation.<sup>165</sup>

The future of NATO became tied to American leadership, and German unification called the future of this leadership into question. Therefore, as the economic situation in the Soviet Union continued to degrade in the 1980s, it was unclear whether Gorbachev was looking for peace, to buy time, or to weaken NATO, but Bush considered NATO central to US foreign policy, and NATO would not survive if Germany withdrew.<sup>166</sup> Sarotte explains that Bush did not consider the CSCE a viable alternative to NATO after the Cold War because he did not see how a collective security arrangement that included Eastern Europe and perhaps the Soviet Union, could deter threats to Western Europe, while Brent Scowcroft<sup>167</sup> believed NATO to be the “best way out of the German-Russian security dilemma”.<sup>168</sup> Mandelbaum described this as NATO partially solving the German problem, but that it would require the US to stay in Europe to prevent Germany from becoming more powerful<sup>169</sup> – or as Lord Ismay, first Secretary General of NATO famously said, “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” Menon

---

Views Regarding American Defense Policies, 1950-1951,” *Dissertations and Theses* (Portland State University, 1970), 2.

<sup>159</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America’s Alliances*, 42–43.

<sup>160</sup> Research Memorandum, Rapallo?, INR-36 at 1.

<sup>161</sup> Scholar, NSA in the Carter Administration.

<sup>162</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Alternative to Partition: For a Broader Conception of America’s Role in Europe* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 174–75.

<sup>163</sup> Brzezinski, 137.

<sup>164</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy: Three Essays* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), 53–57.

<sup>165</sup> Kissinger, 65–66.

<sup>166</sup> Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*, 54–58, 69, 71, 77, 79, 93.

<sup>167</sup> NSA from 1989-1993.

<sup>168</sup> Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, Third Edit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 139–40, 225.

<sup>169</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996), 14, 17.

and Ruger, as well as Layne, consider post-Cold War American policy in Europe based on perpetuating American hegemony, with Europe as a strategic subordinate that would support US forward deployment.<sup>170</sup> Schwarz views NATO enlargement as the “continuation of the status quo” of the “economic and political community of the advanced capitalist states”.<sup>171</sup> Mandelbaum also supports the premise that NATO enlargement was in the interest of the US by arguing that NATO enlargement was in line with post-war efforts “to confine the defeated power within its new borders” because nation-building is less expensive than empires.<sup>172</sup> According to Bacevich, the belief that the US had won a decisive victory over the USSR led to the belief that it was responsible for “shaping the international environment”, which meant US foreign policy strategy did not change – it did not revert back to isolationism by retrenching.<sup>173</sup> Bush stated that he believed that the US bore a “disproportionate responsibility for peace in Europe and an obligation to lead NATO”, while Clinton asserted in 2022 that NATO enlargement had been a “consequential decision” but that he continued to believe it was correct.<sup>174</sup> Brzezinski provided a retrospective opinion on EU and NATO enlargement in 2004, stating that it had been essential to extend the “world’s central zone of peace” as the Cold War would otherwise have left a “truly unstable belt of less privileged and less secure European states”.<sup>175</sup> Hamilton suggests that the Clinton administration sought to project stability, unify Europe, and position the US-European relationship for the future as opposed to Bush’s *ad hoc* response, though he admits that Clinton had not had to navigate the end of the Cold War, while Haslam argues that Clinton had “absolutely no sense of direction in foreign policy” unlike Bush who sought to “further the cause of democracy across the globe”.<sup>176</sup> Sarotte repeatedly highlights the role Kohl played in laying the groundwork for NATO enlargement, as unification was so important to him that he secured the finances to support it, but also seized on Gorbachev’s agreement that Germans should decide on their future to publicly announce this without having put in writing that NATO would not extend into East German territory.<sup>177</sup> Kramer’s review of negotiations at the end of the Cold War concludes that discussions pertained solely to German unification and nothing was discussed about NATO and the rest of the Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>178</sup>

The end of the Cold War created new challenges for the European security framework and there was initially ambivalence about its future utility for the US. Asmus explains that the future breakup of the

---

<sup>170</sup> Rajan Menon and William Ruger, “NATO Enlargement and US Grand Strategy: A Net Assessment,” in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, ed. James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin (Washington D.C.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 166; Layne, “Why Die for Gdansk? NATO Enlargement and American Security Interests,” 390.

<sup>171</sup> Benjamin Schwarz, “NATO’s Enlargement and the Inevitable Costs of the American Empire,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998), 72.

<sup>172</sup> Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe*, 5–6; Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 73, 77.

<sup>173</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2020), 67, 71.

<sup>174</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 60–61, 82–83; Jonathan Haslam, *Hubris: The American Origins of Russia’s War Against Ukraine* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2024), 13–14.

<sup>175</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 96–97.

<sup>176</sup> Hamilton, “Piece of the Puzzle: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Architecture After the Cold War,” 7–8; Haslam, *Hubris: The American Origins of Russia’s War Against Ukraine*, 27–28.

<sup>177</sup> Mary Elise Sarotte, “Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to ‘Bribe the Soviets Out’ and Move NATO In,” *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 121–23; Mary Elise Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990,” *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (2010): 131–32.

<sup>178</sup> Mark Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009): 41; Mark Kramer and Mary Elise Sarotte, “No Such Promise/Sarotte Replies,” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6 (2014): para. 4.

USSR would place “enormous pressure on the West, above all Germany” and would require managing a “process of chaotic change”. There was concern that Germany would be pulled eastward to compensate for the power vacuum, and it was important to signal to German policymakers that there was support in addressing these issues at the risk of Germany otherwise questioning the effectiveness of multilateralism and its commitment and contribution to NATO, leading to a weakening of the trans-Atlantic bond.<sup>179</sup> Lack of uniform support is also highlighted by Haslam, who mentions the letter to Clinton from 50 former senators, ambassadors and civil servants advising him against it.<sup>180</sup> According to Sarotte, there is no evidence that any thought was initially given to NATO’s future beyond East Germany aside from James Baker,<sup>181</sup> Philip Zelikow<sup>182</sup> and Robert Zoellick<sup>183</sup> mentioning “musings at the State department in the latter half of 1990”. In a later publication, though, Sarotte mentions that when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the Americans agreed with the strategic approach pushed by NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner. Wörner told Bush, Baker and Scowcroft that NATO would be the “only safe basis for managing the Western approach in this time of change” and to not let the Europeans “go their own way”.<sup>184</sup> According to Mandelbaum, NATO in some form was considered desirable given the perception of Russia as a threat and the need for European countries to provide their own defence,<sup>185</sup> while Goldgeier points to the lack of support from Congress and the Pentagon in 1993 due to shrinking foreign policy budgets and concerns over the impact of enlargement on US-Russia relations.<sup>186</sup> While Rühle describes political imperatives taking over, with Clinton came on board by the time of the 1994 mid-term elections when the Republicans made NATO enlargement part of their “Contract with America”,<sup>187</sup> Goldgeier describes the success in pushing enlargement forward as the work of “policy entrepreneurs” (Anthony Lake,<sup>188</sup> Talbott, Richard Holbrooke,<sup>189</sup> Samuel Berger,<sup>190</sup> and Jeremy Rosner<sup>191</sup>) who were able to take advantage of bureaucratic weakness in the NSC, State Department, and the Pentagon to push through policy recommendations in time for the 1994 NATO Heads of State summit, through the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act up to the Senate ratification campaign.<sup>192</sup> Stent also points out that some of the criticism of NATO enlargement was because the cost of NATO enlargement had not been laid out despite many NATO countries experiencing an economic recession at the time, and there was concern about the effect of enlargement on Russia’s democratisation efforts.<sup>193</sup> As Engel points out, Bush had to convince Congress to support German unification due to the US domestic economic situation, and told Kohl that

---

<sup>179</sup> Asmus, *German Unification and Its Ramifications*, R-4012-A Rand Corporation at 71.

<sup>180</sup> Sonia Winter, “NATO: Expansion Critics Write To Clinton,” *Radio Free Europe*, 1997; Haslam, *Hubris: The American Origins of Russia’s War Against Ukraine*, 15–16.

<sup>181</sup> Chief of Staff, and Secretary of the Treasury under President Reagan, Secretary of State and Chief of Staff under President George H.W. Bush.

<sup>182</sup> Scholar, Foreign Service Officer, Staffer on the NSC.

<sup>183</sup> Treasury Department and State Department positions, Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant to President Reagan, Lead US official in the Two-Plus-Four process.

<sup>184</sup> Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, 115; Sarotte, “Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to ‘Bribe the Soviets Out’ and Move NATO In,” 115; Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990,” 137; Mary Elise Sarotte, “Deciding to Be Mars,” *Policy Review*, 2012, 74.

<sup>185</sup> Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe*, 8, 15, 17.

<sup>186</sup> James M Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 3–4.

<sup>187</sup> Rühle, “Opening NATO’s Door,” 226.

<sup>188</sup> NSA from 1993-1997.

<sup>189</sup> US envoy who brokered the 1995 Dayton Accords.

<sup>190</sup> Deputy NSA from 1993-1997.

<sup>191</sup> Senior Advisor for NATO Enlargement Ratification at the Department of State from 1997-1998.

<sup>192</sup> Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*, 5–6, 8–9, 11–12.

<sup>193</sup> Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe*, 220–21; George F. Kennan, “A Fateful Error,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 1997.

Germany would have to pay for unification and support to the Soviet Union.<sup>194</sup> The lack of domestic support was also because, as Tonelson adds, there were no clear and mutually acceptable goals for US interests in Europe, nor the appropriate tools, that had been identified.<sup>195</sup> Hamilton explains that following initial appeals to Clinton in 1993, Clinton came to speak of NATO enlargement as being a matter of how rather than when by 1994, after which a 1995 article by Holbrooke “*America, a European Power*” laid out US foreign policy and the need to US involvement in Europe to guard against new instabilities and to protect US national security interests and the New Transatlantic Agenda was signed in December 1995.<sup>196</sup>

There were also dynamics among European countries on the future of NATO. Kagan argues that it was the American Hobbesian understanding of the world that allowed Europe to pursue its idealist vision where military power was no longer relevant while benefiting from the “umbrella of American power”.<sup>197</sup> This perspective does not find concrete proof among those involved in discussions. As Mearsheimer points out, Germany had been the setting for the US strategy of forward defence,<sup>198</sup> and Rühle explained that he believed in extended the Western space of stability eastward to avoid the EU and NATO having their eastern border be Germany’s eastern border, but that this position was only supported by Wörner, and neither the German chancellery, nor the US initially.<sup>199</sup> According to Rühle, Talbott came on board in 1994 after Rühle warned him that failing to bring in Poland would lead to Poland creating a security organisation between Russia and NATO, potentially leading to NATO breaking up.<sup>200</sup> Rühle also adds that the 1993 announcement of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) had been viewed with concern by those who were worried it was a tool to avoid enlarging NATO, even if the explanation given at the time was that interagency discussions were not aligned despite recognising the need to open Western security structures.<sup>201</sup> Kieninger argues that it was the CEE countries that pushed for closer ties to NATO due to the degrading security situation in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1991, but Bush had not felt capable of extending security guarantees at the time and offered instead to move forward on nuclear weapons and to address the European security architecture (such as the 1991 North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) as a “forum for security dialogue between NATO and its new partners”).<sup>202</sup>

The decision to enlarge NATO was accompanied by discussions on how to do so. Sarotte proposes that NATO enlargement was the result of “irreversible decisions about NATO’s future” that foreclosed other options, while Popescu proposes an “emergent process” where incremental decision-making leads to positive outcomes even in the absence of a long-term framework through a process of learning and adapting.<sup>203</sup> Sayle describes how the language of the North Atlantic Treaty had left the “purpose and intent of the alliance open to debate”, citing the cases of Greece, Turkey, the FRG and Spain

---

<sup>194</sup> Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*, 350.

<sup>195</sup> Tonelson, “NATO Expansion: The Triumph of Policy Incoherence,” 42–43.

<sup>196</sup> Hamilton, “Piece of the Puzzle: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Architecture After the Cold War,” 13, 37; Richard Holbrooke, “America, A European Power,” *Foreign Affairs* March/April (1995).

<sup>197</sup> Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 76, 91.

<sup>198</sup> Mearsheimer, “Prospects for Conventional Deterrence in Europe,” 160.

<sup>199</sup> Rühle, “Opening NATO’s Door,” 217–18, 221.

<sup>200</sup> Rühle, 223.

<sup>201</sup> Rühle, 224.

<sup>202</sup> Stephan Kieninger, “Opening NATO and Engaging Russia: NATO’s Two Tracks and the Establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council,” in *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2019), 58, 60–63; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Euro-Atlantic Partnership,” 2024.

<sup>203</sup> Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, 13–14; Popescu, *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy: How American Presidents Succeed in Foreign Policy*, 9–10, 19.

that all joined during the Cold War without NATO's functions needing to change.<sup>204</sup> Colbourn proposes that it was the December 1967 Harmel Report "The Future Tasks of the Alliance" that opened up the potential for post-Cold War enlargement by identifying the main functions of the alliance as defence and deterrence, as well as *détente* by seeking a more stable relationship with the USSR and Warsaw Pact members.<sup>205</sup> Policy decisions such as Rühle's explanation of how he and Wörner changed the language around PFP so that it would offer a path to eventual NATO membership, contributed to the process as an incremental step feeding into the narrowing of options of path dependency.<sup>206</sup> Sarotte argues that the success of NATO enlargement can be attributed to the fact that the West applied "prefabricated institutions" that were extended eastward (NATO's Article 5, the Basic Law of West Germany, the Deutsche Mark).<sup>207</sup> As Ullman points out, the new security regime for Europe had new criteria, including that it was no longer a zero-sum game and being able to seek security through cooperation,<sup>208</sup> as opposed to what Hamilton describes as the historic European rivalries that depend on a "complicated set of structures that balances often-conflicting interests", and only NATO was equipped to deal with situations such as the Yugoslav War.<sup>209</sup> As for the role of Russia, Kieninger argues that there was always a two-track policy that emphasised cooperation with Russia starting from the 1991 NACC, Talbott saw it as an open-ended process where Russia should be eligible to join, and Rühle considered it a closed process that excluded Russia.<sup>210</sup> Sarotte adds that Russia was left on the periphery "by design" and that the West hoped it would "gradually accommodate itself to that reality".<sup>211</sup> According to Haslam, not only was Kohl ignored when he appealed to Clinton in 1994 to include Russia in a future European security structure, but this was again disregarded in 1997 after Chirac, Kohl, and John Major spoke separately with Talbott to bring up concerns over Russia.<sup>212</sup>

The various positions on NATO enlargement demonstrate that the process was driven by both security and politics on both sides of the Atlantic. NATO's purpose was defined during the Cold War, but different interests pushed for its continuation even after the Soviet Union disappeared. While there is debate on whether the very language of the North Atlantic Treaty was intentionally left sufficiently vague to permit enlargement (some of which did occur during the Cold War), the *raison d'être* for NATO was at its core motivated by the need to guarantee US security through European security. NATO as a tool for American foreign policy was debated throughout the Cold War, but there was sufficient impetus and support for it to continue even in the face of conflicts outside of Europe. The question came up once again at the end of the Cold War, but the fear on the part of the US that German unification might lead to Germany and the USSR aligning, pushing the US out of Europe, was coupled with demands from former USSR and Warsaw Pact members for the US to remain in Europe to both ensure the continuation of NATO and security against Russia, as well as to counterbalance Germany. American politicians involved in negotiations throughout such as Bush, Scowcroft, and Brzezinski believed in an altruistic role the US had to play in providing stability, but this takes on a more practical perspective when considering

---

<sup>204</sup> Timothy Andrew Sayle, "Patterns of Continuity in NATO's Long History," in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, ed. James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrinon (Washington D.C.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 48–49, 55.

<sup>205</sup> Susan Colbourn, "NATO as a Political Alliance: Continuities and Legacies in the Enlargement Debates of the 1990s," in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, ed. James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrinon (Washington D.C.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 74.

<sup>206</sup> Rühle, "Opening NATO's Door," 225, 229.

<sup>207</sup> Sarotte, *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, 7–8, 200.

<sup>208</sup> Ullman, *Securing Europe*, 41–42.

<sup>209</sup> Hamilton, "Piece of the Puzzle: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Architecture After the Cold War," 9–11.

<sup>210</sup> Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe*, 217–18.

<sup>211</sup> Mary Elise Sarotte, "The Renewal of the Russian Challenge in European Security: History as a Guide to Policy," *German Marshall Fund* 9 (2017): 8; Mary Elise Sarotte, "A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About NATO Expansion," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): 97.

<sup>212</sup> Haslam, *Hubris: The American Origins of Russia's War Against Ukraine*, 72, 89.

Goldgeier's "policy entrepreneurs" in the US administration such as Lake, Talbott, Holbrooke, Berger, and Rosner. In the face of alternatives and resistance to enlargement, if NATO had been subordinated, replaced or its eastward movement foreclosed, enlargement would have been more difficult or impossible.<sup>213</sup>

The literature on alliances (Calleo, Chace, Diesing, Layne, Lippmann, Nuechterlein, Rapp-Hooper, and Snyder) emphasises that alliances are a successful foreign policy tool that the US has used to the extent that it maintains its sovereignty, even in multilateral arrangements like NATO. This means the Americans saw NATO as having had strategic utility, even if some question whether the costs, risks, and feasibility make sense in terms of tying US interests to Europe since it benefits from the power and security assets provided by the weaker states that do not alter its overarching interests.

The literature on arms control demonstrates that arms control is also a foreign policy tool whose utility was high during the Cold War, particularly due to the nuclear question (Colbourn, Bush, Scowcroft). Nuclear weapons and the status of Germany were closely tied as the Soviet Union feared a nuclear-armed Germany and attempted to pull the FRG closer to the East. Though the Soviets had superior conventional strength, the US dominated technologically, and (after 1961) combined with a policy of flexible response, meant the nuclear threat was more credible. *Détente* and *Ostpolitik* were seen favourably because it provided some reprieve from the costly arms race and the West responded to Soviet overtures for a European peace conference to bring them to the table to discuss MBFR despite concerns the Soviets were looking to solidify the political and territorial status quo. While the US did not foresee the end of the Soviet Union when it did, its goal was to win the Cold War. By the 1980s, the US was pushing for a reliance on conventional and strategic forces that would take advantage of Soviet weaknesses, coupled with efforts to defund the USSR to make any changes more costly. Gorbachev's amenability to the zero option though, led to fears of a complete denuclearisation of Europe, but German unification marked a turning point once the US understood it could affect Eastern Europe through other means.

The literature on German unification (Engel, Ullman, Von Plato) has focussed on the history of the German question that pre-dates the Cold War and provided the undercurrents within the FRG and among the Big Four<sup>214</sup> throughout the Cold War on nuclear weapons and both the push for a European peace conference by the Soviets and *Ostpolitik* by the FRG under Brandt. It explains the quick shift to German unification once the Berlin Wall came down, as well as the US interest in supporting unification as a vehicle for maintaining NATO and its foothold in Europe. It also addresses Kohl's desire to not have Germany's eastern border be NATO's eastern border.

The literature on NATO enlargement (Colbourne, Kienenger, Rühle, Popescu, and Sarotte) explores the origins of NATO as one of several US tools to prevent the encroachment of communism in Europe. Acceptance on the US side was conditional on the Truman Administration confirming it would not impact the constitutional position of the President and Congress, allowing the US to benefit from the Alliance while maintaining its sovereignty. NATO aligned with the policy of forward defence, indicating the US commitment to Europe, though there was some concern about the US umbrella allowing smaller states to pursue their own policies. This is contrasted with the opinion that it can be considered a successful alliance based on common objectives, joint policy, technical cooperation, and penalty for noncooperation. The US commitment to NATO after the Cold War was tied to maintaining American leadership, continuing to prevent Germany from rising above other countries, and providing a path for nation building to ensure peace and prevent a power vacuum from forming. Though some opinions were raised about the risk *vis-à-vis* Russia, Sarotte argues that Russia was left on the periphery by design

---

<sup>213</sup> Sarotte, "Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to 'Bribe the Soviets Out' and Move NATO In," 110.

<sup>214</sup> France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

despite opinions that it should be included in a future European security structure. The Clinton Administration took on the project and worked to convince Congress, particularly over budgetary concerns. Sarotte describes NATO enlargement as the result of irreversible decisions that was successful due to the application of prefabricated institutions, while Popescu frames it as an emergent process that resulted from incremental decision-making. The language of the treaty is mentioned as a reason for enlargement being possible, while the 1967 Harmel Report is also mentioned because of the identification of NATO's main tasks as defence and deterrence, as well as *détente* through better relations with the USSR and the Warsaw Pact.

The literature in these different areas largely exists in siloes. The literature on alliances addresses NATO but from a political or military perspective and considers its continuation after the Cold War in the context of its strategic utility. The literature on arms control addresses the political and technical aspects of the negotiations, though it does weave the German question into the issue due to its pivotal role in terms of motivations for the two Blocs in engaging with each other. The literature on German unification addresses the historical processes behind Germany's various iterations and addresses NATO to the extent that it was the reason behind NATO extending to the territory of the former GDR and Kohl pushed for NATO to extend its border further east. The literature on NATO enlargement considers the background to NATO's creation and the strategic role it played throughout the Cold War, as well as its utility to the US. NATO enlargement is addressed by some authors on a systemic level. Russia and NATO enlargement are considered to the extent that Russia expressed ongoing disapproval of the process.

The dynamics across the different areas are not strongly addressed though. This thesis brings alliance, arms control, German unification, and NATO enlargement literature together to explain how they evolve in parallel with each other throughout the Cold War and after and explain why the dynamics of the end of the Cold War and the persistence and enlargement of NATO are in fact connected to a much longer timeline than is generally considered. This helps explain how NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of incremental, path-dependent decisions marked by six critical junctures: the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO's plan for eastward enlargement, the issuing invitations for accession negotiations, and the US Senate's ratification of enlargement. The thesis contributes to the literature by drawing together extensive primary sources beyond the 1990 conversation between Baker, Eduard Shevardnadze,<sup>215</sup> and Gorbachev conversation regarding NATO's jurisdiction not moving one inch to the east. The inclusion of conversations that had either not been examined or mentioned yet provide additional insight into political dynamics that occurred between the US, NATO, the Soviet Union/Russia, and Kohl to demonstrate how there was no clearly formulated plan from the outset. This fills a gap in the literature on NATO enlargement by providing additional context that has been missing from discussions that focus on whether Russia's contemporary grievances have any basis flowing from the discussions that occurred at the end of the Cold War. Having concluded the literature review on alliances, arms control, German unification, and NATO enlargement, I will examine path dependency in the context of the methodology for this thesis.

---

<sup>215</sup> Foreign Minister of the USSR from 1985-1990 and 1991, President of Georgia from 1995-2003.

### 3 Theory and Methodology

#### Theory

This thesis rests on path dependence theory and hypothesises that German unification formed a critical juncture that made it possible to conceptualise US-Soviet relations through a different framework than arms control negotiations. NATO enlargement subsequently emerged as the dominant organisational framework through a series of critical junctures that progressively eliminated alternatives through subsequent events and decisions that cumulatively made enlargement inevitable. This would mean that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of critical junctures that made it the dominant position after decades of US-Soviet relations articulated around arms control negotiations, even in the face of alternatives. This hypothesis is tested by using process tracing primarily from the perspective of the US, with input from other countries at critical moments as required, articulated around the critical junctures of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 1998 US Senate ratification of NATO enlargement to include the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. This bookends events during that period to examine how path dependency can explain the outcome of NATO enlargement once the threat of the USSR had disappeared through decisions that were made at these critical junctures and which directed subsequent decisions along a path that eliminated alternatives.

Contrary to the oversimplified notion that it simply states “history matters”, path dependence is more than just “past dependence”.<sup>216</sup> While Leithner and Libby propose that path dependency can simply be understood as “the reproduction of an initial choice [...] as a result of causal mechanisms that were set in motion by that original choice”,<sup>217</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow propose a more elaborate approach where the theory of path dependence is a “process to explain the structure and behaviour of organisations using at least two events, decisions, or other types of actions, that are connected so as to form a sequence, and where the outcome is the result of “foregoing course of actions”.<sup>218</sup> As such, Schreyögg and Sydow define path dependence as a “tapering process, which dramatically narrows the scope of action over time”.<sup>219</sup> The authors propose that path dependence establishes itself through three phases: the preformation phase, the formation phase, and the lock-in phase. The preformation phase is where a wide array of choices that cannot be predetermined are still available, but where a decision or action then sets off a self-reinforcing process defined as a “critical juncture”, ending this phase but only known once the “process has been formed”.<sup>220</sup> The formation phase begins at the critical juncture of the preceding phase, and is where a dominant patterns contrasts with alternatives that have more difficulty establishing equal importance, narrowing the scope of options where an “initially unknown logic” gradually becomes favoured and reproduces the decision or action over time. Schreyögg and Sydow further propose that there are four self-reinforcing mechanisms that are particularly important: coordination effects (the more actors adopt and apply a rule or routine, the more efficient their interaction becomes), complementarity effects (repeatedly combining interrelated activities compound rather than simply adding up), learning effects (the more often an operation is performed, the more efficiently it will subsequently be performed), and adaptive expectation effects (where preferences are built in response to expectations of others).<sup>221</sup> The final lock-in phase is where a the dominant patterns becomes fixed and “develops a quasi-deterministic character”, and the process reproduces itself in the face of “more efficient alternatives or critical changes

---

<sup>216</sup> Georg Schreyögg and Jörg Sydow, “Understanding Institutional and Organizational Path Dependencies,” in *The Hidden Dynamics of Path Dependence* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3–4.

<sup>217</sup> Anika C. Leithner and Kyle M. Libby, “Path Dependency in Foreign Policy,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, no. February (2017): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.376>.

<sup>218</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow, “Understanding Institutional and Organizational Path Dependencies,” 321–22.

<sup>219</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow, 323.

<sup>220</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow, 323–24; Leithner and Libby, “Path Dependency in Foreign Policy,” 3.

<sup>221</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow, “Understanding Institutional and Organizational Path Dependencies,” 324.

in the system's environment".<sup>222</sup> According to Liebowitz and Margolis, lock-in has the potential to lead to a suboptimal outcome as they cannot be revised.<sup>223</sup> They propose three reasons why suboptimal results may be perpetuated:

- First-degree dependence when the sensitivity to initial conditions does no harm and the path has some cost but is optimal.
- Second-degree dependence when a seemingly efficient decision may not appear so in retrospect, and outcomes are costly to change but not inefficient.
- Third-degree dependence where the outcome is inefficient but was avoidable, which means that despite knowledge of the starting position and the "desirability of alternative outcomes", the rational choice was not made.<sup>224</sup>

The possibility of a suboptimal outcome is emphasised by Howlett and Rayner, and Liebowitz and Margolis, who all agree that path dependency does not need to be associated with optimal outcomes to be valid, as lock-in can lead to suboptimal outcomes.<sup>225</sup> Howlett and Rayner rely on the randomness of critical junctures, the possibility of alternative trajectories early in a sequence, and the irreversibility of sequences to explain this.<sup>226</sup> As the creation of organisations and institutions is accompanied by large set-up costs, learning effects, coordination effects, and adaptive expectations,<sup>227</sup> this contributes to lock-in and path dependency, and explains why path dependency is "most powerful" at the macro level of organisations and institutions since change is hardest at that level and explains why suboptimal institutions continue to exist despite alternate models existing.<sup>228</sup> If applied to the NATO enlargement context, whether it is considered optimal or suboptimal, the factors that come into play are sensitivity to initial conditions, costly retroactive changes that may not be worth the cost, and a potentially inefficient outcome that may still have been pursued (probably best explained by lock-in).

While Schreyögg and Sydow emphasise critical junctures and a tapering of options, Ebbinghaus emphasises "non-linear self-reinforcing processes", or increasing returns as a result of a renewed interest in institutional theories in the mid-1980s.<sup>229</sup> A notable example is the use of the poly urn by Paul A. David and Brian W. Arthur to explain how a random process (the draw of a certain colour of ball) will "dominate in the long run due to positive feedback" as the draw of a specific colour will lead to an increased likelihood of it being subsequently drawn.<sup>230</sup> Ebbinghaus proposes that path dependence can be conceptualised in two ways: a "trodden trail" where a path chosen by one is subsequently repeatedly used by others; and a "road juncture" where a choice must be made to continue moving forward. The former represents a "spontaneous evolution of an institution and its subsequent long-term entrenchment" while

---

<sup>222</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow, 325.

<sup>223</sup> S. J. Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis, "Path Dependence, Lock-In, and History," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 11, no. 1 (1995): 205–6, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1706450>.

<sup>224</sup> Liebowitz and Margolis, 206–7.

<sup>225</sup> Michael Howlett and Jeremy Rayner, "Understanding the Historical Turn in the Policy Sciences: A Critique of Stochastic, Narrative, Path Dependency and Process-Sequencing Models of Policy-Making over Time," *Policy Sciences* 39, no. 1 (2006): 10, <https://doi.org/10.1007/sl>.

<sup>226</sup> Howlett and Rayner, 7–8.

<sup>227</sup> Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 254.

<sup>228</sup> Pierson, 255–56.

<sup>229</sup> Bernhard Ebbinghaus, "Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change? Two Approaches Applied to Welfare State Reform," *Max-Planck-Institut Für Gesellschaftsforschung Köln* 05, no. 2 (2005): 5–6.

<sup>230</sup> Ebbinghaus, 7; Howlett and Rayner, "Understanding the Historical Turn in the Policy Sciences: A Critique of Stochastic, Narrative, Path Dependency and Process-Sequencing Models of Policy-Making over Time," 10.

the latter is an “interdependent sequence of events that structure the alternatives for future institutional changes”.<sup>231</sup> An institution in this context is defined as “social rules, norms and ideas” that guide and restrain social behaviour and “reduce uncertainty in a complex world”.<sup>232</sup> Similarly to Schreyögg and Sydow’s description of coordination, complementarity, learning, and adaptive expectation effects, Ebbinghaus explains that the return on the adoption of an innovation increases as more people adopt it, leading to “lock-in”, though this can mean inefficient paths can also be reinforced through path dependence mechanisms.<sup>233</sup>

Beyer also emphasises the origins of path dependence theory in the work of Paul A. David and Brian W. Arthur, who sought to explain that the “emergence of efficient technologies is not a given in competitive environments since the “more a technology is used or adopted, the greater its benefits become,” and the more difficult it becomes to deviate from the decision<sup>234</sup> (similarly to what Schreyögg and Sydow describe in the self-reinforcing mechanisms). Beyer categorises path dependence theory according to the mechanisms considered: self-reinforced path (increasing returns; functional, power and legitimacy-based aspects); path of incremental change (increasing returns, mental models; institutionalisation and cognitive frameworks; layering and conversion); path of sequence of events (temporal irreversibility of events; reactive sequences; sequence of policy implementation); branching path (critical junctures; branching); created path (deliberate actions, inventions; policy entrepreneurship; path constitution); altered path (mindful deviations; Bayesian judgements; change of existing knowledge; series of small institutional changes); and cleared path (acceleration, path clearing; removal of constraints).<sup>235</sup>

Capoccia and Kelemen emphasise the concept of “critical junctures” as a “building block of historical institutionalism” where periods of path dependent “institutional stability and reproduction” are punctuated by critical junctures that allow for more “dramatic changes”, explaining that “critical” in this sense is because they are difficult to subsequently modify. The authors describe critical junctures, similarly to the tapering of options described by Schreyögg and Sydow, as closing off alternative options.<sup>236</sup> The situation that allows the critical juncture to occur is a situation characterised by a relaxation of “influences on political action” for a “relatively short period” that both expands options at this point in time, as well as renders their consequences “potentially much more momentous”.<sup>237</sup> The authors further specify that the brevity is “relative to the duration of the path-dependent process it instigates” and the probability of choices affecting outcome are “high relative to that probability before and after the juncture”.<sup>238</sup> Of note, they specify that a historical moment may be a critical juncture for one institution but not for another.<sup>239</sup> The authors’Poli proposal that the “heightened contingency” of critical junctures lends itself to counterfactual analysis and narrative process training means that each step of the decision-making process should “identify which decisions were most influential and what options were available and viable to the actors” to understand what “happened in the context of what could have happened”.<sup>240</sup>

---

<sup>231</sup> Ebbinghaus, “Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change? Two Approaches Applied to Welfare State Reform,” 5.

<sup>232</sup> Ebbinghaus, 6.

<sup>233</sup> Ebbinghaus, 8–10.

<sup>234</sup> Jürgen Beyer, “On a Branching Route: The Spectrum of Path Dependence in Policy Research,” *Review of Policy Research* 43, no. e70007 (2026): 1.

<sup>235</sup> Beyer, 4.

<sup>236</sup> Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, “The Study of Critical Junctures Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism,” *World Politics* 59 (2007): 314–42.

<sup>237</sup> Capoccia and Kelemen, 343.

<sup>238</sup> Capoccia and Kelemen, 348.

<sup>239</sup> Capoccia and Kelemen, 349.

<sup>240</sup> Capoccia and Kelemen, 343, 354–55.

North addresses the issue of institutions from an economic perspective, which combine informal constraints and formal rules to reduce uncertainty in human exchanges, which defines the “incentive structure of an economy”, making history the “story of institutional evolution in which the historical performance of economies can only be understood as a part of a sequential story.”<sup>241</sup> Institutions reduce transaction and production costs.<sup>242</sup> As such, North argues that path dependence is more than the “incremental process of institutional evolution”, it is instead a system of increasing returns as the “organizations owe their existence to the opportunities provided by the institutional framework”.<sup>243</sup>

As regards the concept of increasing returns, Arthur suggests that “small random events” can “steer” a system towards one equilibrium or another.<sup>244</sup> The system as conceptualised by Arthur is always changing and the agents within it use “whatever reasoning they have at hand”, creating an “evolving ecology” that is historically contingent.<sup>245</sup>

Lindblom argues that incrementalism is the usual method of policy making, and that neither revolution, drastic policy change, nor carefully planned big steps are ordinarily possible.<sup>246</sup> The author suggests that incrementalism is a way of “smuggling” changes into a political system, with important changes often occurring “quite indirectly and as a surprise to many participants in the system” because “incremental changes add up”.<sup>247</sup>

Moore Jr addresses the question of the power-seeking process, but a useful parallel that can be drawn here is with the notion of critical juncture. Moore Jr proposes that an external shock can produce a “movement for the forced reintegration of a society around new or partially new patterns of behaviour”.<sup>248</sup>

Schreyögg and Sydow propose a model of path dependence that occurs in three phases and where mechanisms in phase two lead to lock-in. Ebbinghaus proposes a “trodden trail” and “road juncture” model of path dependence where mechanisms also lead to lock-in. Beyer proposes a break-down of path dependence models according to the mechanisms they consider instrumental in leading to an outcome. The approach I will adopt in this thesis overlaps the approaches proposed by the authors described above. I propose that Schreyögg and Sydow’s three-part model of path dependence offers a strong framework to analyse events both at the overarching level of post-Cold War NATO enlargement and at the level of the multiple critical junctures from German unification to the 1998 US Senate ratification of NATO enlargement. Within the second “formation” phase, the mechanisms at play reflect the concept of lock-in that Schreyögg and Sydow, and Ebbinghaus, address, but I propose that lock-in following a critical juncture demonstrates a branch model of alternatives that are not chosen, and overlaps across the mechanisms they address: increasing returns through the coordination, complementarity, learning, and adaptive expectation effects, institutionalisation of decisions as decisions are made, compounded by temporal irreversibility of events due to the difficulty in walking back decisions at the institutional and political level, and removal of constraints and path clearing through political and institutional mechanisms that make a decision both increasingly likely to be pushed through and increasingly unlikely to be walked back. Furthermore, similarly to Capoccia’s description of critical junctures as being critical due to the

---

<sup>241</sup> Douglass C. North, “Institutions,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (1991): 97.

<sup>242</sup> North, 98.

<sup>243</sup> North, 109.

<sup>244</sup> W. Brian Arthur, “Kenneth Arrow and Nonequilibrium Economics,” *Quantitative Finance* 19, no. 1 (2019): 29.

<sup>245</sup> Arthur, 30.

<sup>246</sup> Charles E Lindblom, “Still Muddling, Not Yet Through,” *Public Administration Review* November/D (1979): 517.

<sup>247</sup> Lindblom, 521.

<sup>248</sup> Barrington Moore Jr, “Notes on the Process of Acquiring Power,” *World Politics*, n.d., 1–2.

difficulty in later altering them, I propose that the criticality of these junctures and the lock-in they lead to, are rendered difficult to change because of their institutional and political impact.

## Methodology

This hypothesis of this thesis is that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of critical junctures that made it the dominant position, even in the face of alternatives. To test this, I will use a qualitative case study structured around process tracing that is based on path dependence where the causal mechanism is institutional lock-in through political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting that gradually narrow the options until NATO enlargement is anchored as the dominant choice. As Tisdell et al explain, a qualitative case study is one where the researcher is the "primary instrument of data collection and analysis" and uses an inductive investigative strategy with a "richly descriptive" end product of a bounded system.<sup>249</sup> The critical junctures are identified as the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO's plans for eastward enlargement, the issuing of invitations to begin accession negotiations, and US Senate ratification of NATO enlargement. This means that those critical junctures should be accompanied by an identifiable causal mechanism that leads to further institutional lock-in. If NATO enlargement was not premeditated, we should see a reactive response where options lead to a branching of paths and the decision to follow one option over the other, as opposed to if it were premeditated and then there would be a clear push without a weighing of alternatives. The challenge of path dependency lies in being able to demonstrate that endogenous causes existed to create options, and decisions were made along the way (critical junctures) whose "increasing returns or positive feedback loops generated continuity as opposed to change", leading to legacies that would make a change in path "virtually impossible".<sup>250</sup>

The nature of this research is qualitative. It rests on exploring the context surrounding a key event, through an in-depth case study, namely the single case study of the first round of post-Cold War NATO enlargement. Houghton et al describe qualitative case study methodology as suitable for exploring experiences and situations where the focus is on the "phenomenon and the context in which it occurs".<sup>251</sup> As Alpi and Evans explain, case studies fall within the qualitative approach based on a real case that is studied over time through "detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" such as "interviews, documentation, archival records, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts".<sup>252</sup> Priya further specifies case studies as being bound by "time and activity" about which researchers "collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures".<sup>253</sup> Priya specifies that it is not narrative research methodology, and focuses on contextual study.<sup>254</sup> Priya considers a case study an appropriate tool for testing a hypothesis as opposed to an entire theory through falsification, where it would be replaced by a new hypothesis if falsified.<sup>255</sup> A single case study is also

---

<sup>249</sup> Elizabeth J. Tisdell, Sharan B. Merriam, and Heather L. Stuckey-Peyrot, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2025), 45–46.

<sup>250</sup> Leithner and Libby, "Path Dependency in Foreign Policy," 16–17.

<sup>251</sup> C Houghton et al., "Qualitative Case Study Data Analysis: An Example from Practice," *Nurse Researcher* 22, no. 5 (2015): 8.

<sup>252</sup> Kristine M. Alpi and John Jamal Evans, "Distinguishing Case Study as a Research Method from Case Reports as a Publication Type" 107, no. 1 (2019): 2.

<sup>253</sup> Arya Priya, "Case Study Methodology of Qualitative Research: Key Attributes and Navigating the Conundrums in Its Application," *Sociological Bulletin* 70, no. 1 (2021): 95.

<sup>254</sup> Priya, 96.

<sup>255</sup> Priya, 100.

appropriate where it is “unique or atypical”,<sup>256</sup> which the first round of post-Cold War NATO enlargement falls within.

The sources for this research include the National Security Archives declassification initiative, the Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, State Archive of the Russian Federation, Clinton Presidential Library, Reagan Presidential Library, Department of State Office of the Historian, Hoover Institution Archive, NSC Scowcroft Files, The White House, the US Department of State, and the US Office of the Secretary of Defense, news articles, government reports, and academic literature to reconstruct decision-making processes and perceptions during the period being studied. The need to determine and select what is relevant leads to the important notion of bias. In addressing the question of bias in my research, I echo LeCompte who explains that while it is important to be as unbiased as possible, it is impossible to eliminate selectivity and therefore important to be aware of its effect on data collection. LeCompte addresses the impact of tacit and formative theory. Both serve to “guide daily behavior, explain the past, and predict what will happen next” but the former are “identified to avoid bias in data collection, analysis, and interpretation” while the latter are “identified to develop research questions and guide data collection and initial analysis”.<sup>257</sup> LeCompte further explains that in analysing qualitative data, its lack of “intrinsic organizational structure or meaning by which to explain the events under study” means that it is up to the researcher to “create a structure and impose it on the data”. The data is “assembled using specific rules” setting out how the data will answer research questions”.<sup>258</sup> In the end, analysis will be successful if based on “clearly articulated theories, and responsive to research questions”.<sup>259</sup> In this case, contemporary narratives of post-Cold War NATO enlargement had to be disassociated from the data collection with the goal of maintaining objectivity in the documents under analysis to try to understand process tracing without superimposing personal bias on what may or may not have happened, or the impact of personalities involved in discussions.

The limitations of data collection surrounding this research involved access to declassified archival material. Travel restrictions at time of data collection meant that there was a heavy reliance on the digitisation efforts of the presidential libraries. This means there may be gaps where documents have not been declassified or digitised. Despite the lack of travel, it was a time-intensive process to identify relevant documents, as they were sometimes scanned as part of other documents and classification systems meant they were not always easily identified at the outset. This meant documents, and at times very large files, had to be perused to determine their relevance. As Tisdell et al point out though, although the “search is systematic, these settings [including fieldwork, library work, or online work] also allow for the accidental uncovering of valuable data”,<sup>260</sup> which aligns with one of the goals of this research, namely to seek to contribute new insights based on declassified records as primary sources that may not have been analysed or may benefit from a new perspective. Secondary sources are used throughout to demonstrate what has previously been researched and to contrast with the original analysis of primary sources.

While the data involved individuals, some of whom are/were still alive at the time of writing, there were no immediately identifiable ethics considerations as the decisions being analysed were sufficiently in the past that the archives were able to be declassified and would have no impact on the personal or professional opportunities of the individuals discussed in the research.

---

<sup>256</sup> Priya, 100.

<sup>257</sup> Margaret D. LeCompte, “Analyzing Qualitative Data,” *Theory Into Practice* 39, no. 3 (2000): 146–47.

<sup>258</sup> LeCompte, 147–48.

<sup>259</sup> LeCompte, 152.

<sup>260</sup> Tisdell, Merriam, and Stuckey-Peyrot, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 211.

The timeline of this research went from the 1940s to April 1998, of which the period until 9 November 1989 covers the background that discerns between the focus on arms control as opposed to the first critical juncture that marked the beginning of the shift to NATO enlargement. Limitations of this research pertained to the need to limit the scope, thus largely eliminating the perspectives of non-US countries and individuals aside from specific sections where additional detail is provided through these perspectives, without veering into research on those individuals or countries specifically. Broadening this scope would have required access to additional archives but may be of interest for future research to overlay and contrast the different perspectives.

What does this mean for the study of events during the Cold War leading up to discussions on German unification and NATO enlargement into the post-Cold War environment? Mead has described NATO enlargement as an example of the “kaleidoscope of American foreign policy”,<sup>261</sup> implying that there is no single overarching version of American foreign policy but an outcome that is the result of multiple actors and institutional mechanisms that interact with the environment to produce variations of American foreign policy. Aligning this with the concept of path dependence, it implies that NATO is but one potential variation of American foreign policy and could have had a different outcome had the alignment of factors differed. Path dependence and critical junctures can explain why NATO post-Cold War enlargement was not a given until the fall of the Berlin Wall. Indeed, American party platforms and US national security strategies from 1988-1997 spoke of Europe and NATO, but it was only in 1994 that the latter spoke of drawing in “new participants” and 1996 that the party platforms spoke of NATO enlargement.<sup>262</sup> The narrative and analytical chapters will now provide historical context and an indication of critical junctures to then analyse these in the context of path dependence, while questions such as whether alternatives to NATO were proposed, and whether any risks associated with NATO enlargement were discussed will be woven into the research.

---

<sup>261</sup> Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 34.

<sup>262</sup> The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States (1990); The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States, 1991; The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States, 1993; The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 1994; The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 1995; The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 1996; The White House, A National Security Strategy for A New Century.

## 4 From Arms Control to German Unification

The story of post-Cold War NATO enlargement begins prior to the end of the Cold War and covered three successive American administrations. The groundwork was laid under the Reagan Administration, the question of the future of NATO was opened under the Bush Administration, and the decision to enlarge to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland took place under the Clinton Administration. This chapter begins by considering the role of arms control discussions in the lead up to the end of the Cold War to demonstrate that the US and the USSR were both seriously engaged in discussions. The role of German unification is then examined in the context of its role in shifting priorities away from arms control and to opening the question of the future of NATO, as NATO enlargement to the GDR was not even a consideration at the beginning. The focus then shifts to how the NATO enlargement debate gained traction until US Senate ratification in 1998 locked in NATO's post-Cold War primacy in the post-Cold War European security framework. The critical junctures are woven into the narrative of these events and are analysed in the following chapter. While the Cold War has been studied extensively, the siloing of the fields has precluded the observation of events from multiple and overlapping perspectives. This thesis seeks to overcome those silos by integrating arms control, German unification, and NATO enlargement into an analysis that demonstrates how those larger events and periods of time were connected and impacted by path dependency.

Lindblom argues that incrementalism is, and ought to be, the usual method of policy making rather than revolution, drastic policy change, or big steps that are “carefully planned” because of the complex problem solving involved.<sup>263</sup> While the focus is on the incremental decisions made up to the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement from the American perspective, the broad lines of the European perspective must be included as European geopolitical dynamics also informed the American position given that enlargement occurred in Europe. Furthermore, many American and Russian politicians and contributors to the debate bridged both the Cold War and post-Cold War era, meaning that there is continuity across the two periods in the individuals involved and topics being discussed. This will provide an integrated understanding of the trends and influential events in international relations that contributed to building the decision-making environment that led to the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement in 1999.

This chapter examines how the US and the Soviet Union focussed on arms control to enhance their security, in line with prior Cold War efforts. While Reagan and Gorbachev managed to progress in their discussions and relationship, arms control negotiations were subsequently overtaken by events that were initiated with the fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification. NATO enlargement to CEE states was not a consideration at the time, but it came to supersede arms control as a strategic priority in the immediate aftermath of the rapid changes in European geopolitics at the end of the Cold War. The argument put forward is that both parties were seriously engaged in arms control discussions up until German unification, as Reagan and Gorbachev engaged in multiple high-level meetings and expended significant political capital in the pursuit of an agreement. Though the focus was on arms control and building trust, not NATO enlargement, lingering mistrust and disagreements meant that no new security relationship was officially established by the time the Soviet Union dissolved. Once the US won the Cold War, the need to build trust and/or engage in arms control negotiations was no longer a pressing issue, even more so as the power of the USSR began to dwindle. The US was cleared to push through a policy that suited its interests, even if it was not clear at the beginning what that policy would be.

The Cold War arms race was a costly endeavour, and the US and the USSR's arms control negotiations throughout the 1980s were tied to the hope that it would put a brake on defence spending.

---

<sup>263</sup> Lindblom, “Still Muddling, Not Yet Through,” 517.

The impact of the Vietnam War on US inflation and government spending<sup>264</sup> and the consensus on the “diminishing military utility of nuclear weapons” at the end of the 1970s under Brezhnev<sup>265</sup> meant that the US was open to the idea of negotiating arms controls, even if certain members of Congress and the Reagan Administration were concerned that the USSR would be unreliable and use the opportunity to gain the upper hand.<sup>266</sup> Despite this, by the 1980s, the Department of Defense (DoD) assessed that the “scales had tipped” in favour of the Warsaw Pact in conventional forces, though NATO still held the advantage in tactical nuclear weapons,<sup>267</sup> which led the US to push NATO members to agree to upgrade NATO’s theatre nuclear posture,<sup>268</sup> to maintain this advantage.

Nuclear weapons occupied a large portion of the arms control negotiations that took place in the 1980s. Understanding the role of nuclear weapons in a NATO strategic context requires going back to the 1950s. Nuclear weapons had been central to the credibility of NATO defence and deterrence<sup>269</sup> since the November 1954 Military Committee had accepted that NATO would subject the Soviet Union to a devastating nuclear counterattack in case of aggression.<sup>270</sup> Though the US had wanted to maintain ownership of nuclear weapons to avoid pushing West Germany into a race for equal nuclear status,<sup>271</sup> allies did not wish to be dependent on the US deciding to employ nuclear weapons.<sup>272</sup> By the late 1950s, the US had established the Programs of Cooperation (POC) to provide NATO with nuclear weapons and delivery systems<sup>273</sup> and went on to position nuclear weapons across multiple European countries throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with a large number in West Germany as the “frontline state in the Cold War”.<sup>274</sup> Nuclear weapons had grown significantly in number throughout the Cold War, from 3,000 between 1955 and 1960, to 7,300 by 1971.<sup>275</sup>

The centrality of NATO in the European security framework was also tied to the nuclear question and the US push for non-proliferation through a combination of agreements, norms, and the extension of its own nuclear umbrella over allies. All parties – the US, France, Germany, the USSR – were concerned about others having nuclear weapons.<sup>276</sup> France had proposed an *Europe de la défense* after 1945, but the French parliament had refused to ratify the 1954 European Defense Community Treaty that sought to

---

<sup>264</sup> Edwin L. Dale Jr, “What Vietnam Did to the American Economy,” *The New York Times*, January 28, 1973.

<sup>265</sup> Mary C. Fitzgerald, “Changing Soviet Doctrine on Nuclear War,” *Center for Naval Analyses CRM 86-264*, no. October (1986): i.

<sup>266</sup> Romano, “Détente, Entente, or Linkage? The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union,” 720.

<sup>267</sup> Edward C. Keefer, “Harold Brown and the Imperatives of Foreign Policy 1977-1981,” in *Cold War Foreign Policy Series Special Study 8*, 2017, 9.

<sup>268</sup> Keefer, 11–13.

<sup>269</sup> Edward T. Kenny, “MLF: The New NATO Sword,” *U.S. Naval Institute* 90, no. 2 (1964): para. 7; National Security Archive, “The U.S. Nuclear Presence in Western Europe, 1954-1962, Part I,” *Briefing Book 714*, 2020, para. 14.

<sup>270</sup> North Atlantic Military Committee, “North Atlantic Military Committee Decision on M.C. 48: A Report by the Military Committee on the Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years,” in *NATO Strategy Documents 1949-1969*, 1954, 232.

<sup>271</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Final Act of the London Conference (3rd October, 1954),” *NATO Archives: NATO the First Five Years 1949-1954*, 1954; National Security Archive, “Preoccupations with West Germany’s Nuclear Weapons Potential Shaped Kennedy-Era Diplomacy,” *Briefing Book 617*, 2018, paras. 5, 7; Western European Union, “Modified Brussels Treaty (Paris, 23 October 1954),” 25.

<sup>272</sup> Robert E Osgood, “The Case for the Multilateral Force,” *SAIS Review* 8, no. 2 (1964): 3.

<sup>273</sup> Robert S Norris, William M Arkin, and William Burr, “Where They Were,” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* November/D (1999): 30.

<sup>274</sup> Norris, Arkin, and Burr, 29–30.

<sup>275</sup> Norris, Arkin, and Burr, 29–30.

<sup>276</sup> Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Commentary on the French “Force de Frappe,”* RM-4359-IS, vol. Memorandum (The Rand Corporation, 1985).

create a European army under a single command. The 1949 Washington Treaty had imposed the Atlantic Alliance, which became the reference *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union while the WEU remained in the shadows.<sup>277</sup> While a MLF was again proposed under Eisenhower in 1960 to allow NATO personnel to share “participation in the *control* as opposed to the production and independent ownership, of nuclear weapons”,<sup>278</sup> this was in fact an initiative to dissuade a “Franco-German nuclear enterprise”.<sup>279</sup>

Concern over a possible Franco-German enterprise had been at the core of President Charles de Gaulle’s<sup>280</sup> return to power in 1958 and motivated France’s continuing nuclear development programs, particularly the *Force stratégique nucléaire* (FNS). De Gaulle had assessed that the Soviet nuclear forces would become a credible threat to the US and he wanted to ensure French nuclear sovereignty because he deemed that there was no guarantee that any peace achieved today between US and Soviet nuclear parity could be guaranteed tomorrow.<sup>281</sup> This was all the more risky for France since it had been excluded from the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement.<sup>282</sup>

While the US was concerned about maintaining control of nuclear weapons in the face of a possible Franco-German enterprise, it was also concerned with maintaining its advantage over the USSR. For example, the US had begun developing the Polaris ICBM in 1956 in alignment with the concept of a MLF, it then began the Minuteman ICBM program in 1958 after the successful launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviets in 1957 led to warnings of a “missile gap”.<sup>283</sup> While US and Soviet nuclear policy had originally both been based on massive retaliation, US policy shifted to flexible response in the 1960s, which made it more credible as an attack would not necessarily lead to nuclear war.<sup>284</sup> The Air Force had been lobbying for thousands of Minuteman missiles, but the US Navy and the French were pushing for minimum deterrence that would require a “small invulnerable nuclear force aimed at an opponent’s populations centers” aligned with the Polaris and MLF. This would have given European countries some independence from the US, but the US push to move it forward was lacklustre and indicative of this being what the French described as a “multilateral farce”.<sup>285</sup> After China detonated its first nuclear weapon in 1964, the US established the Gilpatric Committee to examine how to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, which led to the idea of a non-proliferation treaty taking precedence as the development of a “powerful

---

<sup>277</sup> Jean-Sylvestre Mongrenier, “L’improbable Défense Européenne,” *Hérodote* 1, no. 128 (2008): 9–33.

<sup>278</sup> Osgood, “The Case for the Multilateral Force,” 3, 4; “Multilateral Force or Farce?,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 1964.

<sup>279</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Moscow and the M.L.F.: Hostility and Ambivalence,” *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 1 (1964): 127.

<sup>280</sup> President of France from 1944-1946 and 1958-1969.

<sup>281</sup> Jacques Chevallier, “La Genèse de La Force de Dissuasion Nucléaire Française,” in *Armement et Ve République*, ed. Maurice Vaïsse, CNRS Éditions (Paris, 2013), para. 4; Institut national de l’audiovisuel, “Charles de Gaulle Paroles Publiques: Conférence de Presse Du 10 Novembre 1959,” 1959, para. 3; Richard R. Muller et al., *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 57.

<sup>282</sup> United Nations Treaty Series, Agreement for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes (1958).

<sup>283</sup> United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, “Minuteman Missile Sites: Ellsworth Air Force Base South Dakota,” *Special Resource Study: Management Alternatives, Environmental Assessment*, 1995, 21; Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 123.

<sup>284</sup> John T. Correll, “The Making of MAD,” *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, 2018, paras. 3–4; The National Security Archive, “Episode 12: MAD - Interview with Robert McNamara,” 1998; Raymond L. Garthoff, “Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy,” *International Security* 3, no. 1 (1978): 124.

<sup>285</sup> Dan Cordtz, “Europe’s A-Force: Nations Are Skeptical of U.S. Multilateral Proposal,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 1963, para. 11.

deterrent force” was not proving to stop proliferation.<sup>286</sup> As non-proliferation took over, the MLF was quietly dropped. This suited the Soviets, as well as Czechoslovakia and Poland, which had been concerned about it opening the door to West German remilitarisation and the acquisition of nuclear weapons.<sup>287</sup>

Exemplifying the ongoing mistrust despite efforts by the US and the USSR was the situation regarding *détente* under Brezhnev. The Soviets under Khrushchev had built up their arsenal between 1953 and 1962 under a policy of “brinkmanship” on the assumption that the consequences of their use would be sufficient to serve as deterrence and that de-escalation could leave them vulnerable.<sup>288</sup> This eventually ended following the failure of the Berlin crisis that attempted to force the German question based on the threat of nuclear weapons, as well as the Cuban missile crisis that nearly led to war.<sup>289</sup> Unlike Khrushchev’s “brinkmanship”, Brezhnev is described as having sought to avoid war “at all costs” and motivated his push for *détente*.<sup>290</sup> The intent became to create stability to enhance general security.<sup>291</sup> While he maintained credibility with the “ideologically Orthodox” Politburo, he pursued *détente* with President Nixon and the Politburo was not as willing to go to war with the US as was believed.<sup>292</sup> Despite this, and contrary to US National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) from 1963-1970 that underestimated numbers,<sup>293</sup> the build up of ICBMs continued under Brezhnev. The goal of a comprehensive nuclear test ban “waned in the wake of the [1963] Limited Test Ban Treaty” and the SALT that began in 1969.<sup>294</sup> In a 1979 speech, Brezhnev stated that those who supported the arms race, such as the deployment of new types of US nuclear missiles, were seeking to “break down the balance of forces [...] to achieve military superiority for the NATO bloc”.<sup>295</sup> In any case, the Soviets sought to obstruct any Western measures aimed at “greater unity”.<sup>296</sup>

While *détente* under Brezhnev did not preclude nuclear build up, the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras were marked by key progress on nuclear arms control negotiations: the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty (ban on tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water),<sup>297</sup> the 1963 Hot Line Agreement (communication between heads of government of nuclear-weapons states),<sup>298</sup> the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (cooperation to prevent proliferation),<sup>299</sup> the 1972 SALT I and the ABM Treaty (restrictions on areas for missile defence systems and the number of interceptor missiles) and Interim

---

<sup>286</sup> Robert A. Brunn, “Gilpatric Report U.S. Weighs Nuclear-Threat Issue: Committee Set Up,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 1965, paras. 13–14.

<sup>287</sup> Brzezinski, “Moscow and the M.L.F.: Hostility and Ambivalence,” 126.

<sup>288</sup> Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 123–24, 127; Muller et al., *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, 164.

<sup>289</sup> Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 132–34, 141, 143–51.

<sup>290</sup> Zubok, 202–3.

<sup>291</sup> Muller et al., *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, 163.

<sup>292</sup> Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 107–9, 216, 222–23.

<sup>293</sup> Barry H. Steiner, “American Intelligence and the Soviet ICBM Build-up: Another Look,” *Intelligence and National Security* 8, no. 2 (1993): 172.

<sup>294</sup> Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 165.

<sup>295</sup> “The Soviet Challenge to NATO Nuclear Modernization: Speech by President Brezhnev (Excerpts) 6 October 1979,” *Survival* 22, no. 1 (1980): 29, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338008441863>.

<sup>296</sup> Brzezinski, “Moscow and the M.L.F.: Hostility and Ambivalence,” 129.

<sup>297</sup> Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1963).

<sup>298</sup> Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Memorandum of Understanding Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link.

<sup>299</sup> United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” *Treaties Database*, n.d.

Agreement on Offensive Arms (limits on strategic offensive ballistic missiles),<sup>300</sup> the 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) (limits on underground nuclear tests),<sup>301</sup> and the 1979 SALT II (to replace the 1972 Interim Agreement along with further reductions and limits).<sup>302</sup> The futility of an arms race was implicitly recognised until Reagan's 1983 SDI sought to expand research and development (R&D) on missile defences.<sup>303</sup> Reagan was of the opinion that a "nuclear freeze" would not benefit US security as it would be "largely unverifiable" and the Soviets would have little incentive to engage in conventional arms reductions where they had a margin of superiority knowing that the US was "prohibited from catching up".<sup>304</sup> The negotiations on a START to limit ICBMs and nuclear warheads that had begun in 1982 proceeded with difficulty and were only signed in 1991.<sup>305</sup> 1983 marked a stall in US-Soviet relations under Andropov. Reagan's announcement of SDI<sup>306</sup> was considered a threat to the "continued efficacy" of the ABM Treaty.<sup>307</sup> This contributed to an atmosphere of mistrust and the collapse of Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty (for the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles)<sup>308</sup> and START negotiations after NATO applied the double-track approach of modernisation and arms control, and determined that the success of arms control negotiations depended on the credibility of NATO's intent to deploy its missiles.<sup>309</sup>

Despite the stall in negotiations, Reagan reached out to Gorbachev following Gorbachev's election in 1985, and they agreed to meet in Geneva in November 1985. In an exchange of letters after Gorbachev's election, Reagan had stated that he hoped Geneva would provide a "genuine chance to make progress toward our common ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons" but also expressed dismay that Gorbachev characterised SDI as a research program with an "offensive purpose for an attack on the Soviet Union".<sup>310</sup> Gorbachev explained that it was the Soviet Union that was surrounded by American military bases and nuclear weapons and not the opposite.<sup>311</sup> Demonstrating their commitment to progress

---

<sup>300</sup> United States Department of State, "Strategic Arms Limitations Talks/Treaty (SALT) I and II," *Office of the Historian*, n.d.; United States Department of State, "Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty)," *Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance*, 1972; United States Department of State, "Interim Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Certain Measures With Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms."

<sup>301</sup> Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance, Treaty Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests (and Protocol Thereto) (TTBT) (1974).

<sup>302</sup> United States Department of State, Treaty Between the United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, Together With Agreed Statements and Common Understandings Regarding the Treaty (1979).

<sup>303</sup> Muller et al., *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, 5; United States Department of State, "Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), 1983," 1983.

<sup>304</sup> GBH, "National Security and SDI," *American Experience*, 1983, para. 25.

<sup>305</sup> National Park Service, "Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991," 2020; United States Department of State, "START I Entry into Force," 1995; Murrey Marder, "A Double Standoff in Geneva," August 28, 1982.

<sup>306</sup> United States Department of State, "Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), 1983"; Thomas Kern, "The Geneva Summit," *SWI*, May 27, 2021.

<sup>307</sup> William A. Kinsel, "The Role of Arms Control in Strategic Nuclear Doctrine: SDI, MAD, and the ABM Treaty," *Washington Law Review* 62, no. 4 (1987): 763.

<sup>308</sup> United States Department of State, "Treaty Between The United States Of America And The Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics On The Elimination Of Their Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty)," *Treaties and Agreements*, 1987.

<sup>309</sup> Arnold Horelick, "U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Return of Arms Control," *Foreign Affairs*, no. February (1985); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Official text: Final Communiqué, 22-Dec.-1983 (1983).

<sup>310</sup> National Security Archive, "Reagan Letter to Gorbachev, March 11, 1985," 1985; The White House, Reagan letter to Gorbachev, April 30, 1985 (1985).

<sup>311</sup> The White House, Gorbachev letter to Reagan, June 10, 1985 (1985).

on arms control, the summit statement included that both parties would not seek to achieve military superiority, the acceleration of negotiations on nuclear and space arms, and reaffirmed commitment to the NPT.<sup>312</sup> Following the summit, Gorbachev informed Reagan that the Soviet Union had introduced a moratorium on all nuclear explosions from 6 August 1985 to 1 January 1986 and that it would continue past that deadline if the US reciprocated, including allowing mutual visits by observers.<sup>313</sup> Reagan continued to argue that SDI was not a threat to the Soviet Union and that the US had “no intention of using its strategic defense program to gain any advantage, and was in fact seeking to eliminate a first-strike capability from either side, adding the Soviet military had the first-strike advantage with a 3:1 ratio in warheads that can “destroy hardened targets with little warning”<sup>314</sup> (though Reagan had originally secured Congress’s support by arguing that it would “force the Soviets to start talks on nuclear disarmament on U.S. terms).<sup>315</sup>

Parallel to arms control negotiations were discussions of political reform that provide an indication of the spirit with which Gorbachev was proceeding. In an incremental step towards the fall of the Berlin Wall, Alexander Yakovlev<sup>316</sup> – who had been Gorbachev’s senior advisor since Gorbachev came to power – had written a memo to Gorbachev in late 1985 with recommendations on institutional changes in the Soviet Union, of which *glasnost* and *perestroika* are the most known but which encompassed a range of reforms including the separation of powers, the budget, and parliamentary representation.<sup>317</sup> The economic situation was disastrous though: in 1985 there was both a trade deficit and foreign debt, oil prices plummeted in 1986, state revenues and expenditures reached an 80-billion-ruble gap by 1987, and price reforms were never implemented, which Zubok hypothesises may have been due to Gorbachev realising this would create turmoil and undermine his domestic standing.<sup>318</sup> Despite the economic situation, Gorbachev did have support for *détente* within the Soviet bureaucracy, including a draft proposal for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, despite lingering skepticism about US intentions.<sup>319</sup>

In fact, the US government was divided between those who thought abolition of nuclear weapons was Soviet propaganda (for example, in a memo from John Poindexter,<sup>320</sup> the proposed response was to not alter the US’s “current positions while discrediting the Soviet plan” and that the “State Department would be far more forthcoming in adapting to parts of the Soviet plan and putting forth new US positions in Geneva this round”<sup>321</sup>), and those who thought it was a “serious program that needed a substantive response”, with Reagan ascribing to the latter belief, acknowledging the pressure Gorbachev faced on the economic front and from “hardliners”<sup>322</sup>. Gorbachev reaffirmed in a letter to Reagan in September 1986

---

<sup>312</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, “Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva,” 1985.

<sup>313</sup> The White House, Gorbachev letter to Reagan, December 5, 1985 (1985).

<sup>314</sup> The White House, Reagan letter to Gorbachev, early December 1985 (1985).

<sup>315</sup> Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 273.

<sup>316</sup> Soviet and Russian politician, diplomat, historian, and advisor to Gorbachev.

<sup>317</sup> National Security Archive, *Alexander Yakovlev Memorandum to Mikhail Gorbachev, “The Priority of Political Development,” December 25, 1985 [Excerpt]*, Fond 10063 (State Archive of the Russian Federation, 1985).

<sup>318</sup> Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 298–99.

<sup>319</sup> Dale R. Herspring, “Gorbachev and the Soviet Military,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 36, no. 4 (1987): 45; National Security Archive, “Gorbachev’s Nuclear Initiative of January 1986 and the Road to Reykjavik,” n.d.

<sup>320</sup> Deputy NSA and NSA under President Reagan.

<sup>321</sup> Department of State Office of the Historian, 185. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Poindexter) to President Reagan (1986).

<sup>322</sup> National Security Archive, “Gorbachev’s Nuclear Initiative of January 1986 and the Road to Reykjavik,” para. 4; National Security Council, National Security Council, Minutes of the National Security Planning Group Meeting, “Subject: US-Soviet Relations,” June 12, 1986. [Secret] (n.d.).

that he was working hard to support efforts at reaching “concrete solutions aimed at radically reducing the level of military confrontation in a context of equivalent security” ahead of the Reykjavik Summit in October 1986, though he did not feel that was reciprocated by the US.<sup>323</sup>

To overcome the hurdle presented by SDI, Gorbachev had written to Reagan in January 1986 to propose a “stage-by-stage program which would lead to a complete nuclear disarmament everywhere already by the turn of the next century” to counter the need for weapons in space.<sup>324</sup> The Reykjavik Summit later that year was intended to reach an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons,<sup>325</sup> with some even stating that it effectively ended the Cold War.<sup>326</sup> In a memo with the talking points ahead of the Reykjavik Summit sent to Poindexter for a meeting with Shultz, Caspar Weinberger,<sup>327</sup> and William Casey,<sup>328</sup> it indicated that the US did not believe the Soviets to be “serious in reaching any reasonable accommodation on any of the important issues” but that “every effort” would be made to find out whether Gorbachev would be “really willing to deal on some issues” because a failure to do so would risk “an opportunity to put the U.S.-Soviet relationship on a more predictable and less dangerous footing”.<sup>329</sup> The memo acknowledged that they should avoid pushing Gorbachev into a corner publicly but they either needed to “do something to activate the negotiations [...] or prove the Soviets [were] not serious”.<sup>330</sup>

Discussions between Gorbachev and Reagan demonstrated some desire to negotiate but it was underscored by continued mistrust from both sides. The US President stated that the US and the USSR were the “only two real nuclear powers”<sup>331</sup> and that engaging in the reduction of their nuclear forces to zero would send a message to other nations “that they must eliminate their own nuclear weapons”, and both agreed that they should take advantage of the opportunity.<sup>332</sup> Gorbachev considered Reykjavik to be a halfway point to their next meeting that would take place in the US, and that despite “many contradictory views”, the meeting demonstrated that cooperation was continuing.<sup>333</sup> Their mistrust was exemplified by an exchange where Gorbachev proposed further reductions from those presented at Geneva and reiterated several times that it was the turn of the US to make concessions that included a period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, as well as testing only in laboratories to address the issue of SDI, and a renewal of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiations.<sup>334</sup> Reagan argued that the Soviets had broken a three-year moratorium on nuclear tests in the late 50s and therefore a CTBT would need to include verification, which the Soviets had previously been unwilling to address, and the US would “never again be caught unprepared”.<sup>335</sup> Reagan proposed that Gorbachev’s points could be the “ultimate goal of negotiations” but Gorbachev deemed this too vague. Shevardnadze, who was present at the summit, deemed that it would “call into question the ultimate goal of reducing and ultimately

---

<sup>323</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Gorbachev Letter to Reagan, September 15, 1986. (1986).

<sup>324</sup> National Security Archive, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev Letter to President Ronald Reagan, January 14, 1986. (1986).

<sup>325</sup> Nikolai Sokov, “Reykjavik Summit: The Legacy and a Lesson for the Future,” *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, 2007.

<sup>326</sup> United States Department of State, “Memorandum of Conversation,” in *Reykjavik Summit Transcript*, 1986, 48.

<sup>327</sup> Secretary of Defense from 1981-1987.

<sup>328</sup> CIA Director from 1981-1987.

<sup>329</sup> National Security Council, Talking Points for President, Meeting with Shultz, Weinberger, Casey, Poindexter [Attached to Handwritten Forwarding Memorandum] (1986).

<sup>330</sup> National Security Council, F06-114/4# at 2.

<sup>331</sup> Natural Resources Defense Council, “Global Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945-2006,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 62, no. 4 (2006): 66, <https://doi.org/10.2968/062004017>.

Numbers for 1986 indicate that the US had 24,401 nuclear warheads to the USSR’s 45,000, as compared to 300, 355, and 425 for Britain, France, and China respectively.

<sup>332</sup> United States Department of State, “Memorandum of Conversation.”

<sup>333</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>334</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>335</sup> United States Department of State.

eliminating nuclear weapons” but Reagan pointed out that the US had proposed the elimination of nuclear weapons 19 times following WWII, despite having had a monopoly at the time.<sup>336</sup> In response to a zero proposal for Europe, the US proposed a maximum of 100 warheads for each side to maintain a NATO deterrent.<sup>337</sup>

The real interest of the US lay in pushing SDI ahead. Prior to the summit, Weinberger had pushed Reagan to work on obtaining Soviet support for SDI testing in space to ensure continued support from Congress, which Reagan carried into the summit.<sup>338</sup> Reagan proposed that they sign a treaty that would supersede the ABM Treaty, arguing that SDI would effectively eliminate strategic weapons.<sup>339</sup> The US suspected that the Soviets were conducting research on defensive systems and testing beyond the ABM Treaty could be done with representatives from either party.<sup>340</sup> Disagreement continued on SDI, with the USSR stating that it did not understand why the US wanted to create new weapons that would destabilise the strategic situation, while the US argued that the Soviets refused to see the point of SDI.<sup>341</sup> A continued point of contention was also the USSR’s push to include French and British nuclear weapons in the count, while the US argued the French and British nuclear weapons were not for NATO.<sup>342</sup> At one point, Gorbachev remarked that they were halfway through the agenda and the US had not made a single concession.<sup>343</sup> Both sides were at an impasse: Gorbachev and Shevardnadze argued that reductions and the agreement to a period of non-withdrawal went hand-in-hand, and while there were common points for START and INF, there were none for ABM and testing; Reagan refused to link non-withdrawal and reductions, and believed the Soviets were in violation of the ABM Treaty while the US had not even built the systems provided for in the treaty.<sup>344</sup> The Soviets proposed that SDI-related research not be banned under the ten-year ban but Reagan again stated that SDI was not an offensive weapon and the US had no intention of violating the ABM Treaty.<sup>345</sup> While Gorbachev expressed that the meeting had not been in vain, Shevardnadze lamented that Gorbachev and Bush had come so close to making an historic decision on nuclear weapons.<sup>346</sup> Gorbachev stated that he could not sign on to reductions while the US continued doing research, testing, and development to create weapons and a large-scale space defence system.<sup>347</sup> The summit concluded without an agreement having been reached, but it paved the way for the 1987 INF Treaty and the 1991 START I treaty (on warhead reductions, missile limits, verification, and an implementation timeline).<sup>348</sup>

Following the Iran-Contra scandal in 1986, Poindexter, who had been one of the hardliners on US-Soviet relations, was replaced by Frank Carlucci.<sup>349</sup> This hard line was reflected in the information being handed over. In the midst of multiple staff changes, Matlock (who at the time was Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for European and Soviet Affairs at the

---

<sup>336</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>337</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>338</sup> Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 293.

<sup>339</sup> United States Department of State, “Memorandum of Conversation.”

<sup>340</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>341</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>342</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>343</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>344</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>345</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>346</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>347</sup> United States Department of State.

<sup>348</sup> Atomic Heritage Foundation, “Reagan and Gorbachev: The Reykjavik Summit,” *Cold War History*, 2018.

<sup>349</sup> Bernard Weinraub, “New N.S.C. Chief Is Said to Plan a Near-Total Overhaul of Council,” *The New York Times*, December 16, 1986.

Secretary of Defense from 1987-1989.

NSC) sent a memo to his replacement, Fritz Ermarth,<sup>350</sup> in December 1986 to discuss updates to the 1983 NSDD-75 “U.S. Relations with the USSR”<sup>351</sup>, ahead of the 1987 US-USSR Washington Summit. Matlock explained that Reagan had been influenced by Nixon’s stance rather than Kissinger’s in dealing with the Soviets, and that the belief was that Gorbachev’s goal was an arms control agreement that would allow him to “reduce the burden of defense spending that is stagnating the Soviet economy” and argued that it was what could be contributing to Gorbachev’s “opposition to our SDI”.<sup>352</sup> Reagan had stated in a 1983 speech on SDI that “The United States does not start fights. We will never be an aggressor. We maintain our strength in order to deter and defend against aggression – to preserve freedom and peace”, arguing that the Soviet Union had not stopped “accumulating enormous military might” for the previous 20 years.<sup>353</sup> Matlock added that a “recent” President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) study<sup>354</sup> made it “plain the Soviets are planning a war” and that “any new move” from the US, such as SDI, would force them to “revamp, and change their plan at great cost”.<sup>355</sup> Matlock added that Gorbachev was seeking to “wean” European countries away from the US by painting the US as a “threat to peace”.<sup>356</sup> According to Johnson, the Europeans feared a “return to American isolationism” and therefore wanted “a president who accepts global duties and takes firm decisions, even though they may not always agree with them”; Reagan found a way to reestablish “American leadership of the West as inevitable”, through relationships with leaders that spanned the spectrum of parties.<sup>357</sup> Matlock urged against an agreement at any cost, as any agreement had to be in the long-term interest of the US and a summit in itself would be seen as a success, and that the US should wait for Gorbachev to give what it wanted rather than “giving consideration up front to what they want”.<sup>358</sup> Matlock added that Gorbachev should be told in private that unless the US and the USSR achieved a “solid, verifiable arms reduction agreement” there would be an arms race and the US would need to win that race.<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>350</sup> National Intelligence Officer for USSR and East Europe at the CIA from 1983-1986, Special Assistant to President Reagan and Senior Director of Soviet and European Affairs at the NSC from 1986-1988, and Chairman of the National Intelligence Council from 1988-1993.

<sup>351</sup> The White House, “NSDD 75 on ‘U.S. Relations with the USSR,’” 83-0331, 1983.

<sup>352</sup> Jack Matlock, Memorandum for Fritz Ermarth: Odds and Ends (1986).

<sup>353</sup> “Strategic Defense Initiative President’s Backup Copy: Address on Defense March 23, 1983,” *The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library*, March 23, 1983, 4–5.

<sup>354</sup> Further research needs to be conducted to determine whether any of the PFIAB documents have been opened, as otherwise a Freedom of Information Act request needs to be submitted National Archives, “President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board: Records, 1981-1989,” n.d..

It should be noted that the Executive Order 12537 reconstituted the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on 28 October, 1985 with the intent of it being to “assess the quality, quantity, and adequacy of intelligence collection, of analysis and estimates, of counterintelligence, and other intelligence activities” and would report directly to the President on at least a semi-annual basis Presidential Documents, President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (1985).. The PFIAB was “a permanent, non-partisan body of distinguished Americans who perform a continuing and objective review of the performance of the Intelligence community” General CIA Records, President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (1985).. To note, Kissinger was a member of the PFIAB from 1984-1990 Under Secretary of Defense for Policy - U.S. Department of Defense, “Henry Kissinger,” *Defense Policy Board*, n.d..

<sup>355</sup> Matlock, Memorandum for Fritz Ermarth: Odds and Ends, NLRR F06-1 at 3.

<sup>356</sup> Matlock, NLRR F06-1 at 3–4.

<sup>357</sup> Paul Johnson, “Europe and the Reagan Years,” *Foreign Affairs*, February 1, 1989, para. 12.

<sup>358</sup> Matlock, Memorandum for Fritz Ermarth: Odds and Ends, NLRR F06-1 at 4.

<sup>359</sup> Matlock, NLRR F06-1 at 6.

Harold Brown,<sup>360</sup> Cyrus Vance,<sup>361</sup> Kissinger, and David Jones,<sup>362</sup> none of whom were in the American administration at the time, paid a visit to Marshal Sergei Akhromeev<sup>363</sup> in February 1987,<sup>364</sup> who expressed hope that the four of them in conjunction with Akhromeev would help move discussions forward on arms control which Akhromeev stated had made “almost no progress” since the 1970s and hoped that the next Administration would be positively influenced by the negotiations scheduled for May 1987 in Geneva on the establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers.<sup>365</sup> Akhromeev argued that reductions had to be agreed for strategic offensive and defensive weapons, without which it would lead to an arms race.<sup>366</sup> While both sides exchanged views on reductions in armed forces and conventional weapons,<sup>367</sup> Kissinger brought up the topic of SDI. Akhromeev reiterated that the Soviets did not understand what the US wanted in relation to space,<sup>368</sup> and that it would be impossible to reduce strategic weapons the moment weapons appeared in space, meaning the US did not appear to be taking negotiations seriously.<sup>369</sup>

Following the visit by the Americans, Yakovlev wrote a memo to Gorbachev assessing that their visit had been an “‘intelligence-gathering’ political mission” ahead of the 1988 presidential elections to determine where the Soviets stood in relation to *perestroika*, whether the situation in the Soviet Union was improving, and whether its new political thinking would become a part of its foreign policy.<sup>370</sup> Yakovlev concluded that the Reagan policy had been built on the assumption that the Soviet economy had been on the “brink of an avalanche-like crisis” that would lead to “an open expression of social discontent”, and that the Soviet economic development would slow down and cease to present a “military, political and social threat to the West” by 1993-1995.<sup>371</sup> Yakovlev believed this perspective had begun after the 1975 signing of the Helsinki Final Act, and that Gorbachev’s consolidation of his position had shocked the American political elite, who had not accounted for the possibility of change.<sup>372</sup> As a result, these American political elites were trying to situate the Soviets. The Americans had indicated that American business circles had been increasingly concerned about the impact of the growth of military

---

<sup>360</sup> Secretary of Defense from 1977-1981. Brown had attended the annual NATO defense ministers’ summit and other NATO planning meetings. Brown was involved in discussions on the purchase of weapon systems by NATO and the increase of allied contributions to the NATO defence budget. Brown and the Department of Defense were also involved in Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) alongside the Department of State and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), but Brown became an increasingly “trusted source of SALT II advice” to President Jimmy Carter Keefer, “Harold Brown and the Imperatives of Foreign Policy 1977-1981.”.

<sup>361</sup> Secretary of State from 1977-1980.

<sup>362</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) under the Carter Administration and Chairman of the JCS under the Reagan administration until his retirement in 1982.

<sup>363</sup> Chief of the General Staff and First Deputy Minister of Defense from 1984-1988.

<sup>364</sup> S.F. Akhromeev, “Record of Conversation of Chief of General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces Marshal of the Soviet Union S.F. Akhromeev and H. Brown, C. Vance, H. Kissinger, and D. Jones, February 4, 1987,” in *National Security Archive*, 1987, 9.

<sup>365</sup> Akhromeev, 1; United States Department of State, “Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers,” *Current Treaties and Agreements*, 1987.

<sup>366</sup> Akhromeev, “Record of Conversation of Chief of General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces Marshal of the Soviet Union S.F. Akhromeev and H. Brown, C. Vance, H. Kissinger, and D. Jones, February 4, 1987,” 3.

<sup>367</sup> Akhromeev, 4–6.

<sup>368</sup> Akhromeev, 6.

<sup>369</sup> Akhromeev, 8–9.

<sup>370</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Alexander Yakovlev, Memorandum for Gorbachev “Toward an Analysis of the Fact of the Visit of Prominent American Political Leaders to the USSR (Kissinger, Vance, Kirkpatrick, Brown, and others), February 25, 1987 (1987).

<sup>371</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 2.

<sup>372</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 2–3; Central Intelligence Agency Directorate of Intelligence, The April 1985 Central Committee Plenum (1985).

spending and the US national budget deficit,<sup>373</sup> so Yakovlev believed this was indicative of a few things: the US could not exhaust the USSR in an arms race because it could not actually afford to engage in it itself, and the prospect of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons was alarming because Soviet conventional weapons superiority in the absence of nuclear weapons would mean a return to the 1940s and 1950s Cold War thinking so nuclear weapons could be reduced for strategic stability but not completely eliminated.<sup>374</sup> The solution was to “untie” the Reykjavik package so that an agreement on INF could be reached as an agreement on SDI/ABM would be more difficult, and Yakovlev indicated that Brown, Vance, Kissinger, and Jones had warned the Soviets should continue an “intensive policy” toward the US to “neutralize the threat of the extreme right” which the four Americans indicated posed a threat to US-Soviet relations ahead of the elections.<sup>375</sup>

In another incremental step towards the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet position believed it had to continue applying pressure by making concessions to demonstrate the limits of US willingness to honestly engage in arms control, which was interpreted domestically as weakness *vis-à-vis* the US. In Yakovlev’s eyes, the visit illustrated that Soviet domestic reforms were leading to “deep corrections in the American prognoses of the future development of Soviet society”, so the USSR had to continue applying pressure to secure this change of course.<sup>376</sup> Yakovlev saw potential for arms control in the outcome of the visit. Untying the Reykjavik package was key to this, as it would provide a framework agreement that would serve as a basis for later agreements, but the US position was divided, as Weinberger and others on the extreme right were concerned Reykjavik was threatening SDI, Congress was concerned about the cost of a full-scale SDI, and Poindexter’s removal following Iran-Contra meant the loss of a supporter of nuclear abolition. East-West relations were being pursued through different channels.<sup>377</sup> The Soviets would employ a flexible approach by exploring the US position outside of Reykjavik, knowing that it was purely to gauge the “genuine essence” of the American position as the final position of the USSR was that of Reykjavik.<sup>378</sup> Yakovlev believe that by proposing a reduction on strategic and intermediate-range weapons as well as US forward-based systems that Reagan would not be able to accept, it would bring this to light, help limit appropriations for SDI in Congress, and perhaps even “preserve existing limits and cut at least some armaments, at least the INF”.<sup>379</sup> Any “partial agreements” would serve to expand and strengthen the political and legal basis of US-Soviet relations.<sup>380</sup>

While the Soviets continued to be concerned about SDI and were trying to figure out how to address the arms control issues separately, the Americans were concerned with losing nuclear superiority that compensated for Soviet conventional superiority. In a meeting of the National Security Planning Group (NSPG) prior to George Shultz’s<sup>381</sup> visit to Moscow in April 1987 to discuss limitations on intermediate-range nuclear weapons, Shultz believed that the Soviet position was “pre-Reykjavik” based on “hints about progress in arms control” but the US had to determine if the Soviets were serious.<sup>382</sup> Reductions in nuclear forces would place a greater strain on the US than a reduction in conventional forces, so it needed time to fill any gaps and asymmetries since a 50% cut for the Soviets only touched on

---

<sup>373</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Alexander Yakovlev, Memorandum for Gorbachev “Toward an Analysis of the Fact of the Visit of Prominent American Political Leaders to the USSR (Kissinger, Vance, Kirkpatrick, Brown, and others), February 25, 1987, Fond 10063 at 5.

<sup>374</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 4–5.

<sup>375</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 5.

<sup>376</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 5–6.

<sup>377</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 6.

<sup>378</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 7–8.

<sup>379</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 8–9.

<sup>380</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063 at 9–10.

<sup>381</sup> Secretary of State from 1982-1989.

<sup>382</sup> National Security Council, Meeting of the National Security Planning Group: Secretary Shultz’s Trip to Moscow [Attachments Not Included] (1987).

their reserves.<sup>383</sup> Reagan indicated that he was concerned with keeping the Soviets tied to the ABM Treaty because he believed that the Soviets were already acting inconsistently with it.<sup>384</sup> In addition to maintaining military sufficiency *vis-à-vis* the Soviets after any cuts, military modernisation would also help compensate for any cuts by Congress.<sup>385</sup> Pushing for a 7-year transition period would also give more time for modernisation to be sold as acceptable and realistic to Congress.<sup>386</sup> While Shultz believed Reagan's agenda had dominated US-Soviet relations and that the two sides had been making steady progress,<sup>387</sup> this has been considered a more doveish approach by Reagan who distanced himself from the hawks by taking Gorbachev seriously.<sup>388</sup> After all, discussions continued despite the fact that the Soviets could not concede on SDI and the Americans were unwilling to lose their strategic nuclear advantage. The nuclear question became an issue down the line when German unification and NATO were on the table, as the US did not want a neutral Germany that might "acquire its own independent nuclear capability",<sup>389</sup> which would impact the strategic nuclear advantage.

Arms control discussions gained forward traction as the year progressed despite distrust and criticism from both sides. Prior to the December 1987 Washington Summit, Gorbachev wrote to Reagan in September to tell him in an optimistic but pointed manner that while the US and the USSR were poised to agree on an "actual reduction in nuclear arsenals" that would lead to a world where security "no longer hinger on nuclear weapons",<sup>390</sup> and the USSR had "gone its mile towards a fair agreement", the US had hardened its position in what Gorbachev described as "one-sided" and "contrived".<sup>391</sup> Demonstrating that the Soviets were opening up the "reserves" of their position to show a willingness to reach an agreement, Gorbachev wrote that the USSR was even willing to agree to neither side having intermediate- and shorter-range missiles along with reciprocal verification, and he hoped this would open up discussions on strategic offensive arms and space on which the US had maintained a rigid position.<sup>392</sup>

The American position was divided between those who believed the Soviets were not earnest in their negotiations and were looking to buy time to build up their ability to fund a continued arms build-up, and those who believed there was some desire for arms control while maintaining that both sides were truly negotiating. By November, Reagan was supportive of signing an INF agreement at the Washington Summit, as well as a review of all elements of the US-Soviet agenda.<sup>393</sup> Reagan also wanted to make "real progress towards a START agreement" and to move toward a treaty on defence on space that would further SDI's "deterrence based increasingly on defences", and summit outcomes should not be complicated by the US goal of maintaining a strong defence budget and programs like SDI.<sup>394</sup> Reagan's criticism was that the Soviets were using "tokenism" and that none of the concessions had been "institutionalized nor made irreversible".<sup>395</sup> Robert Gates indicated a more aggressive and skeptical stance

---

<sup>383</sup> National Security Council, System II at 4.

<sup>384</sup> National Security Council, System II at 6.

<sup>385</sup> National Security Council, System II at 7.

<sup>386</sup> National Security Council, System II at 8.

<sup>387</sup> National Security Council, System II at 9.

<sup>388</sup> Doyle McManus, "A Cold War Hawk Who Set the Stage for Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 2004, para. 15.

<sup>389</sup> United States Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation between James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow. (1990).

<sup>390</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Letter from General Secretary Gorbachev to President Reagan - Unofficial translation (1987).

<sup>391</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, F99-051 50 at 2.

<sup>392</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, F99-051 50 at 3-6.

<sup>393</sup> The White House, National Security Decision Directive Number 288 (1987).

<sup>394</sup> The White House, System II at 1-2.

<sup>395</sup> The White House, System II at 1.

on Gorbachev's position in a memo from later that November,<sup>396</sup> namely that Gorbachev's "gameplan" could be "played out over a prolonged period – thus giving him and the USSR a significant advantage".<sup>397</sup> Prolonging negotiations would allow the Soviet economy to consolidate and expand abroad, which would simply be a continuation of the Brezhnev Doctrine that implied the "right and obligation of the Soviet Union to intervene in any communist state to maintain the communist system intact".<sup>398</sup> The Soviets were looking for breathing room to avoid having to increase defence expenditures, and programs like SDI and military modernisation were especially threatening by forcing the USSR to "devote huge new resources to the military in a high technology position".<sup>399</sup> The USSR had not slowed down its production and research, and Gates' belief was that it would use "bolder initiatives including conventional force reductions" to test Alliance cohesion in Europe.<sup>400</sup>

In the end, the Washington Summit joint statement laid out that both sides would not seek to achieve military superiority.<sup>401</sup> Bush and Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty for the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.<sup>402</sup> On the topic of nuclear and space talks, negotiators were to work towards the completion of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, with the goal of it being ready for signature by the first half of 1988.<sup>403</sup> Furthermore, an agreement would be worked out to "commit the sides to observe the ABM Treaty [...] while conducting their research, development, and testing as required, which are permitted by the ABM Treaty, and not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, for a specified period of time".<sup>404</sup> The INF Treaty had been ratified and next was the first full NATO summit in six years scheduled for March 1988.

The December 1989 Brussels NATO Summit would be the first NATO summit with all 16 alliance leaders present in six years.<sup>405</sup> East-West relations had progressed significantly in that time, and the intent of the Brussels NATO Summit was to "re-emphasize [...] unity, to assess the current state of East-West relations, to review the opportunities and challenges which lie ahead".<sup>406</sup> At a February 1988 meeting of the NSPG, Reagan stated the intent of the summit as reaffirming the alliance's "proven formula of realism, strength and patience in dealing with the East"<sup>407</sup>, but Powell foresaw problems in developing "a general declaration and a statement on conventional stability in Europe."<sup>408</sup> Shultz had reported that there was disagreement within the alliance on how to deal with the Soviets, and that the British and French were "very cautious", while the Germans and Italians wished for "progress with the Soviets".<sup>409</sup> Reagan's position was that he did not believe Gorbachev wanted to engage in an arms race

---

<sup>396</sup> Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from 1986-1989, Assistant to the President and Deputy NSA from 1989-1991, Director of the CIA from 1991-1993.

<sup>397</sup> Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Memorandum to the President Gorbachev's Gameplan: The Long View (1987).

<sup>398</sup> Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, E34a at 1; Seweryn Bialer, "The Harsh Decade: Soviet Policies in the 1980s," *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 5 (1981): para. 999.

<sup>399</sup> Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Memorandum to the President Gorbachev's Gameplan: The Long View, E34a at 2-3.

<sup>400</sup> Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, E34a at 3-4.

<sup>401</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Joint Statement on the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting (1987).

<sup>402</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, National A paragraph 9.

<sup>403</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, National A paragraph 10.

<sup>404</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, National A paragraph 29.

<sup>405</sup> National Security Council, NATO Summit, March 2-3, 1988, Brussels, Belgium (1988).

<sup>406</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council," 1988, para. 1, <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c880303a.htm>.

<sup>407</sup> National Security Council, NATO Summit, March 2-3, 1988, Brussels, Belgium, SYSTEM II at 1.

<sup>408</sup> National Security Council, SYSTEM II at 2.

<sup>409</sup> National Security Council, SYSTEM II at 2.

and a statement on conventional stability would demonstrate that the western position had overcome prior divisions.<sup>410</sup> Carlucci urged that arms control be accompanied by defence issues to maintain Congressional support on INF and defence budget questions, particularly since Congress was looking for efforts towards burden sharing among the Alliance members.<sup>411</sup>

The Brussels Summit declaration included a reference to the milestone of the INF Treaty and the intent to overcome the “unnatural division” of Europe that most affected the Germans, and to improve relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe.<sup>412</sup> Additionally, the Alliance would need a major European contribution to ensure the “credibility of Allied defence”, noting that the Soviet Union had continued to grow its military capabilities,<sup>413</sup> and demonstrated ongoing NATO support in US-Soviet relations by proposing several goals for the ongoing Geneva negotiations.<sup>414</sup>

The Moscow Summit at the end of May 1988 was marked by optimism on both sides, as Gorbachev saw it as an opportunity to “continue the progress begun at Geneva”, even suggesting that he and Bush add a statement that differences should be resolved by political means in addition to the statement that neither side would seek military superiority, and noted that the exchange of instruments of ratification of the INF Treaty at the summit would be the first post-war disarmament treaty.<sup>415</sup> Gorbachev also stated that he was “ready to work on a START agreement right up to the end”<sup>416</sup> of Reagan’s administration ahead of the US elections. While Reagan agreed that arms control had come a long way since their 1985 Geneva Summit and that he hoped to be able to report back on further progress,<sup>417</sup> he reiterated that SDI was intended to make the US allies more secure, rather than to threaten the USSR, and proposed some additional points for the ABM Treaty, the non-withdrawal period and testing, but Gorbachev continued to push back.<sup>418</sup> Reagan continued to argue that the USSR had conventional weapons superiority, while Gorbachev responded that their weapons were stretched from the “Atlantic to the Urals” and that NATO had a 1.5:1 advantage on the southern flank.<sup>419</sup> Indicating a desire by the US to continue moving forward on arms control negotiations, Shultz proposed that the January 1989 CSCE Vienna Summit could address both sides agreeing to move forward on conventional arms reductions.<sup>420</sup> Indeed, the Vienna Concluding Document (VCD), part of the Helsinki Final Act series of meetings, would go on to include an annex for the launching of negotiations for a treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).<sup>421</sup>

As 1988 was an election year in the US, the Soviets were keen to maintain momentum in arms control negotiations. Anatoly Dobrynin<sup>422</sup> suggested to Gorbachev that he meet with the next president

---

<sup>410</sup> National Security Council, SYSTEM II at 2–3.

<sup>411</sup> National Security Council, SYSTEM II paragraphs 2–3.

<sup>412</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council,” para. 7.

<sup>413</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, paras. 4, 9.

<sup>414</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, para. 14.

<sup>415</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Conversation: First Plenary Meeting (1988); United States Department of State, “Treaty Between The United States Of America And The Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics On The Elimination Of Their Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty).”

<sup>416</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Conversation: First Plenary Meeting, 90591 at 5–6.

<sup>417</sup> The White House, 90591 at 4.

<sup>418</sup> The White House, 90591 paragraphs 5–9.

<sup>419</sup> The White House, 90591 at 12.

<sup>420</sup> The White House, 90591 at 13.

<sup>421</sup> Douglas Wake, “Did the Cold War End in Vienna Thirty Years Ago This Week?,” *Security and Human Rights Monitor*, 2019, paras. 5–6.

<sup>422</sup> International Affairs, “Anatoly Dobrynin (1919-2010),” *International Affairs* 56, no. 3 (2010): 242–43; Tam Dalyell, “Anatoly Dobrynin,” *The Independent*, 2010.

prior to inauguration in January 1989. He proposed that this visit be woven into Gorbachev's visit should he deliver an address at the UN General Assembly in December, which "itself would be a step of a great political resonance".<sup>423</sup>

Gorbachev went on to deliver a speech at the UN General Assembly on 7 December<sup>424</sup>, and then met with Reagan and president-elect Bush on Governor's Island for the last summit on the same day.<sup>425</sup> The UN speech was a landmark moment due to the drastic proposals put forward by Gorbachev, described by some as a "promise to end the age-old European nightmare of invasion from the East"<sup>426</sup> across the Atlantic, but as "short-term propaganda gains" in a CIA research paper.<sup>427</sup> Gorbachev addressed a vast range of issues, not least that of disarmament. Gorbachev reiterated the Soviet stance on space, that "activities in outer space must rule out the appearance of weapons there" but that the INF Treaty had breached a "seemingly unbreakable wall of suspicion and animosity" and allowed the creation of a new model of security based on the reduction of arms.<sup>428</sup> Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union had decided to undertake further reductions in its armed forces,<sup>429</sup> and that he wished to see movement towards a treaty on "50 percent reductions in strategic offensive arms while preserving the ABM treaty", a convention on the elimination of chemical weapons, and negotiations on the reduction of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe".<sup>430</sup> Later that day on Governors Island, Reagan told Gorbachev that the members of the Administration "were all on *Gorbachev's* side concerning the reforms he was trying to make in the Soviet system" and Bush assured Gorbachev that he intended to continue moving forward with discussions.<sup>431</sup>

Once back home, Gorbachev was confident that he had successfully demonstrated that new political thinking was not just words by enacting unilateral reductions to positively influence the conservative elements in US politics, even if he recognised that there was an influential minority in the US that was not keen to let the Soviet Union "seize the initiative and lead the entire world".<sup>432</sup> He was concerned about the conservative elements in the incoming administration<sup>433</sup> and those who sought to "devalue the Soviet Union's peace initiatives" on the assumption that the Soviets had no choice because of the crisis of communism and socialism and that the Soviet Union would "give up its positions step by step" (even if he acknowledged this was partially true but was done due to "internal needs as well").<sup>434</sup>

---

Soviet Ambassador to the United States from 1962-1986, Head of the International Department of the Communist Party's Secretariat from 1986-1988.

<sup>423</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Dobrynin Memorandum to Gorbachev on U.S.-Soviet relations. September 18, 1988 (1988).

<sup>424</sup> United Nations, English-language text of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations, as provided by the Soviet Mission (1988).

<sup>425</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Conversation, "The President's Private Meeting With Gorbachev," December 7, 1988, 1:05 – 1:30 p.m., Commandant's residence, Governors Island, New York (1988).

<sup>426</sup> "Gorbachev Puts Paid to Europe's Fears," *The Guardian*, 1988, para. 1, <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2012/dec/08/archive-1988-gorbachev-europe-fears>.

<sup>427</sup> CIA Directorate of Intelligence, Gorbachev's Approach to the United Nations: Image Building at US Expense? (1989).

<sup>428</sup> United Nations, English-language text of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations, as provided by the Soviet Mission.

<sup>429</sup> United Nations.

<sup>430</sup> United Nations.

<sup>431</sup> Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: The President's Private Meeting with Gorbachev (1988).

<sup>432</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1988).

<sup>433</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, paragraphs 4–5.

<sup>434</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at 1–2.

Gorbachev wanted to avoid an arms race taking root in the Bush Administration.<sup>435</sup> Shevardnadze suggested that the Soviets formulate a clear plan and schedule for the reductions Gorbachev had put forward in his UN speech rather than leaving it to the Ministry of Defence as it would give the impression the Soviets were trying to “sidetrack withdrawal”.<sup>436</sup>

The US continued to engage but it appeared to be continuing along the lines of the Reagan Administration of letting the Soviets make the concessions before any agreement by the US. Kissinger delivered a letter to Gorbachev in Moscow in January 1989 that explained that Bush and his advisors would need some time to think through the issues, particularly arms control,<sup>437</sup> and Kissinger indicated that Bush was very interested in establishing the “channel for a confidential exchange of ideas” that Gorbachev had brought up at Governor’s Island.<sup>438</sup> Kissinger’s explanation of the conduit being used so that “when we introduce a proposal, you would know what ideas and goals are behind it”<sup>439</sup> implied that the US would decide and then socialise the idea with Gorbachev, rather than the channel being used to discuss the validity of ideas prior to a decision being made.

In a meeting with the Trilateral Commission in January, Gorbachev made further commitments to cutting the Soviet military budget, military weapon and hardware production, but these were reported as still being vague.<sup>440</sup> Of note because of its appearance to be out of context but may have been tied to the economic aspect of Gorbachev’s reforms and the increasing unrest among some of the Soviet republics throughout the 1980s, when Anatoly Chernyaev<sup>441</sup> relayed Gorbachev’s meeting with the Trilateral Commission, he reported that Kissinger had asked Chernyaev how the USSR would react if Eastern Europe wanted to join the EC (which Chernyaev acknowledged was because the US “know that our friends are already knocking on the door”).<sup>442</sup> Chernyaev had replied he understood the countries would leave if they did not get what they wanted and that the Central Committee’s Commission on Eastern Europe would consider the political, economic and military-political questions.<sup>443</sup> He suggested that it may mean establishing the type of relationship the USSR had with China, based on the market and technological and scientific developments, rather than “the old rule that we keep them attached to us only be means of energy resources”.<sup>444</sup> Chernyaev also reported that Kissinger had “hinted at the idea of a USSR-USA condominium over Europe, a concern that Chernyaev indicated had already been raised earlier as some believed that the Reykjavik summit had been seen as “an effort at conspiracy between the USSR and the USA over Europe”.<sup>445</sup> Chernyaev believed the Trilateral Commission was trying to seize the initiative, though it may have been a way for the US to probe further into what the Soviet intentions were.

Gorbachev’s fears of the influence of conservative elements in the US administration appeared to be put to rest as the relationship with Bush took off. In a phone call with Gorbachev, Bush indicated that he intended to move forward with what he and Gorbachev had discussed on Governors Island and that he

---

<sup>435</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at 2.

<sup>436</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at 5.

<sup>437</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Letter from Bush to Gorbachev, January 17, 1989 (1989).

<sup>438</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Record of Main Content of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and H. Kissinger, January 17, 1989 (1989).

<sup>439</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Notes of A.

<sup>440</sup> Bill Keller, “Gorbachev Promises Big Cut in Military Spending,” *The New York Times*, January 19, 1989.

<sup>441</sup> Foreign policy advisor to Gorbachev from 1986-1991.

<sup>442</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Anatoly Chernyaev’s Notes from the Politburo Session [Report on Trilateral Commission Meeting] (1989).

<sup>443</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Communist at 3.

<sup>444</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Communist at 3.

<sup>445</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Anatoly Chernyaev’s Notes from the Politburo Session [Report on Trilateral Commission Meeting], Communist.

was examining how to “improve the bilateral relationship and the policies started by President Reagan”.<sup>446</sup> Gorbachev promised his full cooperation.<sup>447</sup> In a discussion with FRG President Richard von Weizsäcker<sup>448</sup> in June 1989, von Weizsäcker told Gorbachev that the atmosphere in the US had become “much less conservative than three months ago”.<sup>449</sup> According to von Weizsäcker, these shifts were the result of conversations between Kohl, Hans-Dietrich Genscher,<sup>450</sup> and other representatives with American leadership.<sup>451</sup> These conservative elements were not gone though, as Gorbachev did see a contrast between his conversations with Bush that did not get “stuck on ideological principles”, and Bush’s public statements that sounded like “Reagan’s crusade against communism”.<sup>452</sup> Gorbachev also remarked that the Bush Administration, as its predecessor, was taking its time to see if the Soviet Union would “move toward more concessionary positions”, though Gorbachev asserted this was an “illusory” approach that did not serve as a basis for policy even if the US continued to “cling to such an approach”.<sup>453</sup> Despite Gorbachev’s position, the US approach was bearing fruit and continued to be pushed. In a position paper put forward by Vershbow, he made the case for “going on the offensive” by pushing the boundaries of Soviet “new thinking” and making proposals that were in the interest of the US and to stabilise US-Soviet relations.<sup>454</sup> While it would be going on the offensive, it would rely on conditionality and reciprocity, as arms control remained central to Soviet concerns but was also the “easiest thing for Western publics to sink their teeth into”.<sup>455</sup>

While negotiations continued between the US and the USSR, another incremental step was taking place in CEE. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Miklós Németh, expressed his concern to Kohl and Genscher in August 1989 that the US preference to avoid “hasty developments” was problematic due to Hungary’s “economic crisis and extensive debt”. Kohl (who was facing a leadership challenge in his party) offered to contact German bankers to provide a safety net for Németh, but Németh informed Kohl and Genscher that he would be opening the Hungarian borders<sup>456</sup> as his country had been receiving an influx of refugees from Romania and he had no intention of receiving money to deal with the repatriation of individuals.<sup>457</sup> After opening the border, hard-line regimes attempted to quell the flow of their Eastern European citizens by closing off their borders, but this led to “intensified protests within their own borders, most notably in East Germany”.<sup>458</sup> This highlighted the strategic importance of the US-Soviet relationship due to its rippling effects, but as Clark points out, was “one of a series of major changes in international affairs” for the US, as opposed to “closer to center stage in Europe”.<sup>459</sup>

---

<sup>446</sup> The White House, President’s Telephone Conversation with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev (1989).

<sup>447</sup> The White House, 2000-0429- at 2.

<sup>448</sup> German politician associated with the CDU, FRG and German President from 1984-1994.

<sup>449</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Record of the First Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and FRG President Richard von Weizsäcker, Bonn, June 12, 1989 (1989).

<sup>450</sup> German politician associated with the Free Democratic Party (FDP), Foreign Minister, and Vice-Chancellor of West Germany from 1974-1992.

<sup>451</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Record of the First Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and FRG President Richard von Weizsäcker, Bonn, June 12, 1989, Notes of A.

<sup>452</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Notes of A.

<sup>453</sup> Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Notes of A.

<sup>454</sup> United States Department of State, *Maintaining the Initiative in U.S.-Soviet Relations* (1989).

<sup>455</sup> United States Department of State, 2011-1462- at 2–3.

<sup>456</sup> Sarotte, 1989: *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, 30–31.

<sup>457</sup> The National Security Archive, “Interview with Miklos Nemeth - October 1997,” *Episode 23 The Wall Comes Down*, 1997.

<sup>458</sup> Mary Elise Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2021), 32.

<sup>459</sup> Joe Clark, “From the Fallen Wall to ‘Open Skies’ : Canada’s Diplomatic Role in the Reunification of Germany,” *Eurostudia* 5, no. 2 (2024): 6.

The fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 was the first critical juncture and marked the beginning of the end of the Communist regimes in CEE. The end of the physical demarcation between East and West Germany meant the German question could be posed again. Gorbachev was caught off guard. Scowcroft realised Gorbachev's confidence had been "shattered" and British Ambassador to the USSR Sir Rodric Braithwaite worried that Gorbachev's "panicked message signaled his effective impotence" after Gorbachev sent messages to Washington, London, Paris and Bonn saying he feared "a chaotic situation with unpredictable consequences".<sup>460</sup> Throughout 1989, Gorbachev had loosened the reigns of the Warsaw Pact following meetings with Hungary and Poland, stating that there would no longer be "repeated foreign intervention in the affairs of socialist countries" and that the Warsaw Pact would shift to a political defence agreement in what Foreign Affairs spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov had termed the "Sinatra doctrine" as Warsaw Pact members could "do things their way"; this was a break with the Brezhnev doctrine whereby the "sovereignty of each socialist country cannot be opposed to the interests of the world of socialism", which justified intervention in said countries.<sup>461</sup> The situation unraveled in a way that Gorbachev had not foreseen. After the initial panic, it appeared that the Soviet Union was keen to gain control of the situation. In a meeting later that November between Nikolai Portugalov<sup>462</sup> and Horst Teltschik,<sup>463</sup> Portugalov presented a two-part document consisting of an official document from Gorbachev discussing Moscow's concerns about events moving in an "undesirable and dangerous direction", while the second unofficial part asked whether West Germany would be raising the question of German unification, and if so, it would be necessary to discuss the exit clauses from the Paris Treaties and the Rome Treaty, in other words, a unified Germany would need to leave the EC and NATO. The proposal was that a "looser 'German confederation' would be acceptable if Germans agreed to 'no foreign nuclear presence at all on German soil'".<sup>464</sup> Kohl and Teltschik knew this would receive widespread popular support as polls indicated 84% of West Germans wanted to entirely denuclearise the country and Baker confirmed similar considerations had been raised by Gorbachev with the US.<sup>465</sup>

Kohl's response to the fall of the Berlin Wall was to use his 28 November Bundestag address to call for German confederation and delivered his Ten Point Plan calling for a confederation that would lead to a federation, which presupposed a "democratically legitimized government in the GDR".<sup>466</sup> This was a surprise because the concept of "two states, one nation" as the political foundation of *Ostpolitik* and German-German relations since the early 1970s had never been questioned,<sup>467</sup> and it caused "enormous resentment among allies, enemies, and neighbors alike" to not have been forewarned.<sup>468</sup> This

---

<sup>460</sup> Sarotte, 1989: *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, 33.

<sup>461</sup> "Warsaw Pact Writes End to Brezhnev Doctrine," *L.A. Times*, 1989, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-10-28-mn-674-story.html>; "Soviet Minister Sees End to Warsaw Pact," *The Harvard Crimson*, October 25, 1989; Mary Battiata, "Shevardnadze Suggests Warsaw Pact Changes," *The Washington Post*, October 25, 1989; The National Security Archive, Memorandum of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and Károly Grósz, General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party - Moscow, 23-24 March 1989 - Excerpt, Inf/1371/1 paragraph 8; Michael Dobbs, "Changes Prove to Be Bonus for Gorbachev," *The Washington Post*, November 9, 1989; "'Sinatra Doctrine' at Work in Warsaw Pact, Soviet Says," *L.A. Times*, October 25, 1989, para. 1; "Brezhnev Doctrine Speech by First Secretary of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev," *International Relations and Security Network*, November 13, 1968, para. 8.

<sup>462</sup> CPSU Central Committee staff member.

<sup>463</sup> Deputy Chief of Staff from 1983-1990 and Head of the Directorate-General for Foreign and Intra-German Relations of the Federal Chancellery from 1982-1990.

<sup>464</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 36-37.

<sup>465</sup> Sarotte, 36-37.

<sup>466</sup> "Helmut Kohl's Ten-Point Plan for German Unity (November 28, 1989)," German History in Documents and Images, 1989, [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=223](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=223).

<sup>467</sup> Ursula Lehmkuhl, "The 'Ottawa Formula' and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the 'Two-Plus-Four' Negotiations," *Eurostudia* 5, no. 2 (2009), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7202/1001456ar>.

<sup>468</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 37.

demonstrated that as soon as the question of German unification was tabled, any semblance of balance of power and arms control was set aside with the goal of achieving unification. In a memo from Teltschik to Kohl following the Bundestag address, Teltschik laid out the two-part document explaining that there was some overlap between the document and Kohl's plan, and importantly, that the Soviets were discussing German unification but that his plan had been published first and would take the lead on the German question.<sup>469</sup> This was not for want of trying. In an article published on 15 December in the *New York Times*, Portugalov emphasised that reunification would be a threat to the stability of Europe because a new security framework had not yet been achieved, proposing that German confederation be the solution, and noting that while the question would not even have arisen were it not for events in the USSR, the Soviet Union had "no intention of interfering in decision-making or events in those countries".<sup>470</sup> Kohl's intent had been to garner support in Europe, and in exchange he supported Mitterrand's announcement of a common European currency and the next steps for European integration ahead of the December EC Strasbourg Summit.<sup>471</sup>

With these discussions on German unification beginning to take place in Europe, the Malta Summit in December 1989, which would be the first summit between Bush and Gorbachev, would be an opportunity for the US to gauge the Soviet view of ongoing events rather than an opportunity to conclude any "major agreements".<sup>472</sup> As the Soviet Union had stated the Warsaw Pact members could "choose their own course" and the US would use the opportunity to reaffirm it was not looking to take advantage of the situation and undermine legitimate Soviet security interests", it would be an opportunity to set priorities and objectives ahead of the 1990 US-Soviet summit.<sup>473</sup> Expectations of the summit were moderated by the fact that prior to the December 1989 Malta Summit, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told Bush that he had raised the topic of neutrality for Poland and Hungary and their withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact with Gorbachev, but had sensed that "the idea was clearly 'not on'" and Gorbachev had said "there would be no changes in the alliances".<sup>474</sup> In line with the approach the US had been following, NSC staffers were also keen to get more concessions from Gorbachev in exchange for cuts the US would probably be "making in any event",<sup>475</sup> which Gorbachev offered with the elimination of "all tactical nuclear weapons" and "nuclear on ships".<sup>476</sup>

In another incremental step towards the critical juncture of German unification, Bush gave Kohl *carte blanche* for German unification in a meeting attended by Bush, Chief of Staff John Sununu, Scowcroft, and Kohl immediately following the Malta Summit.<sup>477</sup> According to Sarotte, this placed the US on the "right side of German unification and able to "catch any sign" that Kohl might "weaken or abandon NATO to accommodate Moscow".<sup>478</sup> In response to being told that Gorbachev believed Kohl was in "too much of a hurry" but that Gorbachev would not stand in the way of "free, open elections", Kohl replied that the situation in the GDR was one of crisis and he did not want things to get out of control. To assuage East Germany and the Soviet Union, he offered to continue to support the GDR with other means than by paying the *Begrüßungsgeld* (100 marks per GDR visitor that was paid to

---

<sup>469</sup> National Security Archive, Document No. 6: Mr. Teltschik's Memorandum for Chancellor Kohl. Bonn, December 6, 1989 (1989).

<sup>470</sup> Nikolai Portugalov, "The Soviet View: Two Germanys, in Confederation," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1989.

<sup>471</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 38.

<sup>472</sup> United States Department of State, Pre-brief for Allies on Malta Meeting (1989).

<sup>473</sup> United States Department of State, 381402 at 5.

<sup>474</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 35.

<sup>475</sup> Sarotte, 39.

<sup>476</sup> Sarotte, 40.

<sup>477</sup> Sarotte, 40.

<sup>478</sup> Sarotte, 40–41.

compensate for the weak East German mark).<sup>479</sup> To assuage Bush, he stated he had not set up a timetable for his 10 Point Program but that it would not compete with what was taking place with the EC and that European integration was in fact a “precondition for change in Eastern Europe to be effective”.<sup>480</sup> Kohl explained that while pushback appeared linked to a fear that Germany would “drift to the East”, it was in fact a fear of the impact of unification since Germany was developing faster economically than other European countries.<sup>481</sup> Kohl explained that his vision was a confederation of two independent states once the GDR had a “really free government” (underlined in original), which would become a federation in the future but with no timeline in mind,<sup>482</sup> indicating that while Gorbachev was concerned about the speed at which Kohl was moving ahead, the project did not have clear deadlines at that point.

Though Bush and Kohl agreed in proceeding with unification, it was not a matter of a single decision. In response to Bush’s concern that he and Gorbachev maintain momentum while taking into account that Gorbachev was “uneasy”, Kohl explained that relying on the Helsinki Final Act about the peaceful change of borders would help avoid problems for Gorbachev.<sup>483</sup> Kohl was also managing the domestic political situation in West Germany, where the Greens were against unification, wanted neutrality and to abolish the army, and where the SPD was in favour of unification though had foreseen it as a longer-term process, and individuals in the GDR were “badly informed about the issues”,<sup>484</sup> so Bush suggested that “self-determination” be used to alleviate the burden of the situation on Gorbachev.<sup>485</sup> Kohl indicated that the EC was generally supportive even if Mitterrand wanted to “proceed moderately”.<sup>486</sup> Kohl hoped that the plans for 1990 (CFE Summit, signing of START, agreement on chemical weapons) would be concluded in time for “electoral reasons” and that those would have a “big impact on the Soviets and Eastern Europe”, particularly since military calculations had “changed dramatically”.<sup>487</sup>

The unplanned nature of the unification process was illustrated at the Brussels NATO Summit in December 1989 that followed the Malta Summit and the discussion between Bush and Kohl. While Bush delivered a policy statement about “the future shape of the new Europe and the new Atlanticism” underlining self-determination, Germany’s continued commitment to NATO, the peaceful and gradual nature of German unification, and the role of the Helsinki Final Act on the question of borders,<sup>488</sup> there was no NATO committee to consider the consequences of unification “nor any significant work being done in its member states”.<sup>489</sup> This further strengthens the argument that NATO enlargement was not premeditated, as a highly bureaucratic organisation like NATO would have committees in place to examine issues of importance.

Despite forging ahead with German unification in discussions with Kohl, US-Soviet relations remained important to the Bush Administration. In an example of both agenda-setting and a political statement as causal mechanisms towards path dependency, Baker briefed NATO allies after the NATO Summit to indicate that the Allies would need to discuss the “dramatic changes taking place, regional

---

<sup>479</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Conversation: Meeting with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (1989).

<sup>480</sup> The White House, 9854 at 2.

<sup>481</sup> The White House, 9854 at 2.

<sup>482</sup> The White House, 9854 at 2.

<sup>483</sup> The White House, 9854 at 2.

<sup>484</sup> The White House, 9854 at 3.

<sup>485</sup> The White House, 9854 at 3.

<sup>486</sup> The White House, 9854 at 3.

<sup>487</sup> The White House, 9854 at 4.

<sup>488</sup> Lehmkuhl, “The ‘Ottawa Formula’ and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the ‘Two-Plus-Four’ Negotiations.”

<sup>489</sup> Clark, “From the Fallen Wall to ‘Open Skies’: Canada’s Diplomatic Role in the Reunification of Germany,” 4.

issues, bilateral relations and the pace of arms control” ahead of the formal summit in 1990.<sup>490</sup> The Soviets were still one of the occupying powers in Germany and could not be discounted, and the US understood that US-Soviet relations remained important and continued to support reforms.<sup>491</sup> Gorbachev remained concerned about the pace of change, but Bush had assured him that while unpredictable, the situation was not dangerous, and that the US was seeking to deepen ties with Eastern Europe but not at the expense of the Soviet Union.<sup>492</sup> Bush reaffirmed Gorbachev’s commitment to the Helsinki process and that the US “stood by the right of the German people to self-determination”.<sup>493</sup> Bush had pushed for resolution of “several areas of arms control” by the 1990 summit, and though Gorbachev had expressed a “strong political commitment to the CFE process”, he did not propose further, deeper, cuts in conventional forces.<sup>494</sup> As Gorbachev’s position was weakening and German unification was inevitable, the US was aware that it had to remain aligned with Kohl as a prerequisite for ensuring US troops would continue to be “welcome on the territory of a united Germany”.<sup>495</sup> Rapid unification was being pushed by Zoellick,<sup>496</sup> despite opposition from the State Department’s European Bureau, adding to Bush and Baker’s support.<sup>497</sup> As Zelikow and Rice explain, the questions then became how quickly unification should happen, what outcomes were acceptable for NATO, what military presence the US would maintain, and what this would mean for arms control negotiations,<sup>498</sup> which were not choices but the outcomes of institutional lock-in resulting from path dependence.

There was a rapid shift towards broad support for German unification by the end of 1989, which was an incremental step towards German unification. Following the Malta Summit, the Brussels NATO Summit, and Baker’s briefing, Mitterrand stated at the December 1989 European Council meeting that German unification should be accompanied by “equally large steps toward European Union”.<sup>499</sup> Mitterrand had obtained Kohl’s support for an intergovernmental conference to amend the Treaty of Rome (which created the European Economic Community) to prepare a new treaty adopting economic and monetary union in exchange for EC endorsement of German unification along the guidelines proposed by Bush.<sup>500</sup> Shortly after, Baker delivered a speech at the Press Club in Berlin entitled “A New Europe, a New Atlanticism: Architecture for a New Era” that aligned with German preferences: a NATO and the American security guarantee, the EC-WEU and a single European security identity, and the CSCE and a pan-European security order.<sup>501</sup> The US was stepping in to take the lead in the “diplomatic processes” pertaining to German unification.<sup>502</sup>

Indicating the misalignment of the West and the East, when Shevardnadze visited Wörner in December and acknowledged that the Cold War was over and that he hoped NATO and the Warsaw Pact would be able to move towards cooperation as the organisations played a stabilising role at that “crucial stage in the development of the European process”, he indicated that the Soviet Union did not rule out

---

<sup>490</sup> United States Department of State, Briefing Allies on President’s Meeting with Gorbachev on Malta (1989).

<sup>491</sup> United States Department of State, 388833 at 2–3.

<sup>492</sup> United States Department of State, 388833 at 6.

<sup>493</sup> United States Department of State, 388833 at 7.

<sup>494</sup> United States Department of State, 388833 at 7–9.

<sup>495</sup> Lehmkuhl, “The ‘Ottawa Formula’ and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the ‘Two-Plus-Four’ Negotiations.”

<sup>496</sup> Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, “Diplomatic Lessons from the Fall of the Berlin Wall: An Interview with Robert Zoellick,” *Harvard Kennedy School*, 2014.

<sup>497</sup> Lehmkuhl, “The ‘Ottawa Formula’ and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the ‘Two-Plus-Four’ Negotiations,” para. 18.

<sup>498</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 19.

<sup>499</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 23.

<sup>500</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 23.

<sup>501</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 24.

<sup>502</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 26.

German unification but remained concerned due to Germany's role in WWII.<sup>503</sup> Shevardnadze sent a message to the US government through Baker in January 1990 that he sought to maintain an exchange of views on German affairs and a coordination of any steps required among the Big Four.<sup>504</sup> He emphasized the importance of taking the Treaty on Cooperation and Good-neighborliness between the GDR and the FRG that would "soon be concluded" seriously,<sup>505</sup> and proposed that representatives of the Big Four be present as the treaty was developed to ensure an exchange of views, "continued stability in Central Europe, progressive development of the CSCE process, and the normal operation of the quadripartite agreement".<sup>506</sup>

All were not aligned within the West though. In January 1990, Genscher considered it a reasonable concession to the Soviets in exchange for German unification to place limits on "NATO's future role in united Germany, or even integration of the alliance into some kind of European collective security system".<sup>507</sup> In his January 1990 Tutzling Address "German Unity in the European Framework", Genscher stated that the CSCE provided an institutional mechanism for integrating the successor states of the Soviet Union into a pan-European security and economic space without necessarily compromising or threatening the geopolitical and military logic of NATO or undermining further progress toward European political union.<sup>508</sup> As a result, Robert Blackwill<sup>509</sup> and Robert Hutchings,<sup>510</sup> both representing the NSC, advised that "immediate US action was needed because they were quickly losing their ability to 'manage the process'".<sup>511</sup> By the end of January, a German-American plan for a dual diplomatic track to negotiate German unification was conceived and agreed upon, whereby the two Germanys would negotiate the domestic aspects of unification and then negotiate the international aspects with the Four Powers, though this plan would then have to be sold to the USSR and to Britain.<sup>512</sup>

In a February 1990 cable to Baker from the US Embassy in Bonn, Genscher's position was described as the belief that extending NATO military structures to the GDR would "block German unity" and that he foresaw NATO assuming a more political than military role and serving as a framework for US presence in Europe, while the CSCE would create the framework for stability.<sup>513</sup> Genscher considered Germany's EC and NATO membership irrevocable, but that it should not impair Soviet security interests, and should therefore exclude moving "closer to the Soviet borders".<sup>514</sup> Genscher traveled to the US to present his position, explaining that he intended to bar NATO from East Germany in exchange for unification and that the Soviets needed to be assured NATO would not extend to "the area of the GDR nor anywhere else in Eastern Europe". Agenda-setting that fed into path dependence took place by narrowing

---

<sup>503</sup> Herman Saen, "Shevardnadze Makes Historic Visit to NATO," *UPI*, December 19, 1989, paras. 3, 8, 22.

<sup>504</sup> United States Department of State, Shevardnadze Message on Germany--Corrected Text (1990).

<sup>505</sup> United States Department of State, 199504374 at 2.

<sup>506</sup> United States Department of State, 199504374 at 3.

<sup>507</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 47–48.

<sup>508</sup> Lehmkuhl, "The 'Ottawa Formula' and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the 'Two-Plus-Four' Negotiations," para. 25.

<sup>509</sup> Special Assistant to President George H.W. Bush for European and Soviet Affairs from 1989-1990, US ambassador to conventional arms negotiations with the Warsaw Pact, director for European affairs at the NSC, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European affairs.

<sup>510</sup> Special Adviser to the Secretary of State from 1992-1993 managing the US SEED Eastern European democracy assistance program, and NSC Director for European Affairs from 1989-1992.

<sup>511</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 48.

<sup>512</sup> Lehmkuhl, "The 'Ottawa Formula' and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the 'Two-Plus-Four' Negotiations," para. 27.

<sup>513</sup> United States Department of State, US Embassy Bonn Cable to Baker: Genscher Outlines His Vision of a New European Architecture (1990).

<sup>514</sup> United States Department of State, paragraphs 7–8.

the options on German unification negotiations: Genscher supported 2+4 talks, but Baker's advisors did not support this as this would bring all six to the table and prevent them from "cutting separate deals". Baker instructed US Ambassador to West Germany Vernon Walters<sup>515</sup> to convey the content of the discussion to Teltschik to ensure the information reached Kohl.<sup>516</sup> Genscher and Kohl's visions for German unification and NATO were at odds with each other: Genscher wanted to take into account Soviet concerns and not expand NATO eastwards, while Kohl sought to anchor a unified Germany in NATO over fear of "another German *Sonderweg*".<sup>517</sup>

Genscher's position, termed "Genscherism", put him at odds with those who wanted to prioritise German unification in NATO.<sup>518</sup> Adding a sense of urgency on the US side, Teltschik informed Scowcroft at the February 1990 Munich Security Conference that Kohl and Genscher would be visiting Moscow a few days later despite Kohl having told the US he would be transparent. According to Teltschik, Kohl wanted to accelerate unification and had heard that Gorbachev might be willing to accept a unified Germany in NATO if all ground-based nuclear weapons were removed from German soil, which Teltschik added would "not be a bad deal for the West".<sup>519</sup> The following day, Walters briefed Teltschik on what Genscher had discussed in the US,<sup>520</sup> while Scowcroft briefed Bush on the Munich discussion, stating that divided Germany was "like a pressure cooker" and would require the combined efforts of Kohl and the US administration to keep the lid on in the coming months.<sup>521</sup>

Another incremental step was Genscher's position being increasingly sidelined. In a letter to Bush, Nitze indicated that the general position regarding German unification and NATO had shifted during a "Forum for Germany" that took place the first week of February 1990. The majority view at the beginning had appeared to be that unification "would and should take time" and that the Warsaw Pact and NATO should sign an agreement with "equal concession by both sides", and that if the former were dissolved, the latter should be too. By the end of the conference, there was agreement that German unification had taken place "de facto" during the meeting and was "irreversible", and that there was "no valid analogy between the Warsaw Pact and NATO" as the former had been "imposed upon countries now no longer under Soviet dominance".<sup>522</sup>

While these discussions were taking place, Baker set out on a trip to Prague and Moscow, ahead of which Genscher had stated that he and Baker were "in full agreement that there was no interest in extending NATO eastward to the Polish border" but which Baker had not specifically endorsed.<sup>523</sup> Blackwill termed this period "the beginning of the Big Game",<sup>524</sup> as he believed Gorbachev might give Kohl "his bottom line on German unification" and suspected that he would propose that Germany stay in NATO in name but "shed all foreign forces and nuclear weapons" along the lines of Norway and Iceland,

---

<sup>515</sup> CIA Deputy Director from 1972-1976, US Ambassador to Germany from 1989-1991.

<sup>516</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 49-50.

<sup>517</sup> Christian Wicke, *Helmut Kohl's Quest for Normality: His Representation of the German Nation and Himself* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 2; Marcel Fürstenau, "Triumph of 'Genscherism,'" *Deutsche Welle*, December 9, 2015.

<sup>518</sup> Josef Joffe, "The Secret of Genscher's Staying Power: Memoirs of a 'Slippery Man,'" *Foreign Affairs* January (1998); Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 50-51.

<sup>519</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 52.

<sup>520</sup> Sarotte, 49-50.

<sup>521</sup> Sarotte, 52.

<sup>522</sup> The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Memorandum from Paul H. Nitze to George H.W. Bush about "Forum for Germany" meeting in Berlin (1990).

<sup>523</sup> Al Kamen and R. Jeffrey Smith, "Baker Carrying Crowded Agenda to Moscow Talks," *The Washington Post*, February 4, 1990.

<sup>524</sup> Joshua Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 4, no. 4 (2016): 22.

which would be unacceptable for the US.<sup>525</sup> That week, Joachim von Arnim, a West German diplomat in Moscow, went behind Genscher's back to Teltschik to advise that NATO *not* be constrained and that Genscher be stopped in his efforts. He suggested instead that Germany "purchase unity" instead of having to make concessions on security policy, countering concerns that German unification would come at the cost of its previous security commitments. This aligned with Teltschik's view, as he had advised Kohl at the beginning of February that "the military presence of the US in Europe and in particular the protection provided by their nuclear forces remain for the foreseeable future indispensable".<sup>526</sup>

A series of infamous exchanges took place in Moscow that served to further move along the incremental steps to German unification. First, Baker and Shevardnadze initially spoke on 9 February 1990, where Baker assured Shevardnadze that while the situation was moving "faster than anyone has anticipated", he understood that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze saw German unification as inevitable, and the US was not looking to unilaterally take advantage of the situation.<sup>527</sup> Baker presented the 2+4 mechanism as a way to avoid "resurgent nationalism in Germany", and that the CSCE would be too unwieldy, though it could be "an umbrella organization to ratify the results of unification".<sup>528</sup> To avoid a neutral Germany that would risk acquiring its "own independent nuclear capability", Germany would instead be "firmly anchored in a changed NATO" that would become more political and have "iron-clad guarantees that NATO's jurisdiction or forces would not move eastward" in a way that would satisfy Germany's eastern neighbours.<sup>529</sup> Shevardnadze reaffirmed that he felt unification should be done in phases, referring to the Modrow plan that foresaw a slower process within a pan-European framework that emphasised economic integration and would move from a treaty community, to a federation, to a unified state.<sup>530</sup> Baker's response was that this would mean a neutral Germany, which the West did not support.<sup>531</sup>

Second, in a subsequent conversation between Baker, Gorbachev, and Shevardnadze, Baker stated that the GDR would be voting for unification on 18 March. This would be followed by the two Germanys discussing the internal aspects of unification, which Baker understood Gorbachev agreed was inevitable.<sup>532</sup> Baker's goal was to get agreement for the 2+4 mechanism (the two Germanys, and the four WWII allied powers with legal rights over Germany), as Gorbachev supported a 4+2 mechanism. A 4+2 format would have given the four occupying powers (the US, the UK, France, and the USSR) the initial decision-making power on the future of Germany, which meant the Soviets would also have a say. The 2+4 format would put the FRG and the GDR at the centre of the decision on the future of Germany by laying the groundwork on internal unification before the occupying powers were integrated in discussions on external aspects. Baker portrayed it as a simpler process, arguing that the 2+4 would be better because it would not be as "unwieldy" as trying to get the four occupying powers to agree, and more broadly all 35 of the CSCE as Germany's neighbours would need to be consulted in that case.<sup>533</sup> Arguing his case, Baker argued stated that in any case, a neutral Germany did not necessarily mean it would not seek to

---

<sup>525</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 54.

<sup>526</sup> Sarotte, 53.

<sup>527</sup> United States Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation between James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow. at 2.

<sup>528</sup> United States Department of State, at 3.

<sup>529</sup> United States Department of State, at 3.

<sup>530</sup> United States Department of State, at 7; Henry Kamm, "Upheaval in the East; East Berlin Chief Presents His Plan to Unite Germany," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1990.

<sup>531</sup> United States Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation between James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow. at 7; Don Oberdorfer, "Gorbachev, Shevardnadze Signal Acceptance of German Unification," *The Washington Post*, February 3, 1990.

<sup>532</sup> United States Department of State, Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker in Moscow. (1990).

<sup>533</sup> United States Department of State, 93D187/Box at 5.

acquire its own nuclear capability, allies and East Europeans wanted the US to maintain a presence in Europe, US presence would be within the NATO framework, and that there would be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction for NATO forces "one inch to the east".<sup>534</sup> Gorbachev agreed that either 4+2 or 2+4 would be suitable if it relied on an international legal basis, which Baker said should only be brought up after GDR elections to ensure Kohl was not accused of putting German unification in the hands of others.<sup>535</sup>

Baker went on to ask Gorbachev if he would prefer a "united Germany outside of NATO that is independent and has no US forces" or a "united Germany with ties to NATO and assurances that there would be no extension of NATO's current jurisdiction eastward". This was a branch that established the premise of the choice being between an independent Germany or one tied to NATO. Gorbachev replied that it was a discussion that needed to be done at the "leadership level" but that "broadening of the NATO zone is not acceptable", to which Baker replied, "We agree with that".<sup>536</sup> Gates, who had attended the meeting between Gorbachev and Baker, then reiterated Baker's points in a meeting with Chairman of the State Committee for Security Vladimir Kryuchkov.<sup>537</sup> He asked Kryuchkov for his opinion, stating that a unified Germany would either be a NATO member, neutral, or a Warsaw Pact member. He further added that only NATO membership avoided creating insecurities, uncertainties, and temptation to develop nuclear weapons, particularly since a "large, economically powerful Germany" could not be neutral.<sup>538</sup> Kryuchkov replied that unification was acceptable, but not within NATO while trust between the US and the USSR had not yet "materialized". He proposed that the US, Britain, and France develop their position while the Warsaw Pact did as well and that the three countries could discuss them without needing to hurry.<sup>539</sup>

Following these meetings, Baker wrote to Kohl to inform him that he had agreed that unification was inevitable and proposed the 2+4 mechanism to consider the security concerns of others as pertained to the external aspects of German unification. It would only begin following the 18 March East German elections, after the internal process of unification had begun, and if the Germans accepted it.<sup>540</sup> Baker relayed the question he had posed to Gorbachev, and concluded that "[b]y implication, NATO in its current zone might be acceptable". Baker took this to mean that it might be possible to change Gorbachev's mind if he were provided with "some cover or explanation for his actions" such as the 2+4 mechanism and a broader CSCE framework.<sup>541</sup> Kohl had also been invited to Moscow and had also met with Gorbachev the day after Baker's meeting,<sup>542</sup> and told him that their position was that "NATO should not expand its scope", that the FRG and the Soviet Union should "find a reasonable resolution" that the FRG understood the security interests of the Soviet Union.<sup>543</sup> Gorbachev had suggested to Kohl that a united Germany have its own military but be outside of "military formations" as it would not make sense

---

<sup>534</sup> United States Department of State, 93D187/Box at 6.

<sup>535</sup> United States Department of State, 93D187/Box at 7.

<sup>536</sup> Anna Melyakova, "Document No. 119: Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker, February 9, 1990," in *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018), para. 74.

<sup>537</sup> Chairman of the State Committee for Security, Chief of the KGB, member of the group that led the abortive coup against Gorbachev.

<sup>538</sup> NSC Scowcroft Files, Memorandum of conversation between Robert Gates and Vladimir Kryuchkov in Moscow. (1990).

<sup>539</sup> NSC Scowcroft Files, Box 91128 at 10–11.

<sup>540</sup> Deutsche Einheit Sonderedition und den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90, Letter from James Baker to Helmut Kohl (1990).

<sup>541</sup> Deutsche Einheit Sonderedition und den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90, Nr 173 10 at 794.

<sup>542</sup> Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*, 46–47.

<sup>543</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev i germanskii vopros, Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl (1990).

for only half of Germany to be in NATO, but Kohl disagreed, stating that it was not the same as NATO membership.<sup>544</sup>

In another series of incremental steps towards the critical juncture of German unification, Baker took the opportunity to propose that the February 1990 NATO-Warsaw Pact Open Skies Conference be used to discuss Soviet and American troop numbers in Europe and German unification within the 2+4 framework as had been discussed in Moscow.<sup>545</sup> An agreement to use the 2+4 mechanism for German unification was reached by the foreign ministers of the US, the USSR, France, Britain, and East and West Germany on the sidelines of the conference itself.<sup>546</sup> Following the GDR elections on 18 March 1990, the German Treaty on the Creation of a Monetary, Economic and Social Union was signed on 18 May. The Washington Summit at the end of May 1990 between Bush and Gorbachev, at a time when the latter was facing decreasing domestic support due to the reforms he put in place and was on the “defensive”,<sup>547</sup> was significant in that it marked the conclusion of 14 agreements and 11 joint statements and the conclusion of much of the Malta Summit agenda.<sup>548</sup> It also marked another incremental step that flew under the radar given the list of arms control-related agreements, as it confirmed the 2+4 framework as the parties agreed that the changes underway in the context of German unification would be explored in “upcoming discussions between foreign ministers and in the two-plus four”.<sup>549</sup> This is not surprising given the record of discussions that indicated ongoing disagreement between Gorbachev and Bush on the future of a unified Germany in NATO. The 2+4 mechanism was mentioned in passing as the basis for the future of Germany, but Bush reasserted multiple times that the pace of change prevented them from allowing the process to move forward slowly as Gorbachev had advocated.<sup>550</sup> This statement implied that the process was out of the control of all involved, that the forces at work could not be reigned in and that there was no way to accommodate Gorbachev’s requests, a position that would go on to be reflected in the manner in which Soviet/Russian positions were addressed up until NATO enlargement. Bush and Gorbachev did not come to an agreement on the formulation of their position but the underlying acceptance that this framework implied was that the two Germanys, and not the Big Four, would be taking the lead. The overview of Soviet reactions to the summit by the US did not indicate any mention of the 2+4 framework, indicating instead that the reporting was focused on the “developing ‘trust’” in US-Soviet relations and that the routinisation of US-Soviet contacts was positive and allowed for the development of a new type of relationship.<sup>551</sup>

Another incremental step that established path dependency was a series of positive developments in East-West relations in the latter half of the year. The July 1990 NATO London Summit statement presented NATO’s new posture based on a defensive alliance with no aggressive intentions and proposed a joint declaration with the Warsaw Pact on their intention to refrain from the threat or use of force, and to act consistently with the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>552</sup> According to Von Hlatky and Fortmann, the intent was to make NATO “seem less threatening outwardly but to maintain its essential

---

<sup>544</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev i germanskii vopros, at 3.

<sup>545</sup> Hoover Institution Archive, Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze diary, February 12, 1990. (1990).

<sup>546</sup> Hoover Institution Archive, Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze diary, February 13, 1990. (1990); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “February 1990,” NATO Update, 1990, <https://www.nato.int/docu/update/1990/9002e.htm>; Goethe-Institut Canada, Ottawa and Germany Unity: German Traces in Ottawa (2025).

<sup>547</sup> United States Department of State, Gorbachev Confronts Crisis of Power (1990).

<sup>548</sup> United States Department of State, Briefing Allies on Washington Summit (1990).

<sup>549</sup> United States Department of State, 193849 paragraph 16; Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Excerpt from the Second Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and G. Bush, Washington, White House, May 31, 1990 (1990).

<sup>550</sup> The White House, Excerpt from the Second Conversation Between M.S. Gorbachev and G. Bush (1990).

<sup>551</sup> United States Department of State, Soviet Reactions to the Summit (1990).

<sup>552</sup> North Atlantic Council, London Declaration On A Transformed North Atlantic Alliance, Ministerial Communiqués (1990).

characteristics”, and the emphasis on cooperation and partnership helped “Moscow save face”.<sup>553</sup> Gorbachev and Kohl met soon after the NATO summit and came to an agreement on German unification whereby Germany would include the FRG, GDR, and Berlin, the Four Powers rights and responsibilities would be terminated upon unification, Germany would be able to choose its alliance and that Germany would want membership in NATO. While Soviet troop withdrawal would occur over 3-4 years, “no NATO structures” would expand into the territory of the GDR but upon withdrawal NATO troops would be allowed in the territory of the GDR though no nuclear weapons, or foreign troops could move there.<sup>554</sup> Momentum continued throughout the year with events rapidly succeeding each other. The German Unification Treaty was signed on 31 August and came into force on 3 October, marking official German unification and the former East Germany joined NATO as a result.<sup>555</sup> The 2+4 Treaty was signed in September and marked the official agreement of all the points Kohl and Gorbachev had agreed to and settled Germany’s international status.<sup>556</sup> The CFE Treaty that aimed to reduce the possibility of major offensive operations in Europe through the reduction of troops and armaments across the European continent, was adopted on 19 November 1990,<sup>557</sup> while the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, that established the permanent institutions of the CSCE, was adopted on 21 November 1990.<sup>558</sup> The culmination of the year’s events were the 2 December Bundestag elections, won by the Democrat-Liberal coalition, making Kohl the first chancellor of a unified Germany.<sup>559</sup> This was the embodiment of the US goal of maintaining NATO at the heart of the European security framework, which rested on a successful German unification and maintaining Germany within NATO. The critical juncture of German unification within NATO had been achieved. 1990 had been a successful year marked by German unification and arms control talks that ran in parallel: the NATO London Summit and the CFE Treaty demonstrated the Soviet Union was no longer the enemy, arms control negotiations had progressed significantly since the Reagan Administration, and the previous far-off goal of German unification had been achieved. The Charter of Paris gave more permanence to the CSCE, but instead of a new pan-European framework, NATO territory now encompassed the former GDR while it restated its defensive nature. Baker and Kohl’s desire for unification had won ahead of Genscher’s desire to avoid pushing NATO borders toward the Soviet Union, a far cry from when Kennan had argued for a North Atlantic Treaty whose membership would be based on states’ whose “shores are washed by the waters of the North Atlantic”.<sup>560</sup> For the US, German unification had been the means to ensure NATO endured as a tool for its European foreign policy. Arms control negotiations continued as previously since no one foresaw the end of the Soviet Union. When Shevardnadze resigned in December 1990 though, he warned that the Soviet Union “faced a looming dictatorship”,<sup>561</sup> presaging difficulties to come.

This chapter illustrated a series of incremental steps towards critical junctures:

- The introduction of *glasnost* and *perestroika* following a memo from Yakovlev to Gorbachev.

---

<sup>553</sup> Stefanie von Hlatky and Michael Fortmann, “NATO Enlargement and the Failure of the Cooperative Security Mindset,” in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, ed. James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 533–34.

<sup>554</sup> GHDI, Results of the Kohl-Gorbachev Talks (July 15-16, 1990) (1990).

<sup>555</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, German Reunification, NATO History (n.d.).

<sup>556</sup> Federal Republic of Germany et al., Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (with Agreed Minute) (1990).

<sup>557</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, “Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (Paris, 19 November 1990),” 1990; Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE),” n.d.

<sup>558</sup> Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Charter of Paris for a New Europe, CVCE.eu (1990).

<sup>559</sup> University of Luxembourg, “Chancellor Kohl’s Role in Reunification,” *CVCE.Eu*, 2024.

<sup>560</sup> Mark Smith, *Nato Enlargement During the Cold War : Strategy and System in the Western Alliance* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 23.

<sup>561</sup> BBC News, “Obituary: Eduard Shevardnadze,” *Europe*, 2014.

- The belief on the Soviet side that the Soviets had to continue to apply pressure to the US by making concessions to demonstrate the limits of US willingness to honestly engage in arms control, but which was interpreted as weakness and affected Gorbachev's domestic support.
- Németh's decision to open the Hungarian border, causing a population flow that hardline regimes attempted to quell but which led to intensified protests.
- **Critical juncture:** the fall of the Berlin Wall.
- The critical juncture led to the US being able to decide whether or not to fully support German unification or to accommodate the USSR; Bush supported the former.
- Support for German unification by Mitterrand in exchange for Kohl's support for European integration.
- The sidelining of Genscher's position that proposed concessions to the USSR.
- The conversation between Baker, Shevardnadze, and Gorbachev that has been the subject of debate since, but where Baker's goal was to get agreement on the 2+4.
- The agreement on the 2+4 by the US, USSR, France, UK, and East and West Germany at the Open Skies Conference.
- The further agreement on the 2+4 at the May 1990 Washington Summit amidst a long list of arms control-related agreements; and
- The 1990 NATO London Summit statement that confirmed NATO's new posture as a defensive alliance and proposal for a joint declaration with the Warsaw Pact maintained its essential characteristics while helping Moscow "save face".
- **Critical juncture:** German unification.

These demonstrate how the incremental steps followed a path dependent process that locked in the path to each critical juncture by eliminating alternatives or reinforcing dynamics that meant the fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification appeared logical and inevitable but were in fact the result of very clear decisions in the face of alternatives. Indeed, the decision to support German unification rather than accommodating the USSR was made clear by the US. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kohl had pushed for German confederation by delivering his Ten Point Plan at the 28 November Bundestag address. This was unexpected as it had been assumed the "two states, one nation" approach would continue to form the basis of German-German relations, but it became clear that Kohl's goal was to move beyond this. The US only sought to gauge Soviet views on events and not make any commitments at the December 1989 Malta summit, and Bush immediately gave Kohl *carte blanche* for German unification following the summit, with the goal of ensuring Kohl did not give up on NATO in return for support for German unification from the USSR. At the January 1990 Tutzig Address, Genscher considered concessions to the Soviets in return for German unification to be reasonable, and in February 1990, the US Embassy in Bonn cabled Baker to explain that Genscher believed extending NATO military structures would block German unification and the CSCE should instead be used. The US had a very clear decision to make after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and it chose to support German unification that left open the possibility of NATO extending to the GDR and sidelined the CSCE.

## 5 Soviet Challenges at the End of the Line

Foreshadowing events in 1991, the US-Soviet summit scheduled for 11 February 1991 was the first scheduled US-Soviet meeting to be postponed since 1960. Though it was officially postponed by mutual agreement due to the Persian Gulf war and the “inability” to conclude the START Treaty that the US and the Soviets intended to sign at the summit, unofficially, the crackdown on the independence movements in the Baltics meant the Bush Administration felt pressured to avoid giving the appearance of “engaging in business as usual”.<sup>562</sup> Prior to the announcement of the postponement, the new Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh<sup>563</sup> had sought to assure the Americans during a meeting at the Oval Office that it was an unfortunate situation but that Gorbachev had not created it intentionally.<sup>564</sup> Contrary to accusations that Gorbachev was “moving toward dictatorship”, Gorbachev was in fact looking for a “political solution” and would ensure any repression of popular movements was not repeated.<sup>565</sup> Bessmertnykh was concerned that postponing the summit would affect Gorbachev’s already difficult situation, and confirm Bush’s concern that the Soviet leadership was attempting to reassert power.<sup>566</sup> Bush asked if Gorbachev might be able to show some flexibility on self-determination, adding that both sides were attempting to stay on track but that he was “becoming a minority” in terms of having to take steps if a solution was not found and the Soviets would need to find “visible ways to show that things are changing the better”.<sup>567</sup>

The US and the Soviet Union continued to work on progressing in their arms control negotiations, but events were impacting the quality of their relationship. Bush reiterated to Gorbachev and Bessmertnykh at the end of January that the US was still committed to the US-Soviet relationship but that the Soviets would need to refrain from further use of force in the Baltics,<sup>568</sup> and Bessmertnykh confirmed at the end of January that the Soviets were discussing how to finalise START.<sup>569</sup> By February, Bush also indicated that he wanted further progress on CFE and START, and that the US-Soviet relationship would not “fall apart over Iraq” as Gorbachev continued to engage in negotiations with Saddam Hussein while Bush appealed to him to support the UN position, which aligned with the US position on the Gulf War.<sup>570</sup> February was marked by the dissolution of the military structures of the Warsaw Pact following proposals by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, and in what Gorbachev hoped would draw a “suitable response from the NATO countries” even if he did not sign the document.<sup>571</sup> The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact caused some delay in the context for negotiations on the implementation of the CFE Treaty, which had been between NATO and the Warsaw Pact and meant the individual shares of the collective ceiling had to

---

<sup>562</sup> Robert C. Toth, “U.S., Soviets Agree to Put Off Summit,” *L.A. Times*, January 29, 1991; Thomas L. Friedman, “U.S. and Moscow Postpone Summit,” *The New York Times*, January 29, 1991, paras. 1–4; Helsinki Watch, *USSR: Continuing Violence in the Baltics* (1991).

<sup>563</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union from 1990-1991.

<sup>564</sup> The White House, Meeting with Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh of the USSR (1991).

<sup>565</sup> The White House, DNSA Colle at 2.

<sup>566</sup> The White House, DNSA Colle at 3.

<sup>567</sup> The White House, DNSA Colle at 4.

<sup>568</sup> The White House, President’s Phone Call with Gorbachev-January 11, 1991 (1991).

<sup>569</sup> The White House, Meeting with Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh of the USSR, January 28, 1991 (1991).

<sup>570</sup> The White House, President’s Phone Call with Gorbachev-January 11, 1991, 400 at 7.

<sup>571</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (Hrsg.), *Statement on the Dissolution of the Military Structures of the Warsaw Pact (25 February 1991)*, *Deutsche Aussenpolitik 1990/91: Auf Dem Weg Zu Einer Europäischen Friedensordnung: Eine Dokumentation*. (Stuttgart: Bonn Aktuell, 1991); Michael Parks, “Warsaw Pact to Disband Its Military Structure,” *L.A. Times*, February 13, 1991, para. 3; Simon Miles, “We All Fall Down: The Dismantling of the Warsaw Pact and the End of the Cold War in Eastern Europe,” *International Security* 48, no. 3 (2024): para. 42.

be calculated.<sup>572</sup> At the April conference “The Future of European Security”, East European representatives expressed concern about being “isolated or perceived a buffer zone between NATO and the USSR”, but Western representatives replied that it was too early to give “security assurances or membership in NATO”.<sup>573</sup> While the Soviets were trying to get bilateral agreements whereby Eastern European countries would not form alliances directed against the Soviet Union, US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (USDP) Paul Wolfowitz<sup>574</sup> reiterated their freedom to choose their alliances based on the Helsinki Final Act, and that while NATO’s existence had been in doubt a year prior, it was important for Europe’s security and stability as it anchored Germany to the West and the US to Europe.<sup>575</sup> The Helsinki Final Act had provided this basis for CEE countries to invoke their freedom to choose their alliances, even if at the time it was seen primarily as a tool to develop more peaceful East-West relations.

Political statements and agenda-setting began to illustrate the growing inability (in cases where Bush could not guarantee Congressional backing) or disinterest (with the increasing instability of the USSR making the possibility of a shift away from authoritarianism seem less of a possibility) of the US in going out on a limb for the USSR, contributing to the incremental changes that would lead to the next critical juncture, the end of the Soviet Union. Shevardnadze, in his capacity as President of the Foreign Policy Association, paid Bush a visit in May to emphasise the severity of the instability in the Soviet Union and to push for a summit.<sup>576</sup> While Shevardnadze and Gorbachev agreed that a summit would help reaffirm the US-Soviet relationship, Bush explained that he would face difficulties at home were he to hold a summit without the Baltics being freed.<sup>577</sup> Reagan’s declaration of Baltic Freedom Day on 14 June, 1983, meant that Bush would be seen as stepping away from this support were he to let the US-Soviet relationship proceed without consideration for the Baltics.<sup>578</sup> Shevardnadze pushed for further progress on CFE and START, arguing that the agreements would help democratisation and reforms, adding that developing economic relations could provide something tangible, but Bush replied that there were legal constraints on credit that would render this difficult and suggested instead that conditions be set up to allow credit to go to the Baltic states to provide him with the support he needed from the perspective of US politics.<sup>579</sup> Bush had previously explained that he was starting to become an isolated voice on support to the USSR in US politics and the results were beginning to show, even if Bush continued to push for progress. Bush and Gorbachev spoke on the phone following Shevardnadze’s visit, where Bush explained that he had been told by General Mikhail Moiseyev<sup>580</sup> that the Soviets were close to resolving CFE and START, which would allow him to come to Moscow.<sup>581</sup> Additionally, Yevgeny Primakov<sup>582</sup> and Grigory

---

<sup>572</sup> Jeffrey D. (Col) McCausland, “NATO and Russian Approaches To Adapting the CFE Treaty,” *Arms Control Association*, 1997, para. 5; Sergey Koulik and Richard Kokoski, “Verification of the CFE Treaty,” *SIPRI Research Report* October (1991): 1, 43.

<sup>573</sup> United States Office of the Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz Memoranda of Conversation with Vaclav Havel and Lubos Dobrovsky in Prague. (1991).

<sup>574</sup> US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy under President H.W. Bush.

<sup>575</sup> United States Office of the Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz Memoranda of Conversation with Vaclav Havel and Lubos Dobrovsky in Prague., X56397 paragraphs 2, 5, 10.

<sup>576</sup> The White House, Meeting with Eduard Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union (1991).

<sup>577</sup> The White House, 3702 at 4.

<sup>578</sup> Frank T. Csongos, “Reagan to Soviets: ‘Get out of the Baltic,’” *UPI*, 1987, para. 1.

<sup>579</sup> The White House, Meeting with Eduard Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union, 3702 at 5–6.

<sup>580</sup> Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces from 1988-1991.

<sup>581</sup> The White House, TELCON with President Gorbachev of the USSR on May 27, 1991 (1991).

<sup>582</sup> First Deputy Director of the KBG, Head of the First Directorate (foreign intelligence) of the KGB, Head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, Russian Foreign Minister from 1996-1998.

Yavlinsky<sup>583</sup> would be in the US to discuss economic issues and credit guarantees. Gorbachev was anxious to demonstrate that the US and the USSR were cooperating.<sup>584</sup>

By June, Gorbachev was able to point to their success on reaching final agreement on issues concerning the CFE Treaty as an example of their cooperation and agreed with Bush that it would be “an event of historic magnitude” if he and Gorbachev could complete the START Treaty and sign it at the Moscow Summit in July.<sup>585</sup> In the midst of these events, the Warsaw Pact was formally dissolved on 1 July 1991.<sup>586</sup> Completing START was not without its snags, as a 6 July meeting in Geneva led nowhere as the Soviet participants were too low in the hierarchy and had to refer everything to Moscow. Baker offered to meet with Bessmertnykh the following week as he hoped this would unblock negotiations given his “apparently decisive role in closing CFE”.<sup>587</sup> Though ideas were exchanged at that meeting, no date for the Moscow Summit had been agreed upon as no concrete progress was made. Baker and Bessmertnykh agreed to assign “higher-level negotiators to the START talks to accelerate progress toward an accord”.<sup>588</sup>

The relationship between Bush and Gorbachev continued to shift, as Bush assured Gorbachev that he was not “shifting away” from him by meeting with Yeltsin,<sup>589</sup> but Gorbachev noted that the US was unable to provide the financial support the USSR needed despite the Soviet Union’s progress toward democracy and privatisation, in stark contrast to the “\$100 billion for regional war” that the US was spending in the Middle East.<sup>590</sup> Gorbachev had appealed to the G7 in May 1991, stating that the USSR needed \$100 billion in Western assistance but it was reported a Bush Administration official had said “a figure as high as \$100 billion is ‘unrealistic’”.<sup>591</sup> Bush continued to press Gorbachev to “cut loose of the Baltics” among other points, and explained that while he was not seeking “economic catastrophe in the Soviet Union”, he had to think of US interests.<sup>592</sup> This implied that underlying all decisions, US interests would need to remain at the forefront of Bush’s considerations, and by extension, any benefits or inconveniences to other countries would be a secondary consideration.

Despite these hurdles, the Moscow Summit was able to take place at the end of July, and Bush and Gorbachev signed the START Treaty.<sup>593</sup> Reginald Bartholomew<sup>594</sup> briefed the NATO Council<sup>595</sup> following the summit and explained that while the US was focussed on “laying the groundwork for a new era in their relations”, Gorbachev had been critical of the “Western impediments to further investment in the Soviet Union”.<sup>596</sup> Bush was optimistic though, as he considered START a “perfect complement to the

---

<sup>583</sup> Leader of the Yabloko party founded in 1992, he held several positions in the Soviet government from 1990-1991.

<sup>584</sup> The White House, TELCON with President Gorbachev of the USSR on May 27, 1991, 3951 at 2.

<sup>585</sup> The White House, Soviet-U.S. Cooperation on Arms Reduction Treaties (1991).

<sup>586</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “What Was the Warsaw Pact?,” n.d.

<sup>587</sup> The White House, Message for Mikhail Gorbachev on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (1991).

<sup>588</sup> Frank T. Csongos, “Baker, Bessmertnykh Meet to Intensify START Talks,” *UPI*, June 7, 1991, para. 7.

<sup>589</sup> The White House, Meeting with President Gorbachev of the USSR [Excised Version Appended] (1991).

<sup>590</sup> The White House, 6069 at 1–2.

<sup>591</sup> Michael Parks, “Gorbachev Asks West for \$100 Billion,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 1991, paras. 1–4.

<sup>592</sup> The White House, Meeting with President Gorbachev of the USSR [Excised Version Appended], 6069 at 3.

<sup>593</sup> “Moscow Summit Schedule / Wednesday, July 31,” *L.A. Times*, July 31, 1991.

<sup>594</sup> Undersecretary of State for International Security Affairs from 1989-1992, US Ambassador to NATO from 1992-1993.

<sup>595</sup> Federation of American Scientists, Chronology: CFE Treaty Negotiations and Implementation, 1972-1996, Appendix G (n.d.).

<sup>596</sup> United States Department of State, NATO: Under Secretary Bartholomew Briefs the NAC on Moscow Summit-- August 1, 1991 (1991).

CFE treaty”.<sup>597</sup> Bush’s efforts did continue though, as he suggested to Gorbachev that the scale of Soviet economic problems would make associate status preferable to full membership in the IMF and World Bank, and had met with President Yeltsin, who pushed for an MOU on economic cooperation between the Russian Republic and the US.<sup>598</sup> Progress continued to be uncertain though. In response to a question on whether the US believed the Soviet economy had a chance to allow investors and donor nations to “meet Soviet economic needs”, Bartholomew replied that it was difficult to say but that investment required financial and monetary stability, and money supply, price deregulation, and the implementation of privatisation were posing many problems.<sup>599</sup>

Internal divisions within the Soviet Union were increasingly apparent and impactful, contributing an incremental step towards the critical juncture of the end of the Soviet Union. In response to another question at the NATO Council briefing, Bartholomew indicated that while NATO adaptation and its “essential role in a new Europe” appeared to be generally understood and accepted, the Soviet military was “ambivalent and nervous”. The need for NATO in the absence of the Warsaw Pact or concern over absorbing former Warsaw Pact members had not been expressed.<sup>600</sup> Domestic divisions became dramatically apparent in the August Coup against Gorbachev by hardline Communist Party officials to prevent him from signing a treaty granting more power to the republics. Yeltsin was able to push back the coup, but in doing so, he was pushed the forefront, while Gorbachev was pushed aside.<sup>601</sup>

In the wake of these events, US Permanent Representative to NATO, William H. Taft IV,<sup>602</sup> suggested in September that there needed to be more ambitious goals for the November Rome Summit and NATO’s future.<sup>603</sup> Taft suggested that NATO demonstrate that it would be the institution best-equipped to “manage transatlantic security relations in the years ahead – the nucleus of a future all-European security system, complementing the work of the G-7, EC, CSCE”.<sup>604</sup> The end of the Soviet Union was not yet on the horizon, so Taft’s suggestions included consultation and technical assistance to the Soviet Union and former allies without any differentiation to avoid an “unjustified signal of no-confidence to the reformist leaders of the Soviet Union”.<sup>605</sup> The process would at least implicitly “*open the door to possible full or associate NATO membership in the future*” (original italics)<sup>606</sup> to influence Soviet demilitarisation efforts by focussing on “stable and transparent security relations with its former Warsaw Pact adversaries”.<sup>607</sup> While Taft acknowledged that France and Germany would likely have opinions on NATO’s role and scope, this process would demonstrate that it was the “nucleus of a future all-European security system” rather than a “closed shop”.<sup>608</sup> Taft recognised that the concept of full or associate NATO membership may be too far for some in the US and some allies at the Rome Summit despite the London Declaration having already established “strong informal contacts” and that it should be left implicit.<sup>609</sup>

---

<sup>597</sup> United States Department of State, 423254 at 8.

<sup>598</sup> United States Department of State, 423254 at 5.

<sup>599</sup> United States Department of State, 423254 at 10–11.

<sup>600</sup> United States Department of State, 423254 paragraphs 15–16.

<sup>601</sup> “AP Was There: 1991 Soviet Coup,” *The Associated Press*, August 19, 2021; Department of State Office of the Historian, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union, Milestones: 1989-1992* (n.d.).

<sup>602</sup> Acting Secretary of Defense in 1989, US Permanent Representative to NATO from 1989-1992.

<sup>603</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO in the Post-Soviet Era--Looking Ahead to the Rome Summit and Beyond* (1991).

<sup>604</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2011-0156- at 1.

<sup>605</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2011-0156- at 4–5.

<sup>606</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2011-0156- at 6.

<sup>607</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2011-0156- at 3.

<sup>608</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2011-0156- at 2–3.

<sup>609</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2011-0156- at 6.

Efforts at developing a European identity for the post-communist security framework were supported by the US only insofar as they did not usurp NATO's centrality. In a 24 October 1991 letter to Stephen Wall, British Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, Scowcroft asked that he share letters with John Major and Douglas Hurd that Scowcroft had sent to Kohl and Mitterrand. In those exchanges, Bush had told Kohl that he understood that Kohl remained committed to the view that "NATO should be strengthened by the development of a European security identity" and that he appreciated Kohl's attempts to "give shape to this identity as the Rome and Maastricht Summits" approached, but that he was concerned that the proposal made by Kohl and Mitterrand to their European Community colleagues had created the perception that Germany might have been shifting toward the view that "European members of NATO must have the means to defend themselves separate from the Alliance" which had created the "strongest public impression, at least in the United States" that Germany and France were "calling for a 'European army' independent of NATO – indeed as a potential alternative to NATO" especially since it was a "long-term proposal".<sup>610</sup> Bush had reaffirmed that the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had "demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that the security of the United States and of Europe must be intimately linked, then great care must be taken to assure the closest of ties through the NATO alliance".<sup>611</sup> While the US would maintain the forces in Europe required to "honor [their] commitment" as long as "Europe desires it", Bush argued that a "European army outside of NATO" would not help persuade Congress that these US forces would be required.<sup>612</sup> Bush suggested Kohl address these issues publicly by stating that the "proposed corps would not take over alliance responsibilities, and that the German forces contributed to the Corps would be part of NATO's integrated military command".<sup>613</sup> The US had no problem with the WEU serving as a "defense identity within the European political union" as long as it also served as the "European pillar within NATO" and was prepared to discuss details using private channels.<sup>614</sup> In his letter to Mitterrand, Bush expressed concern about the divisions within the Alliance that had resulted from the controversy "surrounding the purpose of the Franco-German force" and that the press was reporting on the initiative as a "European army" separate from NATO and even a potential alternative to NATO, making it difficult for the US to engage on the "very important questions of how to create a European security identity that [could] be both the defense element of the European Union and the European pillar of the Alliance"<sup>615</sup>. Bush wrote further that the US had "serious reservations about anything that could be viewed as intended to replace or duplicate NATO" and while he had refrained from public criticism about the idea of a European force, Bush asked Mitterrand for reassurance that his intention was not to "offer a substitute for the Alliance".<sup>616</sup>

In parallel, illustrating the growing disconnect between the US and the Soviet Union, while plans were afoot for developing NATO in a new security framework, Gorbachev met with Bush in October and indicated that he still hoped that accelerating "market-based political and economic freedom" reforms would solve the Soviet Union's domestic problems.<sup>617</sup> Bush explained that while the US wanted to go ahead with financial support, the G7 experts were saying the situation in the Soviet Union was worse than expected, so the US Treasury and Congress needed additional assurance the republics were involved in the new Union treaty process despite resurgent nationalism.<sup>618</sup> Gorbachev replied that all 12 of the republics had signed a MOU that indicated the republics recognised the debt and declared responsibility

---

<sup>610</sup> The White House, [Copies of Letters from President Bush to European Leaders] (1991).

<sup>611</sup> The White House, White Hous at 3.

<sup>612</sup> The White House, White Hous at 3.

<sup>613</sup> The White House, White Hous at 3.

<sup>614</sup> The White House, White Hous at 4.

<sup>615</sup> The White House, White Hous at 5.

<sup>616</sup> The White House, White Hous at 5–6.

<sup>617</sup> The White House, Meeting with President Gorbachev of the USSR (1991).

<sup>618</sup> The White House, 8094 paragraphs 5–6.

for it, so a political decision was required.<sup>619</sup> Bush was able to offer an immediate amount of \$1.5 billion “for the winter” while Gorbachev sorted out the union-republic situation, but the US wanted stability, not the possibility of a reactionary coup.<sup>620</sup> At that point, with the CFE and the START Treaties behind them, talks of further progress on arms control was on the backburner as the domestic political and economic situation in the Soviet Union was hampering investor confidence and Bush’s ability to obtain support from Congress.

By mid-December, Gorbachev indicated that the situation had become “difficult and complicated”<sup>621</sup> as the draft union treaty had progressed through the stages up to the USSR Supreme Soviet, but he had lost contact with Yeltsin.<sup>622</sup> In fact, Yeltsin had traveled to Minsk to sign the Belavezha Accords establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States and informed Gorbachev of the results a few days later. Gorbachev had pushed back stating that “the future of the multinational state cannot be defined by the leaders of the three republics”.<sup>623</sup> Gorbachev told Bush said he did not understand why the union treaty process was being described as being at a dead end as all had agreed except for Ukraine, which could be independent while being part of the economic and defense treaty in any case. Gorbachev agreed to abide by the Belavezha Accords, even if it was unclear at that stage who would succeed the USSR’s obligations in terms of START, CFE, and treaties, as well as the Security Council seat.<sup>624</sup> Gorbachev was still attempting to salvage the union treaty in the wake of the Accords and reassure Bush,<sup>625</sup> but the future of NATO was beginning to move apace as the Soviet situation continued to unravel. The former US adversary was losing its strength and becoming less of a concern and less of a consideration as time went on.

While Gorbachev was attempting to reassure Bush, two more incremental steps towards affirming NATO as the centre of the European security framework were reached over the course of November and December: the establishment of the NACC, and the confirmation that the WEU and CSCE would not supersede NATO in matters pertaining to the Washington Treaty. The November NATO Rome Summit Strategic Concept reasserted that North American security was “permanently tied” to that of Europe. The EC, WEU, and CSCE would play a role tied to their “respective responsibilities and purposes” while NATO would remain the “essential forum” for consultation and agreement on policies under the Washington Treaty.<sup>626</sup> The Strategic Concept recognised that the threat environment included potential instabilities from “serious economic, social and political difficulties” in CEE, and the Rome Declaration asserted that NATO would support these countries in their political and economic transition. The Rome Declaration established that the North Atlantic Council (NAC) would meet with Foreign Ministers of the Republics of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union at the Ministerial level in a NACC starting in December 1991.<sup>627</sup> The Bush Administration, and more widely the US, was looking to the 1992 presidential elections, so this was a way to maintain a lid on the situation while diverting attention to immediate domestic matters. This was well received: at a NATO Defence Planning Committee (DPC) Ministerial following the Rome Summit, Cheney explained

---

<sup>619</sup> The White House, 8094 at 5; Michael Dobbs, “Republics Assume Kremlin Debt: Agreement Clears the Way for More Credits from West,” *The Washington Post*, October 30, 1991.

<sup>620</sup> The White House, Meeting with President Gorbachev of the USSR, 8094 at 5–6.

<sup>621</sup> The White House, Telephone Conversation with President Mikhail Gorbachev of the FSU (1991).

<sup>622</sup> The White House, 9117 at 1.

<sup>623</sup> International Information Group, “Yeltsin Informs Gorbachev of Results of Minsk Meeting, Gorbachev Proposes Referendum,” *Interfax*, 2021.

<sup>624</sup> The White House, Telephone Conversation with President Mikhail Gorbachev of the FSU, 9117 at 2.

<sup>625</sup> The White House, 9117 at 2–3.

<sup>626</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept (1991) agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (1991).

<sup>627</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation made by the Heads of State and Government of the Atlantic Alliance (Rome, 8 November 1991) (1991).

that Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland were engaging in regional cooperation and indicating that while the three countries did “not expect immediate membership in NATO”, they did not want to be separate from the West.<sup>628</sup> Czechoslovakia and Hungary welcomed the establishment of the NACC but hoped cooperation would go “much further”.<sup>629</sup> Additionally, the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which resulted from the December Maastricht European Council, established that the WEU would serve to “elaborate and implement decisions and actions” with defence implications for the EU.<sup>630</sup> Cheney indicated this was supported by the US as it aligned with the Rome NATO Summit’s intent to build a European security and defence identity. The US would accept the TEU’s statement on the WEU as long as it included the “necessity of a strong NATO” and NATO remained the “essential forum for consultation among its members and the venue for agreement on policies” pertaining to the Washington Treaty.<sup>631</sup> The first meeting of the NACC took place a week later and was significant because it clarified that the new European security architecture would be based on the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, with the understanding that security was comprised of the political, economic, social, environmental, and defence components that would rely on NATO, the CSCE, the EC, the WEU, and the Council of Europe. It reaffirmed the necessity for the full implementation of the CFE and START Treaties and institutionalised the relationship between NATO and the countries of CEE and the Soviet Union through regular meetings at different levels.<sup>632</sup>

Gorbachev’s efforts were to no avail. Shortly after the DPC Ministerial, Yeltsin informed Bush that the Alma Ata Protocol had been signed on 21 December, adding eight new independent states to the three original members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>633</sup> The structure of the CIS had already been decided upon, with unified control of nuclear forces and their command given to Marshal of Aviation Yevgeny Shaposhnikov<sup>634</sup> while military reform issues were decided.<sup>635</sup> The START treaty would be submitted for ratification in the four parliaments of the nuclear states on the same day per international standards,<sup>636</sup> and once Gorbachev announced his resignation on 25 December, nuclear control would be passed to the President of Russia in the presence of Shaposhnikov.<sup>637</sup> Yeltsin also made a point of assuring Bush that there would be “no explosive processes” and all decrees had been signed with Gorbachev so that central authority would cease to function as of 2 January.<sup>638</sup> The domestic situation had not improved though: Yeltsin asked Bush to “step up” their food contributions because the situation was “dramatic” and Bush replied that he would consult on the UN issue once he had spoken with Baker but that the US was interested in the economic reform plan.<sup>639</sup> The Soviet Union was officially dissolved on 26 December 1991.

---

<sup>628</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, DPC Ministerial Meeting 12/13 December 1991: Restricted Session Agenda Item I: SECDEF Cheney Comments (1991).

<sup>629</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, USNATO 058 at 3.

<sup>630</sup> EUR-Lex, Treaty on European Union, Document 1 Official Journal (1992); European Parliament, European Council, Maastricht, 9 and 10 December 1991, Presidency Conclusions (1991).

<sup>631</sup> United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, DPC Ministerial Meeting 12/13 December 1991: Restricted Session Agenda Item I: SECDEF Cheney Comments, USNATO 058 at 6; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement On Dialogue, Partnership And Cooperation (1991).

<sup>632</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement On Dialogue, Partnership And Cooperation, 1(91)111.

<sup>633</sup> The White House, [Commonwealth of Independent States] (1991).

<sup>634</sup> Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union in 1991, CIS Joint Forces Commander in Chief from 1992-1993.

<sup>635</sup> The White House, [Commonwealth of Independent States], 9371 at 1–2.

<sup>636</sup> The White House, 9371 at 2.

<sup>637</sup> The White House, 9371 at 2.

<sup>638</sup> The White House, 9371 at 2–3.

<sup>639</sup> The White House, 9371 at 3.

While the Cold War had been marked by ebbs and flows in *détente* and lengthy arms control negotiations, the end of the Cold War was marked by a rapid acceleration of arms control negotiations under Reagan and Gorbachev that continued during the Bush administration, but were superseded by a rapid shift in priorities towards the future of the European security framework after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Once a critical juncture occurs (in this case the initiating event was the fall of the Berlin Wall), events can proceed very quickly. The causal mechanisms of political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting then work together to narrow options along path dependence mechanisms. Arms control negotiations continued in 1990 and 1991, but by the end of 1991, the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union had disappeared, the Soviet Union/Russia was given the same consideration as the countries of CEE *vis-à-vis* NATO in the NACC, and the transition from communism was not proceeding evenly across the former Soviet republics and former members of the Warsaw Pact. Countries such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were adapting their military and engaging in regional cooperation and had clearly stated that the three countries did not want to be outside the West, even if NATO membership was not immediate. This was in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act that allowed these countries to choose their alliances, as well as the general emancipation from the former Soviet Union's political and economic legacies that they sought.

The US-Russia relationship appeared to continue where the US-Soviet relationship used to be. 1992 saw the consolidation of some of these radical changes, as a Work Plan for Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation was drawn up to support the contacts and exchanges between NATO and the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics.<sup>640</sup> Significant world events that influenced NATO that year included the disintegration of the situation in the former Yugoslavia where political and economic crises would go on to lead to multiple wars and draw in NATO starting in 1992, and the American presidential elections that saw the return of the Democrats for the first time since 1980. As Palmer explains, NATO's "major reorientation away from a single focus on collective defence towards the conduct of "non-Article 5" conflict resolution and peace enforcement operations inside Europe (but "out-of-area")" led to NATO efforts to "contain the spread of hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>641</sup> The political sensitivities around Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina due to Russia's historical ties with Serbia, combined with the efforts Yeltsin made to maintain efforts towards NATO-Russia relations despite declining domestic support would gradually come to affect the NATO-Russia relationship and support it received from within Russia,<sup>642</sup> but the future of NATO and the EU was evolving in parallel in the background since the Maastricht Treaty's introduction of criteria for EU membership and NATO's 1991 Strategic Concept had acknowledged the role of the different European institutions in the European security framework.<sup>643</sup>

While the end of the Cold War, ongoing arms control negotiations, and the new European security framework had occupied a large part of the discussions between the US and the Soviet Union and Russia at the end of Bush's mandate, the Clinton administration and NATO's relationship with Russia was initially characterised by discussions on the war in Bosnia and Russia's economic difficulties and ongoing domestic political tensions that meant the US sought to avoid exacerbating problems to keep Yeltsin in

---

<sup>640</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Summary 1992, NATO Update (2001).

<sup>641</sup> Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "NATO's Post-Cold War 'Out-of-Area' Pivot (1990-2014)," *NATO Defense College*, 2019, paras. 73–75.

<sup>642</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation - Telephone Conversation with Russian President Yeltsin (1998).

<sup>643</sup> European Union, Treaty on European Union (1992); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, The Alliance's New Strategic Concept (1991) agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council; European Union, Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union TITLE VI - FINAL PROVISIONS Article 49 (ex Article 49 TEU) (2016).

place at risk of him being replaced by someone less amenable to the US and NATO.<sup>644</sup> After the initial rush of the fall of the Berlin Wall and discussions on the future of Germany and NATO, NATO enlargement was not initially at the forefront of the agenda. NATO enlargement -related policy decisions and agenda-setting were not the focus at the first summit meeting between Clinton and Yeltsin in Vancouver in April 1993, which was dominated by discussions on economic reform and financial support, market access, arms control, North Korea, Middle East peace talks, Libya, and Bosnia and the Vance-Owen plan.<sup>645</sup> Efforts to secure financial support to Russia were not abandoned though. At the G7 meeting in Tokyo that July, Clinton told Yeltsin he had managed to secure 65% of the \$1.6 billion he had announced in Vancouver, and discussed progress that was needed from Russia to be able to develop its market access under the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom), energy projects, and the situations in Georgia and Estonia.<sup>646</sup>

Opinions within the American administration and government were not on the same page across the board in terms of the newly independent countries of CEE. In the lead-up to the NATO summit, Jenonne Walker<sup>647</sup> mentioned that there were allies that preferred to exclude the CEE countries by not including a NACC summit, but her recommendation was to include them as the CEE countries were relevant to Europe's new security problems and excluding them would "exacerbate NATO's image as a Cold War relic", and make them appear as objects of "Western-only meetings" as opposed to partners.<sup>648</sup> The Russians were also pushing for the NACC to be excluded from the summit and for an invitation to be extended to Yeltsin.<sup>649</sup> In a memo from Executive Secretary Marc Grossman,<sup>650</sup> Grossman mentioned that there were proposals for a NATO summit before the end of 1993 with a follow-on NACC summit with a core theme on "strengthening ties to the East" that had limited support that "may grow".<sup>651</sup> The summit did go ahead with both the NAC and the NACC in Athens June 1993. The topics covered were more wide-ranging than at the G7 and in earlier discussions between Clinton and Yeltsin, including the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, instability in former Soviet republics, force adaptation and concept development for support to peacekeeping, the ongoing importance of transatlantic partnership for European security and stability, democratic institutions and political and economic reforms in NACC partner countries, cooperation with other institutions for regional conflicts and security and stability in Europe (UNSC, CSCE, WEU), arms control and non-proliferation, the completion of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Baltic states, and the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine situation regarding the Black Sea Fleet

---

<sup>644</sup> The Secretary of State, Memorandum from Warren Christopher to President Clinton, Meeting with President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation (1993); The White House, Memorandum from Anthony Lake to President Clinton, Subject: Meeting with President Yeltsin. Date: April 3-4, 1993. Location: Vancouver, Canada (1993).

<sup>645</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Working Dinner with Boris Yeltsin, Vancouver, Canada, April 3, 1993, 6:30-8:30 pm (1993); The White House, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Security Issues, Vancouver, Canada, April 4, 1993, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm (1993).

<sup>646</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Memcon with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Ambassador's Residence, Tokyo, July 10, 1993, 7:45 am to 9:15 am (1993).

<sup>647</sup> Special Assistant to President Clinton, Senior Director for Europe on the NSC from 1993-1995, US Ambassador to the Czech Republic from 1995-1998.

<sup>648</sup> United States Department of State and National Security Council, Jenonne Walker to Anthony Lake: NATO Summit (1993).

<sup>649</sup> United States Department of State and National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 9.

<sup>650</sup> Deputy Director of the Private Office of NATO Secretary General Lord Carrington from 1983-1986, Executive Secretary of the Department of State and Special Assistant to the Secretary of State from 1993-1994.

<sup>651</sup> United States Department of State and National Security Council, Jenonne Walker to Anthony Lake: NATO Summit, 2015-0772- at 10.

and nuclear issues<sup>652</sup>. The NACC specifically announced a program of cooperation in preparation for joint peacekeeping activities in support of the UN, the CSCE, and NATO.<sup>653</sup> NATO enlargement was not a concern during the summit. On the other hand, the Copenhagen European Council held in June 1993 established the Copenhagen Criteria, or the EU accession criteria, and confirmed that CEE countries could become members of the EU once they had assumed the obligations of membership and according to the EU's capacity to absorb new members.<sup>654</sup>

Marking an incremental step towards NATO enlargement, efforts to join the alliance by the now Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland continued unabated. By September though, the Visegrad Four (also known as the Visegrad Group or V4) of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, were actively pushing for NATO membership. Director of the NSC Daniel Fried<sup>655</sup> reported to Lake and Berger that interagency group discussions held in mid-September for bilateral security talks with the V4 led by Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Walter Slocombe<sup>656</sup> indicated that their “interlocutors were very pleased to have had an early chance to make their views known before Washington set its policies” and that the V4 had raised the topics of NATO, NATO enlargement and the uncertain security situation in their region.<sup>657</sup> The V4 all pressed for continued US political and military presence in Europe; hoped NATO would remain a viable “hard” security organisation, were seeking NATO membership, and hoped the Summit would send a clear message that membership was now contemplated since the threat environment was characterised by Russia having “fallen off reform and foreign policy moderation”, Serbia representing a threat to regional security, and Polish elections saw a two-thirds of seats for the successor to the communist party and demonstrated the vulnerability of reformers.<sup>658</sup> Czech Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexandr Vondra<sup>659</sup> “urged NATO to send a clear, positive signal in January” that NATO was open to new members in an open process as long as aspirants adhered to certain criteria (democracy, market economy, and foreign policy aligned with the CSCE principles).<sup>660</sup> The V4 stressed that “no new lines be drawn in Europe”.<sup>661</sup> Regional instability was identified as the main threat rather than Russia specifically, and the January NATO Summit could serve as a first step towards NATO extending its security zone to the V4 “step-by-step” while offering Russia “some sort of special partnership status as compensation”.<sup>662</sup> The V4 were told that while key decisions had not yet been made in the US administration and the Alliance, NATO should not be seen as a

---

<sup>652</sup> North Atlantic Council, M-NAC-1(93)38 - Athens, Greece Final Communiqu issued at the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (1993); North Atlantic Cooperation Council, M-NACC-1(93)39 - Athens, Greece Statement issued at the meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1993).

<sup>653</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NACC Foreign Ministers Meeting in Athens,” 1993.

<sup>654</sup> European Council, “European Council in Copenhagen 21-22 June 1993: Conclusions of the Presidency,” 1993; European Parliament, “Copenhagen European Council - 21-22 June 1993,” *Official Positions of the Other Institutions and Organs - European Council*, 1993; EUR-Lex, Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria), Summaries of EU Legislation (n.d.); Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History, The Copenhagen European Council (21 and 22 June 1993), CVCE.eu (n.d.).

<sup>655</sup> Director, Special Assistant to President Clinton, and Senior Director for Central and Eastern Europe at the NSC from 1993-1997.

<sup>656</sup> Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning from 1978-1981, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 1994-2001.

<sup>657</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion (1993).

<sup>658</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 17; Hubert Tworzecki, “The Polish Parliamentary Elections of 1993,” *Electoral Studies* June (1994): 180–85.

<sup>659</sup> Also known as Sasha, Foreign Policy Advisor to President Havel from 1990-1992, Czech Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1992-1997, Czech ambassador to the US from 1997-2001.

<sup>660</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 17–18.

<sup>661</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 18.

<sup>662</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 18.

“charitable organization that gave unilateral (or worse, empty) security guarantees”, and that rethinking NATO’s role in post-cold war Europe should not “exacerbate the sort of regional tensions NATO had been designed to cope with”.<sup>663</sup> The US did not have a clearly-formed outcome in mind at the outset of discussions on NATO enlargement, so decisions were reactionary, and political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting were gradual processes, such as when the US assessed that a “clear and credible statement of intent to expand NATO to new democracies in the East” would probably largely satisfy the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and would require that NATO members provide resources to make “peacekeeping and other forms of practical cooperation a continuing reality”.<sup>664</sup>

While the V4 were negotiating with the US, Yeltsin was looking to ensure continued financial support from the US but the situation in Russia continued to worsen. Yeltsin expressed his gratitude for the efforts Clinton was making in Congress, the IMF, and other international financial institutions, and assured him that Russia was on track and that the political opposition was looking for justification for their militancy.<sup>665</sup> Juxtaposing this was Shevardnadze who had called for UN peacekeepers following a Russian-backed separatist rebellion in Abkhazia and an armed uprising by ousted president Zviad Gamsakhurdia, which was eventually resolved when Shevardnadze acceded to Russian demands and a CIS peacekeeping force was deployed under Russian command.<sup>666</sup> In an address to the UN General Assembly in September,<sup>667</sup> Andrei Kozyrev<sup>668</sup> rejected that Russia was trying to dominate its neighbours, and stated that peacekeeping and the protection of minority rights in the territory of the former Soviet Union was its foreign policy priority, and it would spare no effort to strengthen the CIS.<sup>669</sup> Kozyrev used the opportunity to call for support to countries in transition, including Russia, arguing that successful economic reform was an important element to security.<sup>670</sup> Events just prior to his address indicated Russian domestic politics was unstable. Yeltsin had tried to dissolve the legislature, leading to Parliament impeaching him and proclaiming Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy Acting President. Yeltsin had then ordered the army to arrest leaders of the resistance, leading to Black October on 3-4 October, 1993 where armed clashes erupted in Moscow, Yeltsin ordered the army to shell the parliament building, and hundreds were killed or wounded.<sup>671</sup> An article drafted by Kozyrev and published in *The Washington Post* in October stated that the rioters were unsuccessful in trying to push the narrative that the Yeltsin government was trying to suppress reform, intimidate the former Soviet republics, and engage in a power confrontation with the West, and the “Clinton package” supporting economic reform was key for Yeltsin as he dealt with the reform process.<sup>672</sup> The events of Black October raised concern in the West that Russia was not continuing to proceed along a path towards democratic government but reverting back to authoritarian tendencies, further reducing faith in any statements made by Yeltsin.<sup>673</sup>

---

<sup>663</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 18.

<sup>664</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 18.

<sup>665</sup> C-Span, “Russian Foreign Minister, Andrey Kozyrev, Addressed Reporters Outside of the White House Following a Meeting with President Bill Clinton on September 29, 1993,” 1993.

<sup>666</sup> Philip Remler, “Russia at the United Nations: Law, Sovereignty, and Legitimacy,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2020.

<sup>667</sup> United Nations Digital Library, Kozyrev, Andrei Vladimirovich; Russian Federation (1993).

<sup>668</sup> Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1991-1996.

<sup>669</sup> Daniel Williams, “Russia Asserts Role in Ex-Soviet Republics,” *The Washington Post*, 1993; C-Span, “U.N. Role in International Peacekeeping,” 1993; Kevin Fedarko and William Mader, “In Russia’s Shadow,” *Time*, October 11, 1993.

<sup>670</sup> C-Span, “U.N. Role in International Peacekeeping.”

<sup>671</sup> Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, *Yeltsin Under Siege — The October 1993 Constitutional Crisis* (n.d.); Jonathan Steele and David Hearst, “Yeltsin Crushes Revolt,” *The Guardian*, October 5, 1993.

<sup>672</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, “And Now: Partnership with Russia’s Democrats,” *The Washington Post*, 1993.

<sup>673</sup> “30 Years Ago, the Kremlin Crushed a Parliamentary Uprising, Leading to Strong Presidential Rule,” *AP News*, October 4, 2023.

The US continued to develop its approach to CEE in the context of NATO. A significant incremental step was reached in October 1993 with the proposal of a Partnership for Peace (PfP). On 20 October 1993, Aspin introduced the notion of PfP at a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Travemünde,<sup>674</sup> and Lake discussed it further in the context of preparations for the January 1994 NAC Brussels Summit. The idea had arisen because Clinton had to approve a Principals' Committee recommendation that "the NATO Summit issue a statement of principle to the effect that NATO's membership would grow to embrace new democracies in Europe's east without fixing a timetable or laying down specific criteria for NATO membership". PfP was to be open to all European states and would help "provide a vehicle for the evolutionary movement toward full NATO membership".<sup>675</sup> Lake sought Clinton's approval so that preparations could start once Clinton had approved the Committee's statement proposal.<sup>676</sup> It was acknowledged that including Russia and Ukraine was essential at that stage, as moving NATO's borders closer to them risked "major negative consequences within both [countries]" and would make Central Europe "less secure".<sup>677</sup> PfP would be open to all European states "willing and able to participate in a Planning Cell at SHAPE and appropriate political and military bodies at NATO headquarters, as well as in partnership activities" but would not be accompanied by a security guarantee.<sup>678</sup> It would be an "evolution" of the NACC and part of an evolutionary process towards full NATO membership.<sup>679</sup> Lake recommended moving "rapidly" while the Administration had Principals' agreement on both subjects to "firm up allied consensus and to begin telling both Central Europeans, and Ukrainians and Russians, the broad outlines of our thinking",<sup>680</sup> at the risk of otherwise seeing this evolution of NATO stalled or potentially steered a direction that did not involve potential NATO membership.

Significantly, the situation appeared to be accelerating, and Russian opposition was growing. An article published in the New York Times in apparently leaked information, shared that the US had "decided to support an expansion of NATO that could eventually include Russia, the countries of Eastern Europe and other former members of the Warsaw Pact"<sup>681</sup>. The article noted a radical shift since June 1993, when Secretary of State Warren Christopher<sup>682</sup> had told NATO foreign ministers in Athens that "expansion of the alliance was 'not on the agenda'", noting that Clinton had approved the plan in October,<sup>683</sup> which indicated that there was no coherent plan at the outset and decisions were evolving as options were gradually mapped out. The article also referenced a letter from Yeltsin sent in September where he stated that he opposed NATO enlargement unless Russia was included as it would otherwise undermine European security, and Kozyrev had since stated that Moscow would oppose membership of Eastern European nations.<sup>684</sup> The inclusion of Russia in any discussions on the future of NATO was understood as a prerequisite by the Clinton administration if the US wished to keep Yeltsin in power and to maintain progress on reforms.

---

<sup>674</sup> Steve Vogel, "U.S. Proposes NATO 'Partnerships' for Former Warsaw Pact Nations," *The Washington Post*, October 21, 1993.

<sup>675</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 25.

<sup>676</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 26.

<sup>677</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 26.

<sup>678</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 26.

<sup>679</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 26-27.

<sup>680</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 27.

<sup>681</sup> U.S. Department of State, Memorandum for Warren Christopher from Strobe Talbott, January 2, 1994 (1994); Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. to Offer Plan on a Role in NATO for Ex-Soviet Bloc," *The New York Times*, 1993, para. 1.

<sup>682</sup> Sciolino, "U.S. to Offer Plan on a Role in NATO for Ex-Soviet Bloc," para. 11.

<sup>683</sup> Sciolino, para. 11.

<sup>684</sup> Sciolino, para. 15.

Following events in Russia, Yeltsin assured Talbott and Christopher in October that the domestic political situation had calmed down, and that he had invited observers from the G7, the Council of Europe, and the CSCE to monitor the December Russian parliamentary elections.<sup>685</sup> Christopher noted that Clinton had offered technical assistance and continued to support Yeltsin's efforts, having also accepted an invitation to go to Moscow after the January summit.<sup>686</sup> Yeltsin welcomed the PfP and "inclusive and non-discriminatory" membership in NATO as a "brilliant proposal".<sup>687</sup> Clinton considered that no recommendation could be made that could "ignore or exclude Russia from full participation in the future security of Europe".<sup>688</sup> Yeltsin jumped on this statement and sought confirmation that all countries in CEE and the Newly Independent States (NIS) would "be on an equal footing and there would be a partnership and not a membership," which Christopher confirmed, adding that there would be no "associate status".<sup>689</sup> This was significant to Yeltsin, who stated that it would "dissipate all of the tension" surrounding the NATO aspirations of East European states and not create a second-class status for Russia.<sup>690</sup>

Support for NATO enlargement, as opposed to a secondary role or the disappearance of the Alliance, began to gain a foothold outside of the CEE countries. On 3 November, Walker informed Lake that all "European governments" wanted a "substantial" US troop presence in Europe and were willing to "pay" in terms of US influence on their economic, foreign, and security policies to guarantee this.<sup>691</sup> This would require the identification of a mission important to European security as the military threat to NATO territory declined, such as demonstrating NATO's utility in cases like a "Bosnia-like relief effort, or a peace implementation, or a preventive deployment should new situations warrant".<sup>692</sup> PfP would be helpful in this regard by giving its members the impression that they had an "operating partnership with NATO" and planning and exercising together which would encourage the development of the "partnership" feeling.<sup>693</sup> Walker supported Clinton's intention to announce the US would be keeping 100,000 troops in Europe at the January summit as it would address the fear of American disengagement. While troop numbers would provide less influence than during the Cold War, this could be compensated by a broadening security engagement to include political and economic tools.<sup>694</sup>

The US was moving forward on two fronts: first developing PfP to engage with CEE and identifying support for reform in Russia as a top US foreign policy priority, despite mixed support.<sup>695</sup> While Lake highlighted several successes in that regard (US mobilisation of "\$4.5 billion in support of Russia/NIS reform" and taking the lead in "garnering international support for those reforms with the G-7, IMF and World Bank", and providing political support throughout the constitutional crises),<sup>696</sup> the Clinton Administration was being criticized for betting too heavily on Yeltsin and reform. Lake's recommendation was to reaffirm that US support depended on Yeltsin committing to the democratic

---

<sup>685</sup> United States Department of State, Secretary Christopher's Meeting with President Yeltsin, 10/22/93, Moscow (1993).

<sup>686</sup> United States Department of State, 08 MAY 200 paragraphs 1, 3-5, 7.

<sup>687</sup> United States Department of State, 08 MAY 200 at 1-2.

<sup>688</sup> United States Department of State, 08 MAY 200 at 8-9.

<sup>689</sup> United States Department of State, 08 MAY 200 at 9.

<sup>690</sup> United States Department of State, 08 MAY 200 at 9.

<sup>691</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 36.

<sup>692</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 36-37.

<sup>693</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 37.

<sup>694</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 37-38; United States Department of State, Chronology of the Department of State During the Clinton Administration, History of the Department of State During the Clinton Presidency (1993-2001) (2001).

<sup>695</sup> The White House, "Memorandum to the President: Your Visit to Moscow (Anthony Lake)," 1993.

<sup>696</sup> The White House.

political and economic reforms, particularly privatisation, macro-economic stabilisation, and fighting inflation.<sup>697</sup> While these reforms were not fully supported in Russia, fractured opposition meant Yeltsin did not face strong opposition to the basic direction of his policies while the new Russian constitution of December 1993 afforded him more freedom in his dealings with the international community.<sup>698</sup> The goal moving into 1994 was to obtain Russia's agreement for Pfp to build a new European security environment, the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltics, and the conclusion of a Russia-Ukraine agreement on the withdrawal and dismantling of strategic nuclear weapons in Ukraine.<sup>699</sup> As Pfp would be presented in Brussels prior to the Moscow summit, Yeltsin's agreement would be critical to the long-term integration of Russia into the West, and aggressive behaviour in its near abroad would undercut Western support.<sup>700</sup>

Plans to garner support for Pfp were on the offensive. Leading up to the NATO and Moscow summits, Talbott informed Christopher that he had been meeting with critics, skeptics, and Republican "movers-and-thinkers" – including Wolfowitz, Brzezinski, and Dimitri Simes<sup>701</sup> – to work on getting the message on Pfp out to the foreign policy community.<sup>702</sup> Brzezinski, who normally saw Russia as "incorrigible", had told Lake that he was satisfied that Pfp was not just a consolation prize for East Europeans and had "some real promise".<sup>703</sup> Talbott proposed that the US promote a single policy towards the European continent to avoid concerns over stand-alone and possibly competing Russia policy.<sup>704</sup> A New York Times article published on 2 January 1994 stated that the Clinton administration was divided between a "go-slow" approach to expanding NATO membership to avoid aggravating Russia and those who considered it important to consolidate democratic gains in Eastern Europe and include them in NATO to protect those countries from "historic predators",<sup>705</sup> understood as Russia in its various forms over the course of history. Indicating that the US was still including Russia due to wanting to avoid problems with extending NATO closer to its borders rather than due to the intent to realistically include it in NATO, Talbott expressed concern that this description appeared to mean the US was giving Russia a veto on "initiatives intended to benefit the East Europeans".<sup>706</sup> This was likely part of a larger initiative, as the article stated that Talbott had convinced Christopher in October 1993 that the go-slow approach needed to be chosen. Admitting Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary while leaving Ukraine and Russia out would feed into Russian fears of NATO and complicate efforts to get Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons.<sup>707</sup> The "go-slow approach" was not unanimously supported though, as differing

---

<sup>697</sup> The White House.

<sup>698</sup> The White House; International Labour Organization, Constitution of the Russian Federation of 12 December 1993, RUS-1993-C-41207 (1993); Gennady M. Danilenko, "The New Russian Constitution and International Law," *The American Journal of International Law* 88, no. 3 (1994): 451–70, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/2203713>.

<sup>699</sup> The White House, "Memorandum to the President: Your Visit to Moscow (Anthony Lake)."

<sup>700</sup> The White House.

<sup>701</sup> Director of the Soviet research program and research professor at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Chairman of the Center for Russian and Eurasian Programs and Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, informal foreign policy advisor to President Nixon, Founder and former President of the Center for the National Interest (formerly the Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom), publisher of *The National Interest*.

<sup>702</sup> U.S. Department of State, Memorandum for Warren Christopher from Strobe Talbott, January 2, 1994, C06835979 at 1, 5.

<sup>703</sup> U.S. Department of State, Memorandum for Warren Christopher from Strobe Talbott, January 2, 1994, C06835979.

<sup>704</sup> U.S. Department of State, C06835979.

<sup>705</sup> Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Opposes Move to Rapidly Expand NATO Membership," *The New York Times*, 1994.

<sup>706</sup> Gordon; U.S. Department of State, Memorandum for Warren Christopher from Strobe Talbott, January 2, 1994, C06835979.

<sup>707</sup> Gordon, "U.S. Opposes Move to Rapidly Expand NATO Membership."

opinions included Rühle and the Rand Corporation that argued that NATO “needed to fill a security vacuum in Eastern Europe”.<sup>708</sup> Talbott indicated that Christopher had asked him to be involved in European policy, but that Lake had tried to run him out of three Russia policy Presidential events: a Clinton-Yeltsin phone call, a pre-summit briefing, and a one-on-one Clinton-Yeltsin session in Moscow,<sup>709</sup> indicating internal divisions between the go-slow approach and those pushing for a faster process. Such actions on the part of Christopher illustrate the agenda-setting that contribute to the institutional lock-in as the dominance of NATO enlargement grows over time through the narrowing of options.

The next critical juncture was the launch of the PfP and Clinton’s speech in January 1994, which confirmed NATO enlargement would be taking place. It reaffirmed that the Alliance remained open to the “membership of other European states in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area” while also outlining the commitments and obligations of Members and Partners.<sup>710</sup> Despite Clinton’s speech stating that NATO enlargement was no longer a question of “whether NATO will take on new members but when and how”,<sup>711</sup> the initial response to PfP showed that no one was happy at that point. PfP was not particularly well-received by Partners, who saw it as second-class citizenship or a “security placebo”.<sup>712</sup> While NATO Partners were hoping for more, Kozyrev was advocating for stronger partnership between the US and Russia<sup>713</sup> while also arguing that Russia’s strategic interests lay in the preservation of Russia’s “military presence in the near abroad”.<sup>714</sup> Kozyrev had also published an article in a German newspaper in January laying out a five-step approach to a “Partnership for a United Europe” that would place NATO, the WEU, and the CIS under the “coordinating authority of the NACC and the CSCE” but Talbott dismissed this, arguing that it was an effort to “dilute the primacy of NATO” by creating a 52-member governing structure.<sup>715</sup>

The US continued to press for reform and engagement from Russia, fearful that it would otherwise fall off the path of transition to a market democracy. At the Moscow Summit a few days later, Clinton highlighted the ongoing support for economic transition and funding approval from Congress to demonstrate US goodwill.<sup>716</sup> Clinton pointed out that Yeltsin had assured him of “Russia’s intention to be a full and active participant in the Partnership for Peace”, and that he hoped negotiations would lead to an early 1994 troop withdrawal from Estonia and Latvia.<sup>717</sup> Presaging the growing domestic political difficulties in Russia, the Chief of the US Embassy Moscow’s Internal Politics Section Wayne Merry<sup>718</sup>

---

<sup>708</sup> Gordon.

<sup>709</sup> U.S. Department of State, Memorandum for Warren Christopher from Strobe Talbott, January 2, 1994, C06835979 paragraphs 4, 12.

<sup>710</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Partnership for Peace: Invitation, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/ North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994 (1994); North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Partnership for Peace: Framework Document, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/ North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994 (1994).

<sup>711</sup> William J. Clinton, “The President’s News Conference With Visegrad Leaders in Prague, January 12, 1994,” *The American Presidency Project*, 1994, para. 7.

<sup>712</sup> James J. Townsend Jr, “In Peace and War: The Military Implications of NATO Enlargement,” in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, ed. James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrinson (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 500; Michael Rühle and Nicholas Williams, “Partnership for Peace: A Personal View from NATO,” *Parameters* 24, no. 1 (1994): para. 2.

<sup>713</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, “The Lagging Partnership,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1994): 59.

<sup>714</sup> Bohuslav Litera, “The Kozyrev Doctrine - a Russian Variation on the Monroe Doctrine,” *Perspectives* Winter, no. 4 (1994): 45.

<sup>715</sup> United States Department of State, Memorandum for Anthony Lake from Strobe Talbott. Subject: Kozyrev’s “European Security Plan,” January 12, 1994 (1994).

<sup>716</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 50.

<sup>717</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 50.

<sup>718</sup> Chief of the Internal Politics Section of the US Embassy in Moscow from 1990-1994.

warned in a March 1994 cable that democratic forces in Russia were in “serious trouble” and that the emphasis on market economics was not helping.<sup>719</sup>

Russia did join PFP in June despite events in Bosnia leading to NATO threatening to bomb Serbian forces, impacting Russian domestic politics and support for PFP, NATO also released the “Summary of Conclusions of Discussions Between the NAC and Foreign Minister of Russia Andrey Kozyrev” outlining four points on NATO-Russia relations.<sup>720</sup> In a public expression of ongoing support to Russia, Clinton remarked at the G7 July Naples Summit on “promising developments in the Baltics” in the context of settling the matter of troop withdrawals, as well as continued work on economic reform and Russia having joined PFP.<sup>721</sup> The Clinton-Yeltsin Summit in September in Washington was intended to discuss the US-Russia relationship, including NATO enlargement and PFP, indicating that Clinton was committed to “the integration of Europe and a Europe undivided and whole” but that the US administration expected NATO enlargement to take place and these two aspects were not contradictory.<sup>722</sup> A telephone conversation between the two leaders on 28 September indicated that Clinton was keen to emphasise that NATO enlargement was not “anti-Russian”, was not intended to be “exclusive of Russia”, that there was “no imminent timetable”, and the two agreed that the official position at the press conference would be that NATO enlargement would be “gradual and lengthy” and Russia would not be excluded.<sup>723</sup> The press conference following the summit did not touch much upon these issues, listing NATO and Russia among a variety of other foreign policy topics.<sup>724</sup> Following the press conference, Clinton complimented Yeltsin for his “tireless and steadfast efforts” that allowed him to lay the “foundation for a democratic Russia”, to which Yeltsin responded that Russia had made much progress in the nearly three years since rapprochement had begun and that Russia could finally say it did not need help.<sup>725</sup>

Another incremental step towards NATO enlargement was the confirmation the line of thought was that there would be a dual approach between Russia and the other countries. Discussions on NATO enlargement continued in parallel with US engagement with Russia. In October, Lake recommended a review of the NSC Staff Paper “*Moving Toward NATO Expansion*” ahead of discussions in the lead-up to the December NATO Ministerial.<sup>726</sup> The paper summarised NSC views on tactics and direction to date, and sought to lay out the “basic goals and rationale”, conduct initial consultations, and prepare an initiative in time for the December NATO Ministerial to launch an initial policy framework for NATO

---

<sup>719</sup> The National Security Archive, Wayne Merry Dissent Channel Cable from American Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State, “Whose Russia is it Anyway? Toward a Policy of Benign Respect” (1994).

<sup>720</sup> NATO-Russia Relations: The Background, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2020); Sten Rynning, “A Balancing Act: Russia and the Partnership for Peace,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 31, no. 2 (1996): paras. 213, 216–217; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “The Partnership Between NATO and Russia,” *Press Info*, 1997, para. 1; Julianne Smith, “The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà Vu?,” *IFRI* November (2008): 3; James W. Morrison, *NATO Expansion and Alternative Future Security Alignments* (Washington D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1995), 58.

<sup>721</sup> The White House, Press Conference by President Clinton and Russian President Yeltsin (1994).

<sup>722</sup> The White House - Office of the Press Secretary, Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials, September 21, 1994 (1994).

<sup>723</sup> The National Archives, Declassified documents concerning telcon between the President and Boris Yeltsin on September 28, 1994 (1994).

<sup>724</sup> William J. Clinton, “The President’s News Conference With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, September 28, 1994,” *The White House*, 1994.

<sup>725</sup> The White House, Remarks by President Clinton and President Boris Yeltsin in Dinner Toasts (1994).

<sup>726</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 94.

enlargement.<sup>727</sup> The intent was to affirm that PfP would be the path to membership, and significantly, that the initiative would make a statement that there would be an “alliance with the Alliance” for Russia that would be an alternative to membership.<sup>728</sup> Additionally, the proposed timing for any decision on new members was that it would not take place until the first half of a second Clinton term, indicating that there was no hurry for it to take place immediately.<sup>729</sup>

Tensions between Russia and the US escalated in the lead up to December. In a 2 November letter to Clinton, Yeltsin stated that Russia wanted a “mutually beneficial partnership” with the US and that their relationship was a “central factor in the world’s politics”.<sup>730</sup> Yeltsin stated he was ready to make a decision on a “document on guarantees” to Ukraine but stated that the problems in “Ukraine’s western flank” were more serious against the background of discussions on NATO enlargement, requesting that the draft text be finalised ahead of the Budapest summit.<sup>731</sup> In a 30 November letter, Yeltsin stated that he did not understand the push for “a new revitalizing of the discussion on speeding up the broadening of NATO” and that plans to begin negotiations in mid-1995 would be interpreted as the “beginning of a new split of Europe”, while reaffirming Russia’s interest in cooperation with NATO through PfP and in bilaterals.<sup>732</sup>

The December NAC/NACC Ministerial highlighted the growing rift between Russia and the US. Kozyrev, who had announced that he would not sign the PfP because partnership and not enlargement had been stated as the goal previously,<sup>733</sup> described events surrounding PfP initiating NATO enlargement, compounded by bombings in Serbia without a “courtesy call” to Yeltsin, as an indication that the US and NATO saw Russia as a “second-rate partner”, creating domestic political problems for Yeltsin.<sup>734</sup> The communique following the December NAC Ministerial meeting remarked on the “rapid progress” on the implementation of PfP and stated that the Alliance would “expect and would welcome NATO enlargement that would reach to democratic states to our East”, as “part of a broad European security architecture”, and mechanisms would be presented at the next meeting in Brussels but without any timeline to enlargement.<sup>735</sup>

Following the NACC meeting where Kozyrev refused to sign the PfP documents, Clinton wrote to Yeltsin to express his surprise and disappointment at Kozyrev’s actions, having explained the new security architecture that included NATO enlargement at the Washington Summit, and explained he and Yeltsin had to clear up their misunderstanding.<sup>736</sup> Yeltsin responded that the NAC communique did not in fact contain “nothing new and unexpected” and that the NAC decision required “careful analysis and explanations”.<sup>737</sup> Yeltsin’s displeasure did not end there, as he argued at the December CSCE Budapest meeting (marked by the Budapest Memorandum on Ukraine’s disposal of its nuclear weapons) that NATO

---

<sup>727</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 95; Clinton Presidential Library, *Moving Toward NATO Expansion* (1994).

<sup>728</sup> Clinton Presidential Library, *Moving Toward NATO Expansion* at 3–4.

<sup>729</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 96–97.

<sup>730</sup> United States Department of State, Yeltsin Letter to Clinton, November 2, 1994 (1994).

<sup>731</sup> United States Department of State, C06836764 at 3.

<sup>732</sup> United States Department of State, Yeltsin Letter to Clinton, November 30, 1994 (1994).

<sup>733</sup> Morrison, *NATO Expansion and Alternative Future Security Alignments*, 59.

<sup>734</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, “Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider’s Account,” in *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, ed. Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr (Washington D.C.: Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, 2019), 456.

<sup>735</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 1 December 1994, Press Communique M-NAC-2(94)116 (1994).

<sup>736</sup> United States Department of State, Clinton Letter to Yeltsin, December 2, 1994 (1994).

<sup>737</sup> United States Department of State, Yeltsin Letter to Clinton, December 3, 1994 (1994).

was trying to “split Europe” by admitting former Warsaw Pact members, and that the US should “not be allowed to dominate the world”, stating it risked plunging Europe into a “Cold peace”.<sup>738</sup> In an attempt to mend bridges, Vice President Al Gore<sup>739</sup> visited Yeltsin (who was hospitalised at the time) in Moscow in December following the CSCE meeting to address NATO enlargement and discuss the next steps.<sup>740</sup> Gore reported that Clinton’s words that the “process of NATO expansion had begun”, combined with the NAC communique, had led the Russians to “misread the NAC language on 1995”.<sup>741</sup> Gore reassured Yeltsin that the process required a US-Russia bilateral relationship, a Russia-NATO relationship, and NATO enlargement, and that NATO members were aware that upcoming events in Russia would make it difficult for Yeltsin should any movement forward on the issue take place before mid-1995 (the new Electoral Law was to be adopted in June 1995, followed by Parliamentary elections in December 1995 and the Presidential election in 1996).<sup>742</sup> When Yeltsin pressed Gore on what the NATO-Russia relationship would look like under NATO enlargement, Gore replied that “conceptually we have not ruled out that Russia could be a part of NATO” and when Yeltsin argued that did not make sense, Gore replied that consultations were about finding the “best relationship between Russia and NATO”, and that both sides must achieve the goal of an “undivided Europe”.<sup>743</sup> Following these discussions, the backgrounder for Clinton’s meeting with Gore to discuss Russia and NATO enlargement concluded that Yeltsin had thought Clinton was contradicting the assurances he had given during the September summit regarding NATO expansion, leading to Kozyrev refusing to sign the PfP documents and Yeltsin’s “hardline speech in Budapest”<sup>744</sup>. Following Gore’s visit, Yeltsin had declared that he was willing to put the misunderstanding behind them, and Christopher and Kozyrev were to meet in January for discussions on NATO enlargement and the US-Russia relationship.<sup>745</sup>

The next incremental step towards NATO enlargement was the decision that US interests would be best served by supporting NATO enlargement. This required convincing the Russians to accept the US’s “long-term interest in expanding NATO to the East”, which meant the three points that had been raised by Gore, namely the US-Russia bilateral relationship, a Russia-NATO relationship, and NATO enlargement, would need to be discussed ahead of Christopher’s meeting with Kozyrev.<sup>746</sup> Representing

---

<sup>738</sup> CSCE, Ukraine: The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 (1994); Elaine Sciolino, “Yeltsin Says NATO Is Trying to Split Continent Again,” *The New York Times*, December 6, 1994; “Broader NATO May Bring ‘Cold Peace,’ Yeltsin Warns: Europe: Russian President Accuses U.S. of Being Power Hungry. Speech Comes as Nations Finalize Nuclear Treaty,” *L.A. Times*, 1994.

<sup>739</sup> Vice President under President Clinton from 1993-2001.

<sup>740</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 106.

<sup>741</sup> United States Department of State, “Gore Debrief on One-on-One w/ Yeltsin,” Notes on Vice President Gore’s Meeting with President Yeltsin, Moscow, December 16, 1994 (1994).

<sup>742</sup> United States Department of State, C06835143 at 2.

<sup>743</sup> United States Department of State, C06835143 at 2–3.

<sup>744</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 106; Paul A. Gable, “Kozyrev’s ‘Shock Diplomacy’ Is Increasingly Unpopular at Home,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, 1995.

<sup>745</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 106–7.

<sup>746</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 106–7.

the NSC, Alexander Vershbow,<sup>747</sup> Nicholas Burns,<sup>748</sup> Richard Schifter<sup>749</sup> and Fried notified Lake and Berger of their intent to circulate a paper entitled “Building Europe’s New Security Architecture” to senior and restricted interagency distribution to help prepare for the Christopher-Kozyrev meeting.<sup>750</sup> The paper, which was developed following the NAC Ministerial, the CSCE summit, and Gore’s discussion with Yeltsin, sought to maintain US leadership in “defining the way ahead on NATO expansion” and to set the objectives for year-end 1995 in time for the NATO study on enlargement.<sup>751</sup> The paper proposed enlargement to one or more CEE countries with the option for further enlargement, and an institutionalised NATO-Russia relationship through a Treaty or Charter but without a right of veto or prior consultations over NATO decisions; additionally, Ukraine, the Baltics and “southern tier States” should not be consigned to a grey zone or a Russian sphere of influence, but should not be emphasised for the time being due to Russian sensitivities.<sup>752</sup> Importantly, the paper also proposed that it be made clear that the NATO-Russia relationship could not develop ahead of NATO’s relations with CEE countries and perceptions of a US-Russia condominium would set back progress made with these countries.<sup>753</sup> While the paper does not clearly reference a concept of path dependence, it is very clear in laying out the agenda-setting, policy decisions, and political statements required to achieve NATO enlargement with the understanding that the “expansion process should proceed in close parallel in substance and pace with deepening Russia-NATO partnership”,<sup>754</sup> reinforcing the understanding that those elements contribute to achieving institutional lock-in. As options narrow, this combination of agenda-setting, policy decisions, and political statements contribute to narrowing options in a self-reinforcing mechanism. By the end of 1994, the divergent path for Russia was becoming clear, and even accepted as demonstrated by Yeltsin who had told Gore it was not probable that Russia would join NATO.

The US-Russia and NATO-Russia relationship continued to proceed in starts and stops into 1995. In an apparent positive change, Kozyrev announced to journalists that “There will be no cold peace and the partnership between Russia and the United States will be preserved and strengthened” following the two-day meeting between him and Christopher.<sup>755</sup> Russia’s foreign policy intentions were called into question multiple times though. Kozyrev made public statements about Russia’s right to intervene in its near-abroad<sup>756</sup> but had to follow it up with an explanation that those remarks did not apply to the Baltic

---

<sup>747</sup> Also known as “Sasha”, Director of the State Department’s Office of Soviet Union Affairs from 1988-1991, US Deputy Permanent Representative to NATO and Charge d’affaires of the US Mission, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs from 1993-1994, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs at the NSC, US Ambassador to NATO from 1998-2001.

<sup>748</sup> Director for Soviet Affairs under President George H.W. Bush, and Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Affairs and Special Assistant to President Clinton from 1990-1995, State Department Spokesman from 1995-1997.

<sup>749</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from 1986-1992, Special Assistant to the President, Counselor and Senior Director at the NSC and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State from 1993-2001.

<sup>750</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 116.

<sup>751</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 117.

<sup>752</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 117–18.

<sup>753</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 120–21.

<sup>754</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 118.

<sup>755</sup> Department of State Office of the Historian, Warren Minor Christopher (n.d.); Radio Free Europe, “Kozyrev, Christopher Finish Talks,” 1995; R. Jeffrey Smith and Daniel Williams, “U.S. Plans New Tack on Russia-NATO Tie,” *The Washington Post*, January 15, 1995.

<sup>756</sup> Elias Götz, “Near Abroad: Russia’s Role in Post-Soviet Eurasia,” *Europe - Asia Studies*, 2022, 1529–50, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2133086>; Thomas de Waal, “The End of the Near Abroad,” *Carnegie Europe* May (2024).

The “near abroad” (ближнее зарубежье) is used to describe the former Soviet republics in Eurasia.

states.<sup>757</sup> While Kozyrev signed the PfP, he went on to issue the statement at the 1995 NAC/NACC May Ministerial that Russia supported the concept of a pan-European partnership within which to develop a European security model that was approved at the December 1994 Budapest CSCE summit, and that the future of NATO-Russia relations was yet to be worked out.<sup>758</sup> This statement was made despite the NAC communique that reiterated that new members would be admitted “as part of an evolutionary process”, and which not only noted that the Alliance welcomed Russia’s acceptance of its Individual Partnership Programme under PfP, but also that it was desirable to develop the NATO-Russia relationship further as part of the development of a cooperative security architecture in Europe,<sup>759</sup> as opposed to moving away from NATO entirely. NATO enlargement was now a publicly stated goal, as were NATO’s separate relationship with Russia, but Russian foreign policy appeared to be latching onto the idea of a CSCE-backed pan-European alternative in the hopes of pushing back political hardliners at home.

Another incremental step was marked by the proposal of several dates towards completion of enlargement by the NSC. Recognising implicitly Yeltsin’s tenuous position, and with the upcoming Russian parliamentary elections in 1995 and presidential elections in 1996, the NSC proposed a “go-slow-and-quiet” for the first half of 1996 to align with Gore’s reassurances to Yeltsin. Significant steps would come after the Russian elections, “potentially leading” to a NATO offer at the December 1996 NAC or the 1997 NATO summit, followed by accession negotiations in 1997.<sup>760</sup> Preparations were beginning to race ahead. Following the May 1995 Noordwijk NAC foreign ministers’ meeting, NATO was beginning to assemble ideas on a “framework document for the NATO-Russia relationship” and the Department of State had drafted an initial objectives/content paper to serve as the basis for Allied discussions, with the realisation that Allies needed to have a framework document by September to be ready by the December NAC.<sup>761</sup> The “go-slow” approach meant that the document’s “modest steps on NATO enlargement” would need to be packaged in a way that maintained Partners’ confidence without harming relations with Russia.<sup>762</sup> The process could shift to the formal pre-accession phase in the summer of 1996 following Russian presidential elections.<sup>763</sup> The “who” and the “when” could be deliberated in the second half of 1996, and accession talks could begin during the December 1996 NAC or spring 1997, followed by a completion date of fall 1997 or spring 1998, leading to a completed first stage of enlargement as early as 1998.<sup>764</sup> Work on a more formal NATO-Russia relationship could continue in parallel, with the goal of signing that agreement at the same time as accession talks since it would represent the ‘crossing of the Rubicon’ for the enlargement process.<sup>765</sup>

Despite the strong push by the NSC, diverging opinions among Allies remained. While the prospect of NATO membership had boosted confidence that the US would remain in Europe and all agreed any “who” and “when” discussions should not take place prior to Russian elections,<sup>766</sup> opinions

---

<sup>757</sup> C-Span, “Russian Foreign Policy,” 1995; Michael Dobbs, “Russia’s Kozyrev Portrays Stance as Benign to Ensure U.S. Support,” *The Washington Post*, April 29, 1995; “Kozyrev: Russia May Intervene for Ethnic Russians Abroad,” *Radio Free Europe*, April 19, 1995; Thomas L. Friedman, “Foreign Affairs; The Cold Peace,” *NY Times*, April 26, 1995; Gable, “Kozyrev’s ‘Shock Diplomacy’ Is Increasingly Unpopular at Home.”

<sup>758</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Statement by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of the Russian Federation, NATO Council Noordwijk 31 May 1995 (1995).

<sup>759</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Final Communiqué Issued by the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session at Noordwijk, The Netherlands, Press Communiqué M-NAC-1 (95)48 (1995).

<sup>760</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 135.

<sup>761</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 135.

<sup>762</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- paragraphs 136, 139.

<sup>763</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 140–41.

<sup>764</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 141.

<sup>765</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 141–42.

<sup>766</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 158, 160.

differed on whether to even consider Russia, whether to include the Baltics, and whether to align the schedule with EU enlargement, as well as concerns over the economic burden, and whether a slower pace would be better in the face of Russian opinion on enlargement.<sup>767</sup> There was also concern that delaying much beyond 1996 risked the question of whether the West would “slow or back away”.<sup>768</sup> In a July 1995 memo to Clinton, Lake indicated that “hardening Russian opposition to NATO enlargement, unease among some West Europeans and still-uncertain Congressional support” would require a more intensive diplomatic effort into the fall<sup>769</sup> to ensure the NATO enlargement project did not fall apart. Allies had also agreed at the NAC summit to “negotiate a basic framework document with the Russians in time for the December ministerial”, which would serve as the basis for a formal agreement to be concluded later to establish “permanent NATO-Russian consultative bodies”.<sup>770</sup> The memo acknowledged that Russian opposition to NATO enlargement appeared to be “hardening across the political spectrum among the Russian political elite” and Kozyrev was being attacked for supporting the West’s agenda.<sup>771</sup> Critically, Lake brought up the possibility that it may become necessary to choose between the “CEE and Russian legs” in the second half of 1996 or the first half of 1997 if Russia attempted to derail enlargement policy,<sup>772</sup> indicating a willingness to lose Russia in favour of NATO enlargement should the situation come to that. Indicating a growing lack of faith in Russian reform and support, Lake explained that a “muted reaction in a context of broader cooperation” may be the most the US could hope for.<sup>773</sup> To bolster the NATO enlargement project, Lake suggested proceeding on several fronts: being more active in explaining and advocating their policy to Congress and the public; crafting a “genuinely substantive NATO-Russia relationship”; and demonstrating steady progress in the enlargement process and bilateral military relations with key CEE countries.<sup>774</sup>

In the next incremental step towards NATO enlargement, the Study on NATO Enlargement was published in September 1995,<sup>775</sup> representing the amalgamation of the points that had been discussed previously. The new security architecture would be built through integration and cooperation across existing multilateral institutions in Europe, including the EU, WEU, and OSCE, wherein NATO would play a role “in accordance with its respective responsibilities and purposes” while remaining a “purely defensive Alliance whose fundamental purpose is to preserve peace in the Euro-Atlantic area and to provide security for its members”.<sup>776</sup> PfP would continue to serve as a step towards membership, and NATO enlargement was complementary to EU enlargement, which would also contribute to the extension of “security and stability to the new democracies in the East”.<sup>777</sup> Relations with Russia would be developed through its Individual Partnership Programme under PfP, as well as cooperation with Russia beyond PfP, and Russian concerns about enlargement were being addressed through the development of its “wider relationship with Russia”.<sup>778</sup> The term “enlargement” had come to replace the term “expansion”, which Townsend Jr argues was intended to avoid creating the perception that enlargement posed a threat to Russia, and while there were attempts to put up “guardrails around the military aspects of enlargement”, the nature of the needs among potential new members meant the military aspect could not be hidden in the background.<sup>779</sup> Kohl remained “nervous about the impact of NATO enlargement on

---

<sup>767</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 157–58.

<sup>768</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 158, 160.

<sup>769</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 159.

<sup>770</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 160.

<sup>771</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 160.

<sup>772</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 160–61.

<sup>773</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 161.

<sup>774</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 161–62.

<sup>775</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Study on NATO Enlargement, Official Texts (1995).

<sup>776</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Official Texts at 1.

<sup>777</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Official Texts paragraph 4.

<sup>778</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Official Texts paragraphs 13, 28.

<sup>779</sup> Townsend Jr, “In Peace and War: The Military Implications of NATO Enlargement,” 503–5.

Russia” and had suggested postponing the presentation of the study until after the December Russian parliamentary elections.<sup>780</sup> The Germans were pressing to omit any reference in the NAC communique of a “second phase” and to lead with the focus on NATO-Russia relations, which the US was concerned was serving as a “lightning rod for other delegations”.<sup>781</sup> US concern was that if enlargement were downplayed at the NAC, it would create concern among the CEE countries, and could send a “strong signal to Moscow that Russia can effectively use pressure to slow or halt the pace of NATO enlargement”, despite Clinton having told former NATO Secretary General Willy Claes in October that “NATO cannot be seen to be shuffling its feet in the corner”.<sup>782</sup> In the end, enlargement was included after NATO-Russia relations, and the communique opened instead with the peace agreement for Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>783</sup> There was no longer any doubt that Russia was not on the same path as the CEE countries for potential membership, and 1996 was identified for bilateral and multilateral consultations, the adoption of a program of practical work to enhance PfP, and internal adaptations and other measures to “ensure that enlargement preserves the effectiveness of the Alliance”.<sup>784</sup> Enlargement discussions were well on their way at this point, despite Russian objections.

The December 1995 NAC had established what would occur in 1996 and alleviated immediate concerns about the “how” and the “why”. 1996 was marked by the Russian and American presidential elections, and while discussions on enlargement were beginning to take shape, these discussions were not the subject of immediate concern aside from “adversarial views over NATO expansion”. Meanwhile, Christopher reassured the CEE countries that “NATO enlargement is on track and it will happen”,<sup>785</sup> which was reaffirmed in the communique of the NAC June Ministerial.<sup>786</sup> The NATO foreign ministers attempted to discuss NATO enlargement with Primakov in June 1996, but the Russian position had not changed: Primakov confirmed that Moscow acknowledged the “right of East European nations to join the Atlantic alliance”, but could “not tolerate Western military forces near Russia’s borders”.<sup>787</sup>

Another incremental step occurred in the fall of 1996 when NATO Secretary General Javier Solana suggested that NATO should “invite several Partners to begin accession negotiations” in 1997 during a speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.<sup>788</sup> This reassured the aspiring members, and the December NAC could serve to announce the summit.<sup>789</sup> There was some sense that Primakov was coming to terms with the fact of enlargement and might be disposed to discussing the terms, so the run-up to December would also be an opportune time to re-engage with Russia.<sup>790</sup> A matter to address would be how to formulate future plans for those that were not included in the first round to avoid “forcing a moment of truth on Baltic NATO membership while also avoiding a tacit write-off of Baltic security

---

<sup>780</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 205.

<sup>781</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 205.

<sup>782</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 206–7.

<sup>783</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels 5 Dec 1995, Press Communiqué M-NAC-2 (95)118 (1995).

<sup>784</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Press Communiqué M-NAC-2 (95)118 paragraph 7.

<sup>785</sup> Robin Wright and Carol J. Williams, “Differences Likely to Mark First Christopher-Primakov Encounter,” *L.A. Times*, February 9, 1996; Christine Spolar, “Christopher Assures Aspirants on NATO Expansion,” *Washington Post*, March 20, 1996.

<sup>786</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Berlin 3 June 1996, Press Communiqué M-NAC-1(96)63 (1996).

<sup>787</sup> Rick Atkinson, “Primakov Cites Concerns on NATO Expansion,” *The Washington Post*, June 5, 1996.

<sup>788</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Summary: Speech by Secretary General Solana, IISS London, September 19, 1996, Speeches (1996).

<sup>789</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- paragraphs 213–214.

<sup>790</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 214.

under Russian pressure”.<sup>791</sup> Following meetings between Talbott and Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov<sup>792</sup> in Washington on 9 July, and Christopher and Primakov in Jakarta on 23 July, it had been established that the Russian government understood that the December NAC would set a summit for the first half of 1997 that would announce the beginning of accession negotiations, and discussions would ensure Russia participated in the elaboration of European security arrangements in line with its “potential influence on European and world affairs”.<sup>793</sup> In line with efforts to engage with Russia prior to the December NAC, Clinton addressed Yeltsin in the fall to lay out his “thinking on the new relationship between NATO and Russia, and how it should fit into European security structures”, emphasising Russia’s role in creating the new structures and proposed that he and Yeltsin agree on the principles for a “NATO-Russia Charter” that would establish the consultation, cooperation and action mechanisms for NATO and Russia in the political and military spheres.<sup>794</sup> Clinton emphasised that the “consolidation of a NATO-Russia partnership” would be one of his Administration’s most important goals in the lead up to the December NAC, by which he hoped they would have made “substantial progress”.<sup>795</sup>

Preferences around who to admit as new members in this first post-Cold War enlargement were beginning to become apparent. By October, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and “perhaps Slovenia” were being floated as possible first-round countries. Other countries were either not interested in NATO membership, ineligible because said countries were lacking in “democratic or other development”, up for discussion based on their performance, or were one of the Baltic states due to Russian objections.<sup>796</sup> Clinton delivered a speech in Detroit on 22 October where he announced that the first new NATO partners “should be full-fledged members” by NATO’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1999.<sup>797</sup> He repeated that enlargement was not directed at Russia, whom he called to “look again” at the Alliance, inviting them to recognise that NATO’s promotion of greater stability in Europe would benefit Russia.<sup>798</sup> In the communique following the December 1996 NAC Ministerial, the Madrid summit was announced for July 1997, and the extensive agenda would include inviting one or more countries to begin accession negotiations.<sup>799</sup> Though there were still uncertainties on how to manage the delicate balance of enlargement and Russia-NATO relations, NATO was officially progressing on enlargement and the details would be announced later.

Recognising the importance of keeping Russia on board as much as possible, work was ongoing to manage the NATO-Russia relationship and included multiple meetings to attempt to establish the NATO-Russia Charter, which would be a politically, *not* legally, binding document that would lay out a mechanism for consultation, coordination, and “where possible,” joint decision-making and action between NATO and Russia.<sup>800</sup> The US was aware that Yeltsin needed to be able to say he had defended

---

<sup>791</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 214.

<sup>792</sup> Russian Deputy Foreign Minister from 1991-2003.

<sup>793</sup> The National Security Archive, “NATO/Russia: A Framework for the Next Phase,” *FL-2017-13804*, August 23, 1996, 1; Radio Free Europe, “Talbott Meets Mamedov,” *Newsline - July 10, 1996*, 1996.

<sup>794</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 222; “Germany: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Announces Plans for NATO Summit Next Year,” *Reuters*, September 6, 1996.

<sup>795</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 223.

<sup>796</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 238–39.

<sup>797</sup> United States Information Agency, “Transcript of the Remarks by President W.J. Clinton to People of Detroit,” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, October 22, 1996.

<sup>798</sup> United States Information Agency.

<sup>799</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Final Communiqué Issued by the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session at Noordwijk, The Netherlands, Press Communiqué M-NAC-1 (95)48.

<sup>800</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 268.

Russia's interests, and the language would need to state that the Alliance was open to all of Europe's emerging democracies in response to Primakov having raised the possibility of Russia joining NATO.<sup>801</sup> The US would work to solidify talk of investments in Russia, offer "several billion" in investment finance, and support Russian membership in "international economic fora" on condition that Russia engaged in structural reforms.<sup>802</sup> There was also a recognition that Russia would need to be graduated from Jackson-Vanik amendment denying "normal trade relations (NTR) status to some current and former nonmarket economies (NMEs),<sup>803</sup> though it would require Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin<sup>804</sup> to address START II, Russian economics, and agreeing to NATO enlargement with the Duma, though the latter might be "too painful domestically" and the Russians might think NATO would not be firm on July 1997.<sup>805</sup> The plan was to assess whether Russia was looking to progress or stonewall by linking major issues to NATO enlargement and NATO-Russia for the next six months during an upcoming meeting between Gore and Chernomyrdin.<sup>806</sup> Mamedov, for example, had indicated that START II ratification could not go forward until the NATO-Russia question was solved and had proposed pushing NATO-Russia negotiations to the G7 that was scheduled for the eve of the Madrid summit, meaning the US may end up having to tell Russia that enlargement would proceed "with or without a deal".<sup>807</sup>

As incremental steps are steps that add up until a critical juncture occurs, and process tracing follows these critical junctures to understand how an outcome as arrived at, another incremental step contributing to the decision to issue invitations to begin accession negotiations and towards NATO enlargement was the US's efforts to obtain Russian support. This was indicative of the agenda-setting contributing to the narrowing of options favouring NATO enlargement. The US continued to seek Russian agreement on NATO enlargement. Gore sent Chernomyrdin a letter in February offering "Russia a central role in European security structures in a cooperative relationship with NATO", including a NATO-Russia charter, a mechanism providing consultations and, where possible, joint decision-making and action, [and] adaptation of the CFE Treaty".<sup>808</sup> Chernomyrdin suggested to Gore that Clinton meet with Yeltsin in Europe in the second half of March, and the US seized the opportunity to seek to reach a "general understanding" of what Yeltsin required to acquiesce to NATO enlargement as Russia would seek to draw out negotiations and obtain a maximum of concessions while attempting to delay or derail enlargement.<sup>809</sup> Preliminary meetings seemed to indicate though that despite Yeltsin needing to take a tough public stance, Primakov appeared to have orders to ensure the summit was successful.<sup>810</sup> The US was aligning its efforts to achieve an agreement on the NATO-Russia Charter for the March 1997 Clinton-Yeltsin Summit in Helsinki. Gore and Chernomyrdin had agreed to a three-part economics agenda for Helsinki, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright<sup>811</sup> would give the Russians a draft joint statement on economic issues for release at Helsinki, while Clinton would invite Russia to join the G7, all in the hopes of providing the "best vehicle" for Yeltsin to commit to economic reforms.<sup>812</sup> Following discussions with

---

<sup>801</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 268.

<sup>802</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 269.

<sup>803</sup> Congressional Research Service, "The Jackson-Vanik Amendment and Permanent Normal Trade Relations," 2023.

<sup>804</sup> Russian Prime Minister from 1992-1998.

<sup>805</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- paragraphs 269–270.

<sup>806</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 277.

<sup>807</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 278.

<sup>808</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 304.

<sup>809</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 303, 331–32.

<sup>810</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 379.

<sup>811</sup> US Ambassador to the United Nations from 1993-1997, US Secretary of State from 1997-2001.

<sup>812</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 331–32.

Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin, and Primakov, Albright indicated that the Russians would continue to oppose NATO enlargement but were ready to work on a NATO-Russia relationship.<sup>813</sup> The draft NATO-Russia Charter was a “good-faith effort” to represent the concerns of all parties, but to avoid the NATO-Russia Charter having the American “imprimatur”, Solana had taken the American text and was working on the document in parallel with the Russians.<sup>814</sup> At the press conference following the summit, Clinton reaffirmed that NATO enlargement would proceed at the Madrid Summit and also added that Solana and Primakov would be working on completing a NATO-Russia document in the following weeks. Additionally, Russia was officially invited to join the G7 and Clinton stated that the US was prepared to negotiate on further arms reductions under START III once the Duma had ratified START II.<sup>815</sup> Albright met with Primakov in Moscow in May to help resolve any remaining issues pertaining to the Charter, followed by Solana.<sup>816</sup> The goal was to avoid pushing the document to after the NAC Ministerial, likely in the fall.<sup>817</sup>

Exemplifying the importance of policy decisions which contributed towards narrowing options towards the institutional lock-in of NATO enlargement, Berger referred to the final product of work on the NATO-Russia Charter (NATO-Russia Founding Act, or the “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation”) as “balanced” in a memo to Clinton in May. It maintained NATO’s independence in decision-making, created a permanent NATO-Russia forum, and provided political cover to Yeltsin.<sup>818</sup> The elements that had been points of contention and discussion were enshrined in the Act: NATO and Russia would, among other things, cooperate to “strengthen security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area”, respect sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence according to the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, and engage in mutual transparency in the creation and implementation of defence policy and military doctrines.<sup>819</sup> The Act also created the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council to build “trust, unity of purpose and habits of consultation and cooperation”, including that neither party had a right of veto over the actions of the other.<sup>820</sup> Additionally, a section specifically addressed CFE Treaty adaptation for further reductions.<sup>821</sup>

Support was not as clear cut though. The day before leaving to sign the Act, Yeltsin told Russian press that he hoped the Baltic states and other countries could be engaged in “dialogue” to “persuade them that joining NATO would not improve their security”, while Primakov “ruled out eventual Russian membership in NATO”, and the Duma passed a resolution in May stating that Russia had to take steps to prevent NATO’s military forces “from advancing closer to Russia’s borders” at the risk of the Act otherwise being interpreted as a “sign of Russia’s ‘consent’ to NATO enlargement”.<sup>822</sup> In his speech at the

---

<sup>813</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 344.

<sup>814</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 344, 353.

<sup>815</sup> The American Presidency Project, “The President’s News Conference With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Helsinki,” March 21, 1997.

<sup>816</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 400; United States Department of State, “Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov,” *Statements*, May 2, 1997.

<sup>817</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 411–12.

<sup>818</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 421; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation,” *Official Texts*, May 27, 1997.

<sup>819</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation,” sec. I.

<sup>820</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, sec. II.

<sup>821</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, sec. IV.

<sup>822</sup> Radio Free Europe, “Yeltsin, Primakov Speak Out Against NATO Membership for Former Soviet Republics,” *Newsline - May 26, 1997*, May 26, 1997; Radio Free Europe, “Duma Says Russia-NATO Accord Should Be Binding,” *Newsline - May 26, 1997*, May 26, 1997.

NATO-Russia Founding Act signing ceremony though, Yeltsin stated that the goal was to “create a whole greater Europe” and that it was a historic document that took into account the security interests of “each and every signatory”.<sup>823</sup> He reaffirmed that Russia still viewed NATO enlargement negatively but appreciated NATO’s motivation in reaching an agreement with Russia that took its interests into account.<sup>824</sup> Though Kissinger published an article published in June that was critical of the Act, where he asked whether it risked “diluting” the Alliance into a UN-style collective security system in its attempt to “reconcile Russia” and argued that a “responsible Russian role” did not require its de facto participation in the Alliance as the OSCE was designed for the political task,<sup>825</sup> this perspective was sidelined as it did not align with the political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting supportive of NATO enlargement.

The policy decision of deciding on the mechanism by which countries would be invited to join NATO contributed another incremental step towards issuing invitations to begin accession negotiations. The “who” had still not been decided by April. The NAC May Ministerial was proposed as the venue for this discussion, which would focus on the merits of a “small versus large group”.<sup>826</sup> Solana would begin consultation with Allies following the Ministerial to build consensus and hold a “formal but highly restricted” NAC discussion in June, and an “informal” decision would be made at a special NAC meeting the week preceding the Madrid summit before informing partner governments over the weekend prior to the formal decision in Madrid on 8 July.<sup>827</sup> Support for Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary was considered likely to be unanimous, and keeping the first group small would make it more plausible and provide reassurance that there would be subsequent rounds.<sup>828</sup> An internal NSC recommendation was to push to move beyond the “open door” language towards a clear articulation of further enlargement, or to establish a formal NATO mechanism to consider additional countries’ candidacies.<sup>829</sup> As the intent was to be able to secure ratification by the April 1999 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary NATO Summit, accession talks would need to be completed by the December NAC Ministerial to provide 15 months to secure ratification, and eight months before Congress went on recess for the 1998 elections.<sup>830</sup> A single instrument of ratification grouping all countries would help avoid one or more parliaments voting to ratify NATO membership for “only some of the invitees”.<sup>831</sup>

The next incremental step was to secure US domestic support for ratification as the Senate and the House of Representatives had to approve the resources for the addition of new members, while the extension of security guarantees needed “an expression of informed national will” to be meaningful.<sup>832</sup> Cost did not appear to be a hurdle. According to Berger, a DoD estimate of the cost of enlargement based on four, small, non-specified Central European countries with no stationing or permanent forward-deployment of “substantial NATO forces” on their territories came to an estimated total cost for 1997-2009 of \$27-35 billion, and direct costs for the US were estimated at \$150-200 million in that period, had been generally favourably received by Allies.<sup>833</sup> Furthermore, the cost of *not* enlarging on the proposed schedule was that NATO would risk a “much higher price later” to integrate, consolidate and stabilise

---

<sup>823</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Remarks by Russian President Yeltsin,” *Signing Ceremony of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Paris 27 May 1997*, May 27, 1997, paras. 2–3.

<sup>824</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, para. 7.

<sup>825</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, “The Dilution of NATO,” *The Washington Post*, June 7, 1997.

<sup>826</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 397.

<sup>827</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 397–98.

<sup>828</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 406.

<sup>829</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 407–8.

<sup>830</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 412.

<sup>831</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 412.

<sup>832</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 434.

<sup>833</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 432–33, 435.

CEE.<sup>834</sup> An alliance was the most “efficient and cost-effective way” of integration, consolidating, and stabilising these countries, and there was a risk the CEE countries would believe their future did not lie with NATO and the West, which could lead to “isolation and vulnerability that would destabilise the region”.<sup>835</sup> The communication strategy would have to “give Madrid the historic resonance it merits” to support ratification following the summit.<sup>836</sup>

With the US in the driver’s seat, Clinton was to receive a formal recommendation on which countries to support for the first groups on 10 June, which would then be presented to Solana on 11 June by US Ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter.<sup>837</sup> The US was concerned that Allies were pushing for a larger first group, so the US would have to build consensus on its position of a “small group approach” which had been adopted informally following Albright conveying the preference at the NAC Ministerial in May.<sup>838</sup> Support at the time was for Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, as well as Romania and Slovenia, but the US position was that only the first three were ready and were the least controversial, so the solution was to make it clear there would be a second enlargement.<sup>839</sup> As the Senate NATO Observer Group (SNOG) pointed out, the new members had to be “producers”, not “consumers” of security.<sup>840</sup> The official US position would be composed of support for a small group of three representing the strongest candidates in terms of their political, economic and military reforms, coupled with a robust ‘open door’ package, itself a “pledge” to future admission and non-exclusion based on geographic location.<sup>841</sup>

A critical juncture was marked by the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement invitations in 1997. The July 1997 Madrid NATO Summit brought together the changes that had been underway since the beginning of the decade, where a “new Europe” characterised by “greater integration and cooperation” was emerging.<sup>842</sup> The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were officially invited to begin accession talks, which would be followed by the signing of the Protocol of Accession during the December 1997 NAC Ministerial, with the goal of ratification being completed by April 1999.<sup>843</sup> The declaration also stated that NATO would remain open to new members, would maintain relations with interested countries, encourage their participation in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) (a multilateral forum for dialogue and consultation that had been established at the May NAC Ministerial) and PfP, and further invitations would likely be extended.<sup>844</sup> The Protocols of Accession were signed at the December NAC Ministerial.<sup>845</sup> Despite Russia’s expressed reservations about NATO enlargement, enlargement was on track for ratification based on the timelines of Madrid.

The final step in accomplishing Clinton’s goals was securing Senate ratification. US opinion was not unanimous, as demonstrated by a New York Times article by Sam Nunn<sup>846</sup> and Scowcroft, who argued that while NATO should be the “cornerstone of an evolving security order in Europe”, this should not be

---

<sup>834</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 436.

<sup>835</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 436.

<sup>836</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 509.

<sup>837</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 445.

US Ambassador to NATO from 1993-1998.

<sup>838</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 445, 464.

<sup>839</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 445–47.

<sup>840</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 458.

<sup>841</sup> National Security Council, 2015-0772- at 488.

<sup>842</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “What Is NATO?,” *Press Info*, July 4, 1997.

<sup>843</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation Issued by the Heads of State and Government,” *Press Release M-1 (97)81*, July 8, 1997, para. 6.

<sup>844</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, para. 8.

<sup>845</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 16 December 1997,” *Press Release M-NAC-2 (97)155*, December 16, 1997.

<sup>846</sup> US Senator, drafted the 1991 Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program with Senator Richard Lugar.

equated with a “sponge” that dissipated its cohesion through enlargement beyond “prudent limits”, arguing instead that the transformation of Europe’s security structure should be related to the transformation of its economy through closer economic ties to the EU.<sup>847</sup> Albright went on the offensive to garner domestic support by inviting the Czech, Polish and Hungarian Foreign Ministers to a dinner hosted by the Committee to Expand NATO, which included prominent Republicans.<sup>848</sup> When presented with bipartisan amendment proposals to hinder ratification were ultimately rejected,<sup>849</sup> but Albright stated in a speech at the New Atlantic Initiative Conference that the Clinton Administration opposed any effort in the Senate to mandate a pause in NATO enlargement.<sup>850</sup> An incremental step towards Senate ratification was reached in March 1998 when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) voted 16-2 in favour of NATO enlargement.<sup>851</sup> Clinton argued at a March 1998 “NATO Enlargement” event at the White House that “NATO can do for Europe’s east what it did for Europe’s west” and that enlargement would make the US safer by making NATO stronger, in addition to making Europe more stable, also urging the Senate to reject any effort to “impose an artificial pause on the process of enlargement”.<sup>852</sup> While efforts by opponents to gain votes continued, including by Senator Warner, by the end of April, the balance was still in favour of proponents of enlargement who had a “breadth of support for expansion”.<sup>853</sup>

Amidst ongoing events to get the US to the ratification line, the Clinton-Yeltsin relationship was on the decline. In a telephone conversation in March 1998, Clinton announced that airstrikes would soon be launched against Serb military targets because Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic was stonewalling Chernomyrdin and Holbrooke (who were attempting to de-escalate and prevent potential airstrikes) while continuing to move Serbian forces into Kosovo and evacuating villages.<sup>854</sup> Clinton added that he did not believe the situation should “get in the way of bigger issues of trying to make Russia stronger economically, politically, securing its role in the world in a positive way, and both of us reducing our nuclear arsenals”.<sup>855</sup> Yeltsin replied that it was a “great pity” as the Duma was to ratify START II on 6 April, but it would not happen under the circumstances.<sup>856</sup> Yeltsin added that, while he and Clinton would continue to work together, there would no longer be the “great drive and such friendship” of before.<sup>857</sup> Yeltsin added that it had been very difficult for him to turn Russian opinion in favour of the US and the West, and that even if he and Clinton were able to restart their diplomacy, Russians would likely have a bad opinion of the US and NATO moving forward.<sup>858</sup>

As US approval for NATO enlargement was critical to the success of NATO enlargement, the final critical juncture was reached upon Senate approval for NATO enlargement on 30 April in a “strikingly bipartisan” 80-19 vote after “easily” defeating the amendments seeking to delay enlargement

---

<sup>847</sup> Sam Nunn and Brent Scowcroft, “NATO: A Debate Recast,” *The New York Times*, February 4, 1998, paras. 3–4.

<sup>848</sup> National Security Council, Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion, 2015-0772- at 527.

<sup>849</sup> Tom Raum, “Senate Paves Way For NATO Growth,” *CBS News*, April 30, 1998, paras. 4–5.

<sup>850</sup> United States Department of State, “Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright Remarks before the New Atlantic Initiative Conference,” *Statements*, February 9, 1998; Pat Towell, “Battle Lines Forming in Senate Over Further NATO Expansion,” *CNNI*, March 2, 1998.

<sup>851</sup> United States Department of State, “Department of State Welcomes SFRC Vote on NATO Enlargement,” *Press Statement*, March 3, 1998.

<sup>852</sup> United States Department of State, “Remarks By the President on the National Interest for Enlarging NATO,” *Office of the Press Secretary*, March 20, 1998; C-Span, “NATO Enlargement, March 20, 1998,” 1998.

<sup>853</sup> Helen Dewar, “NATO Expansion Foes Rally For Senate Votes,” *The Washington Post*, April 27, 1998, para. 16.

<sup>854</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation - Telephone Conversation with Russian President Yeltsin, 2107 at 1.

<sup>855</sup> The White House, 2107 at 2.

<sup>856</sup> The White House, 2107 at 3.

<sup>857</sup> The White House, 2107 at 3.

<sup>858</sup> The White House, 2107 at 5.

for at least three years.<sup>859</sup> In a statement following Senate approval, Clinton stated that the “American support for NATO is firm, our leadership for security on both sides of the Atlantic is strong, and there is a solid, bipartisan foundation for an active U.S. role in the world”.<sup>860</sup> Clinton signed the Resolution of Ratification in a Rose Garden Ceremony at the White House on 21 May.<sup>861</sup> In his remarks, he thanked all the groups, communities, and individuals who had made it possible to unite the US and allowed the artificial Cold War boundary line to be erased, making the “triumph of freedom” the “great story of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>862</sup> The decades of Cold War had changed in less than a decade following the unforeseen fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. Debates had evolved significantly over that period, but NATO had come out ahead as the institution that would lead in the new European security framework. How had such significant changes come about?

This chapter illustrated a series of incremental steps towards critical junctures:

- The growing disinterest in the US in going out on a limb for the Soviet Union and affecting Gorbachev’s domestic support.
- The growing divisions within the USSR that were affecting Gorbachev’s support and ability to act.
- The establishment of the NACC, which established a platform for NATO relations with the East.
- The confirmation that NATO, not the WEU nor the CSCE, would be responsible in matters pertaining to the Washington Treaty.
- **Critical juncture:** the end of the Soviet security framework encompassing the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, leaving former republics and former Warsaw Pact members searching to fill the gap.
- The work by the Visegrad Four in September 1993 to actively begin pushing for NATO membership.
- The PfP proposal in October 1993 that added a framework for cooperation between NATO and non-member countries.
- **Critical juncture:** the initiation of NATO’s plans for eastward enlargement.
- The confirmation that there would be a dual approach between Russia and other countries.
- The decision by the US that NATO enlargement was to its benefit and attempts to convince Russia of this while developing a US-Russia and NATO-Russia relationship.
- The NSC proposal of several dates for NATO enlargement and the acknowledgement that a go-slow approach would be required until after Russian presidential elections in 1996.
- The publication of the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement that confirmed the new security architecture.
- US efforts to obtain Russian agreement on NATO enlargement and the proposal for a NATO-Russia Charter that confirmed the separate path for NATO-Russia relations.
- Discussions on the mechanisms for how new members would be invited to join NATO in the lead up to the 1997 Madrid Summit.
- **Critical juncture:** invitations to begin accession negotiations were issued to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland at the 1997 Madrid Summit.

---

<sup>859</sup> Eric Schmitt, “Senate Approves Expansion of NATO By Vote of 80 to 19; Clinton Please By Decision,” *NY Times*, 1998; Helen Dewar, “Senate Approves Expansion of NATO,” *The Washington Post*, May 1, 1998; United States Senate, Congressional Record - Senate - Wednesday, April 29, 1998 (1998).

<sup>860</sup> The White House - Office of the Press Secretary, Statement by the President on Senate Approval of NATO Enlargement (1998).

<sup>861</sup> The White House, “Fact Sheet: NATO Enlargement,” *Office of the Press Secretary*, May 21, 1998.

<sup>862</sup> The White House - Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the President on Ratification of NATO Enlargement (1998).

- Securing US domestic support for ratification to ensure Senate and House of Representatives approval of the resources required for additional members.
- The 16-2 SFRC vote in March 1998 before the final Senate vote on NATO enlargement that indicated support was largely guaranteed following bipartisan efforts to achieve it.
- **Critical juncture:** Senate ratification of NATO enlargement.

Process tracing follows the critical junctures that narrowed options over time to create path dependence and achieve institutional lock-in. This list illustrates the incremental steps that added up over time and gradually eliminated alternatives or reinforced dynamics that meant the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO's plans for eastward enlargement, the issuing of invitations to begin accession negotiations, and Senate ratification of NATO enlargement made NATO the most viable course of action.

The next chapter will specifically frame the events that have been described to this point in the context of path dependency. The earlier chapters approached the events through a historical narrative to combine primary and secondary sources and lay the groundwork for a closer study of these critical junctures that will now be addressed to highlight the flow of events that culminated in Russian concerns being pushed back and NATO enlargement proceeding.

## 6 The Path to Post-Cold War NATO Enlargement – Critical Junctures and Path Dependency

The US has historically considered alliances to be a foreign policy tool. While it sought to avoid “entangling alliances” to maintain its ability to act unilaterally, it did not preclude the formation of alliances. The 1949 North Atlantic Treaty was “historically unprecedented” in its multilateralism because WWII had demonstrated that European security was vital to American security. NATO was originally considered a “temporary expedient” under Eisenhower, then an “inescapable commitment” under Kennedy as the US sought to preserve its security and economic wellbeing in the face of the communism and nuclear weapons. Unlike the two World Wars that preceded it, the situation was characterised by the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons.

At the end of the Cold War though, the disappearance of the communist threat from Eastern Europe did not spell the end of the Alliance, quite the contrary. This thesis argued that NATO’s first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of incremental, path-dependent decisions beginning with German unification. The premise was that arms control negotiations dominated US-Soviet relations until the 1980s, at which point a series of critical junctures throughout the 1980s and 1990s accumulated until post-Cold War NATO enlargement became inevitable. Increasing returns fed into the US rationale that it had to maintain a foothold in Europe through NATO as a foreign policy tool, and CEE countries were asking to maintain NATO and to join it. Overt Russian statements about NATO enlargement did not prevent Russia from becoming sidelined as the pro-NATO and pro-NATO enlargement arguments gained traction. Path dependency meant that each incremental decision locked-in participants, because as Pierson explained, the creation of organisations and institutions is accompanied by large set-up costs, learning effects, coordination effects, and adaptive expectations.<sup>863</sup> These make the political cost of reversing a decision too great. The challenge lay in demonstrating that critical junctures were created specifically because other paths could have been taken that generated continuity and locking in a path, echoing the contemporary sentiment that the decision could have been made to not enlarge NATO and avoid the events that led to the Russia-Ukraine War. By divorcing NATO enlargement from the wider European context, enlargement does not necessarily make sense as it meant integrating “weak, vulnerable states” and pushed NATO’s eastern border further east over a large area.

Prior to German unification, both the US and the USSR were seriously engaged in arms control negotiations as the arms race was burdening their respective economies, and the US and the USSR hoped arms control agreements would put a brake on defence spending. The Soviets had the upper hand in conventional weapons, so the US was reluctant to relinquish its technological advantage (hence Reagan’s push for SDI), particularly given the belief by some that the Soviets were using *détente* to build up their economy and arms under the guise of improving relations. Even if in defending US interests though, Reagan believed Soviet efforts had to be taken seriously as he acknowledged the domestic pressures Gorbachev was facing in pushing for reforms. The US saw *détente* as an opportunity to bring the Soviet Union to the table in the hopes of achieving some of its own goals: strategically, the US wanted to avoid a Franco-German enterprise in addition to preventing the spread of communism, and control of nuclear weapons was of benefit to maintaining a dominant role in international relations’ agenda-setting. The main effort of the Soviets was to obstruct measures aimed at “greater unity” because they understood a nuclear Germany – while advantageous because it would disunite the West and drive the US out – was an unlikely scenario. Gorbachev initially had support for *détente* within the Soviet bureaucracy, including a draft proposal for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Efforts at *détente* once Gorbachev came

---

<sup>863</sup> Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 254.

to power would have allowed a rebuilding of trust between the two blocs. This trust could have then contributed to a shift away from the threat posed by the West that the Soviet Union built its defences for. The 1986 Reykjavik Summit had the potential to represent a significant shift, but the US remained skeptical of Soviet intentions regarding the elimination of nuclear weapons, while the Soviets did not understand the US unwillingness to address the SDI. Despite this, Reagan and Gorbachev both expended significant political capital in pursuing engagement and arms control negotiations.

Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* policies were seen as a positive shift in the West and the reason why the US considered it important to ensure Gorbachev maintained credibility in the Soviet public realm, at the risk of him being otherwise replaced by a leader that would not continue to promote those policies. On the Soviet side, these policies opened the path to dissent that had existed but been heavily suppressed throughout the Cold War. Coupled with the ongoing economic difficulties of the Soviet Union, the unity of the Soviet Union eroded until events led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the discontent of the citizens of the Eastern Bloc became visible on the world stage. The German question had played an important role throughout the Cold War as fear of German resurgence and the threat it could pose existed in the East and the West, even after West Germany was integrated into NATO. A hope for German unification existed in the background but none considered it could happen in the short or medium term. The deterioration of the situation within the Soviet Union is an example of incremental steps that led to an external shock – the fall of the Berlin Wall – and produced movement, in this case the possibilities that had seemed remote suddenly became a very real possibility.

Upon the US realising that it had to support German unification to avoid Germany seeking Soviet support for unification in exchange for NATO membership, this opened discussions on the future of NATO which had not been a concern up until then. German unification was needed to maintain NATO and US presence in Europe. Arms control negotiations were predicated on the premise that NATO and the Warsaw Pact existed, and Germany was not unified nor a nuclear power. Kohl was determined to achieve German unification and fearing that he would negotiate with the Soviet Union and agree to not have a unified Germany in NATO and lead to the US losing its door to Europe, the US actively supported Kohl's efforts to put East Germany on the path to democratic elections, followed by economic union, then German elections that Kohl hoped would make him the first Chancellor of a unified Germany. A unified Germany in NATO was a critical issue for the Soviet Union, as it represented the worst of all the strategic concerns: a unified Germany would become an economic powerhouse, it had the potential of rearming itself with nuclear weapons, and the US would not be driven out, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the Soviet Union to drive a wedge between the European countries and align itself with the US or to drive the US out of Europe. While the US publicly supported Gorbachev to keep the Soviet Union from veering off the course of reform, this did not prevent him from eventually losing domestic support and being replaced by Yeltsin. The chronic economic problems Russia faced, despite continued support from the US that feared Yeltsin being replaced by conservative elements, led to a growing distancing of Russia from the West as Yeltsin experienced increasing difficulties in promoting NATO and the US domestically.

The major change to the geopolitical landscape caused by the end of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, and Russia's economic and political problems that divided it internally, meant the US had lost its biggest immediately identifiable threat and NATO's *raison d'être* as collective defence organisation against the Soviet threat. Though the end of the USSR meant it no longer threatened to dominate the Eurasian landmass, it also no longer provided the "ideological glue" that articulated US European foreign policy, but instead of a new entity filling the gap (WEU, CSCE) or the US withdrawing from Europe, NATO came to occupy the central role of the European security framework. Arms control negotiations did not negate perceptions of its utility.

NATO was one of the most important alliances for the US during the Cold War and there was continuity in US foreign policy in that regard from the Cold War to the post-Cold War. Both parties and

the administrations demonstrated that the preservation of US security and economic wellbeing was central to party platforms and national security strategies that echoed each other in referring to democracy, open markets, and American leadership. NATO was a tool that enabled this by serving the strategy of forward defence. The Reagan Administration was preoccupied with maintaining US political, economic, and defence security through arms control negotiations, and the Bush Administration was preoccupied with German unification to ensure US interests in Europe were maintained through the intermediary of NATO, while the Clinton Administration came to support NATO enlargement once it realised it had widespread support domestically and in Europe (particularly from Germany that wanted to push NATO's borders further east, and the V4 that wanted to guarantee their security from the possibility of a resurgent Russia). Once NATO enlargement was identified as the goal, efforts converged despite Russian objections, culminating in US Senate ratification in 1998 that guaranteed enlargement would proceed due to the central role of the US in NATO.

### **Critical Juncture 1: The Fall of the Berlin Wall**

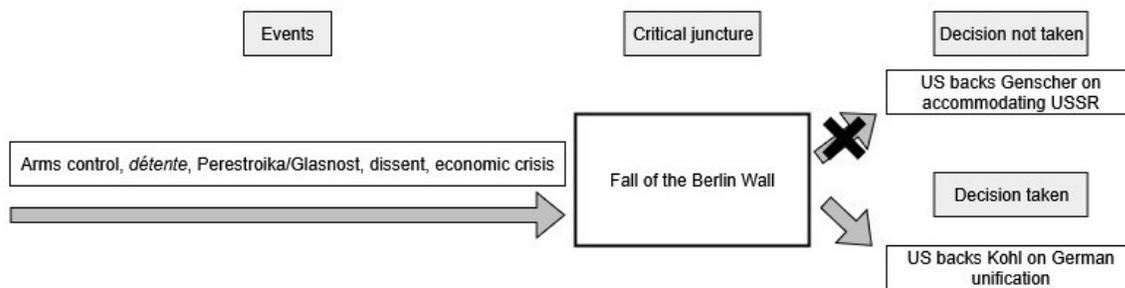
Reaching the point of convergence on NATO enlargement was the result of subsequent events that gradually narrowed down the options and locked in the path to enlargement. By dedicating space to examining the extensive arms control discussions that took place prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, it underscores the extreme significance of the external shock of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The criticality of this event, and the speed with which subsequent critical junctures took place as compared to the decades focussed on arms control, serves to reinforce how historically significant this post-communist period was in terms of shaping the new security environment. The advent of nuclear weapons had changed the nature of conflict, but the Great Debate of 1950-51 did not mean Congress agreed that communism represented an overt threat. The West did not trust Stalin's intentions with the Stalin Note, and after the FRG joined NATO in 1955, the USSR responded by creating the Warsaw Pact. The situation escalated after the Berlin Crisis caused by Khrushchev's ultimatum for the withdrawal of the American, British and French forces culminated in the construction of the Berlin Wall. The construction of the Berlin Wall solidified the division of Germany and pushed the German question to the backburner until the fall of the Berlin Wall reopened this question.

Despite the physical division of Germany, the next several decades were characterised by a combination of arms build up and arms control negotiations. The US implicitly recognised its commitment to Europe initiated with the creation of NATO and the Marshall Plan, but held the cards when it came to armaments, leading the way on programs such as the Polaris ICBMs and then the Minuteman ICBMs and leading proposals on NATO-controlled missile-armed vessels and establishing the Programmes of Cooperation (PoC). As a result, it was also key in arms control agreements, such as the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, Hot Line Agreement, and the Gilpatric Committee to examine non-proliferation instead of a MLF Treaty.

The Berlin Wall did not preclude exploration of closer ties between the superpowers, whether through Brzezinski's 1965 proposal for a "future cooperative community" involving the US and Russia, and Western and Eastern Europe, or the 1969 launch of the *Ostpolitik* by Brandt. Periods of *détente* throughout the Cold War allowed for progress on arms controls even if relations remained antagonistic. The 1968 NPT, the 1972 SALT I Agreements, the 1974 TBTT, and the 1979 SALT II Agreement demonstrated progress. The Helsinki Final Act had been an opportunity to bring the Soviets to the table from the American perspective, while the Soviets saw it as an opportunity to solidify post-WWII borders. The end effect was to lay the groundwork that would later provide the arguments for CEE countries to separate themselves from the Soviet Union and join NATO but at the time it provided for the development of more peaceful East-West relations.

Reagan's 1983 launch of the SDI put a stall to East-West relations as the Soviets considered it a threat to the ABM Treaty and it led to the collapse of INF Treaty and START negotiations. US-Soviet relations were on ice until Gorbachev's election in 1985. The launch of reforms under Gorbachev that included perestroika and glasnost, opened the door to US-Soviet relations once again, leading to an intensification of contacts between Bush and Gorbachev. Gorbachev's reforms faced structural problems though, as oil prices plummeted in 1986 and Soviet state revenues and expenditures suffered a massive gap in 1987 while price reforms were never introduced. The Soviets believed the reforms were causing a reassessment of Soviet goals by the US, while the US believed the state of the Soviet economy meant the US could push for maximum concessions in negotiations. The INF Treaty was signed in 1987, and Gorbachev was optimistic that the USSR could achieve reforms even as his domestic support was waning in light of what was deemed unequal concessions on arms control in some cases in the USSR.

While Gorbachev attempted to maintain his optimism, the reforms he had put in place in 1985 began to bear fruit but not in the way he had intended. The credibility of Soviet reforms and negotiations depended on demonstrating that the communist regime was no longer repressive, so when Németh opened the border between Hungary and Austria and told Kohl and Genscher he would no longer be absorbing the problem of refugees coming from Romania, Gorbachev was left with few options once protests erupted after conservative governments attempted to prevent the swell of population flows from East to West. The process tracing of critical junctures begins with the first critical juncture of the fall of the Berlin Wall which allowed the German question to come back on the table and was a juncture because the US decided to back Kohl on unification after Kohl's Ten-Point Plan and the Malta Summit in 1989 instead of Genscher's initiative for a solution that would accommodate Soviet considerations. The US-Soviet relationship had been dominated by arms control negotiations, but the German question was tabled once again. Path dependency is a gradual process that results from a narrowing of options through political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting, and will be demonstrated over the course of six critical junctures.



**Figure 1: Critical Juncture 1**

### **Critical Juncture 2: German Unification**

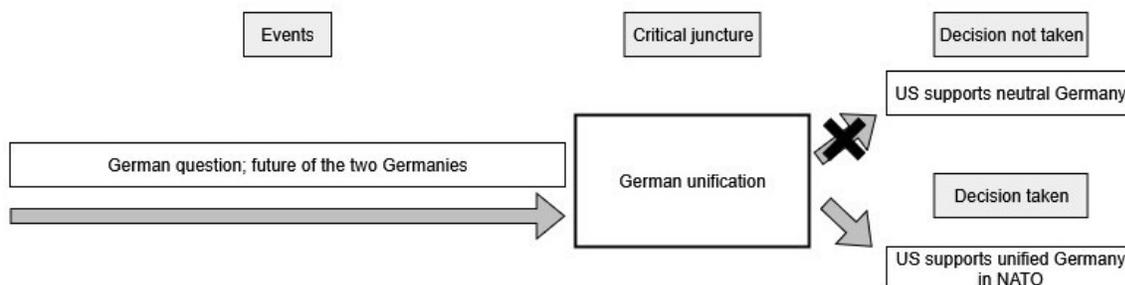
Having reached the critical juncture of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kohl's immediate push for German unification and the demonstrated weakness of Gorbachev as the situation unravelled was sufficient for the US to understand that it had to ensure its interests by aligning itself with the party that would allow it to maintain its foothold in Europe through NATO. NATO without Germany would have lost the central axis of power in Europe that had to be guarded against after two World Wars by dividing its administration among the Big Four. The existence of Germany outside the confines of NATO would pose a threat and cause NATO to lose much of its credibility. As early as the December 1989, Bush and Baker began

speaking of a new Atlanticism. As an example of agenda-setting and policy decisions that contributed to the narrowing of options, the USSR sought to remain engaged in the process by pushing for coordination of the future of Germany through the Big Four, but the US actively pushed for a solution that would limit the influence of the Soviets, eventually settling on the 2+4 framework.

Once the 2+4 framework became the goal, the US pushed back against Genscher’s proposal for a CSCE-based European security framework and Baker managed to get Gorbachev to agree to the 2+4 while promising that NATO jurisdiction would not extend “one inch to the east”. In conversation with Kohl afterwards though, Baker stated that he felt Gorbachev could be persuaded regarding NATO extension if provided with sufficient top-cover. This appeared to contradict the extension of NATO jurisdiction but agreement on the non-extension of NATO jurisdiction was later stated to have been exploratory.

Despite this, it appeared at face value that US-Soviet relations were not being overly taxed despite the launch of the NATO Strategy Review in May 1990 and the July London NATO Summit that confirmed NATO’s new posture as a defensive alliance and the proposal for a joint declaration with the Warsaw Pact. The US-Soviet Washington Summit confirmed the 2+4 framework and Bush and Gorbachev concluded a significant number of agreements and joint statements. The latter part of 1990 was characterised by progress with the Germany Unification Treaty, the Two Plus Four Treaty, the CFE Treaty, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Significantly, Gorbachev agreed with Kohl that Germany would include the FRG, the GDR, and Berlin, and that it would be allowed to choose its alliances. While Gorbachev acquiesced to Western exigencies, he did explain he was facing growing opposition, but Bush told him he could not slow down the process Shevardnadze’s resignation at the end of 1990 was a sign that all was not well for Soviet domestic politics.

The critical juncture of German unification provided a platform for unified Germany in NATO to seek to push NATO’s border eastwards, whose second-order effect was to overlap with CEE countries knocking at NATO’s door. It was a juncture because the US asserted that it supported a unified Germany in NATO rather than a neutral Germany. While the fall of the Berlin Wall had been dominated by the result of knock-on effects of Gorbachev’s reforms, German unification was the culmination of a pre-existing German goal that was backed by the US that sought to maintain its foothold in Europe and found support among European leaders that were already looking to European integration. Had Genscher found more backing for his beliefs or the US not considered NATO as central to its interests in Europe, Germany may have backed out of NATO to achieve unification.



**Figure 2: Critical Juncture 2**

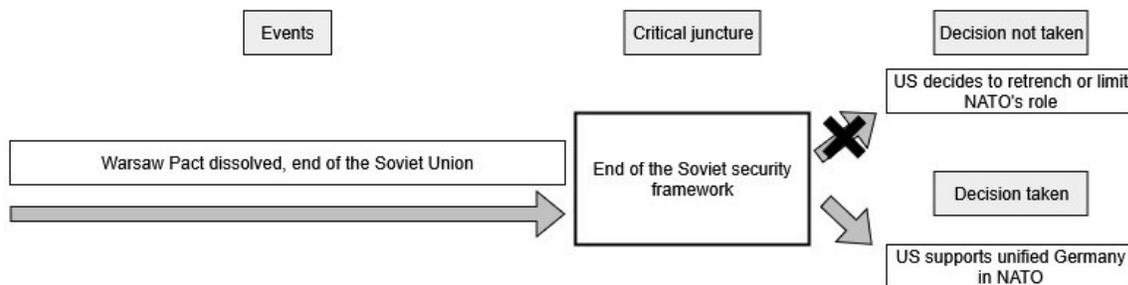
### **Critical Juncture 3: The End of the Soviet Security Framework**

Once the critical juncture of German unification had been reached and the topic of the extension of NATO jurisdiction been breached because of the question of East Germany, tensions in the USSR became increasingly apparent and would lead to the end of the Soviet security framework, both the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. The US-Soviet Summit planned for February 1991 was postponed, and despite repeated appeals by Bessmertnykh and Shevardnadze who highlighted the impact on Gorbachev's domestic support, Bush pushed back explaining that the Soviets had to demonstrate progress on reforms. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland proposed the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, whose military structures were dissolved in February and which Gorbachev hoped would provide a positive signal to the West despite not signing the document himself.

Once the Warsaw Pact's military structures were dissolved, the CEE countries began to voice their concern about becoming isolated or becoming a buffer zone between NATO and the USSR, but the West was not yet ready to offer security assurances or NATO membership, which was indicative of agenda-setting in the West that had not yet reached a point of alignment with what the CEE countries were hoping for, requiring further political statements, policy decisions, or agenda-setting to narrow down the options to make offering NATO membership a viable decision in the West. While the USSR was trying to obtain agreement from the CEE countries to not join alliances directed against the Soviets, the US reminded the CEE countries that the Helsinki Final Act – which the USSR had signed – allowed them to choose their alliances.

While Bush and Gorbachev did reach agreement on the CFE Treaty and START, Gorbachev noted that the Soviets were not receiving the financial support from the US required to successfully achieve their reforms. Bush had begun to engage with Yeltsin, and following the August Coup, Gorbachev's time was counted; while Yeltsin was able to push back the coup, this marked Yeltsin's eventual rise to power. Progress on the NATO side proceeded in parallel. The November NATO Rome Declaration asserted that NATO would support countries in political and economic transition, explicitly tying NATO to the CEE countries. The NATO Strategic Concept asserted that North American security was permanently tied to European security, and the NACC was launched and confirmed the new European security architecture where the respective organisations would have responsibilities across the defence, politics, economics, social, and environmental areas. By the end of the year, Gorbachev resigned, and the Soviet Union was dissolved.

The critical juncture of the end of the Soviet security framework embodied by the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union was critical because it meant the CEE countries and former republics began to seek assurances as the situation in Russia continued to deteriorate, which was leading to a loss in faith in any assurances provided by Russian leadership and a loss of credibility of Russia as a credible international security actor. Combined with the Helsinki Final Act, the CEE countries were free to decide which alliances they wanted to join, including the possibility of NATO membership. Gorbachev's reforms had failed to fix the Soviet Union, but it had opened the door to the manifestation of dissent and the ability for CEE countries to plot a separate path. The juncture was characterised by the need for the US to decide whether to retrench to its side of the ocean or limit its role in NATO, or to confirm that its security was tied to that of Europe, as the end of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union meant in theory that there was no longer a need for NATO or US presence across the Atlantic. Instead, the US confirmed its commitment to European security and NATO, which was a policy decision that narrowed options by reinforcing NATO's role in the post-communist security framework. The effect on path dependency was to contribute another step towards institutional lock-in.



*Figure 3: Critical Juncture 3*

### **Critical Juncture 4: The Initiation of NATO’s Plans for Eastward Enlargement**

Once the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union had been dissolved, the CEE countries and former republics had begun to seek security assurances and the US had stated its security was tied to that of Europe, the fourth critical juncture became that of the initiation of NATO’s plans for eastward enlargement. The establishment of the NACC formalised relations between NATO and the CEE countries and former republics, which was further defined in the 1992 Work Plan for Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation, though events in 1992 were largely dominated by the Bosnian War.

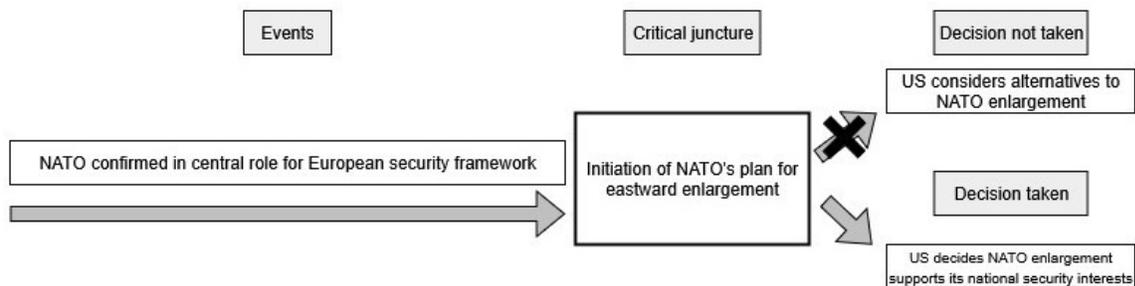
Clinton maintained relations with Yeltsin in 1993, but this relationship evolved in parallel with the developing NACC relationship and the growing momentum on EU enlargement with the establishment of the Copenhagen Criteria. Though Clinton continued to work on securing funding for Russia, the violence of the Russian constitutional crisis that culminated in the army storming the Supreme Soviet building and a ten-day conflict called Black October<sup>864</sup> and the Russian-backed separatist rebellion in Abkhazia further sapped belief in the success of Russian reforms. The V4 began to push for NATO membership and pushed for a clear message on NATO enlargement at the January 1994 NATO Summit. Though Christopher had said in June that enlargement was not on the agenda, Clinton approved the change in October and Lake announced the PfP. By November, Walker had informed Lake that European governments were willing to accept US influence in return for a substantial US troop presence in Europe.

The US Administration sought to obtain broad support for PfP, but still had to address the division between those who wanted to adopt a go-slow approach and those who wanted to act quickly to consolidate the democratic gains in the post-Communist region. By January 1994, Clinton had confirmed NATO enlargement was a question of “when” and “how”, even while Kozyrev suggested an alternative under the helm of the CSCE and NACC, which the US dismissed, as the US did not want to involve bodies that would provide Russia with leverage in any new European security framework. Clinton maintained engagement with Russia, though Merry warned that democratic forces in Russia were in “serious trouble” and that market reforms were not helping. Russia did join PfP but the September Washington Summit was marked by a deterioration of relations where Yeltsin questioned the speed of progress for enlargement. By the end of 1994, bipartisan alignment during mid-term elections on the necessity for NATO enlargement meant the US was clear that NATO enlargement was in its interest.

<sup>864</sup> Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Yeltsin Under Siege — The October 1993 Constitutional Crisis paragraphs 2–4.

Mitterrand stated at the December 1989 European Council meeting that German unification should be accompanied by “equally large steps toward European Union”.<sup>865</sup> Mitterrand had obtained Kohl’s support for an intergovernmental conference to amend the Treaty of Rome (which created the European Economic Community) to prepare a new treaty adopting economic and monetary union in exchange for EC endorsement of German unification along the guidelines proposed by Bush.<sup>866</sup> Shortly after, Baker delivered a speech at the Press Club in Berlin entitled “A New Europe, a New Atlanticism: Architecture for a New Era” that aligned with German preferences: a NATO and the American security guarantee, the EC-WEU and a single European security identity, and the CSCE and a pan-European security order.<sup>867</sup> The US was stepping in to take the lead in the “diplomatic processes” pertaining to German unification

The critical juncture of the initiation of NATO’s plans for eastward enlargement had been reached, which opened the question of how fast to proceed along that path. As early as 1991, Bush had indicated to Kohl and Mitterrand that he was not supportive of a European force that would take NATO’s place and had been clear about the need to maintain unity over NATO’s essential role for the defence of Europe. Though the plan for NATO enlargement had not yet taken shape, the US was not supportive of alternatives, relegating the WEU, the OSCE, and any notion of a European Force to a secondary role. As a result, NATO’s plan for eastward enlargement was a juncture because the political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting that led to the decision to initiate NATO’s plans for eastward enlargement culminated to the narrowing down of options to this decision and further solidified the path dependence. There were no formalities in place prior to this to begin any alignment and negotiations between NATO and aspiring members, nor was there any official pronouncement by the US administration confirming that enlargement would take place. Russia had voiced its objections multiple times but the V4, European leaders, and US domestic political interests had aligned to make NATO eastward enlargement a concrete goal.



**Figure 4: Critical Juncture 4**

### **Critical Juncture 5: Issuing of Invitations to Begin Accession Negotiations**

Once the US had bipartisan support for NATO enlargement, the next critical juncture was the decision to issue invitations to begin accession negotiations. The launch of PfP meant the beginning of the marked differentiation between the countries of CEE and Russia. Despite Russia’s efforts to advocate for

<sup>865</sup> Lehmkuhl, “The ‘Ottawa Formula’ and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the ‘Two-Plus-Four’ Negotiations,” para. 23.

<sup>866</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 23.

<sup>867</sup> Lehmkuhl, para. 24.

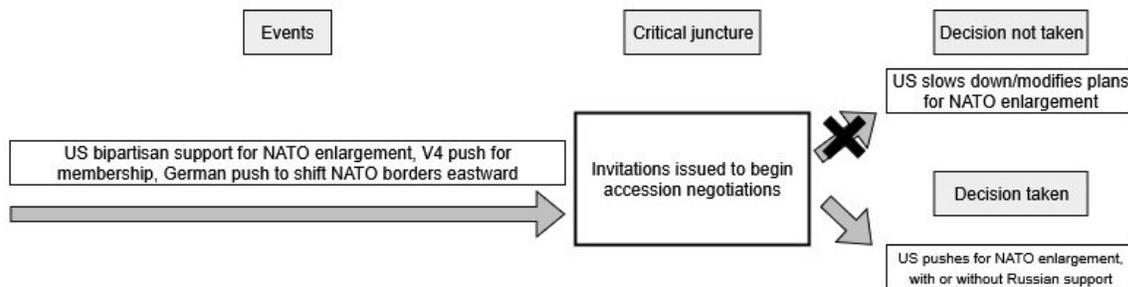
alternatives, the US was firm that it would not allow NATO's primacy to be diluted among different organisations. The December 1994 NSC paper "*Building Europe's New Security Architecture*" indicated the objectives would be clear by the end of 1995 in time for the Study on NATO Enlargement but already proposed that enlargement include one or more CEE countries with an option for more, alongside an institutionalised NATO-Russia relationship that would not provide for priori consultations or veto power to Russia. Russia continued to march to a different beat, as Kozyrev made comments on Russia's near-abroad in the first quarter of 1995 that did nothing to lessen concerns by CEE countries, and issued a statement that NATO-Russia relations had not yet been worked out despite the May 1995 NAC/NACC meeting's communique stating that the NATO-Russia relationship was developing within a cooperative security architecture in Europe.

It became clear as 1995 progressed that there was a dual track to NATO enlargement that set Russia apart from the CEE countries. The US at that point was still proposing a go-slow approach that would maintain confidence with the CEE countries without harming relations with Russia, fully acknowledging that accession talks would mean crossing a line. Lake's memo to Clinton in July 1995 indicated that Russian opposition to NATO enlargement was growing, that there was some unease among West European countries and that Congressional support was not certain. The goal was then to push for a basic framework document with the Russians by December 1995 but with the understanding that Kozyrev might be attacked for supporting the West's agenda, which could mean abandoning efforts with Russia by the second half of 1996 or the first half of 1997 if it risked progress on NATO enlargement.

The Study on NATO Enlargement ended up being published ahead of the Russian parliamentary elections. It stated that PfP would serve as a step to membership while relations with Russia would be through an Individual Partnership Programme and the development of wider relations. While Kohl expressed concern about the impact of NATO enlargement on Russia, Clinton did not want NATO to be seen to be indecisive; the compromise was that the December NATO Ministerial ended up pushing enlargement further down in the document to avoid raising ire in Russia, but it did not detract from the plan. Progress on enlargement requirements and negotiations continued throughout 1996 at the same time as Russian and American presidential elections. NATO foreign ministers did try to engage with Russia again in June 1996 but Primakov made it clear that Russia would not tolerate Western military forces near Russia's border.

Following the 1996 Russian presidential elections, the US engaged with Russia, indicating that a summit in the first half of 1997 to announce enlargement would be set at the December Ministerial, and Clinton proposed a NATO-Russia Charter and told Yeltsin in September that he hoped to consolidate the NATO-Russia partnership by December. The US estimated that Primakov was coming to terms with enlargement and hoped to get his support by December.

Clinton announced in October that the first new members would be full members by NATO's 50th anniversary in 1999, and the December Ministerial communique announced the Madrid Summit for July 1997. The US continued to engage with Russia on investments, financing, and trade, but pushed back at Russian efforts to address the NATO-Russia question at the G7 just before the Madrid Summit to avoid it potentially derailing the announcement of enlargement. Though Russia continued to publicly oppose NATO enlargement, the NATO-Russia Charter was signed in May. The critical juncture was reached when the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were formally invited at the July Madrid Summit to begin accession talks. This was critical because it combined with the separate NATO-Russia path to indicate that Russia would not be a part of NATO enlargement. The juncture was because the US decided to move ahead with NATO enlargement without Russian support as opposed to slowing down the pace or modifying its plans for enlargement. Russia had consistently pushed for alternative institutional arrangements or to put the NATO-Russia relationship ahead, but by formally announcing that accession negotiations were beginning, this made it politically impossible for the US or NATO to backtrack.



**Figure 5: Critical Juncture 5**

### **Critical Juncture 6: US Senate Ratification of NATO Enlargement**

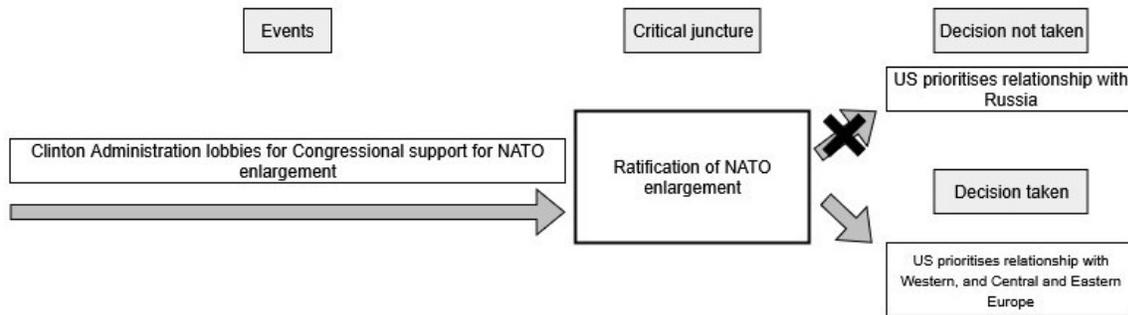
The decision to announce NATO enlargement on the timeline that worked for the US and NATO, despite Russian opposition, marked the beginning of the final steps to the last critical juncture that would lock in NATO enlargement, namely US Senate ratification. US support was required for NATO enlargement to take place, regardless of what other countries would want, and the deadlines were set in place with US constraints at the forefront. Indeed, to secure ratification by the April 1999 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary NATO Summit, accession talks would need to be completed by the December 1999 NAC Ministerial, leaving 15 months to secure ratification, but most importantly, eight months to secure US ratification before Congress went on recess for the 1998 elections. The publication of the Study on NATO enlargement had occurred prior to the Russian legislative elections in 1996, which symbolised the prioritisation of NATO enlargement above NATO-Russia relations, and the timing for the signing of the NATO-Russia Charter had been done to avoid Russian efforts against NATO enlargement.

Once the Protocols of Accession were signed at the December 1997 Ministerial, the US turned its efforts to securing domestic support in the lead up to Senate ratification, including a New York Times article by Nunn and Scowcroft, and diplomatic initiatives by Albright and Clinton. The SFRC vote in March presaged a positive outcome, though there were efforts from both sides to slow down or impose a moratorium on NATO enlargement.

Progress on NATO enlargement was not without consequences though, as Yeltsin informed Clinton that he had expended significant political capital to turn Russian opinion on the US and the West, so once the airstrikes on Serb forces were announced, Yeltsin stated START II would no longer be ratified in April as planned. This did not impact Senate ratification of NATO enlargement in April 1998 though, marking the final critical juncture that confirmed US support for NATO enlargement. The juncture was the US decision to support NATO enlargement despite Russian objections, rather than supporting domestic efforts to slow down or impose a moratorium on NATO enlargement.

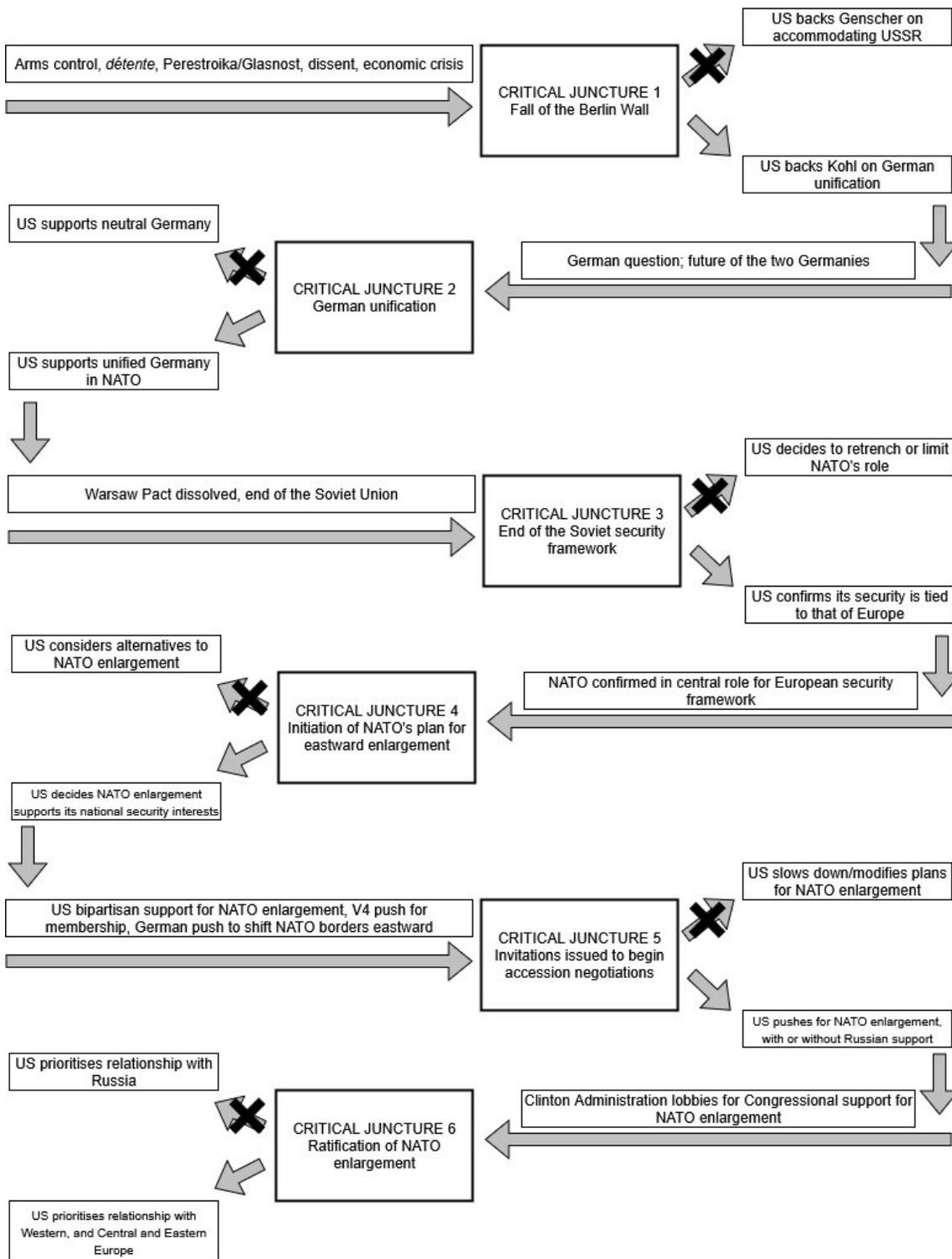
The bipartisan nature of American politics could have created barriers to ratification that could have prevented or delayed enlargement. Delays could have eroded confidence in US commitment to the process and created a knock-on effect across Europe, providing a wedge for Russia to push for its goals. Instead, Russia was sidelined after decades of US-Soviet relations that provided it with a dominant role in negotiations and consideration in international politics. NATO rose above other multilateral institutions as a Cold War institution that found a new mission after the end of the Soviet Union, and the US reaffirmed its interests in Europe after fears that it would lose its footing when German unification risked NATO

disappearing or losing its importance in the European security framework. At its core, NATO had been a guarantee of US security through European security. The US had sought to maintain NATO as a tool for its European foreign policy, but German and Russian interests did not necessarily align with this. The unexpected end of the Cold War opened the door to the US assuming the leadership role in determining the future security framework in post-Cold War Europe, which it was able to do despite initial reluctance in Congress, Defense, NSC, and intellectuals. The US-Russia relationship never assumed the centrality that the US-Soviet relationship had had, despite efforts on both parts and despite domestic problems that Gorbachev and Yeltsin were never able to fully overcome.



**Figure 6: Critical Juncture 6**

The six critical junctures – the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO’s plans for eastward enlargement, issuing invitations to begin accession negotiations, and Senate ratification of NATO enlargement – stand out as the turning points that led to the path increasingly becoming locked in towards NATO enlargement despite it not having been foreseen at the beginning, and despite voices that spoke up along the way to propose alternatives or warn of potential risks. The US increasingly identified its interests with NATO enlargement, which aligned with the CEE countries that began to look for new assurances to avoid becoming isolated or a buffer zone. Alternatives were discounted because they would lead to the US losing its preponderance through NATO. The USSR, and then Russia’s, economic and political instability at the time meant Gorbachev and later Yeltsin could only voice their opposition and propose alternatives.



**Figure 7: Critical Junctures and Decisions**

## 7 Conclusion: Path Dependency and NATO Enlargement

This thesis argued that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia as there is no evidence the plan for post-communist enlargement existed prior to the incremental steps that resulted from political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting that unfolded and narrowed down options over the course of six critical junctures that made the institutional lock-in of NATO a case of path dependence:

- The fall of the Berlin Wall: Gorbachev's 1985 reforms opened the door to events leading to this critical juncture, marking a shock that shifted priorities away from arms control and put the Germanys' future on the table.
- German unification: the long-held goal of unification was seized upon by Kohl, and the US understood it was in its interest to support this if it wanted Germany's support for NATO's continued presence.
- The end of the Soviet security framework: the end of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact meant NATO's original *raison d'être* had disappeared but NATO's role in the European security framework was instead reaffirmed, despite diverging opinions from Russia, but also from several US politicians and academics.
- The initiation of NATO's plan for eastward enlargement: though initially NATO's continued presence in Europe was based on the unified territory of Germany, plans then progressed to enlarging NATO eastward as CEE countries sought to join NATO and Germany did not want its eastern border to be NATO's eastern border.
- The issuing invitations for accession negotiations: continued pushback from Russia and discussions of slowing plans for enlargement down did not change the opinion of the US Administration and it drove this forward by aligning timelines to issue invitations and ratify enlargement in time to prevent 1998 US midterm elections from overriding the issue.
- The US Senate's ratification of enlargement: the US Administration went on the offensive to ensure sufficient votes were secured to reach Senate ratification, which requires a two-thirds majority and would have derailed the plan that had taken shape since the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>868</sup>

This thesis sought to demonstrate through process tracing across incremental steps between six critical junctures that US-Soviet relations shifted from a dominant arms control framework to one of NATO enlargement following the fall of the Berlin Wall. The elimination of alternatives as political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting narrowed down the options for the new European security framework culminated in NATO rising above alternatives, such as the OSCE and the WEU. This demonstrates that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US, but the result of critical junctures that made it the dominant position after decades of US-Soviet relations articulated around arms control negotiations. While the US became the main actor in pushing NATO enlargement forward, and at the speed at which it did, Germany and the CEE countries played a role in advancing NATO enlargement at various points.

The end of the Cold War had been an opportunity for the US to retrench from what had originally been seen as a temporary commitment to Europe to prevent communism from spreading while European nations rebuilt after WWII. Theoretically, the end of the Soviet Union had meant the end of NATO's *raison d'être*, yet in practice NATO endured and enlarged, even accepting weak states into the alliance. Path dependence does not mean decisions were linear and self-evident. They were in fact the result of political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting throughout the process, which allowed

---

<sup>868</sup> "Constitution Annotated - Clause 2 Advice and Consent," accessed March 14, 2026, <https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/article-2/section-2/>.

incremental steps to be taken and lead to critical junctures. The nature of critical junctures is that they cannot be foreseen but are critical in understanding the processes that took place that narrowed down the options over time until NATO enlargement became the outcome. Though NATO also served as a tool for US influence in Europe, support for enlargement in the US was not immediate and required these political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting to achieve the bipartisan strategy of maintaining the pre-eminence of the US in the world. NATO's existence, particularly given the American strategy of forward-deploying, was tied to US national security interests.

This thesis stated that the Russia-Ukraine war has highlighted tensions between those who argue the war was caused by NATO enlargement and those who argue the war illustrates why NATO had to enlarge and asked the question of whether the Russia-Ukraine war was a manifestation of ill-guided or well-planned NATO enlargement. This thesis has demonstrated that it is possible for an outcome to evolve in a gradual manner, absent an initially formed plan, because of political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting narrowing options. Future research may seek to apply this framework to the analysis of possible critical junctures and path dependence to the Russia-Ukraine war.

The thesis began by reviewing the literature on alliances, arms control, German unification, and NATO enlargement to identify a research gap and build the theoretical underpinning of the dissertation's hypothesis. The literature on alliances examined how the US has viewed alliances historically given its reputation for isolationism, and how NATO fits into the American understanding of alliances. Post-WWII North Atlantic Treaty multilateralism was described as "historically unprecedented" but was understood to be the result of the US realising its national security was tied to that of Europe. The threat of communism to a Europe that was rebuilding pitted US interests against those of the USSR. The US aversion to "entangling alliances" was meant to allow it to maintain the ability to act unilaterally but did not preclude the existence of either joining or helping to sustain successful alliances or coalitions, which Rapp-Hooper characterised as a foreign policy tool,<sup>869</sup> and which could be used to serve US national security interests.

The literature on arms control examined the use of arms control agreements as a tool of Cold War foreign policy whose utility diminished once the Cold War ended. Nuclear weapons occupied a central position in arms control and Khrushchev's fear that the FRG would not remain non-nuclear drove the 1958 Berlin Crisis and culminated in the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Despite the hardening of East-West divisions, the Cold War was characterised by periods of *détente* during which both sides engaged in arms control negotiations despite ongoing mistrust of the other side's intentions. Nuclear weapons policy depended on the credibility of the threat, but technological advances meant the build-up was a costly endeavour that neither side could reasonably sustain as pressure on domestic budgets increased. Soviet conventional superiority faced US technological superiority, which underlay arms control negotiations over weapon types and numbers. Though alliances served to support deterrence through forward defence, American superiority in nuclear weapons raised questions about the need for alliances. Once the overwhelming power of US nuclear weapons meant the level of destruction they could wreak *decreased* the credibility of the US using such weapons, it became clear that nuclear weapons alone could not serve for deterrence. NATO supported the credibility of deterrence, and Reagan's push for SDI sought to strategically reorient nuclear weapons that would still allow for arms reductions while capitalising on Soviet vulnerabilities and forcing costly developments for the Soviets in parallel with working to defund them. The Soviet proposal for a pan-European security conference that culminated in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act was seen by the US as a way to engage with the Soviets on MBFR but ended up having long-term ramifications for the USSR as the Act gave a basis for the social and political unrest of the late 1980s and later justification for countries to choose to join NATO. Once German unification was on the table, Kohl pushed for quick agreements on conventional forces prior to agreements on

---

<sup>869</sup> Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*, 14–15.

nuclear weapons to avoid his government splitting due to the thin majority. This changed once the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union dissolved, removing the nuclear-armed monolith and disrupted arms control negotiations.

The literature on German unification explained how despite the division of Germany, the question of German unification lay dormant between Germany's division in 1949 and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Brandt considered Ostpolitik to be impossible to dissociate from *détente* in the quest to overcome political tensions, even if unification would be impossible for the time being. The US was concerned that *détente* would ratify the status quo rather than weakening ties between Eastern Europe and the USSR, as well as removed German reliance on the US nuclear umbrella. By the end of the Cold War, the future of the US in Europe became tied to the question of the future of Germany. So great was the historical German goal of unification that once Kohl signalled his intent to push for German unification, the Bush Administration very quickly backed him to ensure the Soviets did not get him to agree to leave NATO in exchange for their support on unification. This support for German unification was not initially spread across the US government but progressed over time even as the Soviets tried to slow it down. German unification was the vector for US European policy embodied in NATO, with the understanding that the strength of NATO aligned with the strength of US influence in Europe and was the reason why it consistently pushed aside alternatives. The Cold War concerns about a nuclear-armed Soviet Union and the threat of German-Soviet alignment in a potentially nuclear-free Europe would not materialise with a unified Germany within NATO structures.

The literature on NATO enlargement examined the origins of NATO and why it persisted after the Cold War. The 1949 North Atlantic Treaty was the result of the fear of the threat of communism and the realisation that Western Europe's security impacted US national security. Forward deployment of troops was a signal of US commitment to a region, and the 1950 Korean War highlighted the need to strengthen NATO by providing it with more concrete commitments of infrastructure, troops, and command even as the Great Debate highlighted that all were not in agreement on the extent of the communist threat. Brzezinski and Kissinger acknowledged that US-backed security of Europe would allow European countries to move ahead on their own policies, so NATO was a way to provide cohesion and alignment.<sup>870</sup> Bush understood that NATO would not survive without Germany, but Mandelbaum also highlighted how the US would need to stay in Europe to counterbalance Germany.<sup>871</sup> Maintaining, and enlarging, NATO upheld the status quo and led to the US believing and assuming a role in the responsibility to maintain peace in Europe. Additionally, the end of the Cold War raised concerns over the possibility of a power vacuum and a weak signal of US commitment to Europe risked stability on the European continent. This perspective was divided between the beliefs that the US should retrench for budgetary and political reasons, that the US commitment could be maintained through NATO as it was, and that the credibility of NATO and the long-term security of Europe meant NATO had to be enlarged. Germany was also instrumental in pushing for NATO enlargement, as it was concerned about the overlap of its eastern border and that of NATO, but it was also the desire to avoid alternatives to NATO filling the gap that contributed to the hardening of the decision to enlarge. Sarotte suggests that the decision to enlarge NATO was the result of irreversible decisions that foreclosed other options, and Popescu frames it as an emergent process.<sup>872</sup> Sayle suggests the language of the Treaty left it open to enlargement,<sup>873</sup> while Colbourn proposes that the Harmel Report laid the groundwork by seeking a more stable relationship with

---

<sup>870</sup> Brzezinski, *Alternative to Partition: For a Broader Conception of America's Role in Europe*, 174–75; Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy: Three Essays*, 53–57.

<sup>871</sup> Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*, 54–58, 69, 71, 77, 79, 93; Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe*, 14, 17.

<sup>872</sup> Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, 13–14; Popescu, *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy: How American Presidents Succeed in Foreign Policy*, 9–10, 19.

<sup>873</sup> Sayle, "Patterns of Continuity in NATO's Long History," 48–49, 55.

the USSR and Warsaw Pact members.<sup>874</sup> Opinions on enlargement demonstrate that it was driven by security and politics on both sides of the Atlantic and prioritised above other options.

This thesis brought together the four areas examined in the literature review (alliances, arms control, German unification, and NATO enlargement) to explain how their parallel evolution throughout the Cold War informed the dynamics at the end of the Cold War, drawing the reasons for the persistence and enlargement of NATO after the Cold War back to the early days of the Cold War. This longer timeline supports the conclusion that NATO's first post-Cold War NATO enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of incremental, path-dependent decisions marked by the six critical junctures: the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO's plan for eastward enlargement, the issuing invitations for accession negotiations, and the US Senate's ratification of enlargement. This thesis contributes to the literature exposing extensive primary sources, including new insights on well-known discussions such as that of Baker, Gorbachev, and Shevardnadze, to fill the gap in the literature on NATO enlargement that has focussed extensively on the contemporary Russian grievances focussed on the Baker, Gorbachev, and Shevardnadze conversation.

This thesis rests on path dependence theory and hypothesised that German unification formed a critical juncture that made it possible to conceptualise US-Soviet relations through a different framework than arms control negotiations. NATO enlargement subsequently emerged as the dominant organisational framework through a series of critical junctures that progressively eliminated alternatives through subsequent events and decisions that cumulatively made enlargement inevitable. This would mean that NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement was not premeditated by the US to sideline Russia, but the result of critical junctures that made it the dominant position after decades of US-Soviet relations articulated around arms control negotiations, even in the face of alternatives. This hypothesis was tested by using process tracing across critical junctures, using political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting (primarily from the perspective of the US with input from other countries at critical moments as required) articulated around the critical junctures of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 1998 US Senate ratification of NATO enlargement to include the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to demonstrate the narrowing of options until NATO enlargement became the dominant option. This bookends events during that period to examine how path dependency can explain the outcome of NATO enlargement once the threat of the USSR had disappeared through decisions that were made at these critical junctures and which directed subsequent decisions along a path that eliminated alternatives. The results demonstrate that NATO enlargement was not premeditated and that the outcome involved years of political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting to achieve US Senate ratification – an outcome that could not have been predicted or orchestrated at the outset.

The body of the thesis addresses arms control during the Cold War, describing how different periods of tensions and *détente* impacted the East-West relationship and perceptions of intent and risk. The background to the NATO, US, and Soviet positions is laid out in terms of goals on nuclear weapons and conventional forces. The German question is addressed in relation to how it influenced continental dynamics on arms control and political alignments, as well as why Kohl immediately leapt on the opportunity for German unification after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Gorbachev's reforms are introduced and related to how these reforms laid the groundwork for protests that made the fall of the Berlin Wall possible even if Soviet economic reforms proved unsuccessful due to a confluence of external and internal factors. The German motivations, Soviet concern, and US interest in German unification is described to explain how central it is to the changing dynamics in Europe and directly connected to the question of NATO's future. NATO's post-Cold War future is addressed through German unification as well as EU enlargement, and the diverging opinions within the US and EU countries, and the Soviet and

---

<sup>874</sup> Colbourn, "NATO as a Political Alliance: Continuities and LEgacies in the Enlargement Debates of the 1990s," 74.

Russian government is described to highlight the discussions that occurred that underline how the decision points were not self-evident and depended on specific identification of interests. The US-Soviet, and US-Russia summits, and the NATO summits and meetings are highlighted throughout, and reveal their impact on the tempo of negotiations and how key dates came to support the speed at which NATO enlargement proceeded (the 1999 50th NATO anniversary) once the Clinton Administration agreed it would pursue enlargement. US political dynamics are also used to illustrate how bipartisan alignment and Clinton Administration interests were able to use domestic and party politics to move forward with enlargement despite dissenting opinions.

The final chapter addresses the critical junctures and applies path dependency using the historical events discussed in the previous chapters. Process tracing highlights the causal mechanisms, or incremental steps, that laid the groundwork for the critical junctures, namely the political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting that gradually narrowed the options until NATO enlargement dominated alternatives. The detailed history outlining discussions, letters, and other interactions that took place in the lead up to each decision associated with each critical juncture is explored in earlier chapter, but the final chapter broadly recontextualises each critical juncture and highlights the associated decisions that were taken, namely:

- The fall of the Berlin Wall => the US decides to back Kohl on German unification.
- German unification => the US decides to support a unified Germany in NATO.
- The end of the Soviet security framework => the US confirms its security is tied to that of Europe.
- The initiation of NATO's plan for eastward enlargement => the US decides that NATO enlargement supports its national security interests.
- The issuing invitations for accession negotiations => the US decides to move forward with NATO enlargement with or without Russian support.
- The US Senate's ratification of enlargement => the US confirms its support for NATO enlargement despite Russian objections.

The six critical junctures – the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification, the end of the Soviet security framework, the initiation of NATO's plans for eastward enlargement, issuing invitations to begin accession negotiations, and Senate ratification of NATO enlargement – stand out as the turning points that led to the path increasingly becoming locked in towards NATO enlargement despite it not having been foreseen at the beginning, and despite voices that spoke up along the way to propose alternatives or warn of potential risks. The US increasingly identified its interests with NATO enlargement, which aligned with the CEE countries that began to look for new assurances to avoid becoming isolated or a buffer zone. Alternatives were discounted because they would lead to the US losing its preponderance through NATO. The USSR, and then Russia's, economic and political instability at the time meant Gorbachev and later Yeltsin could only voice their opposition and propose alternatives

The analysis concludes that these decisions led to a path of increasing lock-in, defined by Schreyögg and Sydow as the phase “where a the dominant patterns becomes fixed and ‘develops a quasi-deterministic character’”<sup>875</sup> that culminated in post-Cold War NATO enlargement despite the outcome not having been foreseen until these critical junctures gradually led to it being identified and solidified.

The thesis contributes to the literature by drawing together extensive primary sources beyond the 1990 conversation between Baker, Shevardnadze, and Gorbachev conversation regarding NATO's jurisdiction not moving one inch to the east. The inclusion of conversations that had either not been examined or mentioned yet provide additional insight into political dynamics that occurred between the

---

<sup>875</sup> Schreyögg and Sydow, “Understanding Institutional and Organizational Path Dependencies,” 325.

US, NATO, the Soviet Union/Russia, and Kohl to demonstrate how there was no clearly formulated plan from the outset.

The absence of a clearly formulated plan is important because it provides additional background in the context of the present-day discussions on the role of NATO enlargement in continental political and defence matters, as well as helps better inform contributory elements in the East-West relationship when considering options for relations with Russia. This implies that the study of these areas and policy proposals for the future of NATO and the future of relations with Russia can detach itself from partisan politics and examine how individual decisions can lead to simultaneously positive and negative outcomes that may be addressed through the inclusion or exclusion of multiple factors in decision-making. This thesis also contributes an understanding of the extension of the timeframe on the understanding of NATO enlargement rather than considering it in the short-term context of a promise that was made or not in a specific moment in time to better contextualise the lead up and events following the conversation between Baker, Shevardnadze, and Gorbachev.

Now that this new explanation of NATO enlargement has been examined, it would be useful to study whether the same conditions exist today for any additional NATO enlargement. As the role of NATO and national defence in Europe rises to the fore once more, understanding potential positive and negative dynamics of alliance growth and formation may help mitigate tensions and knock-on effects. The case of the Russia-Ukraine war renewed the debate on NATO enlargement and Russia accused the US of not keeping its word, arguing that Baker had assured Gorbachev that NATO would not extend eastward. Critics say Russia gave sufficient warning that NATO enlargement would be a hostile act, while others argue CEE countries had legitimate security interests. Was the Russia-Ukraine war a manifestation of ill-guided or well-planned NATO enlargement attempts? Evidence demonstrates that the US and the Soviet Union engaged sincerely in attempting to succeed in arms control negotiations, even if there was underlying mistrust, and the US did continue to engage with Russia but shifted its gaze to the countries of CEE once it became apparent that Russian reforms were not progressing satisfactorily and that NATO enlargement was key to maintaining US interests in Europe. The study of the critical junctures in this thesis indicates that it was a series of political statements, policy decisions, and agenda-setting that allowed NATO enlargement to become the outcome of institutional lock-in, and has not uncovered evidence that there was a premeditated plan for NATO enlargement at the outset following the fall of the Berlin Wall. NATO enlargement was a sequence of events and critical junctures that allowed NATO enlargement to become the US goal, above and beyond any US-Russia or NATO-Russia relationship. Gorbachev and Yeltsin did repeatedly voice their opposition to NATO enlargement though, indicating that NATO forces so close to their border was problematic. There is no indication that this was factored into the way enlargement would proceed beyond assurances that NATO was not a threat. There were multiple warnings from those working closely on Russia, but these were not heeded. Based on this thesis, the response to the question of whether the Russia-Ukraine war was a manifestation of ill-guided or well-planned NATO enlargement is that NATO enlargement was the answer to US Europe foreign policy but failed to factor in the concerns that were raised. This was likely due to the self-imposed deadline of the 1999 50th anniversary of NATO that did not account for the go-slow approach that was initially advanced. The question this leaves unanswered is whether a slower process would have allowed for a different type of enlargement, even as path dependency precludes moving backwards, leaving us in recent years with rapid accession of Finland (2023) and Sweden (2024), Austria that is content to remain a partner, and Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo that aspire to join but all face various hurdles to this being achievable, or rapidly achievable.

## Bibliography

- “30 Years Ago, the Kremlin Crushed a Parliamentary Uprising, Leading to Strong Presidential Rule.” *AP News*, October 4, 2023.
- A.B. “A Conversation with Kennan’s Biographer John Lewis Gaddis.” *The Economist*, November 28, 2011.
- Address of the President of the United States. Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey (1947).
- Akhromeev, S.F. “Record of Conversation of Chief of General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces Marshal of the Soviet Union S.F. Akhromeev and H. Brown, C. Vance, H. Kissinger, and D. Jones, February 4, 1987.” In *National Security Archive*, 9, 1987.
- Allen, Richard, Robert L. Bartley, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Midge Decter, Lawrence Eagleburger, Samuel Huntington, William G. Hyland, et al. “Beyond Containment? The Future of U.S.-Soviet Relations.” *Policy Review* Winter (1985): 1–41.
- Alpi, Kristine M., and John Jamal Evans. “Distinguishing Case Study as a Research Method from Case Reports as a Publication Type” 107, no. 1 (2019): 1–5.
- “AP Was There: 1991 Soviet Coup.” *The Associated Press*, August 19, 2021.
- Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation. Anatoly Chernyaev’s Notes from the Politburo Session [Report on Trilateral Commission Meeting] (1989).
- . Dobrynin Memorandum to Gorbachev on U.S.-Soviet relations. September 18, 1988 (1988).
- . Excerpt from the Second Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and G. Bush, Washington, White House, May 31, 1990 (1990).
- . Letter from Bush to Gorbachev, January 17, 1989 (1989).
- . Record of Main Content of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and H. Kissinger, January 17, 1989 (1989).
- . Record of the First Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and FRG President Richard von Weizsäcker, Bonn, June 12, 1989 (1989).
- Arms Control Association. “START I at a Glance.” *Fact Sheets*, 2022.
- . “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II).” *Treaties*, n.d.
- Arnouk, Bahaa G. *Global Hegemony: A Strategic Illusion - NATO Expansion, Nuclear Promises and the Death of Strategic Trust*, 2025.

- Arthur, W. Brian. “Kenneth Arrow and Nonequilibrium Economics.” *Quantitative Finance* 19, no. 1 (2019): 29–31.
- Asmus, Ronald D. *German Unification and Its Ramifications*, R-4012-A Rand Corporation (1991).
- Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. *Yeltsin Under Siege — The October 1993 Constitutional Crisis* (n.d.).
- Atkinson, Rick. “Primakov Cites Concerns on NATO Expansion.” *The Washington Post*, June 5, 1996.
- Atomic Heritage Foundation. “Reagan and Gorbachev: The Reykjavik Summit.” *Cold War History*, 2018.
- Auswärtiges Amt (Hrsg.). *Statement on the Dissolution of the Military Structures of the Warsaw Pact (25 February 1991). Deutsche Aussenpolitik 1990/91: Auf Dem Weg Zu Einer Europäischen Friedensordnung: Eine Dokumentation*. Stuttgart: Bonn Aktuell, 1991.
- Bacevich, Andrew J. *The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory*. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2020.
- Bailes, Alyson JK, and Graham Messervy-Whiting. “Death of an Institution. The End for Western European Union, a Future for European Defence.” *Egmont Paper*, 2011.
- Bailey, Norman A. “Defining the Strategy.” In *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, edited by Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H Marlo, 148–68. Lexington Books, 2016.
- Balmforth, Tom. “Russia Accuses NATO, EU of Waging ‘Real War’ on It via Ukraine.” *Reuters*, September 25, 2025.
- Battiata, Mary. “Shevardnadze Suggests Warsaw Pact Changes.” *The Washington Post*, October 25, 1989.
- Baum, Keith W. “Treating the Allies Properly: The Eisenhower Administration, NATO, and the Multilateral Force.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1983): 85–97.
- BBC News. “Obituary: Eduard Shevardnadze.” *Europe*, 2014.
- Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. “Diplomatic Lessons from the Fall of the Berlin Wall: An Interview with Robert Zoellick.” *Harvard Kennedy School*, 2014.
- Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security. “Western European Union (WEU),” n.d.
- Beschloss, Michael R., and Strobe Talbott. *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War*. New York, Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994.

- Beyer, Jürgen. “On a Branching Route: The Spectrum of Path Dependence in Policy Research.” *Review of Policy Research* 43, no. e70007 (2026): 1–25.
- Bialer, Seweryn. “The Harsh Decade: Soviet Policies in the 1980s.” *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 5 (1981).
- Brands, Hal. “Rethinking America’s Grand Strategy: Insights from the Cold War.” *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 45, no. 4 (2015): 7–16.
- “Brezhnev Doctrine Speech by First Secretary of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev.” *International Relations and Security Network*, November 13, 1968.
- “Broader NATO May Bring ‘Cold Peace,’ Yeltsin Warns: Europe: Russian President Accuses U.S. of Being Power Hungry. Speech Comes as Nations Finalize Nuclear Treaty.” *L.A. Times*, 1994.
- Brunn, Robert A. “Gilpatric Report U.S. Weighs Nuclear-Threat Issue: Committee Set Up.” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 1965.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *Alternative to Partition: For a Broader Conception of America’s Role in Europe*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.
- . “Moscow and the M.L.F.: Hostility and Ambivalence.” *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 1 (1964): 126–34.
- . *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.
- Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance. *Treaty Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests (and Protocol Thereto) (TTBT) (1974)*.
- Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation. *Memorandum of Understanding Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link (1963)*.
- Bush, George, and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed*. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- Byun, Joshua. “Stuck Onshore: Why the United States Failed to Retrench from Europe during the Early Cold War.” *Texas National Security Review* 7, no. 4 (2024).
- C-Span. “NATO Enlargement, March 20, 1998,” 1998.
- . “Russian Foreign Minister, Andrey Kozyrev, Addressed Reporters Outside of the White House Following a Meeting with President Bill Clinton on September 29, 1993,” 1993.
- . “Russian Foreign Policy,” 1995.

———. “U.N. Role in International Peacekeeping,” 1993.

Calleo, David. *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present*. Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Calleo, David P. *Follies of Power: America’s Unipolar Fantasy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Capoccia, Giovanni, and R. Daniel Kelemen. “The Study of Critical Junctures Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism.” *World Politics* 59 (2007): 341–69.

Carpenter, Ted Galen. “Strategic Evasions and the Drive for NATO Enlargement.” In *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, edited by Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry, 17–30. Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998.

Central Intelligence Agency Directorate of Intelligence. The April 1985 Central Committee Plenum (1985).

Chace, James. *The Consequences of the Peace: The New Internationalism and American Foreign Policy*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Chevallier, Jacques. “La Genèse de La Force de Dissuasion Nucléaire Française.” In *Armement et Ve République*, edited by Maurice Vaïsse, CNRS Éditi., 281–91. Paris, 2013.

CIA Directorate of Intelligence. Gorbachev’s Approach to the United Nations: Image Building at US Expense? (1989).

Clark, Joe. “From the Fallen Wall to ‘Open Skies’ : Canada’s Diplomatic Role in the Reunification of Germany.” *Eurostudia* 5, no. 2 (2024): 8.

Clinton Presidential Library. Moving Toward NATO Expansion (1994).

Clinton, William J. “The President’s News Conference With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, September 28, 1994.” *The White House*, 1994.

———. “The President’s News Conference With Visegrad Leaders in Prague, January 12, 1994.” *The American Presidency Project*, 1994.

Colbourn, Susan. *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO*. Cornell University Press, 2022.

———. “NATO as a Political Alliance: Continuities and LEGacies in the Enlargement Debates of the 1990s.” In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, edited by James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, 73–96. Washington D.C.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Charter of Paris for a New Europe, CVCE.eu (1990).

Congressional Research Service. “The Jackson-Vanik Amendment and Permanent Normal Trade Relations,” 2023.

“Constitution Annotated - Clause 2 Advice and Consent.” Accessed March 14, 2026.  
<https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/article-2/section-2/>.

Cordtz, Dan. “Europe’s A-Force: Nations Are Skeptical of U.S. Multilateral Proposal.” *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 1963.

Correll, John T. “The Making of MAD.” *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, 2018.

Cotey Morgan, Michael Cotey. *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018.

CSCE. Ukraine: The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 (1994).

Csongos, Frank T. “Baker, Bessmertnykh Meet to Intensify START Talks.” *UPI*, June 7, 1991.

———. “Reagan to Soviets: ‘Get out of the Baltic.’” *UPI*, 1987.

Dale Jr, Edwin L. “What Vietnam Did to the American Economy.” *The New York Times*, January 28, 1973.

Dalyell, Tam. “Anatoly Dobrynin.” *The Independent*, 2010.

Danilenko, Gennady M. “The New Russian Constitution and International Law.” *The American Journal of International Law* 88, no. 3 (1994): 451–70.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/2203713>.

Department of State Office of the Historian. 185. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Poindexter) to President Reagan (1986).

———. “Helsinki Final Act, 1975.” *Milestones: 1969-1976*, n.d.

———. Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon (1972).

———. Memorandum of Conversation (1970).

———. The Collapse of the Soviet Union, *Milestones: 1989-1992* (n.d.).

———. Warren Minor Christopher (n.d.).

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. Memorandum to the President Gorbachev’s Gameplan: The Long View (1987).

- Deutsche Einheit Sonderedition und den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90. Letter from James Baker to Helmut Kohl (1990).
- Dewar, Helen. "NATO Expansion Foes Rally For Senate Votes." *The Washington Post*, April 27, 1998.
- . "Senate Approves Expansion of NATO." *The Washington Post*, May 1, 1998.
- Dobbs, Michael. "Changes Prove to Be Bonnus for Gorbachev." *The Washington Post*, November 9, 1989.
- . "Republics Assume Kremlin Debt: Agreement Clears the Way for More Credits from West." *The Washington Post*, October 30, 1991.
- . "Russia's Kozyrev Portrays Stance as Benign to Ensure U.S. Support." *The Washington Post*, April 29, 1995.
- Ebbinghaus, Bernhard. "Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change? Two Approaches Applied to Welfare State Reform." *Max-Planck-Institut Für Gesellschaftsforschung Köln* 05, no. 2 (2005).
- EBSCO. "Gorbachev Initiates a Policy of Glasnost." *Research Starters*, 2026.
- . "Western European Union Is Established." *Research Starters*, 2026.
- Engel, Jeffrey A. *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.
- EUR-Lex. Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria), Summaries of EU Legislation (n.d.).
- . Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (1957).
- . Treaty on European Union, Document 1 Official Journal (1992).
- European Commission. "EU Enlargement." *Policies*, n.d.
- European Council. "European Council in Copenhagen 21-22 June 1993: Conclusions of the Presidency," 1993.
- European Parliament. "Copenhagen European Council - 21-22 June 1993." *Official Positions of the Other Institutions and Organs - European Council*, 1993.
- . European Council, Maastricht, 9 and 10 December 1991, Presidency Conclusions (1991).
- European Union. Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union TITLE VI - FINAL PROVISIONS Article 49 (ex Article 49 TEU) (2016).

———. Treaty on European Union (1992).

Evangelista, Matthew. *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

“Fareed Zakaria GPS.” CNN, 2022.

Fedarko, Kevin, and William Mader. “In Russia’s Shadow.” *Time*, October 11, 1993.

Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, France, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and The United States of America. Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (with Agreed Minute) (1990).

Federation of American Scientists. Chronology: CFE Treaty Negotiations and Implementation, 1972-1996, Appendix G (n.d.).

Fitzgerald, Mary C. “Changing Soviet Doctrine on Nuclear War.” *Center for Naval Analyses CRM 86-264*, no. October (1986).

———. Research Memorandum: Changing Soviet Doctrine on Nuclear War (1986).

Frankum, Ronald B. “Military Display.” In *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, edited by Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H Marlo, 372–418. Lexington Books, 2016.

Friedman, Thomas L. “Foreign Affairs; Now a Word from X.” *The New York Times*, May 2, 1998.

———. “Foreign Affairs; The Cold Peace.” *NY Times*, April 26, 1995.

———. “U.S. and Moscow Postpone Summit.” *The New York Times*, January 29, 1991.

Fukuyama, Francis. “The End of History?” *The National Interest* Summer, no. 16 (1989): 3–18.

Fürstenau, Marcel. “Triumph of ‘Genscherism.’” *Deutsche Welle*, December 9, 2015.

Gable, Paul A. “Kozyrev’s ‘Shock Diplomacy’ Is Increasingly Unpopular at Home.” *The Jamestown Foundation*, 1995.

Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. *The Cold War: A New History*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2005.

———. *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

- Garthoff, Raymond L. "Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy." *International Security* 3, no. 1 (1978): 112–47.
- Gates, Robert M. *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.
- Gavin, Francis J. "Blame It on the Blob? How to Evaluate American Grand Strategy." *War on the Rocks*, 2020.
- GBH. "National Security and SDI." *American Experience*, 1983.
- General CIA Records. President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (1985).
- George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. "Soviet-United States Joint Statement on Future Negotiations on Nuclear and Space Arms and Further Enhancing Strategic Stability, 1 February, 1990." *Public Papers*, 1990.
- "Germany: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Announces Plans for NATO Summit Next Year." *Reuters*, September 6, 1996.
- Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Transitabkommen (1972).
- GHDI. Results of the Kohl-Gorbachev Talks (July 15-16, 1990) (1990).
- Gilholy, Georgia. "Putin: Blame NATO for the Ukraine War." *National Security Journal*, September 2, 2025.
- Goethe-Institut Canada. Ottawa and Germany Unity: German Traces in Ottawa (2025).
- Goldgeier, James M. *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999.
- The Guardian. "Gorbachev Puts Paid to Europe's Fears," 1988.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2012/dec/08/archive-1988-gorbachev-europe-fears>.
- Gordon, Michael R. "U.S. Opposes Move to Rapidly Expand NATO Membership." *The New York Times*, 1994.
- Götz, Elias. "Near Abroad: Russia's Role in Post-Soviet Eurasia." *Europe - Asia Studies*, 2022, 1529–50. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2133086>.
- Grossouvre, Henri de, and Côme Carpentier de Gourdon. "The Nato Summit In Bucharest." *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 12, no. 3 (2008): 84–93.
- Haass, Richard N. *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War*. Council on Foreign Relations, 1997.

- Haftendorn, Helga. "The Unification of Germany, 1985-1991." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume III*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Hamilton, Daniel S. "Piece of the Puzzle: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Architecture After the Cold War." In *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, edited by Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr, 3–56. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2019.
- Haslam, Jonathan. *Hubris: The American Origins of Russia's War Against Ukraine*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2024.
- German History in Documents and Images. "Helmut Kohl's Ten-Point Plan for German Unity (November 28, 1989)," 1989. [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=223](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=223).
- Helsinki Watch. *USSR: Continuing Violence in the Baltics* (1991).
- Henrikson, Alan K. "The Creation of the North Atlantic Alliance, 1948-1952." *Naval War College Review* 33, no. 3 (1980): 4–39.
- Hershey, Marjorie. "What Is a Party Platform? Here's How They're Made and What You Should Pay Attention To." *PBS News*, 2024.
- Herspring, Dale R. "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military." *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 36, no. 4 (1987): 42–53.
- Hlatky, Stefanie von, and Michael Fortmann. "NATO Enlargement and the Failure of the Cooperative Security Mindset." In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, edited by James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, 531–62. Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
- Hofmann, Arne. *The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik*. London, New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Holbrooke, Richard. "America, A European Power." *Foreign Affairs* March/April (1995).
- Hoover Institution Archive. Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze diary, February 12, 1990. (1990).
- . Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze diary, February 13, 1990. (1990).
- Horelick, Arnold. "U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Return of Arms Control." *Foreign Affairs*, no. February (1985).
- Houghton, C, K Murphy, D Shaw, and D Casey. "Qualitative Case Study Data Analysis: An Example from Practice." *Nurse Researcher* 22, no. 5 (2015).
- Howlett, Michael, and Jeremy Rayner. "Understanding the Historical Turn in the Policy

- Sciences: A Critique of Stochastic, Narrative, Path Dependency and Process-Sequencing Models of Policy-Making over Time.” *Policy Sciences* 39, no. 1 (2006): 1–18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/sl>.
- Huntington, Samuel P. “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* Summer (1993): 22–49.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2624272>.
- Institut national de l’audiovisuel. “Charles de Gaulle Paroles Publiques: Conférence de Presse Du 10 Novembre 1959,” 1959.
- International Affairs. “Anatoly Dobrynin (1919-2010).” *International Affairs* 56, no. 3 (2010): 242–43.
- International Information Group. “Yeltsin Informs Gorbachev of Results of Minsk Meeting, Gorbachev Proposes Referendum.” *Interfax*, 2021.
- International Labour Organization. Constitution of the Russian Federation of 12 December 1993, RUS-1993-C-41207 (1993).
- Jackson, Glen J.R. “The Great Debate: An Examination of Conflicting Views Regarding American Defense Policies, 1950-1951.” *Dissertations and Theses*. Portland State University, 1970.
- Joffe, Josef. “The Secret of Genscher’s Staying Power: Memoirs of a ‘Slippery Man.’” *Foreign Affairs* January (1998).
- Johnson, Paul. “Europe and the Reagan Years.” *Foreign Affairs*, February 1, 1989.
- Kagan, Robert. *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Vintage Books, 2007.
- Kamen, Al, and R. Jeffrey Smith. “Baker Carrying Crowded Agenda to Moscow Talks.” *The Washington Post*, February 4, 1990.
- Kamm, Henry. “Upheaval in the East; East Berlin Chief Presents His Plan to Unite Germany.” *The New York Times*, February 2, 1990.
- Keefer, Edward C. “Harold Brown and the Imperatives of Foreign Policy 1977-1981.” In *Cold War Foreign Policy Series Special Study* 8, 80, 2017.
- Keller, Bill. “Gorbachev Promises Big Cut in Military Spending.” *The New York Times*, January 19, 1989.
- Kennan, George F. “A Fateful Error.” *The New York Times*, February 5, 1997.
- . “George Kennan’s Long Telegram: The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State,” 1946.

- Kenny, Edward T. "MLF: The New NATO Sword." *U.S. Naval Institute* 90, no. 2 (1964).
- Kern, Thomas. "The Geneva Summit." *SWI*, May 27, 2021.
- Kieninger, Stephan. "Opening NATO and Engaging Russia: NATO's Two Tracks and the Establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council." In *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, 57–69. Washington D.C.: Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2019.
- Kinsel, William A. "The Role of Arms Control in Strategic Nuclear Doctrine: SDI, MAD, and the ABM Treaty." *Washington Law Review* 62, no. 4 (1987): 763–90.
- Kirby, Paul. "Why Did Putin's Russia Invade Ukraine?" *BBC*, August 13, 2025.
- Kissinger, Henry A. *American Foreign Policy: Three Essays*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969.
- . NSC-68 - Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (1950).
- . "Strategy and the Atlantic Alliance." *Survival* 24, no. 5 (1982): 194–200.
- . "The Dilution of NATO." *The Washington Post*, June 7, 1997.
- . "The Unsolved Problems of European Defense." *Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 4 (1962): 515–41.
- Konrad Adenauer - Staatsmann des freien Deutschlands- Sankt Augustin: ACDP. "Reactions to the Construction of the Berlin Wall (August 1961)," 1961.
- Koulik, Sergey, and Richard Kokoski. "Verification of the CFE Treaty." *SIPRI Research Report* October (1991).
- "Kozyrev: Russia May Intervene for Ethnic Russians Abroad." *Radio Free Europe*, April 19, 1995.
- Kozyrev, Andrei. "And Now: Partnership with Russia's Democrats." *The Washington Post*, 1993.
- . "Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account." In *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, edited by Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr, 449–58. Washington D.C.: Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, 2019.
- . "The Lagging Partnership." *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1994): 59–71.
- Kramer, Mark. "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia." *The Washington*

- Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009): 39–61.
- Kramer, Mark, and Mary Elise Sarotte. “No Such Promise/Sarotte Replies.” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6 (2014): 208–9.
- Kupchan, Charles A. *Isolationism: A History of America’s Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Layne, Christopher. “Why Die for Gdansk? NATO Enlargement and American Security Interests.” In *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, edited by Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry, 53–70. Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998.
- LeCompte, Margaret D. “Analyzing Qualitative Data.” *Theory Into Practice* 39, no. 3 (2000): 146–54.
- Lehmkuhl, Ursula. “The ‘Ottawa Formula’ and Transatlantic Relations - Politics and Diplomacy of the ‘Two-Plus-Four’ Negotiations.” *Eurostudia* 5, no. 2 (2009).  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7202/1001456ar>.
- Leithner, Anika C., and Kyle M. Libby. “Path Dependency in Foreign Policy.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, no. February (2017): 1–26.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.376>.
- Liebowitz, S. J., and Stephen E. Margolis. “Path Dependence, Lock-In, and History.” *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 11, no. 1 (1995): 205–26.  
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1706450>.
- Lindblom, Charles E. “Still Muddling, Not Yet Through.” *Public Administration Review* November/D (1979): 517–26.
- Lippmann, Walter. *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943.
- Litera, Bohuslav. “The Kozyrev Doctrine - a Russian Variation on the Monroe Doctrine.” *Perspectives* Winter, no. 4 (1994): 45–52.
- Logan, Justin, and Joshua Shiffrinson. “A Post-American Europe.” *Foreign Affairs* August (2024).
- Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History. “Joint Declaration by Helmut Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev (Bonn, 13 June 1989) - Gemeinsame Erklärung von Helmut Kohl Und Michail Gorbatschow (Bonn, 13. Juni 1989).” *Presse- Und Informationsamt Der Bundesregierung*, 1989, 5.
- . The Copenhagen European Council (21 and 22 June 1993), CVCE.eu (n.d.).
- MacNeil, Robert. “30 Years Ago Today: Kissinger on Russia & NATO Expansion Dec. 5, 1994

- PBS Newshour, w/ Jack Matlock.” UCLA Irv Drasnin and Xiaoyan Zhao Drasnin Communication Archive, 1994.
- Mandelbaum, Michael. *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- . *The Dawn of Peace in Europe*. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996.
- Marder, Murrey. “A Double Standoff in Geneva,” August 28, 1982.
- Mastanduno, Michael. “Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War.” *International Security* 21, no. 4 (1997): 49–88.
- Matlock, Jack. Memorandum for Fritz Ermarth: Odds and Ends (1986).
- McCausland, Jeffrey D. (Col). “NATO and Russian Approaches To Adapting the CFE Treaty.” *Arms Control Association*, 1997.
- McDonough, David S. “Nuclear Superiority or Mutually Assured Deterrence.” *International Journal* 60, no. 3 (2005): 811–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070200506000314>.
- McManus, Doyle. “A Cold War Hawk Who Set the Stage for Peace.” *Los Angeles Times*, 2004.
- Mead, Walter Russell. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001.
- Mearsheimer, John J. “Prospects for Conventional Deterrence in Europe.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 1985, 158–62.
- . “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin.” *Foreign Affairs*, no. September-October (2014): 77–89.
- . “Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War.” *The Atlantic Monthly* August (1990): 35–50.
- Melyakova, Anna. “Document No. 119: Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker, February 9, 1990.” In *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, 675–84. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018.
- Menon, Rajan, and William Ruger. “NATO Enlargement and US Grand Strategy: A Net Assessment.” In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, edited by James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, 165–208. Washington D.C.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
- Mikhail Gorbachev i germanskii vopros. Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl (1990).

- Miles, Simon. “We All Fall Down: The Dismantling of the Warsaw Pact and the End of the Cold War in Eastern Europe.” *International Security* 48, no. 3 (2024): 51–85.
- Miller, Roger G. *To Save a City: The Berlin Airlift 1948-1949*. Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998.
- Mongrenier, Jean-Sylvestre. “L’improbable Défense Européenne.” *Hérodote* 1, no. 128 (2008): 9–33.
- Moore Jr, Barrington. “Notes on the Process of Acquiring Power.” *World Politics*, n.d., 1–19.
- Morrison, James W. *NATO Expansion and Alternative Future Security Alignments*. Washington D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1995.
- “Moscow Summit Schedule / Wednesday, July 31.” *L.A. Times*, July 31, 1991.
- Muller, Richard R., Bruno Tertrais, Harvey M. Sapolsky, Charles H. Jr Fairbanks, John A. Battilega, William E. Odom, David S. Yost, et al. *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*. Edited by Henry D. Sokolski. Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004.
- “Multilateral Force or Farce?” *The New York Times*, December 13, 1964.
- National Archives. “President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board: Records, 1981-1989,” n.d.
- National Park Service. “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991,” 2020.
- National Security Archive. *Alexander Yakovlev Memorandum to Mikhail Gorbachev, “The Priority of Political Development,” December 25, 1985 [Excerpt]*. Fond 10063. State Archive of the Russian Federation, 1985.
- . Document No. 6: Mr. Teltschik’s Memorandum for Chancellor Kohl. Bonn, December 6, 1989 (1989).
- . General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev Letter to President Ronald Reagan, January 14, 1986. (1986).
- . “Gorbachev’s Nuclear Initiative of January 1986 and the Road to Reykjavik,” n.d.
- . “Preoccupations with West Germany’s Nuclear Weapons Potential Shaped Kennedy-Era Diplomacy.” *Briefing Book 617*, 2018.
- . “Reagan Letter to Gorbachev, March 11, 1985,” 1985.
- . “The U.S. Nuclear Presence in Western Europe, 1954-1962, Part I.” *Briefing Book 714*, 2020.

- National Security Council. Daniel Fried to Anthony Lake and Samuel Berger re. The Visegrad Four and NATO Expansion (1993).
- . Meeting of the National Security Planning Group: Secretary Shultz’s Trip to Moscow [Attachments Not Included] (1987).
- . National Security Council, Minutes of the National Security Planning Group Meeting, “Subject: US-Soviet Relations,” June 12, 1986. [Secret] (n.d.).
- . NATO Summit, March 2-3, 1988, Brussels, Belgium (1988).
- . Talking Points for President, Meeting with Shultz, Weinberger, Casey, Poindexter [Attached to Handwritten Forwarding Memorandum] (1986).
- NATO-Russia Relations: The Background, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2020).
- Natural Resources Defense Council. “Global Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945-2006.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 62, no. 4 (2006): 64–67. <https://doi.org/10.2968/062004017>.
- ND International Security Center. “The Addition of NATO Members Over Time (1949-2024),” 2023.
- Norris, Robert S, William M Arkin, and William Burr. “Where They Were.” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* November/D (1999): 26–35.
- North Atlantic Cooperation Council. M-NACC-1(93)39 - Athens, Greece Statement issued at the meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1993).
- North Atlantic Council. Directive to the NATO Military Authorities from the North Atlantic Council (1956).
- . London Declaration On A Transformed North Atlantic Alliance, Ministerial Communiqués (1990).
- . M-NAC-1(93)38 - Athens, Greece Final Communiqué issued at the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (1993).
- North Atlantic Military Committee. “North Atlantic Military Committee Decision on M.C. 48: A Report by the Military Committee on the Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years.” In *NATO Strategy Documents 1949-1969*, 229–50, 1954.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. “Bucharest Summit Declaration,” 2008.
- . “Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council,” 1988. <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c880303a.htm>.
- . “Enlargement and Article 10.” *What We Do*, 2024.

- . “Euro-Atlantic Partnership,” 2024.
- . “February 1990.” NATO Update, 1990.  
<https://www.nato.int/docu/update/1990/9002e.htm>.
- . “Final Act of the London Conference (3rd October, 1954).” *NATO Archives: NATO the First Five Years 1949-1954*, 1954.
- . Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Berlin 3 June 1996, Press Communiqué M-NAC-1(96)63 (1996).
- . “Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 16 December 1997.” *Press Release M-NAC-2 (97)155*, December 16, 1997.
- . Final Communiqué Issued by the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session at Noordwijk, The Netherlands, Press Communiqué M-NAC-1 (95)48 (1995).
- . “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation.” *Official Texts*, May 27, 1997.
- . Founding Treaty (2022).
- . German Reunification, NATO History (n.d.).
- . “Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation Issued by the Heads of State and Government.” *Press Release M-1 (97)81*, July 8, 1997.
- . Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 1 December 1994, Press Communiqué M-NAC-2(94)116 (1994).
- . Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels 5 Dec 1995, Press Communiqué M-NAC-2 (95)118 (1995).
- . “NACC Foreign Ministers Meeting in Athens,” 1993.
- . “NATO 2022 Strategic Concept,” 2022.
- . “NATO Leaders - Lord Ismay.” *NATO Declassified*, n.d.
- . “NATO Member Countries,” 2024.
- . “North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1991-1997).” *About Us*, 2022.
- . North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement On Dialogue, Partnership And Cooperation (1991).
- . “North Atlantic Council (NAC).” *About Us*, 2024.

- . Official text: Final Communiqué, 22-Dec.-1983 (1983).
- . “Paris Agreements Documents Relating to the Accession to the Treaty of the Federal Republic of Germany,” 1954.
- . Partnership for Peace: Framework Document, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/ North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994 (1994).
- . Partnership for Peace: Invitation, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/ North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994 (1994).
- . “Relations with the European Union.” *What We Do*, 2024.
- . “Remarks by Russian President Yeltsin.” *Signing Ceremony of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Paris 27 May 1997*, May 27, 1997.
- . Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation made by the Heads of State and Government of the Atlantic Alliance (Rome, 8 November 1991) (1991).
- . Statement by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of the Russian Federation, NATO Council Noordwijk 31 May 1995 (1995).
- . Study on NATO Enlargement, Official Texts (1995).
- . Summary: Speech by Secretary General Solana, IISS London, September 19, 1996, *Speeches* (1996).
- . Summary 1992, NATO Update (2001).
- . The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept (1991) agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (1991).
- . “The Brussels Treaty” Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence (1948).
- . The North Atlantic Treaty (1949).
- . “The Partnership Between NATO and Russia.” *Press Info*, 1997.
- . “What Is NATO?” *Press Info*, July 4, 1997.
- . “What Was the Warsaw Pact?,” n.d.

North, Douglass C. “Institutions.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (1991): 97–112.

NSC Scowcroft Files. Memorandum of conversation between Robert Gates and Vladimir

- Kryuchkov in Moscow. (1990).
- Nuclear Threat Initiative. "Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)," n.d.
- Nuechterlein, Donald E. *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985.
- Nunn, Sam, and Brent Scowcroft. "NATO: A Debate Recast." *The New York Times*, February 4, 1998.
- Oberdorfer, Don. "Gorbachev, Shevardnadze Signal Acceptance of German Unification." *The Washington Post*, February 3, 1990.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act (1975).
- . "Our History: The Helsinki Process," n.d.
- . "Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (Paris, 19 November 1990)," 1990.
- Organization of American States. Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and Final Act of the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security (1947).
- Osgood, Robert E. "The Case for the Multilateral Force." *SAIS Review* 8, no. 2 (1964): 1–9.
- Palmer, Diego A. Ruiz. "NATO's Post-Cold War 'Out-of-Area' Pivot (1990-2014)." *NATO Defense College*, 2019, 73–90.
- Parks, Michael. "Gorbachev Asks West for \$100 Billion." *Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 1991.
- . "Warsaw Pact to Disband Its Military Structure." *L.A. Times*, February 13, 1991.
- Pierson, Paul. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251–67.
- . "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251–67.
- Pipes, Richard. "Détente: Moscow's View." In *Soviet Strategy in Europe*, edited by Richard Pipes, 3–44. New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1976.
- . "On the National Security Council Staff." In *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, edited by Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H Marlo, 80–146. Lexington Books, 2016.
- . "Rethinking Our Nuclear Strategy." *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 1978.

- . “Soviet Military Strategy.” *American Foreign Policy Newsletter* 7, no. 4 (1984): 1–10.
- Plato, Alexander Von. *The End of the Cold War? Bush, Kohl, Gorbachev, and the Reunification of Germany*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1988).
- Popescu, Ionut. *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy: How American Presidents Succeed in Foreign Policy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017.
- Portugalov, Nikolai. “The Soviet View: Two Germanys, in Confederation.” *The New York Times*, December 15, 1989.
- Potter, William C., and John M. Shields. “Lessons from the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.” *Asia-Pacific Review* 4, no. 1 (2007): 35–56.
- Presidential Documents. President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (1985).
- Priya, Arya. “Case Study Methodology of Qualitative Research: Key Attributes and Navigating the Conundrums in Its Application.” *Sociological Bulletin* 70, no. 1 (2021): 94–110.
- Radio Free Europe. “Duma Says Russia-NATO Accord Should Be Binding.” *Newsline - May 26, 1997*, May 26, 1997.
- . “Kozyrev, Christopher Finish Talks,” 1995.
- . “Talbot Meets Mamedov.” *Newsline - July 10, 1996*, 1996.
- . “Yeltsin, Primakov Speak Out Against NATO Membership for Former Soviet Republics.” *Newsline - May 26, 1997*, May 26, 1997.
- Rapp-Hooper, Mira. *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America’s Alliances*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2020.
- Raum, Tom. “Senate Paves Way For NATO Growth.” *CBS News*, April 30, 1998.
- Remler, Philip. “Russia at the United Nations: Law, Sovereignty, and Legitimacy.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2020.
- Research Memorandum. Rapallo? (1963).
- Roberts, Geoffrey. “Stalin at the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam Conferences.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 4 (2007): 6–40.
- Robinson, Roger W. “Reagan’s Soviet Economic Take-Down Strategy.” In *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*, 341–71. Lexington Books, 2016.

- Romano, Angela. "Détente, Entente, or Linkage? The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union." *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 4 (2009): 703–22.
- Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Gorbachev Letter to Reagan, September 15, 1986. (1986).
- Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. "Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva," 1985.
- . Joint Statement on the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting (1987).
- . Letter from General Secretary Gorbachev to President Reagan - Unofficial translation (1987).
- . Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: The President's Private Meeting with Gorbachev (1988).
- Rother, Bernd. "Introduction to the Willy Brandt Document Collection." *Wilson Center*, 2011.
- Ruggenthaler, Peter. "The 1952 Stalin Note on German Unification." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 4 (2011): 172–212.
- Ruggie, John Gerard. *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Rühe, Volker. "Opening NATO's Door." In *Open Door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War*, edited by Daniel S. Hamilton and Kristina Spohr, 217–33. Washington D.C.: Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, 2019.
- Ruhle, Michael, and Nicholas Williams. "Partnership for Peace: A Personal View from NATO." *Parameters* 24, no. 1 (1994): 66–75.
- Rynning, Sten. "A Balancing Act: Russia and the Partnership for Peace." *Cooperation and Conflict* 31, no. 2 (1996): 211–34.
- Saen, Herman. "Shevardnadze Makes Historic Visit to NATO." *UPI*, December 19, 1989.
- Sarotte, Mary Elise. *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Third Edit. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- . "A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About NATO Expansion." *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): 90–97.
- . "Deciding to Be Mars." *Policy Review*, 2012, 71–83.
- . *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2021.

- . “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990.” *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (2010).
- . “Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to ‘Bribe the Soviets Out’ and Move NATO In.” *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 110–37.
- . “The Renewal of the Russian Challenge in European Security: History as a Guide to Policy.” *German Marshall Fund* 9 (2017): 1–18.
- Sayle, Timothy Andrew. “Patterns of Continuity in NATO’s Long History.” In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, edited by James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, 47–72. Washington D.C.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
- Schmitt, Eric. “Senate Approves Expansion of NATO By Vote of 80 to 19; Clinton Please By Decision.” *NY Times*, 1998.
- Schreyögg, Georg, and Jörg Sydow. “Understanding Institutional and Organizational Path Dependencies.” In *The Hidden Dynamics of Path Dependence*, 3–12. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Schwarz, Benjamin. “NATO’s Enlargement and the Inevitable Costs of the American Empire.” In *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, edited by Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry, 71–84. Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998.
- Sciolino, Elaine. “U.S. to Offer Plan on a Role in NATO for Ex-Soviet Bloc.” *The New York Times*, 1993.
- . “Yeltsin Says NATO Is Trying to Split Continent Again.” *The New York Times*, December 6, 1994.
- Shiffrin, Joshua. “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion.” *International Security* 4, no. 4 (2016): 7–44.
- Shiffrin, Joshua, and John Schuessler. “The Shadow of Exit from NATO.” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (2019): 38–51.
- Shunk, David (Col.), Charles (Lt. Col.) Hornick, and Dan (Maj.) Burkhart. “The Role of Forward Presence in U.S. Military Strategy.” *Military Review* July-Augus (2017): 56–65.
- “‘Sinatra Doctrine’ at Work in Warsaw Pact, Soviet Says.” *L.A. Times*, October 25, 1989.
- Smith, Julianne. “The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà Vu?” *IFRI* November (2008).
- Smith, Mark. *Nato Enlargement During the Cold War : Strategy and System in the Western Alliance*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

- Smith, R. Jeffrey, and Daniel Williams. "U.S. Plans New Tack on Russia-NATO Tie." *The Washington Post*, January 15, 1995.
- Snyder, Glenn H. *Alliance Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- . "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut." *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 103–23.
- . "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 461–95.
- Snyder, Glenn H., and Paul Diesing. *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Sokov, Nikolai. "Reykjavik Summit: The Legacy and a Lesson for the Future." *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, 2007.
- "Soviet Minister Sees End to Warsaw Pact." *The Harvard Crimson*, October 25, 1989.
- Spolar, Christine. "Christopher Assures Aspirants on NATO Expansion." *Washington Post*, March 20, 1996.
- State Archive of the Russian Federation. Alexander Yakovlev, Memorandum for Gorbachev "Toward an Analysis of the Fact of the Visit of Prominent American Political Leaders to the USSR (Kissinger, Vance, Kirkpatrick, Brown, and others), February 25, 1987 (1987).
- Stavridis, James (Admiral Ret'). "The Anvil and the Lighthouse: Why Forward Deployments Are Vital." *Proceedings* 148, no. 7 (2022).
- Steele, Jonathan, and David Hearst. "Yeltsin Crushes Revolt." *The Guardian*, October 5, 1993.
- Steiner, Barry H. "American Intelligence and the Soviet ICBM Build-up: Another Look." *Intelligence and National Security* 8, no. 2 (1993): 172–98.
- Stent, Angela E. *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations 1955-1980*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- . *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- "Strategic Defense Initiative President's Backup Copy: Address on Defense March 23, 1983." *The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library*, March 23, 1983.
- Strategic Studies Quarterly. "On Great Power Conflict: Entangled or Untangled Alliances? An Interview with Charles A. Kupchan." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* Winter (2019): 3–10.
- Switzer, Tom. "Why NATO Expansion Explains Russia's Actions in Ukraine." *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, July 24, 2024.

- Tatu, Michel. "Decision Making in the USSR." In *Soviet Strategy in Europe*, edited by Richard Pipes, 45–64. New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1976.
- Tharoor, Ishaan. "A Fateful Summit 15 Years Ago Hangs Over the NATO Meeting in Vilnius." *The Washington Post*, 2023.
- The American Presidency Project. "1988 Democratic Party Platform." *Democratic Party Platforms*, 1988.
- . "Remarks at the Oklahoma State University Commencement Ceremony in Stillwater." *George Bush 41st President of the United States: 1989 - 1993*, 1990.
- . "Republican Party Platform of 1988." *Republican Party Platforms*, 1988.
- . "Republican Party Platform of 1992." *Republican Party Platforms*, 1992.
- . "Republican Party Platform of 1996." *Republican Party Platforms*, 1996.
- . "Text of the 'Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,'" 1972.  
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/text-the-basic-principles-relations-between-the-united-states-america-and-the-union-soviet>.
- . "The President's News Conference With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Helsinki," March 21, 1997.
- The National Archives. Declassified documents concerning telcon between the President and Boris Yeltsin on September 28, 1994 (1994).
- The National Security Archive. "Episode 12: MAD - Interview with Robert McNamara," 1998.
- . "Interview with Miklos Nemeth - October 1997." *Episode 23 The Wall Comes Down*, 1997.
- . Memorandum of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and Károly Grósz, General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party - Moscow, 23-24 March 1989 - Excerpt (1989).
- . "NATO/Russia: A Framework for the Next Phase." *FL-2017-13804*, August 23, 1996.
- . "Perestroika in the Soviet Union: 30 Years On," 2025.
- . Wayne Merry Dissent Channel Cable from American Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State, "Whose Russia is it Anyway? Toward a Policy of Benign Respect" (1994).
- The Organisation of Collective Self-Defence. Paris Agreements 23 October 1954 I. Four Power Conference - Paris, 23 October 1954 (1954).

The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Memorandum from Paul H. Nitze to George H.W. Bush about “Forum for Germany” meeting in Berlin (1990).

The Secretary of State. Memorandum from Warren Christopher to President Clinton, Meeting with President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation (1993).

“The Soviet Challenge to NATO Nuclear Modernization: Speech by President Brezhnev (Excerpts) 6 October 1979.” *Survival* 22, no. 1 (1980): 28–30.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338008441863>.

The White House. [Commonwealth of Independent States] (1991).

———. [Copies of Letters from President Bush to European Leaders] (1991).

———. A National Security Strategy for A New Century (1997).

———. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1994).

———. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1995).

———. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1996).

———. Excerpt from the Second Conversation Between M.S. Gorbachev and G. Bush (1990).

———. “Fact Sheet: NATO Enlargement.” *Office of the Press Secretary*, May 21, 1998.

———. Gorbachev letter to Reagan, December 5, 1985 (1985).

———. Gorbachev letter to Reagan, June 10, 1985 (1985).

———. Meeting with Eduard Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union (1991).

———. Meeting with Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh of the USSR, January 28, 1991 (1991).

———. Meeting with Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh of the USSR (1991).

———. Meeting with President Gorbachev of the USSR (1991).

———. Meeting with President Gorbachev of the USSR [Excised Version Appended] (1991).

———. Memorandum from Anthony Lake to President Clinton, Subject: Meeting with President Yeltsin. Date: April 3-4, 1993. Location: Vancouver, Canada (1993).

———. Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Security Issues, Vancouver, Canada, April 4, 1993, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm (1993).

———. Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Memcon with President Boris Yeltsin of

- Russia, Ambassador's Residence, Tokyo, July 10, 1993, 7:45 am to 9:15 am (1993).
- . Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Working Dinner with Boris Yeltsin, Vancouver, Canada, April 3, 1993, 6:30-8:30 pm (1993).
- . Memorandum of Conversation, "The President's Private Meeting With Gorbachev," December 7, 1988, 1:05 – 1:30 p.m., Commandant's residence, Governors Island, New York (1988).
- . Memorandum of Conversation: First Plenary Meeting (1988).
- . Memorandum of Conversation: Meeting with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (1989).
- . Memorandum of Telephone Conversation - Telephone Conversation with Russian President Yeltsin (1998).
- . "Memorandum to the President: Your Visit to Moscow (Anthony Lake)," 1993.
- . Message for Mikhail Gorbachev on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (1991).
- . National Security Decision Directive Number 288 (1987).
- . National Security Review - 4: Comprehensive Review of US-East European Relations (1989).
- . National Security Strategy of the United States (1988).
- . National Security Strategy of the United States (1990).
- . National Security Strategy of the United States (1991).
- . National Security Strategy of the United States (1993).
- . "NSDD 75 on 'U.S. Relations with the USSR.'" 83-0331, 1983.
- . President's Phone Call with Gorbachev-January 11, 1991 (1991).
- . President's Telephone Conversation with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev (1989).
- . Press Conference by President Clinton and Russian President Yeltsin (1994).
- . Reagan letter to Gorbachev, April 30, 1985 (1985).
- . Reagan letter to Gorbachev, early December 1985 (1985).
- . Remarks by President Clinton and President Boris Yeltsin in Dinner Toasts (1994).

- . Soviet-U.S. Cooperation on Arms Reduction Treaties (1991).
- . TELCON with President Gorbachev of the USSR on May 27, 1991 (1991).
- . Telephone Conversation with President Mikhail Gorbachev of the FSU (1991).
- The White House - Office of the Press Secretary. Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials, September 21, 1994 (1994).
- . Remarks by the President on Ratification of NATO Enlargement (1998).
- . Statement by the President on Senate Approval of NATO Enlargement (1998).
- Tisdell, Elizabeth J., Sharan B. Merriam, and Heather L. Stuckey-Peyrot. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. 5th ed. Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2025.
- Tonelson, Alan. "NATO Expansion: The Triumph of Policy Incoherence." In *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, edited by Ted Galen Carpenter and Barbara Conry, 41–52. Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 1998.
- Toth, Robert C. "U.S., Soviets Agree to Put Off Summit." *L.A. Times*, January 29, 1991.
- Towell, Pat. "Battle Lines Forming in Senate Over Further NATO Expansion." *CNNI*, March 2, 1998.
- Townsend Jr, James J. "In Peace and War: The Military Implications of NATO Enlargement." In *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War*, edited by James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrinson, 495–530. Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
- Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1963).
- Tworzecki, Hubert. "The Polish Parliamentary Elections of 1993." *Electoral Studies* June (1994): 180–85.
- U.S. Department of State. Memorandum for Warren Christopher from Strobe Talbott, January 2, 1994 (1994).
- Ullman, Richard H. *Securing Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Under Secretary of Defense for Policy - U.S. Department of Defense. "Henry Kissinger." *Defense Policy Board*, n.d.
- United Nations. English-language text of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations, as provided by the Soviet Mission (1988).
- United Nations Digital Library. Kozyrev, Andrei Vladimirovich; Russian Federation (1993).

- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. “Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs).” *Statistical Terms Glossary*, 2022.
- United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.” *Treaties Database*, n.d.
- United Nations Treaty Series. Agreement for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes (1958).
- . Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance (1955).
- United States Department of Defense. 2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, including the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review (2022).
- United States Department of State. “Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers.” *Current Treaties and Agreements*, 1987.
- . Briefing Allies on President’s Meeting with Gorbachev on Malta (1989).
- . Briefing Allies on Washington Summit (1990).
- . Chronology of the Department of State During the Clinton Administration, History of the Department fo State During the Clinton Presidency (1993-2001) (2001).
- . Clinton Letter to Yeltsin, December 2, 1994 (1994).
- . “Department of State Welcomes SFRC Vote on NATO Enlargement.” *Press Statement*, March 3, 1998.
- . Gorbachev Confronts Crisis of Power (1990).
- . “Gore Debrief on One-on-One w/ Yeltsin,” Notes on Vice President Gore’s Meeting with President Yeltsin, Moscow, December 16, 1994 (1994).
- . “Interim Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Certain Measures With Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.” *Past Treaties and Agreements*, 1972.
- . Maintaining the Initiative in U.S.-Soviet Relations (1989).
- . Memorandum for Anthony Lake from Strobe Talbott. Subject: Kozyrev’s “European Security Plan,” January 12, 1994 (1994).
- . “Memorandum of Conversation.” In *Reykjavik Summit Transcript*, 48, 1986.

- . Memorandum of Conversation between James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow. (1990).
- . Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker in Moscow. (1990).
- . NATO: Under Secretary Bartholomew Briefs the NAC on Moscow Summit--August 1, 1991 (1991).
- . Pre-brief for Allies on Malta Meeting (1989).
- . Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (September 3, 1971) (1971).
- . "Remarks By the President on the National Interest for Enlarging NATO." *Office of the Press Secretary*, March 20, 1998.
- . Secretary Christopher's Meeting with President Yeltsin, 10/22/93, Moscow (1993).
- . "Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov." *Statements*, May 2, 1997.
- . "Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright Remarks before the New Atlantic Initiative Conference." *Statements*, February 9, 1998.
- . Shevardnadze Message on Germany--Corrected Text (1990).
- . Soviet Reactions to the Summit (1990).
- . "START I Entry into Force," 1995.
- . Statement by Molotov (Paris, 2 July 1947) (1947).
- . "Strategic Arms Limitations Talks/Treaty (SALT) I and II." *Office of the Historian*, n.d.
- . "Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), 1983," 1983.
- . The Moscow Treaty (12 August 1970) (1970).
- . The Treaty of Warsaw (7 December 1970) (1970).
- . "Treaty Between The United States Of America And The Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics On The Elimination Of Their Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty)." *Treaties and Agreements*, 1987.
- . "Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty)." *Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance*, 1972.

- . Treaty Between the United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, Together With Agreed Statements and Common Understandings Regarding the Treaty (1979).
- . US Embassy Bonn Cable to Baker: Genscher Outlines His Vision of a New European Architecture (1990).
- . Yeltsin Letter to Clinton, December 3, 1994 (1994).
- . Yeltsin Letter to Clinton, November 2, 1994 (1994).
- . Yeltsin Letter to Clinton, November 30, 1994 (1994).
- United States Department of State, and National Security Council. Jenonne Walker to Anthony Lake: NATO Summit (1993).
- United States Department of the Interior National Park Service. “Minuteman Missile Sites: Ellsworth Air Force Base South Dakota.” *Special Resource Study: Management Alternatives, Environmental Assessment*, 1995.
- United States Information Agency. “Transcript of the Remarks by President W.J. Clinton to People of Detroit.” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, October 22, 1996.
- United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. DPC Ministerial Meeting 12/13 December 1991: Restricted Session Agenda Item I: SECDEF Cheney Comments (1991).
- . NATO in the Post-Soviet Era--Looking Ahead to the Rome Summit and Beyond (1991).
- United States Office of the Secretary of Defense. Paul Wolfowitz Memoranda of Conversation with Vaclav Havel and Lubos Dobrovsky in Prague. (1991).
- United States Senate. Congressional Record - Senate - Wednesday, April 29, 1998 (1998).
- University of Luxembourg. “Chancellor Kohl’s Role in Reunification.” *CVCE.Eu*, 2024.
- US Department of State. “The Strategic Defense Initiative in Retrospect: The Past, Present, and Future of Missile Defense.” *Bureau of Arms Control Verification and Compliance*, 2023.
- Vie publique. “Déclaration de M. Hubert Védrine, Ministre Des Affaires Étrangères, Sur Les Relations Internationales Depuis l’effondrement de l’URSS, Les Équilibres Géostratégiques et La Sécurité Internationale, Paris Le 3 Novembre 1999,” 1999.
- Vogel, Steve. “U.S. Proposes NATO ‘Partnerships’ for Former Warsaw Pact Nations.” *The Washington Post*, October 21, 1993.
- Waal, Thomas de. “The End of the Near Abroad.” *Carnegie Europe May* (2024).

- Wake, Douglas. "Did the Cold War End in Vienna Thirty Years Ago This Week?" *Security and Human Rights Monitor*, 2019.
- Walter, Jan D. "Did NATO Expansion Drive Russia to War?" *Deutsche Welle*, June 25, 2025.
- Warren, Jason W. "Insights from the Army's Drawdowns." *Parameters* 44, no. 2 (2014): 5–9.
- L.A. Times. "Warsaw Pact Writes End to Brezhnev Doctrine," 1989.  
<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-10-28-mn-674-story.html>.
- Watkins Lang, Sharon. "Strategic Defense Command/Strategic Defense Initiative." *The Eagle March* (2007).
- Weinraub, Bernard. "New N.S.C. Chief Is Said to Plan a Near-Total Overhaul of Council." *The New York Times*, December 16, 1986.
- Wertheim, Stephen. *Tomorrow the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020.
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books, 2017.
- . "The Cold War and America's Delusion of Victory." *New York Times*, August 28, 2017.
- Western European Union. "Modified Brussels Treaty (Paris, 23 October 1954)," 1954.
- Wicke, Christian. *Helmut Kohl's Quest for Normality: His Representation of the German Nation and Himself*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2015.
- Williams, Daniel. "Russia Asserts Role in Ex-Soviet Republics." *The Washington Post*, 1993.
- Winter, Sonia. "NATO: Expansion Critics Write To Clinton." *Radio Free Europe*, 1997.
- Wolfe, Thomas W. *Soviet Commentary on the French "Force de Frappe."* RM-4359-IS. Vol. Memorandum. The Rand Corporation, 1985.
- . "Soviet Military Capabilities and Intentions in Europe." In *Soviet Strategy in Europe*, edited by Richard Pipes, 129–68. New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1976.
- Wright, Robin, and Carol J. Williams. "Differences Likely to Mark First Christopher-Primakov Encounter." *L.A. Times*, February 9, 1996.
- Zubok, Vladislav. *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.