

ALEXANDER VON PLATO

THE END OF THE COLD WAR?

BUSH, KOHL, GORBACHEV, AND THE
REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY

TRANSLATED BY EDITH BURLEY



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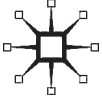
The End of the Cold War?

Bush, Kohl, Gorbachev, and
the Reunification of Germany

Alexander von Plato

Translated by Edith Burley

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| ADN | Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst (News agency of the GDR) |
| AL | Alternative Liste (Alternative party of Westberlin) |
| ARD | Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (First German TV station) |
| CDU | Christlich-Demokratische Union (Party of Helmut Kohl) |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| COCOM | Coordinating Committee for East-West-Trade-Policy |
| COMECON | Council for Mutual Economic Assistance |
| ČSSR | Tschechoslowakische Sozialistische Republik (Czechoslovakian Socialist Republic) |
| DA | Demokratischer Aufbruch (a dissident party of the GDR) |
| DBD | Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands (Democratic Farmers' Party of Germany (an "official" party of the GDR) |
| DEFA | Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (Filmproduction company of the GDR) |
| DGB | Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Trade unions of the FRG) |
| DKP | Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (German Communist Party of the FRG) |
| DSU | Deutsche Soziale Union (DSU, a new party of the GDR, founded during re-unification) |
| EG | Europäische Gemeinschaft (European Community) |
| EKO | Eisenhüttenkombinat Ost (a steel company of the GDR) |
| FDGB | Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Trade Union of the GDR) |
| GS | Generalsekretär (General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) |
| GVVS | Geheime vertrauliche Verschlusssache = as top secret classified document |
| HVA | Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung ("Counter intelligence service" in the Ministry for State Security of the GDR [MfS]) |
| IM | Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (Inofficial Collaborator of the MfS) |

| | |
|-------|--|
| IWF | Internationaler Währungsfonds (International Monetary Fund) |
| KGB | Komitet gossudarstwennoi besopasnosti (intelligence service resp. police of the Soviet Union) |
| KoKo | Kommerzielle Koordinierung (commercial coordination in the Ministry for External Trade of the GDR) |
| KP | Kommunistische Partei (Communist Party) |
| KPD | Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands |
| KPdSU | Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) |
| KSZE | Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (CSCE) |
| KZ | Konzentrationslager |
| LDPD | Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands (an “official” party of the GDR) |
| MfAA | Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (Ministry for External Affairs of the GDR) |
| MfS | Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry for State Security of the GDR) |
| MP | Ministerpräsident |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NDPD | National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands (an “official” Party of the GDR) |
| NSC | National Security Council |
| NVA | Nationale Volksarmee (National People’s Army (of the GDR)) |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OSZE | Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (OSCE) |
| PB | Politbureau / Politburo |
| PDS | Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (successor party of the SED) |
| PGH | Produktionsgenossenschaft des Handwerks (trade production cooperative) |
| RGW | Rat für gegenseitige Wirtschaftshilfe = Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) |
| SDP | Sozialdemokratische Partei in der DDR (Social Democratic Party in the GDR) |
| SED | Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (the ruling party in the GDR) |
| SPD | Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party) |
| SS | Surface-to-Surface Missile (Boden-Boden Flugkörper) |
| START | Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (SNW in the Russian language) |
| SU | Soviet Union |
| TASS | Telegrafnoje Agenstwo Sowjetskowo Sojusa (Soviet news agency) |
| UdSSR | Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken (USSR) |

| | |
|------|---|
| UNO | United Nations Organization |
| VdgB | Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe (farmers' solidarity organization in the GDR) |
| VKSE | Verhandlungen über Konventionelle Streitkräfte in Europa (negotiations about conventional forces in Europe) |
| VL | Vereinigte Linke (United Left—a dissident party in the GDR) |
| VP | Vizepräsident (Vice President) |
| WWU | Währungs- und Wirtschaftsunion (Currency and Economic Union) |
| ZDF | Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Second German TV-Station, main public TV station) |
| ZK | Zentralkomitee (Central Committee) |

Introduction: The Historian as a Detective

There are situations in which the similarities between historical and criminal work leap out at you: the same excitement at the first suspicion, the impatience during the search for evidence, and the suspense at the “conviction” of those responsible. On October 1, 2001 I experienced such a situation when I met Anatoli Chernayev, Mikhail Gorbachev’s main advisor for relations with the Western countries, in Moscow. It was our second meeting.

I had already interviewed him on November 4, 1999, in Moscow while serving as an academic advisor for the ZDF, one of the most important German public TV stations, in the course of which I also spoke with other politicians.¹ In my analysis regarding Chernayev, I discovered “false” memories and contradictions in relation to written as well as oral statements of other leading Soviet politicians. And not only in his case but also in the case of almost all other interviewed protagonists from the East and the West there were similar contradictions. Therefore, now almost two years later, I decided to interview him again.

The result was a surprising conversation: Anatoli Chernayev did not deny the errors in his earlier recollections at all and even agreed with opponents of Mikhail Gorbachev with regard to some concrete points. In reply to my question of why he suddenly remembered “differently,” he replied, laughing, that in the meantime he was putting together Gorbachev’s talks with other party and government chiefs as well as minutes of Politburo members and during this process he had come to understand certain facts that had slipped his mind then.

There was a pause. No Soviet archive relating to the reunification of Germany had yet been opened. Hardly any Soviet file relating to this theme had been “desecretized,” which is the direct Russian translation for the ending of restriction—to say nothing of the closed archives in Washington, Paris, or London at that time. There were only German documents from the East and West, memoirs² of the main actors involved, or interviews with them. In this situation new possibilities suddenly opened up: there could be contradictions, comparisons with other files, counterparts to the Western minutes of Gorbachev’s talks with American or European, particularly German, politicians, or differences between the memories

or memoirs of other political actors at that time and the minutes of talks available so far.

After this pause I asked Chernayev if I could look at these minutes, knowing that the restriction then in effect actually made my question sound absurd and that official Politburo minutes had not been kept for decades. Anatoli Chernayev pondered for a while and finally surprised me with his answer: he would introduce me to the director of the archives, who would then decide. As it turned out, this was a modest understatement of his own position, because it was Chernayev himself who was responsible for the archives in the Gorbachev Foundation as well as how they are dealt with and used and he decided who could look at them and who could not. Chernayev gave the director of the archives the go ahead to provide me with all the files dealing with reunification that I wanted to see. This meant I could look at the minutes of Politburo meetings, most of them even in their original handwritten form, and have them translated as well. Furthermore I could work my way through all the minutes of the meetings that Gorbachev had with other politicians both foreign and domestic in 1989/90, which is particularly important for the history of the politics of reunification. Probably I was the first foreign historian ever to do so.

After a critical examination, these sources³ are a substantial expansion of the official written records of the office of the German chancellor,⁴ of the German Ministry for External Affairs (Auswärtiges Amt),⁵ the British politics under Margaret Thatcher,⁶ the French under Mitterrand,⁷ and the East Germans under the last leadership of the SED.⁸ They also serve as control elements for the memoirs and interviews that had already been published or in which I participated in the course of my work for the ZDF. After that I also interviewed a series of people from the popular movement and international politics. In total it was possible to collect more than 100 interviews with all international main actors⁹ and about 150 with the dissidents.¹⁰ I could not personally interview Gorbachev because of the illness and death of his wife, but nevertheless he did answer my critical questions in writing¹¹ and the ZDF allowed me access to other interviews with Gorbachev, especially the interview of Guido Knopp with the Soviet general secretary and later president of the Soviet Union.

Due to the opportunities Anatoli Chernayev opened to me, I can compare here the materials from the West, especially from the Federal Republic of Germany with those of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) that are now accessible and incorporate them into the discussion about the released American or European material. Therefore minutes from different diplomats are largely quoted in the text. In addition it is possible to confront the memories of members of the opposition and international actors with these files, the written and oral reports as historical sources, of memory and remembrance, of the interests and the aspirations for self-presentation that influence memories and traditions. Therefore not only the political strategies and interests but also the well-known "subjective factor" play an essential part, the significance of the

characters of the main actors, their own experience, their ability to make decisions, and their own objectives.

What makes this book so fascinating is its juxtaposition of a wide range of remarkable and sometimes contradictory written and oral sources. Though it is a serious academic study it is a lively and engaging read.

A Broader Perspective

During the first decades after German reunification an American–German perspective has dominated the writing of its history¹²; in this book a broader global look is attempted, sometimes a “more European look” at the unification of Germany. Central to this are the questions that keep cropping up: Was the government of the FRG subjected to pressure from the Soviet side to decide between unity and its ties to the West? Did the American side rule this out? What strategies did the West and East European governments pursue? What led the Soviet side to agree to the reunification of Germany and the membership of a united Germany in NATO? Why was the result not an overall European security system that would include the North Americas and the Soviet Union, and Russia? What were the consequences of the expansion of NATO after reunification not only for Russia but for Europe and the world?

This book also deals with the internal and international (and national) conditions for the so-called ending of the Cold War and the development of a new world with one super power, a world without the competition between a “socialist” system (which imploded) and a “capitalist” one, and without at least two hostile security systems—NATO and the Warsaw Pact. However, I ask the question: did the Cold War really end in 1989/1990 or were the reunification and expansion of NATO after it the beginning of a new Cold War with its border 1,000 km eastward between the extended West and a new Russia under Putin?

This volume, based on my book in German about reunification from 2009,¹³ is an expanded one; quotes from many interviews with international protagonists have been added as well as a chapter on the North Americas, the United States, and Canada.

The unification of Germany was a political global event, extended the West and NATO eastward, brought parliamentary democracy and a market system to Eastern Middle Europe, and yet seemed to be an essential element in the ending of the Cold War between the West and the socialist Soviet Union. Such fundamental upheavals are surrounded by both national and international myths, since for each participating country they provide explanations for the shaken lives of millions and place a crown of glory on the heads of the victorious politicians or of thorns on the big losers. Such myths influence the historical transmission and are a part of and pose a danger to contemporary history.

Documents and Remembrances

The Beginnings

The American President as the Real Strategist? Or Who Gave the Impetus?

There were many preconditions for reunification: the independence movement in Poland and the Baltic states and then across the whole of Eastern Middle Europe; the economic decline of Eastern European socialism; perestroika under Gorbachev and his policy of noninterference in the Soviet area of influence; the people's movement in the German Democratic Republic (GDR); the stream of refugees from the GDR to West Germany; and, last but not least, the policy of the leaders and foreign ministries of the states involved. I will begin with the last one.

The American Perspective

The files concerning reunification that were released on the instructions of the Federal Chancellery,¹ reactions to them in West Europe, and interviews that I conducted with Bush and his team in the autumn of 1999, all suggest that already by March 1989, the White House—and not Bonn, Paris, or London—wanted to initiate a new European and German policy in which the reunification of Germany should play a central role. The national security advisor Brent Scowcroft,² along with Robert D. Blackwill³ and Philip Zelikow⁴ at the National Security Council (NSC), were by then already convinced that German reunification had to be taken up as a political responsibility⁵ and thus criticized the official policy of the NSC. This is according to the Americans, Zelikow and Rice. The White House was impatient as two major visits by Bush to Western and Eastern Europe had been planned for the spring and summer of 1989. The future of NATO on the occasion of its 40th anniversary (founded on April 4, 1949) was also to be considered during these visits. Arrangements had already been made to hold the NATO “Anniversary Summit” in Brussels on May 29 and 30, 1989.

In the revised version of the aforementioned committee papers, the question of German reunification nevertheless continues⁶ to ferment “always under the surface,” but “the Germans” do not want “to bring this subject to the fore at this moment. The other Europeans are just as reluctant, (...) and it serves no US interests if we take the initiative and raise the subject.”⁷ Scowcroft is said to have been so “frustrated” by this position that he summoned Blackwill and Rice⁸ and asked them to bring about something “with more bite.” Blackwill and Zelikow had drawn up a memorandum in this debate, which Scowcroft passed on to President Bush on March 20, known as Scowcroft’s memorandum. It began with the words:

*Today the highest priority of American European policy should be the destiny of the Federal Republic of Germany. Bush should help to strengthen Kohl who at present is behind in the opinion polls, behind an opposition which gives too little consideration both to the nuclear deterrent and conventional defence. It has to be the aim of American policy to overcome the division of the continent through the assertion of common values. (...) Even if we make progress in overcoming the division of Europe through greater honesty and pluralism, no vision of a future Europe is imaginable which does not also include an opinion on “the German question.”*⁹

Zelikow and Rice later stated that this controversial explanation (which was just as controversial for American strategists) was intended to place the German question back onto the *agenda*. Indeed, following this a directive went out explaining the policy of stemming the Soviet Union and formulating conditions for its international integration. That was the official reason for this new policy. Unofficially, it carried the wish to reduce Soviet influence, especially in Europe, and to strengthen that of the United States. This concept of a “commonwealth of free nations” was planned explicitly as an alternative to Gorbachev’s “communal European house.”¹⁰

Scowcroft: *Essentially, I think it was Gorbachev who said all those wonderful words about this. But at the time, the beginning of 1989, no actions followed those words. The rules of the Cold War were still valid in Central and Eastern Europe. What we also wanted to see were actions to break up these structures. And the crucial aim was of course the reunification of Germany and Berlin, as this would give a clear sign that the Cold War was over.*¹¹

Scowcroft’s maxim was that the vision of a new Europe had to include the reunification of Germany.¹² A further element was the new evaluation of the role of (West) Germany, namely a stronger understanding than before of the Federal government as a “partner in leadership”¹³—a role that Great Britain had played for decades. The reaction from London—where it was suspected that there was a

shift in the importance of its partnership with Washington, away from London and toward Bonn—was so clearly negative that the American policymakers exercised more caution.¹⁴

Zelikow and Rice further maintain that in Germany, the CDU had wanted to take reunification off the current agenda in the spring of 1989, contrary to this new Bush policy.

In complete contrast to the German position, Bush gave a public speech in the Rheingold-Halle in Mainz demanding the ending of the division of Europe and Germany. This was during his German visit and directly after the NATO summit at the end of May 1989. The aim of the West was, he said, to achieve an “undivided and free Europe”:

For the founding fathers of the alliance this hope was a distant dream. Now this hope is the new task of NATO. (...) The Cold War began with the division of Europe. It can only be ended when the division of Europe is abolished. (...) There cannot be a European house (à la Gorbachev) when not all of its inhabitants can move freely from room to room. (...) We are striving for the self-determination of the whole of Germany and all the countries of Eastern Europe (...) Berlin must be the next stage.¹⁵

This speech was not printed in the files of the Federal Chancellery, and is available only in the transcript of the diplomatic talks between Kohl and Bush and others in Bonn on May 30, 1989. The transcript is not as blunt as the above speech. Zelikow and Rice go so far as to claim that Scowcroft had deleted the “radical phraseology” of the speech-writer “because he feared that Bush could go further with this (!) than Kohl in his comments on the German question.”

By this, Zelikow and Rice mean that “the Federal Government (was) not ready to take Bush at his word and to fully demand the American support for reunification, which the President had indicated in May.”¹⁶

The German View

All the German politicians who were interviewed repudiated both theses by Zelikow and Rice that the Americans had initiated the reunification and that leading CDU politicians were prepared to take reunification off the current CDU agenda at the beginning of 1989.

Horst Teltschik said in the interview, which was criticized by Zelikow and Rice, that “the German question was, for us as well, not about a territorial solution in the first instance” but rather about priority for “human rights, freedom, plurality and liberty.” However, he made the conditions clear to ensure that it would *not* finally be a *state*-defined unity: “If the people in the GDR decide for independence in a truly free vote” or if processes develop “which are directed at the overcoming of a nation’s statehood,” such as “European integration.”¹⁷

All the statements of these CDU politicians are centrally *opposed* to the playing off of the long-term reunification policy against the current pragmatic German domestic policy of prevention of a further cultural, social, and political drift away from one another. All three stress the strict retention of this double policy. Judged according to standards of scientific precision and honesty, the interpretation of Zelikow and Rice has to be described as a gross distortion, if not falsification.

All the then German politicians reject the self-portrayal of the Bush administration's German policy as depicted by Rice and Zelikow. The foreign policy advisor to the then Federal chancellor was at first diplomatic and mildly rejected the claim of an early American reunification policy:

*Teltschik: Individual parts of the CDU thought about whether the Union should follow some of the currents in the Federal Republic and not just delete the subject of reunification from the vocabulary, but rather whether it should pursue a policy which went in the direction of political recognition of the GDR at all. However, those were individuals and they had no chance with Helmut Kohl.*¹⁸

Teltschik countered by referring to the fact that, even in September 2000, some American politicians, for example the national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, had held the German politicians of the time to be considerably more courageous and steadfast than the two Americans have depicted them and concludes:

*I would not overvalue my former colleagues Condoleezza Rice and Philip Zelikow. They were employees of the White House and were never present opposite us.*¹⁹

De Maizière too, in answer to my question as to when he had first heard of the American strategy of German reunification with membership of the new Germany in NATO, explained that it had been after the American ambassador, Vernon A. Walters, had visited him. Walters's visit was after de Maizière's election as minister-president (March 1990) and before that he had only a faint suspicion of the American position.²⁰ Walters was actually one of the first to voice the possibility of reunification.²¹

Both their descriptions are surprising in this respect, as the US government had already sent out clear signals about reunification in the spring of 1989, as is evident in Bush's speech in the Rheingold-Halle in Mainz.

Only in one point does Teltschik concede that both American colleagues, that is, myself as I was presenting their criticisms, were right:

*Where you are right is and we regret this is that we did not take up the statement "partner in leadership" more strongly. This was a very far-reaching statement, which when faced with strong partners such as Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher, naturally had implications.*²²

The then foreign minister of the Federal Republic, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, endorses Teltschik in this matter and criticizes Rice and Zelikow's description:

Genscher: *I am first inclined to think that this is a story based on hindsight. Certainly it was kept well hidden at the time.*

Hans-Dietrich Genscher substantiates his claim by looking back at the policy concerning another question:

There was a lively debate in the autumn of '88 and at the beginning of '89, first within the Federal Government and then in the Alliance (NATO) about the English and the Americans' intention to pass a resolution at the NATO conference at the beginning of May 1989 (stressing further) 1989, after which in the summer of 1994, five years later, nuclear short-range rockets with a range of 250 kilometres would be stationed on German soil. They could have reached the GDR, Czechoslovakia—

AvP: And Poland—

Genscher: *—and the western part of Poland.*

Genscher believed this to be wrong and anti-European, and furthermore that these weapons could endanger Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's position in Moscow. Therefore on April 27, 1989, he explained in the Bundestag debate on this matter that he would not vote for it, because, above all, of the people of the GDR. Genscher asked rhetorically: Why had the Americans wanted that, when at the same time they wanted the reunification of Germany and European unity?²³

Genscher adds a point against Zelikow and Rice:

You must of course know that Mrs Rice and Mr Zelikow did not sit at the negotiating table during the deciding negotiations and that there was a deep rivalry between the security advisors of the American President and the American Secretary of State and his ministry.

This rivalry was only compensated for by the friendship between Bush and Baker.

Genscher: *If you look at the list of delegates who sat in the negotiating rooms and led the talks, then you will not find the two writers.*²⁴

This last remark is not correct at least in regard to Condoleezza Rice. She was present at the important talks between George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, for the most part as a "note taker."

Certainly Charles Powell, advisor to Margaret Thatcher, clearly remembers (events) from that time differently from the Germans and the Americans. He did not see in George Bush's new policy, which he implicitly criticizes, the deciding factor for the end of the Cold War:

I would say that the two Western politicians who contributed the most to the end of the Cold War were Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. They were the ones who had the vision of a stronger, enlarged NATO with modernised weapons, which was in a position to place the Soviet Union under great pressure and to influence the downfall of the system. And therefore it was also their strength, which made up the core of NATO and led to the end of the Cold War—and not the concessions that the other Europeans were ready to make.²⁵

Also the leading Soviet politicians stress that they too had stood, even if somewhat less strongly, for reunification—politicians such as Mikhail Gorbachev himself or Anatoli Chernayev. They too admittedly had noticed the new line in the American policy, but they were of the view that it meant more “partnership signals” from Washington to Moscow, rather than emphasizing the part blocking the Soviet's European policy.²⁶

Even these relatively few observations do not merely expose the differences between the politicians of the various nations. They also show the significance of the question—Who first gave the stimulus for the new reunification policy? They show how important the grievances of those claiming to be the instigators have become, with hindsight, for the politicians, their images and self-images, and remained so up to the present day.

Spring 1989: A New Strategy or American Interests, NATO, and the German Question

The files that we have today, the self-images of those involved and above all the continuing solid policy of the Bush administration, show that the American government under Bush was ahead of the others in letting its interests flow into a new European strategy with Germany at its core. Behind this, probably, was the concern that Gorbachev's policy would push the United States out of Europe or at least could clip its wings. Four months after taking office “Bush was the first Western statesman to openly state that the Cold War would only be over when Europe was ‘undivided and free.’”²⁷ Unlike under Reagan,²⁸ this policy was embedded in a concrete general strategy: on April 17, 1989, Poland was handpicked and provided with economic assistance in recognition of its liberal reforms. Within the next three months the prospect of such economic help was to have been offered to other East European states in return *for reforms*.

In addition, Bush had allegedly written to Chancellor Kohl on May 12, 1989, that “there is a historic opportunity” to change the East–West relationship. This statement is taken from a confidential letter to Kohl, which is *not* to be found in the published Chancellery files, but is mentioned by their editor, Küsters, in his introduction. The Soviet leadership should abandon its beliefs in the class struggle, cease carrying the burden inherited in 1945, and grant the states of Central and Eastern Europe the right to self-determination.²⁹ And on May 17, 1989, Baker’s advisor, Robert D. Zoellick,³⁰ submitted a paper in Germany that reiterated this position. For a time, Washington toyed with the idea of offering the Soviets the removal of US troops in return for a withdrawal of the Soviet soldiers from Europe. But this idea was quickly withdrawn before these thoughts became practical policy.³¹

A later document, namely the statement of the Helmut Kohl government on November 28, 1989, the so-called 10 Point Plan, reveals that Kohl saw, in hindsight at least, Bush’s statement at the NATO anniversary conference at the end of May 1989 as the starting point for a new policy. Point ten of the “10 Points” reads:

*Reunification, which means the regaining of the state unity of Germany, remains the political aim of the Federal Republic. We are grateful that we have found renewed support for this from our friends and partners in the statement from the Brussels NATO summit in May this year.*³²

This new strategy of the Bush administration openly coincided with the opportune developments in Eastern and Central Europe.

In the search to find out who initiated the reunification policy as a concrete actual undertaking, the sources give a slight “advantage” to the American government despite some pricks by the Federal Republic politicians.

The second important question is: when did the NATO membership of a unified Germany become part of the American strategy? Or to put it another way: was a united Germany’s membership of NATO ever in question? What is certain is that the Bush administration had a great interest in this arrangement in order to keep NATO as its own instrument in Europe.

In an interview at the end of September 1999, Condoleezza Rice left one in no doubt that the strengthening of NATO had always been the aim of American policy. Not only did she establish a very early connection between reunification and NATO expansion, but rather—and this seems to me to be the real point of interest about the strategy’s origins—she did not see it as an issue, as in no instance would the United States have given up NATO, its “anchor in Europe.”

Rice: It is indeed correct that the USA had only one concern, namely that German reunification could destroy NATO, as NATO was the driving spirit for peace in Germany and America’s anchor in Europe. Therefore the only concern was that the

*reunification of Germany could destroy NATO. But we had no doubts whatsoever that allowing German reunification—incidentally the Americans insisted that no new restrictions would be imposed on its power as a result of German reunification—could in any way be bad for Europe; that wasn't the American way of thinking.*³³

According to Rice's view, it was outside of US interests to imagine reunification or European unity alone without an expansion of NATO into the former GDR. Seen with this perspective, all the then still general statements of Bush in the Mainz Rheingold-Halle ("Now this hope is the new task of NATO"³⁴) gain meaning, and point toward the continuity of an American policy with NATO.

A further sign points to the early expectation of a reunification by George Bush. When he remarked at a meeting with the French president Mitterrand in Kennebunkport in May 1989 that reunification "can be achieved," Mitterrand is said to have answered—according to his then advisor Jacques Attali—that this, along with the atomic weapons in German possession, is one of the two possible causes of a war in Europe.³⁵

In this connection Condoleezza Rice refers to the (later) speech of Bush on December 4, 1989, at a meeting of the state and government leaders of the 16 NATO members in Brussels, in which he expanded Kohl's 10 Points about (complete) German membership in NATO.³⁶ Publicly, the US strategy of the NATO membership of a united Germany was—after Brussels in spring 1989—first perceived at this time, both through this speech as well as one by Baker to the Press Club in Berlin on December 12.

The principal problem for the Americans was that in regard to this question, the Soviet Union understood that an expansion of NATO into the eastern part of Germany was directed against their interests and that Gorbachev must have seen this as a threat to his policy.³⁷ Condoleezza Rice says that the key theme of the American policy at that time was "to unify Germany under Western conditions and simultaneously to get the Soviet Union to accept this."³⁸ Here it was clearly and unambiguously formulated in US policy that this was the United States's predominant ambition and it was carried out in Europe in full view of the Soviet Union.

Years later, at an event celebrating the anniversary of reunification, Bush—as restrained and polite as ever—sat next to Kohl and Gorbachev as the "number 3 of reunification," although he must have been responsible for the whole strategy. Condoleezza Rice stressed in an interview that it was Bush himself who had convinced his team of the merits of this new strategy. Certainly, Helmut Kohl, who is lauded as "the principal reunification protagonist," cannot claim this role until after the autumn of 1989 but only under the shield of the Bush administration. The US government represented its own interests in Europe, and Kohl those of the Germans—the reunification policy met the interests of both. What American dominance in this at least temporary coincidence of interests could result in, especially for a European security system, was not clarified.

The Expected Moment

Not all the politicians involved nor the members of the GDR civil rights movement succumbed to the temptation to pre-date the moment of their discovery about the approaching reunification and their activities in the process. In general, it was stressed that the impetus that it had given to the dynamic in the policy behind reunification was scarcely noticeable. In the summer and beginning of autumn 1989, most government members and the opposition from the people's movement still did not reckon on a quick reunification. They had not yet been gripped by the dynamism of the subsequent months and their standards were still those of previous years: Gorbachev and Shevardnadze took the "historical facts" as their starting point, and for them these facts included the premise that there were two German states.

In the summer of 1989, Chancellor Kohl and his team had at first no concrete expectations of a speedy reunification. Kohl stressed at the end of November 1989 that he had no schedule and on several occasions voiced the view that he expected German unity in ten years. At the end of the year, he reduced this expectation to five years. The then head of the KGB, Wladimir Kryutchkov, reported in 1999 that Kohl had explained in the autumn of 1989 that reunification could become reality in the year 2025.³⁹ In contrast, Eduard Shevardnadze, then Soviet foreign minister, maintained in an interview ten years later that German unity had been the "key" to the development of Europe from an early time (although politically he at first had behaved in an entirely opposite manner).

Hans-Dietrich Genscher was, as he explained in 2001, already of the view in 1988 that great changes were imminent in the GDR and that the Soviet leadership adopted his view early on, namely in May 1989. However, no evidence for this assumption can be found in the Soviet files. The "expected changes in the GDR and East Europe," which Shevardnadze reported to Genscher, surely applied to the Soviet leadership's reforms in the sense of perestroika.

There are also differences in what was supposedly expected or predicted: changes in the Soviet area of influence, the unity of Germany, or the end of the Cold War with the expansion of NATO toward Eastern Europe.

In 1999, Jacques Attali, the advisor to the French president, Mitterrand,⁴⁰ summarized the stance of the British prime minister, Thatcher, and that of the French president, saying that in the summer and early autumn of 1989, both still did *not* expect the speedy reunification of the GDR and the Federal Republic.

He also reported that he had bet against Teltschik that reunification would be "carried out" in the coming year. In the Caribbean in December 1989, Mitterrand and Bush had made critical remarks about Vernon Walters, the American ambassador to the Federal Republic, who saw reunification as coming in five years. Both held it to be foolish to say such a thing, as they reckoned that reunification would come in a decade at the earliest. Attali said: "That was in

December 1989 and they did not suspect that it would happen in half a year.”⁴¹ That of course had significance for the implementation of the differing strategies of these statesmen.⁴²

Also most of the members of the opposition in the GDR had their own problems with predicting reunification, as for them—with all the differences—it was at that time more about reformation of the GDR, mostly in the direction of perestroika, or about the leaving of the GDR. Today many of them speak about early predictions of reunification.⁴³

It bears repeating: In the spring and summer of 1989, George Bush’s government was, in my opinion, the only one among the governments of the time that substantially contemplated the possibility of reunification and with this policy faced up to the fear of the growing influence of Gorbachev’s policy in Central and Eastern Europe.

I do not mention the claims of the persons involved at the time, their abstract or concrete expectations of fundamental changes in Germany and Europe, their subsequent advancing of the date of their knowledge, and the part they played in the reunification in order to sneer at them. Rather I raise these matters in order to be able to place them within the framework of the policy made by the various governments and to show how prognoses are themselves a part of political disagreement, when truth overtakes the prophecies or makes them obsolete. I also raise them in order to make clear the extent to which particular politicians of the various states have later come together in a collective interpretation—one only has to think of the many joint television appearances of Kohl, Gorbachev, Genscher, and Shevardnadze, although their policy that year—as will be revealed—was often far apart. But the politicians “agreed” in the desire to be recorded as worthy representatives of the interests of their national policies for future generations. And it is not only journalists, but also contemporary historians, who have difficulty in not becoming instruments used to the advantage of such interests.

The Politics of Détente and German Unity

There was a considerable difference among German, English, and American politicians at the time in their views of the politics of détente (*Entspannungspolitik*) of the German government under Chancellor Willy Brandt with his advisor Egon Bahr and Foreign Minister Walter Scheel⁴⁴ after 1969: were they a prerequisite for or an obstruction to German reunification? While this *Ostpolitik*, as it was also called, which was seen rather negatively by American politicians in contrast to the Canadian government under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau,⁴⁵ who played hardly any role or none at all,⁴⁶ differing views appear in conversations with the German protagonists.

After the unification of Germany, this debate became much milder, almost evaporating in favor of a view that once more emphasized the significance of the policy of détente for reunification, not only among Social Democratic⁴⁷ but also among the Christian Democratic participants.

This is how Horst Teltschik describes the CDU position after Helmut Kohl's government took office:

Despite the Cold War, despite the failure of the Geneva negotiations, it was clear that we had to continue the politics of détente.

Important steps in the politics of détente are the Moscow Treaty with the USSR of August 12, 1970, the Warsaw Treaty of December 7, 1970 with Poland, as well as the basic treaty with the GDR of December 21, 1972.

In his book *Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit (I Wanted Germany's Unity)* Helmut Kohl's description of the CDU's view of the *Ostpolitik* is also less critical than in the early 1970s:

We, the union parties, were at that time completely convinced that it was necessary to find a system, a modus vivendi, as long as there was no possibility of a peace treaty for Germany as a whole. This idea of Brandt's Ostpolitik, which had already been laid out in the Ostpolitik of Erhard and Kiesinger [former Christian Democrat chancellors—AvP] we could agree with without any reservations. But against the ambiguity of the treaties, however, we could direct fierce criticism.⁴⁸

The CDU had voted against the basic treaty after violent debates because of a fear at the time that it would make the division of Germany permanent.

Here the issue is not so much the “real” aspects of the cultivation of such an image or a criticism of the later moderation of the CDU's policy against the eastern treaties. For me the issue is the evidence that the criticism of Kohl and other CDU politicians of the policy of détente was directed primarily against the suspected surrender of the unity of Germany that could, according to Kohl, have resulted from the SPD's détente politics. In the United States, however, this was, and is, not the essential point of criticism; rather, there, at least at the government level, the *Ostpolitik* was viewed suspiciously as a version of “the politics of appeasement”⁴⁹ toward the Soviet Union. What becomes visible here is that the CDU's position is different from that of the political leadership of the United States, which was hardly mentioned then and is hardly mentioned today. Later, in the years 1989/90, however, the interest of the United States in pushing back the Soviet influence in Europe and the interest of the Federal German government in a reunification of Germany drew closer—a condition essential for the success of the politics of German reunification of both parties.

Former foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher also looked far back in reply to my question about the controversial significance of the politics of détente for the politics of reunification: in the first 20 years of the Federal Republic of Germany there was a basic opposition to neutrality and in support for the tie to the West, for membership in the European parliament, in NATO, and in the European Union. This was certainly correct, but the West nevertheless became powerless when it came to the drifting apart of the two German states. It was not until 1967 that there was a new formulation of Western politics with the so-called Hamel Report, named after the Belgian foreign minister Pierre Hamel. This report contained a strong defence of the West's outlook but at the same time offered mutually beneficial cooperation with the Soviet Union and designs for German unity.⁵⁰

Genscher: *In this Hamel Report it stated that the cause of all tension is the division of Germany and the highest goal of NATO is to create a permanent and fair peaceful order for all of Europe.*

Through these new politics, the German foreign policy of Willy Brandt and Walter Scheel created space in the new *Ostpolitik* with the German eastern treaties and then with the CSCE politics in the final Helsinki agreement.⁵¹

Genscher: *The final Helsinki Act, 1975, opened a completely new chapter in that it introduced Western values such as the right to self-determination of peoples, human rights, the solving of humanitarian questions in the East-West dialogue, indeed, obligated the other side to base itself on these ideas. And in this way a process was set into motion that in the end make possible all these developments, from which Václav Havel, the fighters for popular rights in the GDR profited, which Sakharov could invoke, which later Solidarność invoked very strongly. (...) This was an especially politically astonishing development because the idea of this conference actually came from Moscow.*

Immediately after this point Genscher added two elements that would later become obstacles for Soviet politics in the course of reunification that, however, surprisingly, are stressed neither by Kohl nor other international politicians, particularly not by the Americans:

Genscher: *We succeeded in getting two decisive provisions into this final act. First, that each country can decide for itself if it wants to belong to an alliance and which one; that was important for us when it came to NATO membership. And second, that the borders of Europe could not be changed, if there was peace, while the Soviet Union said absolutely not. And I then said to Gromyko [the Soviet Foreign Minister at the time—AvP]: "If the GDR and Federal Republic decide*

to abolish the border between them and to unify Germany, should we forbid this?"
And he replied: "That is a purely theoretical question." I said: "If it is theoretical,
*you could agree."*⁵²

And this is what happened. Why Western politicians assign no or only a slight significance to these aspects in the final act of Helsinki regarding the right to self-determination, the choosing of alliance memberships, and the borders in Europe might be due to the fact that German–American politics of 1989/1990 aimed to use the CSCE process only marginally for the foreign political aspects of reunification and to make use primarily of the 2+4 negotiations; and American policy always included distrust of the CSCE or the OSCE.⁵³ These organizations had significant Eastern European participation and were not mainly American political instruments or “anchors” in Europe—that role belonged to NATO.

Summer 1989: Gorbachev in Bonn

Before the Arrival

From June 12 to 14, 1989, just 14 days after US president George Bush, General Secretary Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev came to Bonn with a high-ranking delegation. At this time his name already had made a positive impression in the West. François Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher especially saw in him “a new type” of Soviet leader. Charles Powell, advisor to the British prime minister, explained the policy under Margaret Thatcher:

Margaret Thatcher probably knew President Gorbachev better than any other Western leader. In a sense she had discovered Gorbachev. He came to Britain in 1984... It was a revelation to us—here was a completely different sort of Soviet leader. Not a man who had to be surrounded by supporters and aides, not a man who just read out his detailed statement. Here was a man who could debate and argue like a Western politician... And—yes—I would almost like to say, she claimed a kind of title to Gorbachev, insofar as she had more or less prepared the way from him in the West. Thus our hopes for a freer, more humane system in the Soviet Union were also linked with the person of Gorbachev.¹

And Hans-Dietrich Genscher reported that before his first meeting with Gorbachev in 1988, he met with Mitterrand:

Genscher: I asked him to give me his impression of Gorbachev. Mitterrand said to me: “Mr. Genscher, you will meet a completely different Soviet leader. He speaks as we speak among ourselves.” He had several pieces of white paper in front of him, interrupted me, made notes, and I interrupted him too. This was a completely different way of conducting a conversation, just as Mitterrand had described to me, so that finally a few months later right after the Bundestag election I felt compelled

in Davos to make the West aware and to say: "We must take Gorbachev seriously, we must take him at his word, and we must not miss a historic opportunity." And that did me no good at the time, for there was criticism here in my country, there was criticism in London, there was criticism in the United States, but in the end they all joined me in admiration of Gorbachev.²

After all these generous descriptions, it was logical to ask Genscher why, in that case, Kohl had previously compared Gorbachev to Goebbels:

Genscher: I don't know. Of course he had met him much earlier than I did. (...) I was not happy about it, especially as I was embarrassed, to meet with Shevardnadze at the Security Conference in Vienna a few days later and explain to him, that no harm was intended. It is said that the victims are always the interpreters.³

Kohl had met Gorbachev on October 24, 1988, in Moscow, at which point he changed his opinion of the Soviet general secretary. Soon almost everyone we interviewed mentioned positively that the Soviet Union under Gorbachev had since 1988 allowed the COMECON countries more independence than would have hardly been conceivable before. This new independence permitted the development of more independent politics in Poland, Hungary, and even the GDR, and finally in all of Eastern Middle Europe. Particularly essential for the process of reorganization was that the regime under Gorbachev adhered to the principle of *military* nonintervention. There was a deviation later in the case of Lithuania.

A Grand Reception

In Bonn an unexpectedly enthusiastic reception was prepared for Gorbachev, and not only by the politicians but also by citizens and almost all the media. His visit was *the* public event of the week. Shortly before, Gorbachev had been elected to the leadership of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. That his first foreign trip in this capacity was to the Federal Republic of Germany emphasized "the significance we attached to working with the Federal Republic."⁴

The Soviet general secretary later wrote in his memoirs:

There were unforgettable scenes in the Rathausplatz in Bonn. From the surrounding streets we were already flooded by a regular wave of demonstrations of friendship and sympathy. Shouts and wishes of luck such as 'Gorbi! Make love not walls!' 'Please continue like this, Gorbachev!' accompanied us. As we stepped onto the balcony of the city hall, a storm of applause broke out in the square." A small boy was lifted up to the railing. "It was a touching moment, that went around the world through the media.

The general secretary and his delegation carried out talks at various levels: several times with Chancellor Kohl, twice with President von Weizsäcker, with Foreign Minister Genscher, with Rita Süssmuth, president of the Bundestag, and finally with the premier of Baden-Württemberg Lothar Späth. Gorbachev also visited Hoesch in Dortmund, where he was interrupted by ovations, as he wrote, while speaking before steelworkers, accompanied by leader of the SPD Hans-Jochen Vogel and the old SPD chancellors Helmut Schmidt and Willy Brandt. In Cologne he met Johannes Rau, the SPD premier of Nordrhein-Westfalen. The minutes of both sides⁵ contain nothing about this “unofficial” meeting, but do confirm the breadth of the themes in the official meetings. Discussed were minor questions such as the possibility of a visit to Königsberg/Kaliningrad, the care of military graves, and the rehabilitation of German prisoners of war who had been sentenced by Soviet military tribunals. At the core, however, were the big changes in the world: questions about disarmament; the involvement of West Berlin in these negotiations; the relationships of the countries of the European Community with the United States, among themselves, the development of Eastern Middle Europe itself, including the intractable attitude of Erich Honecker, who was hindering reform in the GDR.

Gorbachev was particularly interested—as is made clear from various parts of the talks—in receiving assurances that there would be no external interference in the course of these reform processes in Eastern Europe.

According to the German protocol the Soviet guest said:

It is a matter of delicate processes. One must know that huge consequences would result if someone from outside now poked around with a stick in this restless. The Federal chancellor added immediately: for him it was a matter of preventing this. The General Secretary then repeated carefully (and with foresight) that these fundamental changes inside the socialist states would lead to powerful internal tensions.

*Gorbachev: If anyone tried to exert influence from the outside, this would have to lead to destabilization and a loss of confidence and would endanger the understanding between East and West.*⁶

The Soviet minutes reveal a similar focus. There is an even clearer statement: interference from the outside “would destroy everything that had so far been created. After all we want rapprochement and not the retreat to the position of confrontation.”⁷

Helmut Kohl calmed Gorbachev several times in this regard, emphasized that he agreed with him “on these points,” according to the German protocol. In the Soviet minutes it is even clearer: “I am in complete agreement with everything.” Kohl had emphasized, and would henceforth continue to do so, that he was not interested in destabilization, and especially not of the GDR. At one point

in the Soviet minutes, Kohl is quoted as follows—and this passage is of particular importance for the questions discussed here: at a seminar in New York he had

among other things said that I did not agree with Gorbachev on the question of the unity of Germany. Then I added that, nevertheless, I could see no point in arguing over this matter from morning to night. Everyone should stick to his position—he to his and I to mine. The Chancellor of the FRG is also obligated to speak about Berlin, about the wall, etc. But the question consists of how one says it: stating the existing situation or calling for its alteration.

Naturally it is not known what was actually said in private—besides Kohl and Gorbachev there were also the two advisors and note-takers Anatoli Chernayev and Horst Teltschik as well as the interpreters Andreas Weiß and I. A. Kurpakov. But for the Soviet side this undertaking of not calling for changes appears to be the most important part of the general building of trust. Here are, if one observes the fine differences in the records, set the small, multicoloured mosaic tiles of later, extensive misunderstandings. The general secretary would later in the course of the unification process refer many times to Kohl's declarations of not aiming at a destabilization in Eastern and Eastern Middle Europe and in the GDR.

In response, Kohl stressed that it was not he but rather Honecker himself who destabilized the situation in the GDR with his antireform policy. Here the Soviet minutes are much more detailed than the German ones: "However, the people ask me over and over," Kohl is quoted as saying, "why the GDR took such rigid positions. Everyone says that something must be done, that the people sense the freedom that is now characteristic of Hungary, Poland and naturally for the Soviet Union."⁸

Wherever Honecker was referred to, Gorbachev emphasized the independence of the other Socialist parties and countries or he said nothing, as Kohl observed many times.⁹ According to the Soviet protocol, only once, namely in conversation with Richard von Weizsäcker, was it different: Von Weizsäcker mentioned that even Honecker spoke positively about the last NATO conference in Brussels. Gorbachev asked why von Weizsäcker said this at that point and the German president replied that it was because Honecker usually never said anything positive about NATO. In the Soviet minutes Gorbachev then said:

From my point of view I would like to say that E. Honecker always supported and always will support the idea that two German states in Europe will adhere to the goal never to allow that a war would ever again start on German soil. E. Honecker is completely dedicated to a peace policy and his thoughts are marked by great realism.¹⁰

Such strong support for Honecker, for which von Weizsäcker, who was generally highly respected by Gorbachev, also thanked him, appears not to have repeated

itself, according to the Soviet minutes. On the other hand Gorbachev left Kohl in no doubt that he accepted that the two German states were the result of history and that this should be maintained. In their relaxed conversation on the third day, which has in the meantime become famous, after all essential concrete questions from support for the German economy all the way to a collective declaration had been discussed, Kohl pointed to the Rhine at the end of the park of the Chancellery and explained: "It (the Rhine) symbolizes history, this is nothing static. You can dam this river, technically it is possible. But then it will rise above the banks and find another way to the sea. And that is how it is with Germany unity too." Those two should therefore consider if they will "construct" reunification in their generation or whether they should continue to wait with all the problems connected with this. Gorbachev is supposed to have listened to this "and then no longer disagreed."¹¹

Kohl's assurance that he was opposed to any destabilization in Eastern Europe was for Gorbachev at least as decisive for his trust in Kohl as the hopes for the Germans at the Vienna Disarmament conference. He agreed "that the strengthening of trust had a decisive significance for mutual understanding in all issues. This process needed to take place parallel to changes in opinion, with the introduction of a new way of thinking. The most important thing in this process was however the reduction of military confrontation."¹²

In his own remembrances Gorbachev also emphasized this moment of rapprochement that was decisive for him: he wrote that he had received the impression that Kohl was not defending the modernization of tactical atomic weapons that had been decided at the NATO conference in Brussels. According to Gorbachev, Kohl let it be seen that these weapons would be discussed in Vienna. Later there was indeed a compromise: "The clause about modernization remained, its realization was however postponed."¹³

These hopes for what the Germans would do in the disarmament questions were also more important for Gorbachev than the chancellor's promises of economic assistance, which Kohl emphasized more explicitly. It was a promise of assistance in the minimizing of the supplies crisis that was honored at the beginning of 1990 "at a very important point for the German unification process."¹⁴ Here Kohl was alluding to the supply problems in the Soviet Union, in which he himself was able to provide assistance in the following 12 to 15 months at Gorbachev's request.

Kohl: My relations with Mikhail Gorbachev had changed dramatically since the summer of 1989. . . My relations have also changed from his perspective. Above all because in the months that followed and in the next year he met a person upon whom he could rely. For example, when it was necessary to help him to make sure that the shelves in Kiev and Sverdlovsk and elsewhere were filled—it was a genuine crisis in supplies. The fact that the Germans then in a few days—for a system

*like the Soviet Union completely inconceivable—due only to agreement by the head of the government, the chancellor, for... almost 3.5 million Deutschmarks helped with butter and sugar and also with valuable foodstuffs, that the German consumer goods industry sent hundreds of thousands of shoes and other items, that he had however paid for, even brassieres to the Soviet Union, was for a system that planned everything and required endless time completely unthinkable.*¹⁵

Now no one should assume that in politics there is friendship without interests, but still all those involved emphasize that a special relationship of trust had developed. But we can see in these subtleties on what this trust was based at the time. There certainly were some in the Soviet delegation, such as the member of the international section of the Central Committee of the CPSU Nikolai Portugalov, who asked themselves why there was such a grand reception in Bonn and which interests in the government of the FRG were behind it. At one of the evening or nightly “briefings” of the Soviet delegation he asked Gorbachev this very question. He hesitated and said that he was not going to think about this.¹⁶

I also asked Horst Teltschik:

AvP: *Is this really true? Did such an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect really develop, as it appears in retrospect at least? Or is intended to appear?*

Teltschik: *Well, when you experience Gorbachev, then he is a Russian as one knows from the history of literature. A very emotional man, for whom it is very important to have a personal relationship with someone or not (...) Gorbachev himself once told me that he had developed the impression that he could trust Helmut Kohl. (...) This trip taught him two things. Once, during the visits to businesses, while travelling through the country, he always said: order, the order in Germany. Everything clean, everything tidy—he was fascinated. And then he was fascinated by the condition of our industries, the wealth, i.e. the prosperity of our country. My impression is that he came to recognize that we, the Germans, must be the future partner that would help him to carry his politics of reform in the Soviet Union into the future. You have often asked why Gorbachev accepted the reunification. I think, in the end, the hope that with Germany he had the crucial partner that would help him reform the Soviet Union. (...) He often said to me (later), “Horst, what would we, what could and would we Germans and Russians do together.”¹⁷*

In future, Kohl suggested “that contact be maintained with regard to the Vienna negotiations directly not through the administrations.” Actually hearing the voice of the other would make many things easier. The Soviet protocol also mentions the people they wanted to send in such cases: for Kohl it was Horst Teltschik and for Gorbachev it was Anatoli Chernayev.

The Significance of a Formula: the Right of Self-determination

One result of Gorbachev's visit to Bonn was a joint declaration that the chancellor and the general secretary signed on June 13. It states that "the building blocks of a Europe of peace and co-operation" must be "unlimited respect for the integrity and security of each state" and "the right to choose freely its own political and social system." This required "unlimited respect for the principles and norms of international law," particularly the "respect for the national right of self-determination."¹⁸

Though appearing rather formulaic, this declaration in favor of the right of self-determination was believed to have great significance for the developing situation. At least the German participants said so. In the Soviet minutes or in the memoirs of the main participants this significance is not perceptible: either this declaration is not mentioned or it has no importance.

On the other hand Hans-Dietrich Genscher considered this joint declaration very far-reaching and even observed that through it "we...got the question of openness for German unity into a joint document for the first time." Generally Genscher stressed the advanced state of the Soviet positions more than can be gathered from the files of the office of the chancellor and than what was heard from the chancellor's office.¹⁹ He also emphasized the significance of the delegation's talks that had begun immediately after Gorbachev first called on von Weizsäcker and the significance of his own talks with Soviet foreign minister Edward Shevardnadze. In a private conversation with him Genscher heard the following:

*And then Shevardnadze made an observation that confirmed my judgement of the Soviet leadership: the Berlin wall would also fall when the time is right, but for that a certain atmosphere of trust and respect was essential.*²⁰

For Hans-Dietrich Genscher Shevardnadze's statement was new evidence that early in the summer the Soviet leadership had already arrived at far-reaching thoughts. The question is only how concretely Shevardnadze meant it or conversely in which other European future he wanted to open this perspective. Here, there is also evidence that a misunderstanding was possible: Genscher understood Shevardnadze as much in relation to the fall of the Wall and unity just as the Soviet protocol understood Kohl in relation to the preservation of the division. Nevertheless, Shevardnadze would express such thoughts sooner than other Soviet leaders.

In the Soviet minutes of the delegation's talks with Gorbachev on June 13, 1989, which Genscher led on the German side, there are also no statements that could be interpreted as broadly as Genscher did.

Genscher suggests here that the joint document contained the formula regarding the right of self-determination and, moreover, as “the openness of the German Question.” Now some talks suggest that it was not the Foreign Office that brought this passage into the declaration but rather the chancellor’s office. Therefore I asked Horst Teltschik, the direct partner or the counterpart of the Foreign Office in the chancellor’s office.

AvP: *This is what causes difficulties for historians. If one reads such declarations later, then I read nothing other than a 08/15 declaration about the right of national self-determination. But I naturally know from the talks: everyone tussled to make sure that it was included or not included. Did you say deliberately that the Foreign Office did not have it in there?*

Teltschik: *Documents dealing with foreign affairs were of course always prepared in the Department of Foreign Affairs. That is the responsible department; it then goes into the responsible section in the Chancellor’s Office. And in earlier times it was the case that it was then presented to the Chancellor directly. During my time I took the liberty of checking the contents again. For us the document, i.e. the one from the Foreign Office, did not go far enough. (...) It contained the same material as was always there: peace, happiness, pancakes, détente, disarmament. This was not good enough for us. So we said: new quality means we must try it. And we did this in two directions. One was the theme of self-determination. How could we introduce this? The second was the recognition of the law of nations both internally and externally. And the Foreign Office was able to assert both in the negotiations.*

With another example Teltschik tried to make clear “what an effect such formula business” had: at the party congress of the CDU in September 1989 Kohl made a speech, in which, according to Teltschik’s example, he spoke “of the vision of the unity of Germany.”

Teltschik: *I made the vision of German unity in relation to this document (from Gorbachev’s visit in June 1989). Very concretely derived. The party congress, the delegates, as always showed no reaction. Reunification and German unity were repeated again and again, according to the saying, does he have to say that again? But really no reaction? The next day I had a visitor in the Chancellor’s office. It was the Soviet ambassador Kwizinski.²¹ And he said to me: “Mr. Teltschik, not like this, not like this! No, you can not interpret this document in this way.” In response I said to him: “Mr. Kwizinski all German experts in Moscow know how we define the right to self-determination. Therefore we will continue to do so.”²²*

Furthermore, the general secretary of the SED, Erick Honecker, was already informed during his June 9, 1989, talk with the Soviet foreign minister Eduard

Shevardnadze of the joint final declaration including the expression of the right to self-determination, but he took no position on it.²³ Gorbachev's visit to Bonn was followed in the GDR and appears to have left very different impressions. Inside the SED there were certainly some disappointed voices, particularly against Kohl's "defamatory" remarks about the GDR and Gorbachev's "too tolerant" reactions.²⁴

In the Background: Debates about George Bush's Policy

During Gorbachev's visit to Bonn someone absent played a considerable role: George Bush. In the accounts so far this fact has received surprisingly little attention. Already in the talks with Richard von Weizsäcker²⁵ he is only a marginal chimera. The German president takes an astonishingly long time—at least according to the Soviet minutes—to explain to his Soviet guest without being asked about the new American foreign policy: during his last visit "across the ocean I formed a clear opinion: after a certain reticence the American administration moves to a position that rests on a more constructive approach to the complex of East–West relationships." Richard von Weizsäcker remarks then that the Americans have questions about the German and the European position on the modernization of tactical atomic weapons. Even more important for them was the question of where the development of Western Europe was going altogether.

*The Cold War was over (June 1989!)...relations between the EC and Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) have normalized... What will all these changes mean for the centre of the continent? As we expressed our opinions on this to them, we tried to explain to them that it was imperative that the West as a whole develop a constructive approach to the complex of relations with the East. We tried to work with the Americans on this point and to have a corresponding influence on them. (...) For it is especially important to transform the American position and not leave the impression that we wanted to push them out of Europe (!)*²⁶

Gorbachev agreed with the necessity of building trust between the Americans and both Western and Eastern Europe, but he remained distrustful of Bush's politics, even when von Weizsäcker was very strongly promoting another talk between the American and Soviet leaders. Regarding Bush's politics the general secretary replied as lengthily as Weizsäcker: in personal and private talks with Bush there was a very "sympathetic atmosphere." Nor did anyone in Moscow become impatient or rashly critical when Bush made speeches that one would have to "describe as a Reaganite crusade against communism." This did not help "at all the creation of an atmosphere for a long and peaceful co-operation that we

are offering the Bush administration.” The United States was trying to capitalize on the difficulties in which the Soviet Union found itself.

Richard von Weizsäcker in his response disagreed with the comparison between Bush and Reagan. Unlike Reagan, Bush was a pragmatist who was, however, under considerable pressure from the right.

The talks between Kohl and Gorbachev²⁷ also often concerned themselves with George Bush and his politics. Gorbachev expressed almost more clearly his distrust, which I will quote from the Soviet protocol.

*Gorbachev: Allow me to ask a clear and completely open question. Does it not appear to you that the American administration and the president are following an ambiguous line?*²⁸

Kohl also took a long time to answer Gorbachev’s question regarding his opinion of the American president. It is the longest continuous passage in the talks. Like von Weizsäcker, the chancellor described his American colleague as an East Coast intellectual but above all as a pragmatist. Besides he had a remarkable wife (“a charming woman, mother and grandmother”), who also promoted détente and pragmatism. And he had a foreign minister whose significance Gorbachev should not underestimate. Kohl described Bush in a surprising and frank difference from Reagan as “a European.” During Reagan’s first visit Kohl had a depressing impression because it became clear that “this man had no idea about Europe.”²⁹ George Bush, however, “is a completely different person.” The social question that he had assumed as a heavy inheritance from Reagan could however become his Achilles heel. Like von Weizsäcker Kohl tried to calm Gorbachev by describing the politics of the Bush administration as more conciliatory toward the East, most recently at the latest NATO conference 14 days ago: “The closest to us were actually the Americans, but the (shared) distance in the relationship to London was significant. Bush and Baker too showed their complete exceptionality in Brussels.” Bush also agreed with him on other issues, such as questions relating to the security conference in Vienna and the COCOM (Co-ordination Committee for East-West-Trade Policy) situation (namely the export reductions)—even in the judgement of the developments in Hungary.

Kohl: I told Bush (according to the Soviet protocol) that we should act according to an old saying: the church should stay in the village. This means that Hungarians should decide for themselves what they need, but no one should interfere in their affairs
*Gorbachev: We have a similar saying: “You do not enter a strange monastery with your own rules.”*³⁰

Although Kohl, not unskillfully does not acknowledge Gorbachev’s main fears, two things become apparent. First, Gorbachev remains distrustful of American

Eastern European policy. Kohl asks rather abruptly, which negative public appearances of Bush Gorbachev is actually referring to—and Gorbachev could name precisely two events where, in his view, Bush presented himself like Reagan. Second, it becomes clear that both the German president and the chancellor see the new American policy as a conciliatory “politics of détente” and not a politics directed at the unity of Europe and unification of Germany (although in the report by von Weizsäcker there are hints of this policy). Gorbachev, on the other hand, does not even see this, but rather has fears that the Americans will again follow a confrontational policy similar to Reagan. These fears are, however, quite clearly still vague.

It almost appears as if Gorbachev felt in those days that behind the American politics of integration and concern for Europe, including Eastern Europe, there was no sympathy and a genuine inclusion of the Soviet Union but rather the defence of American interests *against* the Soviet Union. But more than this vague feeling of ambivalence toward American foreign policy is not to be taken from his statements. It is not until the end of the year that it becomes clear to the Soviet leadership that a European house could also be built under American dominance without the Soviet Union. From the view of the West German government it must have meant a tightrope walk: on the one hand to force reunification under the protection of the Americans without however, on the other hand, alienating the Soviet Union or endangering Gorbachev’s position.

However, the Kohl government was still in the comfortable situation that both the Americans under Bush and the Soviet Union under Gorbachev accorded the Federal Republic a decisive role in their European politics. In the Soviet protocol Gorbachev considers the Soviet–American relationship to “have a decisive influence on the situation in the world (...) However the Soviet–American relationships are not isolated, they are also influenced from outside and particularly from Europe. But on the European continent the relationships between the USSR and FRG play a key role.” In the German minutes it says, “that *after* the relationship with the United States the Soviet Union gives the greatest significance to the united states of Europe and bilaterally to the relationships to the Federal Republic of Germany.”³¹

Genscher: *That means, Germany had in the decisive year, 1989, an optimal situation in its relationships to the two countries that were most important for German unity: the United States of America and the Soviet Union. This shows how correct the position of German foreign policy after the war was. The solid partnership in the west as a base and the soliciting of trust and working together in the East.*³²

Gorbachev and the “Soviet Fatherhood” of the GDR

“Carry on, Erich” or “Gorbi, save us”: Gorbachev, the GDR Leaders, and the Opposition

The Opposition and Its Effect on the Politburo Pros

In the descriptions of the reunification, particularly by journalists, *the* citizens’ movement, which at the beginning did not call itself by this name and was very heterogeneous, played a completely decisive role. It was seen as bringing the rulers of East Berlin to their knees: sometimes it was those who wanted to emigrate to the FRG and wanted to put pressure on the GDR leadership, and at other times it was those who sometimes referred to themselves as “*Hierbleiber*” (stayers on) and wanted to reform the GDR.

Most definitely the protests and opposition movements, particularly earlier in Poland, Hungary, and finally also in the GDR, left a deep impression on those in power in Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest, and Moscow. As the exit applications and the many illegal escapes from the GDR increased dramatically, they deeply influenced the politicians in both the East and the West. They were symbols of the turning away of the population of the GDR from “their” system and “their” regime, when the diplomatic missions of the FRG in East Berlin (August 8, 1989), Budapest (August 14), Prague (August 23), and later in Warsaw (September 19) were closed because of overcrowding. On September 30, 1989, Foreign Minister Genscher announced in the Prague embassy the imminent exit of the refugees—their jubilation about this is today part of the media’s sign of recognition and frequently referred to symbols of the beginning of the collapse of the GDR like hardly any other.¹ On special trains of the GDR railway around 5,500 citizens of the GDR traveled out of the Prague and approximately 800 from Warsaw through GDR territory to the FRG.

Genscher asked himself in his memoirs and metaphorically the leadership of the GDR of the time:

How could the leadership in East Berlin underestimate what psychological effect the transport of thousands of refugees through the GDR would have? The effect was impossible to miss. A direct departure such as from Hungary through Austria would have had far less serious consequences; but now a great political river had set itself into motion and pushed itself unhindered through the GDR.²

Honecker's statement became famous: he did not "shed tears" over the people who left the GDR. He was said to have made this statement himself in *Neue Deutschland*.³ This view strengthened the opposition in their position fundamentally and it made Honecker unacceptable among his own colleagues in the Politburo.

The opposition, mainly from the peace movement of the GDR, had joined together in the *Neues Forum* (NF) and on September 19, 1989, made a first application for registration as a "political organization." This application was rejected, since the NF was "subversive" and "illegal." The NF was nevertheless tolerated as the movement became stronger and finally on November 8 received authorization. It also remained the strongest group, while a large number of other organizations were established in the next few months. The *Neues Forum*, like almost all the others, could depend on members who had become experienced in the peace movement early on, that is, experience in illegality and under constant control and spying. This movement, which to some extent could carry on within the churches, had widely varied goals. While the "return to Europe" with nonalignment, democracy, and human rights were central for the opposition, and particularly in connection with the dissidents in Poland and Czechoslovakia, reunification played a minor role. This should not be very surprising, since the roots of the political opposition of most of the leading personalities of the movement were in a time when they were concerned about the reform of the GDR, as Robert Havemann, Dubček, and the Prague "socialism with a human face" show, and not the FRG and the parliamentary democracy of a capitalist state.⁴ The location where *Neues Forum* was founded has a relevant symbolic significance: it was Havemann's house.

The 40th Anniversary of the Foundation of the GDR: Gorbachev Visits Honecker

A decision of great significance for later developments bore the mark of Gorbachev: at the meeting of the political advisors committee of the member states of the Warsaw Pact on July 7 and 8, 1989, in Bucharest a doctrine was buried that officially never existed: the Brezhnev Doctrine. This doctrine was understood

to include the option of interfering and military intervention in other member states, as practiced in Czechoslovakia in 1968.⁵

Gorbachev had begun with reform and new thinking not only in the Soviet Union but also in international relations, which did not meet with agreement from all the leaders of the parties in Eastern Europe. Particularly Erich Honecker, along with Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu, was an unequivocal opponent of perestroika and glasnost. Already in the years and months before there had been definite differences between Honecker's and Gorbachev's politics. Gorbachev summarized them in an interview:

The leadership of the GDR took a very critical stance. It began to take actions to create a type of safety belt against the plague from the Soviet Union, which was how they saw Perestroika. Some newspapers (were) prohibited.⁶ A series of important decisions of our Central Committee Plenums that had a reform character were ignored. This applied to the Central Committee Plenum in January 1987 where a deep analysis of our own history was undertaken and our serious mistakes were sharply criticized. We came to the conclusion that our country had forced upon it a model that led to totalitarianism and as a result the abandonment of any democracy. These decisions were silenced. As well, a kind of office was founded in the GDR within the Academy of Social Sciences in the Central Committee of the SED whose task was to examine and censor all statements by Gorbachev and all his publications in the press.⁷

In the highest leadership organs of the SED a cautious opposition to Honecker's politics had developed, which, nevertheless, until 1988 considered it blasphemous to overthrow the general secretary. Gerhard Schürer, himself a Politburo candidate, reported that already in February 1989 because of Honecker's inadequate response to the economic catastrophe that he feared he had decided to look for a successor to Honecker. Originally, the year before, he had considered Werner Felfe, a member of the Politburo, who, however, died in 1989. Therefore he favored Egon Krenz:

We met in February 1989 in Dierhagen and we agreed. During our conversation it became clear that for a long time Krenz had had similar thoughts. I was in favor of an immediate, naturally very risky, coup d'état, wanted to propose in the Politburo the removal of Honecker, Mittag, and Herrmann and the appointment of Egon Krenz as General Secretary and I would retire (...) Egon Krenz gave me to understand that since the middle of the 1980s he was having talks with Will Stoph, Harry Tisch, Siegfried Lorenz,⁸ Werner Jarovinsky, and Werner Felfe about a necessary change of power at the head of the party. Even Erich Mielke(!) would not stand in our way.⁹

But there were many preparations to be made and new allies to win. Therefore, the “risky” step was put off until later.

At the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the GDR everything still proceeded “normally”—almost normal: in March Honecker sent Gorbachev a brief invitation:

Dear Comrade Mikhail Sergeyevich!

This year the German Democratic Republic celebrates the fortieth anniversary of its founding. For this occasion we are pleased to extend a cordial invitation to a party and government delegation from your country.

We would see it as a great honour to be able to receive the delegation of five comrades at the celebrations on 6 and 7 October 1989 in the German Democratic Republic.

With communist greetings

E. Honecker

Berlin, March 1989¹⁰

Ambassador Kochemassov answered Honecker on July 24, 1989:

Dear Comrade Honecker, I must turn to you, purely in confidence, in a matter that without a doubt has great significance for both our countries.

And then it continued confidentially about the Soviet program of the USSR for the 40th anniversary of the GDR including the publication of an article by Honecker in *Pravda*. On September 6, a detailed program titled “Measures on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Founding of the German Democratic Republic” was sent from Moscow. It was also mentioned that a Soviet delegation would be at the celebrations in Berlin, without, however, mentioning Gorbachev’s name.¹¹

Indeed, in September 1989, after signals ranging from critical to hostile from the capital of the GDR opposing Gorbachev’s direction, questions were asked if it was at all useful to fly to Berlin on October 6, 1989, with a high-ranking delegation. Two considerations, however, led to the decision to fly to Berlin after all.

Falin: *If he (Gorbachev) did not go, then the fall of Honecker would occur even earlier, perhaps even on the day of the fortieth anniversary, because it would be a demonstration that Moscow was withdrawing its political, psychological support for the GDR.*¹²

Already before the visit of Soviet general secretary to Berlin there was an increase in the opposition and large demonstrations against the politics of Honecker. At all these events Gorbachev was present as a hope—in the form of posters and calls of “Gorbi, Gorbi.” The leadership of the SED knew this of course, as a large number of demonstration reports that arrived at the office of the general secretary show.

After his arrival and that of his opponents and advisors, Gorbachev was said to have been downright shocked when, on October 6, 1989, on the way from the Schönefeld airport, he saw only a single demonstrator with a “pro-Honecker placard,” namely “Carry on, Erich!”¹³ All the others chanted, “Gorbi, Gorbi” and carried related banners.¹⁴ For the head of a regime who above all knew the desired and enforced support of “his” people, this must at that time have signaled a fall. Gorbachev himself remarked on it in a ZDF interview:

The people saw how their regime became a system that more and more often demonstrated its rigid conservatism and its inability to respond to the demands of life. As a result, the chasm between the population and the political regime kept getting deeper.

Erich Honecker was said to have been very annoyed and “very dejected”¹⁵ by the reception that the demonstrators gave the Soviet guest, even “furious,” as Falin said, so that Gorbachev was on the one hand pleased but still somewhat unsure about how he should behave toward Honecker.

From his own perspective, Honecker could have hoped that everything would be different in the evening. During a torch procession of selected young people—70,000 members of the FDJ paraded along *Unter den Linden* in numbered sections and with torches in hand in front of the socialist elite—something unexpected happened. Even from the ranks of this younger generation of the elite, selected and infiltrated by the Stasi, there were loud, cries of “Gorbi, Gorbi” that could not be ignored.

There was a “very spooky atmosphere;” it was “not about a political message but rather the impression, and this was thus martial because of this fire in the dark. And the people who participated did not, even according to my sense, feel very comfortable with it,” the opposition film-maker Aram Radonski described the situation.¹⁶

*Gorbachev: Young people, from all over Germany, walked in columns—they were probably specially selected—and called on Gorbachev to help them to make Perestroika a reality and to carry out the reforms in the GDR.*¹⁷

As the masses moved past and called “Perestroika” and “Gorbi, help,” according to Gorbachev. Mięcyslaw Rakowski, who also stood on the stand with Jaruzelski, leaned over to Gorbachev, “Mikhail Sergejevich, do you understand what sort of slogans they are yelling?” And then he translated: “They are demanding: Gorbachev, save us!” In his memoirs Gorbachev added: “But these are the party activists. This is the end.”¹⁸ And “It was five minutes to twelve.”¹⁹

Today it is difficult to say if these experiences have been highly stylized in hindsight or if then Gorbachev had felt a quiet pleasure that his fossilized close

enemy Honecker had been defeated by Gorbachev's slogans. Günther Schabowski reported in a ZDF interview:

It was after all our people, dedicated members of the FDJ who applauded Gorbachev and not him. [Honecker—AvP] He was very embittered by it, very disappointed. And after all he then left the scene quickly.²⁰

Gorbachev in an interview said:²¹

Honecker (later) even accused Krenz of specially selecting such demonstrators who would directly oppose Honecker. This shows his lack of understanding. His consciousness was fogged and he could not understand what was happening around himself and in the GDR. This was evidence that Honecker's political career was over.²²

On October 7, 1989, under the impression left by these experiences, Honecker met with Gorbachev in private and after that with the Politburo. The mood in these talks was—according to Gorbachev, Krenz, and many others—appropriately icy.

This atmosphere is demonstrated by the personal reports and memories substantially more clearly than the minutes that have been made available since then in German and Russian.²³ Despite some differences, both demonstrate more the caution on the German and Russian sides. All sweet talk taken into consideration, there are nevertheless visible differences in principle: Gorbachev reports openly on the experiences of the Soviet Union and thus criticizes Honecker's politics only in a very conciliatory way, argues, however, in favor of a new social politics with new thinking and democracy (sausages and bread are not everything, the people want a new atmosphere, more oxygen, a new breath). Gorbachev emphasized that they were all communists and they supported the ideas of October 1917. He praised the leadership of the GDR for its quick reforms "at the beginning of the 1970s." He interpreted the 40th anniversary speech of Honecker on the previous day positively in the sense of a promise of reform for the coming party congress. Gorbachev added, in misunderstanding the situation, it would be easier for the GDR "to carry out reconstructions because you do not have such tensions in the socio-economic area" as the Soviet Union did.

Honecker was just as vague in the private meeting with Gorbachev, but warned the Soviet Union against the American administration, which signaled its willingness to help but tried "to move the Soviet Union to abandon socialist values." There was also no more clarity in the talk with the Politburo, although Honecker tried to instruct his guest on the "Gotha Program" of Marx and Lenin. The economy of the GDR, including the most modern microelectronics, was presented as exemplary. "We will take into account all advice [*of the Soviet*

comrades—AvP], that will lead to the development of socialism in the German Democratic Republic on a more solid foundation.” In the debate other members of the Politburo also indulged in mutual praise and suggested almost ceremonially new forms of cooperation.

That Honecker also took a dig at Gorbachev does not appear in the minutes but is revealed only in personal reports and remembrances. Thus the secretary general of the SED, referring to the miserable supply situation of the Soviet Union, was supposed to have offered Gorbachev help and cooperation with the “big microchip.” According to Valentin Falin, Honecker said:

*“Not long ago I was in Magnitogorsk. The city administration invited me on a little excursion to show me how the people there lived. I did not go myself. But when the comrades who did participate came back, they said that there were not even salt and matches in the stores.” He said that and looked at those present as if to say: “And those, who have led their own country into misery, want to instruct us.”*²⁴

Nevertheless the frequently mentioned harmonious ways of Gorbachev appear not to have hidden the deep differences. After all, everyone in the Politburo knew what the issues really were. According to the minutes, however, no member of the Politburo rose to speak with the intent of tackling the actual differences, including Gerhard Schürer; but in the interview he became substantially clearer and said that, despite the restraint of Gorbachev—“for this he is a much too great diplomat”—it could still be sensed that “in the Soviet Union changes had taken place and there was dissatisfaction that the GDR did not back this course of Perestroika and Glasnost.”²⁵

Ten years later, Heinz Kessler, who had been minister of defence of the GDR at the time, explained the lack of openness in the talks between the Soviet delegation and the Politburo thus:

*I think that, even if not expressed, the differences of opinion (...) were actually deeper and that actually no one really had the courage, that’s how I would call it, as it actually is common among socialists, communists, to express openly and honestly their differences and to discuss the differences on the basis of common ideas.*²⁶

Gorbachev saw his performance completely differently from the way he appeared in the minutes. In the Gorbachev archives there is, surprisingly among the Politburo materials, a diary entry by Vadim Andreyewich Medvedev²⁷ who received Gorbachev at the airport when he returned. In his diary he wrote:

7 October 1989. Late in the evening [we—AvP] met Gorbachev who arrived from the GDR. The situation there is less celebratory than tense. At the mass meetings the youth, accompanied by march music, had chanted clearly, “Gorbi, help us.” At the

meetings with Honecker and all members of the Politburo he expressed everything "to the farthest limit" (to the "highest level"). They plan to discuss the situation [there—AvP] at a meeting of the Politburo.

There is no sign of this farthest limit of what could be possibly said in the minutes of both sides.²⁸

At the meeting with members of the Politburo Gorbachev was also supposed to have uttered the sentence that was to become a German adage: "Who arrives too late will be punished by life." This sentence was actually, according to Nicolai Portugalov,²⁹ the imaginative creation of an ingenious interpreter.³⁰ The Russian proverb, which Gorbachev expressed, should actually be: "Who arrives late for dinner must be satisfied with the leftovers." No version of this adage is recorded in the minutes. Similar versions are: "If we stay behind, life will punish us immediately" or "We have only one choice, to proceed decisively, or we will be defeated by life itself."³¹ In an interview with GDR television a few days earlier Gorbachev had said, "Danger awaits only those who do not react to life."

In my opinion the visit of the Soviet delegation under Gorbachev for the 40th anniversary of the founding of the GDR played an essential part in the fall of the SED despite all the pretense of harmony: the appearances of the general secretary demonstrated to large sections of the population of the GDR and the members of the SED, with the assistance of its own television, how popular Gorbachev was in the GDR. They showed the dogmatism and complacency of the SED leadership and once again made clear to the critical spirits in the Politburo that Honecker and Mittag had nothing to offer that one could describe as an appropriate reaction to the challenges of the time: to the economic collapse, which Schürer independently—that is, without Mittag—had wanted to present to Honecker already in April 1988,³² the problems of COMECON and the relationship between set prices and international market prices, the imperfect democracy, in particular the lack of the freedom to travel in spite of the rising wave of emigration, censorship and the Stasi presence, the relationship with the Soviet Union, and the renewal debates taking place there, to mention only the most crucial.

Gorbachev's visit was the signal for Honecker's opponents in the Politburo. Already during the farewell Egon Krenz, Günther Schabowski, and Harry Tisch now decided "to get serious." For our context the following note of Schürer is not without interest:

*There was no support to be expected from the Soviet leadership.*³³

All the Soviet participants also deny having been involved in any way in the overthrow of Honecker.

At the departure Krenz was to have said to Falin:

Your side said everything that had to be said. Ours did not understand anything.

Falin replied:

*The Soviet guest did and said more than one could expect from a guest. Everything else depends on you.*³⁴

Krenz did not mention these brief additional observations, but he did mention a “change” that Gorbachev wished for in the Politburo meeting, while looking around at those present, as if he wanted to see if they had understood him correctly:

I take from his explanations that he sees a movement of the GDR towards a course of change under national (?) requirements, towards reforms and more generosity in the sense of his conception of new thought as a basis for the further socialist development of the GDR.

He could be certain that the removal of Honecker was what the Soviet general secretary wanted, but still thought that the opportunity had been missed to inform Gorbachev “openly and honestly about the actual situation in our country. Valuable time is being lost.”³⁵

The appearance of Gorbachev at the 40th anniversary of the founding of the GDR nevertheless made clear that at least the passive support of the Soviet leadership was assured. And as Krenz explained, in the interest of the country’s own independence, there was no desire for any active assistance.

While Schabowski, Tisch, and Krenz made their plans, Honecker and Mielke allowed the violent and senseless beating up of demonstrators in the evening³⁶—a milestone in the development of the opposition. Ulrike Poppe, like many others, reported the encirclement of the Gethsemane Church in Berlin, brutal beatings, and *agents provocateurs*:

*I was afraid because you didn’t know exactly how far the authorities would go, if they would use firearms (...) I also saw how the demonstrators constantly tried to avoid provocations. There were directed provocations from the state security and when anyone wanted to pick up a stone, then there were immediately three people there who said, “Stop, leave that stone there. We want to stay peaceful.” And that worked well.*³⁷

On that evening more than 3,000 demonstrators were arrested; charges were laid against more than 700 people.³⁸

October 9 in Leipzig, the Berlin Underground Leadership, and the Middle Cadres Are Forced to Make a Decision

On the Monday after the festivities in Berlin and the police actions against demonstrations on the weekend of October 7 and 8, 1989, thousands of people gathered in Leipzig in the churches, on the streets, in private residents, in order to demonstrate in the center of the city. This plunged the SED leadership of Leipzig into great difficulties. These and other Monday demonstrations in Leipzig as well as the stance of the SED district authorities and division commanders are in some sense symptomatic of the fall of the GDR. The events in Leipzig, often considered decisive, should therefore be presented as an example and examined.³⁹

The demonstrators feared that in Leipzig there could be a “Chinese Solution”—referring to the events on Tiananmen Square in Beijing where security forces unleashed a bloodbath in early June that year. The district authorities, on the other hand, made up of the second SED district chief Helmut Hackenberg,⁴⁰ the Leipzig head of the Stasi Manfred Hummitzsch, and the chief of the district command of the People’s Police, Major General Gerhard Straßenberg, also feared that day and had prepared appropriately. Within the command there were indeed preparations to strike with all the force of at least the police if not more if there were “provocations.”⁴¹ As is known, there was no battle as was feared. Afterward various groups and persons took credit for this, according to their positions. What is certain is that the parade by tens of thousands of demonstrators—even the number varied, settled in at around 70,000 however—shocked the authorities and made clear that the smallest spark could set off an explosion and that their planned measures against “provocations” in the face of the crowded inner city and its access routes could be carried out only if a bloodbath was considered acceptable.

The fact is that the demonstrators did not let themselves become demoralized despite all their fears and various groups—among them also the “Leipzig Six”⁴²—appealed for moderation. Helmut Hackenberg, who was then the acting chief of the local SED, reported that the youth researcher Walter Friedrich⁴³ was still in the Berlin SED central headquarters on the morning of October 9 and warned that the situation was such that “blood would flow in the evening.” In his presence, reports Egon Krenz, he called his close comrade-in-arms Wolfgang Herger⁴⁴ who, after Krenz, was responsible for security matters and who calmed them both by telling them that the decisions made the previous day to avoid a dangerous confrontation in any case would be followed. As well there were two members of the security department in Leipzig (of whom, as we remarked, there was no sign in the determining moments). Friedrich also presented a paper that Krenz read in his (Friedrich’s) presence in which the researcher expressed his deep worries about the condition of the GDR and the party, suggested the removal of Honecker and the appointment of Krenz as his successor—with glances upward

as if he suspected that there were listening devices in Krenz’s office, a suspicion that he retained, passing Krenz small notes even after the latter assured him that his office was not bugged. This is only a small detail but it provides an insight into the awareness of the total power of the state security authorities even over the party leadership.⁴⁵

However, Hackenberg thought that Krenz who himself “stood alone” had not contacted him, who after all occupied the highest authority to make commands in Leipzig.

Hackenberg: *Egon Krenz in the course of the day until 19:15 did not intervene and no one else did either, but I was dependent on my authority alone, together with my associates, in directing the district division. Everything that occurred was thus made possible with our authority.*

Hackenberg gave the order to retreat at 19:15, and then afterward informed Krenz by telephone. The latter said that he could only receive the information and discuss it with other associates who were in charge.

Hackenberg: *And he [Krenz—AvP] then called me, let’s say, after 20 o’clock and told me that they endorse my decision. And then he added another sentence that I also want to mention: “I don’t know if the two of us would still occupy our positions tomorrow morning. Let’s wait and see.”*

The interviewer did some arithmetic and asked,

Interviewer: *At what time did you give the order to pull back the troops?*

Hackenberg: *18:30.*⁴⁶

This means that the telephone call with Krenz actually no longer had a decisive significance. This is Krenz’s own opinion in his interview:

*But this phone call made no difference to anything. You have to remember that on 9 October the state structures of the GDR were still in order. If there had been an order to fire, if there had been one, it could have been rescinded only by the people who had the authority in Berlin. And everything else that circulates around this matter is legends. The fact is that there was no order in Berlin for the use of force—luckily—there was none.*⁴⁷

Krenz overlooks—apart from the question of the order to fire—one thing in particular: Hackenberg or the whole district management felt they had been abandoned by Berlin, which at least after the mentioned visit by Walter Friedrich must have been clear, that in the face of the critical situation in Leipzig there

was a danger of bloodshed, independently of what the Berlin authorities had decided. Krenz's argument is therefore a genuine bureaucrat's argument, according to which reality can be organized through decisions.

Similar arrangements (of information) will show up repeatedly in the course of further developments: a middle local level in a critical position on the spot finally stands alone in making a decision in a political situation of far-reaching importance. In Leipzig Hackenberg did not want to be responsible for a possible bloodbath, which in his opinion as well could have had far-reaching effects on world politics and he, actually a "hardliner," decided against an escalation. But anyone in the leadership body might have made a completely different decision and thereby introduced an escalation—exactly because of the invisible and powerless leadership in Berlin.⁴⁸ Here the citizens' movement should not overestimate its role, even if the 70,000 demonstrators did increase the pressure on the district management of the SED enormously.

The "day of decision" in Leipzig is indicative of the whole development of the GDR from this time until November 9, the day of the fall of the Wall, when something similar repeated itself.⁴⁹

Rebels Without a New Concept: The Deposing of Honecker and the New Leadership under Krenz and Its Effect

The Leipzig demonstration of October 9, 1989, and its reworking by the political leadership and the directing officers of the security apparatus on October 13 finally contributed to the fall of Honecker. The head of the privy council wanted to let tanks roll through Leipzig as a display of power while Krenz, General Colonel Streletz, who was then acting minister of defence,⁵⁰ and chief of the General Staff of the National People's Army, as well as other members of the Politburo, were in favor of a plan without military intervention, whereby the soldiers should remain in the barracks further away in the surrounding area.

The Tame Putsch in the Big House

Shortly before, on October 13, there was a discussion in Leipzig about October 9, which Krenz used to get military backing in the case of Honecker's removal.

*Streletz: On the flight back from Leipzig Egon Krenz took me aside and said something like, "How would the army, especially the generals and officers, behave, if Erich Honecker were removed, because it is impossible to continue with him, and we voted for a new general secretary?" I would certainly have looked perplexed, because no one had ever spoken with me with such openness.*⁵¹

Streletz's reaction is less surprising but nevertheless interesting for the main question of this book:

In response I immediately asked, “Has such a move been agreed upon with the Soviet Union?” Because, I repeat, I was a representative of the highest officers of the united forces and it was very important for me to know: has this been agreed to with the Soviet Union or not? His answer was: “We never do something like this unilaterally. We always get the agreement of the Soviet Union.”⁵² I then said to him, “The National People’s Army took an oath of allegiance, not to a person; the oath states: ‘I swear to protect the German Democratic Republic from every enemy and to protect it at the order of the Workers’ and Peasants’ government steadfastly.’ That means that it has nothing to do with individuals but with the fulfilment of the duty required by the oath of allegiance.” And then he said again to me, “Is that just your opinion or is it also the opinion of the generals and officers?” I said, “I can guarantee that that is also the opinion of the generals, the officers of the National People’s Army.” And here I noticed that his was visibly relieved.

Streletz added further important information:

This talk that he had with me he later [aboard the plane—AvP] also had with the first representative of the Minister for State Security, Colonel-General Mittag and the Chief of Staff of the Minister of the Interior, Colonel-General Wagner, so that on the return flight from Leipzig to Berlin he assured himself that the three armed organs would definitely agree to a removal of Erich Honecker and that he did not need to expect any difficulty in that area.

Honecker himself then signed the action plan for the upcoming demonstrations in the form of order 9/89 that Krenz and Streletz presented to him. At the same time he also asked Streletz to call the chief of the Soviet troops in the GDR, Army General Snetkov, and to ask whether it is possible to not carry out troop movements and no maneuvers in the areas of Dresden, Leipzig, Potsdam, and Berlin.

According to Streletz, General Snetkov showed a complete understanding, promised restraint, but added something that is particularly interesting and in contradiction to many reports about the noninterference of the Soviet army.

Snetkov, according to Strelitz, said: “Comrade Streletz, I emphasize again, if the National People’s Army needs help, support, the group is prepared to lend any help to its brothers-in-arms the NPA.”⁵³

As is known, it never came to this.

Gorbachev himself always had opposed such a view. At this time—he meant October/November 1989—there were no such forces that wanted to intervene militarily. The Soviet tanks stayed in the barracks.

*Gorbachev: I understand naturally that people cannot forget Hungary and Czechoslovakia—and also the situation in East Germany at the beginning of its development [1953—AvP]. Related associations could arise, but for serious politicians it was clear that we would not take this route again. Neither in the Politburo nor in the Soviet leadership did I have problems with this.*⁵⁴

Heinz Kefßler, GDR minister of defence and himself a general, sees it somewhat differently: he did “not know a single” Soviet general who supported perestroika. A whole lot of them “agreed with me in the belief that this politics of Perestroika and Glasnost had to lead to a difficult situation if not something worse.” Especially Marshal Akhromeyev, Gorbachev’s military advisor, himself a member of the Central Committee and at the time chief of General Staff, was of the opinion “that this route . . . Perestroika and Glasnost, if it continued in the same direction, would hurt the Soviet Union, the community of socialist states, and naturally also the GDR.” In fact, all the generals in the western division of the Soviet army in the GDR were of this opinion.⁵⁵

The question was only whether there could be occasions that in October 1989 and also after which could provoke a Soviet counterattack. It has now become known that there was great anxiety in the Soviet barracks, whose inhabitants sometimes wanted to protect themselves with home-made weapons (like bats and shields) to react to possible attacks quietly.⁵⁶

Back to the Monday demonstrations: together with other leading functionaries, Honecker watched the next demonstration in Leipzig on monitors at minister of the interior Dickel’s place. Streletz had to read the slogans that were carried there out loud to Honecker; apparently the SED chief recommended the use of paratroopers during the demonstration, which the others rejected.⁵⁷

The mass Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, Berlin, and elsewhere had “softened up” the leadership of the SED, presumably with the exception of Honecker—naturally based on their awareness of the decline of the GDR economy and against the background of the changes in the Soviet Union. But without this “weakening” of the political and military leadership and without the agreements between the generals of the GDR, the political leadership, and the Soviet generals in the GDR, the demonstrations and the democratic development of the GDR would have been in great danger.

After Krenz found a positive response from the most important security political leaders of GDR against Honecker during his explorations, the “main conspirators,” Egon Krenz, Günther Schabowski, and union head Harry Tisch, met secretly after dark on October 16, 1989, in Tisch’s house in Wandlitz. Its

interior of old German furniture with an “extensive collection of beer glasses, that occupied the many bookshelves” had provoked a variety of comments.⁵⁸ There the “agenda” for the meeting of the Politburo, where Erich Honecker was to be removed, was determined. Willi Stoph had declared himself ready to make the request for the removal himself. He wanted to step down after the next party congress. It would be necessary to consider who would succeed him (Krolikowski or Tisch). The most important thing was, however, the missed opportunity to patch things up after the 40th anniversary and to inform Gorbachev beforehand—explicitly only to inform: one did not want any word of assent or a message. Harry Tisch was to take care of this during his upcoming visit in Moscow.⁵⁹

Tisch did in fact go to Moscow on October 17 and carried out this task with his characteristic movie-style discretion. Without any notice his car left the convoy and headed off to the Kremlin. Gorbachev acknowledged the explanation with satisfaction and wished Krenz and his friends all the best for the success in their cause.⁶⁰

The removal of Honecker was almost jeopardized by an article in the West Berlin edition of the *Bild-Zeitung* of October 13 that had the headline, “Honecker—Wednesday The Last Work Day.”⁶¹ The highest ranking circles of the GDR had informed the Western *Bild-Zeitung* that Honecker would be removed from power in five days. Apparently Honecker underestimated the “western journal”—at least nothing is known about an attempt to hinder such a possibility. The question of who might have had an interest in such a “deliberate indiscretion” and had informed the *Bild-Zeitung* cannot be answered today.

On Tuesday, October 17, 1989, at 10 a.m., the moment had arrived: meeting of the Politburo. The goal of the group around Krenz was the removal of Honecker. Twenty-five members and candidates were present. Defence Minister Keßler was absent because he was still in the middle of his trip to Central America. Honecker opened the meeting, asked if there were additional suggestions for the agenda. In reply Prime Minister Willi Stoph piped up and presented the proposal “to remove Comrade Honecker from his function as General Secretary.”⁶² At first, Honecker attempted to play down this proposal with only a slight reaction, leading to protests. Honecker later said, “I knew immediately that this was a put-up game and that I could no longer work with this collective.”⁶³

One after the other all the members of the Politburo—even those especially responsible for the catastrophic situation—declared themselves in favor of Honecker’s removal; Schabowski also proposed the removal of Honecker from the posts of leader of the State Council and leader of the National Defence Council. Günter Mittag’s vote for the removal of the old general secretary unleashed spirited heckling—after all he was the man considered by Honecker’s opponents to be the actual manipulator behind the “unrealistic politics” and the turning away from the Soviet Union. As a result, some called for the removal of Mittag and Joachim Herrmann along with Honecker. Honecker listened to everything

without making any movements. Only in the case of Mielke, the head of the Stasi, did Honecker flare up. There was an exchange of words, in the course of which Mielke was reported to have uttered vague threats. Not until November 1990 did it become known what Mielke might have been referring to. In a safe in the office of the Stasi chief a red suitcase was found; in it were files, including those of the National Socialist judiciary, concerning the prisoner Erich Honecker. Contrary to his heroic legend, Honecker had incriminated other imprisoned comrades—though under torture. And Mielke kept this material in his safe just in case.⁶⁴

At the end of the meeting Krenz spoke. This was, he said, a decisive moment. He had decided that if the Politburo agreed to the proposal of Comrade Stoph, he would be available for the office of general secretary. Honecker spoke last and warned against believing that with his removal even one of the internal problems would be solved. “My being replaced shows,” he said, as quoted by Egon Krenz, “that we can be blackmailed.”⁶⁵

In Item 1 of the minutes of the Politburo by Willi Stoph it says: “The Politburo agrees with the proposal of Comrade Willi Stoph to remove Comrade Honecker from the function of General Secretary and member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED for reasons of health.” Egon Krenz would be suggested to the Central Committee the following day as the new general secretary. It was a unanimous decision. Honecker, Mittag, and Hermann voted along with all the others for their removal. With the declaration of the Politburo that Honecker had stepped down for health reasons all sides were deprived of the ability to make public the controversies around the real situation and the relationship to democracy—also within the party—and gave the Central Committee no possible opportunity to change its mind and support Honecker later.

On the following day, October 18, 1989, as expected, the Central Committee elected Krenz as Honecker’s successor.

The Soviet Union’s Restraint?

Like Krenz and all Soviet advisors and then Soviet KGB head Vladimir Kryuchkov, Gorbachev himself claimed that there was no concrete assistance from the Soviet Union in the fall of Honecker.

This might be true, but it would be naïve to say today with certainty that there were no Soviet conspirators in the background. However, there is much evidence that in Moscow there had been hope for a significantly earlier change that one did, however, not want to force. Even after the fall of the Wall, Gorbachev said in a telephone conversation with Mitterrand on November 14, 1989, “If these events [*i.e.*, *the leadership change in the GDR—AvP*] had occurred sooner, then everything would [*today—AvP*] be progressing more quietly.”⁶⁶ If there had been direct interference, then one could with a certain probability assume that, in the meantime, this would have been “blabbed” by one of the former comrades

some of whom are now arch enemies. Still it is unknown if the KGB was working in this direction in the GDR. At the time there were rumors about a KGB group that perhaps could have had an influence. Nikolai Portugalov was asked about these rumors in an interview with the ZDF.

Blumenberg: *I came across something remarkable, first through a book by Gregor Gysi⁶⁷ and then through a report in the Berliner Zeitung that there was a group inside the KGB that from 1987/88 was specially occupied with looking at the leaders of the GDR and seeing who would come into consideration in case Honecker finally failed. This group had allegedly had the names Strahl, Ljusch. Have you ever heard about this, do you think this could be true?*

Portugalov: *In a very limited way. There really was a Ljusch. Only not so much because of the search for a suitable candidate [for Honecker—AvP] but (...) Ljusch was always a type of publicity operation, if you like: a search for an agent, advertising for an agent. But could these people seriously without Gorbachev (...) somehow replace Honecker? (...) They could do no more than give a few tips and they didn't even have these. Basically it was a flop.⁶⁸*

Apart from this rather dark and apparently dramatic story there is so far also no indication of a Soviet “puppet master” behind Honecker’s removal, not even in the Politburo notes in the Gorbachev archives.

Still as the meeting of the SED Central Committee was about to end, a telegram arrived with wishes of good luck from Gorbachev, and Ambassador Kochemassov appeared. The Soviet general secretary also sent personal messages to the Western powers, including to Helmut Kohl through Kvitsinski, the Soviet ambassador in Bonn. The message said that he had no intention of discussing the internal affairs of another state with Kohl, but he reminded Kohl of his assurance that he had repeated recently (on October 11) in a telephone call: he was in no way interested in a destabilization of the GDR or Eastern Europe.⁶⁹

In the Soviet minutes this assurance by Kohl is substantially much more clearly stated than in the German. In the Russian minutes, Kohl is quoted as saying: “I want to assure you that the FRG is in no way interested in the destabilization of the GDR and wants to wish it nothing bad.”⁷⁰

In the message sent through Kwizinski, which is not found in the open files of the office of the Federal chancellor and not in the drafts prepared by the Ministry Director Duisberg for Kohl about the removal of Honecker,⁷¹ it is stated:

Mikhail Gorbachev expects that, in accordance with these assurances and the broad understanding that was achieved by the summit conferences in Moscow and Bonn, the chancellor and GDR together take a position in regard to the events in the GDR that befits the interests of the predictability of the actions of all and the consolidation of the stability of Europe.⁷²

It seems that Gorbachev already appears to be concerned about the GDR under Krenz on the day of the meeting of the Central Committee that confirmed Honecker's removal.

Opening of the Sluice Gates Becomes a Breaching of the Dam

In his concluding words at the meeting of the Politburo on October 17, Krenz is supposed to have said, "Without the Soviet Union there is no GDR. If we do not immediately begin a turnaround in the party, there could be eruptions that resemble a civil war."⁷³ He must have had only a slight inkling of how much and how differently he would be proved right. On October 18, the Central Committee confirmed Egon Krenz. In his final speech he expressed, in the characteristic Communist Party language, what innovations he was considering: from economic reforms to democracy and new relationships with allies to his own readiness "to test ways and possibilities to make the relations between the GDR and FRG closer and more satisfactorily regulated in the long run." At the same time he made clear what he wanted to preserve: the GDR as a sovereign state and socialism in the GDR.⁷⁴

Based on what is available today in the original documents, in my opinion, Krenz's cautious opposition and finally the tame and late Politburo putsch was the result of his conviction. His measures were carried out to provide the impetus for improving the condition of the people of the GDR as well as to permit more democracy, particularly the freedom to travel—within his conception of a real socialism, which shaped him.

He wanted thereby to open the sluice gates in a controlled way, but this was not sufficient in those days—the dam broke. It was simply a hopeless and much too late attempt to win over a people of whom the majority had already headed off in a new direction. Besides, for the opposition Krenz was a representative of the Ancien Régime, whose face had, after accusations of electoral fraud and the justification of the blood bath on Tiananmen Square in Beijing,⁷⁵ become a hostile grimace.

Ulrike Poppe said:

I think that no one in the country had any hope that anything could change with Krenz. He was the crown prince, he was chosen by Honecker.⁷⁶ He pretended that he would do many things differently because he had to, but he had no chance.⁷⁷

For most of the opposition, with whom I spoke,⁷⁸ the choice of Eugen Krenz was already a declaration of the bankruptcy of the new beginning. And Krenz did no better when he then gave the speech that he had given before the Central Committee on television with the address "Dear Comrades"—without any sense what this must signify for the majority of the population.

Shabowski hoped at the time: “We have time now. We will now be able to do everything—this was our big illusion. That bit of air we that we hoped to give ourselves thereby was used up almost immediately.” And Krenz added: “The grace period was not given to me by the western media nor by my own population. In this respect I was always the driven one. In the morning we were often of a different opinion from the one we had to have in the evening.”⁷⁹

Indeed, after the fall of Honecker events followed each other rapidly. On October 23, around 300,000 people demonstrated in Leipzig shouting, “We are the people!” Reports of catastrophes arrived hourly at the general secretary’s doors: resignations, pleas, explanations, reprimands, criticisms. When one reads today everything that landed on the general secretary’s table in the following weeks,⁸⁰ then one senses that it was no longer swaying planks upon which Krenz and his team had erected their navigation bridge; rather it was the remains of a sinking ship. The opponents had been known to the SED for a long time—the general secretary had a separate, though in no way complete, file on the opposition.⁸¹ But now the first signs of dissolution also appeared *in* the party where there had been an “almost religious relationship to unity and purity.”⁸²

The Decline of the GDR Economy

At the end of the Central Committee meeting of October 18, several members of the Central Committee such as Manfred Ewald and Hans Modrow wanted a policy discussion in a plenum. But Krenz considered himself unready; there was no content preparation. “The Central Committee must know: how is the economic situation? How are the state finances? Which economic reforms are possible?”

That the miserable economic situation was unknown to the members of the Central Committee is hardly believable. As has been frequently suggested, Gerhard Schürer had early on already attempted to present the economic situation, warts and all, to the Politburo. He mentioned that in the second half of the 1980s the planned growth of 4 percent had no longer been reached while at the same time the subsidies and the earnings of the population “grew annually of their own accord by seven per cent,” as a result of which there were growing disproportions in the budget. Exports to the “non-socialist economic regions” decreased and the debt “galloped in the direction of twenty billion US dollars.” A further cause of the deterioration was that the world market prices for crude oil were all over the place: “In 1972 a tonne of crude oil from the USSR cost 14 Rubles, by 1981/82 it climbed to 182 Rubles per tonne, then went back down to 90 Rubles per tonne, but its effect was delayed in the COMECON price, because the COMECON price for the following year is always based on the world market price of the last five years.” The situation now meant “that for the Soviet oil we still

had to pay 170–190 Rubles per tonne, but only the actual world market price would be received for the export of oil products. As a result the export surplus of the years 1981–1985 melted away.” On top of this the USSR reduced the export shipments to the GDR from 19 million tonnes to 17.1 million tonnes.⁸³

Lothar de Maizière thinks that the first truly unsparring examination of the true state of the economy of the GDR took place ten days after Honecker’s removal under the aegis of Krenz. “On 27 October the five economic experts (...) presented Studies of the economic situation of the GDR. (...)” This study was filed as GVVS,⁸⁴ that is, the highest level of secrecy⁸⁵ because if these data had become known by the population, there would have been an uprising; and even worse, if the West European banks had found out, they would cast doubts on the credit-worthiness of the GDR. He did not mention this either. According to this study, in which besides Schürer also Schalck-Golodkowski,⁸⁶ the finance minister, and others took part, there were fundamental defects in the GDR’s economy.

- First, the inadequate reinvestment in production, “which had led to a complete obsolescence” of the plants. “In principle a social economy must reinvest 50 per cent if it is healthy.”
- Second, “The efficiency of the East German economy is at most forty per cent of the comparable situation in the GDR.” In the last 20 years disproportionately more had been invested in the consumer area.
- Third, “The ratio of government expenditures to GNP, i.e. public consumption, was in the last years of the GDR over 80 per cent and we know that at the time [*end of 1999—AvP*] it was 53 per cent in the FRG.”⁸⁷
- Fourth, the debt: according to de Maizière the debt of the GDR in 1989 was “more than 500 billion GDR marks: 220 for the industries, 110 for the construction of apartments, 167 to western countries”⁸⁸ (which finally rose to 50 billion). The balance of payments with the COMECON states remained “fairly balanced”:

De Maizière: *The savings of the GDR population of 160 billions were worth as much as the paper they were printed on. Alone in the last five years [of the GDR—AvP] the tax income of the population— this had a legally fixed tax of 3¼ per cent—was higher than the increase in costs. Thus this means that we had the beginning of galloping inflation. Finally it was only through the monetary union that we were spared the inflations experienced by the Poles, the Czechs, and above all the Russians.*⁸⁹

The new debt appears from today’s perspective limitable, but

*We had to spend 4.40 Marks to produce a product that could then be sold in the FRG or elsewhere for 1 Mark. That means 50 billion Marks in debts are converted to around 225 billion GDR debts. And that is more or almost double an annual budget.*⁹⁰

A further element was introduced by de Maizière, which otherwise played no role at least in the minutes and also not in the talks of the GDR with the Soviet leadership: the exchange clauses inside COMECON and the costs for the Soviet troops in the GDR.

There were basically three exchange rates for the Ruble. The tourist rate was 3 GDR Marks for 1 Ruble (...) In the frame of the Comecon there was no Ruble as currency but as a conversion Ruble, the so-called Account Ruble. There we send products for 2.34 Marks in order to receive one Ruble for them from the Comecon bank. Completely different with the deployment costs. Since 1957 the GDR paid annually in advance approximately 4 Billion Marks for the deployment of the Red Army. And they were financed over the years through oil shipments and for 5.50 Marks for an Account Ruble, i.e. two and a half times worse than the economic Ruble rate. That had to be found by the GDR besides the provision of free construction, road building, etc. that the troops required. And with this money that they received in this way they bought highly subsidized items. Because the basic necessities, children's clothing and all such things that they bought were highly subsidized so that one had to convert that again.⁹¹

In summary⁹² for the GDR economy this meant:

- Outdated production facilities, high repair costs
- In the FRG 53 percent of the gross national product, in the GDR only 15 percent were spent on investments (1989)
- Poor as well as aged infrastructure from roads to communication (particularly in the telephone network)
- Dropping trade with the West: not only with the FRG but with the OECD countries⁹³ as a whole
- Dramatic fall in the foreign currency profitability of GDR products: for 1 DM in foreign trade in 1980 the rate was 2.40 GDR Marks; in 1990 4.40 GDR Marks
- Debt of the GDR: at the end of the 1980s more than 550 billion GDR Marks, including 167.2 billion GDR Marks owed to the West (in 1975 it was 10 billion FRG Marks = 167.2 billion GDR Mark at an exchange rate of 1:22; in 1989 it was 38 billion FRG Marks = 167.2 billion GDR Marks at an exchange rate of 1:4.4; in 1990: 50 billion FRG Marks). The annual interest costs of the GDR were in 1988 22 billion GDR Marks
- In the area of consumption in 1989 a four-member worker or clerical employee household in the GDR had to spend for its own use: 45.4 percent for industrial products (23.2 percent in the FRG), 40 percent for food and consumer goods (23.2 percent in the FRG), 4.8 percent for rent (25.8 percent in the FRG), other items 9.8 percent (16.1 percent in the FRG)

The decline of the economy of the GDR particularly in the second half of the 1980s was noticed in the West but, oddly, not seen as being so dramatic. In my opinion it was particularly depressing for the convinced Socialists and Communists in the GDR that the economy and consumption of the GDR were inferior in comparison with the system of the FRG (and with National Socialism, the two main enemies of the GDR system). This is shown as well by the interviews carried out in 1987 in the industrial area of the GDR and some memoirs.⁹⁴

“Respectable People Stand by Their Paternity”: Krenz in Moscow

On October 27, 1989 a message for Egon Krenz arrived “that we are ready in Moscow to receive you on 31 October and 1 November 1989 for a working visit.” There was a program, a press release—incidentally at first without mentioning that Krenz was to be received by Gorbachev. On the third page it said “To Comrade Krenz with a request for attention. We suggest: to refrain from a departure and reception group at Schönefeld Airport.”⁹⁵ Apparently in Moscow one wanted that even in Berlin there should not be much fuss about the visit. Yakovlev⁹⁶ would meet Krenz and 13 other persons. On November 1, at 10 a.m., a meeting of Gorbachev and Krenz (only the interpreters H. Ettinger and S. J. Netchayev would be present) was scheduled. At lunch Yakovlev and Shevernadze would join them.

The extensive preparatory materials for this visit are contained in the files of the general secretary of the SED.⁹⁷ According to the program there was a completely new gesture in the recommendation of the Foreign Minister (MfAA), not to take along the DEFA documentary film crew but instead(!) Jan Carpentier (director), Frank Däumlich (cameraman), and Harald Reichmann (technician) from the youth channel “Elf99.”⁹⁸

In the material it is emphasized that Krenz wanted to expose the economic situation of the GDR. “For this we have to have a fast lead time or the situation is difficult to control and hardly still predictable.” In writing, Krenz added in parentheses, “without causing a shock.” These materials also contained the negative balance of payments with claims on the Soviet Union.⁹⁹ As well there are numerous preparation and information files on diverse themes, as well as the “Request of the GDR for the increase in shipments of gas” and the offer to pay for this with construction and assembly work as well as important pharmaceutical shipments.¹⁰⁰

The visit happened as it was planned: on November 1, Egon Krenz met in Moscow with representatives of the Soviet leadership, among them Mikhail Gorbachev. It was “the absolutely last meeting” between the general secretaries of the SED and CPSU, said Hans Modrow later. Krenz had the feeling that he

was supported by a “majority agreement” by the people of the GDR and also the Central Committee. This is how he appeared and presented the situation in the GDR.

Modrow: The actual situation in the country was not known even to him. The crisis of the SED and GDR was more complex than the new man understood and therefore also expressed. Krenz had... also no key concept for its solution. And Gorbachev would not have prepared himself intensively either. In many aspects the dialogue did not rise above the level of friendly but non-committal encounter and therefore acquired altogether at best a documentary character.¹⁰¹

This harsh judgement of Modrow reflected the general opinion of this visit. In my opinion, in view of the minutes now available,¹⁰² this a crude misjudgment. Hardly a visit at that time had such extensive consequences for the decisions of the Soviet leadership as this visit by Krenz on November 1, 1989.

It is not possible to suggest that Krenz was poorly prepared when one reads the almost 130-page preparation dossier from his office. There were quite different themes that were discussed with the various department heads.¹⁰³

For Krenz “the all-decisive” theme was the economic relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁴ This was the subject for the conversation of both sides according to the Soviet minutes as well: all problematic questions were discussed. Krenz drew a realistic picture of the GDR economy without any beautification with a few hopeful sprinkles in order to, as he had intended, not “create a shock.” And this appears to be exactly what happened. For it was not even a month before that Honecker almost arrogantly had painted a completely different picture of the GDR, so that Gorbachev could still assume, as he had said in his speech before the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED in Berlin, that in the GDR reforms could be carried out without the bad economic conditions as in the Soviet Union. This proved now to be a big illusion with far-reaching consequences for the Soviet policy. Because if the GDR teetered on the edge of economic bankruptcy, then the “German Question,” which both were always discussing, would take on a completely different dimension, and the necessary costs would have to be assumed by the Soviet Union to support the GDR politically. Or, on the other hand, it would be necessary to force the FRG to do more. These were all obvious variables at the time. But they were variables that became known to Gorbachev on this day and, namely, through the negative examples of Poland and Hungary.

Gorbachev: In Hungary and Poland a situation has now arisen that, as one says, can no longer hide itself anywhere, so much have they exposed themselves to financial dependence on the West. Now some reproach us: where does the Soviet Union actually have its eyes, why does it allow Poland and Hungary to “slide away” to the

*West? But really we can't finance Poland. Gierek has piled up the debt [around 100 billion dollars—AvP], Poland has paid 49 already and still has to pay almost 50 billion. And in regard to Hungary, the International Monetary Fund already set a strict ultimatum under Kádár in 1987.*¹⁰⁵

And now, after the report on the actual economic situation in the GDR, Gorbachev had to fear that the GDR would also become a financial burden to the USSR—with pertinent effects for all countries of COMECON and Warsaw Pact.

Interestingly, according to the Soviet minutes, Gorbachev did not provide assurance that the Soviet Union would do everything to fulfil its obligations in shipping raw materials from the Soviet Union, and that this was already included in the Five Year Plan, as Krenz says.¹⁰⁶ In the Soviet minutes it is only said:

We strive to fulfil our obligations to the GDR. Our raw material shipments—they are a big relief for you.

Krenz: *We are very grateful to the Soviet Union for these shipments. Unfortunately many in our population do not know very well what these mean for the GDR. Not long ago Schürer pointed out what a fortune we would have to pay for these items in the capitalist market.*

But Gorbachev saw that at least something *political* had to happen in order to support the GDR even if it was hardly possible to help economically. Politically one also had to win over the FRG in order to get it to take responsibility for economic assistance to the GDR.

Gorbachev to Krenz: *You would apparently feel more secure with our participation in tri-lateral contacts. This would be good for everyone and at the same time helpful for your political relations with the FRG. It would consolidate the position of the GDR in total. Besides you should move toward bold contacts to other Western states and not only to the FRG. That would strengthen your position in relation to Bonn as well.*

Only a short time later this “triangle” (FRG–Soviet Union–GDR) increasingly became the economic hope of Gorbachev for both the GDR and the Soviet Union—as the danger of the collapse of the GDR loomed, the need for West German assistance became critically necessary. That he already thought about this on November 1, 1989, after the realistic description of the GDR economy, can be doubted, but a thought in this direction does appear here for the first time.

In the 1999 interview Krenz quotes a section of the talk with Gorbachev that seems to me to be essential to the Soviet position on reunification:

And in the conversation with Gorbachev I asked, “Tell me, Mikhail Sergeevich, what place do the two German states have in your idea of the European house?”

He is silent, he looks at me, as if he does not understand the question. “Okay,” I say, “then I will be clearer. Compared to the other socialist countries we are your child. Will you continue to stand firm for your partnership or your paternity?” Then he says: “How can you even ask such a question? Well, I don’t know of a single sensible politician who wants German unity, including Chancellor Kohl.” And he [Gorbachev—AvP] said that he had spoken with Mitterrand, that his friends in the Politburo had spoken with Bush, with Brzezinski, with Andreotti, with Yaruzelski—and they all were of the opinion that German unity was not a matter of everyday politics because no one knew what would happen if the Warsaw Pact dissolved. And therefore there was opposition to Poland and Hungary leaving the Warsaw Pact. That was Gorbachev still on 1 November 1989.¹⁰⁷

In this interview Krenz also reports that after his question about Soviet paternity Gorbachev spoke quietly with his interpreter and quoted a Russian saying “No matter how long the thread, it will end some time.”

In the Soviet minutes this complete passage appears to have no fundamental difference.

Krenz: We assume that that GDR is the child of the Soviet Union. And decent people stand by their children, at any rate they allow them to bear the father’s surname. (animatedly)¹⁰⁸

According to the Soviet record, however, Gorbachev reacted somewhat differently from Krenz’s report: namely without an indignant reaction to the question regarding paternity. Gorbachev gave only vague answers, in which he refers to others and gave his own position more carefully:

Yesterday A. N. Jakovlev met Z. Brzezinski and he is, as we know, a head with “global thinking.” And he said: “If events were to turn around, so that the reunification became a reality, then it would be a general catastrophe.” I think we are following a correct line: We always supported the coexistence of two German states and as a result we came to a general recognition of the GDR. We pushed through the Moscow Agreement (Treaty of Moscow), gave the Helsinki Accord some momentum. Therefore we must confidently continue this line. You must know, all serious politicians such as Thatcher and Mitterrand, Andreotti and Yaruzelski, even the Americans—all of them do not want reunification although new nuances have become visible in their position. Therefore, I think we must all work on the assumption: history has decided that there are two German states.

The general secretary assumed in this conversation, that the support for the reunification, which Mitterrand or the Americans expressed officially, was only

to please the West Germans and only for the sake of appearances and added—seen in the long term—without understanding the situation:

I think they are doing this only for Bonn, because to some extent they are afraid when the FRG and the Soviet Union become closer.

The Soviet secretary general thus suspected that the United States and the Western Europeans were worried that there could be a rapprochement between Bonn and Moscow without the West. Probably he even hoped that this concern would gain him some room for political maneuvering. Krenz was struck in this meeting situation by a similar, though a different, concern, namely that the GDR could be left out if the USSR and the FRG became closer.¹⁰⁹

The conversation between Gorbachev and Krenz is significant not only for this judgement that was, at least in the long term, faulty; what was actually significant for Gorbachev was—to repeat—the shocking recognition that the GDR was economically completely unhealthy. It says that he asked Krenz how he saw the economic situation of the GDR: “Is it really so bad?” or: “I did not think the situation was so precarious.”¹¹⁰ According to the Soviet record, Gorbachev did not react in this way, rather he observed:

We knew your situation, your economic and financial ties to the FRG, it was clear to us that this could turn around. As far as we are concerned we fulfilled our obligations to the GDR conscientiously, including sending oil, even though we had to reduce the amount somewhat at the time.

To my question of March 5, 2002, if Gorbachev meant in his conversation with Krenz, that the paternal responsibility for the GDR was ending and how surprised he was about the real economic situation in the GDR, Gorbachev answered, contrary to the Soviet minutes:

I do not remember, but it is possible that in the conversation with Krenz I did not deny the Soviet “paternity” in relation to the GDR, although deep inside I was convinced that the division of Germany could not and does not have to last forever. I was truly surprised, when an accurate picture of the situation in the GDR was revealed after Honecker’s removal.

The Soviet general secretary must have informed the members of the Politburo about this surprisingly catastrophic economic situation. For in the minutes of the Politburo meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which had taken place on November 3, 1989, there was only on

single sentence relating to the “balance” that Egon Krenz presented during his visit to Moscow two days earlier. And it says:

*The GDR is living over its means by a third.*¹¹¹

No more.

Since then the Soviet leadership knew that the economy of the GDR would become a millstone around the neck of the Soviet Union, which was itself at that point being shaken by a crisis, if there were further political destabilization. This is not an extreme interpretation; this is also shown by the following briefly summarized debate in the minutes of the Politburo that have not been available until now.

They begin with a notification from the head of the Secret Service of a demonstration by the cultural professionals of the GDR on the following November 4, 1989.

Vladimir Kryuchkov: *Tomorrow there will be 500,000 people on the streets of Berlin and other cities.*

And then there follows a discussion that for the situation at that time is farsighted and, in my opinion, of great significance:

Gorbachev: *Do you hope that Krenz can hold on? If we lose the GDR, we cannot justify ourselves to our own people. But without the help of the FRG (!) we won't be able to keep it “above water.”*

Shevardnadze: *It would be better if they got rid of “The Wall” themselves.*

Kryutchkov: *It will be difficult for them when it is removed.*

Gorbachev: *They are being completely sold out with their bowels (...) And when they enter the international marketplace with world market prices, the standard of living will sink immediately. The West does not want the unification of Germany. It wants to hinder this process with our help [actually: with our own hands—AvP], to challenge us with the FRG, in order to prevent a “conspiracy” of the USSR with Germany. I told Krenz: in the choice of cadres, do not focus just on the Central Committee but also on the society. Otherwise it (the society) will force upon you those who are not suitable for you. We will carry out this work with the FRG in a “triad”, i.e. with the participation of the GDR people and, furthermore, with open cards.*¹¹²

Some of what Krenz mentions in his memoirs or in the interview is not to be found in the Soviet record: the urging of Gorbachev for satisfactory travel regulations to enable visits to relatives in the West. Or the addition to the remark that

no Western politician was in favor of reunification “including Chancellor Kohl.” Or that one had to defend things in the GDR that no longer suited the time but were necessary. In both records the fact that Honecker had to go is dealt with as humanely difficult but politically necessary and really too late.¹¹³

Already here in the Politburo shortly after the discussion with Krenz the predicament of the highest Soviet leadership and at the same time its hesitation in the direction of a new strategy were made clear. On the one hand the idea of drawing the FRG into a triad FRG–GDR–USSR and gaining economic assistance for the GDR originated here. On the other hand the GDR was already falling so quickly and so deeply that soon it would be able to play only a minor or even no role in the triad. At any rate a strategy that made provision for the decline of the GDR, that, according to the Soviet records was apparently expected, did not develop. Also most definitely there was no development of a policy that clarified and presented to the West its own conditions—political, economic, and military—in the event of the reunification of Germany. And this even though this “worst case” was at this time already being feared. The decisive question that would be asked later was asked here very concretely for the first time: What and until when was it still possible to get something for the unity of Germany? As the GDR disappeared the “price” of this German part state would keep sinking. There was not much time for the development of such a strategy, for Washington and Bonn would quickly propose a strategy, which would provide a concrete bill for this contingency and put the Soviet Union under pressure.

Coincidence as the Helper: Pushing Movements, Driven Politicians

The Fall of the Wall

The Mass Demonstrations in Berlin and the Resignation of the Government and the Politburo

On November 4, 1989, one day after the meeting of the Politburo in Moscow, there was indeed a demonstration in Berlin of, as KGB boss Vladimir Kryuchkov had suspected, at least 500,000 people. This demonstration united different currents. Unlike in Leipzig slogans referring to the democratic or democratic-socialist renewal of the GDR dominated. Therefore, in the “Erste Einschätzung der Demonstration und Kundgebung am 4. November 1989 in Berlin” (First Evaluation of the Demonstration and Rally on November 4, 1989 in Berlin) by the Propaganda Department for the Politburo it was observed, with relief, that it was mainly a “protest against the undesirable developments in the GDR.”¹ The department suggested to the Politburo that it incorporate some of the demands and give them a “prominent place” in the politics of the SED. Among these were: to practice freedom from force, to reshape the relationship between democracy and socialism, to establish freedom of belief and assembly; to prepare for free elections, but with the continuation of the National Front so that “no door would be opened to bourgeois party pluralism,” reform of “the system of state security” but no abolition of the Stasi. Moreover, the “demands for the removal of the leading role of the SED is not acceptable to us Communists.”² In response it suggested the “calling of a meeting of the people’s chamber to deal with the situation of the GDR and the resignation of the government.”³

The Politburo made a decision quickly, but, considering the rapid pace of developments, half-heartedly: on November 6, Krenz decided to place the whole travel issue on the agenda of the highest party echelon, mainly because the

Czechoslovakian party leader Jakes had threatened to close the borders with the GDR if there was no travel regulation for GDR citizens.⁴ Then on November 7, 1989 it was decided that the council of ministers' "earlier travel regulation" come into effect immediately. On the same day the government also resigned and on the following day the Politburo also resigned. Krenz remained. On November 7, there was a telephone conversation between Alexander Schalck-Golodobski and Rudolf Seiters, minister in the chancellor's office, during which Chancellor Kohl informed General Secretary Krenz that the Federal Republic would provide financial assistance in the travel situation only if Krenz gave a public declaration that the GDR would permit opposition groups and "the holding of free elections" within a definite time. Krenz felt blackmailed by this and remembered a warning from Gorbachev not to allow himself to be put under pressure by Kohl. Shevardnadze even recommended in a letter to press Kohl hard.⁵

The Opening of the Wall and International Fears

On November 3, 1989 Shevardnadze had expressed internally the opinion that the GDR should tear down the Wall itself, which in his opinion could mean a relief for Soviet politics. Only six days later this hope, the fulfilment of which he surely had not believed in himself, had become reality. But it brought absolutely no relief for the Soviet leadership.

Naturally, for almost all international and national leaders who were asked, the fall of the Wall was an event of worldwide significance, which, however, surprised them in different ways. All of them remember where they were on this day.⁶ Many were impressed by the surprising liveliness of the Germans, the lack of force, the people dancing on the Wall, and the general mood of celebration. Some had expected it. Especially for the "Germanistenfraktion"⁷ in the Central Committee of the CPSU this expectation was also worry, because the fall of the Wall and the agreement of the SED leadership to the opening of the border, especially in Berlin, affected, as everyone knew, not only the Soviet Union but the borders between the Cold War blocs and, in Berlin, the status of the four powers.

Portugalov: *The mass demonstration in Leipzig meant for us the beginning of the revolution, the first and only successful German revolution. And if you look back on modern European history you find only one slogan that can compete with Liberté, Fraternité, Liberté, and that is "We are the people." But that these noble words rather quickly, at most in a few weeks, changed a bit and sounded a little different (We are one people.).*⁸

On November 9, 1989 Politburo member Günter Schabowski, without having been sufficiently informed, announced the immediate opening of the Wall, even though it had been planned as a graduated process that would take weeks. He had answered a question about when the new travel regulations would come into

effect: "To my knowledge it is coming—it is right away (nodding) immediate." Then, as if to verify it for himself, he read the text again. Western television stations spread this announcement immediately, with the result that numerous people stormed the Wall and forced the officers of the border police to decide whether to open the border or use force. Unbelievable to this day. The Central Committee of the CPSU met and at first had no idea of what was going on. All this is well researched and has been published.⁹ It is more difficult with international reactions. George Bush expressed what many feared: would a military confrontation result? Could the Soviet Union, in particular the military, simply accept this fall of the border of their empire? Would this also lead to the fall of Gorbachev? Would the Western powers interfere, if the Soviet Union closed the border or had the border closed again?

Bush: I remember getting these reports, (...) the leader of the Democrats in the House, calling on me to go to Berlin, to stand and beat my breast on the Berlin Wall. (...) But it would have been the stupid... stupidest thing an American president could do, to go to Berlin and stick my fingers atop the wall, into the eyes of Mr Gorbachev and the Soviet military. Because, as Shevardnadze has subsequently written, we did not know whether the Soviet military would say: "Enough of this. We're going to do something about this." And I don't know what they could have done, but we did not need a military confrontation with Russia, with the Soviet military, and they had plenty of troops in the GDR, in Hungary—I mean in Poland, and other places.¹⁰

Kohl, Genscher, Teltschik, and many others were in Warsaw, had just spoken with Lech Walesa, then candidate for Solidarnosc, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Polish prime minister,¹¹ and now, after the dramatic events in Berlin, had to persuade the entire Polish leadership that the German chancellor now saw that his place was in Berlin. Finally this was accepted ("they were completely dismayed"¹²) and so, through a very indirect route and in a plane provided by the American ambassador Vernon Walters, Kohl flew to West Berlin for the great rally on November 10 at 16:30. Foreign Minister Genscher stayed in Warsaw and met Lech Walesa the next morning. He was accompanied by Bronislav Geremek, the foreign affairs speaker of Solidarnosc, later temporarily foreign minister. It was impossible to miss, reported Genscher, that, as a result of the events in Berlin, Walesa had become "unsure" of what the fall of the Wall signified.

Genscher: As Lech Walesa introduced certain questions, Geremek apparently noticed how my face became ever stonier. So he interrupted him and said, "One must of course examine exactly what it means for us Poles, because if the Wall falls it means: Germany will be unified and if Germany is unified then it is a great day for Poles as well. Because if Germany is united, then Poland will be a neighbour of the European Union and of NATO." That was the correct political and strategic point of view

(...) *They felt squeezed between the Soviet Union in the East and the GDR in the West, where after all 300,000 soldiers were stationed. And from this perspective it was understandable that Geremek said that it would be a great day for Poland.*¹³

Relations with Poland and Polish fears remained a constant theme during the whole reunification process. Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet foreign minister at the time, described the tense situation on this evening for himself and the Soviet leadership:

*I was in Moscow then. Naturally I was aware of what was going on. We all knew. I mean the Soviet executive.*¹⁴ *I knew that there were demonstrations and meetings. The situation had become so critical that the Politburo met almost every day. I had contact with the Soviet embassy and received news hourly, almost every hour.*¹⁵

Blumenberg: *Were you surprised by the time? The time, not the event?*

Shevardnadze: *To be completely fair, to be completely honest, I must say that it happened somewhat sooner than I had imagined. Although you are naturally correct, the event had to happen sooner or later, the Wall had to fall.*¹⁶

Anatoli Chernayev, Gorbachev's advisor for the Western states, remembers the same:

For me there was nothing unexpected as the process of German reunification began, ... as finally the Wall fell. We are asked over and over again: what was the reaction in Moscow as the Wall fell? Perhaps it was a great shock? Nothing like that at all. (...) Let the Germans do it. But what worried Gorbachev was that the fall of the Wall could lead to an armed conflict. And from the perspective of his own philosophy he could not allow that Russian soldiers became involved and left their barracks... because this conflict would have taken place on the boundary between two blocs. It could lead to a collision between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. That could absolutely not be allowed to happen. (...) You know of course that there were various people in the Politburo, among them people that later separated themselves from Gorbachev for ideological reasons. But none of these people advocated the use of force. There were also people that later participated in the putsch. But they understood all too well what kind of answer now had to follow.

In the case of Helmut Kohl there was also a general fear of such a fundamental collision between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Like Gorbachev, Kohl feared less a decision in favor of escalation by the leadership on the other side than a counterstrike by a worried or provoked Soviet military in the GDR.

Blumenberg: *In your opinion, was there really an immediate danger on this night or during the following days that some commander would lose his nerve?*

Shevardnadze: *Such a danger existed, although the agreement of the political leadership was necessary for such an order. However, if a general who has great influence or very great power sees that possibly his life's work was being destroyed, he might under these circumstances give such an order without the agreement of the political leadership. That is what worried me the most.*¹⁷

For Jacques Attali, Mitterrand's advisor, it was a day of joy:

Attali: *A moment of enormous joy, the beginning of an end. And I remember that night I was at a concert in Cordoba where I heard Montserrat Caballé singing all the Spanish songs about freedom and Jewish music about the expansion of Jews about freedom, too, and it was quite a very moving combination.*¹⁸

Mitterrand, putting himself into Kohl's place, was also positively impressed. That this was, however, not so simple for Mitterrand is revealed later.

For the British government it was all a surprise.

Powell: *None of us expected the sudden collapse of the East German regime—the sudden demolition of the Berlin Wall. And therefore, when the moment of reunification started to approach, people had very different views within NATO of how fast we should progress towards that.*¹⁹

This was the salient point for international politics: suddenly the reunification—for years a chimera—became a real possibility. This was perhaps the most important, possibly even the frightening signal of the fall of the Wall for the Western leaders with the exception of Bush and naturally Kohl. Instead of NATO Sunday sermons it was now necessary to have a concrete policy in relation to this union that was now possible, with the necessary steps with clarification of the international requirements and conditions. Most of the European governments were opposed to this unification that was now a real possibility not only because of the potential shift in the balance of power in Central Europe in favor of Germany, but above all because the general destabilization of the postwar order between East and West that was to be expected. In this regard there were similar fears in the Soviet and the Western European governments.

Powell: *You see many European politicians were concerned, first of all, that too rapid progress towards German reunification would be highly destabilising for President Gorbachev in the Soviet Union.*

On the evening of November 9, after they had finally heard about the opening of the Wall, Krenz and the leaders of the GDR would probably also become fearful and anxious about what kind of global political change would follow. Krenz had

assumed that the “early” travel regulations would not take effect until November 10, that is, the next day, and that people would then line up at the police to apply for passports. Schabowski’s “mistake” at the famous press conference occurred because he was not in the Central Committee when Krenz discussed this subject.

Shabowski: *I came after five o'clock [after meeting journalists—AvP] back to the Central Committee, sat down beside Krenz, and he gave me this decree from the government.*

Krenz: *I had to assume that as a member of the Politburo he had heard what I had read. After all he could not go to a press conference and not have participated at all in the meeting about which he actually wanted to provide information.*

Schabowski: *This government decision, of which I had a draft in my hand, had been placed under a restriction period by the government bureaucracy.*

Krenz: *And if it had gone into effect on the 10th—it is now just speculation, things would have happened just as on the 9th or would it have been more orderly. But one thing was clear in any case: on the 10th the border police would have had their orders. And, with the military, orders count and not some slips of the tongue by the Politburo members.*

Schabowski: *So, I went without knowing about the restriction period to the press conference and I am not even sure if Krenz was aware of the restriction. He does insist that he told me about it—that is absolute nonsense.²⁰*

This shows the other side of the “leadership role of the Party.” Did military orders count or what a single member of the Politburo said count? Or another question: what did the people who ran to the border and what did the officers at the border crossings believe?

The answer of Streletz who was a member of the military:

What happened at the border crossings, where the barricade was lifted or not, who was allowed to pass with what documents, that was all the responsibility of the state security. I tried to reach Minister Mielke. He was not in his office. Then I reached only his representative, Lieutenant General Neiber, who was responsible for the border in the Ministry of State Security. I said to him, “Say, what is going on at the border?” And he said to me, “Listen carefully, Schabowski has made some kind of mess, we have to try to figure it out. I am trying to reach my minister. When I have reached him, I’ll let you know.” (...) That was around 22:00 or 22:30.²¹ Because of this Minister Keßler ordered the chief of the border troops, “Go immediately to Pätz, it was around a half hour’s drive away, to the command of the border troops, take over the direction there and let me know what is happening at the border crossings.” Colonel General Baumgarten left and then reported around 22:30. “At some border crossings, such as Bornholmer Straße, the barricades have been lifted and at others not yet. There is supposed to be an order from Egon Krenz to Minister Mielke that the barricades are to be opened.”

Blumenberg: *And what did you think in this situation?*

Streletz: *For me it was not clear how in such a situation the leadership system and the information system, working together, could break down. First, why did Minister Keßler receive an order from Egon Krenz? After all, he was the leader of the national defence council? Second, if he had received such an order, why did Minister Mielke not inform the Minister of Defence? Because he was obligated to inform us about this. Why did he not inform us about this? And third, how should we carry on in this area when no one knew what was going on up front? Looking back critically I must honestly say that this night from 9 to 10 November 1989 was glorious for neither the political nor the military leadership. One must say honestly we failed in this situation. And it is only thanks to the politically experienced actions of the soldiers at the border crossings that there was no escalation.*

Indeed, again it was the lower and middle leadership cadres who all, in different ways, decided against the use of firearms, while the leadership of the SED reacted without any clear ideas.

Keßler, then the minister of the defence, sees it somewhat differently, completely from the view of the leading role of the party:

The assumption is that something was announced by Schabowski that no one knew anything about. No one. So, I am assuming, because his assignment was completely different. While we all got moving, he announced: immediately, yes. Immediately means: immediately. (...) We did not want to and could not do anything to oppose this any more.

The essential question—how far the GDR minister of defence had agreed with the Soviet military leaders—Keßler answered in his own typical way.

Blumenberg: *So that means that they had orders not to interfere under any circumstances?*

Keßler: *That is my impression, I can't verify it.*

Blumenberg: *Did you speak on the telephone with Army General Snetkov²² personally?*

Keßler: *Yes I did.*

Blumenberg: *And what did you discuss with him, concretely?*

Keßler: *I described the situation to him, [informed—AvP] him of our intentions, how we wanted to sort it out, together with others, so that he was in the picture, ... And he said to me, "Okay, they [the Soviet troops—AvP] would stay on the spot where they are," and he did not tell me why, but I think they had the idea.*

Blumenberg: *Was he very surprised by the situation on the 9th?*

Keßler: *My impression was: no.*

Blumenberg: *Aha, but that is very interesting.*

Keßler: *It certainly is. But actually everything is interesting.*

West Berlin and West German television played a large part on this evening. Walter Momper, the Social Democratic mayor of Berlin at the time, had already spoken on West Berlin television at 19:40: "This is a day for which we have long yearned, for 28 years. The border will no longer separate us." The journalist Hans-Joachim Friedrichs said in the daily news that one could take the risk of calling this day a "historic day;" "The gates in the Wall are wide open." However uncertain the situation was, the masses now streamed to the border.

The opposition video filmmaker Aram Radomski reported that he was one of the first to arrive at the Wall on Bornholmer Straße. Only 30 to 40 people were there. The border guards did not believe anything at first and wanted to send the people home. Radomski called to the guards that anyone who had a valid identity card issued by the GDR could cross the border to West Berlin. As well, from within the crowd, he asked to speak to the officer in charge; the officer arrived after a while and replied, "Yes, whoever wants to can do that today." And then the first crossed "over," more and more joined them, so that finally there was a never-ending river of people that wound its way to West Berlin. Most of them had no idea, according to the law that was still in force, that the stamp they received took away their GDR citizenship.²³

The Soviet envoy Maximichev remembers his outrage; the leaders of the GDR had informed the embassy that the travel regulations would not come into effect until *the following day*, and furthermore there had *never* been talk of an opening to West Berlin because this would affect the status of the four powers. Nonetheless he calmed the ambassador Kochemassov; he went to bed, while he himself—Maximichev—tried to reach Krenz. But he was still in the meeting of the Central Committee and could not be disturbed. Maximichev could not imagine that the leadership of the SED would have met with Moscow or Gorbachev personally behind the backs of the Soviet embassy in Berlin:²⁴

Schabowski: *Indeed, that was not arranged [with the Soviet leadership—AvP]. (...) Krenz and Gorbachev only spoke about the travel law once. There he said, "Okay, do it," but this opening and West Berlin—this was something else. But you know, when you are here I cannot suddenly start to stutter about West Berlin. I said to myself—it was in fractions of seconds—we must open this border anyway and what the heck: West Berlin had to be included.*²⁵

Still late in the night of November 9/ 10 Egon Krenz, who according to his own statement was not informed of the premature announcement by Schabowski till after 20:45, tried to reach his Soviet counterpart Gorbachev:

Krenz: *After all I was in a conflict. Look, what do I report to Moscow? Do I report as though we are facing a world war? Then I would naturally have been able to wake Gorbachev up. He would surely have let himself be contacted by me. (...) The*

deshburnaya [the woman attendant looking after a floor of a building—trans.], on the other side, said that the General Secretary was not to be reached. But if I had made it urgent and I had said it was a matter of life and death, then she would certainly have connected me. This is a question that therefore I did not make so dramatic because I did not want that a dramatic description might lead to faulty decisions.

Blumenberg: *But in the night, in the evening you spoke with* [Ambassador—AvP] *Kochemassov?*

Krenz: *No, I did not speak with Kochemassov* [because he was already asleep—AvP]. *I spoke with Kochemassov early next morning.*²⁶

The envoy Maximichev said: “Kochemassov was sleeping and he himself decided not to do anything” so that this news would not fall into the wrong hands while the “authorities” in Moscow slept and that led to unpleasant consequences.

Portugalov: *And you know why* [they let Gorbachev sleep—AvP]? *It was immediately clear to us on this night what was of most importance to us: there had been no bloodshed, there had been no conflict, and there had been no fighting (...)* *In this sense it was no violent revolution and there was not the slightest danger that Gorbachev’s principles would in any way be compromised and that the tanks would roll. (...)*

Blumenberg: *It was always clear that the Soviet forces in the GDR in no case, under no circumstances, would intervene?*

Portugalov: *Yes, absolutely.*²⁷

The next day Krenz received two completely different responses from Moscow. Both were presented to him by the same person—Ambassador Kochemassov.

Krenz: *The first meeting went like this: “Okay, Comrade Krenz, in Moscow there is unease about the situation that developed tonight at the Berlin Wall.” And in reply I said, “I’m not surprised.” I certainly did not want start with any self-criticism. I said, “I’m not surprised because our travel regulations had after all been agreed to with you by Foreign Minister Fischer.” And then he said something that was completely new to me (!): “Yes that is correct, but not for Berlin. This applies to the border between the GDR and Federal Republic of Germany, but in Berlin the interests of the Allies are affected.” The Soviet allies had used this argument for the first time because they had always assumed that the border of the four power agreement applied only to West Berlin and not to the capital of the GDR.*

That is a remarkable reasoning, apparently also the rejection of self-criticism, for of course the border of the “capital of the GDR” with West Berlin was related to the four-power status of the city, even in the view of the GDR at the time—even if it was opposed.

Krenz continued:

And then I said to him, "Well, fine, Comrade Vyacheslav, that is now only a theoretical question. We could have changed this night only if we had deployed the military. And that would have resulted in a bloodbath. And you would not have wanted this." And then he said, "You are right, Comrade Krenz." (...) In the meantime Streletz completed a state telegram to Gorbachev.²⁸ In this we gave Gorbachev [on November 10!—AvP] the details, including how many citizens had already returned from West Berlin. My request to Gorbachev was to tell his ambassador Kochemassov to get into contact with the Western Allies so that the security of the city was maintained. A short time later I received a second call from Kochemassov that I took in a side room of the meeting of the Central Committee. There Kochemassov said, "Okay, in the name of Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, in the name of the Soviet leadership, I congratulate you and all comrades on the brave step of opening the Berlin Wall." Naturally I asked the question: what happened in Moscow? What was behind the scenes? How was the mood of the Foreign Minister, with Shevardnadze, with Gorbachev, how was it with Falin, with Portugalov? Who influenced whom and what finally happened there?²⁹

It seems, however, that it was simply that in Moscow it was known that nothing more could be changed without the deployment of troops. Chernayev confirmed this viewpoint completely in the interview with me.

AvP: Were both explanations composed at the same level? Or was the first by Kochemassov?

Chernayev: You know, it is very simple. (Laughs) The Soviet ambassadors in the countries of the Warsaw Pact all felt responsible for what happened in "their" countries. Kochemassov worried perhaps that it was his fault the Wall fell, that he had not done good work. I think that he and the KGB in East Berlin passed along messages or statements with which they agreed at first.

In his congratulations to Krenz Gorbachev transformed the anarchic opening of the Wall into a conscious act of the SED leadership and congratulated him on "this brave step." This is not a completely accurate reflection of the events, but the team around Krenz did indeed want new travel regulations in place quickly.

Even if the SED leadership tried the next day to bring "order" to the situation that in their view was muddled, the Wall could no longer be closed. The train toward unity had left the station.

In Bonn on the morning after the opening of the Wall, that is, on November 10, at 11:30, minister of the chancellor's office Seiters informed the ambassadors of the Western powers—Boidevaix, Mallaby, and Walters—that the chancellor had interrupted his trip to Poland and was on his way to Berlin, which Walters at least

knew, since he had provided Kohl with an American military plane. Seiters referred to Kohl's report on the state of the nation of November 8, in which he had declared to the GDR his readiness to assist with basic reforms in that country. The chancellor included in these the authorization of "independent parties," a "binding assurance" of "free elections," and the surrender of the "monopoly of power" by the SED. With these conditions he was ready to discuss a "completely new dimension of our economic assistance." Modrow would later remind him of that promise. Minister Director Duisberg mentioned that it would be an overwhelming burden because that was where the migrants from East Berlin would be accommodated, while the refugees from the GDR would be transferred further into the republic.³⁰ On November 10, there was a rally in West Berlin where Momper, Brandt, Kohl, and others spoke. Kohl had finally arrived there after "a monster detour."

Kohl: *And then I went there and already as I got out of the car I was greeted with whistles and calls of fie, in the Schöneberg city hall. (...) It was a section of the left, symbolized by the then Berlin mayor, Mr. Momper. He had also said in his speech that it was not about the reunification but about the reunion.*³¹

Teltschik: *And I said only offhandedly to the Chancellor that this can't be true that we came here now just for such people. Why this rejection, why there was this noisy protest, could not be explained. The opposite would actually have been expected, because a historical decision was now looming. (...) And this repeated itself then in the rally itself. At the moment when the Chancellor spoke, there was a noisy chorus of whistles.*³²

These whistles were heard all over the world, as Kohl himself put it.³³ I suspect that outside of the country they had a calming effect; for the fear felt internationally was after all fear of an exuberant German nationalism. This had been Gorbachev's fear; he had phoned Bonn and sent telegrams not only to Kohl but also to Thatcher, Mitterrand, and Bush. As the chancellor wanted to begin his speech, Teltschik received a phone call from the Soviet ambassador in Bonn and he had to leave the balcony of the Schöneberg city hall:

Teltschik: *Ambassador Kvitsinski was on the phone. He informed me that he had a crucial message from President³⁴ Gorbachev for the Chancellor, which I wanted to pass on to the Chancellor immediately. (...) His message was very simple. It was the message that at precisely this rally the Chancellor should encourage the people to remain peaceful in order to prevent chaos from breaking out. Gorbachev's great concern, because there was at the same time a big rally in East Berlin, was that emotions would come to a boil.*³⁵

In his speech in which he referred to the reunification and expressed his joy at the opening of the Wall, Kohl—completely as Gorbachev had wished—urged

everyone “to remain cool and to act sensibly” and “not to follow radical slogans and voices.”³⁶ Ten years later in a ZDF interview he summarized Gorbachev’s request thus: that he had asked the question “if it was true that because of the situation—the opening of the Wall—Soviet units, Soldiers, and civilians were now exposed to danger. (...) This is what his hardliners had told him.”

In his written protocol of the call of November 10, 1989 Horst Teltschik puts a sharper emphasis on the necessity to preserve the two German states in the words of the Soviet general secretary than he and Kohl had in their interviews.³⁷

It is surprising, but in the minutes of 1989 there is no mention of that fear that Soviet soldiers and civilians would be endangered, which Kohl and Teltschik mentioned ten years later in their interviews.³⁸ Gorbachev was concerned above all about the recognition of the “reality of two states” in Germany and the stability in the GDR for a new democracy—rather than reunification.

On the same day from 10:10 to 10:25, the chancellor also spoke on the phone with “Leader of the State Council Krenz.” He had prepared for this call with his own list of ideas. In this it said:

2. Strengthening the politics of freedom and normal relationships with the FRG (mutual respect for sovereignty, stable relationships). The question of “reunification” is not impending in any way for the GDR.

“Radical reforms,” such as free elections, were to be announced, but the “urgent question of money (‘travel funds’)” for travel was to be dealt with, as in the preparatory notes:³⁹ “Repeal lowest exchange, travel payment of DM to M = 1:4,40. The exchange methods will be prepared by the FRG: ca. 2.8 billion DM, every GDR citizen receives travel money of 300 DM per year: money for environmental protection and border crossings.”

In the following telephone conversation Krenz did indeed say that he was ready for “radical reforms,” but there was no talk of money. Besides the assurances of interest in the stability of the GDR, Krenz emphasized that “the borders would remain and not be abolished,” as was recorded in the Bonn protocol. “But to make the border more porous did not after all mean that it would be removed. I would be very grateful to you if I could calm you in this regard.” It was summarized as follows in the GDR protocol.⁴⁰

He [Krenz—AvP] was certainly in absolute agreement with the Chancellor that reunification now was not on the political agenda. The Chancellor replied that in this point their understanding diverged. He was sworn into office on the Basic Law and in this question surely had a different basic conception from the leader of a state council.

Nevertheless the chancellor then added a cryptic sentence:

*At the moment, however, the reunification is not our main concern.*⁴¹

In a telephone conversation between Kohl and Gorbachev on November 11, the Soviet general secretary did not express criticism of Kohl's speech the day before as Shevardnadze did to Genscher.⁴² Kohl emphasized that he rejected all radicalization, wanted to prevent chaos, and carry on a policy of "a sense of perspective." By now, 230,000 people had crossed over to West Germany. They were a real problem. Gorbachev showed that he was pleased by Kohl's calming explanation. It was necessary to give the GDR time for reorganization "in regard to freedom, democracy, and economic life." Kohl agreed with the delay explicitly that it was only necessary also to make this clear to the people of the GDR. Gorbachev also declared here that a triangle of the FRG, the Soviet Union, and the GDR had to develop, in which "everything [had to be] balanced and evenly weighted."⁴³

This balance was never achieved—and Gorbachev would give Kohl part of the blame.

Modrow Becomes Prime Minister

On November 13, 1989, at the suggestion of Egon Krenz, Hans Modrow—who was seen in the West as Gorbachev's favorite—became prime minister of the GDR. He had not been a member of the Honecker Politburo, which gave him some credibility. After the removal of Honecker, Mittag, and Hermann, Krenz had taken him into the Politburo, although Modrow did not want to be responsible for economy or campaigning. Krenz said: he belonged in the Politburo or he would have to retire.⁴⁴ When Krenz proposed Hans Modrow as the SED's candidate for the office of prime minister to the Politburo, Gerhard Schürer protested and proposed Siegfried Lorenz to oppose Modrow. However, Lorenz refused. Originally, besides Lorenz, the general secretary had an eye on Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, head of KoKo, and the minister of construction Wolfgang Junker, but "Schalck and Junker were no longer under consideration,"⁴⁵ since both had little appeal among the population. Modrow was thus Krenz's second choice.

It is difficult to determine if Modrow was really favored by Gorbachev. In the meeting with Krenz on November 1 Gorbachev had taken Modrow's side, when he said that he had been sorry about how Honecker had "held him back." He even asked about him in a way that prompted Krenz to change his own position of an earlier reprimand of Modrow.⁴⁶ But it was not only about Modrow

that Gorbachev expressed himself in this way; he did so even more about Willi Stoph, whom Honecker had “humiliated” at various times. Gorbachev praised Stoph highly in general. He placed great faith in him, because he (Stoph) had already told him about the real economic situation in the GDR in the middle of the 1980s and at the same time had criticized Honecker.

In response to my question about who in Moscow was favored as Honecker’s successor, Anatoli Chernayev explained:

Privately some persons were preferred to others, but we did not exercise any influence, made no attempt, to replace Honecker.⁴⁷

KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov also gives a similar picture of Moscow’s stance and the side-taking.

AvP: Did you try earlier from Moscow to raise Modrow to a higher position? Perhaps as successor to Honecker or Stoph?

Kryuchkov: We thought about it. The question was asked and discussed in that way. But then another point of view became prevalent. And that was that it was not sensible to interfere. (...) The main question was to ensure the safety of all Soviet citizens who were in the GDR. If the West had tried to embark on direct interference, then we would also have been able to deliberate this question.

There is much to support this version of the Soviet failure to influence the election of Modrow and Krenz, even if it cannot be ruled out that there was actually activity in the background working in this direction. But I found no evidence of this.

Hans Modrow quickly undertook a host of activities that placed the GDR in a tight spot.⁴⁸ First he expanded his political base in the government, in the *Volkskammer*, and beyond by building a coalition government and took, among others, the recently elected leader of the CDU, the still relatively unknown politician Lothar de Maizière, into his government.

De Mazière: He came toward me and I said, “The first thing is: if I participate, it will be only if Article one in the constitution regarding the leading role of the SED is removed.” Because in the constitution of the GDR there was [entrenched—AvP] in Article one the claim to power and the leadership role of the SED. I said, “Second, it must be clear for us that what we are doing is a transitional government and that there must be free elections. And the SED must participate in those free elections the same way as all others do.” And third, we must introduce thorough economic reforms; otherwise the country will be emptied. (...) Since 4 November 4000 people have left daily. An uncontrollable currency criminality has begun. We had exchange rates of from one to 20. (Twenty GDR Mark for one DMark), etc.

Modrow agreed because he had already expressed similar thoughts and de Maizière became vice prime minister and at the same time Minister for Church Questions. Indeed some economic reforms go back to Modrow's regime (among others the *Treuhand*). The leadership claim of the SED was removed from the constitution by the *Volkskammer* (already on December 1). Other groups and finally also other parties were permitted. Free elections were decided upon and organized by this government (see below).

De Maizière: *In this phase Modrow was, I believe, a relatively honest manager of the transition. There were after all times during the Modrow government when the public opinion polls showed only 10 percent approval of the SED but over 60 percent endorsement of Modrow. He was, after all, also seen a bit as the Gorbachev of the GDR by the West.*⁴⁹

Already on November 17 in his government declaration before the people's chamber, Modrow pleaded for a "*Vertragsgemeinschaft*" (a contract community) with the FRG "that would transcend widely the basic treaty (Grundlagenvertrag) between FRG and GDR from 1972 and the treaties and agreements made between the two German states until now," which were intended to support the special relationship between the two German states in various aspects.⁵⁰ The extent to which this had been agreed to with the Soviet Union is essential to the question asked in this book. Modrow insisted that it was his idea and he is supported in this regard by Anatoli Chernayev.

Chernayev: *For Gorbachev at this time this was completely new. He also said this during Genscher's visit a short time later in Moscow.*⁵¹

In the European capitals this agile new prime minister was taken seriously, because he was for them a guarantee of a sovereign GDR at least for the time being and thus of a slow reform process, although he had to or was able to govern without the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED from December 3, without Krenz as head of the state and from time to time without the SED from December 6 because the Central Committee was replaced by a "Working Committee" as the ruling body after a party putsch on December 3. On December 9, at the special party congress, Egon Krenz and the entire Central Committee had to resign and Gregor Gysi became the new head of the SED. On December 16, the SED broke at least officially with its Communist program and changed its name. Now it was the SED-PDS (*Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*: Party of Democratic Socialism) and after February 4 only PDS. One of the main reasons for this change was the "Wandlitz Incident," which exposed the lifestyle of the GDR elite and, as expressed in a letter to the general secretary, caused "(another) shock."⁵²

This indignation reached as far as the Stasi elite: on December 5, 1989 Jan Carpentier, a journalist working at the GDR youth radio station Elf99, was whisked away by soldiers of the “Guard Regiment Felix Dzierzynski,” as he put it, and taken to a hall in Berlin Adlershof, where around 600 to 800 angry soldiers of the regiment presented harsh criticism of the SED and GDR leaderships, which had been unthinkable before. They said they were systematically cut off from information and now wanted openness. They reported the burning of files. The camera team of Elf99 filmed this outburst. The Elf99 team was received with the enthusiasm that would have been reminiscent of the West in 1968 if it had not been all men in uniform. An excerpt from the speech of the leading officer is given below:

I feel, even though I am a colonel, exactly as crappy and betrayed as you do. You can believe this. (Enthusiastic applause.) In view of the dramatic worsening of the situation in our country, the constant exposure of new crimes by the members of the former party and state leadership, for whose security we carried the responsibility.

And then followed a list of disappointments. Director Georg Langerbeck still remembers that it was even said: “They have tormented us, now we will torment them.”⁵³ These scenes revealed a collapse in the security branches of the GDR of hardly negligible proportions.

The Scout as the Instigator: Portugalov in Bonn or the Productive Misunderstanding

The following sections deal with the history of a diplomatic misunderstanding that was to have serious consequences: on November 21, 1989, Nikolai Portugalov⁵⁴ came to Bonn. He was the German specialist in the international department of the Central Committee of the CPSU under the direction of Valentin Falin. In Bonn he was received by Horst Teltschik in the chancellor’s office. Portugalov came not only with an official document previously approved by Falin but also with a handwritten “Non-Paper,”⁵⁵ which he himself had written in the hotel, as he said in his conversation with me.⁵⁶

According to the files of the chancellor’s office the official document contained the usual material:⁵⁷ the leadership of the Soviet Union knew from the beginning of the reform politics “what results this would have for the GDR;” “the sequence, quality, and speed of the reform in the GDR depended, however,—contrary to the Soviet Union—decisively upon the politics of the government of the FRG.” In “this decisive phase of the turning point” the German–German

relations could go in an “undesired and dangerous direction” for the Soviet Union. The development had “for the foreseeable future” to “remain in harmony with the German-Soviet declaration of 12 June 1989,”⁵⁸ especially as it concerned the recognition of the existing borders including the implicit recognition of the German–Soviet basic treaty.

The contents of the unofficial paper are completely different and caught Teltschik’s attention:

*A purely theoretical question: if the FRG government were intending to introduce the question of reunification, or a new unification, into everyday politics, then it would be sensible to think about the idea of the future alliance membership of both German states, i.e. NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and also membership in the European Union.*⁵⁹

These were completely new signals that “electrified”⁶⁰ Teltschik. The reunification was being discussed concretely in Moscow and apparently expected. Teltschik emphasized later the “Focus on the Reunification of Germany,” which was the concern of the Non-Paper.⁶¹ The novelty of this Non-Paper was that it not only paid attention to reunification but that it also already raised questions about the membership of a united Germany in certain alliances. These were the questions that were later dealt with only in secret in Moscow and which no one wanted to ask.

In response to my question if he confirmed what was written in this report of Teltschik to Kohl on December 6, 1989, Portugalov replied: “Yes, with the exception of membership in the European Union.”⁶² Teltschik, however, rejects this, because he “did not quote anything that was not in “Portugalov’s paper.”⁶³

Immediately, of course, the question arises as to who actually sent Portugalov. Because the answer could clarify how early in Moscow there were such extensive discussions about the problems related to the unification of Germany, such as NATO membership or membership in the European Union. It would be possible thereby also to clarify when strategies about the conditions of German unity were developed, those related to the relationship of the NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the European security system as a whole, and similar questions, in order to prepare and be equipped for the related negotiations with the West.

According to Portugalov he was sent by his boss Valentin Falin,⁶⁴ the director of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Falin himself denied this until 1999, to the irritation of Portugalov, presumably to play down his role in the reunification politics and their acceleration later when he was an opponent of Gorbachev. Not until 1999 did Falin admit in the interview referred to here that Portugalov’s declaration was correct.

In Bonn there were suspicions that higher authorities were behind Portugalov's move.

Teltschik: *He was ordered and it was by God himself. He did not say by whom, whether Falin or Gorbachev. He gave me the impression, well at least Gorbachev. Okay, he tried to emphasize his significance. It's legitimate after all.*

Anatoli Chernayev, Gorbachev's advisor for the West, appears annoyed to this day by Portugalov's behavior in Bonn.

AvP: *Were the [papers—AvP] agreed upon with you or Gorbachev?*

Chernayev: *You know, Portugalov makes himself too important.*

AvP: *Well, he was seen as important in Bonn with what he brought with him. There were after all new contents, from the reunification or new unification of German to questions of alliance membership.*

Chernayev: *I know that Portugalov went to Bonn, but not Gorbachev,⁶⁵ but I did not know any details, perhaps Falin knew more. But I am certain that Portugalov had discussed neither the official nor the unofficial paper [with me—AvP]. If there had been any talk of confederation or reunification I would have told Gorbachev.⁶⁶*

The question of who actually sent Portugalov remained unclear not only because for years Falin refused to take responsibility for this visit, but also because of the assumption in Bonn that Gorbachev had been responsible. As Teltschik himself wrote in his report of December 6, 1989, about the meeting with Portugalov to Kohl, the official as well as the unofficial document was "sent by way of the confidential route agreed to by you (Kohl) and General Secretary Gorbachev."⁶⁷ If this was the case, Portugalov's visit would have taken place at least with the knowledge of Chernayev or Gorbachev.⁶⁸ In 2002 a year after our meeting I asked Horst Teltschik again about the interpretation of his report to Kohl: did Gorbachev use Portugalov as a courier or not? His answer:

A clarification of the Portugalov connections can be made only by him. He gave me to understand that everything that he had presented he had discussed with the leadership of the Soviet Union. He did not give a single name, however, although he led me to understand that Gorbachev himself was being referred to.⁶⁹

Gorbachev answered my question if he had been informed about the substance of Portugalov's trip with a clear "no": "I knew nothing about Portugalov's activities."⁷⁰

Portugalov also maintained in later conversations his explanation that he was sent by Falin, but added that after assuming office Kohl had organized a

“confidential channel” through Egon Bahr for the chancellor’s office. “I was the bearer of this confidential channel that Kohl had arranged but *not* through Gorbachev.” It was the third or fourth time that such a meeting was organized through the KGB office in Germany, bypassing the embassies. But even they would have known only the “Minimum minimorum” (Portugalov), approximately what had been discussed with Chernayev, or what Chernayev had told him (Portugalov). The most important was determined *orally* beforehand between Falin and Portugalov.⁷¹

Interestingly Kryuchkov, who was then chief of the KGB, has a somewhat different theory. In response to my question who, in his opinion, had entrusted Portugalov, he replied that it was Alexander N. Yakovlev, one of Gorbachev’s men in the Politburo, who had already since 1987 “schemed” in favor of reunification. In answer to my question about Falin as the one who had given Portugalov his orders, he answered:

*I think that Falin could not give such an instruction. I rule that out. So one can't give the responsibility to Falin. I only said that Portugalov was Yakovlev's man. And then one can add to the situation that I have hinted at, follow it through to its conclusion.*⁷²

Presumably Kryuchkov meant that Falin could not have carried out such a mission because of the hierarchy. He would think that Falin could not do this mainly because in the eyes of Kryuchkov he was “like-minded” later in the opposition to Gorbachev and would simply not have done such a thing. Again an interesting insight into the power of memory in relation to membership in a fraction, except that Falin simply corrected himself.

The main opponent in the Politburo, Yegor Ligachev,⁷³ does not want to comment on Portugalov’s trip because he knows too little about it, but, nevertheless, adds something that rather conforms to Teltschik’s original minutes:

*It seems that Gorbachev did this in a completely confidential way and that is why it is difficult for me to comment on this episode.*⁷⁴

Falin corrected himself in 1999 and now insists that he and not Gorbachev had sent Portugalov. But he explained then as before that Portugalov was supposed to carry out only a limited mission in his assignment: to find out about the politics of Bonn; otherwise it was only a question of the prevention of force and the acceptance of the GDR by the FRG as well as the worry about “unforeseeable events.” This applies more to the official than to the unofficial document.

I find it interesting not only because of Falin’s credibility but also because in these statements it becomes clear how the hopes of that time and the later legitimation contradict his own group, namely the one hostile to Gorbachev. Today one

would not want to be the who one was then. This applies to Kryuchkov as well as to Falin, but also to Ligachev, who was then openly Gorbachev's main opponent, but less to the flexible Portugalov or Chernayev, Gorbachev's confidant.

He refined his point of view two years later with other points:

Chernayev: *Perhaps Falin was carrying out his own politics. I believe anyway that he was disappointed that Shevardnadze, and not he, was made the Foreign Minister. (...)*

AvP: *Teltschik, however, writes in a note to Kohl that was made public with the files of the Chancellor's office that this Portugalov's news came to Bonn "through the confidential route agreed to by Gorbachev and you [Kohl—AvP]." Was Portugalov's trip then arranged by Gorbachev himself? And the surprise simulated?*

Chernayev: *No, certainly not, whatever Teltschik might have believed.*

AvP: *Or by Yakovlev, as Ligachev says?*

Chernayev: *No, not him either. Yakovlev would not have done this without Gorbachev and that is what he would have had to do in this case.*

Everything suggests that Gorbachev knew nothing about Portugalov's Non-Paper, but this could not be assumed in Bonn. Portugalov's visit showed the chancellor's office that "they" in Moscow were playing extensive sand table games and that "they" could be located very high up. The diplomacy historian of German unity, Werner Weidenfeld, who could not yet have been familiar with most of the Moscow documents but is still very well informed asserts in his monumental book *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit (Foreign Policy for German Unity)* that with Portugalov's visit it became clear in Bonn "that Gorbachev and his colleagues—contrary to official statements—knew perfectly well that the German question was once more on the agenda."⁷⁵ That might not have been true at this time. Certainly Gorbachev would have given some thought to the virulence of the "German Question," but he spoke not only publicly but also internally against any kind of practical step in relation to German unity, even in "confederate structures." His colleagues were not united in the same point of view and the hostility, criticisms, and bickering between the "Germanisten" of the International Department of the Central Committee and the close circle around Gorbachev, represented mainly by Chernayev, Shakhnasarov, and Yakovlev, are apparent to the present time.

It appears to me that Gorbachev's statement that he "knew nothing about Portugalov's activities" and had not been informed about his talk with Teltschik is plausible; moreover, it corresponds with versions of Anatoli Chernayev and Nikolai Portugalov. It also does not seem like Gorbachev wanted to inform the chancellor's office of such far-reaching considerations. Besides the long-lasting annoyance of Portugalov about Falin's lack of willingness to take responsibility for this visit and his late admission that the International Department of the Central

Committee of the CPSU was the instigator also supports this. But Portugalov might not only have written the “Non-Paper” himself, but in a moment of “creative self-designation” had drafted it himself. In doing so, at that moment, he had carried out world politics.

My thesis is that there was a misunderstanding on both sides that spurred on the reunification process: in Moscow “they” thought that the Germans were already far advanced in their plans for the reunification and the alliances of a united Germany (which, however, did not apply to the time then). And in the chancellor’s office one suspected the same: in Moscow there was much advancement in these questions (which was, however, wrong at that time as well) and the same in East Berlin, because the newly appointed prime minister Modrow already spoke of “contractual community” of the two parts of Germany.⁷⁶

Helmut Kohl and Horst Teltschik now decided in all haste to work on a basic paper for the chancellor’s speech before the Bundestag less than a week later. This haste is certainly the result of this misunderstanding, which was a catalyst that sped up things like hardly any other diplomatic event.⁷⁷

This extremely consequential mutual misinterpretation exposed however also how unclear Bonn was about the leadership of the USSR and how contradictory the positions in Moscow were.

The Ten Point Plan: Taking the Initiative with an Obsolete Program?

The “Ten Points”

Horst Teltschik, “electrified” by Portugalov, concluded from his visit: now the chancellor, if he did not want to be crowded into the background, had to take the initiative and take over leadership. Kohl shared this view and gave Teltschik and his collaborators the task of preparing an appropriate paper.

Teltschik: I received the assignment on Thursday at midnight: prepare the speech. On Friday morning I summoned four or five intelligent people, and not just from my department, but from the Germany workgroup and from another department.⁷⁸

The “10 Points” were formulated, edited by Kohl on the weekend with friends and his wife,⁷⁹ and on Tuesday November 28, 1989, he presented it to the Bundestag in his budget speech.

All this took place in secret, that is, without informing anyone else, not even Hans-Dietrich Genscher, whom Kohl, and even more Teltschik, mistrusted because they worried that the foreign minister would immediately express second thoughts or even on Sunday evening give an interview and get the credit.⁸⁰

Helmut Kohl announced the Ten-Point Plan for German–German politics in his declaration of November 28, 1989. I will quote from this at length because it created ill-feeling between the Western allies and especially in relation to Gorbachev:

First, measures had to be taken immediately because of the movement of people. Second, closer cooperation with the GDR was necessary in all areas.

Third: I have offered to expand our help and our co-operation extensively, if a fundamental change in the political and economic system in the GDR has been bindingly decided and irrevocably set into motion. "Irrevocably" means for us, and above all for me, that the leaders of the GDR come to an understanding with the opposition groups in regard to a change in the constitution and a new electoral law. We support the claim for free, equal, and secret elections in the GDR with the participation of independent, which of course means also not socialist, parties. The monopoly of power of the SED must be abolished. (...) Economic assistance can become effective only when there are basic reforms of the economic system. (...) We do not want to stabilize conditions that have become untenable. We know: there can be an economic upturn only if the GDR opens itself to Western investment. (...) I do not understand anyone who makes accusations of patronization in this context.

Fourth: Prime Minister Modrow has...spoken of a contract community. We are ready to take up this idea. Because the closeness and the particular character of the relations between the two states in Germany require an ever denser net of agreements in all areas and at all levels...

Fifth: But we are also ready to go one decisive step further, namely to develop confederative structures between the two states with the goal of a federation, i.e. a united state organization, in Germany. For this, however, there must be a legitimate democratic government in the GDR.

After free elections various joint institutions could be developed. "How a reunified Germany will finally look, no one knows that today. But that unity will come if the people in Germany want it, of that I am certain."

In Points 6 and 7 Kohl emphasized the European dimension. Development inside Germany would remain embedded in the total European process, including the West–East relations, in the EU, and had to become part of Gorbachev's common European house.

Eighth: The CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) process is at the heart of this total European architecture. We want to move it along and make use of the forums ahead.

Ninth: The overcoming of the division of Europe and the division of German require far-reaching and speedy steps in disarmament and armament controls...

Tenth: With this broad strategy we will act towards a state of peace in Europe, in which the German people can once more attain its unity through free self-determination. Reunification, which means achieving again the state unity of Germany, remains the political goal of the government of the FRG.

In the following goodwill declarations about more community, peace, and freedom in Europe there is also a sentence that makes clear that Kohl had earlier already accepted the new American European politics:

We are grateful that we found renewed support for this from our friends and partners in the declaration of the Brussels NATO Summit.⁸¹

The question of a united Germany under the roof of NATO and the German–Polish border were not mentioned by Kohl.

The Effectiveness of an “Obsolete Concept”: The Ignored Genscher and the Protesting SPD

The “Ten Point Plan,” as it became generally known, although it contained no schedule, led to a sharp reaction both inside and outside the country, which can hardly be understood from the perspective of today, after reunification. Horst Teltschik, who was the most important author of the design of the Ten Point Plan speech, explained why this was not done only in secret but why the allies were informed beforehand in differing ways.

Teltschik: Why did we deal with the four powers differently in this speech? We were careful that this complete speech was on the American president’s desk before it was given. (...) The White House was always informed by us in every detail because we wanted to prevent the development of any mistrust.⁸²

The Western European allies and the Soviet general secretary were treated differently from Bush.

Teltschik: We did not inform Mitterrand, Thatcher, and Gorbachev.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his foreign policy advisor Teltschik also explained why: the reaction would have been the same from all of them, from Genscher as well. He pointed out that they exercised care, as it was the wrong moment, especially because of Gorbachev’s endangered position.

Teltschik: We would have heard only misgivings. I’m absolutely certain about that. Now just imagine that (...) had been the reaction of the four powers on Monday. And Kohl had then said, “That may well be, but I am distancing myself from that

and giving the speech anyway.” It would have been an even greater affront. Then a second argument. No one would in a similar situation ever ask a foreign partner for permission to act in a central national matter.⁸³

The expected reaction did indeed follow: from London to Paris and Rome to Gorbachev there was criticism, in Germany as well: Genscher was not pleased.

AvP: *On the one hand it is reported that you congratulated Kohl on his great speech and, on the other hand, (somewhat later) you said, in principle, what was new in this speech was already obsolete.*

Genscher: *Yes. It is after all known that this so-called Ten Point Plan had not been agreed to in the government.*

AvP: *Yes, not with you either.*

Genscher: *—and thus not with the Foreign Minister. I could not have agreed with him in this form either and namely because he was historically out of date. Because he was starting not from German unification as an immediate goal but rather from a confederate structure between the GDR and the Federal Republic and a coexistence of several years of the GDR and FRG, which the unification as seen from below had already passed. At the demonstrations, the idea was that we were one people and not we are two confederate states or something. This means the historical development was much further.*

It is very much a question if it was possible to speak of a completed unification from the bottom by the end of November. But it would soon take place. Perhaps it was just this fact that the “Ten Points” only “ran over” a bit ahead of real developments that made them so effective. They were rather like a starting shot “from the top” of the Federal Republic that would soon be left behind developing events, just as one would leave the starting blocks behind. And this is how this speech was interpreted in the affected governments, as a starting shot for an immediate and concrete politics of reunification by Bonn.

Genscher: *It [the Ten Point Plan—AvP] did not answer two questions central to German unity, namely: (a) what did we actually want to unite? This refers to the border question. And b): what is the location of the united Germany? Will it remain a member of the Western organizations or will it be a neutral Germany? (...) On the other side Gorbachev felt, let us say, taken by surprise, but for a completely different reason. Gorbachev had instinctively felt: this is now going towards unification. In July '89 [he means June—AvP], i.e. five months before, we had promised each other that we would consult each other on all important questions. And now he felt as though he was being driven by a development that he could not direct, which was after all not easy for him in his internal position either. This was the reason for his annoyance that I then was exposed to when I went there at the beginning of December.⁸⁴*

However understandable Genscher's interpretation is, for the chancellor's office it was crucial that with this plan a general debate was opened, through which reunification appeared as a concrete possibility of the West German government's policy and led to expected reactions; further that everyone was now talking about the plan and that Kohl appeared to be the only one who had not only taken the initiative but had done so in competition with the active Modrow. Today no one speaks about this either.

Teltschik: *There is this issue, the contract community. Modrow made the suggestion of a contract community. We did not know what on earth a contract community was. There is no such thing in the international law of nations—contract community. So I said: this doesn't matter. We will take up this issue. Then Mr. Modrow can say nothing against it. The Soviet Union cannot say anything against this issue because it is a suggestion from Modrow.*⁸⁵

At the time, at the end of November 1989, the FDP leadership spoke in two tongues: Genscher held back, Lambsdorff criticized the "Ten Points," and particularly the one point that was considered essential, because they did not take into consideration the German–Polish border question and the fears of the Polish government. The other critical point referred to by Genscher was not mentioned at that time: a unification already carried out from the bottom, leaving the confederation idea behind, was also not mentioned by Lambsdorff. But, the FDP saw the "Ten Points" more as a continuation of their own politics in relation to Germany.

Another domestic reaction was a majority of the Greens at first regarded reunification skeptically. In their publication entitled *Kooperation statt Anschluß* (Cooperation Instead of Annexation) it says in regard to the Ten Point Plan, for example: "Kohl's policy, which wants to absorb the GDR and make it capitalist, presents a danger for Europe."⁸⁶

On December 1, the Bundestag voted on the Ten Points. The governing coalition, CDU/CSU and the FDP, voted "yes." The FDP, however, wanted the addition of a clear statement on the Oder–Neisse border. The speaker of the Greens Jutta Oesterle-Schwerin accused the chancellor of having a *Heim-ins-Reich* (a Nazi slogan: home to the Reich) policy.⁸⁷ The SPD abstained following a violent debate. There were many critics of the Ten Point Plan in the party. There was even an alternative version because the eleventh point was missing, namely the "Recognition of the Oder-Neisse border" (from Herta Däubler-Gmelin, who was in favor of the other points).⁸⁸ There were also some supporters in the SPD, such as for example the foreign policy speaker Karsten Voigt;⁸⁹ the leader of the SPD Hans-Jochen Vogel was probably not far from the Ten Point Plan, although he also criticized the lack of a statement on the Oder–Neisse border. On November 28, he had also presented five points at the same parliamentary sitting. In his

presentation, confederate structures between the two Germanies played a central role. Much to his annoyance no one today speaks of them anymore.⁹⁰

Willi Brandt in an interview with *Stern* magazine said:

*I ask myself; what was actually surprising in this modest outline of points [Kohl's—AvP]? It would just mean that you were just opposed to every kind of closer movement by the two German states.*⁹¹

The reaction of the Modrow government in East Berlin was unequivocal: “Such declarations have nothing to do with reality,” “sovereignty and equality must be the basis,” “reunification is not on the agenda.”⁹² Modrow said: “No one wanted reunification then, neither East nor West. And neither did the population of the GDR.”⁹³ According to *Der Spiegel*, in a survey that was not representative, 71 percent of the population of the GDR opposed reunification and only 27 per cent was in favor.⁹⁴ For Modrow, however, it was not insignificant that that Kohl spoke of “confederate structures” and joint commissions. This fitted completely with the contract community that he had suggested—only he hoped for a confederation of two sovereign states and therefore wrote in his memoirs: “The Ten Point Plan was conceived as a blow against my (!) idea of a contract community.”⁹⁵

Concern and Disappointment in Moscow

The strongest reaction to the Ten Points came from Moscow. After the proclamation Gorbachev very soon had an opportunity to complain, and moreover to George Bush during the summit conference on the *Maxim Gorki* on December 2 and 3. According to the Soviet minutes, Gorbachev dealt with the “German Question” very directly:

In this context I want to say something about the “German question.” We have the impression that Mr. Kohl is pushing, rushing, is not acting seriously and responsibly. (...) But for you and for me it is very important to inform others that certain activities could harm the positive developments, as well very important and serious matters could be endangered, among them trust in the government of the FRG. What could come of this? Will a united Germany be neutral... or will it become a member of NATO?

Gorbachev did not mention another possibility, which is surprising, because, as we will see, other options were being discussed in Moscow. Marshal Akhromeyev reproached Gorbachev that he gave answer to the German question, with the result that the West concluded that there would be no resistance to reunification from Gorbachev.⁹⁶ But, according to the Soviet protocol, George Bush did

not go at all further with the question of the status of a unified Germany either. Gorbachev then said only

that it was too early to discuss these or other (alternatives). This process should develop; it should not be pushed ahead artificially. Not we, you and I, are responsible for the division of Germany (...) But contrary to your allies and you, I say clearly: there are two German states, and this is what history has decided. And history should decide how this process will continue and where it will lead in the context of the new Europe and the new world. In any case it is the question that must be dealt with by us with the greatest possible caution so that the changes that have now begun are not endangered (...) I think that we are in this consideration in agreement.

Bush: *I agree with you. We will not do anything too soon, make no attempts to speed up the unification. If you speak with Mr. Kohl, you will observe, that he also agrees with my point of view.*⁹⁷

In the Soviet minutes I have seen Bush does not defend at any point the Bonn policy favoring German unity, although he appeared to do so in the press conference four days later. Bush only asked for understanding for the “emotional side” of this problem on Kohl’s part. Apparently Bush and Gorbachev—occupied by other international themes such as Afghanistan and Cuba—did not want to add anything more to their talks.

In Bonn the meeting between Gorbachev and Bush on the *Maxim Gorki* on December 2, 1989, was seen much more positively in relation to Kohl’s politics⁹⁸ than is supported by the Soviet minutes. At the “Malta summit,” as the chancellor’s office, or rather, Horst Teltschik in his note to the chancellor of December 11 observed, Gorbachev had discussed the “German question” and Bush’s “Four points” (!) “in a basically positive way.” As well “GS (=General Secretary) Gorbachev” emphasized “support for the ‘contractual community,’ though not too fast a development, and support for the continuation of the WP (=Warsaw Pact) membership.” Finally, in this context, Gorbachev referred to the “significance of both alliances for stability in Europe,” and pointed out the “increasingly political role” of both alliances. Teltschik pointed out that “still in July in Strasbourg” there was talk of the “elimination of both alliances.”⁹⁹ But Gorbachev might also gone home with the misunderstanding that the Americans did not support a fast German reunification policy.

Gorbachev returned from Malta to Moscow and already on December 5 met Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Hardly another international appearance revealed the positions, concerns, and fears—yes, also the fears—of the Soviet general secretary as sharply as this meeting. In an unusually direct and in part aggressive way, the general secretary expressed his annoyance with Kohl’s “Ten Points” and above all the lack of prior consultation. Encouraged by a report by Falin after his visit to

East Berlin shortly before, Gorbachev was troubled; because Falin had informed him that the voices in the GDR favoring unification were increasing.

According to Genscher, Shevardnadze seemed particularly glum, which the German foreign minister attributed to the fact that the “GDR leadership that had just left were creating an atmosphere opposing the Declaration [*the ‘10 points’—AvP*].”¹⁰⁰ Shevardnadze did understand that the situation would bring “problems and shocks” for his country. There was also another reason: the Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Kvitsinski, had in the meantime reported to Moscow about the meeting of Portugalov with Teltschik¹⁰¹ and urged a quick proposal in the German policy of the Soviet Union. The confederation idea should be elaborated in order to get ahead of Kohl, thereby supporting the GDR as a sovereign state with another social system. Otherwise the “existence of the GDR (was) only a matter of time.”¹⁰² In general moods ranging from concern to “panic” appeared to be spreading among the Soviet diplomats because of the dynamism of the German question.¹⁰³

Genscher describes this meeting in detail in his memoirs,¹⁰⁴ it is also mentioned in the academic literature,¹⁰⁵ and the minutes of this meeting have so far been published in short excerpts or in summaries. In consideration of its significance I would like therefore to quote in detail from the Soviet protocol.

First Gorbachev disguised his planned criticism of Kohl, though also of Genscher, as praise:

You are for us a privileged partner in these talks because we have known and valued you for a long time. New, little known people are normally spared, but with old acquaintances one can speak directly and openly. With you it is permitted to confront you immediately with complicated matters.

But then it became stern, even if he let Genscher speak first: “How do you judge the actual situation?” In reply Genscher made rather general statements about the recent changes and then went on:

Genscher: *We do not want to derive any one-sided advantage for ourselves from the processes that are taking place in Eastern Europe and leading to problems that are unavoidable while major reforms are being carried out. Our goal is the stabilization of the situation through the development of relations with the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and the GDR. That is a longing that is close to our hearts. (...) We are for stability in Europe, for the increasing closeness between its states and peoples.*

Genscher closed his introduction with the declaration:

I do not say this as a private person, but as foreign minister of the FRG. The policy of our government is not the policy of a minority but a direction that the majority of the population of the FRG supports and that has the greatest possible agreement of the Bundestag.

Gorbachev replied:

I have received your statements with consideration and trust. If what you say reflects reality, one could only welcome it and we could carry out our discussion with a feeling of trust and optimism. However some comments are called for. There are two levels. One is the philosophical-conceptual, upon which your actions are based. The other level relates to the real, practical steps that we observe with great attention. In Europe and in the whole world huge upheavals are taking place. This is change for the better. Confrontation and the arms race are being ended, and mutual trust is growing. And it would be very dangerous if, in view of these upheavals, provincial, regional, egoistic, and utilitarian approaches were to dominate.

Then the Soviet general secretary criticized Kohl's "Ten Points."

Gorbachev: These are, to be frank, ultimate claims that have been raised in relation to an independent and sovereign German state. What the chancellor said affects all of us, even though it concerns the GDR.

First, these ten points have appeared after we had a constructive and positive exchange of opinions and (reached) agreements in a series of basic questions. One should actually appear with such a document only after an appropriate consultation with the partners. Or does the Chancellor not need this anymore? Apparently he thinks that his music, a march, is being played and he is already himself beginning to march along to it.¹⁰⁶ I do not think that these steps have the effect of firming trust and mutual understanding and making a contribution towards giving life to the agreements reached between us. How can one speak of a "European construction" when one acts in this way? You know that we have spoken with Chancellor Kohl on the telephone. I told him that the GDR is not only a factor in European but also in worldwide politics and that both the East and the West will observe carefully everything that is going on. Kohl agreed, affirmed that the FRG did not want to destabilize the situation in the GDR and would act thoughtfully. However, the practical actions of the chancellor do not agree with his broad assurances. I told Kohl that the GDR was an important partner and ally of the Soviet Union. We are also interested in the development of our relations with the FRG. This is the triangle that is playing a special role in European and world politics. (...) The leadership of the FRG simply insists on issuing commands. And this is what everyone feels, I can guarantee it.

Immediately after making these statements Gorbachev asked himself a question:

Is Bush possibly heating the situation up? But really one has to consider one's steps 2, 3, 5 steps in advance and predict the consequences.¹⁰⁷

And then he repeated—not looking forward very much himself—the sentences that he had repeated, regularly, even at the Malta summit:

Reality consists of both German states being sovereign and independent. This is what history has decided. (...) The relations between the two German states should develop within this framework. It appears that they will become even closer. But these processes should proceed normally. Any artificial acceleration would only complicate or encumber the great, momentous transformation that is taking place in the development of European states, i.e. in a central point in world politics.

After these still rather general and mild observations Gorbachev became more caustic:

However, what is happening in reality suggests the opposite. Yesterday Chancellor Kohl, rather awkwardly, declared that President Bush supports the idea of a confederation. What does this mean? What does confederation mean? Confederation presumes a common defence, a common foreign policy. Where is the FRG then—in NATO, in the Warsaw Treaty? Or will it be neutral? But what does NATO represent without the FRG? And anyway how will this continue? Have you thought everything through?²¹⁰⁸ Where then are the existing agreements between us in all this? Is this really policy?

Then the Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze added a sentence that suggested or was to suggest historical associations:

Today one carries on in this way with the GDR, tomorrow possibly Poland, Czechoslovakia, and then with Austria.

Gorbachev addressed Genscher directly with an acerbic remark that could be considered unusual in diplomatic communications:

With all responsibility I tell you that you are not presenting the best political style, since you are not distancing yourself from Mr. Kohl. In any case it is not possible to call him responsible and farsighted.

According to the Soviet minutes Genscher appeared unimpressed and replied with general remarks about the farsightedness and predictability of the politics of the FRG that aimed at peace in Europe and then continued:

In explanation [of the statements—AvP] of the chancellor in the Bundestag it must be said that it demonstrates the long-term basis of the politics of the FRG. It shows that it is a basic part of the process of integration of all of Europe. In his turning to the GDR the chancellor wanted to emphasize first that we are ready now in Europe to

help and to work together but also demonstrate the possibility for closer relations in the future. What he said is no command or ultimatum, but rather just a suggestion. The GDR will decide freely and independently how it should react to this proposal. (...) His Ten Point Declaration is no calendar of fixed measures; rather it sets the perspectives for a long period of time. The GDR decides itself, replies itself to these suggestions with yes or no. We are interested in the internal stability of the GDR. With his declaration, so it appears to me, the chancellor has made a contribution to the strengthening of this stability. There is no command and no claims with ultimatums. We know that neither Poland nor Hungary have this impression. These ten points, our policy, is supported by all the parties represented in the Bundestag, including the SPD.

Gorbachev was, however, not reassured; on the contrary, he repeated his disappointment that Genscher had made himself Kohl's lawyer. He also repeated that the alleged assistance measures and Kohl's demand for reforms would signify basic changes in the social and political system of the GDR and thus presented "the strongest interferences in the affairs of a sovereign state."

And then Shevardnadze threw in a sentence that appears to be almost "revenge" for Kohl's earlier comparison of Gorbachev with Goebbels.

Shevardnadze: Not even Hitler would have allowed himself this.¹⁰⁹

Gorbachev added: "And that's not all. Kohl demands that the SED relinquish its monopoly of power." And he showed keenly his indignation that Kohl had turned directly to the citizens of the GDR as if they were "his own" citizens. It was the worst revanchism that contradicted all the promises that Kohl had made to Gorbachev regarding the stabilization of the GDR and Eastern Europe and endangered everything that had been achieved so far. As Genscher emphasized that the "Ten Points" were only suggestions, about which the GDR had to decide itself (*Gorbachev: "Stop acting as [Kohl's] lawyer!"*) the general secretary said, understandably:

Gorbachev: Then this is even more of an ultimatum. Apparently you have prepared the burial of the European process and in such a form too.

Genscher: It is not like that.

Now Genscher tried to vehemently refute the allegation by declaring that they were after all not responsible for the decline of the GDR. He emphasized clearly that he was not anyone's lawyer. "I am speaking in the name of all parties, of the Chancellor, and the government." Nonetheless Gorbachev also made a connection with National Socialism.

Gorbachev: The Germans should remember where a policy without sense and understanding led in the past.

Genscher: *We know our historical mistakes and have no intention of repeating them. What is happening in the FRG and GDR today does not deserve such a severe judgement. The people in the GDR demand their rights without any aggression, completely peaceably. You will know that the GDR is my homeland and I receive the demands of its people with satisfaction and sympathy. And the people of the FRG watch the events in the GDR with sympathy and involvement. All responsible politicians on our side say that the people of the GDR should decide for themselves what they need.*

The meeting continued in this mood.

Toward the end of the meeting Gorbachev could not resist a small effrontery. He said that he had had the impression that Genscher himself had found out about the Ten Points only during Kohl's speech before the Bundestag.

Genscher: *Yes, that's right, but that is our internal affair. We will settle it ourselves.*
 Gorbachev: *But as you yourself see, this internal affair affects everyone.*

Gorbachev concluded in a conciliatory manner:

*Don't take everything I said personally, Mr. Genscher. You know that we act differently towards you than to others. I hope that you have understood everything correctly. I thank you for the conversation.*¹¹⁰

Genscher had hardly returned home before he attempted to give this "most unpleasant" talk of his career a less dramatic turn, apparently to prevent further damage to German–Soviet relations. This is how he presented himself and this was how the note by Horst Teltschik reported to Chancellor Kohl about the explanations of "Genscher before the Foreign and Interior German Committee" on December 11 in Moscow: Gorbachev said to Genscher on December 5 in Moscow that the Soviet Union had not only "tolerated" the development in the GDR, but had "initiated" it. He did not question the final goal of unity, but criticized the speed and was concerned about uncontrollable developments "also because" of the Soviet forces in the GDR.¹¹¹

This is a downright absurd and euphemistic summary in view of the actual conversation that took place in Moscow.

It is highly likely that Genscher, differently from and more sensitively than many other politicians, wanted to achieve a politics of building bridges with the Soviet Union, because of Gorbachev's harsh criticism, that would tie the plans of the foreign minister and the government to the basic interests of the Soviet Union, as they were only hinted at by Gorbachev—despite, it has to be said, Gorbachev's sharp tone in his talk with Genscher.

For me this talk of Gorbachev with Genscher, like the one with Bush before, reveals the complete helplessness of Soviet politics in the face of the process of collapse of the GDR and in Eastern Europe. When I asked Anatoli Chernayev in 2001 about it, he answered rather self-critically:

But Gorbachev and we had no strategy in relation to Germany, only general ideas. At the time we had only the idea that at some time some day there would be reunification. We did not see [the Ten Points—AvP] positively then. Gorbachev thought that Kohl was acting too quickly. Three days after Kohl's Ten Point plan Gorbachev met Bush in Malta. Bush did agree with Gorbachev that Kohl should slow down. Only the following events showed that it was necessary to react quickly. Kohl's decisions were correct. The problem was only that he did not phone Gorbachev. He should have done that.

AvP: *What would have happened if Kohl had called? How would Gorbachev have reacted?*

Chernayev: *I think, if he had phoned, Kohl could have persuaded him, as he was able to persuade him in other situations. And there was at that time in East Berlin no leadership figure who could be relied upon.*

The Soviet leadership under Gorbachev did indeed have no ideas in this situation. Instead of making a sober analysis, that in the GDR the times were changing toward unification, that the GDR was also collapsing economically, instead of worrying about the effects on the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union and to work out as soon as possible the Soviet conditions for a reunification of Germany, Gorbachev demanded from Kohl of all people that he not support a policy leading to the unification of Germany, contrary to his basic convictions. An apolitical stance of reproach against the chancellor was revealed, although he was not responsible for the economic decay of the GDR and could hardly do anything about the mass movements toward the West. A basic mistake of Soviet politics was being continued: just as the Soviet leadership took little notice of these movements from the bottom it, so also, in practical politics, had treated the GDR as the special case of a “half nation.” It overlooked—in spite of many contrary statements—the significance of the constant ties between East Germany and West Germany, which would have to have an effect as soon as the Wall had fallen.

Instead of accepting reunification as a real possibility and developing concrete conditions for that eventuality, the Soviet leadership criticized Kohl, claiming that his politics promoted reunification. Instead of winning over the Western Europeans for a discussion about reorganizing the military alliances in Europe in case of German reunification including the Soviet Union, Canada and the United States. Gorbachev spoke abstractly about the European house and insisted on the two Germanies as guarantors of peace and security in Europe

until the end of January 1990. And in addition, the Soviet side attempted to mobilize the other Western Europeans against the unity of Germany. However, the Western Europeans were also trapped in old ways of thinking and attempted to use Gorbachev for their own politics against the unification of Germany.

Annoyance in West Europe: Support from the Americans

The Different Positions of Mitterrand and Thatcher

Among the Western allies the reaction to the “Ten Points” was diplomatically restrained but still more than opposed. Helmut Kohl had held back during his time in office, but afterward had reported his disappointment frankly, that the West European partners with, the exception of the socialist Gonzalez in Spain, had reacted to a (rapid) process of reunification with distrust. This was particularly true of Margaret Thatcher, but also of François Mitterrand.¹¹² Italian prime minister Andreotti criticized Kohl’s “pan-Germanism” sharply.¹¹³

Some highlights are presented below, first from Charles Powell, Thatcher’s advisor, whom I interviewed on September 27 1999 in London:

Powell: *Now, when the Wall came down in November, of course we were all happy, joyful, delighted—this was what we had all hoped to see. And in his first reaction, Chancellor Kohl implied that this would not lead to rapid progress to reunification. He spoke about the need for stability for not allowing the situation to get out of hand and that he implied that reunification would be a gradual process. (...) And yet, only a week after that, 24th November, [28—AvP] he put forward his famous “ten points.” And that came as a bit of a shock to most of us because it envisaged a much more rapid progress towards reunification than we had up until that point expected.*¹¹⁴

Jacques Attali reports on the reaction of the French president.

Hans-Christoph Blumenberg: *I think that President Mitterrand really was furious, was he not?*

Attali: *He was surprised because we had a lot of contact with Chancellor Kohl as I had every-day relations with Horst Teltschik since 1982, and we were not informed but as we realised half an hour later, Mr. Genscher was not informed because he called Roland Dumas to tell him that he was not informed. And then we were less furious when we understood that even the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany was not informed of his plan. And Mitterrand thought that if he were in the Chancellor’s shoes he would have done the same. (...) Yes, I mean, it is a terrible situation for a Minister of Foreign Affairs whose life has been devoted to the question of East–West relations not to be informed of a plan which is so carefully well-designed in order to structure the future of his nation. I think if I would have been Genscher maybe I would have quit in such a situation.*¹¹⁵

This is probably a rather muted description because Mitterrand demonstrated completely ambivalent positions in relation to reunification. He had apparently supported the politics leading toward reunification, most recently at the German–French consultations on November 2 and 3, 1989 in Bonn, where he declared, “The further construction of Europe will bring us closer to the day when the division of Europe is overcome, when Germany can be reunified.”¹¹⁶

Horst Teltschik describes what happened next:

*So, after they [Kohl and Mitterrand] had just spoken about these themes, Mitterrand could not have been surprised by Kohl's position. He could be surprised only that Kohl now went public with [with the Ten Points—AvP].*¹¹⁷

That was one side of Mitterrand, but in talks with Gorbachev and Thatcher or with Bush he showed another. I have already mentioned that in May 1989 at a meeting with Bush he had said, according to Jacques Attali, his advisor then, that reunification along with atomic weapons in German possession was one of the two possible origins of a war in Europe.¹¹⁸

This shows Mitterrand's ambiguity concerning reunification. On December 6, one day after Genscher's visit to Moscow, when Mitterrand met with Gorbachev in Kiev, Gorbachev informed him about the Malta summit with Bush, which he described as “good” in mood and also progressive with regard to questions of disarmament.¹¹⁹ But he thought that American thinking was out of date for the challenges of the time. The United States wanted to impose its values on the world, but there were universal values. Mitterrand agreed with the remark:

The Americans have a very limited world view. (...) There is an idolization of the market and capital in the USA.

With regard to the German question, which Gorbachev called troubled, both emphasized that it could be solved only within the framework of an all-European context. Mitterrand emphasized explicitly:

The German question must not determine the European process, but rather the other way around. And: In the first place—I repeat this—must be European integration, the development of Eastern Europe, the complete European process and the creation of a European peace order. If the USA wants to participate in it, then that gives us additional guarantees.

That is one of the few hints of a concern for an all-European peace order, but it was not developed. Mitterrand went on to say that Kohl's “Ten Points” had “turned everything upside down. He had mixed up all the factors and hurried ahead.” Mitterrand had spoken with Genscher about this, but he had expressed

no opposition. Even the harshest sentence of the Soviet foreign minister was repeated: “Shevardnadze said in this context that even Hitler did not speak in this tone.” But here it appears to concern only the tone, since in the original text of these minutes Shevardnadze also hinted at threats to Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in the sense of Hitler’s politics.

When Gorbachev repeated that he had spoken to Genscher about a German “diktat,” Mitterrand asked, “You said that so directly? ‘Diktat’ is after all a German word.” Gorbachev replied, “I expressed myself even more harshly,” because in Russian the word is also “Diktat.” Then Gorbachev turned directly to the subject of Kohl: “The latest events show that there is still a lot of provincialism in our friend Kohl.”¹²⁰ The report on the conversation with Genscher takes up a surprising amount of space in the Soviet minutes of the Mitterrand–Gorbachev meeting. The report concludes with the observation: “We will observe very carefully what happens [*in Bonn—AvP*] because the actions of the FRG remind us of the visit of an elephant in a china shop.”

Then both considered Modrow’s difficult position. Mitterrand said: “Yes, the situation is complicated. I intend to travel to the GDR on 20 December.” What appears in literature as a suggestion by the French president, namely to visit the GDR together with Gorbachev, is somewhat more modest in the Soviet protocol. Gorbachev actually replied: “Everything has to be evaluated. Should I go there too?”

Mitterrand: “*What the heck. Let’s go together.*”

Gorbachev also explained why he was opposed to such a joint visit to Berlin, although it would have had a significance for Modrow and possibly would also be seen as a Soviet–French signal to Europe that could hardly be overestimated: he referred to the congress of the people’s deputies, which would not permit such a visit and again made clear where his priorities lay at this time: the inner politics of the Soviet Union.

The remark about the bad political chess players, who could only plan one move in advance, appears in the minutes without actually naming Kohl. Gorbachev told Mitterrand: “Don’t forget that even average politicians have to plan their activities two to three moves ahead.” This remark later led Mitterrand’s advisor Attali, who accompanied the French president to Kiev, to comment that it would then have demonstrated that Kohl was a better chess player than Gorbachev.¹²¹

At this meeting in Kiev both had to see their powerlessness in the face of the dynamic in Germany. Gorbachev demonstrated that he had no idea how his “European house” could become a strategy in the interests of Soviet security within Europe with a united Germany.

Mitterrand was deeply disappointed by the meeting with the Soviet general secretary. This is what his advisor Attali told Vadim Sagladin, Gorbachev’s

advisor for European Affairs: Gorbachev had apparently accepted the reunification, which he—according to Sagladin—had put into perspective. Further, according to Sagladin, Mitterrand had concluded from the conversation that it was necessary to speed up the construction of “common European structures” starting with the East–West border. Only through this could a separate German path and German striving for hegemony be hindered.

This is another of the few hints at that time about Mitterrand’s thoughts in relation to East–West agreements involving all of Europe and including the Soviet Union *before* or *at the same time as* German unification. However, they are not in the Soviet minutes, not even in Attali’s diary, but only in Sagladin’s report.¹²²

At the working breakfast with Kohl on December 9, mentioned above, Mitterrand reported that Gorbachev had been surprisingly relaxed despite the alarming developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, that he asked himself how Gorbachev would react if the progress toward German unity took place quickly. He also wondered if Gorbachev had perhaps even planned these results in his politics of reform from the beginning. Then Mitterrand told Kohl about Gorbachev’s decision on December 6 (!) to allow a united Germany into the two military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Mitterrand could not imagine how two alliances could coexist in one country. The surprising aspect of it is this: according to the Soviet minutes, Gorbachev had not expressed this idea to Mitterrand at all but only spoken of his indignant question put to Genscher as to where the mutual defence policy in a German–German confederation could go: to NATO, to the Warsaw Pact, or to neutrality? Unfortunately it is not possible to determine exactly if Gorbachev really expressed this thought, which was not entered in the minutes, or was it just a trial balloon by Mitterrand in relation to Kohl. “For Gorbachev the Warsaw Pact was, so to speak, the last bastion,” said Mitterrand in a postscript to Kohl, but this was probably only still the case for the Soviet Union.

At the sidelines of the meeting of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on December 8, the mood of which Kohl later described as “icy,” even “hostile” to him,¹²³ Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand met, accompanied only by Charles Powell and Jacques Attali. Mitterrand’s advisor recorded in his diary the following episodes: Margaret Thatcher said there that in the GDR people were speaking more and more about reunification. If this continued in this way, Gorbachev would be in a plight from which he would never come out. Mitterrand muttered something like “God knows.” Margaret Thatcher continued that Kohl had no idea about the sensibilities in Europe. She said that Germany was divided because the Germans had forced upon us the most savage of all wars. It was necessary to ensure that Germany would not dominate Europe as Japan dominated Asia. Gorbachev must be pretty nervous at the moment. If the German masses attacked the Soviet military bases the consequences would be terrible. Mitterrand reported that he found Gorbachev tougher than he appeared

in public. He referred on his meeting with Genscher and spoke of a German *diktat*. But Gorbachev also had “no more resources than we do.”

The British prime minister pulled two maps of Europe out of her purse—one from the time of the Second World War and another from the postwar period. She tapped on the one before 1945, on Pomerania and East Prussia, and shouted, “They will take back all of this, and the CSSR as well.” Then Mitterrand added: an increase in the speed of this development would become very dangerous. Margaret Thatcher felt Kohl is heating everything up. Mitterrand added that Gorbachev could not prevent this and the United States could not either. In response Thatcher said contemptuously that the United States did not really want this. Besides there was a strong pro-German lobby in Washington. Mitterrand expressed surprise that the American ambassador in Bonn, Walters, was speaking of a reunification already in five years. “And we have no forces (*les moyens de force*) against Germany. We are in the situation of the governments of France and England before the Second World War. (...) We must not find ourselves in the situation of Munich again.”¹²⁴

The stridency of this scene is disputed by Charles Powell, himself an eyewitness, particularly that Thatcher had not said that Kohl wanted to conquer back the eastern territories. However, he did confirm the basic concept, relating however, to Thatcher’s statements about Pomerania and East Prussia, and the fears of the Poles.

In an interview Attali describes this situation somewhat less dramatically, but adds something that is more significant:

Mrs. Thatcher was obsessed at the idea that Germany would like to reorganise the Third Reich territory. But this summit [in Strasbourg—AvP] was the follow-up of another summit where Mrs. Thatcher was mad. It was a month before, there was a summit convene of the last minute at the Elysée to prepare the Strasbourg Summit. It was in November. And Mrs. Thatcher became mad¹²⁵ when the chancellor explained that the German Reunification was already agreed by a N.A.T.O. decision of '71. Mrs. Thatcher burst by saying “well, but when we said that we knew it was impossible!” and the chancellor said “yeah, you just said it.” And then, I think, at that moment everything was broken between them. And she always was very reluctant, very distressful. Francois Mitterrand was in between. He never trusted Mrs. Thatcher, he did not agree with her, but he wanted to get something out of German Reunification.

Nowhere is it so clear that Thatcher as well as Mitterrand were driven by a generational fear that Germany could dominate Europe as it had in the first half of the twentieth century. Over and over the British prime minister compared the situation of 1989 with Munich in 1938. Thus her minister, Alan Clark, reported on the following scene with Thatcher at her country estate, Chequers, on

January 28, 1990: Clark thought that there was too much talk of Munich. It was necessary to support the reunification politics of Kohl. "Now the Germans will give something for it. It's coming anyway." Charles Powell would support him with the same idea that later nothing more could be gotten. Now Kohl would, for example, support the expansion of NATO. Clark said no one knows how it would be later. He continued:

Thatcher: (*with "flashing eyes"*²⁶): "That means retreating before Kohl's grand power ambitions. And I will never do that."

Clark (*laughing*): "You are wrong, completely wrong."

Thatcher: "I'm not an appeaser."²⁷

She seemed to feel as if she were in Munich in 1938 and Adolf Hitler, not Helmut Kohl, were her opponent. And, it is necessary to add today, as if the individual states of Europe were to continue playing the crucial role and not the United States of Europe. In her concept of the future there was no such united Europe, which was the main difference with Mitterrand.

That was also the subject of the conversation with Horst Teltschik.

AvP: *This situation showed me that the two considered their familiarity with the time up to 1945 more important than their experience with the Federal Republic in the fifty post-war years.*

Teltschik: *Yes, I agree that you are correct that the reaction of Margaret Thatcher was determined exactly by her experiences, her wartime experiences, the bombing of London by German planes. I once spoke about it with Charles Powell—he was after all virtually my counterpart in this group. He said to me, "Horst, you have to understand, this is another generation."*

Gorbachev was viewed and used ambivalently by the French government under Mitterrand and even more by the British government under Thatcher: on the one hand there was genuine worry that a precipitous process of unification would lead to opposition in the Soviet Union, which Gorbachev and his allies could not control. Beyond that this concern was used to prevent reunification and thus a Germany that would become too powerful. Portugalov speaks of a "sordid" politics of Thatcher who pushed the Soviet leadership in the direction of everything in opposition to reunification that she herself as an ally of the Federal Republic of Germany did not dare to do.¹²⁸

Jacques Attali, however, refuses to accept that the positions of Thatcher and Mitterrand on the unification of Germany should be considered the same:

No. François Mitterrand and Mrs. Thatcher were not in the same position. Mrs. Thatcher was against German reunification. François Mitterrand has built his

political life on the French-German friendship in order to build Europe. Everything in his life is based on that. And then he was not against German reunification, but he was against unconditional German reunification because he believed that unconditional German reunification will lead to a too powerful Germany, and a Germany which would be, maybe, once again seized by its devils. Then the two positions were slightly different.

Blumenberg: *But, let us say, the style, the tone was very hard in this period. I recall something you wrote when President Mitterand had met Genscher and told you what he had told Genscher that “if you do German unification before European unification you will find yourself against la triple alliance, France, Great Britain the USSR, ‘et cela se terminera par une guerre’ (and this will end in a war).*

Attali: *Yes, it is exactly what I just tell you. For Francois Mitterand the only danger of a war in Europe will be to put an end to the construction of Europe. And the construction of Europe could only be jeopardised by the German dream of unity without an improvement of European unity. Do not forget that in November '89 the decision has not yet been taken to create the Euro, and the decision was supposed to be taken in the four following months. And then our fear was that the German reunification process will kill the Euro, and killing the Euro will kill the process of German-French integration. And that is why François Mitterrand and myself we believed that without European integration Germany could again become a threat to peace, as well as now today without European integration Russia is a threat to peace. (...) If Germany wants our blessing it will [receive] it from Mitterand on three conditions: no nuclear weapons on German territory, the recognition of the irreversibility of Oder-Neisse-Border and a push to European unity (...) Mrs. Thatcher was trying to avoid German Reunification. Francois Mitterand was trying to get something out of it.¹²⁹*

Here the differences between Thatcher and Mitterrand are expressed clearly. Therefore the French president pleaded for the primacy of European unity *ahead of* German unification or at least a parallel development of German and European unity. In his attempts to realize this position, however, he bumped against the counterweight of the German–American coalition—in which Kohl and Genscher were essentially “more European” than the Americans—and the “traditional” postwar fears in Eastern and Western Europe about Germany, especially in the case of Thatcher and of Gorbachev, though to a lesser extent in his case. The Soviet general secretary wanted to preserve the GDR as a sovereign state longer, although it was already in the process of disintegration, so that there was no longer the possibility to embed the unification of Germany in the total European framework. Most of the Western European (though also the Eastern European) governments were united in the worry about a strengthening of Germany and thereby supported the Americans in their politics that

favored their own European interests. This was Mitterrand's dilemma and therefore Sagladin's report on the disappointment after Kiev seems extremely credible to me. Mitterrand's conception of the parallelism of the East and West Germany and East and West Europe would have had a chance only if Gorbachev had *early on* developed a pan-European policy, defended it with determination, and had clearly sought a coalition with Mitterrand. The longer Gorbachev waited on this, the slimmer were the chances for it. However, it was impossible to get Thatcher to work toward such pan-European goals with the Soviet Union. A "triple alliance" of England, France, and the Soviet Union against Germany would, therefore, have been a union held together by a fear of Germany not by the goal of a united Europe.

The American Position

Just as Bush had been unclear in expressing his position on the German question to Gorbachev on December 2, 1989, on the *Maxim Gorki*, at least according to the Russian minutes, he clearly expressed himself publicly, whether to the press or to the NATO allies.

On November 29, 1989 Bush gave a speech in Washington, in which he discussed his "Four Principles" regarding German unification, which can be seen as support and an addition to, perhaps a critique of, Kohl's "Ten Points." He repeated them, or rather made them more precise, a few days later on December 4 in Brussels at the meeting of the heads of state or government of the 16 NATO members. The four core points are: self-determination, commitment to NATO, peaceful and step-by-step unification, and confirmation of the borders in Europe, as they were established by the Helsinki Accords.

Thus NATO membership of the united Germany was once more clearly on the table. With this speech he strengthened Kohl's position in the matter of reunification in relation to the other West European governments and also Gorbachev, as indeed was intended. However, the emphasis on the border issue with Poland was a broad hint for Kohl, whose reticent position was curious and for some frightening.

The Consensus Effort in Europe

A few days later, namely on December 8 and 9, the assembly of the European Council mentioned above took place in Strasbourg. There, after a lively discussion and a clear German agreement to a European monetary union with the Euro as the common currency (for Mitterrand and Genscher particularly important), a declaration was accepted:

We strive for the strengthening of the state of peace in Europe in which the German people will regain its unity through free self-determination...peacefully and

*democratically, in full respect of the relevant agreements and treaties and of all the principles defined in the Helsinki Final Act, in a context of dialogue and East-West cooperation.*¹³⁰

This elaborate sentence demonstrates all compromise constraints that existed in Europe at this time among the EU countries, particularly Germany and Great Britain, between the United States and the Soviet Union. Zelikow and Rice emphasize similarities of this resolution to George Bush's "Four Principles" in Brussels.¹³¹ But for me, on the contrary, they reveal not only the attempts to achieve consensus in the middle of the contradictions in Europe but also a watering down of Bush's clear position on NATO and a united Germany—whatever one's position on this. The membership of a united Germany in NATO appeared no longer here as the decisive point that would lead to further debates especially with the Soviet Union; now it appears only as one part of the general agreements and contracts.

For the French government under Mitterrand European rapprochement was more important than the NATO question; through the steps toward Europe and a common European currency union the dangers of (rapid) German reunification would be avoided; hence the significance for the president of the positive German stance on the currency union. In his picture of Europe of the future the division into East and West would have been abolished; as a result the Soviet Union would have an integrated place as well. In the face Gorbachev's unenthusiastic response two days before, for him too the issue became at least a step-by-step and slower policy of unification than he expected after Kohl's "Ten Points."

Margaret Thatcher was also on the horns of a dilemma, though another one: she wanted to at least postpone the unification of Germany¹³² so as not to diminish the international importance of Great Britain. But, at the same time, she saw that her influence on the Americans was reduced by this aim because they were playing the card of the membership of a united Germany in NATO to strengthen their own position. The British prime minister could say little against such an expansion of NATO but would have to swallow the bitter pill of German unity. In order to prevent this, she tried to become closer to Mitterrand and Gorbachev.

In the face of the hesitating Western states Genscher argued:

Genscher: I always told our friends in the West: "Since you have obligated yourselves to support us in reunification it can please you as much as it does us. A problem could develop for you only if, contrary to your obligations, you oppose it and the Russians support it. (!) This would lead to a change in the political climate in Germany, but if the West supports German reunification without reservations, then there is absolutely no problem; rather it means in fact that the influence of the

Soviet Union in Europe diminishes. (...) In November 1989 I undertook a trip to Washington, then to London, then to Paris, and at the beginning of December to Moscow, and moreover always with the question: what is your view of German unity? And Bush and Baker declared absolutely clearly that the United States was completely on Germany's side [very emphatically—AvP], and they did everything now to take advantage of the hour. There was not the slightest doubt. Furthermore at this meeting the question of who would negotiate German unification was discussed for the first time.¹³³

However in November/December 1989 the chance that existed at this time to develop an original European position that aimed at an pan-European security system with a unified Germany and dominated by the European states, which was allied with the United States but at the same time did not exclude the Soviet, was gambled away.

“Johann Lackland,”¹³⁴ His International Recognition, and the Civil Movement

Modrow's International Successes and Disappointments

In this web of international contradictions Hans Modrow, the prime minister of the GDR, had to carry out his politics: on the one hand he wanted to protect the sovereignty of the GDR in the vague possibilities of a “contractual community” with the Federal Republic; on the other hand he wanted to get on with the stimulation of the economy, burdened with a huge debt and with a barely functioning relationship with the Soviet Union, and democratization of the society and politics. These tasks were hardly achievable under normal circumstances, let alone on a sinking ship. But, surprisingly, Modrow was not alone: some Western and Eastern politicians saw in him a guarantor of a slower process of reunification, even if he was insecure. This is shown by the somewhat ineffective meeting of Mitterrand and Gorbachev in Kiev, in the rather incidental suggestion of the French president to undertake a joint French-Soviet visit to strengthen Modrow's position, a suggestion that was not carried out.¹³⁵

On December 4 Modrow flew to Moscow with Harry Ott, acting foreign minister,¹³⁶ and also, at his request, Egon Krenz for a meeting of the political advisory committee of the Warsaw Pact. Modrow suspected that Gorbachev had called this meeting in order to at least inform the allies *after* the Malta summit with Bush, while Bush had done this before in a discussion with his Western allies.¹³⁷ In preparation, however, Gorbachev had on November 24 already sent out a six-point document¹³⁸ on the bases of his international politics to the participants in this meeting. This document is therefore interesting because here are

mentioned additional new, even if small, steps leading to the end of the Cold War and the showdown between the blocs:

In Point 1 respect for every nation's right to self-determination with regard to its development is repeated as the decisive foundation of the Soviet policy. Point 2 contains the key statement: an end to the "remnants of the Cold War." At the same time it was possible to build on both the Final Helsinki Act and on the CSCE process as a whole. Point 3 stressed that stability in Europe had to be preserved (recognition of the existing borders, no territorial claims). Point 4 dealt with the "German question:" the developments in the GDR had led to talk of the possibilities of a "Unification of Germany." The existence of the GDR as a sovereign state and member of the Warsaw Pact was nevertheless a guarantee of stability in Europe. The GDR was "our strategic ally." Point 5 concerned the "removal of ideology in the relations between countries." Point 6 said: "the transition to a period of peace in Europe required reliable mutual guarantees of security" and new roles for NATO and the Warsaw Pact as "political defense organizations." With the strengthening of security and trust "the dissolution of both alliances [can be] envisaged."¹³⁹

The "Six Points" show once more that the danger of the exact situation in the GDR, but also in the Warsaw Pact states, was only partially understood, let alone that there were efforts to develop conclusive strategies in the face of this situation. The question of what the Soviet side or the Warsaw Pact had to do if the GDR and its own defense alliance eroded completely was not dealt with seriously or at least only in the continuing thought of the further existence of Germany as two states. The seriousness of the situation could, however, be seen clearly in the mood of the meeting.

Modrow describes the mood at the meeting of the political advisory committee of the Warsaw Pact thus: "There was something like unrest in the air." Everyone felt unsure, just as he himself felt as the "new person" in this group. "A sense of sad distraction surrounded the Polish politicians in particular." Because at this meeting, for the first time, a non-communist politician was present: Mazowiecki from Poland. And all the others did not know if they would keep their offices for much longer. After all, they did not derive from actual events but rather lagged behind them. Gorbachev's rather petty rejection of a visit from Kohl to Moscow, as a kind of punishment for the "Ten Points," fits in here as well.

Modrow continues to give his impressions. After a rather strained speech in the committee Gorbachev was downright high-spirited and looked after Modrow with great kindness. Modrow had wanted a detailed conversation because it held the promise of "a strengthening of my authority in Germany" and, therefore, also in the Federal Republic. "Gorbachev thought that my (!) idea of a contract community was acceptable only if it did not [lead] to German unity." Modrow would soon remind him of this.

Modrow's most memorable foreign political success was the visit of the American foreign minister, James Baker, on December 12 to the GDR, more precisely to Potsdam. After conferring with his advisors, with Kohl and Genscher, Baker decided on the evening of December 12 to travel from West Berlin to Potsdam to speak with Modrow and various church representatives. According to Zelikow and Rice,¹⁴⁰ Baker consulted with Kohl the evening before and on the morning of December 12 at a working breakfast. According to the files of the chancellor's office Baker told Kohl only in passing "that he would this afternoon see PM Modrow, as well as various representatives of the opposition, in particular also church leaders."¹⁴¹ Helmut Kohl might have taken Baker's visit to Modrow as an affront because of its implicit but still clear upgrading of the second German state when reunification should have been the obvious issue, as Kohl expressed it at the working breakfast with Baker. But he did not say anything against Baker's visit. On December 13 *Neues Deutschland* reported appropriately: "USA interested in stable development of the GDR."

Today it is still not clear why Baker even took this trip because after all people such as the American ambassador, Vernon Walters, in Bonn and the American head of mission in Berlin, Harry Gilmore, were vehemently opposed to it. But the American ambassador to the GDR, Richard Barkley, was just as passionately in favor of it.¹⁴² Zelikow and Rice, as well as others, write that a CIA paper gave the reason: "the key" for the changes in the German-German relations "lies in the GDR." Baker later added quite clearly and undiplomatically another, perhaps the real, reason:

I knew that President Mitterrand was planning to visit the GDR the next week, and I wanted to demonstrate American leadership by going there first. More important, I felt my visit could help support the process of peaceful change.

According to Baker this trip to Potsdam was one of "the most surreal trips that I took as Secretary of State." The trip over the Glienicke Bridge was reminiscent of espionage tableaux: the American spy Powers was exchanged here. The crossing from West to East was described by his assistant as "like going from color to black and white," although West Berlin had not appeared exactly colorful to Baker. He does not remember the content of the talks: "My memories of the meeting are as fleeting as Modrow's regime itself."

Modrow is more affable and remembers the meeting better:

The conversation itself was completely pleasant. Baker agreed to economic assistance, but made fundamental political and economic reforms a condition. I could calm him completely in this respect, and, as I heard, the church leaders with whom he met after me, attested to my willingness to make reforms that were considered necessary.¹⁴³

This difference in memory appears not untypical to me: Modrow was at that time internationally better known than anyone wants to acknowledge today and his relations with Western politicians were more successful than he wants to depict today.

That Baker did not remember the conversation might have another reason as well: after his meeting with Modrow there was a press conference where Baker said that for the United States “it was very important that this process [*Baker refers to reforms in the GDR—AvP*] proceeds in a peaceful and stable way. We want to demonstrate this and this is the political signal that we want to send with our presence.” This is how it was publicized through the press agency of the GDR, ADN, and in the special GDR edition of (West German) *Spiegel* of December 13. *Le Figaro* explained that for the United States “an ‘uncontrolled’ reunification of the two German states” was not acceptable and that Baker had in this way referred to the responsibility of the four powers. Egon Bahr spoke in the *Saarlandischer Rundfunk* of a damper for Kohl.¹⁴⁴

The government of the Federal Republic had apparently expressed irritation in private and Baker wrote a letter to the chancellor: “Dear Helmut, I regret very much that my remark during a press conference caused problems for you. I wanted to achieve exactly the opposite.”¹⁴⁵ The differing remembrances of Baker and Modrow are another example of the relationship between memory (“disappeared from memory”) and personal interest and justification.

Condoleezza Rice explained in an interview that Baker’s approach, contrary to his diplomatic apology, was really the same as that of *Le Figaro* and ADN, was, in fact, even more brusque toward Chancellor Kohl.

Now remember that Baker went to visit Kohl in December and Baker and his entourage had gone into the Eastern sector [into the GDR—AvP]. And they had seen these posters, these pictures of Kohl and they had seen the cries for one nation, one people, one state. And Baker was truly disturbed. He thought that now Kohl might be sprinting out ahead, he might be running out ahead of what could be handled in the diplomacy. And he said to Kohl at dinner: “You know it’s important not to inflame passions.”

Here apparently Kohl had to put up with irritation on the side of the United States and to persuade them that without the prospect of unity the emotions in the GDR could be much more volcanic. And he explained this too.

*Rice: And Kohl said: “The hardest thing, the biggest mistake would be to try to contain the passions of the German people.” And that for Baker was something of a cold realisation that maybe Kohl might run out ahead of us then.*¹⁴⁶

However, both Modrow and Baker remember an amusing anecdote: in the middle of a minor conversation Baker interrupted. Indignantly he turned to Modrow

with the remark that it was not agreed upon. Modrow did not know what he meant. Then it became clear: Baker thought that he had seen Egon Krenz enter—but it was just the waiter.¹⁴⁷

Modrow and Baker both maintain that Baker's visit was the only, the first, and the last visit of an American foreign minister to the GDR, which is not quite true; John Foster Dulles and Bill Rogers had previously visited at least East Berlin.

Before Baker's visit Falin's representative Rafael Fyodorov had already arrived in the capital of the GDR for the first round of the special party congress of the SED on December 8 and 9. Fyodorov emphasized again that the existence of the GDR was tightly bound to Soviet interests and warned against a change in the name of the SED. Hardly was Gregor Gysi voted to the leadership of the party, when a congratulatory telegram from Gorbachev arrived. They spoke to each other on the phone on the evening of December 10, at which time they emphasized that the sovereignty of the GDR and the party should be preserved. The Soviet general secretary also informed Gysi about his Central Committee speech of the day before in Moscow; this contained essential elements of the German policy (see below). Then to the second round of the party congress came Yakovlev, member of the Politburo and confidant of Gorbachev, and with him something new: he wanted to speak with Bärbel Bohley, the leader of the opposition. This did not take place, but he did speak with church representatives. Mostly he had long talks with Modrow, Gysi, and others from the SED-PDS. At these meetings he gave advice, as usual, disguised in the report on experiences with perestroika in the Soviet Union. Among other things Yakovlev criticized the harsh treatment by the new SED leadership of the previously important members of the SED.¹⁴⁸

Mitterrand's visit on December 20/21 was the result of an invitation made back in Honecker's time; that was confirmed by Egon Krenz who had in the meantime stepped down. Edith Cresson, the French Europe minister, brought Mitterrand on December 1 a confidential request from the GDR minister for foreign trade Gerhard Beil: that both the French president and the minister, should during his impending visit emphasize the sovereignty of the GDR and what it had in common with France. It could, after all, not be in France's interest for Germany to become a country of 80 million.¹⁴⁹

The French diplomat, Caroline de Margerie, travelled to the GDR at the beginning of December to prepare for Mitterrand's visit, spoke in many places with representatives of various groups, and became increasingly unsure of what advice she should give to Mitterrand:

*The president called—he had never done this before—and asked, “Do you think that I should not go?” I took a deep breath and said, “Monsieur le Président, I think that you should not go.” And he answered, “I will think about this.”*¹⁵⁰

Genscher reported that shortly before Mitterrand's trip his colleague Dumas asked if Mitterrand should go to the GDR or not. He (Genscher) answered: the decision was France's affair. But he added: it was necessary to be aware that Prime Minister Modrow and the leader of parliament Gerlach (LDPD) represented a transitional government. It was important that Mitterrand "said a clear yes to German unity, important also that Leipzig be respected as the centre of the peaceful revolution. I recommended that there should also be a meeting with Kurt Masur there."¹⁵¹ Mitterrand did not behave differently from "what I expected of him." Mitterrand, however, expressed himself rather carefully and pragmatically during all talks that he had with Gerlach and Gysi, leader of the SED-PDS: he referred to the free elections that had been planned for May 6, 1990, spoke in favor of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) summit conference in Paris on European order, and emphasized the permanence of the borders, in accordance with the CSCE agreements. Gysi attempted to persuade him that only a third of the GDR population wanted unity, a quarter were opposed, and the rest wanted unity in a sensible time frame—which, contrary to Gysi's interpretation, could be interpreted to mean that three quarters wanted unification. Gysi emphasized that he still supported a democratic socialist GDR as a member of a federation of European states.

Completely opposite to Genscher, Prime Minister Hans Modrow saw the visit of Mitterrand as a sign of hope "for an equal place for the GDR in the community of nations." Mitterrand's wish to stay at the central Palast Hotel rather than *Schloss Niederschönhausen* emphasized "our concept of Berlin as the capital of the GDR." Mitterrand made a very strong impression.¹⁵² Even the joint working breakfast on December 21, where normally everyone simply watched everyone else drink coffee, "was characterized by an engaged interest in the development of the GDR into what everyone hoped would be a stable state." A later exchange of letters "confirmed my impression of mutual sympathy and respect. A comforting counterbalance to the arrogance of West German politicians that I had experienced," said Modrow.¹⁵³

It really is surprising how differently this event, the state visit, can be viewed; this depended naturally on the hopes of the various sides; it also depended on the ambivalence of Mitterrand's behavior.

Even if Genscher throughout his memoirs defends Mitterrand against all criticism of his policy relating reunification, in Bonn there was still a certain apathy toward Mitterrand after this visit. Horst Teltschik remarked, "The visit of Mitterrand at this time appeared anachronistic. Whom should it benefit?" After his return Mitterrand reported that everywhere he met perplexity. There was only concern that Kohl was moving too quickly. "At the same time it is not even certain if the majority of the population of the GDR wanted reunification." Teltschik remarked pointedly, "Yet again someone held his wet finger up to the wind."¹⁵⁴ Today we know that Gysi informed Mitterrand about the alleged mood of the

population of the GDR. Mitterrand continued that none of the people with whom he spoke in the GDR had expressed a desire for immediate reunification. The mood on the street was completely different. Two days earlier Helmut Kohl had been met in Dresden with loud demands for “Germany one fatherland.”

Mitterrand emphasized free elections, the right to involvement of the neighbors and the four victorious powers, and announced his readiness, with the involvement of both German states, “to negotiate a redesign of the four powers’ agreement on Berlin.”¹⁵⁵

Even today Mitterrand’s motives remain unclear: to pay one’s respects to the GDR at this time when its imminent decline as an independent state could no longer be ignored appears perhaps friendly but also an apparently apolitical Don Quixote-ism. A little earlier or in association with Gorbachev this visit might still have been a signal for the status quo or perhaps for a common Europe. But now—after Kohl and without Gorbachev—it was more probably the expression of lost hope and little more than a consolation for the now powerless GDR elite. And it was evidence of how quickly the dynamics of the events passed old strategies.

One of his biggest disappointments was experienced by Modrow then at the RGW (*Rat für Gegenseitige Wirtschaftshilfe*—Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) congress in Sofia on January 8/9, 1990: dependence on the world market “and, moreover, on the basis of conversion into freely convertible currency.” The commission that had been established there was to achieve basic reform of the RGW: it “never met, instead what happened was the dissolution of the RGW.”¹⁵⁶

Weizsäcker, Genscher, and Kohl in the GDR

There was one exception to Modrow’s lack of sympathy for the arrogant West German politicians: Richard von Weizsäcker, because the Federal president also visited the GDR but as a private person. Nevertheless on December 17, there was a meeting of Weizsäcker and Modrow as well as a press conference. Modrow referred to this visit as one with “significant meaning.” After the traditional Christmas singing in the Nikolaikirche in Potsdam they met in the Cecilienhof to speak—a rather well-known location for a private meeting, because here after 1945 the conference of the victors over Germany had taken place. The result was a call for peaceful way into the future and mutual respect between the citizens of both states. “Certainly not a father for the people, but a brilliant president.” And this from the mouth of a socialist prime minister.

By the way, like Willy Brandt von Weizsäcker also uttered the famous sentence: “My opinion is that we are one nation and *what belongs together will join together*. There must be no attempt to make it grow together too exuberantly.”¹⁵⁷ And this was made already on December 15, 1989.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, born in Halle, also visited the GDR in the last month of 1989, like many other West German politicians. For him the concern was to make the first political contacts with bloc parties and opposition groups for reunification and elections in the GDR. After a private concert in the Gewandhaus in Leipzig organized for him and his entourage the FDP politician spoke in the evening to the district authorities of the LDPD where Genscher realized, as he later wrote about the members of the GDR bloc parties, that “it was not our place in the West to judge them.”¹⁵⁸

What a long way had been travelled in the short time since the fall of the Wall at the beginning of November: now there was already talk of joint political party work for elections in a united Germany—and Gorbachev still hoped for a sovereign GDR and grumbled at Kohl.

The visit that, however, was noticed most, both internally and externally, was the first official visit of Helmut Kohl to the GDR on December 19 and 20. He was received at the airport in Dresden by Prime Minister Modrow.

Kohl: Yes, that was a scene with which I had not reckoned. (...) You know, we actually knew nothing. What the people thought we could sense and could recognize through individual examples. The plane rolled up, I still stood on the steps of the plane. Modrow and his group, the Oberbürgermeister (Lord Mayor) and others stood about 20 meters in front, and the carpet was rolled out as for state visits. Then I looked at the building: hundreds and hundreds on the roofs. Everywhere shouts. And at that moment it became clear to me: it is now erupting out of the people.

Kohl describes in an interview that naturally he knew how difficult the situation was for Modrow in general and now in Dresden in particular.

Kohl: From his point of view he was himself in a terrible situation in Dresden. He had after all been the man in charge for years in this party district. (...) And now he receives me, the capitalist leader, at the airport and the whole airport is packed with people that shout out their acclamation and wave Federal German flags or GDR flags with the compass—the symbol was partly cut out. And under these circumstances he had to drive with me into the city.

On the way he tried to chat with Modrow. As was Kohl’s custom, he had complete knowledge of the biography of the man with whom he would be speaking in advance. He always considered it important “that in politics one behaves the same as in private life, including in political meetings.”¹⁵⁹ And he continues in this context:

My problem, however, in speaking with the GDR leadership was: these were after all new people. What did we know? Our news service knowledge was almost null, and

I generally have great reservations about news service knowledge anyway. I do not want to accuse anyone in particular, but during my time in office I did not experience that the news services (had informed me) particularly (well—AvP). I am now speaking not only about the German ones.

What he had learned about Modrow “actually make me feel optimistic, that this was a sober man, who understood the signs of the time, that he tried in the actual situation to do the best—naturally not, to achieve German unity but so to speak achieve a reform of the SED regime. (...) I must tell you completely openly, I also did not have in my talks with him generally any, now from a personal perspective, negative relationship. If the situation had developed differently, we would have been simply together...” (He stops in mid-sentence.)¹⁶⁰

Modrow: He was so well prepared that he knew my biography. He knew exactly which village I was born in, that it was called Hasenjetz.¹⁶¹ (...) Only later did I realize that that was apparently Kohl's way that he attempts through this completely personal encounter to find a way to get closer to people, which succeeded supremely well with Yeltsin. (...) For me it was, however, not convincing. For me it was his ploy.¹⁶²

Modrow had the impression that this reception had been well prepared. Special trains had been organized. In the whole of the GDR there were not as many Federal German flags as had been waved by the hundreds in Dresden.

Then there was a private meeting that lasted about two hours.¹⁶³ In that meeting, both realized that something had to be done. According to Modrow in an interview, the chancellor had only a single subject: he wanted to speak about the regulations and conditions for travel. However, in Bonn information regarding what costs in total would fall on the FRG through payments for the GDR and what additions in capital were necessary had been prepared. Credit guarantees, that is, security, were one of the main concerns in this regard.¹⁶⁴ As well there was a submission regarding talks in Dresden, in which, based on politics for “unity in free self-determination,” readiness to help was signaled under the condition of certain reforms, above all in constitutional and criminal law, and a market-oriented economy.

As a safeguard Kohl had written a detailed document for General Secretary Gorbachev, with which he wanted “to explain on the evening before my talk with the prime minister of the GDR, Hans Modrow... again the German and European political goals of the Federal government and summarize the concrete set of goals that I would pursue with Prime Minister Modrow.”¹⁶⁵ In this letter Kohl emphasizes again that all agreements made with the Soviet Union up until this time remained in force, now as before he wanted to avoid any destabilization in Europe, and would not want one-sided benefits from the current

developments. It was naturally clear to Kohl that Gorbachev saw the changes in the GDR and the politics leading toward unity as the most disturbing destabilization. Therefore he wrote: "Origin and effect must, however, not be confused." The main source of destabilization was the GDR's inadequate willingness to reform when problems pile up "and particularly when reforms were suggested by the example of its own partner." Kohl added that one knows how to value the positive role of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev. Because of this lack of reform, in the half year since the summer ca. 500,000 people¹⁶⁶ had moved to the FRG. This was not in the interest of the Federal government; the people had carried out their free self-determination. "In short: the people themselves have put the German question on the agenda!" And everything that happened afterward showed the prudence and the responsibility of the people. Accordingly Kohl explained his "Ten Points" and emphasized the "total European framework" of his policy, which based itself on the available instruments of the CSCE and the negotiations as well as the bilateral relationships with Poland and Hungary. He again took up his thoughts on confederation, which on the one hand assumed two "sovereign states" but on the other hand were based on a "clear rejection" of "any form of forcible unification." Kohl's wish to calm the situation can be felt in such statements. But did they really reflect his real politics?

Then followed the one sentence that could be understood as hinting at a new approach toward rapid reunification when compared to the earlier plan at the end of November:

*I consider it probable that starting points for greater cooperation [between the GDR and the FRG—AvP] could derive from common history, language, and culture.*¹⁶⁷

That is all and it is only a small hint of a policy with a larger import; besides this the chancellor referred to his speech in front of the Hungarian National Assembly on December 18. These statements directed at Gorbachev did not reflect the level of discussion that Kohl had already reached with the Americans and the Federal government. This was not really information but rather another sop for Gorbachev. Gorbachev did appear to have recognized this because he replied a few days later with a letter in which it says: "We would like to believe these assurances."¹⁶⁸

Now, we go back to the private meeting with Modrow on December 19 in Dresden and to the issue of travel regulations.

Modrow: And that was a costly game. We had nothing in our pockets and the Federal Republic should pay.

There is no detailed protocol of the private meeting in Federal Republic's records but records are available only for the talks that took place immediately afterward

in a larger circle. In the meeting, Modrow summarized the main points of the talk with Kohl: in the GDR “there was the threat of an escalation of the conflict with extremists and forces favoring unification” and force was sometimes resorted to. “The renewal process was being supported mainly by democratic forces and aimed at free elections. The elections were the affair of the GDR; the election in the FRG should not be carried into the GDR or vice versa.” The economic situation was tense. “In relation to the FRG it was necessary to consider a compensation of 15 billion DM for the years 1990/91.” There was agreement in regard to the responsibility for the situation in Europe and for Helsinki II. The GDR had a positive view of a contractual community between the two German states and of the official relations between NATO and Warsaw Pact, which Modrow would certainly not have referred to in this way. The existence of both German states was one of the primary questions in international politics.

The chancellor made “a personal observation” about the “significance of this hour,” because every change between the GDR and the FRG touched the equilibrium of Europe. He declared his agreement with another Helsinki conference and made a few suggestions about the disarmament negotiations. There were many differences of opinion in many areas, but there was also much in common. Then he spoke about the free elections, the irreversibility of the reforms, especially in criminal law, and a few issues that were already included in the document being prepared for the meeting. “One should now abandon thoughts of a federation and see what can be done today.” The chancellor opposed the concept used by Modrow “*Lastenausgleich*” (cost compensation): “In the Federal Republic of Germany there were in total 150 billion DM paid as cost compensation to German refugees after 1945; the Federal Republic had also paid 100 billion DM in reparations compensation. The concept is thereby covered.” Kohl repeated:

In no way should the GDR be destabilized. (...) We must on the one hand avoid the impression that the GDR is being bought out by the FRG, but on the other hand the impression that the GDR is a bottomless barrel.

With a few modifications he agreed with the explanation of the purpose of a treaty community. In reply to a question by Minister Seiters, Modrow said that 25 condemned spies would be released between December 18 and 22. Modrow emphasized as well that the elimination of the minimum exchange rate would result in a loss of 150 million DM, for which compensation was necessary. The Federal German side found this too high; furthermore it was not to become a subject for discussion. If compensation was at all necessary it should be dealt with elsewhere.

Modrow mentioned the opening of the Brandenburg Gate for pedestrians, which was to occur with the presence of two mayors from East and West Berlin,

“OB Krack and RBM Momper,” and possibly Kohl and Modrow.¹⁶⁹ This was also announced at the press conference that followed.

Understandably, Hans Modrow does not have good memories of this meeting:

Kohl approached the negotiations with great aloofness. He expected agreement from me on the prepared declarations and therefore he just blabbed over our heads... an early victor. (...) Neither in Dresden nor later did Bonn do the minimum for the economic stability of the GDR and the social security of the population... whether in regard to the 15 billion DM that we suggested for this purpose (and for which we provided a detailed list to the Federal German government¹⁷⁰) nor to any assistance in relation to the premature opening of the Brandenburg Gate.¹⁷¹

Modrow and his team were completely aware of the symbolic significance of the Brandenburg Gate and therefore in several documents tried to find ways for them to “steal the show and somewhat minimize the whole issue.” In one of the Politburo’s documents it says: “It must be ensured that the opening should possibly be announced by the GDR independently and a high ranking government representative (foreign minister) makes a statement at the opening.”¹⁷² Finally there was the suggestion that this should be done through the mayors of West and East Berlin, which Kohl with his sense for symbolism wanted to announce immediately.

In the evening the chancellor gave one of his most effective public speeches before the Frauenkirche in Dresden.

Kohl: I was never in my whole life so uncertain of what I should say in a speech because I saw at the side [of the square—AvP] batteries of dozens of television cameras from the whole world. An enormous corps of journalists of a few hundred persons. And a hundred thousand people.

Among them were also people with SED flags, whom Kohl took to be the “organized supporters.”

Kohl: I did not know at all: will this now get out of control? (...) We wondered: what would happen if the crowd suddenly started singing the German National Anthem before all the world? (...) And then we had an idea. (...) So we got a cantor. (...) And I told him: “If it gets beyond my control, then you come and start singing the old chorale: “Nun danket alle Gott.” (Now Thank We All Our God) That was, of course, completely ridiculous because the chorale was not known to the people there.

The chorale was unnecessary;¹⁷³ there were no riots, no nationalist outbursts, but there were many loud shouts of “Germany” and “Helmut.” There were embraces from a woman who came onto the stage. After the speech he was “stroked” through the barriers made up of young people in uniform and whom he passed,

Kohl said in the interview. In his speech he spoke of unification but at the same time warned against violence and radicalization.

Kohl: It was my most difficult speech ever. It was necessary to avoid in front of the ruin of the Frauenkirche everything that could be interpreted outside of the country as an eruption of nationalistic exuberance.

He summarized:

The effects on television, the pictures of the speech at the Frauenkirche, and everything else were a global political event. This was an event that Deng Hsiao Ping in Peking had seen just as all my colleagues in the EU, everyone, just as Gorbachev saw it, as the Americans saw it, who watched the film over and over in the White House. And it was after all completely obvious, this was no organized show of support, this was the people that stood here. In this way this picture made up for, so to speak, those awful pictures of the leftwing rabble in front of the Berlin city all [after the fall of the Wall—AvP].¹⁷⁴

By the way, Kohl met dissidents from Dresden as Vaatz and others who came from the “Neue Forum” and went to the Eastern CDU. They made the suggestion that the GDR should be rebuilt in the federal form of states (“Bundesländer”), in which should be free elections and free elections in the GDR as a whole. Even the aim of a unified Germany in NATO was mentioned.¹⁷⁵

Condoleezza Rice was, and is, also convinced of the significance of this speech but expressed again the concern of the American leaders at the time, after the calls of “Germany—united *fatherland*,” “Germany, Germany,” “We are one people,” particularly at the Monday Leipzig demonstrations:

Rice: I think Dresden was extremely important for Kohl because Kohl was, I think, not a politician who lived in his intellect, in his mind. He lived in his feel—his sense of how the politics was going. And when he got this tremendous response in Dresden to his talk of one German nation, and people came back at him with: “Unification! Unification!” I think he felt in his heart, in his stomach that unification was not just possible, but it was demanded by the East German people. And this was a very important moment for him. I have to admit that for the United States it was a moment of some nervousness because while the United States was very committed to German unification and even rapid unification, and while the United States wanted very much to support unification, the United States did understand that there were problems to be worked out with the other Europeans, with the Soviet Union, and didn’t want a kind of mass movement now to make it more difficult to work out the details.¹⁷⁶

Teltschik: “The situation remained tense internally too. The number of people moving out of the GDR into the Federal Republic increased in 1989 almost tenfold

over 1988.¹⁷⁷ How was this to continue? Because, even with our help, the GDR could not give the people new prospects so quickly.”

Three days later the Brandenburg Gate was opened; a month later—as discussed in Dresden—complete economic freedom, including firms with foreign interests, was permitted.

At the end of 1989 within the Federal government the view that the issue now was reunification had been established. But outside of the country this was in no way the case. Kohl’s caution in naming this concrete goal could be seen as consideration for Gorbachev, but this naturally also indicates that he was with this making him *no offer* to develop a common strategy that, though based on the acceptance of a faster unification, at the same time aimed for a *European solution with the Soviet Union*. On his part, Gorbachev let valuable time pass and could not find an answer to the question of how a common European house could be built with the Soviet Union in this volatile situation. And most other West Europeans still wanted to hinder Germany’s unification or to slow it down. Then the Americans had to take this into consideration. For them both—the lack of unity of the Western Europeans and Gorbachev’s inadequate strategy in the event of the total collapse and the loss of a sovereign GDR for the hegemonial Soviet sphere of influence—were not inopportune. With these the United States expanded its leadership role and the Soviet position kept getting worse. Because the politics of Moscow continued to thrive on the security of a still living, even if terminally ill, GDR as a sovereign state. What could be done when this security disappeared?

The first six weeks of the new year were to be the decisive ones of this dynamic and exciting time.

Modrow and the Round Table (*Runde Tisch*): the Civil Movement, German Unity, and the Futile Hope of “Being Treated as Equals”

During the fall and winter the popular movement became stronger and more effective in public. Toward the end of the year after the *Neues Forum* a whole range of other groups organized themselves, from the conservative camp to Trotskyite organizations, and everywhere there were round tables where government representatives and those in opposition advised on the ensuing reforms.¹⁷⁸ The decline of the SED benefited the opposition as did the inadequate grassroots support for Modrow’s regime: on December 1—as mentioned above—the People’s Chamber had already removed the state party, the SED, from the constitution, on December 3 the SED Politburo under Krenz and the Central committee had to resign after having been in office for just a month, and on December 6 Krenz was forced to resign his position as head of state. Modrow, as the new leader of the government, thus came under such pressure that he needed a widening of his authority. He attempted this on the one hand by the inclusion of representatives

Table 4.1 Composition of the central *Runde Tisch*

| <i>On the government side</i> | <i>On the other side</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 SED- PDS | 2 Vereinigte Linke (United Left) |
| 3 CDU | 2 SDP/SPD |
| 3 NDPD | 2 Demokratie Jetzt (Democracy Now) |
| 3 LDP(D) | 3 Neues Forum |
| 3 DBD (Farmer's Party) | 2 Grüne Partei |
| 3 VdgB | 2 Initiative Frieden + Menschenrechte |
| 2 FDGB ^a | 2 Grüne Liga |
| | 2 Unabhängiger Frauenbund |
| | 2 Demokratischer Aufbruch |

^aNDPD = National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands, DBD = Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands, VdgB = Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe, FDGB = Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund.

of the bloc parties, such as CDU leader de Maizière, in a coalition government; on the other hand he accepted a round table. This meant that Modrow had to take advice from representatives of opposition groups. The central *Runde Tisch* (round table) in Berlin met for the first time on December 7. Some have called this type of a limited sharing of power as a “diarchy,” a form of “double power.”¹⁷⁹ Very quickly it was decided to hold free elections on October 4, 1990.

The central *Runde Tisch* in Berlin met between December 8, 1989, and March 12, 1990, in total 16 times. Under the direction of “moderators” were gathered (from the churches as well as the council of ministers) members of the council of ministers of the GDR (head of government Hans Modrow and his three representatives from the bloc parties, L. de Maizière for the CDU, P. Moreth for the LDPD and Ch. Luft for the SED-PDS as well as 27 ministers of the new GDR government) with changing representatives of the popular movement (19) as well as of the bloc parties and mass organizations (19).

There were also three moderators and three press officers as well as one representative of the Sorbian round table, all without voting rights. The two representatives of the FDGB with the right to vote had a special status although they should actually have been counted with the government side (Table 4.1).¹⁸⁰ Because of such inconsistencies the desired equal composition of 19:19 were repeatedly a problem for the opposition and the representatives of the “old system.”

Despite these round tables the relationship to power, in which they participated only partly, remained ambiguous for most of the opposition—this is shown among other places in interviews with members of the opposition.

Ulrike Poppe: *We had a conception of democracy, which meant we did not want to get into a position in which we were not legitimated to exercise power. And*

*therefore we always thought it was more sensible to create a forum that would balance the lack of the legitimacy of the people's chamber and take over the coordination of the transitional period.*¹⁸¹

It appears that the SED had made all power unattractive. A member of the *Neues Forum* reported on his first encounter with West German politicians:

Gunther Begenau: *I had the big idea that you just had to give me the chance and I could make politics. For twenty years you sort of hauled it around with you. But when I saw then how it went (laughs) I realized: I can't do this. So I could not do it. I could not have stood there and told people anything, as others did.*¹⁸²

He decided to have no more to do with politics, more precisely party politics, and did union work in a research capacity.

The actual essential question for this book is however who of the representatives active in the *Runde Tisch* espoused in December 1989 and January 1990 a position that aimed at unification with the Federal Republic? Almost all nine groups—with few exceptions—at first did not have union with Germany in their program, to say nothing of the heads of their members. Even those who were thinking in this direction “defined it as a process of reforming towards each other,” as it was formulated in a handout by *Demokratie Jetzt*. In words of Ulrike Poppe:

*German reunification yes, but in a process. That meant for us not simply an annexation but that reforms were necessary on both sides in order to create a reunited Germany. This does not mean that the East must emulate the West, but rather that both must reform themselves in a forward direction, something like that, but very vague.*¹⁸³

Another detail is worth noting. Some of the opposition had signed the appeal *Für unser Land* (For Our Country), which was a call for the rescue of an independent GDR. In this appeal it said:

Either we can insist on the independence of the GDR and attempt with all our strength and in cooperation with those states and interest groups that are prepared to do so, develop a united society, in which peace and social justice, freedom of the individual, generosity to all and the protection of the environment are ensured.

Or we must tolerate, due to powerful economic forces and impossible conditions, a reliance on the influential circles in the economy and politics of the Federal Republic for help for the GDR, and a clearance sale of our material and moral values will begin and sooner or later the German Democratic Republic will be swallowed by the Federal Republic.

We still have the chance, as equal neighbours of all the states of Europe to develop a socialist alternative to the Federal Republic. We can still remember the antifascist and humanistic ideals to which we once appealed.

This clear alternative of either GDR or Federal Republic shows that for many members of the opposition it was a matter of a reformed GDR and for others a matter of a renewed socialist GDR—both at the end of November and in months thereafter. It was not only the opposition and writers who had signed this appeal but soon also functionaries of the SED, the most prominent of them being Egon Krenz.¹⁸⁴ Later, the opposition, for example Ulrike Poppe, believed that signing had been a mistake.

Bärbel Bohley, the cofounder of *Neues Forum*, stated shortly after the big demonstration on November 4 in Berlin:

*Among the most memorable last Saturday was that reunification did not come up, that no one demanded, “we want Kohl” or something like that. (...) Only someone who wants to trample our delicate plant to death and is not interested in democratization in the GDR can say the word reunification.*¹⁸⁵

But naturally the events and demonstrations, the economic crisis, and also the politics of the Federal Republic began to make the German question more virulent. Thus in the *Neues Forum* at the beginning of December Joachim Gauck was able to prevail in opposition to Bärbel Bohley with a proposal that aimed at reunification—at least thanks to the majority present, which does not, however, mean that this question had been settled in the *Neues Forum*.¹⁸⁶

The position on the German question was soon, however, differentiated in the opposition. One example of the thoughtfulness with which this question was considered is the joint declaration of the *Demokratischer Aufbruch*, the *Neues Forum*, and the Social Democratic Party of the GDR on December 2:

Who now dreams: today reunification, tomorrow Mercedes, the day after tomorrow Mallorca—will wake up quickly. (...) What do we want: a democratic and bloc-free Germany in the European house, where borders no longer separate, but united. A Germany with an ecological economy and responsible consumption. A Germany with social justice and a balanced standard of living in West and East and with responsibility for the two-thirds of the world. (...) The reform of an economy takes at least five to ten years. The timetable is important.

And then the steps from a treaty union to a confederation under specific conditions were formulated. Among others is the statement: we must “also become an economically accepted equal partner and discriminations” must to be avoided.¹⁸⁷

But here exactly was the problem, despite all the amiable setting of goals: would the GDR economy even be able to provide the foundation for equal negotiations?

Ulrike Poppe believes that already in January 1990 the majority of the opposition wanted reunification, though with conditions, above all negotiations on equal terms with the Federal Republic. What that meant for the individuals involved in practical politics, whether a delay in reunification or even a cloaked refusal, is difficult to discern. Equally difficult is it to answer the question which majorities in which groups Ulrike Poppe was referring to. In the case of the representatives of the central *Runde Tisch* in any case the rejection of the *actual* development of reunification is clear and difficult to separate from a rejection in principle.¹⁸⁸

How difficult it is to determine this is shown also in a meeting of the leading representatives of the *Runde Tisch* with Rudolf Seiters, minister of the chancellor's office, in East Berlin on January 25, 1990. All the opposition groups represented there took part with the exception of the Social Democrats (because of the funeral of their former leader Herbert Wehner). Almost all spoke against reunification. Seiters summarized that a deep concern was expressed about the internal development of the GDR.

*The talk showed that the groups in part were prepared under the burden of the problems to accept pragmatic solutions. They will not put their own positions on record and fight for majorities, but would accept limits to their wishes in order to achieve the stabilization of the GDR. The representative of the united left let it be known that he rejected the establishment of a market economy in the GDR. The Federal government was asked several times to declare clearly that an immediate and quick reunification would not solve any of the pending problems.*¹⁸⁹

Here, as in the opposition political streams there was distrust of the Federal Republic's government.

The representatives of the *Runde Tisch* viewed their own government with distrust as well, particularly Modrow and his politics in the matter of state security. Already at the formation of the *Runde Tisch* was formed the working group, *Auflösung der Staatssicherheit* (Liquidation of State Security).¹⁹⁰

This question led to the sharpest discussions with the prime minister, which finally resulted on January 15, 1990, in the "*Sturm auf die Stasi-Zentrale*" (The Storming of the Stasi Central Headquarters) on Normannenstraße in Berlin.

De Maizièrè: *I don't know if it was Modrow's conviction that (secret) services were still necessary or if he shied away from a conflict with the Ministry for Security—he was in favor of renaming this Ministry for State Security¹⁹¹ the Office for National Security, moreover with a parliamentary subordination and a separation of the three areas. In the Ministry for State Security there was after all the Military*

Foreign Service, MAD, . . . and foreign espionage HVA and the internal surveillance apparatus under one authority. These were to be separated. But the majority of the parties and groups at the Runde Tisch were of the opinion: absolutely no service at all anymore and there were fierce discussions at the Runde Tisch and then this situation on January 15 in Normannenstraße. Still to this day, it is unclear how far this storm was actually also initiated by the Ministry for Security, the State Security, itself. Because at the same time a whole lot of material disappeared there. It is not clear to me today, why particularly volatile files showed up of all places at the CIA in New York, which were, as we thought, until October 3 still in the GDR. (. . .) There was no success in this Modrow time to isolate the pure espionage surveillance apparatus and to dissolve it into other necessary services. For example all [a large proportion—AvP] of the forensic sciences were with the Ministry for State Security. No country can do without forensic sciences.

Most of the opposition, as well as and particularly the ministers without a portfolio, were concerned, in their own opinion, about the independence of their politics also in relation to the Federal Republic, about democratic changes in the GDR for which they were themselves responsible, about a constitutional assembly for a new complete Germany; they did not accept at that time the Basic Law, the constitution of the Federal Republic. And very much in particular no one wanted at the time the extension of NATO into the area of the GDR state. On the contrary, there was fear that this would endanger the politics of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, as the foreign minister of the later de Maizière government and cofounder of the SDP, Meckel, would put it in the course of 1990. Not only Meckel, but almost all representatives of the *Runde Tisch* were trapped in “large-scale weather pattern” concepts with a still overvalued Soviet Union as the center of East and Central Europe and in a prejudice against the Federal Republic. And they were—understandably enough—full of worry about Gorbachev’s position.

Gorbachev, His Opponents, and German Unity

It is interesting that in the Soviet Union Gorbachev’s politics were and still are seen differently¹⁹² from the way they are seen in the West. During his time in government there were perestroika and glasnost, a democratization of the CPSU, and guidance out of totalitarian structures¹⁹³ with a strengthening of market elements in the economy. But during his time in the government there was also a drastic drop in the standard of living, a sharp economic decline, the departure of many republics from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, its final collapse, and thus the loss of Soviet Union’s significant role as a superpower. Criticism of Gorbachev’s and also Shevardnadze’s politics is sharp, as is to be expected and extends from ineptitude to a betrayal of communist goals and corruption to

treason. Only from the view of small group in the society, more precisely the later small democratic parties, was he seen positively as a pioneer of the development toward democracy and market economy.

The politics of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev were of special significance for the whole German unification process, less because of concrete and confident politics toward reunification in the frame of a new “European house,” but of a hope for democracy, his character as a model for many, not only for the opponents in Eastern Europe and the GDR and because of his politics of nonintervention in the affairs of other states of the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence.

The Soviet leadership saw, however, that it nevertheless faced growing problems internally: the economy had been in great difficulty since the 1980s and the inner unity of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics began to show deep fissures; in addition there were reform movements in the countries of COMECON—to name the most important three fundamental problem areas.

In order to ease the internal difficulties, particularly the economic ones, it was necessary for the Soviet Union to reduce its spending on armaments. As a result there was a close relationship between the politics toward Germany and Europe, questions of disarmament, armament expenditures that had to be reduced, and internal problems. Shevardnadze in particular had mentioned this in various speeches and negotiations.

Horst Teltschik, advisor to the chancellor, also sees an essential concrete reason for the difficult situation of the Soviet Union in its arms race with the United States, which had become too much for the Soviet economy’s capabilities:

Teltschik: Gorbachev later said (...) it had become clear to him that it was no longer possible to continue an arms race with the West economically and financially. Because at the same time after all came the Star Wars initiative from Reagan. A program that had little reality as far as being carried out. But I already said then: the decisive thing about Reagan’s suggestion was not that he wanted to do it but rather that the Soviets believed: if he wants to, he can. (...) Gorbachev later always said that was the point where we had to say we must change our politics.¹⁹⁴

As then the reform movements in Eastern Europe, beginning in Poland, became significant and as the streams of refugees from the GDR in the late summer of 1989 overfilled the West German embassies, it was like a roll of thunder that signaled a giant storm over the whole Soviet sphere of hegemony. At the latest then there was a necessity in the Soviet leadership for an initiative-rich and concrete policy toward Germany and the Western powers, in order early to formulate conditions for which the GDR would be “freed” if it could not be held on to after all. And these conditions, it became increasingly clear at the end of 1989, had to be derived from the universal hope for a “new European house,” with which Gorbachev had won the hearts of the opposition in Eastern Europe.

The Fluctuations in the Policies of the Soviet Leadership about Reunification until January 1990

Under pressure from the internal and external political events at the beginning of 1990 the Soviet leadership thus had to develop a strategy for the protection of Soviet interests in response to an increasingly likely reunification of Germany. And this was especially difficult 45 years after victory over Germany, after the 40-year existence of the GDR as “child of the Soviet Union” and outpost against the West. As well the leadership believed that the loss of the GDR could hardly be coped with by the Russian, or rather the Soviet, people, who still had clear memories of the “Great Patriotic War,” the terror and loss as well as the victory over Germany. Possibly this worry was exaggerated by the leadership, because only a month and a half later, in March 1990, 60 percent of Soviet citizens still supported the reunification of Germany (compared to only 45 percent in Great Britain) and 24 percent were opposed, 19 percent had no opinion, but 67 percent expressed opposition to the inclusion of a unified Germany in military blocs.¹⁹⁵

It was necessary for the leadership to make decisions quickly, not only because the United States and the Federal Republic were exerting pressure and at the end of January and beginning of February 1990 high-ranking international visitors would be arriving, but because the GDR was collapsing. Soon there would be nothing left that could be used as a “pawn for Soviet interests.” In November 1989 alone “around 130,000 people had left the GDR for the Federal Republic, and in January around 2,000 left,” as noted by Hans Modrow who certainly felt the pressure of those in charge most clearly.¹⁹⁶ He also gave the Soviet Union part of the blame because the “economic collaboration had sunk to a hardly imaginable low level. In Moscow they considered themselves unable to formulate their own needs because they did not have the numbers from the country in order to develop trade agreements with the GDR.”¹⁹⁷ As a result hardly any raw materials were sent, particularly crude oil that was crucially necessary in the GDR.

In Moscow, after Krenz’s visit of November 1, 1989, was asked the anxious question if in this situation of the breaking away of Soviet influence was it still possible to count on the preservation of the GDR. How could (then still) it be transferred to a “treaty community” or later into a confederation with the FRG? Which “vehicles” were suitable for the assertion of Soviet interests? The perception of the four-power responsibility or the CSCE? Into the Warsaw Pact or NATO? Or in both? Or in a new pan-European security system? How could one prevent the membership of a united Germany, at least of the GDR section, in NATO? Was it possible to achieve a possible withdrawal of Soviet troops from what would then be the former GDR under the condition of the same withdrawal of the American troops? These were only the most important of the strategic questions that were lining up.

For the Western powers the Soviet positions on these basic problems did not seem clear. That was above all because in the public as well as negotiation papers there was little consistency.

Gorbachev's criticism of Kohl's "Ten Points" that Genscher had to bear the brunt of on December 5 in Moscow revealed that he had rejected the concept of a treaty union and that had it been necessary in Bonn after Portugalov's visit to let it be considered a Soviet invention.

Gorbachev's speech before the plenum of the Central Committee on December 9 showed an essentially less compromise-ready general secretary as had appeared only shortly before in his talks with Bush in Malta: in this speech—as one heard keenly in the chancellor's office—Gorbachev "for the first time and explicitly alluded to the security aspect of the political dimension of the GDR that was important for the foreign policy of the Soviet Union," as was noted in a file for Kohl.¹⁹⁸ Gorbachev was keen on advocating the continued existence of the GDR and the recognition of postwar realities. If this sharpness was due to the fact that he had to calm opposition to his policies in the Central Committee or that Falin had written the speech and therefore Gorbachev was representing Falin's line, as Zelikow and Rice mention,¹⁹⁹ or both, it is not possible to ascertain today and was then even less possible.

Chancellor Kohl, of his part, felt prompted, after Soviet criticism of his politics had become clear, to write a letter on December 14, 1989, to Gorbachev. "You have in all these talks (Bush, Mitterrand, Andreotti, and 'not the least' Genscher) considered the policy of the Federal government critically. I consider these Soviet evaluations, that apparently is the basis for this criticism, to be unjustified." And he repeated again: "The people themselves have placed the German question on the agenda!"

A few days later—in the note by ministerial director (Ministerialdirigent) Peter Hartmann dated December 18, 1989—Gorbachev had an undated letter sent to the chancellor through the Soviet embassy's councilor, Kumikov, in Bonn that did not answer Kohl's letter, but instead intended to place before his eyes before the visit of Kohl in Dresden "in all clarity rigorously" the "concerns of the Soviet leadership in relation to our German policy once again:" "the language is in part hard and goes beyond the formulation of Gorbachev's Central Committee speech," the ministerial director added. The criticism of the "Ten Points" takes up the sharp "Shevardnadze charges ('ultimate claims') against Minister Genscher of 5 December 1989 and thus gives this line priority over the earlier softer reaction of Shevardnadze in Rome." On the other hand Gorbachev mentioned "no reservations about a further development of the German-German relations."²⁰⁰ Since the chancellor had, however, just written a letter to Gorbachev, that contained answers and responses to this letter, Hartmann suggested that no further answer should be sent, which is what happened.

Particular confusion was caused by Shevardnadze's speech before the political committee of the European parliament on December 19, 1989, in which he,

on the one hand—differently from Gorbachev ten days before—had accepted reunification as a possibility, but at the same time wanted to address the problems of European stability, the Warsaw Pact, and Soviet security interests. Already in the plan of the speech there was disagreement. The director of the German department in the Soviet foreign ministry (the Third European Department), Alexander Pavlovich Bondarenko, was “outraged” because of the differences from Gorbachev’s Central Committee speech and mentioned this to the writer of the speech, Sergey Tereshchenko, who was himself the director of political planning in the Soviet foreign ministry. He now wanted Bondarenko to present his criticism directly to Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze in response to Bondarenko’s criticism said that he was the foreign minister and not a parrot. He could not just block the West in Brussels, but he had to present a positive concept.²⁰¹ His concept remained essentially the same but was not agreed to by the Politburo.

Apparently the different positions in the text were clearly visible, so that the speech given by Shevardnadze on December 19 in Brussels created lack of clarity in the West. It exposed the dilemma, in which Soviet foreign policy had found itself. Ministerial director Hartmann who on December 20, 1989, again wrote the summary for the chancellor about “the statements of the Soviet Foreign Minister,” reported that Shevardnadze had described this speech “in his own words as ‘thinking out loud.’”²⁰² As a result there was a constant “on the one hand—on the other hand.” Shevardnadze above all asked questions that he himself could hardly answer or that could be answered only in the future. In this way he declared himself and his listeners “the question of German unity, in whatever form” cannot be asked “without having clarity on many highly important aspects: 1. Where are the political, legal, and material guarantees that German unity would not endanger the security of other states and peace in Europe? There is no answer to this question.” And so he asked even more questions with the remark that this “list could go even further.” The other questions related to: which borders a “hypothetical Germany—when in the course of time it becomes reality”—would have; which place it would have in the existing military-political structures, the potential of its armed forces, if it was ready for disarmament, neutrality, what about the “presence of allied troops on German soil,” what about the Four Power Treaty of 1971, the Helsinki Process, etc?

Besides all these unclear items, Hartmann criticized above all one thing that Shevardnadze did not mention: “the massive popular protest as the triggering factor,” but he also observed that Shevardnadze in his seven questions “surprisingly assumed the possibility of a united Germany.”

Condoleezza Rice answered my question about the effect of this speech in the United States:

To me, this was one of the most interesting miscommunications during the entire period. Shevardnadze gave this big speech about unification, and he made the speech as a series of questions about unification. And I learned later from his aide, Sergey

Tereshchenko, with whom we had a very good relationship, that Shevardnadze thought he was signalling a breakthrough, that they were ready to somehow accept unification. And we were just confused by the speech because it seemed to raise all kinds of questions and have no answers. It seemed to reinforce the fact that this was a dilemma for Soviet policy. We didn't know what to make of the speech. (...) I now use in my classes with my students to say: "Here's how diplomatic miscommunication happens!"²⁰³

Gorbachev's Opponents in the Politburo

Later the Soviet foreign minister gave as the root of his wavering and Gorbachev's positions on reunification differently from Gorbachev himself the contradictions and opponents in the Politburo. He and Gorbachev had actually considered the reunification of Germany earlier as unavoidable, but were stopped in their position by the Politburo.²⁰⁴ Many of his own statements contradict this (one remembers his Kohl-Hitler remarks with Genscher on December 5). As well he had himself repeatedly depended on "conservative" leading colleagues in his ministry, as Zelikov and Rice stress.²⁰⁵ Sometimes during these weeks Shevardnadze appeared as more opposed to signals of reunification than his general secretary.

How strong Shevardnadze considered the effectiveness of the opponents in the Politburo on Soviet foreign policy is revealed in the following interview excerpt:

But within the Politburo there was a bitter struggle. (...) There were moments when I thought that the policy could fail. (...) The logic of this conservative majority was this: thirty million Soviet people died in the war against Germany. And that Germany is divided, that Soviet troops were in the middle of Germany, that is—so to speak—the result or, if you like, the booty of this death and dying. And its logic was: the Soviet people will not forgive us, if we take such a route [in the direction of reunification—AvP], if we make a decision for this.²⁰⁶

The problem for Soviet policy was only that holding on too long to two sovereign German states prevented the early working out of a strategy with a formulation of the Soviet conditions for reunification until it was (almost) too late.

Shevardnadze: I must say, it is to the great merit of Gorbachev but also of me that the Soviet leadership did finally work out a positive position towards German reunification. (...) And even the conservative section in the Politburo understood that something had to change.²⁰⁷

Soon it was no longer possible to set conditions. Falin, however, traces the wavering of the Politburo and especially of Gorbachev himself to the fact that "Gorbachev in the fall of 1989 and in the first half of 1990 was closer to the 'conservatives' than to the 'liberal' Eduard Shevardnadze."²⁰⁸

In retrospect, it is clear, how the struggles are carried on again in relation to the historical achievements and mistakes, and also their effects. As a result after the last contradictory sentences a question becomes necessary: who actually were the opponents in the Politburo and which positions toward the “German question” did they represent?

In the tighter leadership of the Soviet Union at that time, that is, in the Politburo, there were indeed opponents of Gorbachev’s policy: in particular Yegor Ligachev is mentioned by the general secretary himself, after 1990 also KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov and Marshall Serge Akhromeyev (“our chief opponent.”²⁰⁹). Shevardnadze added Valentin Falin, who, as Germany specialist and director of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, almost naturally came into competition with the “newcomer” in the Foreign Ministry, Eduard Shevardnadze, but who was himself not in the Politburo. Almost all those involved emphasize as well that Falin had assumed that he himself would become the foreign minister.²¹⁰ In 1989 little of this internal opposition was, however, noticed outside of the country.

About these inner disputes in the inner leadership group there are at present only the statements and memoirs of the participants themselves—and these are more than contradictory, which is hardly surprising, given the enormous demands made on the Soviet leadership both in its domestic and foreign politics and the changes that the Soviet Union was experiencing in the in the party, the state, and society. The Politburo notations permit a few observations, but are not yet so completely and consistently finished that they permit a comprehensive description of its members and their positions.

In addition Gorbachev used his opponents to emphasize in the West the dangers that faced him and thus increase the West’s reciprocation. As a result there are on his part later attempts to let his and Shevardnadze’s politics appear stringent, but for external Western eyes to appear wavering only because the internal opponents of this policy who were not well known outside had to be kept under control. These opponents—with the exception of Marshall Akhromeyev, who later in 1991 as a failed putschist committed suicide—have in their criticism today and the positions they occupy now an interest in describing their position as diametrically opposed to Gorbachev’s. But they must also make themselves appear to have been tricked and betrayed and in this way enable them to explain why they did not openly oppose Gorbachev sooner.

Who In the Immediate Soviet Leadership Was against Reunification?

In the face of all these contradictions, in the description of the problems facing the regime under Gorbachev, and in the presentation of Gorbachev’s opponents neither in the academic studies nor in the memoirs of the participants is a simple

question even asked,²¹¹ namely this one:—who among these repeatedly mentioned “enemies” or “political opponents” of Gorbachev in the Soviet leadership was actually fundamentally opposed to reunification? Another question belongs here too: how differently are the positions on reunification of opponents and political friends remembered?

First Yegor Ligachev:

AvP: *Mr Ligachev, you are considered by everyone to be the strongest opponent of Gorbachev's policies in relation to the reunification of Germany and the membership of the united Germany in NATO. How do you yourself see your role?*

Ligachev: *First I want to say that I am an opponent, moreover an implacable opponent, of Gorbachev, not only in the German question, though not primarily in the German question, but rather in the matter of the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the destruction of the Soviet system.*²¹²

After a historical retrospective that gives the responsibility for the division of Germany to the Western allies, he continues:

We, as members of the political leadership of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, thought, and this is very important, that the division of a nation like the German nation could not continue forever. Sooner or later there would be a reunification of the German nation. Therefore we assumed the self-determination of the German nation, i.e. we assumed that the German nation itself should have the right to choose.

These words would have had to spring a surprise not only for the professional “Moscow-watchers,” but also all those who saw Ligachev as the main opponent of Gorbachev in the question of reunification in the Politburo. At least Ligachev presents himself today as someone who also favored reunification and furthermore not only under particular conditions, as was to be expected of Ligachev, but rather through a direct vote by the GDR population.

AvP: *When did you actually decide concretely in favour of the right to self-determination of the Germans?*

Ligachev: *We were of the opinion that an incorporation of the GDR into the FRG was not to be allowed, as in fact happened. Because there was no reunification of Germany, but instead the incorporation of the German Democratic Republic into West Germany. There was the creation of the unified Germany on the basis of the bourgeois system and the loss of socialist values. We suggested, and that was a basic suggestion, that this question be solved with the help of a referendum. From our point of view this was the democratic method for solving this question. Unfortunately, Kohl, Mr. Kohl, who was at the head of the government, was, like other Western politicians, categorically opposed to the carrying out of a referendum.*

*(...) Perhaps they took into account the situation that in the GDR the majority of the citizens favored the preservation of the socialist system.*²¹³

AvP: *Where is the difference between what you wanted (with the referendum) and what happened at the election of 1990? There the (East) German population did indeed agree.*

Ligachev: *The issue is above all a referendum at the end of 1989. I mean the time when the so-called Berlin Wall fell, was destroyed. (...) I repeat, that would have been a real solution, but it became known that this suggestion was rejected by Kohl. And in order to carry out a referendum, it was of course necessary to have the agreement of both Kohl and the leadership of the GDR.*²¹⁴

Was it decisive for Ligachev that at the end of 1989 a majority in the GDR were in favor of the preservation of the GDR? Or was he, Ligachev, in favour of reunification on the basis of the right to self-determination—whatever the result of a vote on this basis?

Since at that time I had not encountered a Soviet initiative for a referendum in the files of the chancellor's office and therefore also no rejection of such a suggestion, in 1999 after the conversation with Ligachev the confidant and Gorbachev's advisor on the West at the time, Anatoli Chernayev, I asked what was to be made of this Ligachevian referendum. He answered briefly, that this was "nonsense." Two years later I asked him again and he qualified this a bit because in the minutes and notes for the meetings of the Politburo I had indeed come across this suggestion for a referendum. "In those days nobody cared about this so-called proposal," declared Chernayev, who then with clear body language described what could be done with such a suggestion:

*You know, one can make proposals in two ways. The one is (stands up) the official way, one requests a proposal that is to be discussed. The other (sits down): one asks in the middle of an inappropriate situation, (with a quiet voice) could one not, should one not, would it not be sensible that (...) one carries out a referendum because one knows already that no one would take this seriously. This is what Ligachev did. And indeed no one paid any attention.*²¹⁵

As a result this idea did not even reach the Federal government in the form of a note. However, Eduard Shevardnadze, three months later, referred to this suggestion, in fact during Baker's visit to Moscow on February 8, in the talk between the two foreign ministers.²¹⁶ Baker mentions this referendum idea in his memoirs.²¹⁷ It belonged, apparently, to the range of options that were discussed in the highest levels of Soviet leadership for the construction of the process of reunification but were mentioned only once in the international negotiations though not suggested.

Ligachev was also not against reunification in principle—but he wanted it to be attached to conditions in the Soviet interest and to see it “stretched out” in time. I asked Vladimir Kryuchkov, who was then KGB minister and another (later) opponent of Gorbachev in the Politburo, about the discussions on the unification of Germany in the Politburo. Kryuchkov, who moreover was Andropov’s man in putting down of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, replied somewhat differently from Ligachev:

You have asked a very complicated question. The matter is that in 1989 it appeared as if in the Soviet leadership there were no (!) differences in the points of view on this problem [of reunification—AvP]. Everyone was of the opinion that sooner or later the reunification of Germany would take place. But naturally everyone thought it should take place in a way that had no negative effects, for all sides. (...) Everyone assumed that Gorbachev should represent a rational point of view. But very soon, the end of 1989, it became absolutely clear that the points of view in our Soviet leadership were diametrically opposed.

These differences he also attributed above all to the conditions of reunification and the timetable. Kryuchkov invoked Kohl, who at first assumed a reunification in the year 2025. This would have given everyone time to prepare for the merger and to take into account the interests of all neighboring states. Georgi Shakhnasarov, close advisor of Gorbachev for socialist countries, reports as well on another timetable of Kohl: “In 1990 a community with East Germany on a contractual basis should develop, in 1991 or 1992 confederate structures should be created, and the complete unification was planned only for 1993/94.”²¹⁸ This means that at the end of 1989 it was assumed in Moscow that at that time Kohl was also assuming a much longer process, as he himself repeatedly emphasized. Only he had reacted then to the speedy changes more quickly than the Soviet politicians.²¹⁹

Kryuchkov said in conversation: the United States had taken a position different from Kohl’s; moreover the months from October to December 1989 were very turbulent months.

*Kryuchkov: First Gorbachev had no position (on reunification), but then he developed a position that in no way met the interests of the Soviet Union. Alexander Yakovlev went even further in this direction. Medvedev, another member of the Politburo, also headed in the wrong direction. At the same time there was, however, a whole group of persons, and this group made up a majority, which represented the opinion that the method, with which one decided to unify Germany, finally in no way fitted with the interests of Moscow, the interests of an array of countries, and finally even the interests of the Germans themselves, to say nothing of the fact that neither Thatcher nor Mitterrand could come to grips with the turbulent reunification process that was apparently building.*²²⁰

What is interesting here is that Kryuchkov was basically in favor of reunification, but, like the *majority in the Politburo* critical of the “method” for carrying out reunification.

We also asked Valentin Falin, who after 1990 presented himself ever more strongly as an opponent of Gorbachev.²²¹ And in the closer government circles around Chancellor Kohl he was seen as a “troublemaker” in the politics of reunification.²²² Horst Teltschik even said that he was the head of a possible putsch at the beginning of 1990, which is highly unlikely and for which there is no evidence. On the one hand Falin is clearer than others in his positions on the German question, already because of his time at the embassy in Bonn, but at the same time his position is more complicated because during the 1970s and 1980s he apparently feared this unity but saw the Honecker regime as a “negative” catalyst in the direction of unification. He takes particular offense that Gorbachev did not react to his early hints at the fundamental problems of the GDR that became even more virulent through the German question.

*Falin: My first prognosis of where it was going was in September 1986. Then I informed Gorbachev that at the end of 1989/beginning 90 all the countries of COMECON were heading for a fall into an economic hole, from which they would not emerge, with far-reaching, unmanageable results, economic, social, and political, and other. No reaction (from Gorbachev). In 1987 I reported directly to Gorbachev alone: the GDR in its development had stepped over the point where it was still possible to help this republic, where a cure was still possible. No reaction. In March 1988 Gorbachev received something to read from me: in the three months immediately ahead the situation in the GDR can become completely destabilized. No reaction.*²²³

Such early statements of Falin were confirmed by Western journalists, particularly the West German journalist Dirk Sager. Anatoli Chernayev also reported on Falin’s worries about an uncontrolled German unification:

*In 1972 I was once in Bonn when Falin was the Soviet ambassador there. Already then he said to me that reunification would come one day “and we could not prevent it.” But he—Falin—did not want it then, above all he was afraid that reunification would take place behind Moscow’s back, agreed on only between the German governments.*²²⁴

There are many indications that Falin was worried that Soviet interests would lose out with reunification, particularly if it reacted too late.²²⁵ He was certainly not one of those in the leadership that simply did not want to believe in the “threatening reunification;” he just wanted to shape it differently.²²⁶

Briefly speaking, neither Kryuchkov nor Ligachev nor Falin, that is, those who are dubbed the main opponents of Gorbachev’s German policy in the

Politburo, present themselves as opposed to reunification in principle. And in retrospect they do not even present themselves as radical opponents of German unity. Viewed from their present-day position they could certainly have an interest to reveal themselves as early “decided opponents,” as they do completely in all questions that are directly connected to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

They believed that, at the beginning they were even in agreement with Gorbachev and then, when it came to the “abandonment of Soviet interests,” the question of NATO expansion into the area of the GDR, were taken by surprise by the authoritarian politics of Gorbachev and particularly of Shevardnadze. Ligachev still became incensed ten years later that a commission at the highest level was formed for each different international crisis,

... but in the German question Gorbachev with Shevardnadze and Yakovlev took everything into their own hands, and no commission was formed. (...) Here everything was taken over by these three persons, who had carried on all meetings and negotiations in relation to this issue.

AvP: *But they had to convince the Politburo.*

Ligachev: *Well, against this situation there was actually no resistance (!), but it still appears rather odd. I just wanted to record this fact here.*

Anatoli Chernayev, however, calls Ligachev’s view “nonsense.” Everyone was informed then and no one who later call themselves opponents of Gorbachev (and Chernayev) had not leaned out of the window in *this* question.

AvP: *And the position of Ligachev, that reunification was not discussed at all?*

Chernayev: *Perhaps he was opposed. But no one protested against it at the Politburo meetings. Not at the beginning, that is after the fall of the Wall, and not at the beginning of 1990. Only in April did the wind become more bitter. But that was due to Germany’s joining NATO. There it was really very crass and Gorbachev himself declared that he would under no circumstances agree to a solution in which the united Germany would become a NATO member. And everyone agreed with this. That was however not until a month later. In the course of these months, January, February, and March, I can not remember any such expressions of Politburo members, that they protested against it.²²⁷*

It is necessary to recall that Ligachev and the KGB chief Kryuchkov did not sit as Gorbachev’s opponents in the Politburo from the beginning. Falin did not become foreign minister during Gorbachev’s time but in 1988 became chief of the influential international department of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Also Marshall Akhromeyev was taken (back) into politics by Gorbachev. And the general secretary alone was seen generally at that time as an untouchable

“institution.” In the question of the expansion of NATO to the GDR the later enemies might well have been very irritated, but did not yet express opposition or organized themselves into a faction—not even in the Politburo, which even the best-known opponent, namely Ligachev, himself admits and which not only Chernayev states. But from the opponents of Gorbachev, with small exception in the case of Falin, there were no concepts to counter the policy of the general secretary. There was an opportunity for this on the decisive meeting of the inner leadership on the German question on January 25, 1990.

A Decision on the Approval of German Unity? The Meeting of Advisors on January 25, 1990

The meeting of Gorbachev with several ministers and advisors on January 25, 1990²²⁸ was to decide on the Soviet policy relating to the reunification of Germany and arrive at a consensus. For the events were rushing along and visits of various important partners were coming up: on January 30, Hans Modrow was to come to Moscow, on February 7 James Baker for three days, and on February 10 Helmut Kohl.

To this day there are many legends surrounding this advisory meeting, among which are available the protocol by Mikhail Gorbachev and Anatoli Chernayev from 1993,²²⁹ a deviating report by Valentin Falin.²³⁰ In 1997 he followed with a further assessment.²³¹ Georgy Shakhnazarov also described this meeting in his book *Preis der Freiheit* (German, 1996).²³² There are also interview comments on the subject, from among others Kryuchkov, chief of the KGB at the time.²³³ In December 2001 I could now look at the protocol in the Gorbachev archives that Anatoli Chernayev had written after this meeting. “The author guarantees the authenticity of everything written in this manuscript,” it says in the footnote to this record. Beside it is Chernayev’s signature and below he added a footnote that appears to have been written later:

This record was written by M. Gorbachev’s advisor, A. Chernayev, immediately after the meeting, at which no shorthand notes were taken [not even minutes—AvP]. In his book Six years with Gorbachev [the German title: Die letzten Jahre einer Weltmacht (The Last Years of a World Power)—AvP] he [Chernayev—AvP] briefly reports on the discussion and the decisions made there. They signify basically that the Soviet Leadership for the first time saw the unavoidability of reunification and that in the spirit of this new thinking were completely decided not to hinder this process.

This record was from the beginning not complete. Therefore, the author did not mention it in his speech [?—AvP]; also not what Falin, Akhromeyev, and Shakhnazarov said at the time. Probably it appeared to him then to be not so important for the essence of the decisions made at this meeting.²³⁴

During the examination and checking of this document Anatoli Chernayev, the historian Elke Sherstyanoi,²³⁵ and I could correct the date of this meeting, which was reported variously. Gorbachev²³⁶ himself as well as most historians²³⁷ thought it was January 26. (*Chernayev*: “*They get that from me.*”) The heading of the minutes indicates January 27. With the original diary by Chernayev, who always assumed the 26th, and through establishing the week, we could ascertain to his surprise that it was undoubtedly January 25, a Thursday.

The result summarized in the footnote by Chernayev—no hindering of the reunification of Germany—is, however, not so clear in the minutes of this meeting. And the difference in the date leads to almost the same distrust of this record as of the differing reports from Falin or Gorbachev, as well as Chernayev of 1993. However, the record appears in many aspects as authentic and suits the time of the beginning of 1990: Gorbachev gives long monologues, the advisors and opponents play a less important role as they later attributed to themselves in their books. Besides the floating positions and desperate attempts of these weeks are revealed, as no one knew yet how to deal with the developments, which were from the Soviet Union’s view catastrophic, while still, however, seeing it as a superpower and wanting to represent it as such.

Now to the contents of the record: on January 25, 1990 in Gorbachev’s office in the Central Committee building, “sixth floor, second entrance,” the following participants, which the record lists in the following order and without first names: Gorbachev, Ryshkov,²³⁸ Shevardnadze, Kryutchkov, Akhromeyev, Chernayev, Shakhnasarov, Yakovlev, Falin, and his representative Fyodorov. Falin added the Soviet defence minister Yasov,²³⁹ but forgets Fyodorov. Shakhnasarov also mentions Ivashko.²⁴⁰ There were sometimes heated arguments during this meeting that lasted four hours, but these cannot be found in the written documents.

According to the Chernayev document, Gorbachev opened the meeting with the following thoughts:²⁴¹

The GDR situation is the same as our Azerbaidjan one. We can rely on no one. We have no intimate relationships. And when we make agreements with someone, there are no results. Even Modrow is distancing himself from the SED.²⁴² And it has no significance that he is a true friend. There are no more influential forces in the GDR. This means that we can influence developments only through the FRG. And here we have the choice: Kohl or the SPD. The Social Democrats—even with all the reassuring statements and promises of Brandt and his colleagues—definitely want to use the GDR in their election campaign. We can bring all this skilfully into play.²⁴³

Then Gorbachev begins role-playing with a fictitious Helmut Kohl, whom, completely in contrast to the later staged friendship, he wants to haul from the

national to the European carpet and put him under pressure, and moreover through the presence of the Soviet troops in the GDR.

We must invite Kohl and say to him: now look [the informal you is being used—AvP], whatever happens, you play along. But you can also lose. The Social Democrats have more chances in the GDR than you do. We don't look at the German problem through your election perspective; we look at it in the European and global context. You allies in NATO see it in the same way. And you know the difference between what they say openly and what they think in reality.²⁴⁴ That means we are making you an offer, dear Helmut, to take the European point of view in the German question—and in fact and not only with words. This means, concretely: in the GDR there are our troops, in the FRG there are NATO troops. This is a concrete fact, which accords with the legal results of the Second World War, as they were determined by the victors. And from there comes the right of the four powers to take part in determining the German development [to participate in the German process—AvP]. You, and particularly Brandt, do not like that France is also among the victors, the “honourable victors,” as you refer to them ironically. Fine, but now there is a reality that is different from 1945. And let us gather not four, but five, with your, Kohl's, participation. And these (five) will define the rights of the Germans and the others.

Chernayev: *Mikhail Sergeevich, I think, “6” not “5” must be gathered—four victors and two (representatives) of the German states.*

Gorbachev: *Let's discuss that later. First of all I will continue.*

The thought that followed next showed that Gorbachev wanted to use the Soviet troops as a pawn to prevent the membership of a united Germany in NATO:

The most important thing is that no one should assume that the united Germany will join NATO. The presence of our troops will not allow this. And we can withdraw our armed forces only when the Americans withdraw theirs. And they will not do this in the long run (for a long time). And Kohl has to take this into consideration and also that they [the West Germans—AvP] will need many years to swallow the GDR economically. So these years are here for us and for you to use. Let us use this time sensibly. And let us prepare ourselves for a European meeting at the highest level in 1990. An action with four or five [government representatives—AvP]—according to our initiative will bring us again into the role of an active participant, that cannot be pushed out of the German development. This is a beneficial course.

Shevardnadze: *Mikhail Sergeevich, the main question for Kohl is now the “treaty community,” which leads to the confederation of the FRG and GDR. For us it is better if we do not get involved in the discussions on unification. That is not our*

affair. Let us just let the GDR present its initiatives. But we should negotiate only with the USA about the troops. I am opposed treaty commission (institution) in which the four powers will participate. That just means that the NATO people will dominate there.

If Shevardnadze really did say this, then this is a new position that diverges from the later 2+4 procedure; that is interesting but was, however, to play hardly a role. In the other version of this record, also from the Gorbachev archives, Shevardnadze is quoted in a rather different way: “The question of the contract community leads to the preservation of FRG-GDR” not as in the just quoted version “to the confederation.” And the last sentence there: “I am opposed to an institution of the four powers. NATO will not agree to this” instead of “that the NATO people will dominate there.”

According to the record, Kryuchkov continued the debate with a general description of the situation in the GDR:

Kryuchkov: The days of the SED are numbered. It is [no longer—AvP] a support or a lever. Modrow is only a transitional figure, he maintains himself only with concessions, but soon that will no longer be enough. We must pay more attention to the SPD in the GDR. Our people are afraid that Germany will again become a threat. It [unified Germany—AvP] will never accept our current borders.²⁴⁵ We must slowly get our people used to the idea of the reunification of Germany. Our armed forces in the GDR are a factor in the general European process [by which he might mean the CSCE process—AvP]. We must actively support our friends—former KGB and Interior Ministry members.²⁴⁶

Yakovlev, actually knowledgeable of the situation in Germany, because in December 1989 he had after all visited Modrow and held many talks, with opponents among them, made suggestions that went even further:

Modrow must get into the SPD and put himself at the top (!) of the Eastern section. America needs our troops in the GDR more than we ourselves do. (...) It would be good if Modrow appeared with a reunification program—without prejudices, based on reality,²⁴⁷ and if we actively support him. In this way we will get the sympathy of the German people. And at the same time we should mention that we already since 1946 supported the reunification of the German people. And the conditions [must be—AvP]: neutrality, demilitarization. There will be opposition from England, France, and the smaller European states. This will get the USA to think. And we can sit on the mountain and watch the skirmish from above. And as far as our people go, even Stalin supported the preservation of one Germany right after the war. Anyway, we cannot just wait as we have up to now.

Fyodorov: *But that will help the revanchists. According to my information in Germany no one wants reunification now.*²⁴⁸ *Modrow has suggested a referendum but not until after May 6.*²⁴⁹

Ryshkov: *One must see the development realistically. One can no longer stop this process [of unification—AvP]. The most important thing now is the tactics, because we cannot preserve the GDR. (...) It is wrong just to give Kohl everything. If this happens then Germany will start a third world war in twenty to thirty years.*

But what kind of conditions could be demanded for unification when the GDR was already “collapsing”? Actually all that remained were security conditions for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, if possible at the same time as the American troops, as Gorbachev tried to develop this at the beginning of the meeting.

Valentin Falin said later in his report on this meeting, contrary to this position mentioned here, that the “advisors of the general secretary” were in favor of “leaving the GDR to its fate and being resigned to the fact that the united Germany would join NATO: it was necessary to think more about saving one’s own face.” Kryuchkov explained that a double authority had established itself in the GDR and that the representatives of the FRG “behaved on the territory of the GDR as if they were already at home there.” (...) Yakovlev held his—Falin’s—position. Gorbachev also had expressed opposition to any expansion of NATO.

Of particular interest, however, is Gorbachev’s view of the situation in the Soviet Union, which was mentioned here “in passing”: he gives the judgement that the Soviet people would not turn against perestroika. But the Soviet society was “in comparison to similar ones” “the most rotten and nothing could save the society.” Gorbachev’s politics had begun to reform it; it was necessary to continue and keep the initiative. Their own society was too ideological (actually *verideologisiert*, over-ideological) and that was why developments were faster than we, the people. “And the party was not in a position to renew itself.” (!) These were at this time for Soviet ears then extremely critical judgments of the reformability of the “ruling authority of the Soviet Union” and shed light on Gorbachev’s real opinions in the discussions in the Politburo and the Central Committee of the CPSU, where he did not state matters so sharply. In this depressed mode Gorbachev continued speaking, hoped however, that the other Central and Eastern European states such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or Bulgaria would have an interest in the Soviet Union, “to experience a disease but not to run away too far from us.” But it was most difficult in the GDR:

Because we could lose it: there is the FRG and there is the European Community, to which it has been tied for a long time already. For us there is also a moral factor—the reaction of the Russian people.

Then follows again the sentence that reveals the strategic limits but also the arbitrariness of his speech:

I would place all my bets on winning time. The most important thing now—to slow the process, however it looks at the end (reunification).²⁵⁰

The strategy of winning time might in the situation that he and his advisors as well as Falin had described has not been one in which it was possible to offer the Germans or Americans anything impressive—probably the only thing that would have made an impression would have been to add the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Germany to conditions.

In his summary then the general secretary listed the following:

- the relationship with the other great powers
- “sliding in” the German question at the Vienna Process
- a (limited) relationship with the SED (he or the minute-taker still referred to it in this way)
- the relationship with the FRG.

Overall, as quoted: “not to give up the position of victor,” the “idea of the 4+” was to be introduced. First, however, it was necessary to come to an agreement with France.

Gorbachev: As far as the problem of the troops in Europe goes, it is necessary to act in such a way that it does not appear (!) as if we will simply withdraw on the fiftieth anniversary of the victory. The presence of the troops in Germany is closely connected with the Vienna (disarmament) Process. And to Kohl we will say: don't interfere. In this regard we will be able to agree with everyone. With the GDR we will maintain the special relations: with it and the GDR. We must insist on this. There are common interests; there is also a basis for mutual understanding.

However, how Gorbachev wanted to maintain the relations with the GDR, which he had just described as a disappearing state formation, is completely unclear. He hoped to gain time through the “contract community with confederation elements,” but all signs pointed to unity. With regard to the SED, so the general secretary, one should “not make the sign of the cross over it yet”—that SED that had been described as an irrelevant power. It had “after all two million members, as far as I am concerned now only 700,000. To write them off completely would be foolish. A (new) left force will develop. Let us first of all listen to Gysi.” It was the same in the other socialist countries.

The resulting impression is that Gorbachev was trapped on the one hand and on the other hand the situation was catastrophic, but something will surely turn up.

Gorbachev said at the end of this meeting:

Our next steps:

1. *Receive Modrow in Moscow on 2 February and then Gysi. Here we have moral obligations.*
2. *Receive Kohl right after Baker and right after Modrow. And then inform Modrow about the talks with Kohl.*
3. *The ideas for talks with Kohl to be carried out based on the talks with Baker and Modrow.*
4. *Inform Thatcher right after the talks with Modrow.*
5. *Write a letter to Mitterrand.*

(...)

Gorbachev: Assignments:

—*Safeguarding of the developments in Eastern Europe through propaganda. (Yakovlev, Falin, Fyodorov)*

—*Interview with Gorbachev about the reunification of Germany after the meetings with Modrow and Kohl. Not to be ruled out: short visits for a day to London and a day to Paris.*

—*Akhromeyev must prepare himself for the withdrawal of the troops from Germany.*

—*The “economic vulnerability”²⁵¹ of the GDR must be made clear to Modrow and Kohl. (!)*

In 1993 Gorbachev wrote a similar though different summary of this meeting. In his memoirs it says first: “The reunification of Germany is unavoidable. The USSR should take the initiative for a conference of the ‘Six,’ i.e. the victorious powers and both German states.” Then follows: “preservation of the relationship to the GDR. Closer coordination of our politics with London and Paris, and Akhromeyev had to review the conditions of the withdrawal of our armed forces from the GDR.”²⁵²

In summarizing the result of this meeting Valentin Falin said that there was much reflection, but there “was no profusion of ideas.” Even in the question of how to prevent the bringing of “NATO (...) to our border” Gorbachev said “it was necessary to think about this.” His own stance Falin summarized thus: “I have not wavered. Unification—yes, annexation—no.”²⁵³

Anatoli Chernayev presents still another variation of this summarizing conclusion: a “Group of Six” 4+2 should be formed, everyone wanted to “orient himself toward Kohl but not to ignore the SPD; invite Modrow and Gysi” And

Akhromeyev's assignment was explained as follows: "This is more an inner political than an external political problem: 300,000 men, among them 100,000 officers with families must be accommodated!" Besides, Falin, Fyodorov, but also Yakovlev and Shakhnasarov, wanted to orient themselves toward the SPD.²⁵⁴ Everything else, namely that it was necessary to get more for the reunification, was first put down by Falin in a detailed note: "And there he threw out all these questions. The note was very cautious and aimed at putting the brakes somewhat on this process."²⁵⁵

In this interview Chernayev confirms, as we could see in his diary from the time, that he wrote his personal descriptions on January 28, also his minutes of the meeting of January 25.

This protocol of January 25, 1990, makes clearer than all other descriptions of this meeting that have been accessed that the decision to allow the reunification to remain a German affair was not made clear and in a framework of political strategy but rather that, being driven by the development of the GDR, no other possibility was seen. It becomes equally clear in this material that the Soviet leadership had a pretty good idea of the catastrophic situation in the GDR, that in the face of the miserable economy large sections of the population and the West German politicians were pushing for reunification, and also a clear idea of their own ever worsening situation in the Soviet Union. But they believed that they had a few trumps in their hands, in order to get something that could meet Soviet interests in exchange for reunification:

- No admission to NATO
- Continued disarmament
- Withdrawal of the American and Soviet troops at the same time, and Akhromeyev, was to prepare the conditions of this withdrawal before it occurred
- Payment for the withdrawal of troops from the GDR by the Federal Republic.

They wanted to negotiate with other governments on these conditions. There is no longer any talk of demilitarization, to say nothing of neutrality, in this summary—only Yakovlev spoke of it. At the same time it must have become increasingly clear during the course of the meeting that they actually had only one trump card and that was their own troops in the GDR. And their return home was already on January 25 taken into calculation, moreover—and this is the essential aspect—before having negotiated with the Americans about a similar withdrawal of American units. How else can one understand Gorbachev's sentences: that it "does not appear as if on the 50th anniversary of victory we simply leave"? Of all people Akhromeyev was to deal with this. The problem should be moved to Vienna; there the presence of Soviet "troops in Germany," because it was "closely tied to the Vienna (disarmament) process," would be included in the disarmament negotiations.

As a result a question is raised: was the issue really still the simultaneous troop reduction of the Soviet *and* the American units, as Gorbachev insisted in this meeting, even as the only pledge to be taken seriously? Almost even more essential: the “European House,” with which Gorbachev in the past months had opened a vision in the East and the West, played no part in this meeting, neither in general nor in any strategic discussions, to say nothing of it as a European security system as an alternative to NATO membership of the united Germany.

As well, this meeting makes clear that Gorbachev had no fear of putsching generals, especially not of Marshal Akhromeyev who was present.

Putsch for or against Gorbachev?

The Military, the Marshal, and Gorbachev's Armchair

One man is always referred to when there is talk of the military that was hostile to or even threatening to Gorbachev: Marshall Sergei Fyodorovich Akhromeyev. This threat was held up in Bonn and Washington when the speed of the unification process had to be justified. That one of the Western demands, namely NATO membership of the united Germany, made this danger more virulent than many others, was thus rather relegated to the background. How serious was the danger of a military putsch in the months of the reunification process really, in particular through this Marshal?

Marshall Akhromeyev, born 1923, had fought at Leningrad in the Second World War, and was apparently respected and popular. And he was the most significant putschist later in August 1991 with Kryuchkov and Yasov. Gorbachev himself brought Akhromeyev out of retirement into the political center of power as an advisor. At the advisors' meeting on January 25, 1990, in Moscow he had taken responsibility for the preparations for the return of the Soviet soldiers. These soldiers could cause trouble after their return, since they had gotten used to the better living conditions in the GDR. Chernayev wrote: “He (Akhromeyev) said that will become more our internal problem as a problem of foreign policy.”²⁵⁶

Akhromeyev's opinion is important because he was probably the marshal that Gorbachev referred to when at the end of 1989 he uttered the sentence that would become famous about the “Soviet Marshal” who on the day of when the agreements for reunification were signed sat on “his chair.”²⁵⁷

On November 9, 1999, that is, ten years later, the historian Timothy Garton Ash, as moderator of the big anniversary celebration with Bush, Gorbachev, and Kohl, which was broadcast by ARD, asked Mikhail Gorbachev if this threat from the military, from this marshal, really did exist. Gorbachev answered, contrary to earlier statements, with a clear “Nyet.” Kohl quickly added, however, that this threat very definitely did exist, for this danger was the main worry in the whole of the highly dynamic year 1990/1991. This was a concern that was present in

the West and which even Condoleezza Rice thousands of kilometers away in Washington in her own statement did not let her sleep peacefully.

*We were very worried the entire time that we would wake up one day to a report that Gorbachev had been overthrown, and that the hard-line Soviet leadership had decided to contest the end of the Cold War. That was a constant worry—I went to bed every night worrying about it and woke up every morning worrying about it.*²⁵⁸

However, she cannot remember the concrete dangers of these months, only on the resignation of Shevardnadze later in December 1990 because of the threat of the new democracy in the Soviet Union, that is, before reunification.

This threat was surely the decisive reason for the acceptance of a “window open only for a short time” for reunification as the Federal chancellor said at the time.²⁵⁹

Horst Teltschik adds still another variation to this threat scenario. The meeting between Kohl and Gorbachev in Moscow on February 10, 1990, had been planned for January and in Bonn people asked themselves if something had happened in Moscow to Gorbachev. Later Teltschik asked Shevardnadze, after he was no longer in office, what the reasons were. And Shevardnadze reported that in January 1990 they had had important talks in Moscow about whether they should intervene (militarily) in the GDR.

Teltschik: *And there were those who spoke in favour of a military intervention. He [Shevardnadze—AvP] even gave me a name.*

AvP: *Whose?*

Teltschik: *Falin. And Falin denies this in various ways. He denies everything. I have already told you personally, I have absolutely no respect for Falin because of various experiences. But why should Shevardnadze lie to me in this situation? There was no reason for it. And personally I have always had a very good relationship with Shevardnadze.*²⁶⁰

This assumption by Teltschik, as well as Shevardnadze, appears to me, taking into account Falin’s real position and his influence inside the military according to what we know now, hardly possible. It appears much more plausible that Gorbachev treated the chancellor after the Ten Point Plan and after Kohl’s appearance on December 19, 1989, with greater hostility than Bonn wanted to accept or recognize. Over and over Gorbachev had said that he then believed that Kohl would heat up nationalism behind his back and destabilize the GDR despite his declarations.²⁶¹

Teltschik also says: “We had no reports, who, where, what, how, was discussed, argued, and attempted to carry out [*in Moscow—AvP*]. No we did not. Neither

from the CIA nor from anyone else. And we could not figure out if new uncertainties, new crises were developing.”²⁶²

Now, back to Akhromeyev and the military: the crown witness, Shevardnadze, reports that still in June 1990 the marshal was present at a meeting of Gorbachev with Kohl and of Shevardnadze with Genscher in the Caucasus, where everything essential had already been decided—the unity of Germany and NATO membership.

Shevardnadze: *They [the Germans—AvP] then took responsibility or accepted the obligation to spend a few billions. It was—I don't know any more—15 or 20 billions,²⁶³ to create infrastructure, to construct, buildings, build houses for the people who would leave Germany. Thus a method was worked out to let these soldiers leave Germany as friends and not as enemies. Our main opponent was General Akhromeyev. Later, by the way, he committed suicide. Even he on this evening expressed no opposition.*

Now what is astounding is that Falin of all people, who in this phase presented himself as the main opponent of Gorbachev, ten years later describes himself as his confidant in the matter of the threat to the general secretary by the Soviet military in the Western group of the Soviet army.

Falin: *I brought Gorbachev in 1990 very, very confidential information: that one wanted to invite him to the GDR on the initiative of our troops there. And during this visit he could be arrested there. His reaction was the following: “Kryuchkov told me nothing about this. Yes, it would be good if you flew to Berlin to meet with your source [to find out—AvP] how far this rumour has a basis in fact,” as the Russians say. I did this, in the GDR I met this so-called source. (...)*

Blumenberg: *And these talks took place? And how seriously must these talks be taken?*

Falin: *I found out and later told Gorbachev: there was nothing more than vague talk, feelers sent out between generals of the GDR and Soviet Union.²⁶⁴*

This appears more than doubtful to me: Falin gives no names, but still apparently does not mean Akhromeyev, who did in fact later putsch against Gorbachev. I therefore asked Anatoli Chernayev about this story of Falin:

Chernayev: *When was this supposed to have happened?*

AvP: *Apparently in the first months of 1990, he says.*

Chernayev: *I hear about this for the first time. And I think this is all improbable.²⁶⁵*

Truly alarmed were the later putschists only when the Soviet empire was threatened, as it began to fall apart and some of the republics against the Moscow

central authorities followed a course to independence, as had already happened at the end of 1989 and beginning of 1990 in the Lithuanian Communist Party and then the Lithuanian Soviet Republic. And then it took more than a year before the putschists organized themselves and, according to general opinion, began an amateurish putsch.

In answer to my question about the danger of a putsch at the end of 1989 and beginning 1990 Anatoli Chernayev replied rather brusquely on December 2, 2001:

Chernayev: *That was a joke. There was no danger then from the military. Whoever says so is talking nonsense.*

AvP: *Falin tells recently about a plot by the West group of the Soviet armed forces (in the GDR) against Gorbachev.*

Chernayev: *No, there was no military danger then. No!* [The only moment of temper from Chernayev in this conversation—AvP] *Gorbachev had become more confident. From the spring [1990—AvP] he no longer sought advice from the Politburo. Only from Shevardnadze.*

AvP: *When Gorbachev met Bush, end of May/beginning of June in Washington and said “yes” to German freedom to join an organization, all the Soviet participants, including Akhromeyev, were very shocked.*

Chernayev: *Absolutely. Gorbachev was not longer afraid then.* [Chernayev added quietly] *Unfortunately, not later either, when he should have been.*

There is much evidence that the threat to Gorbachev from the military in these 12 months between the end of 1989 and the end of 1990 was for all those involved in Europe a frequently used argument: for Kohl, to force through his reunification politics, for Mitterrand and Thatcher, but also for the SDP and other opponents in the GDR, however, exactly the opposite, namely to slow the progress toward reunification in the interest of the Moscow leadership.

To my question if there was a real threat to his position in these months from the party and military Gorbachev himself said:

At the beginning of 1990 there were no real plans and possibilities to organize a general overthrow or another type of overthrow. There were muttering, grumbling at various meetings and protests in various circles, but no conspiracies.²⁶⁶

Yakovlev “Pleads” for a Coup d’État against the Party

Chernayev told us about a further variation that reversed previous speculation about the risk of a putsch in the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1990—the plans for a coup d’état in favor of Gorbachev. To lend substance to this, he read aloud the entry he had made in his diary for January 28, 1990. Gorbachev,

Yakovlev, and Chernayev had met in a state dacha outside of Moscow to discuss drafts for a new party program.

Chernayev: *And if you want me to, I'll read you an extract from my notes which tell of the difficult and critical situation that both the country and Gorbachev himself were in.*

Of course we wanted him to. Chernayev asked us simply to listen, not to write anything but he let the tape recorder run. He wanted to rectify our understanding that reunification was dependent upon the crisis in domestic policy. Reunification would have made up only a small part of the debate; even the meeting on January 25, 1990, was far more (about 70 percent) concerned with domestic policy.

Chernayev (*quoting from the diary*): *Yakovlev said to Gorbachev: "Mikhail Sergeyevich, you have to bargain. The politburo and the plenary session of the Central Committee are the biggest obstacles to Perestroika and your current policy. It's senseless to summon them so often. (...) If you carry on hesitating to take over power then everything will collapse. Instead of the meeting of the highest Soviets arranged for February, you have to summon, perhaps as soon as next week, a congress of the people's deputies and manage it like a president." Gorbachev was not yet then president, only General Secretary and chairman of the highest Soviets. "And the congress should elect you as president."*

Chernayev continued that Yakovlev had suggested proclaiming a multiparty system and threatened that if Gorbachev did not do this then "everything would collapse."

"You have to summon up absolutely all your determination and negotiate immediately, don't put it off until May or the autumn, to concentrate total state power into your hands, and to drive out the politburo and also the idle gossip chamber (the gossiping highest Soviet) from the corridors of power. Over the next few days, before the Central Committee plenary meeting arranged for the 5/6 February, you have to appear on television, appeal directly to the people and explain that you are taking over responsibility, special responsibility, under the motto: the countryside for the farmers, the factories for the workers, real independence for the Republic, a state federation instead of a state union, a multi-party system, a rejection of the Communist Party's monopoly of the Soviet Union, borrow a good deal from the West, reform of the army and a purge of the generals and their replacement with intelligent lieutenant-colonels, the withdrawal of troops from Eastern Europe, the dissolution of the ministries, a firm reduction of all organisations including the Party apparatus, and—with great determination—extraordinary economic measures. These have already been included in Slyunkov's draft paper. [Slyunkov was a member of the politburo and had economic responsibilities—AvP] A paper has already been prepared."

Gorbachev should replace Ryshkow as head of government, reduce the party apparatus, and dissolve the state planning commission.

*Yakovlev (continuing from Chernayev's diary—AvP): "Because no reform can be implemented with a premier who thinks like a company director, with an institution like GOSPLAN which is stamped by the military-industrial complex." Gorbachev interrupted him: "Who should we replace them with?"—"There are enough people, you just have to be bold in your choice. That's what a revolution is." Gorbachev reacted to this: "Travel back to Wolynsk, go about your duties. Don't talk to anyone about this. We'll think everything through here. I'll think about whether I'll go on television." In brief, what Yakovlev was suggesting here was, to coin a French phrase, a Coup d'État. It would have been one if everything had been implemented.*²⁶⁷

I asked whether the term "presidential dictatorship" had been raised.

Chernayev (on the word "President"—AvP): The aim was to suppress the politburo and the Central Committee and to concentrate all power in the hands of the President, in the state structures.

AvP: What would that have meant for the Party?

Chernayev: Now, you know, the abolition of Article 6 of the Constitution [the leading role of the Party—AvP] was already being discussed. Things would have led naturally to a splitting of the Party. A significant part would have persisted in an orthodox anti-perestroika position. But a part, the progressive part, would have followed Gorbachev.

Chernayev meant that Gorbachev had reacted wrongly, that he had perhaps made the cardinal mistake of his life when he didn't follow Yakovlev's suggestion.

Gorbachev's greatest and deciding mistake was to stand by the Party, because he thought it could be the avant-garde of Perestroika. However it was already clear from the Party's conception of itself, that due to its nature, this couldn't be so. And by remaining General Secretary of the Party, he tied his own hands.

Gorbachev himself answered my question why he had turned down Yakovlev's suggestion of a coup d'état:

*Whoever knows me even just a little as a politician and a person cannot seriously ask the question whether Gorbachev had the will to carry out a state coup.*²⁶⁸

2+4, 4+2, or 33+2? The Centers of Power Take Over the Negotiations on the International Aspects of Unity

Who Negotiates Germany's Unity?

Different Concepts

At the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, while the majority of the people of Europe were only just starting to be aware that there was a real possibility of reunification, those in all the concerned centers of power were already thinking feverishly about how it would be fashioned: who should negotiate the procedures for the unification of Germany? The European states? The victorious powers of the Second World War alone? Or the “Big Four” and the two Germanies? Or the CSCE, that is, the European states including the two Germanies, the United States, and Canada (as well as the Soviet Union)? How could the international and national unification issues be tied together most efficiently and—one can add safely add—what was the best way to realize individual interests and goals?

Several possibilities were considered: one was an all-European conference that would attempt to complete a postwar peace treaty using the CSCE as an “instrument,”¹ because, besides 33 European states, the United States, and Canada, thus everyone who was affected, would have participated in the CSCE. For the strategists in the Federal Chancellor's Office and in the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic or in the State Department of the United States this “instrument” was out of the question because—as it was regularly put—there would have been far too many decision makers for such a sensitive question and the smaller states would also have had a right to veto, which was “far beyond their

standing” (Baker).² Genscher’s view was similar: “the negotiations would have gotten bogged down by the reparations question”³ and:

A peace treaty for Germany would have meant that we would have to hold a conference with all countries with whom we were at war or their successors, i.e. for example, we would have had to include in the peace negotiations all the successor states of the English empire, the French empire, the Dutch and Portuguese ones, as a result we would have had to negotiate with Kenya and Zambia about German unification, and with all the Latin American states, even Uruguay.

AvP: *Well, now, I find that rather extreme, because, if think about it, Potsdam did not take place with the participation of all these states—*

Genscher: *—Wait a moment. No, no, no. A peace treaty would have [called in—*
 AvP] *these countries—and it was also the goal of many to have such negotiations. We had a crucial interest to speak only with the four powers.*⁴

Another possibility, which was discussed mainly by the other former victorious great powers of the Second World War, was a victors’ conference à la Yalta or Potsdam, that is, without the smaller states, but also without the two Germanies.⁵ The American politicians both in the White House and in the State Department assumed that a four-power conference was favored by Moscow as well as probably the governments in London and Paris, because it would have resulted in better and simpler decision-making structures and, above all, would have made it possible for the victorious powers to achieve their interests more easily.

There are some hints that support this: Gorbachev’s “Six Points,” which he had distributed before the meeting of the Political Advisors’ Committee of the Warsaw Pact or Shevardnadze’s confusing speech to the Political Committee of the European Parliament. This reasoning also accords—most significantly symbolically—with the meeting in the headquarters of the Allied Control Council in Berlin on December 11 of the ambassadors of the four victors, which was initiated by the Soviet Union,⁶ at which the four-power status of Berlin was discussed. On January 10, 1990 the Soviet ambassador in Washington sent the State Department the oral message that “among the big four the consensus (is looming) that an exchange of ideas on German affairs continues to be desired.” These German affairs had great significance “for all of Europe, if not for the whole world;” the settling of these was still “an understandable responsibility” for the victorious powers. Or it might “become necessary (for the victorious powers) to undertake certain parallel or coordinated steps in relation to German affairs.”⁷

And again on January 25, 1990, at the Moscow advisory meeting, where it was decided to permit the reunification of Germany, Gorbachev emphasized strongly the victor status, which gave the Allies rights in regard to the soon to be united Germany. First he spoke of five negotiating partners, that is, the victorious

powers plus the Federal Republic, but was—at least according to the protocol—reminded by Chernayev that the GDR still existed. Besides, the formula “four plus two,” which was referred to as a “group of six,” would increase the influence of the Allies over Germany.⁸

Against a New “Versailles”

The Federal Republic’s Foreign Ministry expressed its opposition most sharply to a simple four-power, that is, a “victors” conference, and so did the State Department.

As far as the foreign policy of the Federal German government was concerned, peace negotiations were completely out of the question, no matter who carried them out. The reason was mainly the degraded status that the Federal Republic and the GDR would have been assigned by the Allies, including all wartime opponents. Apart from this, any reminder of the “Treaty of Versailles” was to be avoided, partly because the new role of the Federal Republic in the EU, NATO, and the UN would have been reduced thereby and partly because all would have had the reparations negotiations connected with Versailles before their eyes: namely their significance for the rise of German nationalist parties and ultimately of the NSDAP. How deeply this was felt by the generation of Genscher and Kohl is made clear in one episode.

On December 13, 1989, there was, as mentioned, in Brussels a meeting of the foreign ministers of the EU states with their American colleague Baker. In the evening there was a dinner with the foreign ministers of the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany, a traditional meeting of the four.⁹ There was a rather relaxed conversation about this and that. Only the German foreign minister was irritated. The meeting of the ambassadors of the four victorious powers in the old headquarters of the Allied Control Council in Berlin on December 11,¹⁰ 1989, had put him in a bad mood.¹¹ There the Soviet ambassador in East Berlin, Kochemassov, had represented the positions of Gorbachev on December 9, 1989, at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU: opposition to unity, in favor of the further existence of two German states resulting from the Second World War, and opposition to the disparagement of the GDR. The Soviet Union would not accept, declared Kochemassov, that these postwar realities were constantly being challenged. The French ambassador emphasized, however, that the issue was only Berlin, thus emphasizing the significance of the four-power status.

After this ambassadors’ meeting the British Labour representative Ted Rowlands asked, “Is it not anachronistic that German questions are being discussed without having the Germans present?”¹² Genscher was incensed by this meeting, particularly its pointed form, and now distributed in Brussels among the participants of the EU foreign ministers’ conference a paper, in which he

warned of a new peace treaty à la Versailles. At the dinner there Genscher held up a photo of the ambassadors' meeting and said heatedly:

Such a meeting of the four victorious powers was, I hope, the last of its kind. It has injured the honour of the German people. We are proud of the peaceful revolution in the GDR. A meeting this startling in the Allied Control Council headquarters does not suit in any way our reciprocal relationship. Never again must the Germans be left on the sidelines.¹³ You have to decide between working with us in NATO and in the European Community or with the Soviet Union in the Allied Control Council.¹⁴

It is rather amusing that it was Genscher of all people who threw this alternative at the former victors, especially the United States, which sometimes accused him of flirting with the Soviet Union, and thus at the same time appeared to be the man who himself as the man who pointedly expressed the commonality of the Germans with the other Western powers in NATO. The story had a fitting conclusion, fitting because of the emotion and because of this admonition to work together with the Germans in NATO. Baker laid his hand calmly on Genscher's arm and said:

Hans-Dietrich, we understood you.¹⁵

In his memoirs, following his calming gesture, Baker continues: "In the faces of Roland Dumas and Douglas Hurd I also read that they not only understood me but found my reaction completely understandable."¹⁶

James Baker also mentioned this episode in his memoirs, but he minimizes the significance of the offence, namely the ambassadors' meeting in the Control Council headquarters. Therefore I asked him in an interview what the reasons for this meeting were.

Baker: *Yeah, because we had to deal... in unification we had to deal with the question of four-power rights. And thereby was important to the Soviets that there be a meeting of the Ambassadors of the occupying powers—the four powers. And this is something we did to help the process, to help move the process along and... keep working the Soviets toward the final result. (...) Yes, well we didn't want a peace treaty. I don't think the Germans wanted it. And, you know, that's probably a true story about what Hans-Dietrich said. But we needed—we had to have that meeting in order to (...) bring the Soviets along, because there were four-power rights that needed to be dealt with. And there were internal aspects of German unification where we had agreed in (...) And there were four-power rights and obligations that excluded Germany—that applied to Germany, but that excluded Germany. And we had to deal with that. And I'm sure it's probably correct that Hans-Dietrich Genscher didn't like that much. But, it had to happen.*

Hans-Dietrich Genscher later wrote that the “humiliating treatment of the first German democracy at the negotiations for the Versailles peace treaty, yes even only a discussion about a peace treaty,” must also be avoided. “United Germany should be able to go into the future without open questions and without discriminatory conditions. Democratic stability in Germany could not be endangered a second time. A right-wing radical opposition should not be offered a new chance.”¹⁷

German Unity, NATO Membership, and a European Security System

More important than the ambassadors’ meeting of the four victors in Berlin was, in Baker’s opinion, as he describes it in his memoirs, his speech to the Berlin Press Club on December 12, 1989. The whole situation in Europe appeared to him as if the Europeans were expecting rescue from the Americans after the upheaval of the destruction of the postwar order: “And most of Europe was looking to the United States for direction.” Shortly before this speech he had looked through a crack in the Wall to East Berlin and had seen the “high resolution drabness that characterizes East Berlin,” which made him realize “that the ordinary men and women of East Germany, peacefully and persistently, had taken matters into their own hands. This was their revolution, and it was the job of men like me to help them secure the freedom they were working so hard to win.”

This was the point of view from which Baker delivered his address on Europe to the Press Club, a speech that had been written by Bob Zoellick: it was not necessary to start over again after this political earthquake in Europe, but rather there were the three essential institutions, namely NATO, the EU, and the CSCE, each of which “needed to evolve to promote what I called a ‘new Atlanticism for a new era.’”¹⁸ With the observation that NATO must become a “more ‘political’ alliance,” “I did not just want to prepare the Soviets for the continued existence of this Alliance, if the Warsaw Pact were dissolved, but also to get them to accept a unified Germany in NATO.”¹⁹ This was the actual goal of US politics in Europe, so that all statements regarding the necessity of cooperation with the Soviets in the *four*-power agreement, which he emphasized at that time, must appear rather as tactical trick for the achievement of this goal.

I have quoted Baker in such detail for two reasons. First, this text reveals—as does his speech—an almost messianic self-confidence in his own personal and political role as well as that of the US government; the same attitude is also revealed in his assumption that the Europeans expected “American guidance,” that is, leadership. Second, in this speech the American position in the NATO question becomes clear, and this only two weeks after the Ten Point Plan of Helmut Kohl from the end of November, where this issue was left out; because for the Germans it was the unity question that was the decisive one, as Teltschik still noted ten years later,²⁰ while, for the American government, it was the

NATO question. This is not a retrospective justification, since it was the line already presented by Bush in his “Four Points” and intimated at the beginning of May 1989 in Mainz, and it would be continued during Baker’s visit to Moscow at the beginning of February.

Baker had had breakfast with Kohl on the morning of December 2 in West Berlin. The Federal chancellor explained in great detail that it was necessary to show the people in Germany a goal, namely the achievement of the contract community and unity under a European roof, but at the same time to emphasize that this could happen only at the end of a long and onerous process, which would take “a fairly long time.” This is what he had done with his “10 Points.” Baker reported the worries of the other governments, particularly of Margaret Thatcher, with whom he had just met. Kohl’s comment was: “We are not heating up the process.” Kohl explained further, according to the protocol of this meeting, “that it was a mistake of PM Thatcher to think that things should just be allowed to develop. But if he [*underlined in the original—AvP*] did not clearly state the goal, then others would.” Gorbachev would then, for example, demand the withdrawal of Germany from NATO if Germany were unified. Baker expressed understanding and answered that Gorbachev had already indicated this to the Americans, which was, after all, why the United States was supporting Kohl’s politics. “This support was embedded in the framework of the 4 Points that the president had formulated the previous week. With this, one was moving very close to the wording that the ER [*Europa Rat = European Council—AvP*] had used.”²¹ With this statement Baker probably wanted to suggest that only this American assistance and the cooperation with Chancellor Kohl was responsible for the success of the meeting in Strasbourg. Kohl had done something “superb.” Kohl also explained at the breakfast that he had supported the decision for the (European) economic and monetary union, as Mitterrand wanted, although it went “against German interests.” But Germany needed friends. “He was happy to allow France the credit for the success of Strasbourg, but without him nothing would have happened there.”

Baker then mentioned the sensitive German–Polish border question. Kohl addressed it by referring to Point 8 in his “Ten Points,” which clarified this issue and at the same time referred to the last act of the CSCE. As well there were contractual obligations imposed by the Moscow and the Warsaw Pacts. The Constitutional Court had, however, interpreted the Warsaw Pact to mean that “the Federal Republic of Germany could not make a statement on behalf of all of Germany.” Kohl alludes here to the Refugee Convention of 1950. He emphasizes that the issue was only the Oder–Neisse line, but not the internal border or the sector boundaries in Berlin. “When it comes time for German unity, the Polish border question will not be a problem for one second.”²²

Nevertheless, it was repeatedly seen as a problem, especially in Poland and Western Europe.²³ Genscher dealt with this border problem somewhat differently

from Kohl in that he thought that after the elections in the GDR both German parliaments should issue a joint declaration on the preservation of the Oder-Neisse border.

Genscher also considered even more important the necessity of clearing up another issue, namely the relationship of unification and alliance membership. He wrote that “in 1989 over and over” he emphasized the loyalty of Germany to its alliances during the process of unification, but yet at the beginning of 1990 wanted to make very clear for Bush and Baker what “I had explained internally long ago: we will even as a united Germany remain a member of NATO and the EU.” Then he did so again during the Three-Kings Day meeting of the FDP on January 6 in Stuttgart and on January 31, 1990, in Tutzing. This agrees with the general strategy, but his statements in Stuttgart and Tutzing reveal how much Genscher tried in this not to damage the Soviet security interests. In Stuttgart he made a similar statement to Bush and Baker: “The alliances NATO and the Warsaw Pact will receive a special political leadership function in this process.” But he added something that would have sounded different at least to Soviet ears and could have awakened worries among the Americans: “The security provided to the peoples of Europe by the alliances must in the first step be strengthened through co-operative security structures.” This statement could only have been meant as the beginning of the new cooperative security structures between the Warsaw Pact (or at least the Soviet Union) and NATO. Genscher then continued: “In a second step the alliances which have become structured co-operatively must be transferred into a common, collective security, i.e. structures *between* the alliances should develop that will overcome the rivalry step by step.”²⁴

Here it becomes especially clear that this is not the same as what he and the American leaders were saying in regard to NATO, as the former foreign minister of the FRG later wants to convince his readers in his memoirs. That the Americans noticed and dealt with Genscher with caution was mentioned by Condoleezza Rice in reply to my question almost ten years later:

Genscher, I think, was someone of a different view. I always worried with Genscher that he perhaps wanted to hold on to “Ostpolitik” somehow. And since, I think, I believe that “Ostpolitik” had been overcome, that it was long past its time and that now the key was to unify Germany on Western terms and to get the Soviet Union to accept that, I worried that he was a little too accommodating somehow for Soviet interest.

AvP: *There was a murmur of “appeaser.”*

Rice: *Oh, I think “appeasement” is way too strong. I think that Genscher understood Germany’s role in the West. But he had a strong view that you had to somehow draw the Soviet Union in, in ways that I thought were perhaps inappropriate. (...) I think Kohl and Genscher ultimately complemented each other in this process because Genscher could be the one who talked to the Soviet Union. I think*

Kohl was much more effective with the West, with us in particular, with the United States in particular. (...) Kohl was perhaps just more forceful about doing it quickly and doing it on Western terms.

But Kohl was also sometimes suspected of sacrificing NATO membership for the unity of Germany. On January 18, the *Washington Post* asked, on the occasion of an interview with Helmut Kohl, if there were differences between the governments of Bush and Kohl, because it had to appear “as if he [Kohl—AvP] did not agree with the persistent argument of the Bush government that German reunification had to be brought about in the context of continuing German obligations in NATO.” Kohl said in the interview: “I do not think that it would be wise to give attention to such thoughts in the current state of the discussion.” The news agency AP reported: “On the theme of reunification the Chancellor said that the process in Eastern Europe has passed the American position, German unity could be achieved only in connection with German NATO membership. Kohl said that there were various opinions on this question in Washington. He thinks, however, that the American view could change with a change in the relationship between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.”²⁵

Genscher quotes this criticism of Kohl in detail—perhaps it appeared and still appears to him as not completely unfair that even the chancellor was viewed with the suspicion that the foreign minister usually had to suffer. But Genscher, in his own words, knew Helmut Kohl “much too well” to be worried by this, but it was absolutely necessary in this question to clarify openly the alliance membership of a united Germany.

Nikolai Portugalov, member of the International Section of the Central Committee of the CPSU, stated in 1999 that one of the big mistakes of the Soviet policy had been “not to have put the fat man [*i.e.*, Kohl—AvP] on the rack and force him to decide between unity and ties to the West.”²⁶ George Bush and his Secretary of State Baker as well as Condoleezza Rice, nevertheless emphasize ten years later, probably correctly, that they never had any doubt that Kohl had decided in favor of a tie to West in deciding between the two alternatives, ties to the West or unification. They would have, therefore, supported Kohl in his reunification policy “aggressively” (Baker), under the condition that the NATO question had been clarified and the Oder–Neisse line was recognized as the border, with a written guarantee to Poland. Nevertheless, I asked Baker this question again:

AvP: *OK. Another question—had you ever had...have you ever had doubts that Chancellor Kohl would decide in the alternative—unification or commitment to the West, that he would prefer the unification?*

Baker: *No, we never doubted that because (...) we had some very clear understandings with Helmut Kohl at the beginning of the process. And he knew how important*

it was from our standpoint that the unification take place as a part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. And so we were really not fearful—we trusted him. It turned out to be the right thing to do. We were not fearful that he was going to opt for a neutral Germany—a unified Germany, but one that was not in NATO. We really didn't worry much about that.

AvP: *And I think it was a help for him (...) concerning Prime Minister Thatcher and Mitterrand.*

Baker: *You mean our support?*

AvP: *Yes, when you said the unified Germany would be a member of the NATO, then nobody (in NATO) could say something against it.*

Baker: *It helped us make the case for German unification with the British and the French. It made it more difficult with the Soviets.²⁷*

On January 31, 1990 in Tutzing, Genscher was clearer—according to his own account in his memoirs: he made clear what was to be united, namely the GDR, the Federal Republic, and Berlin, nothing else. That was directed to the Poles on the one hand, and to all Germans, who wanted to challenge the Oder–Neisse border. “A border guarantee to all our neighbours must be the first expression of will of the two German parliaments and governments.” This was the previously mentioned different approach from that of the Federal chancellor who at this time wanted to push such a (renewed²⁸) declaration onto a parliament of all of Germany. Membership in the EU was irrevocable, a statement directed at Mitterrand. And the same applied to membership in the Western alliance. “We do not want a neutral Germany.” However, he added a statement that, at its core, was difficult to see as being in agreement: “The idea that the part of Germany that today makes up the GDR should be included in the military structures of NATO would block German-German rapprochement.”²⁹ It appears as if Genscher later wanted it to appear to his readers that his position did not diverge from the American one, that he, however, still wanted to lay out clearly his differentiated position in relation to Soviet security interests and his differences in the inclusion of the GDR in NATO structures. At the same time Genscher faced the complicated situation that neither he nor the Soviet Union had or could have a clearly formulated idea of what a European security system that included NATO, the declining Warsaw Pact, the United States, and the Soviet Union should look like. And this in the face of the clearly stated interests of the main Western partner, the United States, which wanted to block every German indication of an independent rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

On April 25, 2001, I asked Genscher about these contradictions.

AvP: *If I understand you and your politics in these years correctly, then you were not committed so clearly only to these components (Western alliance), but to an all-European security system with the inclusion of the Soviet Union. Is that correct?*

In his reply, Genscher continued, not ineptly, in the contradiction he had been expressing:

Yes. But that was the German-American position, because, after all, we had to offer the Soviet Union something. It practically gave up its sphere of influence, as a result of this German unification it was to leave Germany. And for the Soviet Union it was clear, if it left the GDR, it meant that it would leave Poland, it would leave Czechoslovakia, it would leave basically all the states that had been forced into the Warsaw Pact. What could we offer them? We said that the Federal Republic of Germany had 500,000 soldiers, the GDR 180,000, together that makes 680,000, the united Germany would have 370,000 soldiers.

AvP: *So a reduction in troops.*

Genscher: *Then we said allied troops would not be stationed in the area that you give up in Germany. After all no Allied forces are stationed in the new German states, but rather they are in the western states and now also in a reduced form.*

My first question, how far Genscher then saw a European security system that included the Soviet Union, was not really answered by the sentence, “Yes, that was the German-American position.” Because that was in fact not the American position then—the concern here is January 1990. And it was then not at all clear, particularly not on the American side, how far the former GDR would receive a special military status. As well an extensive dispute developed on this question inside the Federal German government, mainly between Genscher and Minister of Defence Stoltenberg.

Genscher continued:

But more important, I think, was that we said that we, NATO, will meet you in a different way in the Foreign Ministers Conference in Scotland and then at the NATO Summit Conference in London, all in the early summer of 1990, let us say, we are no longer enemies, but rather we see ourselves as a partner. And we offer the Soviet Union partnership for the security of Europe. Then we declared ourselves ready to negotiate on an idea of Gorbachev’s, namely to conclude a charter for all of Europe.

This is a not unimportant observation that accorded with the expectations of the Soviet Union, as we will see soon, but it does not come until *after* reunification, thus becoming the *condition* for a European charter and that is again something other than a military security alliance. However, the European security alliance was considered a *condition* or *part* of Soviet politics in relation to reunification.

Genscher: *This [the Europe charter—AvP] then took place in the fall of 1990 in Paris, where we discussed again all the really essential principles, on human*

rights, liberality. Even the market economy became part of the European Charter. (...) For him [the Soviet General Secretary—AvP] the opening of the West to co-operation, and to equal co-operation with the Soviet Union, was of great significance.

AvP: In the end, though, the hard facts naturally are those which the Soviets brought outside of this expanding Western Europe.

Because at the end of the reunification process the Warsaw Pact had fallen apart, NATO had been expanded, and there was no European security system that included the Soviet Union. For Nikolai Portugalov it was clear in 1999:

The Americans and the Germans were not at all ready to include us in any kind of European security system. The clever Genscher, who here apparently wanted to make concessions, quickly got it in the neck. Just at this time the word “Genscherism” was being spread around; it meant nothing other than “appeasement,” and precisely a retreat from our, the Soviet, interests.³⁰

In any case the Bush/Baker government backed Kohl in the course of continuing developments against criticism from Western Europe in the fall of 1989 by clearly stating the expansion of NATO as part of reunification. After all, how could a Margaret Thatcher torpedo a policy of reunification if she received an expansion of NATO in return?

Bush: I don't want to overplay it—that we had to steamroller right over England or France. It wasn't that hostile atmosphere. (...) As I told you, we made it very clear that we wanted Germany... and Kohl made clear, they wanted Germany to stay in NATO. (...) General Scowcroft and I and Jim Baker felt that... really the sooner the better. Provided Germany be willing to, you know, recognize the Oder–Neisse line and borders, provided Germany was not going to get out of NATO. So we had assurances on those points and thus could be very enthusiastic about Germany being reunited.³¹

This picture presented by the usually restrained Bush also contradicts that of Genscher and Teltschik, that they had found out nothing about this strategy of the United States in the spring and summer of 1989 after Bush's visit to the NATO jubilee summit in Brussels and Bonn.

One of the conditions for German reunification that Baker and Bush mention here, namely the question of the recognition of the Oder–Neisse border, however, led to a “middling PR catastrophe” for Kohl, since he had wanted this to be confirmed by one total German parliament and not, like Genscher, by the parliaments of the FRG and GDR after the elections of March 18, 1990. The only serious difference with the Americans was over Kohl's stance on a renewed

recognition of the Oder–Neisse border before unification, which ranged from reluctance to rejection. Naturally this led to deep concern, mostly in Poland but also in Europe in general and in the United States.³² As mentioned Kohl had used the constitutional court's decision against Baker; perhaps there was also concern that there could be greater conflicts with refugee organizations and German nationalist groups.³³

The American government under Bush did not have a specific problem:

*AvP: There were some politicians who saw the German division as a consequence of National Socialism in World War 2. Or even as a punishment for the crimes of German politics. You not?*³⁴

Bush: Not me. I didn't. But I think you're right. I think some people felt that Germany, having brutally invaded [Belgium and—AvP] the Netherlands and gone to war with most of the free world, was properly punished. But I . . . my view is: Germany earned, the Federal Republic of Germany earned its place by its adherence to democratic principles, free elections, democracy, freedom. And I saw that bringing that to the GDR would be a good positive thing for peace. This was an unnatural division. And unnatural divisions are not catalysts for peace.

The Formula

2+4: The German and American Position

The formula 2+4 as a synonym for the negotiations between the two German governments and those of the four victorious powers on the external aspects of German unity was the formula of the Western governments. The West German side especially, just as the American side, supported it in order to make clear that the victors were not holding a peace conference with the Germans, as was suggested by the Soviet version 4+2. The two foreign ministers Baker and Genscher describe similarly but not identically how this formula came to be.

James Baker first answered this question in the interview of 1999:

In fact it was done in my office in the State Department.

In his memoirs he is somewhat more modest and says, like Genscher, that this formula was the result of negotiations between representatives of the American State Department and of the German Foreign Office, mainly between Frank Elbe, Dieter Kastrup, and Bob Zeillick, in January 1990.

This formula corresponded to Genscher's ideas and he defended it vehemently. The "two" must remain ahead of "the four," as he emphasized to Baker on February 3 during his visit to Washington. This was not simply semantics, because having the "two" first made clear that the Germans were taking the lead in unification. "Four plus two" would, on the other hand, be an expression

of a “four power diktat” “and therefore politically as well as psychologically unacceptable.”³⁵

In the interview in 1999 Baker added something else:

Some of the people who work for me in the department came up with the idea initially. They, I think they talked to some of Hans-Dietrich Genscher's staff people—Frank Elbe and maybe Dieter Kastrup and some others. And they basically said: “Here, this looks like a good way, will cover all the basis. We will get the two Germanies. They will deal with the internal, we will have the occupying powers France, Britain, United States, the Soviet Union—they'll deal with the external.” And it was a suitable vehicle and a suitable process. We got agreement to it. And I write extensively in there about each meeting that I had to have to get agreement—I had to get agreement from Douglas Hurd, agreement from Roland Dumas, agreement from Shevardnadze. We got all that agreement and so we wanted to go forward and announce it as a procedure at Ottawa at the “Open Skies” conference because we wanted to do it while we had it, before anybody changed their mind. And we frankly had a little problem at the time internally in the US Government, the National Security Council people were a little apprehensive about this approach. So, I had to get on the phone to President Bush. And I had to say: Wait a minute. We have to do this now. We have a great opportunity. This is the way we ought to go. But it was developed internally within the State Department in consultation with Genscher's people.

It thus appears that Baker had to convince not only the French, the British, and the Soviet governments of the process that had been agreed to with the Federal German government but also the National Security Council, perhaps even President Bush.³⁶

The Soviet Invention of “4+2”

In the Soviet Union the government was putting forward similar ideas, but with other emphases. Anatoli Chernayev claims to have invented the formula 4+2. As a result he wrote about the advisors' meeting on January 25, 1990, in his book, with the German title *Die letzten Jahre einer Weltmacht* (*The Last Years of a World Power*): “However my suggestion was accepted unanimously, the establishment of a body of six persons for the discussion of all problems connected with German reunification: the four victorious powers (USSR, USA, England, France) and the two German states (FRG and GDR).” And he added in a footnote: “Later this concept entered diplomatic usage under the formula ‘Four-plus-Two,’ among the Germans (not without an undertone!) as ‘Two-plus-Four.’”³⁷

At the advisors' meeting of January 25, 1990, Gorbachev had not at first included the GDR, so that Anatoli Chernayev had to remind him that there had to be not five, but rather six potential negotiators.

This means on the one hand that Gorbachev had the “Big Four” of Potsdam in mind, when he wanted to make Kohl the fifth at an expanded peace conference. This indicates also that the Soviet secretary general had already written off the GDR, a few days before the visit of the GDR’s prime minister Hans Modrow, but Chernayev’s proposal of six was recorded in the protocol. It is thus possible to establish the date of the Soviet move over to the idea of negotiation by the victorious powers and the two German states and thereby at the same time giving up the idea of using the CSCE as the vehicle for making decisions about Germany, although Shevardnadze presented it again at the following visit of the American secretary of state—a renewed fluctuation. The “four” who were placed at the beginning revealed the hope of the Gorbachev regime for a dominant role of the four former visitors and thus also the hope for the great weight of the Soviet Union in the negotiations on German unity.³⁸

On the other hand the GDR is necessary for this concept because without it, how could membership of the united Germany in NATO be prevented? “The presence of our troops will not permit this,” Gorbachev said, but these troops were in the GDR, which would soon have the strength to maintain itself and whose population was visibly disappearing toward the FRG. Thus, Gorbachev’s sentence, “And we can remove our armed forces only then when the Americans remove theirs,” required a swift move if the Soviet Union was to continue to use the GDR as collateral, because soon it would cease to be collateral.

It is thus even more surprising that the Soviets did not take the initiative immediately.

The “Keys to Unity”: The Visits of Modrow, Baker, and Kohl to Moscow at the End of January and the Beginning of February

Modrow at Moscow on January 30, 1989

On January 29, Modrow came to Moscow, bearing not only a plan that would later be referred to as the “Modrow plan” by Gorbachev and the Americans but also “disastrous” news about the state of the GDR economy and the increasing desire of the GDR population for reunification. As well he expressed material criticism of Soviet economic policy, which he considered partly responsible for the economic misery in the GDR. Later he wrote: “Hardly any of the crucially necessary raw materials, particularly oil, were still being sent to the GDR, the existing agreements were waste paper. Disastrous was also the Soviet Union’s decision in January to base the payments in the RGW (= COMECON) on foreign currencies and to put an end to the convertible Ruble. That was after

all the actual purpose of the RGW's activities: value mutual shipments with goods not currency." Modrow concludes his later criticism of the Soviet Union with the sharp sentence that he appears to attach to Krenz's meeting with Gorbachev on November 1, 1989: "The child of the Soviet Union, the GDR, lay deathly ill in the intensive care station—and Moscow began (!) to clamp shut the lifelines."³⁹

In his two related books he mentions that he was not informed of the results of the advisors' meeting of January 25, which had taken place only a few days previously. Therefore he also appeared surprised by Gorbachev's answer to the question about German unity from a reporter at the airport, which later became a stock phrase:

*It is the right to self-determination of the Germans to decide this question, the Soviet Union will in no way stand in the way.*⁴⁰

Modrow describes how his plan was developed during his flight there. This plan provided that, after a first phase of economic cooperation of two sovereign states, the areas of state competence would be given to the confederation, "at the end of which, third, the construction of one state in the form of a federation or a German alliance could take place. All in all I considered one to two years as the time frame for this." Such steps toward unity appeared no more than a few days earlier in the "plan of the government of the GDR agreement on cooperation and good neighbourliness between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany," which Modrow had presented to Federal Minister Seiters on January 25.⁴¹ There, in regard to the confederation, it still stated that "the Germans in both states could decide together with their neighbours about their future co-existence."⁴² These changes in favor of the Modrow plan in a few days later reveal again the rapid pace of developments that made responses necessary.

Seiters and Kohl had disregarded this plan from the beginning because they did not want to make a decision about such a suggestion before the elections in the GDR. Now Modrow himself turned it into waste paper—probably because of this West German reaction and the situation in the GDR, which changed daily. On January 27, the oppositional *Neues Forum* had held its official founding congress more or less like a political party and thus for the first time since its declaration of December, which had no political significance, declared in favor of a step-by-step rapprochement of the two German states. On January 28, there followed a meeting of the government with some representatives of the *Runde Tisch* where Ibrahim Böhme of the SPD proposed, surprisingly, to bring the election closer. After a violent discussion March 18 was decided upon as election day—Gregor Gysi (SED/PDS) was also in favor.⁴³ On January 29, at the tenth sitting

of the *Runde Tisch* the dismal economic situation in the GDR was discussed and a new electoral law was suggested, which would concede the same opportunities to the opposition.⁴⁴ After this meeting Modrow drove to the airport and during the flight worked on the “Modrow plan” with his colleague.

In his memoirs Gorbachev is remarkably restrained in regard to his talk with Modrow on January 30. All his meetings with the GDR government leader were more like a “crisis team.” Modrow’s cabinet had achieved much under extremely difficult conditions. Then he quoted a passage by Modrow from their conversation: Modrow had made observations he, Gorbachev, did not find unexpected, that a growing majority of the population of the GDR no longer supported the “idea of two German states.” And “this idea” could no longer be sustained. Particularly in the border regions, such as Thuringia, the reunification tendencies could not be ignored. Modrow, according to Gorbachev, said: “The overwhelming majority of the social forces—apart from the small left-wing sects—group themselves in relation to the idea of unification. If we do not now take the initiative, then the process that has begun will continue spontaneously and violently.”⁴⁵ This could almost have come from Kohl’s mouth, who, with this argument, had to win over his West European colleagues, even briefly Baker, in relation to the tempo of developments.

Gorbachev reported on this meeting:

*Futhermore Modrow said in this meeting: “the Germans are in favour of reunification. They don’t even want to accept the union of two German states any more. They are for fusion.” (...) But (nevertheless) the Modrow team was acting very responsibly at this time in the East. I think that winter was survived only because many issues were successfully resolved. One must do justice to Modrow.*⁴⁶

In his detailed report Modrow presents another picture of this meeting. Although both knew that Modrow had been treated as the GDR-Gorbachev, there was not even a bit of the “euphoria of the casual, cardigan and sweater friendship that the world would see later in the Caucasus between Mikhail and Helmut.” He emphasizes often that he had not been informed of the latest Soviet decision about reunification. That was not surprising because, as a guest, he was allowed to speak first (which is not true); but also in the course of the meeting there were only comments and questions, but he was not informed. And this in spite of the fact that the reunification of Germany was in the forefront of their conversation. Gorbachev expressed hope in France, England, and the SPD. Then both discussed the Modrow plan, as Gorbachev referred to it, that is, the unification in stages and under specific conditions.

Modrow: An important aspect was military neutrality. (...) There was great agreement. There was no critical situation that would have revealed serious differences.

Modrow accuses Gorbachev several times not only of insufficient consultation but also insufficient openness. He did not promise economic assistance, which was crucially necessary; Gorbachev generally referred economic questions to Ryshkov. Gorbachev certainly showed goodwill, “but his responsibility did not bring about any practical results.”⁴⁷ Here then can be seen the clear differences between the statements of Gorbachev and Modrow.

Until now information about this meeting has come almost only from the memoirs of those involved. Therefore, I would like to make public some excerpts from the Soviet protocol of the Gorbachev Foundation.

The meeting between Modrow and Gorbachev took place—as indicated in the title—in the presence of Ryshkov and Shevardnadze. But a remark by the minute-taker at the end indicates that Falin and Fyodorov (of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU) and the acting foreign minister of the GDR, Harry Ott, as well as the GDR ambassador in Moscow, Gerd König, also took part. After the welcome Gorbachev began with the observation that it was a special time, full of unrest and hopes, that for all those who were now politically at the helm, especially in Europe, there were decisions to be made, whose significance extended far beyond the boundaries of the time in which they lived. He did not want to complain about anyone, he said, and then continued with a sentence critical of himself that could be the flavor of his politics of the last months.

Gorbachev: *Everything should have been done earlier, in your country and in our country. But even the volcanologists work only when the ashes fall on their heads.*⁴⁸

Gorbachev still considered himself in agreement with state leaders even of the West when he criticized the West German government:

Now many present the situation as if only the Soviet Union hesitates at the acceleration of the unification of Germany. But in fact it worries France, England, and many other countries. With regard to the West German politicians, they rush persistently to unification, even though officially they declare that they have no intention of driving it ahead.

At the same time the general secretary painted a completely realistic picture:

Lately it appears that Kohl prefers to wait for the formation of a new regime in your country in order to clarify practical matters with it. But until then he is actually supporting the destabilization of the GDR. Apparently he intends in this atmosphere to carry out a deadly blow against the SED, the state structures, and the cadres who are associated with the party.

Gorbachev still had hopes from the people of the GDR, which would prove to be an illusion by the elections six weeks later:

We have the impression that a large proportion of the population of the GDR is interested in preserving their workers' state. But this is not wanted by a very active minority that acts very skilfully and, to be blunt, increasingly audaciously. Apparently the strings lead to Bonn.

Modrow then presented—when asked about the situation in the country—his unvarnished, almost dramatic report on the conditions in the GDR. He began with information about the punishment of those guilty in this development:

Our situation is very difficult. For the GDR this is literally a fateful time. It is always becoming more apparent that the former government is responsible for the extent of the crisis. Yesterday the decision was made to charge Honecker, Mittag, Mielke, and Herrmann with treason. Twenty-nine former functionaries of the central level and 290 people from lower levels were charged. They are charged with violations of human rights and constitutional rights, the destruction of the economy, and misuse of office.

The “anger of the masses,” now that they have found out about the abuses of the former officials, is directed against “the Party as a whole” and against State Security. Its coalition government was the “only organ” “that supported the authority of the state.” Under Krenz there was an attempt to “protect the old leadership.” “A great inconsistency was exposed when the party was renewed.” Modrow reported on the *Runde Tisch*, on the growing number of opposition groups. He was able to accomplish the fact that “the” party was not dissolved, but it would change only its name. On January 22, he suggested to the opposition that it participate in the government. A few parties, however, wanted to leave the government again.

The economic and social tension was growing and was affecting everyday life. Demands for increased pay, longer vacations, and pensions were becoming louder.

Modrow: *This would require additional expenditures of around 40 billion Marks, which was far beyond the actual capabilities of the GDR.*

Gorbachev: *How does the state budget look?*

Modrow: *The whole budget—230 billion Marks. The domestic debt is 170 billion Marks and the foreign debt 20 billion dollars.⁴⁹ We could solve our problems only through the increase of the effectiveness of the economy. But the economic situation is constantly getting worse. Strikes have begun. In many places there are temporary work stoppages or work slowdowns. There is danger of a chain reaction. There are*

difficulties in supplying everyday necessities. The open borders have had negative effects. People fear the instability of our currency. As a result there is a buying boom.

Modrow reported further that the organs of the authorities in the districts were falling apart, that there was increased radicalism. The political leaders were also becoming more fearful so that even a well-known Social Democrat (of the GDR) constantly changed his residence. There were suicides in the State Security. The People's Police, however, was still relatively stable.

Modrow: There are growing negative attitudes toward the Soviet troops. Here too there could be problems. This is particularly the case when troop manoeuvres take place on the firing ranges. In a whole list of places the population was watching the Soviet garrisons very closely.⁵⁰

In January approximately 50,000 people left the GDR, at the end of the year it could be another 500,000. The GDR was being heavily influenced by the FRG, and Kohl and the former chancellor Brandt (SPD) were guiding the election in the GDR. Brandt spoke at events attended by "many thousands" and promoted reunification. The attacks on the SED were increasing. He did not even know any more how many members it still had: 500 or 600,000? Modrow reported on the election day, which had been brought forward to March 18, 1990, though the local elections were still supposed to take place on May 6. A government of national responsibility with oppositional ministers without portfolio was now being put together from the opposition groups of the *Runde Tisch*.

Then came Modrow's passage that Gorbachev quoted in his memoirs:

From all this one must come to the conclusion that the idea of the existence of two German states is already no longer supported by a growing proportion of the population of the GDR. It appears to me that this idea can no longer be sustained.

One sentence in his descriptions reveals Modrow's bitterness in complete clarity: what was being undertaken today "is essentially the attempt to dismantle the post-war structures in Germany." Whoever carries the GDR flag is attacked—"the street is unfortunately now in the hands of the opposition."

Modrow: I consider it extremely important to steer the whole problem relating to the two states on German soil and the steps involved. The issue is that the ideas and formulations that we have used until now no longer suffice. The larger part of the social forces, with the exception of small left-wing sects, group themselves in one way or another around the idea of unification. We have prepared our thoughts on this. I want to ask you, as far as possible now and here to become familiar with these (hands over the document, the "Modrow-Plan").⁵¹

Modrow then was asked the big question: “How can we influence the course of events?” And he gave an answer that had just been rejected by Genscher and Kohl and Baker and *not* brought up by Gorbachev at the advisors’ meeting:

It is important to put the brakes on the process and to move over toward a pan-Europe route; otherwise the influence of the other side will grow and our influence will decrease.

Surprisingly, this “all-Europe idea” of Modrow was not discussed more deeply, neither in the form of a CSCE initiative nor in the form of a European security system, which would be an alternative to NATO and the Warsaw Pact. On the other hand, although it did not fit the logic of this all-Europe idea, Modrow suggested a four-power initiative, which neither of them mentioned in their books.

According to the Soviet protocol Modrow said:

I think the Soviet Union should, together with the other three powers, remember their rights in Germany. It would be good if the four powers could quickly agree on a partnership in the stabilization of the situation.

The two Germanies were not mentioned in relation to this possible four-power idea. But then Modrow asked Gorbachev about the international level, which should advise on Europe and particularly Central Europe.

It is necessary to consider that Baker and Genscher had just developed a concept of 2+4 negotiation and that Gorbachev and Chernayev had already suggested the 4+2 formula. According to this protocol, however, Gorbachev did not express such a thought to Modrow. Modrow suggested explicitly in a misunderstanding of the state of German–American negotiations that the American secretary of state should give a statement about to the four-power responsibility during his upcoming visit to Moscow.

Modrow also asked for Gorbachev’s visit to the GDR:

A great help to us would be a visit by Mikhail Sergeevich (Gorbachev) and Nikolai Ivanovich (Ryshkov) to the GDR, particularly in view of the fact that lately high-ranking politicians from the West are very active in their travels.

Modrow then moved on to economic problems because these had just been discussed with Silayev, head of the ministerial council, without any success:

The problem of oil shipments from the Soviet Union is very serious. In January we received 508 thousand tonnes less than was agreed to. In the first quarter the shipments were reduced by 1,127 million tonnes. This leads to serious harmful consequences for our chemical industry, affects transport and fuel supplies for the

population, the security of the spring orders. In January were able to balance the situation somewhat, but it will not be possible to continue because with the high foreign debt we really have no leeway. I ask again if a solution to this problem, which is very serious for us, could be dealt with at the highest level because it was not possible to reach an agreement with Comrade Silayev.

The official exchange rates were catastrophic for the GDR. The official exchange rate was 3 East Marks for one DM, but the trade exchange was 8:1: “The whole social policy was effective only with a closed border. Now all the social achievements are turning against us” because they are being exploited by speculators.

One can see that Modrow presented to Gorbachev really all the problems that were troubling the GDR government.

Gorbachev declared that this situation in the GDR had not arrived unexpectedly, but still this dramatic, factual description probably caused him deep worry about whether there was any possibility any more of having concepts for their own initiatives or if these would come too late.

Gorbachev replied first with thanks for Modrow’s openness, agreed with him on the significance of this fateful time for the GDR, and also said that everything would have transpired less painfully if something had been done when there was a stable GDR. The Soviet general secretary encouraged the GDR prime minister: “We have not a few opportunities and we use them in London, Paris, and the USA.” Kohl would still see that his practice of destabilization would have negative consequences for everyone, including the FRG. “We intend to tell him this at a personal meeting,” which would soon take place in Moscow. There existed “a special responsibility of our three states for the processes now taking place in the centre in Europe.”

With regard to the United States the Soviet general secretary said:

There are many signs that the USA wants to play the German card. It upsets the outlook of its own position in Europe in the future. They do not like the integration of Western Europe, to say nothing of that of Europe as a whole.

Gorbachev had not presented this summary of American fears and interests in any other talk with a foreign guest, not even with Mitterrand, in whose case it would have definitely made sense. It is, however, necessary to ask oneself why Gorbachev had until then taken the interests of the United States so little into consideration. The thought expressed here shows that at this time Gorbachev preferred to move toward Western Europe, but he at the same time ties this thought to an illusion.

Gorbachev: “Apparently [the USA—AvP] ponders the possibility of a unification and neutralization of Germany even if this leads to the complete withdrawal of American troops (!) from Western Europe.”⁵²

It is hardly possible to understand how Gorbachev could assume such a view at a time when the Federal government was declaring its opposition to any neutralization and fundamentally supported the NATO policy of the United States, if for no other reason than the fact that the British government definitely, the French government with at least clear hints, and the other Western European states with few exceptions criticized reunification, or at least the speed of the process.

Here lies the core of the strategic problem, if you like, the actual crux for Gorbachev: the Western Europeans in their strategy of hindering or delaying German unity welded the Federal government closely to American NATO policy. And Gorbachev contributed to this, to strengthen the Western Europeans in their position against (or at least against quick) reunification. Gorbachev still hoped to influence the Americans toward a withdrawal of their troops from Western Europe. Why should this, however, be in the American interest, if they knew that the German government was on their side? We will see how far Gorbachev tried in his next talk with James Baker on February 7 to achieve this withdrawal of American troops from Europe.

After what was actually the high point of this meeting between Gorbachev and Modrow there were discussions of the usual, but in my opinion, no less illusionary hopes.

Gorbachev: *The main question is the military neutrality of the GDR and FRG or: the question is not that of neutrality in general but rather the military neutrality as a step.*

Thus Gorbachev predicted realistically a future that would be uncomfortable for him, namely one in which “the military political structure in the East would be destroyed” and, furthermore, this would happen before any political security solution between East and West. Through this a “sudden change in the balance of power would result.”

And then again, he said something unbelievable:

The most important thing is the preservation of the state sovereignty of the GDR and non-interference in its affairs.

He made this statement, although both of them had just stated that the GDR would fall and expected this to happen with the elections in around six weeks—or at least that there would be a wide-ranging confederation. The idea of “interference” in the GDR would soon no longer exist, since the majority of the population would vote for German unity. What then would the word “interference” mean? Or did the Soviet general secretary already hope that the Federal Republic

would take over the GDR in order to take over the agreements with the Soviet Union, particularly the economic ones?

It is impossible to escape the impression that here two state leaders who were in distress saw the world and its critical development quite precisely but who still encouraged the one toward another, and carried hopes of a future: neutrality and the withdrawal of American troops from Central Europe as well as the continuing existence of a sovereign GDR. Or, like the government of the FRG, Gorbachev strung Modrow along or was even tantalizing him only until after the elections when there would be a healthier economic partner: the Federal Republic.

Before the end of the meeting Modrow thanked him with the remark that all these “questions that have been brought up were thought through by you. And what you said is a great support for us: we must keep going.”

It is surprising how the general secretary could with these ideas affect a man like Modrow, who came to Moscow full of criticism. If the prime minister of the GDR really did say this, it must have been Gorbachev’s charisma that led Modrow, who actually thought realistically, to make this statement.

But Gorbachev’s strategic considerations, which at least he expressed to Modrow, did not survive two weeks. Possibly he did not want to be completely frank about his true thoughts with Modrow so that the latter would carry on a while longer. Both interpretations might not reflect Gorbachev’s own views of himself: that of the political chess player planning in advance and that of the open and democratically instructive politician who wanted to treat Modrow as a “true friend.”

Modrow remembers one point not quite correctly: if the protocol is correct, Gorbachev also mentioned the advisors’ meeting of January 25 to the prime minister of the GDR.

Gorbachev: Frankly, the great agreement in our [his and Modrow’—AvP] ideas and approaches is explained by the fact that literally the day before, on Friday, we discussed, at this table, with our responsible comrades from the leadership and with specialists, detailed questions that were related to the developments in the GDR. This is why I am reacting in this way to your suggestions.

This does not, however, constitute real information about this meeting; there Modrow is correct.⁵³

At the end of the actual meeting a dispute developed about how to inform the press. Gorbachev was in favor of a publication of the Modrow plan and the results of their meeting before Kohl’s visit to Moscow on February 10, but wondered who should do the informing: Modrow or the *Runde Tisch*.

Ryshkov spoke in favor of publication through the parliament, that is, the People’s Chamber.

Shevardnadze asked Modrow:

Are you sure that you have the support of the government? [Modrow had of course mentioned that he was the only Politburo member of the SED who was still in office, but the attacks on him were increasing.—AvP]

Modrow: *“I think that we will preserve it in its essentials. (...)”*

Shevardnadze: *Probably a struggle is developing on the question of neutrality.*

Gorbachev was, however, in favor of passing over neither the parliament nor the government.

Suddenly and unexpectedly—at least according to the protocol—Modrow asked again:

I wanted to be more specific in the question about oil. Can we count on assistance?

Ryshkov: *That is a complicated question for us. Oil production fell by 17 million tonnes. We are in a difficult position with our friends. We will look again in case the smallest possibility arises. But I repeat again, the situation is very difficult.*

Gorbachev: *In general we will do everything not to allow the destruction of the mutual economic ties. I think its necessity will be understood in the FRG too. It is important to draw the West Germans into a three-sided economic relationship, into the creation of three-sided economic co-operation. After all we do have the greatest ties with the GDR and FRG. Besides the West Germans also have to understand that it hardly have the capability to take over alone the economic problems of the GDR. Are they for example in a position to supply the GDR with raw fuel? With one word, we are in principle in favour of the preservation of the mutually beneficial two-sided ties. These questions must be deliberated with the FRG.*

Thus here, as already at the advisors' meeting five days before, the FRG as the source of financing is brought into play, although all the participants actually knew that so close to the election the Federal government did not want to put any more money into the GDR, but rather afterward when there was another government. In his book *Ich wollte ein neues Deutschland* (I Wanted a New Germany) Modrow says that the conclusion he had drawn from the inadequate assistance from the Soviet Union was “that the future economic stability of the GDR could no longer be achieved without close co-operation with the Federal Republic.” Gorbachev had “not made any statements anyway” regarding the economy, but rather had referred to Ryshkov.⁵⁴ Both of these observations are not quite correct, according to the protocol: Gorbachev promised, more than Ryshkov, to support the GDR—whatever this actually meant—and he selected the FRG to be the loan issuer in the German–Soviet–German triangle.

Modrow speaks completely concretely of “14 to 15 billion Westmarks” that he counted on from the Federal government. “Also for 4–5 billions in goods.” Modrow even said that in the Federal Republic there was talk “of a kind of Marshall Plan.”

He expressed this expectation to the Soviet leadership although recently in Dresden he had been given the cold shoulder by Seiters in financial matters. As has been said before, all of this really does not sound like “encouragement.”

Gorbachev expressed much more indignation about the persecution and abuse of SED functionaries than about the other issues that had been mentioned, particularly after Modrow remarked that there were efforts to “declare the whole party a criminal organization.”

Gorbachev: *That must not be permitted, we must fight.* “Here there could be *only one standard—the law.*”

And finally, completely at the end, the stubborn Modrow repeated his invitation to Gorbachev and Ryshkov. This would be “a great help” because the leaders of the FRG were visiting “the GDR very actively” during the election campaign.

*I think we could accept your invitation. However, I visited you not long ago. Possibly Nikolai Ivanovich (Ryshkov) could undertake this trip to Berlin in response to your request.*⁵⁵

Gorbachev’s understanding of the meaning of this invitation was either very good or very bad: he was to come as an election campaigner to the almost lost GDR. But he did not do the SED/PDS this favor. But what in his view spoke against it? It could only be the fear of a confrontation with the Federal Republic, which he wanted for himself and the Soviet Union as a future economic partner. Or he had internal reasons.

At the press conference in Berlin on February 1 immediately after his return, Modrow stated that the intention of his plan and the meetings with Gorbachev was, besides the four-power responsibility, an economic, monetary, and trade union as well as an alignment of rights and laws.

The Modrow plan also includes the “military neutrality” of a united Germany—at least in the German version that was published on February 2, 1990, in *Neues Deutschland*, but also in the Russian version that Gorbachev had received from Modrow at the beginning of the meeting, that is, *before* Gorbachev’s mentioning of this “main point” in the meeting.⁵⁶ It was assumed that it was Gorbachev who introduced the point of the neutrality of united German as “essential” in further negotiations.⁵⁷ The Soviet protocol of the meeting confirmed this assumption immediately since this “main question” (Gorbachev) was not addressed by Modrow but by Gorbachev. But Modrow said in an interview that since December 1989 he had been in agreement with Gorbachev that reunification could only be carried out on the condition of neutrality.⁵⁸ He does not

express this in relation to the actual situation on January 30 so clearly in his books. Neutrality was in his discussions “an important aspect,” he writes there.⁵⁹ Also almost at the same time at the beginning of February, he noticed that “neutrality was negotiable,” which Kohl found interesting.⁶⁰

At Modrow’s press conference in Berlin on February 1 at least the “military neutrality” was an essential point for the two Germanies on their way “to federation.” Gorbachev informed Chancellor Kohl, even if rather briefly, in a letter of February 2 about his meeting with Prime Minister Modrow mainly about the “goal of the creation of a contract community as a step on the way to the confederation of the two German states”—knowing that for this “step” there was not much time considering that there was an election on March 18.⁶¹

Baker in Moscow on February 9: Germany’s Membership in NATO and the 2+4 Mechanism

On February 7, only eight days after Modrow’s meeting in Moscow and four days after Genscher’s visit to Washington, the American secretary of state James Baker arrived in Moscow,⁶² that is, during the dramatic plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, where all of Gorbachev’s politics were sharply debated and where, at first, Gorbachev could get his way. Baker stayed until February 10 and then left as Chancellor Kohl arrived. Baker’s visit was of particular significance for the further development of the reunification of Germany and especially for the negotiations on the external aspects of unity, that is, the question of the unified Germany’s membership in NATO and question of the 2+4 negotiations.

First Baker met Shevardnadze and expressed there—according to his own report—opposition to growing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and then dealt with the 2+4 negotiations. Shevardnadze opposed the speed of reunification especially among the Germans and favored the CSCE as the suitable negotiation apparatus for the unification of Germany, but confessed, according to Baker, that the four-power mechanism would be brought into play effectively there. He also spoke in favor of a referendum in Germany, without, however, going into detail on the specifics. Apparently the idea of a referendum, which had been brought up by his “archenemy” Yegor Ligachev, had had some effect on his political opponent Shevardnadze. Baker explained Shevardnadze’s position on the fact that he had been attacked in the Central Committee plenum and was accused of being personally responsible for “losing” Eastern Europe and Germany.⁶³

After the meeting with Shevardnadze, Gorbachev received the American secretary of state. Because this meeting was so important⁶⁴ and files and memoirs of the participants differ so much,⁶⁵ I would like to quote longer passages from the Soviet protocols.⁶⁶ Also, Gorbachev’s meeting with Baker is sometimes undervalued and the following meeting with Kohl overestimated.⁶⁷

After the general greetings and a short report of the Soviet general secretary on the Central Committee plenum and the situation in the country, Baker gave advice on the Soviet economy and the necessary construction of a new price system in the Soviet Union. "Sometimes the finance minister in me wakes up, a post that I used to hold. So these are my free pieces of advice and I hope that they are worth something." Then this first section—in the second the other "big" impending political problems such as the German question or the 2+4 negotiations—is concerned with questions of disarmament and arms control, particularly air- and ocean-based cruise missiles, which were of great significance for the Soviet leadership. Shevardnadze had first negotiated with Baker about this alone: now he was with Gorbachev. Baker believed that the United States had gone very far in accommodating Soviet ideas on disarmament.

The Soviet protocol of the meeting of Baker with Gorbachev, in the presence of Shevardnadze and Baker's representative Bartholomew, reveals that Gorbachev was speaking of the question of the strength of the American and Soviet troops in Central Europe, as he had indicated on January 25 and then again in his talk with Modrow on January 30. To start with he made it clear to the American secretary of state that he saw in the American disarmament suggestions only the beginnings of accommodation.

Gorbachev: As we looked at your first proposals it became clear that your implementation will give you a significant advantage, if I am not mistaken, of 2,000 warheads. This is in no way equality. We can not divert from the principle of equality. Neither the congress nor the Supreme Soviet would agree to that.

The range of the rocket and above all the regulation of armament limits, also of chemical weapons, also played an essential role for Gorbachev. For the elaboration of the details Marshall Akhromeyev was brought in; he agreed with Gorbachev. Baker's under secretary of state Reginald Bartholomew took over the role of the specialist on the American side. One further critical point of Gorbachev concerned the American proposal of the reduction of troops in Central Europe to 195,000.

Gorbachev: You propose a level of 195,000 persons. We agree, but not for Central Europe, but rather for the whole European zone, i.e. the Soviet and American troops that are in Europe outside their national territories. If this is not completely acceptable to you because you have troops not only in Central Europe but also in several other countries, we can try another approach. That is a level of 225,000 persons for the Soviet and the American armies in Europe. Thus our suggestion is flexible. The second number of 225,000 persons takes into account the fact that you have troops in Great Britain, Italy, Turkey, and several other countries

totalling 65,000 persons. Because these troops have their duties and regulations, we thought that for you a level of 225,000 might be more acceptable to you.

Baker: *We will look at these numbers and make an effort to answer in the second part of today.*

Only two days later, on February 11 in Ottawa, there was little left of this wished for equality, as we will see in the next chapter.

Gorbachev became clearer in the question of the limitation of nuclear tests and the way he brought this into the discussion, moreover, shines a light on his personal style in such negotiations:

Now on to another question: not long ago, as I appeared at the council of the Ecological Forum, I said that we are ready on any determined day to end nuclear tests, if the United States would join us. And really the whole room got up and applauded. This information is for your consideration.

Even if one is speaking of a gradual reduction of nuclear tests, the goal of a complete end to such tests should not be forgotten. According to the Soviet protocol Baker answered:

Baker: *We are also in favour of a step-by-step process.*

Gorbachev: *It is necessary that this process proceed without interruption.*

Shevardnadze: *Yesterday the Secretary of State agreed with this position.*

Baker: *Yes, we are not turning away from the idea of uninterrupted negotiations and the long-term goal of the end to nuclear tests. The [American—AvP] president does not diverge from this position. Our task now is to complete the work on the protocols on the control of the two treaties over the limitation of nuclear tests. (...) I can assure you that, as I already said yesterday, we will not abandon the step-by-step process and the long-term goal of the talks.⁶⁸*

Then, according to the protocol, Baker immediately moved on to the problems of the CSCE, since in his talks with Shevardnadze it had become clear to him that the Soviet foreign minister saw the CSCE as the main forum for the solution of the large European questions, including German reunification.⁶⁹

Baker: *We know that you are interested in an all-Europe meeting at the highest level. We have studied your suggestions. At the beginning we were rather distant, because it was not clear what goal this meeting was supposed to have. However, not long ago, we declared our agreement to participate in this meeting and we have stressed three principal items. First: this meeting should be a step for the preparation for the all-European summit conference that is planned for 1992. Second: it necessary at this meeting to sign an agreement on the reduction of conventional troops in*

Europe or at least use it to force movement in the direction of an agreement. And finally, third: we would like that at this meeting the agreement on our suggestions about free elections as a human right be established.

Gorbachev declared himself in agreement in principle, but wanted this conference to take place before the party congress of the CPSU so that there was time in the Soviet Union to carry out “free elections of the party delegates.” As later history shows, Baker’s acceptance of the CSCE was not one that even in any degree influenced the continuing progress of German reunification.

All of this and other points of discussion not mentioned here show in the Soviet protocol an extremely cooperative, clear, and simple American secretary of state. On the other hand, in the second part of the talks, he spoke very directly about the unification of Germany:⁷⁰

Baker: *Early today I had a thorough discussion with Minister Shevardnadze on the German question. I would like to learn your opinion in this matter too.*

Gorbachev: *I would like to listen to you.*

Baker: *First, this process is moving much more quickly than anyone could have expected last year and even in December of last year. In the course of the last week I have met with the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, and the FRG. All agree with this opinion. On 18 March the people of the GDR will vote. In its greatest majority it is in favour of unification, elects leaders who support the idea of the unification of Germany. Soon the two German states will begin the discussion of the internal aspects of unification, such questions as the unification of governments, parliaments, a common capital, common currency, economic unity. De facto this is already taking place.*

I am familiar with the uneasiness of the Soviet Union, about which we spoke in great detail with the minister [Shevardnadze—AvP]. At the same time we understand your statement, made a short time ago, and the presence of E. A. Shevardnadze in Brussels in December of last year as an expression of the fact that a unification is unavoidable. The most important thing is that this process takes place under stable conditions and secures stability in the future. We think that frameworks or mechanisms for decisions in these questions that affect the external aspects of unification are necessary. At the same time it is necessary to be extremely careful in approaching the creation of such mechanisms, in order not to set off a flare-up of German nationalism. This task should be undertaken only when the two Germanies have begun to deal with the domestic aspects of unification. We have begun a preliminary discussion with the French and the Germans, so far without a bias toward an agreement, on the possibility of the creation of a mechanism “two + four.”

Thus, in quite direct language, are named here the first essential issues that concerned Baker and also the West German leaders. Baker made clear that he had

spoken with Genscher and with the foreign ministers of the two other Western victorious powers who wanted to temporarily preserve the status (Thatcher) or favored a four-power conference on Germany. This is not without significance because it made clear to the Soviets with extreme urgency that the discussions of January 25 were already out of date. The issue was not a conference of six, but rather the two German governments, which did not want to let the victorious powers negotiate about them and therefore wanted to be in first place and not the other way around, as the advisors' meeting of January 25 had suggested. Gorbachev asked cautiously from the perspective of the advisors' meeting:

I wanted to ask you what you think about the "four + two" mechanism.

Baker: *I think it is better to have a "two + four" mechanism. I explained to Mr. Shevardnadze why in our opinion a four-sided approach would not work. I think that the idea of the use of the CSCE process would also be hard to achieve because it would be very cumbersome. I would also like to emphasize that I have no guarantee from the FRG that the Germans would agree to "two + four."*

In 2001 Anatoli Chernayev, Gorbachev's Western advisor, considered this a weak response list because "Baker had actually already spoken with Genscher" (which Baker had not hidden, "only" his positive stance on the 2+4 mechanism). But, according to Anatoli Chernayev, Gorbachev was also "tricky" in his pretence that he was discussing this question "for the first time."⁷¹

Baker continues:

Of course the fears of Germany's neighbours must be taken into account in the working out of the external aspects of unification to some extent. Therefore it is very possible that the CSCE forum could be used in the ratification of an agreement that is worked out in the framework of the "two +four" mechanism.

What appears here in the Soviet protocol as Baker's opinion has a clearly different direction from what Baker gives in his memoirs. In them there is no mention that the CSCE could be used for "ratification" of what would result from the negotiations in the framework of the 2+4. On the contrary, in his memoirs Baker contradicts Shevardnadze who wanted to bring the CSCE into play because the CSCE was in total too "unwieldy." This seems to be only a small difference, but it immediately becomes significant if one considers that here in the Soviet protocol Baker appears to make concessions toward a total European solution. It can be postulated that this difference is the result of different protocols or in the skilful way in which Baker handled the negotiations, making such declarations without any commitment, if they were suited to persuade the Soviet side, but then later playing them down, or the result of both. It is also possible that Baker late played

down this agreement regarding the CSCE because Bush had not yet taken up this approach and which in his letter to Kohl of the same day, February 9, played no role, as in later negotiations.

Baker: *We have fought together with you, brought Europe to peace together. Unfortunately we then used this peace poorly and that led to the "Cold War." At that time we could not act together. Now that basic and rapid upheavals are taking place in Europe, we have a very favourable opportunity to work together in the interest of the preservation of peace. I would very much like for you to know: neither the president nor I intend to derive any one-sided benefit from the process that is now taking place.*

Immediately after this concession to the CSCE—this is what it must have been in Baker's eyes—and after this exceptionally polite statement, that they did not want to derive any one-sided benefit from this process, Baker moved on the *main point*, namely *the question of neutrality*, which now did indeed reveal most clearly the American desire for a one-sided benefit:

Baker: *Now a few more points. We are with determination opposed to Germany becoming neutral. The West Germans also told us that such a decision would not be satisfactory for them. I want to explain to you why. If Germany becomes neutral it will not necessarily become anti-militaristic. On the contrary, instead of relying on American nuclear deterrence, it might decide to create its own nuclear weapon potential. All our Western European allies and many East European countries have given us to understand that they want the United States to maintain its military presence in Europe. But I want to assure you that if our allies tell us that they are opposed to our presence, we will take our army home.*

Shevardnadze: *With regard to your allies I don't know, but the unification of Germany could conceivably require [the American withdrawal—AvP].*

Baker: *If that is the case, our army will go home. We leave every country that does not want our presence. The American people have always strongly supported this. However, if the current West German leadership becomes head of the united Germany, this leadership told us, that they are opposed to our withdrawal.*

These are considerations that were an element of the German policies of both states, since the 1950s, since the time of the American secretary of state John Foster Dulles and his Soviet counterpart Vyacheslav Molotov, namely the tying of Germany to the two military alliances of the Cold War, NATO, and the Warsaw Pact, in order to be able to fetter a potentially nationalistic or aggressive German politics.⁷² There was only one small difference from the 1950s: now only NATO actually existed because the Warsaw Pact was in the process of dissolution.

These passages from the Soviet protocol essentially confirm the Western statements made to this point on the question of Baker's arguments in favor of NATO membership for the united Germany. Beyond this they allow no doubt that the Soviets were informed by this time at the latest through Baker's visit of the West's position opposing neutrality and favoring the continued presence of American troops in Europe even after reunification—and more, that they had to take this position into consideration.

Baker: *And finally: the mechanism that leads to presence of the USA in Europe is NATO. If NATO is dissolved, there will no longer be a mechanism for the presence of the USA in Europe.*

This is a previously unfamiliar point. Here is enunciated the almost hegemonic claim of the American government of the time on Europe, but here also lies the weak point in Baker's logic from the point of the view of the Soviet Union and its interests. Why should the presence of American troops be in the Soviet interest? Only because of the potential threat of a united neutral Germany? Were there not other mechanisms for tying Germany, for example through alterations in the structure of NATO or even of both military alliances, as expressed again by Genscher in Tutzing? Or through a new European security system? What could Gorbachev had expected from an agreement with this American, possibly common Western rationale? Or was it too late for all these other possibilities; was it realized too late in Moscow that, because of such long hesitation, the European train had already left in the opposite direction and without the Soviet Union?⁷³

Baker anticipated some of these questions—Gorbachev had not yet responded—and made an offer:

We understand that it is important not only for the Soviet Union but also for the other European countries to give the guarantee that, if the United States maintains its presence in Europe within the framework of NATO, an expansion of the jurisdiction or the military presence of NATO will not take place by even one inch in Eastern direction.⁷⁴ We intend that consultations and discussions within the framework of the "two + four" will guarantee that the unification of Germany will not lead to the expansion of the military organization of NATO to the east.

This "guarantee" is the decisive point: the American secretary of state offers in the case of reunification a NATO, which will not expand to the East—not even to the region of the then former GDR (but with American troops in Europe in the framework of NATO). This was how the Soviets had to understand it and this is how it was understood. However, at the end Gorbachev did not put this "guarantee" in a juridical form according to international law. From a Soviet point of view, that should turn out to be a big mistake. And Baker wrote by

hand in his personal notes: “End result: Unified Ger. anchored in a *changed (polit.) NATO—*whose juris. would not move *eastward!” as Sarotte quoted.⁷⁵ However, facing Gorbachev’s unclear statements in this talk Baker might exaggerate the success of his meetings in Moscow.

After his “guarantee” Baker continued immediately:

These are our thoughts. It is possible that another approach can be found. We still do not have the agreement of the Germans to this kind of solution. I have presented it to Genscher, but he said only that he will consider it. (...) Now I have presented this approach to you. I repeat, it is possible that something much better can be come up with, but so far we have not succeeded in this.

Baker’s explanations were a clear, polite, and skillfully formulated direct serving up of American interests. Now it was Gorbachev’s turn; he had listened to Baker for a long time and interrupted him only once.

In the face of these suggestions that conflicted with Soviet interests, he answered surprisingly hesitantly, thoughtfully, carefully, and partly unclearly, in a style completely opposite to Baker’s.

Gorbachev: *I would like to say that, in general, we share these trains of thought (!). The process has begun, it develops. We must try to adapt to the new realities. A mechanism is needed (...) so that stability in Europe—a very important centre in world politics—is not destroyed. Naturally we have some differences from you in our view of the situation. I think this is not terrible. The most important thing is that the situation is not approached too simplistically.*

Because the question, what kind of Germany the united Germany was to become, was seen differently in Paris, in London, in Warsaw, in Prague, in Budapest. Jaruzelski had just told him that the Germany question was a special question particularly for Poland. And then Gorbachev quoted Jaruzelski, apparently to make his position clearer in an indirect way:

(Jaruzelski) expressed the opinion that the presence of American and Soviet troops in Europe was an element of stability in Europe.

No one would express openly their fears of the Germans and the Germans would not today make claims on the Sudetenland or Austria. “But what would happen tomorrow?” France and Britain were also worried whether they would remain “big players in Europe”⁷⁶ after reunification. In Baker’s version of this section Gorbachev’s answer is substantially more positive: “We have to adjust to this new reality,” is what Baker heard Gorbachev say, “and not be passive in ensuring that stability in Europe is not upset. Well, for us and for you, regardless of our

differences, there is nothing terrifying in the prospect of a united Germany.” This is an idea that appears to be almost the opposite in the Soviet protocol. The fear of possible future German expansion becomes in the Soviet protocol an essential line of Gorbachev’s reasoning. For Baker it is also surprising that here for the first time Shevardnadze rejects a point with which Gorbachev agreed openly, namely the lack of a threat from a united Germany (but only in the American protocol).⁷⁷

According to the Soviet protocol, Gorbachev continued that the United States and the Soviet Union had it easier with Germany because Kohl and his team knew what significance these two (super-) powers had.

In this “superpower” comment Baker believes that he saw the reason why Gorbachev thought differently from Shevardnadze; there was something that Gorbachev, unlike his foreign minister, denied: “the decline of the Soviet Union as a great power.”⁷⁸

Gorbachev: *With regard to the mechanism: “four + two” or “two + four:” a mechanism that would base itself on international law, would give an opportunity for consultation and judgement of the situation. Perhaps it is necessary after our exchange of opinion—you, as you consider necessary and we in the same way—to proceed with consultations with our partners in East and West.*

This does not yet mean that there is unanimity between us, but it is necessary to search for it. You said that the FRG expressed opposition to this approach (the 2+4) [which Baker had not expressed in this way—AvP]. As far as Modrow is concerned, based on our consultations with him, he supports such an approach. Tomorrow we can ask Kohl what he thinks about it.

Here again it becomes clear that Gorbachev is playing for time, although it was precisely this that he did not have in the face of the imminent elections in the GDR. It also shows that he apparently had no clear approach, he did not agree with the 2+4 mechanism, but did not reject it either, remains—differently from what was indicated on and January 25 and 30—cautious in the question of neutrality and NATO, but wants to wait to see what Kohl says, although he supposedly knew that he had agreed with the Americans.⁷⁹

Baker: *This would be good. But I would like to express a warning. If we have a chance to persuade the Germans to support the “two + four” approach, then only after 18 March, only after the GDR’s decision, after they begin to discuss the internal aspects of unification. Otherwise they will say: the pressure of the four powers is unacceptable, unification is a purely German affair. Our approach takes into account that the internal aspects of unification really are the affair of the two Germanies. However, the external aspects must be dealt with with consideration of*

the security interests of Germany's neighbours. Besides we have to discuss the status of Berlin. If we approach the situation in this way, there is the chance that the Germans will agree with the proposed mechanism.

I have to admit again that I did not discuss this at all with the chancellor, Genscher also gave me no answer. He said only that he would look closely at this approach. I think he supports it. But the chancellor, that is something else.⁸⁰ He can be considered after all a candidate in the upcoming elections.

Gorbachev: *That is a very important factor that shapes the situation.*

Baker: *That is the wonder of democracy. He must be very careful so that the impression is not created in Germany that he is putting the question of unification into other hands.*

Immediately at the end of this section of the conversation Gorbachev takes a turn that underlines once more the differing speaking styles of him and Baker: "I want to tell you about a symposium," said Gorbachev according to the Soviet protocol but not anywhere else so far, "which was recently organized by the Evangelical Academy [*in Germany—AvP*] and in which representatives of all parties and groups of the FRG and the GDR participated, except for Modrow's party." And a long report followed:

In the result of the consultation a large proportion of the participants spoke in favour of a confederation. The representatives of the GDR emphasized that the closer economic ties between the two Germanies were not to mean the sale of or the colonization of the GDR. They said that they did not want to be spoken to as one spoke with small children.

Here Gorbachev expressed, as he often did by quoting the statements of others, very early the idea of the danger of colonization that was later to play a large role.

Second conclusion: unification should take place with respect for the existing borders and with the preservation of the membership of both parts of Germany in NATO and in the Warsaw Pact only in the territory of the FRG and GDR at the present time.

There were differing opinions at this conference of the Evangelical Academy on the question of neutrality and the membership of a united Germany in the military alliances. The majority had spoken in favor of membership in both alliances, which would become political structures.

Gorbachev: *The most surprising thing was Brandt's appearance. He confirmed that no one should interfere in the self-determination of Germany. He said that the Germans could not wait for the CSCE process, that closer relations of all Europe*

could not precede the unification of Germany; on the contrary, a unification of Germany must come before. He rejected the confederation and spoke in favour of a federal German state. In this the West German part should remain in NATO, and it was necessary to think about what was to happen with the GDR. Many representatives of the FRG criticized Brandt for fuelling German nationalism, that he is attempting to outdo even Kohl.

Only a few weeks later Willy Brandt's position, which is quoted here and which was very close to Genscher's position, which had already been presented, was the general position—even including the special status of the GDR. In Bush's letter to Kohl on February 9,⁸¹ which has already been quoted, there is also this position of Brandt, in which Bush incorporated a remark of the then NATO general secretary Wörner regarding the special status of the GDR,⁸² but *not* Baker's agreement against any expansion of NATO, which in this case referred to the expansion to the GDR.

In opposition to Brandt, Gorbachev mentioned the brother of the president Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, who warned of the intensification of nationalism in the Soviet Union as a danger not only for perestroika, or Günter Grass, who expressed his concern about an aggressive chauvinism in a united Germany. Besides, the economic costs of unification were given as 50 billion Marks for the next eight to ten years, for which reason people should think three times "if unification is worth it."

Gorbachev: *What an interesting array of opinions. I have told you about them in such detail because I think that one should not allow these emotional waves to influence and be influenced by such pressure, and should not diverge from the decisions and predictions about what it all means and how this process can be channelled. In both German states there are forces that see danger. And this is important. I would like to ask you to tell the president that we will stay in touch with you, that we want to exchange information and if necessary ideas about this problem with you.*

Baker: *I will definitely do this. I would like you to understand: I do not say that we should yield to the emotional wave. But I think that internal integration in Germany will soon be a fact. Under these conditions it is our duty to the peoples, our duty for peace in the whole world, to do everything possible to plan such mechanisms as will guarantee stability in Europe. That is why I have suggested this mechanism.*

After Gorbachev's answer to Baker's suggestions, which was rather balanced and thoughtful but not very concrete, the American secretary of state led the Soviet president back to what was for him the essential thing.

I want to ask you a question that must absolutely be answered now. Assuming that unification takes place, what is for you more reasonable: a united Germany outside

of NATO, completely independent, without American troops—or a united Germany that has ties to NATO but with a guarantee that the jurisdiction or the army of NATO would not be expanded over the current border to the east.

To this direct question that almost demanded an answer Gorbachev responded only:

We will ponder all of this. We intend to discuss all these questions at the level of the leadership.

And then comes the only concrete sentence on the problem that had been mentioned, but it did not require—as would be expected after the advisors' meeting and Modrow's visit—the neutrality of a united Germany:

Gorbachev: *It is of course clear that an extension of the NATO zone is not acceptable.*

Baker: *We agree. (!)*

Gorbachev: *It is entirely possible⁸³ that in this situation, as it is now developing, the presence of the American army can play a constraining role (!). Possible that we must, as you said, think about this, that a united Germany will possibly seek ways of retrofitting its armaments [rearmament?—AvP], as happened after Versailles, the creation of a new army. In fact, if this takes place outside of European structures, history can repeat itself. The technical and industrial capabilities allow Germany to do this. If it existed in the framework of European structures, this process could be prevented. It is necessary to think about all of this.*

The Soviet leadership had, however, been thinking “about all of this” for a long time and the question arises why Gorbachev did not express more clearly the interests that had already been made much clearer at the advisors' meeting 15 days previously. His final remarks are also more than vague.

Much of what you say appears realistic. So let us ponder. It is not possible to come to any kind of conclusion now. You know that the GDR is tightly allied with us and the FRG is our first trading partner in the West. Seen historically, Germany was always a strong partner of Russia. We and you have the opportunity to influence the situation. And we should use this opportunity if we work out a rational approach that takes in to consideration the interests of our countries and of other countries, if we work out an appropriate mechanism. These possibilities should not be underestimated. Naturally it is now becoming very difficult because of the election, the embers of emotion that heat up the society. We will observe the situation and decide how to proceed.

These are again only general statements and warnings but no political concept.

The assurance, given twice by Baker, that NATO would not be expanded eastward by even one inch with the unification of Germany was of enormous significance for the Soviet politicians. Even if Gorbachev mentioned it only in a brief remark in his later memoirs⁸⁴ and did not bring it into his later negotiations, it played later a greater role for him and especially for his opponents.

Thus, in 1999 in an interview with me, Yegor Ligachev, Gorbachev's main opponent in the Central Committee of the CPSU, repeated indignantly that Baker had

*given guarantees from the side of USA, and the side of Germany, that no NATO expansion to the east would follow or would take place. Everyone can see what has happened now. There is an unstoppable expansion of NATO to the east. And this is a movement toward the CIS borders.*⁸⁵

He charges Gorbachev with agreeing to everything in order not to endanger relations with the West but in doing so he had accepted a threat to the Soviet Union.

This agreement is not repeated by Bush or Baker, not even in Baker's memoirs, which otherwise report in great detail on his meetings with Shevardnadze and Gorbachev on February 8, 9, and 10 in Moscow. But his agreement is—as we have seen—definitely confirmed by the Soviet protocol and Baker will be criticized for it immediately after his return (see below).

Later Modrow summarizes the results of the Baker visit:

*Baker first had a meeting with Shevardnadze, then on the 9th a meeting with Gorbachev. And there exactly is the crucial point off the table. There is no more talk of a militarily neutral Germany; instead now the process of German reunification will be carried out without any conditions from the side of the Soviet Union in this question.*⁸⁶

This summary is correct in that Gorbachev did not insist on the neutrality of a united Germany with Baker, yes, did not even mention what he had indicated only ten days before, but rather Shevardnadze had. One can add that Gorbachev also dropped the other condition that he wanted to express, namely the parallel withdrawal of the American and Soviet troops, but rather permitted a larger contingent of American than Soviet troops. Thus it was no wonder that Baker reported euphorically on this meeting and saw it as a breakthrough in the question of the NATO membership of a united Germany. It would be wrong, however, to observe that Gorbachev had not expressed any conditions: but it was a different one, namely no expansion of NATO—and this was exactly what Baker had agreed to bindingly.

As for the main result of the meeting between Baker and Gorbachev it is possible to summarize: the Soviet general secretary did not oppose clearly Baker's ideas of a membership of the united Germany in NATO, the idea of the presence of American troops in Central Europe, even agreed with Baker in general, was even coy in accepting German unity, and hinted that he would not oppose Germany's membership in NATO. Baker could indeed interpret Gorbachev's vagueness in this direction. The main Soviet condition, as expressed in Gorbachev's previous formulation, namely the "simultaneous withdrawal of the American and Soviet troops" or even "neutrality of the united Germany" as part of this unification process, was not raised here. Instead Baker declared unconditionally that there would be no expansion of NATO to the east.⁸⁷

Kohl in Moscow on February 10: A Further Key to Unity

On February 10, Chancellor Kohl flew to Moscow for meetings with Gorbachev that were finally not to take place. His arrival came at a time when conditions were relatively favorable for his policy: in the GDR there were signs in favor of unity, the election had been brought forward to March 18, an assortment of opposition parties and groups were being formed, and his CDU joined the bloc party Ost-CDU and garnered more allies. The SPD took another approach through its own Eastern SDP, which was still weakly organized. Modrow and the SED-PDS were encountering increasing difficulty, but it appeared that his government would still survive until the elections.⁸⁸

In international relations working with the United States bore fruit: the rigid opposition of the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, crumbled. It was necessary for Mitterrand to grasp that German unification was going to come quickly and his hope for a *progression* of first a European and then a German unification was being buried; also the cautious feelers he had sent out in the direction of a (however unclear) European peace order spreading from the East–West borders met with no positive response—not even Gorbachev had reacted. But still the Federal German government had agreed to the Euro and the European monetary and social union—which was extremely important for Mitterrand.

Even the Polish prime minister had only limited reservations: Mazowiecki hinted in a recently written letter only in a very veiled form at the border question, but spoke instead more clearly of the desire for credit.⁸⁹ Still the Oder–Neisse border remained a source of criticism of Kohl.

From the United States, however, came a push that expressed a characteristic fear of the Americans and could cause inconvenience for Kohl. The US assistant secretary of state Eagleburger spoke on January 30 in Bonn "on behalf of Secretary of State Baker" of "the" "worry" that the European Union might act without considering NATO. In NATO there was an agreement that it "was necessary to

continue to *talk*” about a “CSCE II summit conference.” “But then the EU had decided in another forum that this summit would *take place*. This would tie the USA’s hands. (...) Because the USA was not represented in EU bodies, NATO remains the first choice; it remained the basic tie to Europe for the USA.”

This was for Bonn an essentially complicated, perhaps potentially even explosive, issue because behind it was the problem of whether NATO interests and European unity (East and West) would always be compatible during this process of German and European unification. What would happen if Gorbachev took a clear position against the presence of American troops in Europe—as a condition of unification? What if he insisted on the simultaneous withdrawal of Soviet and American troops from Central Europe? Here was a genuine risk for Kohl’s policy of unity.

In the meantime we know that Kohl was never placed in this position, because Gorbachev “did not play this card” and had already on January 25 at least considered the withdrawal of Soviet troops, without demanding that the Americans do the same, and he had also not demanded this of Baker at the meeting on February 9. But apparently Kohl did not know this yet. It became clear to him only shortly before his meeting with Gorbachev from Baker’s letter of February 10.

Portugalov’s statement, that they had not “put the fat man on the rack to get him to decide between unity and a tie to the West,” would have to have been modified from the Soviet perspective under these circumstances: the Soviet side did not put Kohl on the rack to make him decide between unity and the simultaneous withdrawal of the American and Soviet troops from Central Europe or, more precisely, to decide in favor of a European security system.

The chancellor tried to calm Eagleburger with comments about the “equally significant” friendship with Paris and Washington: he would “therefore not participate in any plans to force the USA out, but rather would remain strictly in opposition to this.”⁹⁰

A further cause for this American concern was given by the French “Sherpa” Jacques Attali, Mitterrand’s advisor. At the meeting of the representatives of the leaders of the G-7 countries (so-called Sherpas) Attali had said, according to the Bonn protocol: “Europe must adjust to a time when the USA and the Soviet were out of Europe.”⁹¹ Here the French position pointing to an independent Europe becomes visible.

Nevertheless, Chancellor Kohl now really needed only the Soviet agreement for reunification and this under the most favorable conditions for the Federal German government: no neutrality of the united Germany, no withdrawal of American troops from Central Europe, also no simultaneous withdrawal of American and Soviet troops, and continued German membership in NATO. What still had to be clarified was the military status of the (former) GDR territory. Another question was: what did the new relationship to what kind of Warsaw Pact look like?

On February 7 Horst Teltschik had written a submission for the chancellor titled “Gesamteuropäische Sicherheitsstruktur’. Sicherheitspolitik der Bundesregierung auf dem Wege zur deutschen Einheit” (All-European Security Structure: Security Politics of the Federal Government on the Way to German Unity).⁹² The goals were, among others, the stability of all of Europe and respect for the security interests of all the involved states. He referred to the proven security structures in Europe, on the essential US presence. The membership of the GDR and the Federal Republic in different military alliances was “a problem.” Teltschik concluded:

A united Germany will be neither partly nor completely demilitarized. (...) A united Germany will remain a member of NATO and the WEU (West European Union).

And then something there follows something new, though it had emerged since Genscher’s Tutzing speech, since the debates in the United States between the White House, the security staff, and the secretary of state, and since the speech of NATO general secretary Wörner in Hamburg about the special status of the GDR in NATO as a consensus between Bonn and Washington.

However, no units and facilities of the alliance [NATO—AvP] will be moved across the existing internal German border towards the east.⁹³

This means, modifying Genscher’s Tutzing position, that all of Germany would be in NATO, but the forces of the members would remain only in West Germany. This position was different from the one Baker took in Moscow. It did however agree with decisions of the White House at this time; these were defined and elaborated in a letter to Chancellor Kohl of February 9—exactly at the time when Baker was giving his pledge not to expand NATO to the east.

Although officially the discussion was still always about longer time periods until reunification, all settings of the course for the future primarily in Bonn and Washington amounted to decisions that would be made soon after the elections in the GDR, if there were no fundamental objections from the Soviet side. When Scowcroft met Teltschik on February 3 in Munich, he was—according to Teltschik in his diary—“deeply impressed by the tempo of the development and sensed that after the election on 18 March everything could move very quickly towards unification.” Scowcroft then asked: “What collateral did the Soviet Union have that could be used against the Federal government? (...) I referred to the four-power responsibility. The United States will not go along with that, Brent responded. This would also make it [*the USA—AvP*] hesitate to agree to a CSCE summit because the Soviet Union could be tempted to turn it into an ersatz peace conference on Germany.”⁹⁴

Nothing of what Scowcroft and Teltschik feared from the Soviet Union had remained in the strategic considerations of the Soviet leaders, other than using their own troops as a pawn, but this pawn was also just being eliminated.

Two Letters to Kohl

Two American letters reached Chancellor Kohl for the preparation of his meeting with Gorbachev on February 10: a letter from Bush (February 9) and one from Baker (February 10), which reported on his meeting with Gorbachev and which he had left with the American ambassador in Moscow. Kohl and Baker had just missed each other there.

George Bush had to decide between two concepts that related to the military status of the GDR territory after unification: one that was close to Genscher's Tutzing position, that is, no extension of the military structures of NATO onto GDR territory with a general membership in the alliance; and another different concept that added all of the GDR area to NATO, thereby "granting guarantees of protection" to it, but also giving it a special status that affected the stationing of the members' forces.⁹⁵ This accorded with the decisions of the chancellor's office on February 7, even if the differences appear minor.⁹⁶

In the letter from George Bush of February 9 that arrived at the same time with a personally written German letter,⁹⁷ there was first a reinforcement of the mutual German–American basis:

We will in no case allow the Soviet Union to use the four-power mechanism as a lever against you in order to force you to create a Germany as the Soviet Union would like it to be and at the tempo it wants.

He then continues with the problems of the NATO membership of the united Germany:

Naturally this is also something that the German people and the representatives they elect have to decide. Therefore I have received your rejection of the idea of neutrality [in the Modrow plan—AvP] and your decisive statement that a united Germany would remain a member of NATO with great satisfaction. In this regard I welcome the idea that one aspect of NATO membership of a united Germany could be the conferring of a military special status for the area of the GDR. We believe that such an approach can be compatible with both the security of Germany and that of its neighbours—in the context of an essential, perhaps finally a complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Central and (!) Eastern Europe.

Here an essential approach of American politics in connection with German unity becomes clear: the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Central and

Eastern Europe. What about the American troops then, to take up Gorbachev's idea from the advisors' meeting of January 25? Bush's answer was:

To strengthen your position I said that I expect that Germany will remain a member of NATO and at the same time I mentioned that NATO's role will constantly change, that its political role⁹⁸ will gain more significance. We are certainly also in agreement that the presence of American forces on your territory and the continuation of nuclear deterrence are decisive for ensuring stability in this time of change and uncertainty. Even if the Soviet Union, as we hope, removes all its troops from Eastern Europe, it will still remain by far the most powerful single military power in Europe. US troops in Germany or elsewhere in Europe, protected by a reliable deterrence, must, I think, will help to preserve the security of the West as long as our allies want to have our military presence in Europe as part of a common defence.⁹⁹

This is the complete American strategy, as had already been indicated in May 1989, now on the way to success: the Soviet troops withdraw, the American troops remain in Europe, including Germany. The only compensation that is offered is no allied troops in the GDR in accordance with its special status. Could Gorbachev accept this? Would he still try again to play his actual trump card, his own troops in Germany? Or had the Soviet leadership accepted the American politics of hegemony in Central Europe; would it withdraw not only from Central Europe but also from other Eastern European countries?

Baker immediately made this new line his own, according to his rivals in the White House. This meant Baker's assurance¹⁰⁰—no expansion of NATO jurisdiction by an inch to the east with reunification—had been valid for just a single day.

The American secretary of state informed the Federal German chancellor in his letter on the results of his meeting on the German question with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, particularly about the Soviet concerns:

- Above all whether reunification might not endanger security and stability in Europe
- Whether the borders would be permanently accepted by the Germans
- Whether the current assurances would be maintained by later governments
- Whether the security of the other European countries—considering historical experiences (with the Germans)—could be guaranteed

Baker had assured Gorbachev that the Federal German government would take these concerns seriously, but no one except the Germans could decide the fate of Germany. Baker emphasized that he had stressed the autonomous German responsibility for the internal aspects of reunification. The external aspects were not to be dealt with through the instrument of the four powers, which

the Germans would not accept, but rather through a 2+4 mechanism. He also expressed opposition to the CSCE as an instrument, though it could sanction what was decided in the 2+4 arrangement. Everything could begin only after the elections of March 14. He had also told Gorbachev that he had spoken with Genscher about all this, but not with “you,” the chancellor. Gorbachev had described these ideas as “acceptable in this situation.” Baker continued that he had informed Gorbachev that Germany wanted to remain in NATO, that this was also the view of the United States, that he therefore asked Gorbachev: would you rather see Germany outside of NATO, independent and without American troops, or do you want a united Germany with tight ties to NATO and with the guarantee that NATO would not expand by one inch to the east?¹⁰¹ Gorbachev had answered that they would consider everything in a kind of seminar of the Soviet leadership. In general Gorbachev was not definite. The 2+4 mechanisms and the CSCE frame might be suitable for helping him to go further.¹⁰²

Clearly the American secretary of state had written this letter in Moscow before he had moved over to the slightly different line of the president.

The Conversation

Thus prepared, even with small shadings in the American positions, Kohl came to Moscow, was received very cordially, and met with Gorbachev. One was a “conversation under four eyes” with the participation of interpreters and sometimes Horst Teltschik and Anatoli Chernayev. Then there was a meeting “in an expanded version.” The German protocol of the private meeting was written by Horst Teltschik and printed in the files of the chancellor’s office.¹⁰³ The Russian version is preserved in the still restricted files of the presidential archives, but also in the Gorbachev Foundation, written and confirmed by Anatoli Chernayev.¹⁰⁴ The same applies to the meeting “in an enlarged circle,” as it is referred to in Russian, or the “delegation talks,” as put in German.¹⁰⁵

Just to remind, in his role-playing with Kohl at the advisors’ meeting on January 25 Gorbachev had intended to confront the chancellor with the fact that the Western powers were secretly opposed to reunification, that he would not withdraw the Soviet troops from Germany without the Americans doing likewise at the same time, that he would agree to reunification only if the united Germany remained neutral; in any case he would not permit Germany’s membership in NATO. He also wanted to play Kohl off against the SPD.

Now to the meeting itself, which I am presenting according to the Soviet protocol, which was until then closed, and where I will comment on specific differences from the German protocol.

After a greeting that was, considering Gorbachev’s usual introductions, brief, the host made a comment about the “really not simple time:” “We keep ourselves in the Soviet Union constantly under pressure in order, as we say, not to break

any dishes. Restraint and balance are of course required not only for internal matters but also for foreign politics. You are the guest, you have the floor.”

The chancellor thanked his host and said, “Our meeting today has become pressing, our talks will be very important.”¹⁰⁶ Gorbachev agreed.

Kohl reminded of the meeting of the previous summer in Bonn and wanted to build on this meeting in the same frankness and openness. Much had changed but the “current development, I think, continues in the spirit of the joint declaration” of Bonn. He also congratulated Gorbachev on the last Central Committee plenum that, thanks to good preparation, had become “such an impressive, superior, and outstanding achievement.” In the German protocol this praise is not quite so extravagant; instead Kohl’s is quoted as saying that he could imagine “what was going on before and during the Central Committee plenum behind the scenes.” Gorbachev added: “And in the plenum too.”

Then, in both protocols, the “supplies campaign” (in the German protocol) and the “provision of financial assistance to the Soviet Union for the shipment of supplies” (in the Soviet protocol) is mentioned.¹⁰⁷

Gorbachev expressed many thanks—now again according to the Russian protocol—“for this initiative that went far beyond the usual scope of a relationship and wins a most generous name,” as it is literally translated. Kohl said that he had passed a test by doing so, “and easily as well,” probably referring to his requests of German business partners. This assistance, he had told Shevardnadze in the car, conformed “completely to the assurances that I had given last summer in Bonn.” He offered further assistance. “Mr. General Secretary, if the situation should arise where you need help and support and you think that I can help you, please approach me.”¹⁰⁸

After Gorbachev thanked him the chancellor turned his attention to the current German and international situation: the “German track” and the “European track” were tightly tied to each other. His report on the GDR was as catastrophic as that of Modrow, whom he considered generally an “honourable person.” The authority of the state had been in a state of collapse since January 20. On December 19 in Dresden, Kohl had believed that Modrow would speak with him about the contract community and the confederation. “However, Modrow changed his concept and concentrated on the economic side of the issue and also on the franchise.”

The number of migrants arriving in the West stood at 380,000 in the previous year; 200,000 of these were younger than 30, highly qualified people. They came not because of the money but rather because of their futures. If the tempo continued at this pace, in February 65,000 to 70,000 “would come to us.” Transactions between firms in the GDR were increasingly carried out in “FRG Marks.” Some districts were seceding from Berlin, vengeance and calls for retribution were being heard more and more. “He himself (Helmut Kohl) does not encourage this development, but tries to stop it.” Yesterday morning the

magistracy of East Berlin had asked the Senate of West Berlin to take over the hospitals. Two-thirds of the physicians had left, and as were many electronic specialists and scientists from other disciplines. "Now the population of the GDR is in a state of depression." Until now everything had happened peacefully, and there was no radicalization.

Kohl: *In the GDR are stationed Soviet troops of around 400,00 individuals. The wives and daughters of Soviet officers live there. It is the duty of the Soviet government to protect them. That is an elementary rationale, a legitimate interest, and I support it.*

Until now he had spoken about what was the current reality;¹⁰⁹ now he wanted to speak about what could happen.

Kohl: *I will try to construct a prediction. On 18 March there will be elections in the GDR. I and my government are doing everything to ensure that there is no collapse before the election.¹¹⁰ After the elections a new parliament will be created, there will be a new government. Independently of the results of the elections—the drive toward the unification of Germany will grow. There is now in the GDR not one party that is opposed to unification. Even the former SED now supports the unity of Germany. We do not doubt that the parties of the GDR and the new government will express their desire for the unity of Germany. A sensible reaction will be necessary. Exactly for this reason I made the suggestion for the creation of a monetary union and the expansion of economic co-operation. The goal of that is the restoration of the economy of the GDR and the prevention of further emigration from it. For the FRG these are problems, but problems that can be solved.*

Kohl continued that it was necessary to act:

And I want to work closely with you, Mr. General Secretary. The changes that are now taking place are not least the results of the politics of perestroika; for this reason we want to stand beside you.

The chancellor referred to another "negative instance." There was in the Federal Republic just now a stormy debate about the nuclear power plants in the GDR. That concerns not only us but also the Soviet Union.

Minister Töpfer, who is responsible for questions of environmental protection, therefore also for the security of the nuclear power plants (in the Russian: atomic stations), received during his most recent visit to the GDR from its government the suggestion to take over the problem of guaranteeing the security of the nuclear reactors. Töpfer said that this was not possible at this time. After seeing the nuclear power plant in

Greifswal, however, he suggested that it be turned off immediately. The condition there is dangerous. The equipment of this nuclear power plant is even older than that in Chernobyl. The people are fleeing the area. They know that after Chernobyl there was complete hysteria in our country.

Military security is the next important point, to which Kohl now moved:

It is necessary to consider our security interests reasonably and with trust in each other. These consist of concrete interests and psychological factors. There was Hitler; the German army marched through the Soviet Union, France, Holland, and Poland. For the Germans this is a bitter history and they have learned their lesson from it. I wish, together with you, Mr General Secretary, to participate in the shaping of the beginning of the decade of the 1990s. During this time the lessons of history should always be before our eyes. (...)¹¹¹

If a united Germany is created in the joining of FRG-GDR-Berlin, it will be necessary to complete the relevant agreements. In them it will be necessary to put an end to the border question. I know that in the Soviet Union there are doubts because of the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court. We will make this decision be not a problem. If development continues to proceed, it seems to be now, then the new government of Germany, the united German parliament, will accept a final decision. Here there should not be the shadow of a doubt or any reason for distrust.

The shadow had developed because there had been an earlier statement that had appeared possible to all those affected Hans-Dietrich Genscher had made the conciliatory suggestion that after the election in the GDR *both* German parliaments would separate themselves from this declaration.

Kohl did not, however, pay attention to this, but went on to another, if not to the most important point in the eyes of the Soviet leadership:

The question of NATO and the Warsaw Pact is different. I heard that you had a productive talk with Secretary of State J. Baker. In order not to get lost in details, I want to say only: we are in favour of further progress in the question of disarmament and will promote this on our own. We are in favour of progress in Vienna for the success of the START talks¹¹² and particularly in regard to chemical weapons. Naturally we must not forget rockets with a shorter range, which you refer to as tactical. Talks about these will also take place.

What we do not want is neutrality. That would be a historical stupidity. Such a mistake was already made after 1918. A special status was established for the Germans at that time. The point of Rapallo¹¹³ was to emerge from this special status. The mistakes must not be repeated.

We intend that NATO should not expand its operating range.

In the German protocol this sentence is clearer: “Naturally NATO cannot expand into the current territory of the GDR.”¹¹⁴ In its generality this sentence actually reflects actually nothing more than the state of discussions with the Americans, especially Bush’s letter about the special status of the GDR within the united Germany’s membership in NATO; it does not even correspond with Genscher’s Tutzing declaration but goes further. Why Chernayev expresses this part so much more concretely cannot be determined. Perhaps he had not yet been able to comprehend the difference between Baker’s and Bush’s positions in all its volatility; possibly Teltschik did, however, express it more clearly in his record than it was said in the meeting. In the conversations with Anatoli Chernayev it was not possible to make it more precise.

Kohl continued:

*It is necessary here to find sensible scheme. I understand correctly the security interests of the Soviet Union and hold myself accountable that you, Mr. General Secretary, and the Soviet leadership will soon have to inform the people of the USSR of what is happening. It is one thing when we speak, but another thing when simple people speak. They remember the fates of their fathers and brothers. This is completely normal. However, if we do not act, the situation will become critical. We must prevent this. And we are ready, together with our partners, neighbours, and friends, to act. With us, your saying who comes too late will be punished by history is very popular. We are ready to let it guide us.*¹¹⁵

That was the first longer statement by Kohl. Gorbachev answered: “Thank you very much for your thoughts. I have a few questions.” His first question related to one of his main concerns—the economic stability of the GDR. Kohl added, “Another economic system is needed there.” Gorbachev asked: “If there is talk of a monetary union—are any time limits intended?” Kohl’s answer is not without interest:

I cannot answer this question for the following reasons. If I had been asked this question at the end of December I would have said that a few years were necessary for such a change. That would be sensible, the economists think. But now no one is asking me. The people are deciding everything on their feet. Chaos is beginning. Probably in a few weeks there could be a reaction, possibly even after months.

Gorbachev: *That means right after the elections?*

Kohl: *That is possible. I don’t want to go too far. However, I have already spoken about the suggestion by the Magistracy of East Berlin to the senate of West Berlin. The next week the mayor of West Berlin comes to me and says that we will have to pay. And I cannot refuse. The situation is such that everyone is doing what he thinks is right. But an economic scheme is necessary. This is the actual point of my well-known Ten Points. You see point by point the creation of a contract community.*

Gorbachev did not respond to this comment about the “Ten Points;” instead he asked a second question:

Gorbachev: *I have not understood your remarks about the conclusion of a new agreement, in which the question of the borders finally dealt with. Are they not already fixed? Or is the translation inaccurate here?*

Kohl: *Yes, the border is regulated in the Moscow and Warsaw treaties. But these treaties were made with the FRG. Therefore the issue is the confirmation of what is said in them. If the GDR and FRG unite, the new German parliament must confirm the existence of these treaties. There can be no doubt about their content. But the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court¹¹⁶ affects the Moscow Treaty that was made between the Soviet Union and FRG.*

According to the Russian protocol, Gorbachev did not have questions about this: according to the German one he had two: first was the issue the confirmation of the Moscow Treaty; second, but the treaty “did not need to be confirmed, but rather strengthened.”

Further according to the Russian protocol:

Gorbachev: *Does this not frighten you? After all, you will bury the FRG?*¹¹⁷

Kohl: *I have no fear of this. I imagine that this new state structure, the united Germany, will not have to make new treaties.¹¹⁸ The new state can step into the rights of the old treaties, obviously with the agreement of Moscow and Warsaw. That is, however, a technical and not a political question. Its clarification does not appear to me to be particularly complicated.*

In the following passage there is a small difference between the German and the Soviet protocol. According to the German one, Kohl addressed the essential question: “The main question is the status of the future Germany, above all the military one.” According to the Russian, it was Gorbachev who did this:

Gorbachev: *The central question relates to the status of Germany in regard to military security.*

Kohl: *Here a solution can be found.*

Then the chancellor became rather more general:

Kohl: *The Soviet Union has a right to try to safeguard its security interests. We are interested in the sovereignty [of the united Germany—AvP]. It is necessary to find ways from both sides to secure trust. That concerns not only us but also the USA, Great Britain, and France. I am convinced that much can be done.*

I mean, for example, it will become very important if (in the German protocol: that) the new German state takes the same stance, assumes the same obligations that the FRG had in relation to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. That will be important for the Soviet Union, and for the USA, Great Britain, and France. The French and the English are deep inside very glad that they have weapons that the Germans do not have. They are not glad because they can threaten us with these weapons. For them this gladness has a specific psychological basis.

Gorbachev: *Could it not happen that the pluralistic system in the FRG and the election campaign mechanism would make the problem of reunification become part of a competition among various forces? That would lead to a splitting of the society in the GDR. And will it not become worse if this debate is carried into the society of the GDR?*

Kohl: *This will not happen.*

Gorbachev: *But would the GDR not become a hostage in the election campaign?*

Kohl: *No. In the GDR everything had already significantly earlier, when the decision for the elections was made. Anyway, it would have been somewhat quieter there, if Honecker had begun with reforms at least in the spring of 1989.*

Gorbachev: *I told him that.*

Kohl: *I know.*

And then Kohl praised the historical significance of Gorbachev. “What would the Soviet Union be without you?” His opponents had no idea about politics and history. “Regarding the elections, we have no intention of carrying them out from the Federal Republic.” As an example of this, and hardly understandably, Kohl referred to his trip to Dresden, which was a success and that he, Gorbachev, would certainly have seen. “There I said specially that we will travel a mutual road with the Soviet Union.” In addition, if one follows the Russian protocol, there is an astonishing historical retrospective.

Kohl: *With regard to the elections in the GDR, such areas as Thuringia and Saxony count as a stronghold of the historical parties.¹¹⁹ In their time Marx, Engels, Bebel, Lassalle were successful there. Great party congresses of historical significance were held in Eisenach and Gera [he means Gotha—AvP]. In 1932, before the Nazis came to power, the Communists could get the support of a majority of voters. And only behind them came the Social Democrats. In general, the Social Democrats had a better starting position than the others. In 1945 with the help of Marshal Zhukov its union with the Communists took place. Now this party has been created anew. Willy Brandt, whom you know well, is now travelling like a bishop or metropolitan through the GDR and gives everyone his blessing. He was even elected honorary leader of the GDR- SPD.*

Gorbachev commented, less politely than in the German protocol:

Gorbachev: *You are not exactly sitting around either. In Davos as you were leading the discussion you touched on the theme of non-intervention. You mentioned it in connection with the inner collapse of the GDR.*

Kohl: *Yes, that is so.*

Gorbachev: *Okay, if that were true. But various forces in the GDR are asking the FRG not to treat them like small children.*

Kohl: *We are not doing that.*

Gorbachev: *I am familiar with the words of the well-known scientist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, who calls for a refrain from interventions. One more question. Is it true that the government of the FRG no longer sees the unification of Germany in the framework of a total European process, but rather outside of this?*

Kohl: *The one like the other. After all, this concerns everyone. I do not see a difference.*¹²⁰

Teltschik's minutes make this more understandable, beginning with Gorbachev's question:

Does the Federal Chancellor want to say with his statements that the problems of the unification of Germany should no longer be solved in the framework of the European union but rather outside it? The Federal Chancellor denies this. For him there was no (!) difference between the two developments.

Then it became really tense for the chancellor and Horst Teltschik, as Gorbachev observed:

Well, it can be said that there are no discrepancies between the Soviet Union, the FRG, and the GDR on the question of the unity of the German nation, that the Germans should decide this matter themselves. Simply put, in the main departure point there is the statement: the Germans should make their choice themselves. And they should recognize this, our position.

Kohl: *The Germans know this. They want to say that the question of unity is the choice of the Germans themselves.*

In both protocols this observation comes almost incidentally. But Horst Teltschik reports on the tension of this situation as the "note-taker" in the interview:

And then, almost abruptly, came this central sentence that I will probably never forget until the end of my life. Now not completely but almost word for word: "Thus it is now the matter for the German Democratic Republic and the Federal

*Republic of Germany if they want to unite, when they want to unite, how quickly they want to unite, and how they want to unite.*²¹ *If you are right there, you know that you are experiencing a historic moment. That is the story. There was certainly a shiver of excitement running up my spine. After all I had to record everything. And the interpreter translated, I had to write along. In this case it really is important that every word is correctly preserved. Because a misunderstanding is fatal. And so I nudged the chancellor and told him that Gorbachev had to repeat himself. Therefore, Helmut Kohl spoke in such a way that Gorbachev repeated this sentence three times.*

In both protocols, and in both minutes in the delegations' languages, however, it is not the *governments* of the GDR and FRG that are referred to but rather the *Germans* who should decide about German unity. After the essential statements had been made, in many aspects, the talks started at the beginning again. Kohl repeated that peace should emerge from the German people, which Gorbachev considered an important statement.

But suddenly and unexpectedly a new surprising drama developed as the general secretary again expressed misgivings in the border question and Kohl replied—a drama that was new to me, since I was familiar only with the German protocol:

Gorbachev: *We must build the united Germany on a fundamental base. Therefore I asked the question about the borders. This is a fundamental issue.*

And now in the German protocol it says only: "The chancellor expressed his opinion on the Oder–Neisse border." But in the Russian one there is more:

Kohl: *For me this question causes internal political difficulties. But I maintain firmly what I told you. I have countrymen who lost their homeland. At the end of the Second World War the Reich lost a third of its territory. Thirteen million people were expelled from their historical homeland. Two million died on this journey. Now of those 13 million, 4–5 million are still alive. They have children and grandchildren. Their feelings include an understanding that the former territories belong to yesterday. If an opinion poll were taken, 88–89 per cent would say that that is the past. If there were a referendum on the unification of the GDR and FRG with the final recognition of the Oder–Neisse border, 92–93 per cent would be in favour. But if one is honest, for many people the pain deep in the soul does not go away. This problem is part of the domestic politics of the FRG. I am pressured to appeal to a portion of the voters, to win their voices. But I hold to the treaty agreements.*

If the protocol is correct, Kohl's thoughts can hardly and only partly be understood: why was the Oder–Neisse border such a problem for him when in his

opinion, such a huge majority would be in favor of the unification with its “final” recognition of the Oder–Neisse border? Because he feared that “for many people the pain deep in the soul does not go away” and this could become a problem in the long run after all? Or did Kohl’s German nationalist heart offer resistance to the fact that, during his time as chancellor, the “third part of Germany” would finally be written off? Was it the shadow of Adenauer and his effective slogan “Germany divided into three—never,” which could be directed at him? Hard to believe with Kohl, the European. But it became even more problematic—still according to the Soviet protocol, because Teltschik left something out here:

Kohl: *I have a great, personal request to make of you, Mr. General Secretary. It would be very good if the subject of the borders not be mentioned in connection with the fate of the expellees until the day when there is complete clarity. For me it is not important when that day arrives, tomorrow, after four months, or after four years. That is my internal political problem, and I do not want the pressure on me to become stronger.*

After this memorable request by Kohl to the leader of the Supreme Soviet and the general secretary of the CPSU, of all people, Teltschik’s minutes begin again. It is to be suspected that the omission was not made without Kohl’s request.

But Gorbachev answered this remarkable request from Kohl with resistance:

Gorbachev: *But you must recognize that I, Jaruzelski, Modrow, the leadership of Czechoslovakia, that all of us also have an internal political problem. Have you paid attention to the last plenum of the Central Committee [of the CPSU—AvP] [There he had been asked:—AvP] “Was this matter a theme,” “will that policy be carried out?” “Have you not forgotten the sacrifice of the people [in the Great Patriotic War—AvP]?” This came to the forefront and it is with us very current. The chancellor must consider that. If a united Germany is constructed, it is necessary to know where its place in the community of nations is. We must all take this context into consideration. We are in favour of co-existence and for working together for the good of all.*

Kohl: *I have already said that peace would come from German soil. If there is no inner freedom, then there will be no freedom at all. And there are short-sighted people and idiots everywhere. With regard to the borders, for the internal peace it is important¹²² to accept the Oder–Neisse line. We have no problem with Czechoslovakia. Fourteen days ago the Sudeten German Organization declared that it had no questions about the border with Czechoslovakia. The spirit of revenge has dispersed. In its place is the wish to live and work together. As far as the border on the Oder–Neisse is concerned, I would need to receive the internal support¹²³ of the majority of the population of the country. I have good chances of this. That, which I recently said in Warsaw, was, it appears to me, received positively.*

Why then did Kohl have this remarkable outburst? And why in the German protocol was it left out and instead there was a note that the chancellor expressed his position on the Oder–Neisse border? The chancellor spoke soothingly:

Mr. General Secretary, the Germans in the GDR and the FRG are making a decision in the context of the development of all of Europe. It is not necessary to worry about the fate of the borders. Everything is clear here, and on Day "X" this question will be removed from the agenda as finally solved. But to bring forward this matter today would be too soon. I told you that for me inner political problems are tied to this. This issue should not worry you further. But I ask for your understanding that I cannot do this now. But I will keep my word.

Then there was an invitation from Gorbachev through Kohl regarding the recognition of the significance of the new trade relations between the FRG and Soviet Union if the GDR joined the Federal Republic. But then Gorbachev returns once again to his main point:

The military component remains at the core. It plays a decisive role in the determination of the European and international balance. You mentioned this theme. Our formula includes the following: there should be no danger of war from German soil; the postwar borders must be untouchable. And the third point: the territory of Germany should not be used by external forces. There is the question of what status the unified Germany should have. I know that the chancellor will not accept any neutralization.¹²⁴ It is said that this would demean the German people. (...) And yet I still see the united Germany—with a military potential sufficient for its defence—outside of [international—AvP] military structures.

Gorbachev used the argument that other states were not demeaned by being neutral, such as India, China, or others who were not members of a bloc. "And that does not humiliate them. Why should such a status demean the Germans? This is not neutrality. It is a strength, and not only a European one, but a worldwide one." It would also be no "serious" solution "if one part of the state belonged to NATO and the other to the Warsaw Pact. Somewhere along the river there is an army and on the other side another." In the German protocol there is another sentence that is absent from the Russian one—a sentence that could be understood as implicitly directed against Bush's, but also Genscher's and Baker's, suggestion:

This applies also, said Gorbachev in the German protocol, to the other suggestion that particular troops should be stationed as far as a particular river, but should not, however, be stationed in the other part of Germany.¹²⁵

It is strange that Gorbachev's resistance to this suggestion of a special status of the GDR territory does not appear in Chernayev's protocol, but it does in Teltschik's. Chernayev might have known nothing about the discussion between the government leaders and the secretary of state in Washington and the foreign ministry in Bonn, but he did know Baker's position, while Teltschik might have known the differences very exactly.

According to the Russian protocol, Gorbachev continued:

One says: what is NATO without the FRG? But it may also be asked: what is the Warsaw Treaty without the GDR? That is a serious question. In military questions there should be no divergences. One says that NATO would fall apart without the FRG. But the Warsaw Pact will die without the GDR. If we want to come to advise each other on the main issue, then it is important that we agree.

Kohl: *That is not the same thing. All you need to do is look at the map.*

Gorbachev: *If we unilaterally withdraw all troops from the GDR, you would not pull NATO back.¹²⁶ Important decisions are necessary that will not poison the atmosphere in our relations.*

Now Gorbachev says something that, in my opinion, would not exactly have strengthened his position: "...this part of the meeting, I think, should not become public. Let us say that we had a fruitful talk on a wide variety of questions about European and international developments and that the exchange of opinions is being continued." Helmut Kohl confirms that it was necessary to come to "some kind of agreement." The United States was in this regard not to be forgotten.

Gorbachev took this as an opportunity to move on to the 2+4 mode, moreover in the German order and not the Soviet "4+2:" after the elections in the GDR the representatives of the two German states and the four powers could meet before others got involved in the talks. An idea that the Federal chancellor "liked very much."

Kohl: *But to be clear I want to state that a separate conference of the four powers is not acceptable to us.*

Gorbachev: *Without you nothing will be clarified.*

Kohl: *At the table with the four powers the two German states, or if history speeds up, one German state, should be present. It would be very good if this table stood in Germany.*

Gorbachev: *That is not ruled out.*

Kohl: *For us that is important for psychological reasons.*

Gorbachev: *But where then? Two chairlegs on one side of the border and two on the other?*

Gorbachev is apparently riled up. Kohl wants everything signed, sealed, and delivered.

Kohl: Permit me now to summarize briefly. If I have understood you correctly, you mentioned that the decision on the unification of the Germans is a matter for the Germans themselves.

At the same time the lessons of history should be learned: peace was to come from Germany.

Kohl: Further, parallel to the unification process it is necessary to seek a solution with regard to the existence of NATO and the Warsaw Pact that will satisfy everyone. The necessary talks with the partners must be started immediately. This, I think, can be said publicly.

But not intended for the public is our decision that we will carry out an inventory of the economic relations between the GDR and the Soviet Union in order to make possible the fulfilment of the obligations that you have taken on, so that a united Germany will take over these obligations and guarantee their fulfilment.

It must be agreed with our partners—the USA, France, and Great Britain—that both German states or one German state and the four powers meet for a final elaboration.

This summary is confirmed by Gorbachev in its essentials, but he wished for an addition:

I would like to go back to the beginning of our conversation: the Soviet Union and the FRG record in consideration of Modrow's view that they have no differences of opinion on the problem of Germany's unity and the right of the Germans to make their choice. And there is understanding and agreement that the German problem concerns not only the unity of and the satisfaction of the hopes of the Germans. It touches on the interests of the neighbouring countries, the situation in Europe and in the whole world.

Kohl: On this we are of the same opinion.

Then the meeting dealt with various questions: the Germans in Russia, the nationality problems in the Soviet Union, though only in passing, the Japanese, who did not have any more gray cells (in their heads) than the Europeans, but who were better at buying “know how.”

The chancellor, apparently sensing Gorbachev's concerns about the economy of the GDR and hopes for the Federal Republic, suddenly noted:

Kohl: If the German question stopped being an encumbrance, possibilities for the broad co-operation of our countries would open up. Now the FRG is in a stable

economic situation. The last eight years were the very best in our history. We have a broad field for co-operation with the Soviet Union in the economy, in science, and in technology.

After the meeting between Kohl and Gorbachev alone, there was another meeting “in an extended circle,” in which Shevardnadze signaled a general agreement with the line taken by the “leaders” and Genscher reported that the foreign ministers had spoken about the stabilization of the economic situation of the GDR and the “necessity of intensive preparation for an all-European meeting at the highest level.” Then—as far as I know for the first time—he referred to the upcoming “Open-Sky conference” in Ottawa where there would be “the opportunity to speak about this thoroughly.”¹²⁷ Genscher also congratulated Kohl “under the table” on the results of the meeting with Gorbachev.

At dinner where all were present there was joking: Gorbachev and the chancellor agreed that their foreign ministers “had a beautiful life” because their work was taken away from them. Even Falin, who was present at this dinner with Sagladin and who was, according to himself, disturbed that no actual conditions for unity had been agreed on, joked: they could both go into retirement because the German question was solved.¹²⁸

In the evening at 22:00 there was a conference in a place that looked like—I have seen the television broadcast—a sterile lecture hall. Uwe Kaestner and Horst Teltschik prepared the statement with the chancellor in his suite, which “was, as always completely overheated.” As the chancellor dictated, Teltschik (whose hand had “flown” over the paper while he took the minutes of the meeting with Gorbachev “on this historic occasion”) believed “not to have heard correctly—it sounds like a businesslike report. How can one present such a huge success in this way?” He protested and made suggestions. Teltschik made another vicious remark about the German foreign minister: “As always, Genscher went with his colleagues and three journalists to his guest house. He will inform the journalists better.”¹²⁹

The chancellor accepted Teltschik’s suggestions for his statement. Still the media representatives at the press conference remained remarkably unimpressed when Kohl made his statement:

*Tonight I have only one message to give to all Germans. General Secretary Gorbachev and I have agreed that it is the right of the German people alone to make the decision if it wants to live together in one state. General Secretary Gorbachev confirmed unequivocally that the Soviet Union will respect the decision of the Germans to live in one state; and that it is for the Germans to decide for themselves the time and route to unity. (...) I thank General Secretary Gorbachev that he made possible this historic event. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a good day for Germany and a happy day for me personally.*¹³⁰

In the interview in 2001 Teltschik expressed his irritation at the listless German journalists:

The result was, after all, nothing other than: we can unify ourselves again. The chancellor presents this, Genscher then even describes the scene where he congratulated him under the table on this result. And there sit two hundred German journalists—no reaction. I said to my colleague: I don't understand this. Actually everyone should have gotten up and applauded. I mean, this after all a sensation! It was only in the plane that I showed them "Pravda"—I had learned Russian once, and I showed them the sentence, then they got it. Then suddenly—then they shouted: We must drink sparkling wine. And then came the famous scene that we drank sparkling wine on the plane.¹³¹ But because the German journalists understood so quickly.¹³²

In the Soviet news agency TASS the decisive sentence of the meeting between Gorbachev and Kohl was stated more clearly and somewhat differently: there is "at the time between the USSR, the FRG, and the GDR no difference of opinion that the Germans should themselves answer the question of the unity of the German nation and must themselves choose what form of state, at what times, how quickly and *under which conditions* (!) they will achieve this unity."¹³³ This could have been Gorbachev's statement to the press.

Modrow was also mentioned here because he also brought home the approval of unity as the result of his meeting with the Soviet general secretary, but it was not stated as clearly and not as widely publicized. Now, however, there was hype in the Soviet media.

On his return Kohl spoke of the "key to unity," which he now held in his hand. Teltschik observed in his diary that the negotiations were a breakthrough, the chancellor would go down in history as the chancellor of unity. Certainly this meeting was of great significance, even if no fixed results on the conditions had been determined and would later lead to disagreements. Still, this description of the outstanding or even singular significance of the results that the chancellor had achieved is not (completely) accurate.

After all Modrow also believed that he had cut the key to unity. Modrow revised later:

Today I would say that I made a stupid remark then when I said: Helmut Kohl picked up the key that I had already cut. . . . But he had received a completely different key from the one that I worked on. But I understood this only later.¹³⁴

For Modrow was operating on the basis of other conditions such as a neutral Germany.

Baker had definitely achieved the decisive breakthrough and his talk with Gorbachev was presumably the most significant of these three talks, which Gorbachev carried out from January 30 to February 10. Modrow even says:

First I did not grasp the extent to which Gorbachev's thinking had changed after the talks with Baker. He gave the GDR away, nothing less and nothing more. Bonn used this opportunity ruthlessly.

Still, one cannot say that Kohl had to fight to achieve Gorbachev's agreement to unity.

Anatoli Chernayev gently laughed at the Germans: they had behaved as if *they* had achieved everything, although they knew that everything had already been negotiated with the *Americans*.¹³⁵

Nevertheless, to some extent they were all correct: Modrow, Baker, Kohl, and—Chernayev. The gate to unity had four locks.

Questions for Gorbachev and His Replies

The meetings with Modrow, Baker, and finally with Kohl became a success for the reunification policy of the Federal German chancellor and for everyone, particularly in Germany, who wanted unification, as well as for American NATO policy. However, if one considers the Soviet perspective, the question remains, particularly after this meeting, why Gorbachev, acting for *Soviet* interests, made hardly any use as a *subject of negotiation* of what he had intended: the simultaneous withdrawal of American and Soviet troops from Central Europe, the neutrality of Germany (negotiations over which he postponed here), a total European security system as part of the negotiations on unity, or even only playing off the SPD against Kohl, as he had acted out in the advisors' meeting. Gorbachev wanted to raise some of these issues in later negotiations at another time—but he no longer had time in view of the already completely probable victory of the parties in the GDR that were in favor of German unity.

Gorbachev himself mentioned this clearly in answer to my question about the withdrawal of troops:

*About the simultaneous withdrawal of the Soviet and American troops from the two Germanies: as it [Germany—AvP] quickly changed into a unified state, the presence of foreign troops on its territory already bore on the sovereignty of this independent state.*¹³⁶

This was, however, somewhat later. The question was, after all: how would the people have reacted, how would the politicians have reacted, if Gorbachev had

still openly made these demands at the beginning of February 1990? The majority of Germans, including those in the GDR, were at this time already in favor of reunification, but there was no majority in favor of joining NATO and—one suspects—with it the presence of foreign troops. As has been mentioned, the Americans had also noticed this with concern. Gorbachev did not try at all to make use of this contradiction. He played masterfully on the piano of winning over the people in the West, but he was apparently not aware that he could have therewith had an influence in the West and set something into motion. On the contrary, he did not want to publicize these issues after the meeting with Kohl.

His answer to the question about the negotiation subject, “neutrality,” was similar:

Gorbachev: *The question of neutrality was asked while all the interested sides assumed a gradual nearing of the two German states. However, the events, whose tempo the German people determined themselves—this idea no longer accorded with reality, which was quickly changing.¹³⁷ This also relates to the question of the membership of a united Germany in NATO. The German nation [whose will Chancellor Kohl was just at this time expressing—AvP] was just making this decision.*

I had asked why he did not present his earlier argument against NATO membership, or at least only in passing, but certainly not as condition; why he did not carry out his declaration that he would withdraw the Soviet troops only at the same time as the American troops from Central Europe. Gorbachev answered with a thought that, in my opinion, did not accord with his stance at that time, to put it mildly:

To put the matter in this way, as if I could have prevented it (NATO membership) would be to underrate my own choice, which was based on morality and democratic principles and took into account the long-term interests of my own country, the good and mutually beneficial relations with the German nation, with Germany.

Does Gorbachev thereby want to say that he himself decided in favor of NATO membership of the united Germany because of the future relations of the Soviet Union with Germany? Surely this would—the longer the hesitant position of the Soviet leadership lasted—become a point, but not during the beginning negotiations, that would allow him to play some of the few trumps he had in his hand. This would mean that his opponents would be right, they who had accused him of doing exactly this. This would also mean that in his meeting with Kohl, his attempts at persuasion, all his earlier and later attempts to resist and outbursts¹³⁸ against NATO membership were only an act. This is not very believable, above all when he was concerned to specify the security interests of his own country in the course of reunification. The European house that included the Soviet Union was in the process of failing, the Warsaw Pact was

dissolving, there was no replacement, no European security system—where then were the Soviet security interests?

Against this interpretation also speaks Gorbachev's telephone call with Modrow on February 12, with which he wanted to inform the prime minister of the GDR about his talks with Kohl and Baker.¹³⁹ In this telephone call the Soviet general secretary paints a negative portrait of Kohl's demeanor; he "apparently wants to present himself in Moscow as the saviour of the Germans, as father of German unification." "All in all I came under the impression that Kohl was arrogant (or haughty)," Gorbachev said, according to the protocol of his foundation. He reported that Kohl had declared "that the membership in NATO is unacceptable to us." On the other hand—as reported by Modrow—he indicated that he could no longer help him. Modrow himself, who does not mention the phone call in his first book, observes in the second one¹⁴⁰ that, "with all the passion that I was able to feel in the situation," I insisted and asked for "support for my meeting with Kohl in two days." But "he did not react. He told me that it was important to maintain a consistent course, wished me great success, and hung up. I was dismayed."¹⁴¹ This version cannot be supported through the Soviet protocol. In it there is no sign of a request for help or anything about the passion, with which Modrow asked Gorbachev for his support for his imminent meeting with the Federal chancellor. However, Modrow did report very factually on the situation in the GDR and expressed his regret that he had to find out about the plans for a monetary union from the mass media. Bonn did not inform him and the experts whom he had named to Bonn for negotiations on financial matters were not invited. Also Kohl's statement that there was a request from the (East) Gerlin municipal authority to the West Berlin Senate for support in the care of patients was denied by East Berlin Oberbürgermeister Krack. Modrow told Gorbachev: "This is a provocation pure and simple."¹⁴²

Both the international and national difficulties faced by the Soviet leadership had assumed such proportions that no Hercules in the history of the world could have succeeded in solving even partly all the problems at the same time. The Soviet Union was breaking apart: Lithuania's Communist Party had already made itself independent followed by the whole country; in Baku hundreds of people died when the independence movement was put down. The food crisis was already fully under way; Kohl had organized aid shipments with remarkable speed. In completely different parts of the country, at different levels, the situation was becoming critical. Our examination of the politburo minutes reveals that there was a relationship of approximately 80 to 20 in the frequency of the national to the international points on the agenda. Further, the German question took up only one aspect of the foreign political questions, even if it was an important one. In the internal questions the independence efforts played a substantially weightier role, as did the economic problems and the institutional reforms. Thus a short time after the advisors' meeting of January 25, namely

on January 29, a politburo sitting took place, which dealt with a plan for a new law that would regulate in a new way the relationship between autonomy and the ties of the individual republics to the Soviet Union.¹⁴³ Here Gorbachev's position becomes clearly visible, as well as that of the majority of the politburo: greater autonomy—yes, separation from the Soviet Union—no. What kind of help could Modrow have hoped for from this Soviet Union in February and March 1990; what could Gorbachev have been able to offer him?

Modrow added another reason for Gorbachev's position: the Soviet general secretary had been won over by Kohl mainly because the Federal German chancellor had offered to take over the trade agreements of the GDR with the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁴ In my opinion this would have definitely been in the interests of the Soviet Union in the face of the expected fall of the GDR. Since the visit of Egon Krenz on November 1, 1989, Gorbachev had tried to get the Federal Republic more strongly involved in solving the economic problems of the Soviet Union and GDR. This was, besides the security guarantees, the essential content of the triangle, Soviet Union–Federal Republic–GDR, as he had formulated it.

My question to Gorbachev therefore was different: if Gorbachev and his leadership had expected the decline of the GDR since the Krenz visit on November 1, 1989, then—again seen from a Soviet perspective—a swift strategy for the formulation of the Soviet conditions for German unity would have been required. To this belonged first the problem of military security, of the relationships of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, and the special military status of the united Germany, and of the territory of the GDR. All these questions were however formulated earlier by the governments of the United States and the FRG and—despite slight differences—forced on Gorbachev. He had nothing comparable to offer in the sense of a strategic concept, other than the simultaneous withdrawal of the American and Soviet troops and a general notion of neutrality, but these demands were defended only weakly and irregularly. The more time passed, the more did the “pawn GDR” disappear and the less was there the chance of enforceability.

In view of this background and of its historical significance in the transformation of the Soviet Union, it was not necessary for Gorbachev to behave as if he had wanted to solve the security questions exactly as they finally were solved.

The United States and the Federal Republic Have Things under Control: The Beginning of the 2+4 Negotiations

The Protagonists of the 2+4 Process

Immediately after Chancellor Kohl's visit in Moscow the so-called Open-Sky Conference began in Ottawa. There, from February 11 to 13, 1990, the foreign

ministers of the NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries met to negotiate on the inspection flights and aerial photography in one another's air spaces. But on the sidelines—probably at Genscher's initiative—the foreign ministers of the two Germanies and the victorious Allied powers agreed to the “2+4 conferences” where the external aspects of German unity including the security questions of the neighboring countries were to be negotiated. The first meetings at the official level were to take place soon. Thus a more rapid pace was laid out than what Shevardnadze and the Moscow leadership had wanted. The Soviet foreign minister first received other orders from Moscow but in the end agreed to the 2+4 decision on his own responsibility, as he wrote,¹⁴⁵ like Dumas who, on behalf of the French government, also had preferred the 4+2 solution with the stronger emphasis on the responsibility of the four powers.

Shevardnadze's view of things are as follows:

This mechanism functioned very soundly. And if there was any kind of resistance, and there was massive resistance, they were all absorbed by this mechanism. In this way we always came to a consensus. Our opinions did not always coincide. For example, I had appeared in Bonn and Berlin. And my statements then seemed rather contrary to what my colleagues were saying. But this was the opinion of the politburo. Because parallel to the Four-plus-Two model the other model, the other mechanism functioned, this was the politburo. And this politburo had one goal: to provide directions for the Soviet foreign minister, according to which he had to act, according to which he had to make his statements.

The head of the international department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Valentin Falin, describes this somewhat differently:

At a particular time Shevardnadze no longer functioned as an instrument of Gorbachev, but rather acquired a taste for a certain independence. In talks with the Americans—see how he went fishing alone with the American Secretary of State. What they discussed there is not clear to this day. Gorbachev had told Shevardnadze to insist: the formula should be called 4+2. In Ottawa Shevardnadze had, as he later said, at the request of Genscher, changed the formula to 2+4. Gorbachev was incensed, but “the train had left the station,” but (...) 2+4 signified a completely different arrangement. In this arrangement Mitterrand had no chance, and Margaret Thatcher had hardly a chance either.¹⁴⁶

In his book, *Politische Erinnerungen (Political Remembrances)* Falin wrote that “the Soviet foreign minister received the ‘strict’ order” to “insist on the ‘4+2’ version” not only “because the responsibility for ‘Germany as a whole’ was incumbent on the four powers... But the most important and most basic was: the formula ‘4+2’ reflected the correct priorities. In the first place is the securing

of European peace.”¹⁴⁷ As Chernayev was writing a statement to press in the name of Gorbachev after Ottawa on the significance of the “4+2” negotiations, Shevardnadze asked him for a “clarification”—at least according to Falin. The formula “2+4” had been preferred. Chernayev had spoken with him immediately after this “embarrassing meeting:” “It is outrageous! Mikhail Sergeyevich had made clear to him explicitly that for us only the formula ‘4+2’ is acceptable. (...) Do you know what he (Shevardnadze) replied to my question: “‘How is this?’ Genscher had asked for this so much and Genscher is a good person.”¹⁴⁸ In the interviews with Anatoli Chernayev, 11 years later, there is, however, no sign of this indignation.

The consensus that then came into existence in Ottawa with Shevardnadze and Dumas was the result of a speedy diplomatic tour de force between the foreign ministers that occasionally leaving Bush and Kohl¹⁴⁹ behind and sowed mistrust between the chancellor’s office (Teltschik) and the Federal Republic’s foreign ministry. Because when Baker wanted to inform Bush and Scowcroft about the state of the negotiations, Scowcroft considered—according to Baker in his memoirs—the 2+4 agreements “not a good idea” because Kohl did not agree. Baker was surprised and asked Genscher, who was present, for an explanation. Genscher called Kohl from Baker’s hotel room in Ottawa and came back with the report: “Kohl’s completely on board and is calling Bush right now.”¹⁵⁰ Finally after Bush had spoken with Kohl twice and expressed the hardly understandable American fears that Kohl might possibly be behind the 2+4 suggestion of the foreign ministers, Baker’s colleague, Robert Zoellick, had already on February 12 (!) presented the first working proposal, in which the 2+4 solution was presumed to have already been decided upon.¹⁵¹ In the end the statement that had been so controversial was brief and concise: the foreign ministers of the “Six” agreed that they “would meet . . . to discuss external aspects of the establishment of German unity,¹⁵² including the issues of security of the neighbouring states. Preliminary discussions at the official level will begin shortly.”¹⁵³ What could be so controversial in this, after all the briefings, remains rather unclear—it appears more like peevishness and competition between the Security Council and the State Department in Washington, perhaps also the feeling of being inadequately informed on the part of Teltschik; for Kohl could not have been opposed because this declaration did not go further than what had already been discussed 14 days before.

Genscher: *Finally we agreed on 2+4 and that we wanted to negotiate on, as it was put, the external aspects of German unification in this framework. We took up these negotiations after the holding of the first free elections in the GDR that took place on 18 March 1990, so that we also had on the GDR side a democratically elected government as a partner. This was for us completely essential for carrying out these negotiations.*¹⁵⁴

“Out of the Game”: The Other Europeans

There are many notable aspects in these agreements in Ottawa. First of all, after an examination of the Soviet protocols of Gorbachev's talks, and of the minutes of the politburo,¹⁵⁵ it can be documented that there is no indication that the leadership of the GDR was included in the preparation of the 2+4 negotiations by Shevardnadze, Gorbachev, or the Soviet foreign ministry.¹⁵⁶ The GDR really no longer existed for the Soviet Union, although its foreign minister took part in the decision in Ottawa.

The second big problem during the negotiations in Canada was: what role was being considered for the smaller European states (and Canada¹⁵⁷) beside the six leading negotiating governments? Memories are awakened if one compares the meetings in Ottawa with those in Yalta and Potsdam in 1945: in the conferences of the “Big Three” at the end of the war the other, smaller victorious European powers did not participate, just as little as they did in Ottawa. However, this time the exclusion of the other European states was not accepted without objection; in Ottawa the protest was perhaps even more vociferous than in Yalta, since the chosen location was a place where the foreign ministers of the smaller states were present. That the security interests of the surrounding states in the agreement were also to be considered attracted the attention of both Poland and Western European countries that worried that there would be negotiations about them but without them. The Polish foreign minister Skubiszewski let Genscher calm him; he emphasized again that only the Federal Republic, the GDR, and Berlin were to be unified and no territorial claims would be made.

But particularly the Italian foreign minister Gianni de Michelis together with his Dutch colleagues were opposed because they assumed that Europe would remain excluded if everything was dealt with by the 2+4 representatives and especially if it was dealt with by the NATO council.¹⁵⁸

Baker reported in his interview candidly on these debates:

I remember when we broke the news in Ottawa that we were going to go “Two-plus-Four”—use a “Two-plus-Four” process. We broke that news to the NATO Council. And all hell broke loose—the Dutch and the Italians and everybody just raised hell because they wanted in on it. Well, if we'd had sixteen countries or fifteen countries in on the German unification it might never have happened. So we had a very divisive debate in the NATO meeting there in Ottawa that day when we said: “Here's how we're going to handle the German unification.” And at one point, Gianni De Michelis, who was the Foreign Minister of Italy, said: “It is important—this will affect us, affect the future of Europe. We must be at the table.” And Hans-Dietrich (Genscher) got up and said: “Let me tell you something.” He said: “You're not even a player in this game.” Very tough. And he was very tough about it. I sort of admired

*him for doing it because we could never have accomplished it if everyone of the European countries had insisted upon sitting at the table with the two Germanies. If you had two Germanies and fifteen Western European countries and the Soviet Union—I'm sorry, fourteen Western European countries, United States, Canada and the Soviet Union, well we'd never get there!*¹⁵⁹

And Shevardnadze reported on the bitter Moscow battles in the background for his negotiations in the 2+4 meetings:

*It was really a battle. It was a continuing battle in the politburo. If, for example, you were to examine closely my appearances, my statements, during the meetings of the Four plus Two, you would see that the first statements and the last statements are very different from each other. And these statements were reflections of the processes that were going on in the politburo. The first statements were acute, they were quite strong. But with time, step by step, they became milder. This was the result of the hard fighting in the politburo. This was, so to speak, what we had achieved in the politburo. And naturally the People's Movement, the movement had started in East Germany, had contributed to this. The same happened in Poland, in other Eastern European countries. And even the conservative fraction in the politburo understood that something had to be changed.*¹⁶⁰

Here Shevardnadze is also behaving as if he always took the position that accorded with the decisions in Ottawa. But this was in no way the case: at the advisors' meeting at the end of January as in his speeches and letters he had preferred at first a four-power negotiation,¹⁶¹ then later briefly the CSCE mechanism.

In spite of all the resistance of the smaller European countries and all the changeability in Moscow it did not change: the six would decide on the external conditions.

Questions for Gorbachev II: An European Security System as the Prerequisite for German Unity or the Other Way Round?

In Ottawa there were also talks between Shevardnadze and Baker about the Soviet and American troops in Europe, particularly in Central Europe. This was an essential point in Gorbachev's position both in the advisors' meeting of January 25 in Moscow and—extremely weakened—in the meeting on February 9 with the American secretary of state. On February 11, it was determined *with Soviet agreement* that the limit would be 195,000 men in Central Europe, but the Americans were allowed another 30,000 men in other parts

of Europe, namely, among others, in Great Britain, Italy, and Turkey.¹⁶² Baker could not believe it when he was informed of this by Shevardnadze and asked about it again because of an apparent error in translation and it was confirmed: in the middle part of Europe there would be equality, elsewhere inequality in favor of the United States. Baker reports how he returned to the plenary session with the feeling “that the momentum was on our side.”¹⁶³ Here I see a further collapse in the Soviet position, perhaps even the last opportunity for the Soviet Union, to move somewhat in the direction of their demand for neutrality or toward an all-European security system with the inclusion of the Soviet Union. Because the equality of the troop reduction (or later even a withdrawal of Soviet *and* American troops) in the numbers and at the time was at the advisors’ meeting of January 25 in Gorbachev’s view the only effective way of exerting pressure: the Soviet troops in Germany had come to be seen as a pawn and a source of pressure. Insofar as this reduction was not accepted with equality this source of pressure lost strength—only three weeks after the advisors’ meeting and Gorbachev’s pithy words on the subject.

The “why?,” the questions about the reasons for the falling pressure on the Western governments and negotiating partners in relation to these Soviet demands determined my interviews in Moscow, particularly with Chernayev, but also the opponents of Gorbachev and Gorbachev himself.

Anatoli Chernayev replied first that the stubborn position of the Germans to insist on NATO membership had a decisive significance for the English, the French, and the Americans. In response to the question of what this signified for the Soviet Union, he said:

Chernayev: *What does it mean—for us? We had to integrate ourselves into this process. Mitterand had told Gorbachev: you will remain alone [with the anti-NATO position—AvP], alone in the 2+4 negotiations, I will not be able to support you, I will not vote against my partners in the alliance.*

AvP: *And what would have happened if you had blocked?*

Chernayev: *I think that the process would have been held up for a few months but in the end would have had the same result. Here you have to consider our internal situation: a huge weakening of Gorbachev’s position at home, the economic situation in Russia, the worsening of the general standard of living, in principle a crisis of perestroika. Gorbachev always had fewer and fewer resources [reserves of energy—AvP] to assert himself. (And then laughing:) Anyway, the question “what would have happened if . . .” not a question for historians.¹⁶⁴*

My remark that the question was meant rather to ask what they feared if the Soviet leadership had said, “No,” also led nowhere. In an earlier interview¹⁶⁵ in answer to my question of whether they had been worried that they would be crowded out of Europe he had said: “No, we never felt as though we had been

pushed to the edge.” But in his memoirs, which were available only in Russian and which include diary excerpts, he wrote that there were such fears.

Chernayev in the interview: *Now at this point it is recorded that Eastern Europe was detaching itself from us. And that Western Europe was reaching for it (Eastern Europe), that NATO and the European Community were reaching for it. And they (the Eastern European states) were themselves striving in that direction. And really, there was danger that the Soviet Union would be ostracized by this movement toward (European) integration. Integration in the sense of a European union including Eastern Europe. And that is exactly what happened. I name such fears here. Or are you now asking perhaps if I felt personally marginalized? (Laughs) I have never personally felt marginalized.*

Despite his laughter Chernayev continued in a rather melancholic way:

Look, if you have studied our history, you know what Dostoyevsky wrote about the relations between Russia and West. (. . .) In the middle of the 19th Century the famous book by Danilevsky The West and Russia appeared where both Dostoyevsky and Danilevsky said: no matter how we try to be attractive to the West, it will not love us. This tradition is still alive today. The whole politics of Gorbachev shows that Gorbachev approached Europe and America with an open heart. And we were still not believed. Furthermore that is one of the factors of the collapse of perestroika. Gorbachev was not believed. They assumed that he was only playing, stayed a Communist, believed in socialism, therefore could not join the West.

Scherstjanoi: *And who actually did not believe him?*

Chernayev: *Both Bush and Baker. As far as the Germans are concerned, Gorbachev's ideology did not interest them much. Communist or not Communist. For them it was important to find a personal connection with Gorbachev, Genscher and Kohl, Teltschik too. What mattered for them was the solution of their national question with Gorbachev's help. They saw in him a person who understood, who was ready, and who would help them. The end.*

Again and again, all the interviewed Russian politicians, even those who usually disagreed, emphasized that they had set particular hopes on Germany, but—one can add—nevertheless the Americans were more important to them, at least for global politics.

Chernayev: *And as far as the Germans are concerned, I am convinced, for we have in spite of everything developed special relationships over 300 years, the Germans*

were not opposed to an integration of Russia in Europe. But if you consider all of Europe, Great Britain, France, the smaller countries, Europe as a whole was more afraid of Russia and did not want it. The Germans were something special in this case. They were ready to enter into a very close alliance with the Russians.

This is an essential sentence: the Soviet leadership trusted the politics of Kohl and Genscher precisely in relation to the question of “taking in” Russia, or the Soviet Union, into Europe. But this was not in the Americans’ concept. Thus here was a sore point in the politics of the Federal chancellor and also the Federal foreign minister that was not used by Gorbachev for an early alternative decision: reunification—yes, but only with one Europe that “included” the Soviet Union. Gorbachev also trusted the Germans personally.

Chernayev: *If you read his memoirs . . . he said: they don't believe us. I have laid out all my cards already, but still they don't trust us, don't trust us completely. I trust them all, the Germans, the Americans, I even trust Thatcher, I trust Mitterand, but no one trusts me completely.*¹⁶⁶

I was amazed that he spoke of trust alone, when, however, trust must be expressed in solid negotiation results or, if one’s own interests are at stake, in negotiations with hardboiled diplomats.

AvP: *But all this without concrete plans for a European security system. At this time, in spite of everything, the Soviet leadership had no concrete ideas how, with what security structures, the “all European house” was to be built. It was not sufficiently prepared.*

Chernayev (hesitates a little): *Now, why ever should Moscow prepare this?*

AvP: *So that one discusses diplomatically how the future defence community or something similar would look. This is after all finally the point.*

Chernayev: *Gorbachev tried in every possible way to do this communally. And finally he was able to get an all-European council that took place in Paris in November (1990). And there the principles were agreed upon. But at the same time it was said that the mechanisms had to be created, mechanisms of security, mechanisms of co-operation.*

But the essential decisions had already been made. Anatoli Chernayev added a sentence that, despite all the even-handed statements, revealed his deep disappointment:

And what followed were ten years of disintegration. When the Soviet Union collapsed, no one cared any more.

It was not possible for me to understand why he or Gorbachev believed that, in diplomacy, it was possible to hope that anyone would “give a toss” without definite treaties, if the position of the other side was getting weaker. I asked:

Were there diplomatic suggestions, are there actual protocols, real plans, for how a European security confederation should look?

This was translated somewhat more tactfully by Elke Scherstjanoi:

Unfortunately we do not find in the documents even the smallest sign of ideas that were worked out by your specialists, ideas on how the all-European house would function and how it would be built, according to what concrete principles it was to function.

Chernayev: *Yes, there were really no such concepts. But, let us say, Mitterrand had the idea of the European confederation. The French after all did not come with a concrete system either. All the Europeans together would have had to work this out.*

The reference to the lack of a concept in the French government meant that working out of their ideas about the architecture of a united Europe is helpful only in a limited way, since France was not facing the danger of decline like the Soviet Union. Chernayev, who himself played an authoritative role in the German and European politics of Gorbachev, then emphasizes again his idea, both then and today, of a clear success of German and European union:

Naturally it was necessary to clarify the basic questions. The Cold War had to be ended and Germany had to be united. This division had to be settled. The second step was to bring all Europeans to one table. It was necessary to unite on the principles and main ideas of European union. And this was done at the meeting in Paris in November 1990 when the Charter for a New Europe was accepted. And the third step was to develop concrete political mechanisms for collective security, collective cooperation. For this...

Scherstjanoi (*interrupts*): *But your specialists had not yet made any preparations for this?*

Chernayev: *We would have had to do this together [with the other Europeans—AvP]. After all we did agree at the Paris meeting, established a commission that should have gotten together. It was made up of the foreign ministers. (...) Further, we even suggested the making of a treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This was a completely concrete suggestion. And the Americans were in favour of it. But the unfortunate aspect of it was that one year later the Soviet Union, as part of that treaty, disappeared.*

Otherwise it would already be in NATO or NATO no longer existed. One might have doubts that this progression of points 1 to 3 that was to be extremely positive for the German politics of reunification would have been so favorable for the Soviet Union: my questions were always directed toward the question of whether it might not have been better to have brought the European security system into play as a requirement or in the negotiations on the unity of Germany.

But Chernayev reaffirmed the correctness of the progression he had presented: everything else would have led to chaos. After the fall of the Wall Bush and Gorbachev had shaken hands and declared:

“We are no longer enemies, no longer opponents, the Cold War is over.” But as long as the Berlin Wall stood, the Cold War continued and would always continue. This was therefore the first question that was to be solved in Europe, the key question. As long as the Berlin Wall stood, it was not possible to speak about European unity.

This theme of trust and morality in politics was also part of the conversation with other politicians. Gorbachev also referred to it as I asked him about the agreement to NATO membership and he replied that he himself wanted a decision “that was based on morality and democratic principles” (see above). I asked Gorbachev, as I asked Chernayev, about the “progression” of German unity and the European security system.

Gorbachev: *The problem of synchronizing the unification of Germany and the whole European process as a system of European security was always present at all negotiations at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In favour [or: “involved”, in the original translation: “with it”—AvP] were H. Kohl with Genscher, and F. Mitterrand, and G. Bush, and J. Baker, and G. Andreotti. However, the German people gave the first process [reunification—AvP] a frenzied tempo and the second was by nature much too complicated to keep up or even to control it.*

Then to give the Germans “conditions” for what you consider possible¹⁶⁷ would have been at my level simply frivolous. This would have ended with a bloody explosion or with a unification that would have made opponents or enemies of Germany and the Soviet Union.

My question aimed, however, at his own conditions that he had himself play acted at the advisors’ meeting on January 25 and from there, as with Anatoli Chernayev, about the concrete Soviet concepts for a European security system and the problem of why he had not already at the end of 1989 after the visit of Egon Krenz made an offer, to get on quickly with reunification within the framework of a European security conference and to formulate his own interests clearly. The international debates on this would surely not have led to a weakening of the Soviet Union.

In another interview I asked Chernayev if the Soviet Union could not have “gotten more?”

Chernayev: *You know, I personally have absolutely no liking for such diplomatic games. Therefore I also regarded Falin and the other foreign ministers with suspicion. These were people who played. But it concerned the fate of a great nation, the relations between the two great, decisive nations in Europe! This was after all the task. And such games... Naturally, the [Western Europeans and the Americans—AvP] played their own game. But we played an honest game. Baker wrote in his memoirs to my surprise—I later never met him again, otherwise I would have said to him: “Yes, I said to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand by one centimetre. But I said it in order to move him towards an agreement with German NATO membership.” This is what he wrote in his memoirs. So he admits that he was playing with Gorbachev.*¹⁶⁸

If one reads the protocols of Gorbachev’s meetings with Western colleagues, then really the question arises about the significance of the “subjective factor.”

He had a negotiating style that was clearly different from that of his negotiating counterpart. He rarely approached matters directly, as Baker did with great clarity, but rather clothed his opinion in the experiences with perestroika in the Soviet Union when he spoke with authorities from the COMECON countries. He reported on congresses or seminars and the views represented there when he wanted to convince Western partners of an opinion. He was—with the one exception of a conversation with Hans-Dietrich Genscher on December 5, 1989—never angry or threatening, always amicable, striving for trust, sometimes even witty, lightening the atmosphere. Helmut Kohl, who also tried to have a personal relationship with those with whom he was speaking, was in contrast, with all his politeness, not vague or misleading. One of Gorbachev’s favorite statements was: “We will think about it;” he rarely expressed brusque rejection, only sometimes did he express his interests clearly or followed a clear negotiation tactic. This contrast naturally led not only to misunderstandings, but also to embarrassing dishonesty if there were irreconcilable positions and interests that could not be solved through harmonizing efforts for consensus, as, for example, in his stalling tactics with Modrow. Sometimes he thought that he had made something clear that was, however, vague and could be interpreted in different ways. But even in the protocols it is possible to feel his effect on people, to say nothing of charisma.

Gorbachev’s lack of readiness for conflict has been frequently described, but the contradiction between bold large projects or strategic suggestions on the one hand and the careful, almost thoughtful and restrained, hardly pushy negotiation and conversations on the other is astonishing and comes through even in the dry negotiation protocols. A basic feature of his way of carrying out negotiations is

very striking—and here might be found an explanation for this contradiction: he apparently believed that it was possible to convince where interests were concerned. Again and again he tried to win over in a human way diplomats who had to represent their strategic interests.

Differences between the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defence in Bonn

Baker's guarantee that NATO would not expand to the east agreed with Genscher's thoughts, which he had presented in his speech at the Protestant Academy Tutzing at the end of January 1990. But during Baker's visit in Moscow there was a move in Washington away from this in favor of a solution in which the united Germany would join NATO as a whole, so that the "defence guarantees" and the treaty obligation would become effective for the GDR as well—this was the justification. However, the territory of the GDR would have a special status. Gerhard Stoltenberg, the minister of defence of the FRG, added to this generality the concept "special status" and expressed, according to the protocol of the chancellor's office of February 14, 1990,¹⁶⁹ the following opinion: "BM Stoltenberg declared himself in agreement with the concept that a unified Germany would be a member of NATO, *without* the area of the GDR becoming an alliance area; he says that this does not mean demilitarization (a unintegrated German territorial army would be possible) and also asked if the security guarantee of NATO could extend to the GDR territory."

At the same meeting on February 14 Genscher "emphatically" opposed this idea of "stationing army units in the GDR; this would meet with resistance from all sides. However the alliance guarantee should apply to all of Germany."¹⁷⁰

In the FDP voices against the "arsonist" Stoltenberg became harsher and found expression in a firm statement: no expansion of NATO! Stoltenberg made a statement to the press that created more tension; finally there was a meeting of the chancellor, Genscher, and Stoltenberg, where the foreign minister prevailed: in the joint declaration it even stated that there would be no *Bundeswehr* organizations in the area of the GDR after unification. This is notable because it did not agree with the position of the chancellor's office. Horst Teltschik had recorded in a type of diary on February 14 that Genscher had declared in his speech before the Bundestag that "co-operative security structures"¹⁷¹ that would loom more and more over such alliances, which "could also dissolve" in them. This—according to Teltschik—went far beyond the chancellor's statement. On German radio Genscher rejected an expansion of NATO jurisdiction beyond the current areas. This statement (that agreed with Baker's in Moscow) was not accepted by the chancellor's office "because it challenged the NATO membership of a united Germany in general."¹⁷²

Still there was agreement on this joint declaration that signified no real clarification, since there was still the contradiction between the NATO membership of a united Germany on the one hand and rejection of any “expansion of NATO jurisdiction” on the other. Which “German troops” should be stationed on the area of the GDR remained as vague as the future of the divisions of the National People’s Army.

This dispute between Genscher and Stoltenberg also had an internal political component. The minister of defence declared in an interview on February 28 that long-serving members of the National People’s Army would not be taken into the *Bundeswehr* because he had serious security concerns because of their long Communist bias. Only the younger soldiers had a chance to be incorporated.¹⁷³ This immediately led to the question: which divisions could then be stationed on the GDR territory and with what NATO status?

Despite these ambiguities, by the middle of February the basic decisions had been made and the Soviet Union could hardly relapse following the agreements for the unity of Germany and the “2+4 mechanism”—if there had not been a coup d’état for the removal of Gorbachev.

Elections in the GDR and Their Consequences

The Constitution, Economic Union, and Opposition in the GDR

On February 3, Federal chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister Hans Modrow met in Davos. That same day Chief Officer Mertes had written a submission to the chancellor, in which he urged his boss to again place himself “at the front of movement,” as he had done with the “Ten Points.” The central issue now was the “economic renewal of the GDR.” It was necessary that the situation in the GDR “change for the better in a manageable time” if the people were to remain “in their homeland.”¹ Mertes included two papers: a “Statement” for a declaration by the chancellor on the next tasks in the achievement of German unity and a paper, *Schritte zur deutschen Wirtschaftseinheit* (Steps toward German Economic Unity).²

The main points of the “Statement” were:

First: an economic and monetary union should be established immediately after the elections.

Second: also after the elections government committees for the purpose of “harmonizing the law in Germany” should be formed.

Third: a “council of the whole of Germany” should be established with the goal of “working out a liberal constitution for a common federal state.” (The contents of this demand were already being dealt with.)

Fourth: “extensive security structures in Europe in the framework of the CSCE process” should be developed. Here too the plan was that the first and essential steps would be the “2+4” negotiations in the Foreign Ministry and almost at the same time in the chancellor’s office. (It is necessary to remember that Mertes presented this submission to Kohl on February 2, that is, before Kohl’s visit to Moscow).

Fifth: “The end of the process must be the recreation of a united German federation, i.e. in a Federal state.”³

The “steps toward economic unity” should be

1. the immediate introduction of the D-Mark as the common currency in Germany,
2. a short-term program of assistance for the GDR,
3. an intermediate-term infrastructure program for the GDR,
4. an extension of already existing programs of assistance,
5. the addition of a separate “reconstruction program,”
6. a speedy transition from a planned socialist economy to a social market economy in the GDR—freedom instead of socialism,
7. the safeguarding of pensions and incomes, and
8. the gradual adoption in the GDR of the Federal German environmental standards (the intermediate-term goal: environmental union).

As Modrow had feared, his request for extensive financial support was not granted. Instead of his hoped for 15 billion DM in immediate assistance, the Federal German government offered detailed plans for a monetary union. In principle it was clear to all sides that before the elections in the GDR on March 18 nothing decisive could be settled in any binding way. Modrow saw the situation in this way too. In his phone call with Gorbachev on February 12, 1990, he had said that before these elections no “basic decisions between the GDR and the FRG” would be accepted.⁴

Later, however—after unification—Modrow did not like to remember that, at this meeting with Kohl in Davos on February 3, he had stated that the D-Mark was a possibility as a “single currency” for the monetary union, or rather the contract community (he did not refer to anything else). And, according to the Bonn protocol, he added: “Then it will be necessary to pay a lower wage in the GDR because of the low productivity.”⁵ It appears that he did not report on this part of the conversation at home, because on February 9 the minister of the economy of the GDR, Christa Luft, still opposed a monetary union based on the D-Mark in the near future.⁶

In general Modrow went “further” with many questions of the economy than the civil movement; at least he was more realistic in relation to the actual developments, in the question of the contract community, or rather the confederation, the *Treuhand*, economic policy in the face of the economic decline of the GDR, credit from the FRG, the reduction of state subsidies, etc. He also had described this to Kohl, for example, in the talks with him on this February 3, 1990, in Davos. There, according to the files of the chancellor’s office, Modrow said: “He would we happy to deal with the subsidies more quickly and reduce them. But how would this be managed? There was an attempt to do this with

children's clothing. For a revision of a package of 30 billion Marks 300,000 people would be required on the weekend. If he had discussions with the *Runde Tisch* beforehand and the matter took a week, then the GDR was 'finished.' It was necessary to continue with the support of the Federal Republic through March to the beginning of May. If this does not happen, then anything could happen."⁷

Helmut Kohl avoided giving any answers to Hans Modrow's demands, requests, or hints, whether implicit or explicit, but rather emphasized the continuing migration problem and only observed that he "had understood the drama completely." But otherwise he discussed the international aspects of unity and again opposed a four-power negotiation on Germany. The four powers "must not be allowed to see us as a protectorate. PM Thatcher had, apparently, not understood this completely." With Mitterrand it was different.⁸

Modrow had already met Kohl again on February 13 and 14. A large ministerial delegation accompanied him to Bonn. Previously, namely on February 9, State Secretary Köhler of the Federal Finance Ministry had sent to Ministry Director Claus-Jürgen Duisberg of the chancellor's office a plan of a proposal to the government of the GDR regarding the creation of a common economic and currency territory that was now being voted on by all. It included two parts: "On an appointed day the Mark of the GDR would be replaced as the currency and legal mode of payment by the D-Mark." And: "At the same time the GDR had to create the necessary legal conditions for the introduction of a social market economy (legal coordination in the central areas of the economic order)."⁹ Immediate negotiations for this were to be proposed to the GDR.

On February 13, Kohl informed Modrow that he wanted to accomplish the completion of the negotiations on the internal aspects of unity before the end of the 2+4 negotiations. The prime minister of the GDR criticized the fact that he had not received an answer to his suggestion for an agreement on cooperation and good neighborliness with the FRG (of January 17),¹⁰ disclosed the economic situation of the GDR, and "asked again the question about a solidarity payment"¹¹ from the Federal German government. He was of the opinion it was necessary for something to be done before March 18. The *Runde Tisch* had expressed the wish for 15 billion D-Marks. The states would, on their part here and there, provide millions in contributions. The citizens of the GDR would now expect from the Federal German government that "something would be done in this matter."¹²

The *Runde Tisch*, or rather the participating groups and parties, had developed a position paper,¹³ in which they considered this solidarity payment "appropriate in the amount of 10 to 15 billion D-Marks and this immediately, independently of all further negotiations."

In his meeting with the "Ministers without Portfolio of the GDR," that is, the representatives of the *Runde Tisch*, who had been in office for a week, Seiters, head of the chancellor's office,¹⁴ that, in the interest of stabilizing the GDR, a "far-reaching offer for the creation of a monetary union and an economic

community” had been made. “On the other hand, we consider assistance in the form of transfers in the millions to be the wrong approach in the current situation.” Minister Walter Romberg (SPD) referred to the importance of the “security of the elections;” in the GDR there was also the expectation of a large financial contribution from the Federal Republic; preparations for the monetary union had to be made. Minister Gerd Poppe (of the group *Frieden und Menschenrechte* [Freedom and Human Rights]) declared, “the elections could not be burdened by the impression that the result was determined from outside.” It was necessary to think about the “social net;” it could not “tear.” In GDR, 72 percent of the people did not want the monetary union so quickly. Tatjana Böhm of the *Unabhängiger Frauenverband* (Independent Union of Women) added that the insecurity of the socially weaker had increased. Minister Matthias Platzeck (*Grüne Liga*¹⁵ [Green League]) confirmed that in the GDR the feeling that outsiders were making the decision was growing; unconditional assistance had not come. Minister Wolfgang Ullmann (*Demokratie Jetzt* [Democracy Now]) also emphasized the “common responsibility for the process.” The observation by Seiters that everyone had already moved beyond the idea of a contract community (which the minister had explained by pointing to the stream of refugees that continued to increase) did not contribute to stabilization. However, he was in favor of the establishment of the commission on currency reform soon; this could act as a signal that democracy was being stabilized.

The clearest in his criticism (at least as recorded in the protocol) was Minister Sebastian Pflugbeil of *Neues Forum* (New Forum). His organization had given him the task of speaking out against “the participation of politicians from West Germany in the election campaign of the GDR.” Minister Schlüter of the *Grüner Forum* (Green Forum) characterized the migrants from the GDR as “economic refugees.” So far in the GDR, there had been modest economic security, “which was, however, swiftly shrinking.” Minister Rainer Eppelmann of *Demokratischer Aufbruch* (Democratic Start) also referred to the fears of the people of the GDR. “A shot of penicillin was necessary; therefore he asked for credit of 5 billion D-Marks without conditions.” Romberg warned again of underestimating the social-psychological fears of the people of the GDR. “Therefore he too was concerned about the question of the participation of West German politicians in the elections.” Klaus Schlüter und Matthias Platzeck repeated their call “for assistance in the billions. The *Runde Tisch* would guarantee that this contribution would not fall into a bottomless barrel.” Gerd Poppe expressed clearly the worry “that the opposition movement, which had led to and shaped the development in the GDR, should not now be lost.”

In the delegation meeting immediately after, between Chancellor Kohl and Modrow and his ministers,¹⁶ the discussions were similar. More clearly than to Seiters it was emphasized here that whole process in the GDR required more time. The flood of refugees, said Ullmann, could be stopped only “if no one

any longer had to have the feeling of being excluded from the economic and technical niveau of West Germany.” The goal, therefore, had to be made clear in the plan of each step. At the same time he opposed “membership” according to Article 23 of the Basic Law. An “annexation” (according to the protocol he used both terms) would “allow a power cartel to be established in the middle of Europe that could lead to international problems.” Helmut Kohl responded to the deliberations of the minister without portfolio, as with Seiters, explicitly opposing the idea “annexation” in this context. “The Federal Republic has in its 40 years of existence contributed decisively to the stability and freedom in Europe. The Basic Law is the most liberal constitution that there had ever been in German history.” All other details were not up for discussion here. “Solidarity was not just a word for him. (...) He personally wanted the GDR to become a thriving commonwealth. The difficulties are also substantial for us; besides the migrants we have to think about the number of those who are leaving. He asked, therefore, that our offer should not be understood as a dilatory step. It is a great risk for us as well.”¹⁷

It is worth noting in the statements of the ministers without portfolio the contradiction between the clear demands for assistance from the Federal German government and complete rejection of the exercise of any influence by the Federal German government in the decision-making process in the GDR. This is noteworthy mainly because it was apparently due to the belief that in politics it was possible to get something without satisfying the interests of the “other” side. In economic questions the representatives of the popular movement were rather naïve. In the declining GDR there was a huge gap between power politics and democratic action. That developments were proceeding so quickly that they had no more time was clear to some of them, such as for example Jens Reich of *Neues Forum*, but still they did not abandon their increasingly illusionary hopes for a new constitution, for assistance from the Federal German government, or an economy in the GDR that would give them enough time to reform the GDR (and the Federal Republic).

Gerde Poppe remembers this meeting with Kohl as unpleasant. The chancellor had not taken the concerns of the opposition seriously and had made this clear not only verbally but in his whole body language. He never looked at them, but rather looked past them. Gerd Poppe also did not accept my suggestion that from his position Kohl must have found them bothersome, perhaps also naïve. Thus, I asked him, as one of the few in the opposition who had developed strategic international political concepts (like Hans-Jürgen Fischbeck and Reinhard Weißhuhn or Wolfgang Templin), why in the decisive phase there had been no real discussion of the 2+4 negotiations and their goals. Gerd Poppe replied that he was also wondering about this and that he had no explanation other than that they were completely occupied by internal politics, particularly the constitutional discussion and problems of state security. If they entered the discussion

at all at this time, the subject of external politics arose in the form of questions about human rights. Only after the elections of March 18, 1990 was this seen differently.¹⁸

How much the tempo of reunification had sped up is shown by the fact that, already since January and with highlights in the first weeks of February, the various routes toward and the forms of unification of the two German states were being discussed. In the matter of German unification, it was no longer, as it was put often in the files of the chancellor's office, a question of "if" but of "how." Various possibilities offered themselves: from a consultative assembly that would approve a new constitution for the unified Germany, as was possible under Article 146 of the Basic Law, to "accession" or "annexation"¹⁹ to the area of the Federal Republic, or rather the area to which the Basic Law, according to its Article 23, applied. Chancellor Kohl had several times explained clearly his preference for unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law. For Kohl the main reasons for the continuing existence of the Basic Law were: the simple continuation of the current treaties, the preservation of the Basic Law and its repulsion of plebiscite elements in a new constitution. Also in favor of the resolution according to Article 23 was the potential speed of the procedures in the face of the still growing numbers of migrants and the necessary synchronization of the internal and external aspects of unity. For the *Runde Tisch* almost the same reasons were the most important for their rejection of this solution because they still wanted to preserve the independence of the GDR at least for a short time.

The ministers without portfolio as representatives of the opposition of the GDR apparently still hoped that there would be a unification of equals, unification "on an equal footing," as Ulrike Poppe expressed it. However, this hope had a chance only if the Federal German government they had rejected would provide the GDR with extensive financial assistance. But it did not do so for obvious reasons of Realpolitik. After the talks in Bonn Kohl agreed only to immediate humanitarian assistance of 5 billion D-Marks; Finance Minister Waigel reserved another 30 billion D-Marks in the budget of 1990. Otherwise there was the *offer* of a monetary union and an economic community *after* the election. For Kohl this was entirely an "act of solidarity." "In this way we involved . . . our compatriots in the east completely and directly in what we had built up over the last decades." During the meeting Modrow spoke, like Platzeck, of a "transfer of the GDR to the FRG without conditions," which had come up in Bonn on February 13.²⁰

As well the ministers without portfolio made themselves the representatives of a mood in the GDR—fear of domination by the Federal Republic—that only part of the population felt. Most of them would soon show with the ballot that it was exactly this dominance and power of the Federal Republic that they preferred instead of the uncertain independence of the GDR, which, completely contrary to its representation by the ministers without portfolio, appeared to offer a less promising future than joining or being annexed by the Federal Republic.

At this time there was strong contradiction between the results of surveys of the GDR population on the subject of reunification and the views of the active opposition.²¹

Lothar de Maizière agreed with my observation that the ministers without portfolio at this time were still pursuing politics directed at slower progress toward reunification or even a policy favoring the preservation of a reformed GDR; in any case almost all these ministers without portfolio were opposed to the adoption of the Basic Law for the GDR, contrary to the majority of the citizens of the GDR who on March 18, 1990, voted for a speedy reunification.

De Maizière: *This is what they [the civil rights activists—AvP] stuck to in general. In the vote on the date of the establishment [of unity—AvP] in the People's Chamber in August 1990 and the unification agreement of all the civil rights activists, who were after all together in the fraction Bündnis 90/Grüne, only Konrad Weiß and Joachim Gauck voted for German unity; all the others voted against it or abstained. And in the case of the unification agreement one abstained, all the others voted against it. So this conversion did not occur until much later.*²²

For both the Federal German government and Modrow's delegation, it was clear that Modrow, neither as a person nor with his party, whose honorary chairman he was, would form a government in the GDR after the elections. The unity avalanche, in front of which they came running, to use Modrow's image, had caught up with them and would soon have buried them completely.

The accusation of naivety in politics was made repeatedly against the opposition.

Blumenberg: *Did you take these Eastern fears seriously? They did after all partly extend over party lines.*

Schäuble: *I did take them seriously. But, more and more, I did believe that it was actually only a minority position. It became clear that those who were activists at the beginning of the change and the revolution actually wanted first of all to modernize the GDR and democratize it. Reunification was not really so important for them. Then came the next step; then they wanted bring as much as possible of what the GDR was into a common German order. Naturally they did not want to simply join or even be annexed, which was after all right and understandable.*²³

This was indeed the question: what, in the eyes of the representatives of the popular movement, did the GDR still have to offer, first of all to strengthen their negotiation position in relation with the Federal government? But this question was also relevant to the matter of material benefits and a common German experience or completely generally: what did the GDR bring into this united Germany? If no answer was found to this question, then it was also not possible

to develop any basis for a position opposed to a takeover by the Federal German government. An essential point of such a position was that representatives of the popular movement believed—understandably enough—that they brought experience in political grassroots democracy from the time of revolution, which the society of the Federal Republic did not have. This later led to conflicts over how far this experience of the few, that is, the representatives of the popular movement, was also contributed by the 68ers of the West who might possibly have included more of the population than in the GDR.

What the GDR otherwise brought to the Federal Republic—the opposition had ideas on this that were not so far distant from what Lothar de Maizière would lay out in his government statement on April 19, 1990.

It is possible, therefore, contrary to many, retrospective myths or omissions in the media, to say that the popular movement did not represent an avant-garde of the actual progress toward reunification—however significant it was for the fall of the SED regime and however appealing and innovative some of their goals still appear today. The goal and direction of reunification were determined by the state chancelleries of the various involved states and their foreign ministers since December 1989, particularly those of the FRG, with regard to the internal aspects. The popular movement was a GDR opposition and experienced its decline with the GDR; its various approaches then had to assimilate into the critical opposition of the Federal Republic. But, to state it as a paradox, this democratic popular movement that wanted something different from what the state chancelleries wanted was still an essential condition for their politics.

Elections to the People's Chamber

The CDU-Alliance Victory: a Hostile Takeover of Willing Transferees?²⁴

Since the beginning of February it was therefore clear to the political leadership of Germany that the issue would no longer be of a “contract community” or a “confederation,” but rather unification without any sizable intermediate steps. Chancellor Kohl also spoke publicly at the beginning of March of unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law (the provisional West German Constitution). Kohl counted on the parties in the GDR that were in favor of unity, even if under different conditions. Not only this: the CDU East and West had combined on February 5 with other groups and parties for form the *Allianz für Deutschland* (Alliance for Germany). The SPD did not have the same opportunities: no bloc party, only an organizationally and numerically weak SDP that soon joined the SPD. Yet the SPD hoped for a victory at the polls with Oskar Lafontaine as their candidate for chancellor; unlike Willy Brandt and Hans-Jochen

Vogel, he did not actually belong to the unity activists and considered the national question, or rather its state formation in Central Europe, a question of the nineteenth century. Beside this was the PDS with a relatively strong inner structure—in this respect it was completely the successor party to the SED. The Liberals had also joined a bloc party, the LDPD. Opposition groups joined together in the *Bündnis '90* (Alliance '90) and later also with the West German Greens to form *Bündnis '90/Die Grünen*. It considered itself the actual and genuine representative of the population of the GDR and for this reason the Western Greens were the most restrained in the election campaign.²⁵

Every party gambled in the election campaign with the support or the fears of the other countries of Europe, particularly the PDS with the fears in the Soviet Union. In the west and east of Europe in March 1990 surveys were conducted on the unification of Germany with the following results that contradicted some assumptions about the stances in other countries: In the Soviet Union, for example, 60 percent (!) were in favor of German unity, 24 per cent opposed, and 19 percent had no opinion, but 67 percent expressed opposition to the inclusion of a united Germany in military blocks.²⁶

In comparison, in mid-February 58 percent of the population of the FRG had expressed support for the neutrality of a united Germany (Table 6.1), which caused concern in NATO countries and particularly in the political leadership of the United States. The government of the FRG took a position vehemently opposed to any neutrality. The most misgivings about reunification were in Poland—probably the expression of old fears, perhaps also because of Kohl's politics of delay in the border question that were taken note of in Poland.

Before March 18, most political observers assumed that the SPD would win the election.²⁷ There was great surprise when the *Allianz für Deutschland*, which

Table 6.1 Popular support for German reunification

| | <i>For unity</i> (%) | <i>Opposed</i> (%) | <i>Neutral</i> (%) | <i>No reply</i> (%) |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Great Britain | 45 | 30 | 19 | 6 |
| France | 61 | 15 | 19 | 5 |
| Poland | 41 | 44 | 14 | 1 |
| USA | 61 | 13 | 9 | 17 ^a |
| GDR (11/89) | 70 ^b | | | |
| FRG (2/90) | 69 | 11 ^c | | |

^a *The Economist* 10/1990 from *ibid.*, p. 100.

^b ZDF-Politbarometer from Teltschik of 20.11.1989, p. 41.

^c *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach* of February 1990, quoted from Maier 1990, p. 65.

was composed of the Christian Democratic Union, the German Social Union (DSU), and the *Demokratischer Aufbruch* (DA), emerged as the clear winner. The official final result of these elections for the People's Chamber of the GDR appear in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Results of the elections to the People's Chamber of March 18, 1990

| <i>Part Abb.</i> | <i>Party Name or Merger</i> | <i>No. of Votes</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Mandate</i> |
|------------------|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| CDU | Christlich-Demokratische Union | 4,710,598 | 40.59 | 163 |
| SPD | Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands | 2,525,534 | 21.76 | 88 |
| PDS | Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus | 1,892,381 | 16.32 | 66 |
| DSU | Deutsche Soziale Union | 727,730 | 6.27 | 25 |
| BFD | Bund Freier Demokraten: Deutsche Forumpartei, Liberaldemokratische Partei, Freie Demokratische Partei | 608,935 | 5.28 | 21 |
| Bündnis 90 | Neues Forum, Demokratie Jetzt, Initiative Freiheit und Menschenrechte | 336,070 | 2.89 | 12 |
| DBD | Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands | 226,932 | 2.17 | 9 |
| Grüne-UFV | Grüne Partei (nicht: Die Grünen), Unabhängiger Frauenverband | 226,932 | 1.96 | 8 |
| DA | Demokratischer Aufbruch – sozial und ökologisch | 101,146 | 0.93 | 4 |
| NDPD | National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands | 44,292 | 0.38 | 2 |
| DFD | Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands | 38,192 | 0.33 | 1 |
| AVL | Aktionsbündnis Vereinigte Linke, Die Nelken | 20,342 | 0.18 | 1 |
| Others | | 52,773 | 0.45 | — |

Source: The official result in: Maier (1990, p. 127).²⁸

The *Allianz für Deutschland* received together approximately 48 percent of votes. This meant that the chairman of the CDU, which was the strongest party, Lothar de Maizière would be appointed to put together a government. For the SPD this meant a disastrous defeat, with which they had not reckoned. The successor party of the SED, the PDS, on the other hand, could emerge from these elections as the third strongest party. It was also remarkable that in East Berlin the SPD received 35.0 percent and the PDS received 30.0 percent, while the *Allianz* received only 21.6 percent here, in contrast with Thuringia where it had its best result of 60.2 percent. The popular movement, which had been divided and spread among *Bündnis 90*, *Grüne-UFV*, *AVL*, *Demokratischer Aufbruch*, and others, was downright rejected: its bad showing, not only compared to the *Allianz* or the SPD, but also, above all, to that of the PDS, caused deep disappointment among many of its activists, even if they had not placed great hopes in the mass of the people of the GDR who had been accustomed to compliance for many years.

International Consequences

The Western Allies

Internationally the success of the *Allianz* was seen as a clear confirmation of the desire for unity in the GDR, which had been feared or not expected to be demonstrated so clearly. But it was also seen as a personal victory for Helmut Kohl and his politics; he had, as Thatcher, Powell, Clark, and others later wrote, been underestimated. This election result made it entirely plain to the governments in East and West that, with a new, stronger Germany, it was necessary to settle quickly the external aspects of unity—whether in restraining the new Germany or in recognizing it. This also applied to the Soviet Union, which now would have to say goodbye to any illusion of a sovereign second German state, if it had not, as Gorbachev at least shortly before, already done so. In Washington this election victory also appeared as approval of its close ally Kohl but also the politics of George Bush. It freed the US government first of all of any concern that neutral or anti-American tendencies would prevail in Germany and might “cause trouble” in the approaching 2+4 negotiations.

Helmut Kohl had first visited Mitterrand in the middle of February (on February 15) and then George Bush (on February 24) in Camp David. French newspapers and television stations had then spoken of a “falling-out” between the president and the chancellor. For Mitterrand had once more made clear his worries about the developments that could be linked to unity—after all one could not expect him to speak like “a German patriot” because he was a “French patriot.” The fear was that European unity would suffer, that the border with Poland or other borders in Europe might be questioned, and that Germany would oppose the presence of other foreign troops when the Soviet troops had finally left. Kohl

emphasized twice in this meeting that the German population did not think in this way. A “mature Germany” was, Mitterrand continued, gratifying, but, as the voice of the Poles as well, he had to express these fears. Mitterrand had the basic fear that the legacy of the dreadful policies of Stalin in 1945 toward Germany would now lead to its reverse. The question was also if this united “mature” Germany would fulfill its alliance obligations, if for example “united Germany would assume the same obligations as the Federal Republic of Germany in regard to nuclear armament.”²⁹ The answer was: “The chancellor guarantees that this will be the case.” Kohl tried to ease tensions in the other questions as well: the Oder–Neisse question had been “dramatized unnecessarily.” “The more rights that Germany transferred to the EU the smaller the chance of the ghost of a fourth Reich.”³⁰ Despite all the soothing statements later in the press it was hinted that the current relationship between Kohl and Mitterrand could not compare with the relations between de Gaulle and Adenauer or between Giscard d’Estaing and Helmut Schmidt. Kohl saw this differently: Mitterrand had certainly expressed his differences but at the same time emphasized that “he wanted to do everything that had to be done with me: ‘With who else then?’ Perhaps we have already become something like an old married couple.”³¹ But there was a difference, which again, despite all the politeness, made clear the different concepts: in order to give priority to the significance of European unity, Mitterrand wanted to “bring forward somewhat the conference on currency questions planned for December 1990”—and to refer to this in a joint declaration. The chancellor added that this was not possible for him—probably because, in his view, the currency union and the economic union with the GDR had to be settled first.

In the case of the British prime minister there was a certain release of tension after she suggested, following a meeting with Kohl on March 30, to work on various options in the matter of the NATO question before the meeting of Bush with Gorbachev. The alliance had to be unanimous in this question. Kohl had emphasized that he would not pay every price for unity, “particularly not neutrality.” On April 10 the prime minister spoke in an interview on American television in favor of a solution on the NATO question “together with the Soviet Union.” There had to be changes in NATO, its strategies had to be revised, the alliance had to make do with fewer armed forces. Horst Teltschik remarked that Margaret Thatcher now also began to adjust to the changed situation in Europe.³²

Compared to the meeting with Mitterrand, the one with George Bush³³ was uncomplicated. Both considered themselves the makers of a successful policy. Only the Soviet Union still had to agree to the membership of a united Germany in NATO. Here was the main problem of the coming negotiations, both bilaterally and in the 2+4 process. Because, after the loss of its ally, the GDR under the SED government, now had to emphasize more strongly the European process in questions of security, which they had mentioned earlier in the reunification process, but unforgivably feebly from the perspective of Soviet interests.

The Soviet Union, German Unity, and Lithuanian Independence

In preparation for the meeting between Kohl and Bush, Horst Teltschik had prepared a brief,³⁴ in which it said: "GS Gorbachev and FM Shevardnadze have in interviews supported the right of Germans to unity, but they are expressing . . . a narrower line." Gorbachev was demanding an "act that was bound by human rights ('a peace treaty')." Shevardnadze felt that the unification process was "too hasty." And then followed the decisive sentence: "Both keep their options open and try to use the German question as a lever for an all-European security system."³⁵

This was thus a later attempt by the Soviet leadership for treaties determined by human rights and a binding European security system, but their "cards" had become much worse because of the elections in the GDR. The German question that they wanted to use as a "lever for an all-European security system" was, because of the results of the elections to the People's Chamber, actually no longer open. This lever was weaker than it would have been a few months earlier.

The Soviet Union was under extreme pressure: on March 11 the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania—possibly strengthened by developments in Poland, Hungary, and the GDR—issued a "Declaration on the Restoration of the Independent Lithuanian State." This was a very threatening shot over the prow of the already leaky ship "perestroika." This was probably *the* change in the Gorbachev era: it threatened the internal collapse of the union of the Soviet republics and no longer "only" the external sphere of power. This was surely also the most alarming signal for Gorbachev's opponents in the Politburo and the Central Committee of the CPSU, fundamentally more frightening and more significant for them and the military than the German question, the solving of which was to be expected anyway in time. The Politburo had discussed the Baltic question frequently—as revealed by our perusal of the topics of the agendas of the Politburo, more frequently than the problem of German unity. On January 29, 1990, it had discussed a new law on autonomy, membership, and secession from the union,³⁶ but it was much too late; the centrifugal forces in the Soviet Union could no longer be controlled. Gorbachev must have been seized by a "gloomy mood," as the British prime minister observed after a conversation with him and about which she informed Bonn, Paris, and Washington.³⁷ Gorbachev stated that he had the "constitutional duty to preserve the union." He indicated that any use of force would bring with it national and international problems. Still he did not assure her that there would be a peaceful solution. Margaret Thatcher stated that she had held back despite holding another long-standing opinion of the annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1940 in order "not to increase (Gorbachev's) difficulties," (!) but had at the same time placed great weight on his "open assurance that he did not want to use force." The Soviet president stated in response that he had "to act forcefully and decisively," that it appeared that "it was necessary to endure this test."

It must have sounded almost like a cry for help when Gorbachev said to the British prime minister:

In the West there is a tendency to see him (Gorbachev) as only a passing phenomenon that was not worth supporting.

Margaret Thatcher emphasized in reply that there was broad support for his politics of reform in the West.

On March 28, Nikolai Portugalov came to Bonn with a statement and a major question that were both discussed with Anatoli Chernayev. It was clear to the Soviet leadership that the joining of the GDR to the Federal Republic according to Article 23 of the Basic Law could not be prevented and in general was an issue to be settled internally by the Germans. But in this Article 23 there was mention of "other parts of Germany," where the Basic Law could allow for accession. What would happen after unification with these "other German areas" and, most importantly, with German citizenship there? As well Portugalov observed that the GDR would be relieved of all international obligations after its dissolution "while those of the Federal Republic continued to apply. The Soviet Union was therefore interested in solutions that accorded with the existing obligations of the GDR to the Soviet Union." Portugalov added questions about the NATO membership of the united Germany: if there could not be a status like the French one, if the obligations of the GDR to the Warsaw Pact could not be preserved. And finally there was the broadest question: "Perhaps it was possible to consider a type of NATO membership of the Soviet Union."³⁸ Portugalov combined these thoughts with the observation: "The more flexible and the more generous Germany is in the question of military status, the more flexibly will the Soviet Union act in the question of the peace treaty." Portugalov revealed his concern about the political leadership in Lithuania. "In this connection the position of the Federal Republic is also of great interest to the Soviet Union." In fact, according to the information available to me to this time, Kohl had hardly supported Lithuania in the question of independence, but rather had called for moderation, completely opposite to the position of American president Bush. In the meeting of Prime Minister Prunskiene with Chancellor Kohl in Bonn on May 11, 1990, the chancellor "suggested... testing to see whether, considering the situation on Moscow, it might not be possible for Lithuania to delay for a while the declaration of independence and the laws to be declared afterward."³⁹ After all, for the Federal German government the issue was reunification within (Western) Europe, while for the American government pushing back the Soviet Union in all of Europe was essential.

At the end Teltschik summarized his impression of the meeting with Portugalov: the leadership of the Soviet Union had so far not come to a final opinion on the central questions. Teltschik was especially surprised by the idea

of a possible membership of the Soviet Union in NATO that had been only hinted at.⁴⁰

In preparation for the 2+4 negotiations the *Arbeitsgruppe Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik des Kabinettsausschusses Deutsche Einheit* (Working Group Foreign and Security Politics of the Cabinet Committee Germany Unity) had been meeting since February 14. On April 2 Genscher and Stoltenberg, Seiters, Kastrup, General Major Naumann of the High Command of the Defence Ministry, and Teltschik met with the chancellor.⁴¹ Here Kohl gave a different emphasis from that in the settlement of the argument between Genscher and Stoltenberg:

There was unanimity that the security clauses in Articles 5 and 6 of the NATO treaty had to apply to all of Germany.

It remains open if they will take effect from the day of unification or not until after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Kohl spoke emphatically in favour of agreeing on a definite date for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Equally decisively did he advocate that the Bundeswehr would be stationed in all of Germany and that compulsory military service was in effect everywhere.

Through this not only was the route to further conflicts with the Soviet Union opened up, but the positions taken were Stoltenberg's rather than Genscher's. Portugalov had just applauded Genscher's speech before the WEU on March 23 in Luxembourg (Portugalov: the speech "was outstanding," as Teltschik recorded with pleasure). Now the stance on the military status of the GDR territory had become harder again.⁴²

The Statement of the de Maizière Government

The *Allianz für Deutschland* (Alliance for Germany) had won 192 seats, but this was not an absolute majority. However, de Maizière wanted a coalition government anyway. With the Liberals his government would have represented 63 percent of the votes, but this majority was not enough for the tasks that had to be undertaken. Therefore he also wanted to include the SPD, in order to have a two-thirds majority to cover all eventualities. This government that was "more than a large coalition" was also formed on the basis of a coalition agreement that naturally only expressed the common denominator of all those involved and led to criticism in the chancellor's office.⁴³ On April 12 de Maizière was sworn in as prime minister and on April 19 made his government statement before the People's Chamber. Behind the scenes there were constant discussions with the Western politicians, but these did not become very clear. Thus Horst Teltschik reports that he used the back door of ministerial council's building when he went to the meeting with the prime minister or with Sylvia Schulz, de Maizières's office manager. Teltschik described the "new politicians" in the GDR as being almost

countercultural “with sweaters and corduroy pants, as if they were pursuing some leisure activity”—in this case in reference to Foreign Minister Markus Meckel.⁴⁴ In contrast, De Maizière said: “The refreshing thing about the East German politicians was that they were all new to this. They made up a cross-section of the occupational world of the GDR. Three quarters were Christians. But they did not identify themselves as politically experienced, they were not professional politicians.”⁴⁵

In his government statement on April 19, 1990,⁴⁶ de Maizière first thanked Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev and asked the citizens of the Soviet Union to see a unified Germany not as an enemy, in spite of historical German guilt; only then did he thank the democratic groups of the GDR and the bearers of the peaceful revolution, through which it had been achieved that the People’s Chamber now for the first time deserved its name. “The people of the resistance in the GDR are the pride of their countrymen and their achievement is the moral treasure of our people.” But de Maizière did not forget the freedom movements in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland and Hungary, nor the citizens of the Federal Republic: they supported them, encouraged them, and helped. “The unbounded sympathy of the responsible politicians of the Federal Republic—I name only Richard von Weizsäcker, Helmut Kohl, Willy Brandt and Hans-Dietrich Genscher—for self-determination and the unity of the Germany people also gave us the opportunity now to make unity a reality.”

De Maizière also addressed those who now believed that the current world process was “ultimately counterrevolutionary.” “Whoever identifies real socialism with a brutal party dictatorship, subjugation of society, state ownership of the means of production, and central planning” is deeply mistaken.

We are asked: do we not have anything at all to contribute to German unity? And we answer: indeed, we have! We bring our country and our people, we bring the values we have created and our industriousness, our education and our talent for improvisation. Poverty makes one inventive. We bring the experiences of the last decades that we have in common with the countries of Eastern Europe. We bring our sensibility for social justice, for solidarity, and tolerance. In the GDR we were raised against racism and hostility to foreigners, even if there was hardly any opportunity to practice this. We bring our bitter and proud experiences at the boundary between accommodation and resistance. We bring our identity and our honour.

What beautiful words, which would soon be tested by actual events; what hopes had to be preserved during the economic catastrophe and the way in which “rich” twin received the “poor” one.⁴⁷

From the start de Maizière faced a storm: the economy of the GDR was collapsing, the state budget was breaking down, unemployment was a serious threat, government employees could be paid only with West German assistance,

the number of migrants was still high. The property question had to be solved somewhere between restitution and compensation. And last, but not least: the Soviet troops were still in the country and fear of German provocations against the Soviet military or its establishments occupied the prime minister, as he said, day and night. “This could have been powder keg and this in the presence of the Soviet armaments. 1.5 million tonnes of munitions were lying around there. Could not be imagined.”⁴⁸

On the other side someone was demanding “at every second People’s Chamber sitting (...), that we should immediately join [*the Federal Republic—AvP*], and furthermore preferably as of the day before yesterday.”⁴⁹

In the chancellor’s office in Bonn the government declaration of the new prime minister of the GDR was read carefully and analyzed, which leads to the conclusion that it had been discussed only generally, but not specifically, with Teltschik, Seiters, or someone else in the chancellor’s office. Particularly the “external and internal security political statements” of de Maizière led to a submission by Minister Director Hartmann with the involvement of Westdickenberg, delegations councilor who presented it to Chancellor Kohl.⁵⁰ The most important of de Maizière’s points on this range of subjects where there was no emphasis “but there was a final point,” were:

- commitment to Europe with the goal of “an pan-European order,”
- affirmation of the existing borders, in particular “the recognition of the western Polish border (no statement on the procedure!),
- underlining of the CSCE process,
- guarantees for the Soviet Union and the other WP-states,⁵¹ that their security interests would be respected,
- a “brief statement on the security status of the GDR with Soviet armed forces beside a greatly reduced NVA” (National People’s Army),
- removal of the Allied rights through the 2+4 negotiations,
- “step-by-step reduction of the military obligations of the GDR, but intensification of political cooperation in the Warsaw Pact,
- support for a gradual expansion of the EU in relation to the Eastern European states,”
- “twice mentioning (...) the provocations in the North-South conflict.”

Besides the commitment to Europe, Hartmann viewed positively that de Maizière, differently from what was fixed for his government in the coalition agreement,⁵² did not repeat the wording of an agreement on the Oder–Neisse border, nor support for the “complete removal of nuclear weapons from German soil” or the setting of the “size of the (all) German armed forces as well as their reduction in anticipation of the VKSE-1 results⁵³ or the equalization of American and Soviet forces in Germany.”

Hartmann added that “this change in relation to the coalition partner” could be traced to “our negotiations on Easter Monday in East Berlin.”⁵⁴ This would not, however, mean that “in the future we would not have to deal with questions such as ‘denuclearization.’”

The ministry director appreciated above all that “NATO and NATO membership of a unified Germany were not mentioned at all,” but, instead there was talk of “loyalty to the WP” (Warsaw Pact). What was to be wished for—as Hartmann put it—were clear statements on demilitarization and neutrality, and precisely phrased statements on the future of the NVA. “Caution was necessary in relation of the ‘2+4’ negotiations to the CSCE process, as it suggests in the state declaration; danger of misunderstanding that the 35 CSCE states have the right to participate.”

It is possible to recognize from these remarks what a narrow and fast stream de Maizière had to navigate with his government statement, threatened by the cliffs of his coalition partners, whose loyalty was limited anyway, on the one hand, and those of the chancellor’s office and West CDU on the other hand.

On May 6 the “first free local elections in the GDR” resulted in a confirmation of the election victory of March 18—despite many assumptions that now, after the increase in popular fears of a monetary union and its results, the outcome would be different. The CDU became, with 34.37 percent, despite a loss of 6 percent, the strongest party, ahead of the SPD with 21.37 percent, the PDS with 14.59 percent, and the Liberals with 6.65 percent. All the others remained below 5 percent.

European Security Policy: de Maizière at Moscow on April 29, 1990

Already on April 29, 1990, one month after Portugalov’s visit at Teltshik’s, the new prime minister of the GDR visited Soviet general secretary Gorbachev in Moscow—a sign of the particular regard that de Maizière had already expressed in his government statement.

But earlier, on April 16, there was memorable meeting of the new prime minister with the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, Kochemassov, who had phoned immediately after the election:

De Maizière: He said I should visit him. He was used to having the GDR leaders visit him. Now the answer was no, things had, unfortunately, changed. He had to make the visit and he did receive an appointment very quickly. But not exactly the one he wanted, an hour later or earlier instead. I don’t remember exactly which. But for him it was a completely new experience.⁵⁵

The ambassador had hinted to de Maizière who still was in charge in the GDR; otherwise it was about economic questions. Moscow placed great value

on the fulfillment of the shipment agreements with the Soviet Union and the COMECON states. This confirmed for de Maizière once again the suspicion expressed by Modrow that this was particularly important for the Soviet Union.

De Maizière continues with his story:

[Ambassador Kochemassov—AvP] brought me a so-called non-paper. Until that day I did not know what a non-paper is. It is the note of a state without a signature. But that it is from a state can be recognized because the ambassador is bringing it. He began by saying that I was the one that the Soviet government had wanted least of all. Now, however, they had to live with me and he presented the paper to me and it said there: we will not accept unification according to Article 23. We will not accept that there might be any investigations of the [Soviet military—AvP] tribunals or German state organs on forced deportations, the expropriations [1945–1949—AvP].⁵⁶ All these questions are to remain untouched. We will not accept that the unified Germany belongs to NATO. We will take action to influence the troop strength, we will prevent Germany from ever having the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons or their production, distribution, possession, and all that. Yes, a whole catalogue of demands was made clear in this non-paper. That the question of alliances was presented in this way... (was due to the fact) that the Americans expressed completely clear expectations and said that the united Germany was to become a member of NATO. They were much less interested in the other things, to put it this way.⁵⁷

The tone of the actual non-paper of April 16 is not so blunt as Kochemassov was, in de Maizière's account, but the position of the Soviet Union was made completely clear, even if politely. In particular unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law was criticized, because of misgivings already expressed by Portugalov on March 28 regarding the borders and the citizenship of the Germans outside of the German areas that were now going to be unified. In Kochemassev's non-paper there was criticism that the article in the Basic Law was still referring to the borders of Germany in 1937; it insisted that there must not be an annexation of one state by another, and there was a rejection of "an attempt by a NATO country" "to usurp the sovereign rights of a country of the Warsaw Pact." That would do "a disservice to the whole European situation." This Soviet non-paper demonstrates again that Baker's assumption Gorbachev had accepted his proposals concerning NATO and Germany on February 9 was untimely.

Now it was clear to the Soviet leadership that there would be a dilemma when the two Germanys, as members of two different military alliances that had earlier opposed each other, united while the current treaties with the military alliances were to continue. The Soviet solution to this dilemma had previously been the neutrality of all of Germany. Now this idea was missing; in Kochemassov's

non-paper it said only: “The membership of a united Germany in NATO is unacceptable and this is not altered by any provisos about a temporary, to say nothing of permanent, exclusion of the current territory of the GDR from the sphere of influence (!) of NATO.”

And then a new solution follows: “The resort is the creation of an alliance system.”⁵⁸ Apparently it was now becoming clear to the Soviet leadership what they should have thought out months before and framed into an offer if it wanted to defend its interests against the other European states and NATO. Five, four, even three months earlier, it should have used such an offer that would lead at least Mitterand to serious considerations as well as putting pressure on the United States (and the Federal German government), because what the Bush administration feared most was a solution of the German question in a European political or security framework, where the United States had less influence than it did in NATO: over and over this had been expressed by its representatives—explicitly by Bush himself to Kohl, by Eagleburger as well also to the chancellor (also in his criticism of the statements of Jacques Attali on this), or by the American national security advisor Brent Scowcroft to Teltschik at the sidelines of the defense conference in Munich, while Kohl was conferring with Modrow in Davos, that is, on February 3.⁵⁹ But the signs had in the meantime become worse for this solution, the end of the Soviet Union as a superpower had long been seen by the negotiating partners, and the elections in the GDR seemed to seal this decline. Nevertheless, in the government of de Maizière there were sitting a foreign minister, Markus Meckel (SPD) with his undersecretary of state, Hans-Jürgen Misselwitz (SPD), and a defense and disarmament Minister, Rainer Eppelmann (Demokratischer Aufbruch, CDU), who had political sympathies with a European security system that should not exclude the Soviet Union.⁶⁰

The Federal German government also received from the “Soviet chargé d’affaires” in Bonn a non-paper that was much shorter than the one received by de Maizière three days earlier. It had “become known,” it said, “that the government of the FRG [was preparing] the draft of a treaty on the creation of a monetary, economic, and social union” between the FRG and the GDR. In this non-paper there was criticism that the agreement between the FRG and the GDR was not an agreement of equals but “rather was reminiscent both in its form and in its contents of an ultimatum.” Besides this it discussed a few of the points, which were also made clearer to de Maizière, especially the objection to a unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law. But at the same time there was an even stronger reference to the “working out of measures for the fulfillment of the economic obligations of the GDR to the Soviet Union.” “We rely on the guarantees of the Federal government that in consideration of the far-reaching trade and economic ties of the USSR and the GDR that no economic damage would be done to the USSR and we count on concrete steps of the FRG for the

consolidation of these guarantees.”⁶¹ The Soviet Union was also facing economic bankruptcy.

De Maizière spoke of his meeting with Gorbachev that took place soon after on April 29 as a great disappointment:

The odd thing was: he arrived and first of all told me for ten minutes everything he expected of me and what I had to do. When I then said that he was mistaken, that a few (...) changes had taken place, I would—unlike my predecessors—no longer arrive as an underling, rather I relied on the support of 75 per cent of a freely elected People’s Chamber. I would be ready to speak about things that interested both of us, (...) but no longer as an underling. So he was rather—well, he was rather upset. I did not think that he could become so vehement: he would not let me rub his nose in it and I don’t know what else. I also don’t want to spread this around. Then came this question about the economic situation, and it was completely clear to me that he was at this moment reorienting himself, and he said that then I would have to rely on Federal Republic and see that I received the necessary economic assistance there.⁶²

Contrary to de Maizière’s oral account, the Soviet protocol⁶³ presents this meeting as very open, sympathetic, occasionally deep and dealing with many themes, revealing many similarities in opinions. It is sometimes—here in particular—surprising how sharply memories and protocols differ, and it is in no way the case that the protocols are “more correct” than personal information. Both are expressions of different dimensions or perspectives. De Maizière remembers Gorbachev’s demands and presents his assertion against it; the protocols have diplomatically minimized these differences, if they were indeed so sharp, and record were so sharp, and report contents that reveal hardly any differences.

Both note that the German unification process was currently passing the all-European one. Gorbachev criticized Chancellor Kohl for speeding up this process contrary to his statements.

Gorbachev: Perhaps Chancellor Kohl was demonstrating more realism in judging the situation, even if not in all cases. I had to say to him more than once that it was necessary to act with the greatest responsibility both in internal German as in international considerations. At the beginning everyone saw the situation as simply one of the need to put the GDR in one’s pant pockets, it was necessary only to decide which one, right or left. But, in the first place, that is not realistic and, in the second, this is not the way to do politics. (...) Not seldom did he announce one thing and then do something else. For us the unification of Germany is no new problem. Even when at the end of the Second World War there was the question of the post-war order, we spoke for the wholeness of Germany, although, as you know, completely different plans were decided upon. One wanted to divide Germany, in order to put an end forever its powerful potential in Central Europe. (...)

De Maizière: *It is important that the recent understanding that this process takes a regulated course grows. This will not succeed if the process of unification is part of the creation of a new European security system. In relation to your remarks on the positions of Chancellor Kohl, one can certainly say that he understands the changes of the time. There will be difficult processes. In the program of the government I have set out that the process of unification should proceed with respect for and preservation of the uniqueness of the GDR. And one component of our uniqueness is the whole history of our close relationship with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the process of the unification of two German States is now passing by the all-European process. It appears as though we must decide together how these two processes can be tied together.*

De Maizière emphasized that it was particularly important “already now to agree in three-sided meetings on economic problems first of all, i.e. with consideration of the FRG.” Gorbachev answered:

I already mentioned such a triangle in my first telephone conversation with Kohl. I emphasized that the question of the unification of Germany is an important constant in international politics. You have to understand this as well and as exactly as possible. In such matters you cannot behave like the elephant in the china shop.

After this rather vague critique both moved on to the weighty question of the relationship of the two military blocs, of a European security system, and the role of the Americans in this process.

Gorbachev: *Support from their side is not so unequivocal as it appears to him. I know about this. Nevertheless the main support will come from the side of the Americans. They want to tie the FRG more tightly to themselves because they fear Western European integration and, even more complete European integration from the Atlantic to the Urals.*

Here Gorbachev discusses more clearly than usual the American politics that was skeptical about European unity. For him this is a crucial point: how, in the face of this American skepticism regarding the trend toward European unification and its institutions, should German unity be integrated into European unity, if the Kohl government had to depend on the Americans?

Discussions of this theme reveal how close the views of Gorbachev and de Maizière were. For this reason, I would like to quote certain passages in depth.

De Maizière: *I share your opinions in many matters. The goal, to create a common European house, does not rule out that two states within it have certain common relationships. If you look at the history of Germany, you can gather from it that the Germans were always well off if they had good relationships with the Russians.*

Gorbachev: *And basically Europe also benefited from that.*

De Maizière: *When I speak of the importance of the relationships between Germany and Russia, you naturally have to take into account the interests of Poland and the other countries. Because there were also times when the relationships between our two countries were good and other countries were not doing so well. I am convinced of the necessity of a European security system, from which the Americans should not be excluded, because without their involvement there would be no international stability. I do not need to add, certainly do not need to speak about it, that without Soviet-American cooperation an important problem like nuclear disarmament cannot be solved. Therefore we look forward with great interest and hopes to your meeting in May in the USA. (...)*

Gorbachev: *It really is as you have noted that the whole European process and the unification of Germany can develop quickly at a different rate. And we must deliberate together how this can be corrected. Unification must align itself well with the whole European context. This must also become a subject of serious talks at the meeting of the "Six." A development of new structures of security in Europe is imperative (...)* In all the questions relating to the unification of Germany that affect security we will set conditions [will be very demanding—AvP], just as all the others, not less and not more either.

Here also a clear demand for a correction in the politics that had developed to this time in favor of the creation of new security structures in Europe. In view of his own politics to this point Gorbachev must have been referring to himself. He mentions his problem with this correction immediately after the last passage.

Gorbachev: *You are right that in important international affairs nothing will succeed without the participation of the USA. For this reason we also pay so much attention to the relationships with the Americans, work together with them in assessing regional conflicts, and try to act together with them in their regulation. All the more important is an active participation of the USA in the new period of all-European cooperation, in the creation of a new European security system. Without the involvement of the Americans in this matter we cannot build an all-European house, not even an all-European garage. If we begin to isolate it, everyone will have to build his own shelter again. The Americans feel this. Therefore we must work with them in the question of the unification of Germany as well. In a telephone conversation Bush tried to convince me that the Germans had changed in the West and in the East so much that the Soviet Union did not have to worry about the entry of a united Germany into NATO. In response, with the same arguments, I suggested an alternative: to take the united Germany into the Warsaw Pact. This suggestion put Bush into an awkward situation. The unification of German creates genuine, difficult problems that have to be solved while considering security interests, first of the neighbours of Germany and all the states that are participants in the all-European process.*

If you attempt to convince us that the inclusion of a united Germany in NATO could not threaten us in any respect, it is necessary to say: you do not have to convince us. This is not a kindergarten and it is not about toys, but rather about a serious theme such as security.

It is quite apparent that the Soviet strategists have, with self-criticism, abandoned their previous passivity in regard to the place of a European security system in the reunification process—in relation to Soviet interests and their implementation.

Gorbachev: *We give much thought to how to tie the unification of Germany to permanent guarantees for security. We came to the conclusion that it was necessary to create a European security structure more quickly. And it is necessary to consider fundamentally the nature of the transition period to its creation. Perhaps it is possible in this context to consider a double membership of the united Germany in NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Some reject such a symbiosis from the start, but I repeat, it is necessary to weigh all possibilities and variations calmly. Until now only one thing is completely clear to us: the Soviet forces stationed in the GDR must remain there and should have regular conditions for their stay.*

Nowhere does it become as clear as here that the flaws in the Soviet foreign policy till then were to be corrected through the idea of a double membership of the united Germany in both military alliances; this had been considered during Baker's visit but had not been pursued. This change in policy would make up for the lagging behind of all-European security by introducing a transition period. This transition period of double membership had become necessary because the unity of Germany had not been coupled earlier with the (pre)-condition of new security structures that included the Soviet Union. Now with every month the Soviet Union became weaker, internally (Lithuania) and externally (the election results in the GDR); yet Gorbachev announced that there would be strong reactions to any unfairness. He even threatened at this meeting to obstruct the disarmament negotiations in Vienna. What is surprising is not only this but the responses by de Maizière and their similarity to Gorbachev's views—and to Modrow's, at least at the beginning of the following passage.

De Maizière: *I agree that really a series of very serious problems are arising. If the united Germany is integrated as a whole into NATO, that would mean a denial of the GDR as a factor in stability and security in the centre of Europe. On the other hand, a simple focus on the current situation without considering the changes that are connected with the unification of Germany could lead to a destabilization on our side. And that would also not lead to a solution of the problem. Our position is that we do not consider it necessary to strengthen the membership of a united Germany in NATO. We are in favour of a politics of progress toward the dissolution of the blocs and so also naturally of NATO.*

I would like to clarify three aspects of this progress. First an institutionalization of the whole European process is necessary. This could be: regular meetings of the foreign ministers, security ministers, commanders of the army of all participating states. It is possible to imagine for this purpose a multilateral organ for the regulation of conflict issues. It is necessary to take into account the models for the regulation of the treaties, which pertain to disarmament and military détente. Second, it is necessary to give the Vienna talks a new momentum. We are uneasy that they have slowed down. After Vienna-I there has to be Vienna-II, a summit conference.

Here it becomes quite clear that de Maizière was representing an independent “European” policy that—particularly in the following point—appears not really to be in agreement with the Americans or the Federal German government.

Third, we are in favour of the change of the structure and the strategy of NATO. And such changes should not just be declared but should be put into practice. The character of NATO itself must change in favour of the priority of political cooperation over the military. A coalition agreement between the parties, those who make up the government [of the GDR—AvP], provides for the possibility of the united Germany joining NATO, which for the its neighbours and the other European states would be acceptable. What is meant in this is that NATO would change its character. As well a particular military regime is planned for the territory of the present GDR. On this territory there should be no NATO forces, but rather forces made up of the present people’s army of the GDR (!) and they should, technically speaking, be tied to the Warsaw Pact and in no way should they be tied to the military structure of NATO. (!) Otherwise the eastern part of Germany will become a target of attacks. And since the territory of the GDR is densely populated and covered by a large number of economic objects it is very difficult to defend it.

This position was in clear contradiction to the concepts of President Bush and the chancellor’s office. How far de Maizière was here attempting an independent route or believed he at least had Genscher’s support, perhaps had even been “sent ahead” by him, can only be suspected through a few hints from de Maizière. It is necessary to remember that at the same time the preparations for the 2+4 meeting of foreign ministers in Bonn were under way, as well as the preparations and consultations between the two German foreign ministers Genscher and Meckel.

In the next section the Soviet president agreed essentially with the views of Lothar de Maizière.

Gorbachev: *The course of the unification process in Germany requires an increase in the speed of the creation of new all-European security structures. This is the first item. Second, we cannot imagine that the united Germany will be wholly integrated into NATO.*

De Maizière: *We can't imagine this either. (!)*

Gorbachev: *Third, we are in favour of changing the contents of the duties of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, in accord with the changes that have occurred and continue to occur in Eastern Europe. We have the right to ask NATO the questions you referred to: ratification of the security doctrine, changes in the structure and direction of this alliance. More so because in the Warsaw Pact these changes are already taking place. In this context I have to criticize the Americans and the Western Europeans, who actually want to preserve the military doctrine of NATO without any changes; this is indicated, contrary to various declarations, by the usual military exercises that they are carrying out. We are also discussing the necessity of contacts between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the creation of all-European mechanisms that allow the events in Europe to be foreseen. (...) So in this way one can characterize approximately the transition period for the creation of a new European security structure: change of the doctrines, structures, and orientations of the function of NATO and the Warsaw Pact with the reliance not on military but rather political aspects of its work.*

De Maizière: *Mr. President, we agree that the changes in NATO should not remain only oral but are to be concretely and appropriately fixed. The current model of NATO is not the only possible one, especially in light of the fact that the organization of the Warsaw Pact has actually changed its character as a result of the latest events in Eastern Europe. We know how Hungary and Czechoslovakia view the Warsaw Pact. It is necessary to judge the changes realistically, and everyone should learn a lesson from it. Our youth would prefer not to serve in the army at all or only under a variety of conditions and with the satisfaction of particular demands. Our border is in fact open and there is no opportunity to close it.*

Gorbachev: *Then your young people are already prepared to serve in the Bundeswehr?*

De Maizière: *No, it's not like that.*

Gorbachev: *I think it would be an expression of uncommon optimism to tolerate the real possibility that two differently oriented armies would exist in the united Germany: one according to the NATO principle and one according to the principle of the Warsaw Pact. Especially since the current governments of the FRG and the GDR will be replaced by a new one, one single government, and this will naturally have one single state apparatus and also its own single army. It would also be difficult to imagine anything else. (...)*

During the meeting Gorbachev expressed definite opposition to unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law, mainly because the border questions might be brought up through it. He moderated this determination somewhat after de Maizière's arguments.

De Maizière: *You, Mr. President, have expressed criticism of the possibility of a unification of Germany according to Article 23 of the Basic Law of the FRG. We see*

the situation differently. In our election campaign we openly preferred this route to unification and have received the mandate from our voters for it. We consider such a route possible and justified, for, in our opinion, it should lead to the change of the Basic Law and finally to the elimination of Article 23. This should show that the united Germany has no territorial claims. But actually I think that the discussion which article should have precedence in unification, the 23rd or the 146th, is more a dispute between legal experts than one that will determine the meaning of the case.

Gorbachev: *I would like you not to consider my criticism of Article 23 of the Basic Law as an attempt to slow down the process of the unification of Germany. This is not the case. We base ourselves on principled ideas. (...) I think it is very important to avoid all ambiguities and vagueness in everything that touches on the interests of the neighbours of Germany and also the other European states. Just look how harsh were the reactions to Kohl's attempts not to give exact answers to specific requests, for example, to the question from Poland for a final recognition of the Oder–Neisse border.*

De Maizière: *We would be naive if we did not notice these problems. You know that our position in this context is clear. The People's Chamber has expressed itself clearly on the final recognition of this border. I do not believe that Chancellor Kohl is using Article 23 of the Basic Law for reasons of external politics. His behaviour in this case can be explained better by inner political factors, such as the "Bund der Vertriebenen" (refugees' organization), etc. (...) The case is that the reference to the borders of 1937 has significance only for citizenship and do not carry any territorial claims. I had to carry out extra examinations of this subject.*

Gorbachev's skepticism on this explanation remained although he considered de Maizière's position believable and acknowledged it as such; because de Maizière also mentioned that some refugees did base territorial claims on this article.

This conversation also dealt with economic questions: because Lothar de Maizière was hoping for economic assistance, particularly the preservation of the old COMECON payment methods without the floating currencies that could be converted on the basis of international market prices. As well he hoped for the settling of the costs for the Red Army. And both had great hope, not to say the great illusion, that the special economic relations between the GDR and the Soviet Union would be of great value to the unified Germany.

Gorbachev: *The extensive familiarity of the representatives of the GDR with the Soviet market are also a plus that will help all of Germany to enter the Soviet market more successfully.*

De Maizière: *Yes. The good relationships with the Soviet Union—that is our advantage.*

Gorbachev: *A short time ago, when I was in one of the armaments factories in Sverdlovsk. I observed that relationships with the West Germany (!) firm Philips have already been established. This did not exist approximately a year ago. Now, however, when the West Germans saw what opportunities we have and they could evaluate them, faster co-operation is possible. It is possible that joint production could already compete in all international markets in two years. But the specialists of the GDR do not know only two, three of our industries, but practically the whole country.*

In this context the prime minister indicated skepticism about the positive internal opportunities of the monetary and social union.

With regard to the negotiations with the FRG on the monetary and social union, the framework of the joint negotiations is determined by two points. On the one hand, the FRG is ready to address our interests, even if the West German people do not want to pay too much for them. On the other hand the people of the GDR expect a rapid introduction of the Western Mark. And if their expectations are not met, then the flight into the West will increase again. There have been days when more than three thousand of our citizens went there, generally young, qualified workers. Today the out migration amounts to one thousand people a week. The result is that the age pyramid of our population is getting worse. This leads to tension. The people now see the West Mark in the foreground and do not notice behind it the danger for the situation of our industries, for their own social position.

At the end of the conversation both expressed their satisfaction with their meeting, because there were great similarities in spite of the slight disagreement on the question of unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law, particularly in regard to security and the NATO, as well as the border issue; here it appears that there were greater commonalities between de Maizière and Gorbachev than between the East Germans and the West German CDU leaders. This had also been noted by the chancellor's office's analysis of de Maizière's government statement.

The Soviet president even asked at the end:

I am very glad that I have gotten to know you, Mr. de Maizière. Have we not perhaps already met before?

De Maizière: *No, unfortunately not. This is the first meeting and I am satisfied with it.*

After this conversation it is necessary to ask how the two German foreign ministers (Genscher and Meckel) and the two government leaders (Kohl and de Maizière) would appear together at the "2+4" negotiations.

Economic Development and the Currency, Economic, and Social Union

Although the internal unification agreements and the internal economical development of the GDR and the Federal Republic through the currency, economy, and social unions are not main themes of this book, they are necessary for the understanding of the international aspects and should be mentioned here at least briefly. The most difficult problem in the GDR was the adaptation of the East German economy to the Western one and thereby also to the international market, without leading to the total collapse of the GDR's economy. Among the assortment of problems was also the conversion of the Mark to the D-Mark. Bundesbank president Karl-Otto Pöhl had already written to the chancellor on March 30: "A conversion of 2:1 is necessary particularly in the interest of the ability of the GDR to compete globally." But the people would naturally want the conversion at 1:1. Pöhl on this: "A conversion rate of 1:1 would expose the economy of the GDR to international competition with a level of costs and a debt that, in our opinion, most of the industries could not manage."⁶⁴

The hopes that the Eastern European market would attract investment by West German industries in the territory of the GDR proved to be an illusion because the COMECON market was collapsing as well. On January 12 in a speech to the Lower Rhine Industry and Trade Chamber of Commerce Helmut Kohl had said: "I am convinced that economic improvement will come only when the conditions are right. The investors must have confidence that their investments are wise and will make profits."⁶⁵ Ten years later Helmut Kohl said that at that time no one thought that the Soviet Union would collapse so quickly, but this was the basis of his hope for the "blooming landscapes" in the Eastern part of the new republic. Whoever now says that he knew this then is lying.⁶⁶

Until today there is a dispute over whether the currency union of the Federal Republic and the GDR contributed to this collapse and to the inflation in Eastern Europe particularly in the GDR or whether the economic and currency union was in fact necessary earlier than before because of this implosion of the COMECON market. There were also many critical voices in the West, who believed that the currency union would be established too quickly and would give the GDR economy no time to adapt (Bundesbank president Pöhl) and, therefore, "tip it over the edge." Thus Horst Siebert, a well-known West German economist, wrote in the *Handelsblatt*:

The alignment of the differing standards of the GDR and the Federal Republic no longer took place through the exchange rate but rather through the mobility of labour and capital and, insofar as factors are not mobile, through an alignment of prices for the immobile factors. Thus, in a currency union the GDR gives up an important variable that is instrumental for its catching up process: the businesses of the GDR

*confront powerful problems of alignment if they become integrated into the international economy. Only a small proportion of the businesses were oriented towards the international market.*⁶⁷

Lothar Späth, then prime minister of Baden-Württemberg, declared in an interview with *Stuttgarter Zeitung* on February 10, 1990:

The currency union makes sense only if it is established at the same time as the economic community. This means that the GDR will adopt all our economic and property laws. Both must take effect on one and the same day. Everything else does not bring quick change and will give people hardly any hope.

Question: *This means that you demand the unconditional economic capitulation of the GDR.*

Späth: *I will say it finally completely bluntly: yes.*⁶⁸

De Maizière continues today to believe that the collapse of the GDR economy was not the result of the currency union but rather due to the speed with which it came into being. He also explains it as due to the rapid decay of the Soviet economy, the collapse of COMECON, and the decline of the GDR economy *already before* his taking of office. Besides industry in the GDR had been for a long time hopelessly outdated. The degree of obsolescence was between 70 and 85 percent.

De Maizière: *In the GDR a workshop could depreciate no more than 2 per cent per annum, i.e. it had to last fifty years. And this is also how the result appeared. The ratio of government expenditure to GNP, i.e. the expenditures of public officials, was in the last years of the GDR over 80 per cent, in the Federal Republic at the time 53 per cent. And everyone agrees that that is certainly too high. In principle a national economy, if it is healthy, must reinvest and accumulate 50 per cent and 50 per cent can go towards consumption. In the GDR this was [at the end—AvP] over 80 per cent. That means, therefore, we had the beginning of a galloping inflation and it was only the currency union that saved us from the inflation that the Poles, the Czechs, and, above all, the Russians had to experience.*

If the Eastern European market had not collapsed, he also says, “the investments of the West German business would have made sense. (...) This was the decisive miscalculation in this story.”⁶⁹

In the chancellor’s office on May 13, 1990, the assumption was: “the following magnitude for the budget deficit in the GDR (...) (without Federal assistance): the second half year ca. 44 billion DM, 1991 (the whole year): ca. 75 billion DM.”⁷⁰ In the central question of the exchange rate, said Helmut Kohl

later, a compromise had been agreed upon. Wages and salaries were regulated at 1:1; pensions at 70 percent, bank accounts “were converted into DM at 1:1 depending on the age of the GDR citizen (...) to 2000 Mark (1 to 13 years old), 4000 Mark (14– to 58), und 7000 Mark (59 and older). For all savings higher the rate was 2:1.”⁷¹

After the announcement of the planned regulations of the currency, economic, and social union in mid-May 1990 there were violent protests and several strikes in the GDR, supported by unions and the SPD as well as the PDS in opposition to the economic sale of the GDR to the FRG. De Maizière spoke of one of the most serious crises that the GDR faced. Kohl and de Maizière met on May 14 for a “difficult” talk. They agreed that the pensions could be exchanged at a rate of 1:1. (Both see this and the improvement of the pensions in the new federal states since the change to the present day as a personal success of their politics.) However, Kohl wanted to dissuade de Maizière above all against the idea that in the property question there would be a transition period of ten years for individuals who on a “particular effective date did not have their residences in the GDR.” During this transitional period these individuals who had moved to the West would have received a right to inheritable tenancy, in order to hinder speculation (de Maizière). Kohl was opposed because it would “have essentially stifled all readiness to invest”⁷²—a statement that is questionable, since the unusually long period of the clarification of property relations would have hindered investments just as much. The chancellor was completely in favor of complete restitution and not, as was also discussed, a compensation payment for previously owned property.

De Maizière: *The majority of old property-owners lived in the West, had for a long time already found their livelihood here, did not want to take it up again there, but rather they had an economic interest in it. The productive wealth of East Germany is [in 2000– AvP] more than 90 per cent not in the possession of East Germans, which leads to significant mental tensions. (...)*

AvP: *May I still ask you directly. You now speak as if you preferred the principle of compensation with certain exceptions and restrictions.*

De Maizière: *Yes, with many restrictions.*

AvP: *With many exceptions and restrictions. We know that the opposite occurred. Did this happen with your agreement?*

De Maizière: *You know, you must not always think about what is sensible and right, but rather you have to consider what you will find majorities for.*

AvP: *But you found the principle of compensation more sensible?*

De Maizière: *I would have found a principle of compensation with many, many exceptions more sensible.⁷³ I do not believe at all that we would have come to a very different agreement. Whether we would have approached it this way or that. But I believe that the route would have been more bearable and more comprehensible.⁷⁴*

On May 18, the agreement for the creation of a currency, economic, and social union between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic was signed.⁷⁵

In July 1990—according to de Maizière—the GDR would no longer have been able to pay wages and salaries. In the second half of 1990 the GDR budget equaled 64 billion D-Mark, but there were only 55 billion available and 32 billion was financed by transfers from the West German government (22 billion D-Mark from assistance and 10 billion D-Mark through bank credit).⁷⁶

The Federal government prepared—partly together with the GDR government, partly without it—with great effort the currency, economic, and social union, attempted to clarify the constitutional problems of unity, and at the same time to negotiate the external aspects of unity in the 2+4 negotiations, to name only three of the most important matters. If one reads the daily protocols of the chancellor's office, one must also mention these achievements.

On July 1, the D-Mark became the common currency in all of Germany and the currency, economic, and social union came into effect.

The Walk to Canossa by de Maizière on August 2, 1990

By the middle of May 1990 at the latest it became clear to de Maizière that the GDR would not survive the year economically and financially, contrary to the plans not “to complete” unification until 1990 or 1992. This realization was bitter because he had also hoped that if the GDR could enter unity with more weight it would have been better for the merging of the two German societies and states, for the self-confidence of the GDR population, and also of the new GDR politicians.

Added to this was, however, the fact that de Maizière felt that an earlier entrance of the GDR into a union was a personal defeat in his relationship with Kohl who had particularly at the beginning of their political contacts rather circumvented him.

De Maizière in the interview: *After all it probably did not remain a secret even then: we did not get along well with each other. And I say completely deliberately that if two people cannot get along it is always due to both of them. Even me. (...) You know, when you have a feeling, you are in a room, now Kohl enters, and the room is full and you can no longer breathe, then it is not only because of him but also somewhat because of me. (...) But until 3 October, for what we had to achieve together, I cannot complain of a lack of fairness.*

I asked de Maizière why he referred to his visit to Kohl during his holiday on Lake Wolfgang in the summer of 1990 as a walk to Canossa.

De Maizière: *Yes, well, it was going there and saying: we must surrender the shop more quickly because otherwise will be bankrupt—[He lets the sentence hang.—AvP]*

If you have read again the government statement that I issued in April I said there: the most important thing is that this process of unity be conducted with honour. And I hoped that we would succeed to some extent to organize our relationships, to organize them, and to make progress in democratization, in order then to enter into unification negotiations more equally with orderly conditions and not be under the pressure of knowing at each negotiation that next month the cheque that was due would arrive so that I could still pay the wages in the public services.

The fund *Deutsche Einheit* (German Unity) was to regulate the financial burdens of German unity between the union and the states in a particular relationship; according to de Maizière 120 billion D-Mark were expected in four years.

De Maizière: *In my opinion 38 to 83 billion would be needed. This was even optimistic.*

AvP: *That was very optimistic, as we now know.*

De Maizière: *Today we know that it was 120 to 150.⁷⁷ (...) So I traveled to Kohl at Lake Wolfgang and said (...) There will be a power vacuum, a parliamentary vacuum. And that is why I was in favour of bringing forward the first all German elections to the Bundestag to 14 October because that was when the first free Landtag elections in the East would take place. And then I had to swear to financial disclosure and that was difficult for me. Hence the designation Walk to Canossa. It was not supposed to be easy for Henry either then, when he...*

AvP: *...walked barefoot through the snow.*

German unity was already being prepared before this walk to Canossa. On July 22, the People's Chamber decided in favor of the inclusion of five new states and the Landtag elections on October 14. The conflicts over the all German Bundestag elections on December 2 became so serious in de Maizière's coalition government that first the Liberals and then on August 20 the Social Democrats left the government. The reasons might have to do something with the foreign politics (see below).

What Is National and What Is International in the 2+4 Negotiations?

The 2+4 Foreign Ministers' Conference

Since May 14, 1990, officials of the governments of the six “2+4” states were negotiating the external aspects of reunification. For the Federal Republic these were mainly Dieter Kastrup and Frank Elbe of the Foreign Ministry as well as Peter Hartmann of the chancellor's office. The foreign ministers met on May 5. The newcomer here was GDR foreign minister Markus Meckel of the GDR-SPD and his undersecretary of state Hans-Jürgen Misselwitz. Together with Genscher he was preparing himself for the 2+4 conference that was to take place in Bonn; this was to be followed by a conference of foreign ministers that had been planned by a meeting of officials on April 30.

These preparations by Genscher and his GDR colleague Meckel would not have lacked piquancy because the Federal German foreign minister had some sympathy for the GDR diplomacy that aimed more at an all-European solution, which would include the smaller countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. De Maizière mentioned to me that Genscher, as has already been indicated, sometimes “sent ahead” the GDR government if it was a matter of the special military status or the inclusion of the Eastern European states in an all-European security structure. However Meckel's ideas might have gone too far for Genscher, especially because of Meckel's lack of diplomatic experience and subtlety in relation to the Western European states and the United States. There was criticism of the following: the rejection of the Bonn officials also of the Federal German foreign minister by Meckel; the quick official acceptance of the Oder–Neisse border with Poland by the GDR parliament (*Volkskammer*), the greater weight that the foreign minister wanted to give the CSCE as opposed to an expanding NATO because, in opposition to Bonn, he held a position favoring a more neutral special status of the GDR in NATO; finally he supported the

smaller states of Eastern Europe against the EU. The most clearest difference lay in the idea of a territorial army *made up of troops from the people's army*, which was suggested by the GDR foreign minister; this was to help to reduce the disagreement with Gorbachev on the question of NATO expansion.¹ The Bonn government pressed de Maizière repeatedly for clarifications of the GDR's foreign policy against Markus Meckel's, which could not have been very easy for him because he and his foreign minister had the same views in many areas. From April 1990 Meckel's positions received official importance just when these positions were losing weight internationally and their potential for being realized was fading.²

Before Shevardnadze's departure for this meeting, there was in Moscow "a heated discussion in the politburo," as described by Anatoli Chernayev. Gorbachev let himself be "carried away into a categorical rejection of Germany's remaining in NATO: 'Before that I'd put up with the failure of the Vienna CSCE negotiations and the START treaty, but I will not permit this.'"³ This discussion was prompted by a "proposal" evidently in Shevardnadze's speech "that was far less brusquely expressed" than was Gorbachev's rejection. This proposal was endorsed by Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Yasov, and Kryuchkov, among whom were two of the later main putschists against Gorbachev in August 1991 (the two last ones). Here they still endorsed the "less brusque proposal"—another indication that they did not become bitter enemies of Gorbachev until after the settling of the German question. After Gorbachev's outburst everyone at this meeting, with the exception of Shevardnadze, remained "dumb as fish." Though not asked to, Chernayev wrote a memorandum to Gorbachev the following morning. "Germany will stay in NATO anyway, and we will then again be chasing the train that has already left the station. We are heading exactly toward a failure instead of now putting forward clear conditions for our consent."⁴

In Bonn Genscher, as host, opened the first 2+4 foreign ministers' conference and emphasized the interest in the continued membership of a united Germany in NATO. According to Chancellor Kohl this foreign ministers' meeting did not bring about particularly important results, except that there was a renewed acknowledgment of the right of the Germans to a unified state. Immediately after, the chancellor held a press conference where he also stated that "the federal German government together with the GDR [supports] a final settling of the existing western Polish border in accordance with international law."⁵

Despite this careful public declaration at the conference there had been some drama when the Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze proposed a "separation in time between the internal and external aspects of unity." The idea behind this was clear: the Soviet Union wanted in this way to gain in order to get some leeway in the CSCE conferences in favor of an all-European settlement, in which the territory of the GDR did not unilaterally become part of NATO. Presumably this also meant that the 2+4 negotiations were to become less important than the CSCE negotiations. Genscher then telephoned the Federal German chancellor

who expressed his opposition to this very decisively. Looking back, he later said: "First—this was certainly also recognizable as the Soviet side's ulterior motive—we would have been denied for an indefinite time the right to decide freely our alliance membership." Kohl even believes that the Soviet leadership with the help of the German "nationalist-neutral" left was still hoping to achieve German neutrality.⁶

The German delegation also received support from the Americans under Baker because the United States were always in vigorous opposition when institutions, such as the CSCE, which were dominated by Europe, received greater significance because this would reduce their influence in the 2+4 negotiations and in the NATO council. The Soviet Union was too late with this move not only because of German and American resistance and not only because of its own weakness, but also and mainly because its own alliance partners in the Warsaw Pact were already turning toward the West. At the recent conference of the foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact the Czechs, the Poles, and the Hungarians had no longer opposed the NATO membership of the united Germany.

Moreover, the Soviet foreign minister heightened the drama by stating openly in this circle that the opponents of Gorbachev and his person were only waiting for the opportunity to move toward the selling out of Soviet interests.⁷ Shevardnadze's suggestion for separate negotiations in the external and internal aspects of unity were, nevertheless, not only rejected by his Western counterparts, but he did not pursue them further either. Still, Shevardnadze emphasized once more his "negative stance" in relation to a membership of the united Germany in NATO and warned of a new division of Europe. But if one assumes a joint setting of goals, "then one should rely not on blocs but rather on all-European security structures."

In contrast with Kohl, Genscher expressed his gratitude for Shevardnadze's positive stance on the unity of Germany in principle. Genscher even went one step further: "Here I felt confirmation of my belief that we must in future achieve a new relationship between the two alliances."⁸

Perhaps the press suspected, not entirely incorrectly, that there were differences between Kohl and Genscher in these questions. It is true that Genscher was also in favor of completing the 2+4 negotiations *before* the (internal) German treaty, but the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* had the impression: "Genscher welcomes Moscow's willingness to separate the inner and external aspects." Genscher denied it, but a degree of confusion remained.

Teltschik with the German Bankers in Moscow: Credit for German NATO Membership?

When Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze came to Bonn at the beginning of May 1990 for the 2+4 negotiations he had to disclose how wretched

the economic condition of the Soviet Union was and what significance this had for politics in the country. He asked Chancellor Helmut Kohl for 5 billion in credit.⁹ He then sent Horst Teltschik to Moscow to negotiate this loan. On the afternoon of May 13, 1990, Teltschik flew in great secrecy with the bankers Hilmar Kopper of the Deutsche Bank and Wolfgang Röllner of the Dresdner Bank to Moscow—not even the pilot knew who, besides Teltschik, was sitting in his plane.

Teltschik: *And this was a sensational day in Moscow. In one day we saw the whole Soviet leadership, from Gorbachev to Ryshkov, the prime minister, the foreign minister, the head of the central bank, the finance minister, the economic minister—all of them negotiated this loan.*¹⁰

Horst Teltschik also reported something surprising:

In the meeting with Gorbachev the issue was, this was my assignment (!), to make clear to him: the chancellor is ready to give this credit. But we want something in return. (Laughs). And this I could not say clearly. I mean, the difficult situation in such a meeting is to make the partner understand that we view such a credit as part of the overall solution, without causing displeasure, because we are saying it, without causing hard feelings. That was my assignment.

AvP: *So what was that something in return?*

Teltschik: *What we wanted in return, what we said, the loan is part of the price that we pay for NATO membership.*

AvP: *For NATO membership. Yes, so that is the important point.*

Teltschik: *Yes. So, that is part of the package. (...) In the end we always spoke of a package solution. We have to put together a package of bilateral, multilateral measures in order to help Gorbachev over the hurdle of NATO membership.*¹¹

Teltschik does not mention exactly this fact in his book of 1993 but rather only in response to my question in this interview in 2000.¹² Why in his book he does not mention the “something in return” of NATO membership and why he does not make use of the opportunity to present these credit negotiations as a breakthrough in the question of German NATO membership, moreover, two weeks before the Americans, was not understandable to me. Because, as a result, it was Bush and his government that later took credit for this success. Would this have been in the interest of the Federal German government? Should it perhaps be exactly so or appear that the Americans decided this difficult question in talks with Gorbachev? Or did Teltschik not really discuss this bargain—credit for NATO membership, as Portugalov told me, because this conflicts with diplomatic practice?¹³

I hoped to find the answer in the Soviet protocol of the meeting between Gorbachev and Teltschik on May 14, 1990,¹⁴ because during this meeting he, Teltschik, as quoted above, mentioned this trade carefully. But there is nothing on it in this protocol. In response to my question, Teltschik wrote that “I presented the provision of credit as a component of a package solution. I have no doubt that this message was understood to mean that the NATO membership of a united Germany was also included. That was after all one of the very few central questions that were still unsettled.” Horst Teltschik sees evidence for this in the invitation extended a short time later to Kohl to come to Gorbachev’s homeland, which Teltschik himself had suggested.¹⁵

Gorbachev, however, denied to me that there had been such a linking of credit and NATO membership at this meeting:

*The story with Teltschik, who supposedly “brought” the proposal “to buy” our agreement to the entry of Germany into NATO to Moscow, is an invention that was denied many times by us and the Germans.*¹⁶

Nevertheless there is no hint that Teltschik could have mentioned this combination. Because in that meeting of May 14, 1990, Gorbachev tried to make clear to Teltschik that a loan did not in any way mean the surrender of political independence. In the transition to a market economy the Soviet Union wanted to preserve its social services and to make its businesses profitable. Credit was necessary for this.

Gorbachev: *Co-operation—that does not mean to find oneself in a state of dependence, particularly a political one. For the Soviet Union such dependence is morally unacceptable. (...) If we accept something, we will pay for it. (...) In the past our economy depended on heavy industry, the defence sector. Now we are directing it toward the solution of social questions, the production of the necessities for the people. (...) For this we need protective measures, a kind of insurance fund. We see this as favourable credit from our western partners.*¹⁷

Apparently the Soviets had asked the Americans for credit as well, but they had set conditions that had annoyed the Soviet side and led to a change in direction, perhaps a change in orientation with a greater emphasis on Europe. This is suggested by Gorbachev’s subsequent statements from the Moscow protocol:

The Americans do not want to put themselves in our place. For me it is a question in principle, the leadership of the FRG should know this too. We have begun a change with all the difficult results that derive from it and it would be immoral to try to take advantage of this instability. No politicians could take this position, only narrow-minded pragmatists, who think in old categories from election to election.

Gorbachev then continued in an unusually sharp form—unusual because he spoke in this way about the Americans who were not present to a third person, namely Teltschik:

Seen internationally, the beginnings of a kind of American revanchism is becoming visible. You can feel the growth of great power ambitions. (...) We would like everyone to feel that we are seeking our partners first in Europe. We orient ourselves towards them in the context of an all-European process, the deepening of cooperation for mutual benefit on the way to the creation of an all-European house. Europe is closer to us than everything else.

I interpret this whole situation in this way: Gorbachev, disappointed by the Americans, discovers, or rather rediscovers, the Europeans and the all-European security system because this implicitly opposes the American influence in Europe through NATO, after he had intermittently placed great emphasis more strongly on the *four power authority over Germany*. This renewed high esteem for the Europeans came very late and under conditions that were in no way as beneficial to the Soviet Union as in November/December 1989 or January 1990.

But if there was this renewed reorientation, why did Gorbachev then make the decisive change in the NATO question not with the Germans or ten days later with Mitterrand, but instead with the Americans whom he had just criticized?

Mitterrand Meeting Gorbachev on May 25, 1990: NATO, the “Vanishing of the Blocs,” a “European Confederation,” and “All-European Security Structures”

If one reads the protocol¹⁸ of the meeting between Gorbachev and Mitterrand—three weeks after the first 2+4 foreign ministers’ conference, ten days after Teltschik’s visit, and not even one week before Gorbachev’s meeting with US president Bush—one senses why Anatoli Chernayev believes that Gorbachev “listened to” Mitterrand most and held him in esteem particularly.¹⁹ No previous meeting made the considerations by both of them in the direction of a whole Europe settlement as this and at the same time Mitterrand presses Gorbachev unusually explicitly to express himself clearly—negatively or positively—on the NATO membership of the united Germany.

Mitterrand: *We have good relations with the Germans. But we are not blind. We have never closed our eyes to how they concentrated all their energies to make the unification of Germany take place as quickly as possible. All this time I said the following: I make no conditions for reunification, but I believe that the results of the unification of Germany should be part of negotiations of appropriate guarantees.*

After much skirmishing around NATO and other questions, Mitterrand asked again in the middle of the meeting:

Now the concrete difficulty is tied to the question of the NATO membership of the united Germany. The USA, but also the leaders of both Germanies, would like to solve it as quickly as possible, and naturally in the direction of NATO membership. Another issue is what the German people, the ordinary Germans, think about it.²⁰ Naturally these questions will be solved between the Germans themselves, but which version could you suggest to them?

Gorbachev [unusually bluntly—AvP]: *Membership of the future Germany in both blocs at the same time.*

Mitterrand: *I think that this proposal, actually a wise one, will not be accepted. At the same time I want to remind you that I personally support the complete dissolution of the military bloc. The impression exists that the question of the membership of Germany in NATO is connected with the course of disarmament talks. To speak concretely, will you make such a link to the Vienna talks? Surely you won't give up such trump cards as the disarmament talks.²¹ In any case not until then, when you have an answer in this aspect of the German settlement. In other words, will you put the brakes on in the course of the disarmament talks by making it dependant on the course of German affairs?*

Gorbachev: *This could be one of the results of which I spoke.*

Mitterrand: *I do not feel the slightest doubt in regard to the determination of the FRG, and the USA that supports it, on the NATO question. It appears that you will speak about it in the upcoming meeting with President Bush.*

Gorbachev: *Absolutely.*

We will see what—once again—remained of this “absolute” clarity a week later in the negotiations with President Bush on disarmament as a condition of the membership of Germany in both blocs or in NATO a week later. Mitterrand also pondered what possibilities Gorbachev actually had to prevail in Washington in his support for the membership of Germany in the two military blocs:

Mitterrand: *I am not a pessimist. But I think that Bush will be extremely surprised when you give him your suggestion. He is not prepared for it.*

Anatoli Chernayev combines his memory of this phase of the meeting with a judgement:

Chernayev: *Mitterrand was more sophisticated [than Baker—AvP]. He said: “I understand you. You do not want Germany to join NATO, I understand the feelings of the Soviet people. But Mr. Gorbachev, you do not have the power to prevent this. You cannot oppose it. If the Germans want this, and the Americans,*

then you cannot prevent this. Therefore, do not oppose it. You will only lose.” Thus, he convinced Gorbachev very elegantly.

This appears to me a very capricious interpretation. Because Mitterrand was actually urging Gorbachev to use the disarmament talks as a bargaining chip. Mitterrand noted that he had asked Bush in the interest of equilibrium in Europe not to expand American troops to East Germany. Both—Mitterrand and Gorbachev—were aware that the Americans wanted to make use of European institutions for the reunification process less than of NATO. This factor led Mitterrand and Gorbachev to further consideration on Europe as a whole.

Mitterrand: *What methods are available to us? The USA is completely on the side of the FRG. They are in favour of an immediate unification. Great Britain is taking a rather more restrained position. I even believe that if they had their way they would be hostile towards a unification of Germany. But the English have clearly expressed their support for German membership in NATO.*

The security questions stood—according to Mitterrand—in the foreground at the moment, but not only for the Soviet Union, but

... also for European security as a whole. I will not allow myself to diverge from this goal, particularly, when I present my idea on the creation of a European confederation. It is similar to your concept of the construction of an all-European house. One could say that your idea of an all-European house is more like a general concept, while my suggestion is at the same time based in politics and legality. For this the future confederation needs appropriate structures. That could be, as I have already said, a permanent secretariat, frequent meetings by foreign ministers every year, but possibly also the finance and other ministers. At the same time the equality of all European state members must be guaranteed. Not one of them should have the feeling that it is in a state of dependence. We could find common positions not only in the question of security, but also in technology, the environment, and many other areas. Then the European states will adopt the habit of working together. Even more because there are already two, three organizations that—each in its own area—in their own way are heading this way.

I have not read anywhere in talks with Gorbachev or with Western partners such clear words from Mitterrand on a whole Europe made up of east and west, especially not in this combination with the eventual departure of the American troops from Europe.

Mitterrand: *Naturally the first issue is the CSCE. One should not try to trade it away. During a particular period the presence of the USA and*

C a n a d a i s a p o s i t i v e f a c t o r .²² However the CSCE is not the European house. It is a stage on the way to it.

Now we find that the already mentioned statement of Mitterrand's advisor Attali at the G7 conference, "Europe must get used to the idea of at time when the USA and the Soviet Union are out of Europe,"²³ which led Eagleburger to intervene with Kohl, did not come out of nowhere. Furthermore, Attali was present in this "meeting under four eyes," as was Anatoli Chernayev and the two interpreters. It was actually, as always, a "meeting under twelve eyes."

However, Mitterrand believed that his ideas of a European confederation were not ripe for the current situation, although, otherwise, in earlier and in this meeting he had actually preferred to see the unification of Germany *after* or *with* the all-European unification process. Here was the actual strategic problem.

Mitterrand: *I have already often expressed myself on the European confederation. At this time such a confederation cannot be an answer to the situation that has arisen. It will not be an answer in three years either. But in ten years it will happen. Its goal [is—AvP] to make it so that the Europeans are together, discuss and decide on their affairs, avert the danger of war, but also—and this is important—become an economic power.*

Gorbachev agreed with Mitterrand in all these questions.

Both were clear that they could do little if Bush and Kohl wanted to achieve NATO membership of the unified Germany.

Mitterrand: *With regard to the question of the membership of Germany in NATO, I am ready to help, but I think that the key is with you. What can I do? Send a division there?*

Gorbachev: *It is easier for us—our divisions are already there. (Laughter)*

Back in Paris again, Mitterrand informed, via his security advisor Hubert Védrine, the Bonn government through the legation counselor Joachim Bitterlich of his meeting with Gorbachev.²⁴ This report reflects little of the closeness of Mitterrand and Gorbachev's thoughts, little also of the clarity with which both had discussed the various possible all-European security concepts. In this regard Mitterrand emphasized understandably that he had "defended your position," that is, the chancellor's, when Gorbachev raised the question of the double membership of the united Germany in NATO and the Warsaw Pact. According to the Soviet protocol this is a diplomatic euphemism, because Mitterrand had only described this suggestion—"actually a wise one"—as rather futile because it would not be accepted.

For whatever reason, Mitterrand, or rather Védrine, let the German government be informed that Gorbachev had "made a 'connection' between the process

of disarmament and the future military status of Germany.” This is also incorrect, according to the Soviet protocol. But even more surprising is that—for the Bonn ears naturally—the “Elysée asks . . . , if Gorbachev thereby really wanted to tie one agreement to another or only to clarify their close relationship.”²⁵ It is relevant to remind that according to the Soviet protocol it was Mitterrand who had really placed this “trump card” in Gorbachev’s hands:

Mitterrand: *There is the impression that the question of the membership of Germany in NATO is connected with the course of disarmament talks. To speak concretely, will you make such a link to the Vienna talks? Surely you won't give up such trump cards as the disarmament talks.*

My repetition here is deliberate, because it makes clear that the trump card was also—to continue the image—a “marked card” of Mitterrand’s: he presented it to Kohl differently from Gorbachev and differently from how he apparently thought strategically.

Gorbachev in Washington and the NATO Question

Less than a week after Gorbachev’s meeting with Mitterrand and two weeks after the one with Teltschik there were on May 31 until June 2, 1990, the summit conferences between US president George Bush and the Soviet president Mikhail S. Gorbachev in Washington and Camp David. This meeting had been in preparation for a long time, but was contentious in regard to the essential questions.

Baker had been in Moscow from May 16 to 18 to prepare for this meeting and had found there a Soviet leadership that had reverted to “inflexible positions” in questions of foreign policy primarily because of huge difficulties caused by Lithuania’s declaration of independence and the consequent insecurity. Yuli Kvitsinski, until now the Soviet ambassador to Bonn who was being called back to Moscow, described the foreign policy considerations there as a “surrealistic jumble of ideas;”²⁶ however a phalanx opposed to NATO membership of the united Germany had formed, from Gorbachev through Akhromeyev and Yasov to Falin. One of the reasons for this position, which was in no way America-friendly, might have been the decision of the US Senate regarding Lithuania; with a clear majority of 73:24 it decided “to withhold any US trade benefits from the USSR until the Lithuanian standoff was resolved and the [*Soviet—AvP*] economic embargo was.”²⁷ As well, the United States rejected requests for credit—completely in contrast with the Federal Republic of Germany. This could also be a reason for the at least temporary increase in the orientation toward Western Europe. Still Baker made clear in his meetings with Shevardnadze in Bonn and in Moscow, and in the middle of May with the Lithuanian prime minister Kazimiera

Prunskiene and Gorbachev, that the differences between the new Lithuanian government and Gorbachev were not so great that they could not be solved. But apparently there was “a real gap in symbols” and he was reminded of the Middle East where, as he said, “symbols constantly wrecked substance.”²⁸

Also Baker tried to emphasize the concessions that had been made in consideration of Soviet security interests, which Shevardnadze completely acknowledged in Bonn on May 5, and also agreed to a further American troop presence of “at least seven to ten years, probably longer.” Baker wrote about this to his president only after the first 2+4 foreign ministers’ meeting and mentioned at the same time that the Soviets were opposed to German NATO membership but apparently “don’t know how to square the circle.” After his departure from Bonn, Baker stopped off in Warsaw to “reassure” the Poles on the border question and to invite the Polish foreign minister to the next 2+4 foreign ministers’ conference.²⁹ On May 18, Baker was finally in Moscow and felt compelled to note that his counterpart Shevardnadze was overwhelmed by the looming problems and had to demonstrate his credibility in the disarmament question before his own team. Shevardnadze went with Baker to Sagorsk to the seminary where they both lit candles, which gave Baker a “strange feeling,” and thought about the nationalities problems in the Soviet Union without being disturbed.

In his five-hour meeting on May 18 with Baker³⁰ the Soviet president stated “for the first time” that he had the feeling that the United States was attentive to its (one-sided and short-term³¹) advantage, in Eastern Europe, especially in Lithuania and Germany. According to his information the United States wanted to separate Eastern Europe from the Soviet Union (or even isolate it). Gorbachev emphasized that he would support paths that were freely chosen, but it was not right if the states of Eastern Europe were pushed in this direction. In regard to Germany Gorbachev thought that the presence of the united Germany in NATO would be questionable and a dangerous disturbance of the European equilibrium. Besides, the United States was attempting to attach conditions to the participation of the Soviet Union in the European Recovery Program (ERP) of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Baker denied these reproaches, though with the exception of the credit conditions: it could not be expected that American taxes would be spent for a country that subsidized Cuba, Cambodia, and Viet Nam annually “to the tune of ten to fifteen billion dollars a year, while maintaining very high defense expenditures.”³² Finally the Soviet side canceled a meeting between Baker and Shevardnadze; even the efforts of Rice and Zoellick, who had accompanied Baker, made no difference. Gorbachev sounded, as Baker put it, like a “jilted lover who had been left unexpectedly at the altar.” These differences and the lack of results meant that difficulties were to be expected for the summit between Gorbachev and Bush on May 31.³³

Helmut Kohl had phoned President Bush the previous day about precisely this problem and discussed exactly this point, which was so decisive for the

Americans: “It is important that Gorbachev now understands that the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany stand together, no matter how things develop. The visible expression of this is the membership of the reunified Germany in NATO and, furthermore, without any restrictions.” Perhaps the chancellor also called because Brent Scowcroft, Bush’s security advisor had (according to Bush during the telephone conversation) described to Helmut Kohl’s “generous offer” as “forward looking,” because of the reduction of the united Germany’s troop strength, but premature. Kohl probably wanted to signal to Bush that this offer did not mean a “softening” of the German position but rather was directed at the goal of getting Gorbachev’s agreement on German membership in NATO.³⁴

The summit conference between Bush and Gorbachev would indeed lead to the decisive breakthrough in the NATO membership question. Besides this disputed point, there were in the meetings of the two presidents a series of other issues, primarily disarmament questions.

Two aspects of this summit conference are particularly striking in the Soviet protocols:³⁵ Gorbachev attempts on the one hand—differently from when he was with Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand—to make the United States his main partner now; on the other hand he wants, virtually at the last minute, to tie the German question to an all-European security design.

At Washington: the Construction of European Security and the Membership of the United Germany in NATO

The Soviet president naturally knew that the last of these two points was a controversial one for the United States, that the United States always wanted to see NATO as the leading and decisive authority, followed by any European institution—even if it was the CSCE, in which it was itself involved. Therefore Gorbachev began by emphasizing the first item, the leading, though insecure, role of the United States and the Soviet Union:

I think that for the United States—even with all its power—it is difficult today to maintain its leadership in the world. (...) I say directly: we do not believe that a weakened USA, a USA with a smaller role in world affairs, is to our advantage. This can be of no benefit for us, because a weakening or any kind of slighting of the United States would mean instability in the world.

But Gorbachev caps this idea with a light dig against the losers of the Second World War:

Mr. President, I do not know if you agree with me or not, but the tragedy is that in the post-war period our two countries fell into such opposition, which demoralized you and us. And the other countries got on back their feet during this time and progressed.

Bush: *Yes, this a very accurate observation.*

Gorbachev: *And with what result? It so happens that the defeated are flourishing, but the victors are facing growing difficulties. But to be honest—and here under four eyes we have to speak in this way: some of them began to behave defiantly, not to say impudently. Look how Japan is creating its new empire, how a new European centre of strength and economic power is being created. We see ourselves here, confronted by a trend that affects our and your interests. (...) The world balance is changing. A reorganization of power is occurring. The world is becoming polycentric.*

Of course, it is not known if Bush interpreted this position of Gorbachev similarly to Baker's after his visit to Moscow at the beginning of February, that is, as a deliberate or unconscious attempt by Gorbachev to minimize the weaknesses of his country and—as here in Washington—at the same time to describe the leadership of the United States as endangered from the outside, bring it to the same level as the Soviet Union, and give it the same interests. But one of the “impudent” defeated powers, Germany, had been described previously as a strategic ally of the Soviet Union by Gorbachev to Teltschik; similarly he had described Europe as the center and goal of Soviet policy to Mitterrand; and third and finally, in the same month of May, he had described the United States to both of them as hostile, even revanchist, toward the Soviet Union. Was this only “diplomacy” or the expression of the inconsistency of his foreign policy or the expression of a strategic intent, as it had been developed in the meeting with de Maizière? Even familiarity with the Soviet protocols makes it difficult to determine this. In Washington Gorbachev emphasized more strongly than in Malta at the beginning of December 1989 or during Baker's visit to Moscow on February 9 the connection between European and German unification, exactly as suggested by Mitterrand.

Gorbachev: *I want to suggest to you in this context to deal with the question of a changing Europe and the processes that are connected with the unification of Germany together. The connection is so great that it is not possible to separate one from the other. (...) As a result it is necessary to focus on deepening the all-European process and to determine the necessary sequence of steps and limits. We share the striving of the American side for an agreement soon in Vienna that can be signed at an all-European meeting at the highest level.*

Gorbachev then expresses support for a “gradual agreement,” which would have made another step possible and meant more time primarily for the “how” of the “relationships in the new Europe.” Gorbachev poses the question, both himself and for Bush, of how “to combine the continued progress of Europe as a whole with a fair regulation of the external questions that were raised by the

unification of Germany.” He urged “speed” in order to progress from “Helsinki I to Helsinki II.”

Gorbachev: *And here it is absolutely clear that the new Europe will not be built without the active participation of the USA. Just as nothing good will come of trying to isolate the Soviet Union, even if it is not isolated but simply pushed aside. If we were to notice such tactics, I say this openly, there will be an appropriate response.*

Here appears the connection of the American leadership role, or rather its threatened position, and European union more as an idea that would win Americans over or even pull them into a conception of European security. But the Americans did not feel that their leadership role was endangered and moreover because of the collapse of the Soviet imperium they hardly needed the Soviets any more in relation to German unity and even less did they want a European union that included the Soviet Union. On the contrary, the United States wanted, if possible, to exclude the Soviet Union and was also just then successful in pushing the Soviets out of Europe with the help of German unity and the change in orientation of the Eastern European states. They needed the Soviet Union now more in other parts of the world, such as for example at this time, in the growing conflict with Iraq in Kuwait.

As well the *Lithuanian question* was putting pressure not only the Gorbachev leadership but also the Bush government: in US Congress demanded for a clearer American position in favor of Lithuanian independence; Bush himself had—as Gorbachev stated with displeasure—already decided in favor of this direction and gave up his earlier hesitation, which had more strongly taken into consideration the risk that American support for the Lithuanian independence movement presented for Gorbachev. Over and over in the meetings in Washington and Camp David, which lasted several days, the issue was the dilemma, into which Gorbachev had been placed by the Lithuanian situation. I have already mentioned that this problem played an essentially more significant role in the Politburo than did the German question—at least in the number of times it was discussed there. Gorbachev himself even did not rule out Lithuanian independence if this took place “in the framework of the Soviet constitution” and not through unilateral declarations and actions. Because he feared a chain reaction in the Soviet republics, in which independence struggles had already flared up. A (temporary) solution of the Lithuanian conflict occurred a month later on June 29 when, with a slight modification of the suggestion by Kohl and Mitterrand, Lithuania suspended temporarily the declaration of independence. In response, the next day, Gorbachev lifted the embargo against Lithuania.³⁶

In this sticky muddle the Americans, but also the Soviets, were ready to make compromises on disarmament questions. Gorbachev signaled his readiness

to make concessions in a matter that had been already been decided on for a long time, namely in the limitation of American troops in Europe to 225,000 instead of 190,000 men.

James Baker, who was also present at the second meeting of the summit conference, stated that in the preparations for these meetings the Americans had become persuaded by the “support for the creation of all-European structures,” “which we used to avoid.” But now a decisive weakening of the Soviets had occurred, which must have made it easier for the Americans to give this oral agreement, if in return they received German NATO membership first. Besides this, Baker mentioned eight more points, in which concessions were made to the Soviets, among them:

- The “politicization” of NATO (which had, however, already been an American position since May 1989)
- The “guarantee” “that during a limited (!) period”³⁷ there would be no NATO troops in the GDR
- The “reduction of armed forces, including the *Bundeswehr*” for which “we strive”³⁸
- “we (!) are ready, during a short period of time, to permit the presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the GDR”³⁹
- “already we are making an effort to ensure a final and appropriate border solution”
- “we have achieved a regulation with the Germans regarding the obligation of the future Germany to give up the possession of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons”
- And finally the United States has made an effort to create favorable political conditions for Soviet–German economic relations.

Baker: *All this is clearly aimed at the security of the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union.*

Even if this appears a bit exaggerated and some points had been wanted by the Germans anyway or had already been agreed to, their repetition was meant to indicate the readiness of the United States to compromise in the recognition of Soviet interests.

I would like to present the following excerpt in its full length because it is an exemplary presentation of the open contradictions between the Soviet and the American delegations and their readiness to compromise. Subsequent to Baker his Soviet colleague said:

Shevardnadze: *We are ready to work on these questions with the foreign minister. But the central question of the military-political status of the future Germany requires*

a decision at the level of the presidium. It is also necessary to establish the substance of the transitional period, during which the responsibility of the united Germany to NATO and to the Warsaw Pact is preserved. This is no chimera, because the rapprochement of two blocs as well as the reduction of military confrontation is being carried out in parallel and the corner stone of collective security in Europe is being laid.

Bush: *NATO is the anchor of stability.*

Gorbachev: *But two anchors are more reliable. As a sailor, you should know this.*

Bush: *But where will we find the second anchor?*

Gorbachev: *In the East. Which, in reality, our ministers should rack their brains about.*⁴⁰

Bush: *Yes, you should think about it. But it is necessary to consider the unusual tempo of German unification. After the successful completion of unanimity in the framework of "2+4" you can extend your hand to the new Germany. But it is possible at that moment to rely only on NATO. Of course it is worth discussing an expansion of the role of the CSCE process, but I tell you honestly it is too cumbersome to count on a fast and concrete result.*⁴¹

Gorbachev: *We rule out no variations. It is possible that NATO and the Warsaw Pact will be preserved for a longer time in some form or other than we can imagine now. Then they could make an agreement that took into account the construction of a united Germany but also the metamorphoses of their own organisations. Again there would be the possibility of German membership in the Warsaw Pact and NATO at the same time. If we want to end forever the division of the continent, we have to bring the military-political structures in agreement with the unification tendencies of the all-European process. Today this might sound surprising but we are entering an absolutely new time in European politics. Besides, the Second World War was already witness to the birth of a very unconventional coalition—united through a noble goal. Are we really more stupid than Stalin and Roosevelt?*

Bush: *One must also take their mistakes into account.*

Gorbachev: *Let us build a new free one [a coalition—AvP], let us change the doctrines and institutions, let us confirm the primacy of politics over military structures.*

Baker [as always very concrete—AvP]: *How do you see in practice the existence of a new NATO and a new Warsaw Pact?*

Gorbachev: *At the start a solid agreement between the blocs, from which will develop a multifaceted exchange, the creation of common organs for the consolidation of trust and the prevention of crisis situations. These processes will be a great help for the Vienna talks, guarantee their political security. If things are done differently, include the powerful united Germany in an alliance, the result will be an imbalance, we will be faced with questions for which no one will have answers.*

Bush: *Are you in agreement with our starting point, that Germany should not be put into a special situation?*

Gorbachev: *I agree with this, if you accept the associated involvement, the principle of the rapprochement of the blocs in the position of the united Germany, i.e. a situation that changes neither the current obligations of the FRG nor of the GDR, but then after, of course, comes the reform of the blocs themselves—as part of the Vienna and all-European processes. The terrible losses that we suffered during the Second World War are psychological and political realities today too. And no one—not we and not you—can ignore them.*

Bush: *And yet I can hardly understand you. It might be because I have no fear of the FRG, I see in this democratic country no aggressive power. If you cannot break through your psychological stereotype, it will be difficult to speak to each other. But an agreement is possible. We and Kohl after all want to work with you in all areas.*

Gorbachev: *There must not be any ambiguities here. We fear no one, neither the USA nor the FRG. We simply see the necessity of a change in circumstances, for a break with the negative and for the creation of more constructive models. That is our free choice.*

In this passage one thing became clear: first, more clearly than before but in an essentially weaker position, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze express the idea that an all-European security system must be *part* of the reunification of Germany. But, from the Soviet standpoint, this clarity comes too late in view of developments in Germany and the “2+4 negotiations” that had already made considerable progress. Second, Gorbachev does not follow Mitterrand’s advice, but instead proposes the temporary membership of Germany in both military blocs—and this when the Warsaw Pact was already in the process of collapsing.

A further later criticism by opponents such as Kryuchkov of Gorbachev was that he adopted the American position on NATO. Part of Falin’s argument takes this direction too. Let us see how the breakthrough in the NATO question develops. First of all Gorbachev responds to a critique by Bush:

You say that we do not trust the Germans. But why then have we given our agreement to their striving for unification? We could have switched the light to red [turned on the red light—AvP], we had the means. But we allowed them the possibility to make their choice in a democratic way. You say that you trust the FRG, but you pull it into NATO and do not permit it to decide its fate in a final settlement. It should decide itself which alliance it will join.

With this Gorbachev sat in his own “democratic trap.” Because it was he himself (according to the Soviet protocol) and not Bush who raised the question of

NATO membership of the united Germany—differently from assumptions held till now or the remarks of American or German politicians and historians and his opponents in Moscow. The decision should be made by “the FRG”—did he mean the government or “the Germans?” According to a decision in the cabinet or according to a democratic decision process in Germany? Bush takes up this critical point immediately:

I am in complete agreement with this. But the Germans have after all already made enough of a choice.

Gorbachev: *No. They strive for getting it under their control.*

George Bush appeared sure that at least the German governments would decide in favor of NATO membership, since he was familiar with the surveys that revealed the difference between the attitudes of the population and the government in this question. Gorbachev apparently was in thinking of another decision, possibly through a referendum.

Bush: *If Germany does not want to stay in NATO, it is their [the Germans’—AvP] right, to choose another fate. This is what it says in the final declaration.*

Gorbachev: *Let us make a public declaration on the results of our meetings, that the president of the USA agrees that a sovereign united Germany decides itself which military-political status it chooses—membership in NATO, neutrality, or something else.*

This sounds almost as if Gorbachev understood this as the victory for his position, as if he assumed that, in removing this decision from the authority of the American government, his chances of delaying the NATO question further or tying it to an all-European security solution had improved. The meeting continued:

Bush: *To choose an alliance is the right of every sovereign country. If the government of the FRG—I speak completely hypothetically—does not want to stay in NATO and asks that our troops leave, we will accept this choice.*

Gorbachev: *That means that we [can—AvP] also state it in this way: the United States and the Soviet Union are in favour of the united Germany, upon the reaching of a final agreement that takes into consideration the results of the Second World War, deciding for itself which alliance it wishes to join.*

Bush: *I would suggest a slightly different version: the USA is clearly in favour of the membership of Germany in NATO, but, if it makes a different choice, we will not protest and will respect it.*

Gorbachev: *Agreed. I accept your choice of words.*

They agreed to include such a passage in the concluding document. At the same time there was again a discussion of a double membership.

Baker: *However you word it, the simultaneous obligations of one and the same country towards the Warsaw Pact and NATO are irreconcilable [schizophrenic—AvP].*

Gorbachev: *Only for a financier who counts cents and dollars. But now and then politics is the search for the possible in the sphere of the unusual.*

Bush himself presents this moment in the interview with a clearer emphasis on his own role and more dramatically than he comes across in the dryness of what is quite a compelling protocol.

Bush: *I keep going back to the fact that Germany had earned its right to . . . determine what it wanted to do and what it wanted to be and I spent a lot of time trying to convince . . . and hopefully had a hand in convincing Gorbachev that this was the case. I'll never forget a meeting in the White House over here, not far from where you and I are talking this very minute. And when Gorbachev for the first time said: "Let the Germans decide." And I had a note handed to me: "Make him repeat this. Be sure we get this right. Be sure he feels this way." So I went back to him again and I said: "Now, Mikhail, let me be sure I understand you. Do you feel Germany has the right to make its decisions on this, by itself?" He said: "Yes." A very tense and dramatic moment in the cabinet room at the White House.⁴²*

Disarmament

After the most contentious of all the questions appeared to be solved, both sides appeared to be more ready to compromise in the matter of disarmament, which had in part still been controversial during the preparations immediately before the summit conference. In the delegation meeting on June 1, 1990, in the White House⁴³ in the presence of the two presidents, reports were given by the two disarmament experts, Viktor P. Karpov and Reginald Bartholomew, who, instead of Baker whom Bush actually asked for. The Soviet expert was given the opportunity to go first and he summarized the common and the contentious questions. The main issue was the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons of all kinds, intercontinental missiles, chemical, biological, and bacteriological weapons, and the limitation of underground nuclear tests. Also contentious was the number and quality of Soviet bombers, which had been reduced for the air force but not for the naval forces. There were also differences over the reduction of nuclear warheads—the Soviet side wanted their destruction, the American side did not.

Then Bartholomew also spoke and placed greater emphasis on criticism of the Soviet Union's navy bombers. He stressed much more strongly than Karpov one point that was to become a decisive difference: the so-called circumvention,

as it is expressed in the Russian protocol. This referred to the possibility of the West to circumvent the nuclear arms limit, since the British did not have to make the reductions that the Americans did, which, from the Soviet view, meant there was a disarmament loophole in NATO.

Bartholomew: *Non-circumvention. Here we went to great lengths to take into account the uneasiness of the Soviet side. It is known that for forty years there has already existed on our side a particular structure of cooperation with Great Britain that allows the English nuclear weapons to be kept up to date. The Soviet side wants us to distance ourselves from such cooperation; that would have consequences not only for the United Kingdom but also for our relations with our allies. We cannot do this.*

Gorbachev even thought before Bartholomew spoke that without a settlement of this question no document could be signed.

After Bartholomew's presentation Bush was conciliatory:

Everything I have heard has been a great and pleasant surprise for me. This means that we are not so far apart. Probably only in the questions of "noncircumvention": and a few other matters, for example, heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles and the Soviet bombers.

Baker even added that it would be possible to reach agreement on the limitation of mobile ballistic intercontinental missiles, so that only the bomber issue, the heavy ballistic intercontinental missiles—and the differences of the "noncircumvention" remained.

Great efforts were made to come up with solutions for questions, for which agreement seemed possible. But for Gorbachev the disagreement on "noncircumvention" was so decisive that on this subject he made one of his longest speeches of this summit, which expressed his positions very clearly and concretely, but also his bitterness about Western views of him. It was not possible to create such loopholes or to preserve them without putting everything at risk. Otherwise negotiations would lead to results that would be simply ignored later. On this point he felt that he had been duped by the Americans and the British and he responded unusually harshly. But finally—the Western powers did after all accommodate him especially in the disarmament and security questions—he had to concede because of the external and internal weakness of the Soviet Union. With regard to the membership of the new, united Germany in NATO the Soviet president had also adopted the democratic position, which made the alliance question one for the Germans to decide themselves, even though it was exactly this problem that had been termed the decisive one of the *external* aspects of German unity and thus of the 2+4 negotiations. Sometimes in the talks with Gorbachev the idea had popped

up that the Soviet Union itself could become a member of NATO—even then the German problem would no longer have been a special one. Such ideas assume however, that the United States wanted the Soviet Union in NATO and no longer saw it as a potential enemy. In all important questions France and England agreed with the German–American positions, even when they had made their differing views clear shortly before. The British prime minister had also undertaken revisions here and on June 8 during her visit to Moscow had brought, in its essentials, the disarmament offers that had been developed by the American and German governments. She was finally in favor of the membership of the united Germany in NATO at the same time as she was concerned about the tempo of reunification, which because annexation according to Article 23 of the Basic Law would permit no transitional period. Because of these fears of a strong, united Germany she spoke in favor of the continuation in Germany of an American military presence, which should continue to have nuclear arms, even if they were reduced. The British army also had to continue to have nuclear weapons.⁴⁴

On this point, then, differences with the Soviet Union remained.

After this decisive conference in Washington many things changed: Gorbachev lost the last possibilities for an all-European security structure with both, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, or without them, if he had not lost his last trumps for that already at the beginning of February in Moscow. He now had to fight for the cohesion of the Soviet Union—ultimately without success. Foreign Minister Markus Meckel (as well as Lothar de Maizière and Rainer Eppelmann) in East Berlin had nearly no chance any longer against a NATO presence in East Germany (but this battle was not yet finished) and for a united Germany as a “peaceful bridge” between East and West. Even his or their hope for a demilitarization zone in Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary was gone; further meetings about this goal between these countries did not take place. Meckel’s time as foreign minister of the GDR was over.⁴⁵

During his visit to the United States Lothar de Maizière made a speech at Georgetown University on June 11 about the process of German unification where he mentioned some of these dreams.⁴⁶ However, his position was weakened by the deep crisis in the GDR and he walked or had to walk to Canossa, which meant meeting Kohl during his vacation at Lake Wolfgang in Austria on August 2, 1990 (see above). The coalition with the SPD and Meckel broke, and de Maizière took over the Foreign Ministry as well.

Excursus on Land Ownership: Restitution or Compensation?

To the present day there is still a basic disagreement over whether the Soviet Union declared untouchable all the laws, dispossessions, persecutions, and other

measures that it had carried out as an occupying power until 1949.⁴⁷ Behind this question are hidden an assortment of other problems that blur the line between the “external” aspects of unity, which were to be dealt with in the 2+4 negotiations, and the “internal” problems.

First there was the question of responsibility: should the question of the consequences of the actions of the Soviet occupying power be dealt with in the 2+4 negotiations, or would trilateral negotiations between the two Germanies and the Soviet Union be more appropriate, or was this an internal German problem? All the German participants made the same statements, also in front of the German Constitutional Court: the Soviet side wanted this problem to be solved in connection with the 2+4 negotiations.

The second problem was the differing treatment of the dispossessed before and after 1949: if those who were dispossessed in the period up to 1949 were to have no claim on their earlier property, unlike those who lost their property after 1949, then was this not a great injustice?

The third problem: to whom did this property expropriated before 1949 actually belong?

The fourth problem was only partly related to this issue: should those who were dispossessed before or after 1949 receive compensation or have their property be returned to them? If the united Germany became the new owner, why could it then not sell cheaply to the previous owners the property that was expropriated before 1949 or at least pay them compensation, independently of whether the Soviet Union wanted confirmation that their conduct at that time was being taken into consideration? Many of these old property-owners later attacked the German government through advertising campaigns and even deliberately spread insulting statements (“Traitor Kohl” etc.) in order to bring up the legal and civil rights aspects again.

In this dispute Gorbachev’s statement that he had not made these demands for the recognition of the laws, regulations, and other activities of the Soviet occupation power was like a bomb. Now suddenly the Federal German government was being suspected of grabbing the estates of the old great landowners through a “great coup” and with the assertion of falsities in order to get their state finances in order.⁴⁸

In conversation with me Anatoli Chernayev confirmed Gorbachev’s statement that the Soviet negotiators had not insisted explicitly on the preservation of this old Soviet position. When I asked de Maizière about this, he became enraged:

In July we had almost finished the 2+4 agreement. And for the first of September to the next 2+4 official round came the people [the Soviets—AvP] with a new proposal, in which a new article was included that again explicitly contained exactly these questions. And so we said, but we have already settled this in the old treaty

because this is not an external aspect of German unity, but an internal one. The Soviets insisted, however, that this was an external aspect. We found the solution: a letter was signed together with the 2+4 treaty in Moscow and it was part of the 2+4 treaty. The letter was signed by Genscher and me in the presence of Gorbachev and was handed over to Shevardnadze.

This letter contains four points: first, no restitution for expropriations of private property 1945/49; second, the united Germany obligates itself to care for and maintain all Soviet graves and war memorials and to finance their preservation; third, the united Germany will not permit any neo-fascist parties or organizations and if any are established will prohibit them; and fourth, all the agreements under international law between the GDR and the Soviet Union will be taken over or phased out with attention to the principles of legitimate expectations.⁴⁹ De Maizière mentions an interesting detail:

We signed this in Moscow, as I mentioned, under Gorbachev's eyes. (...) [The Soviet negotiators—AvP] insisted that this letter would have a seal affixed to it. But our delegation had not brought a seal, so a courier had to go to the GDR embassy in Moscow, bring the seal from there, and then the seal was affixed. The time was spent with the observation that the computer was not printing out the German and French texts of the 2+4 treaty. But at the moment when the seal was being put on the letter, the computer was working again. We then signed the treaty. So, for the forgetfulness of Gorbachev in this regard, no honourable explanations occur to me.

AvP: *Actually it also conflicts with Gorbachev's own interest within the Soviet Union, and Russia, not to appear today like someone who had eaten crow in this question.*

De Maizière: *And he could argue against that with this. Notwithstanding that Yuli Kvitsinski told me and also Bondarenko that they had a negotiating directive from the politburo.⁵⁰ And everyone who is familiar with Eastern politics knows: a directive from the politburo was pretty much the "final word." (...) This directive was decided upon by the politburo, whose general secretary was Gorbachev. That means that the setting of the agenda for this was made through him in this politburo sitting.⁵¹*

Support for de Maizière's view comes from the fact that the Soviet ambassador Kochemassov had raised similar demands during his first visit to de Maizière.

De Maizière was particularly embittered by Gorbachev "not remembering" because it led to criticism in Germany. He himself was accused of making an unsworn false statement.

De Maizière: *So it got as far as legal action against Kinkel, Kastrup, me, and I don't know who else. (...) The action was like a hot potato. The order was filed in*

Berlin. Berlin said, we are not responsible, sent it to Bonn. Bonn said, we are not responsible either, although this was where the government was. (...) And then the State's Attorney Office of Karlsruhe had to rule on it. At some point they then suspended the action. But still I have to say to you, as a lawyer and a member of the legal profession, this does not leave you cold, to [be given—AvP] a legal action for making a false statement not under oath in front of the highest German court. This hurts.

Georgi Shakhnasarov, another important advisor of Gorbachev, first sees it similarly:

It is not correct if some Western politicians say that we would agree to reunification on the condition that this property would not be returned to its previous owners.

But he agrees that the “levy [*expropriation*—AvP] was accepted as irreversible” and that no “legal actions contrary to these statements [were to be] undertaken.” Still Shakhnasarov expresses clearly an essential difference from the interpretations of de Maizière and Genscher, which was hardly considered in the German public debate: in the letter of the two German foreign ministers at that time it was stated

that the all-German parliament should have the right to make the final decision on possible state compensation measures.⁵²

Indeed in the German version of the joint letter of the two German foreign ministers and in the statement that is cited there, “Gemeinsame Erklärung der Regierungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zur Regelung offener Vermögensfragen vom 15. Juni 1990,” it says:

It [the government of the Federal Republic—AvP] is of the opinion that the final decision on possible state compensatory payments must be reserved for the future parliament of all of Germany.⁵³

Why then could there not have been continuing compensation possibilities after October 3? After unification it would have been possible to distinguish between the recognition of the legal acts of the Soviet occupation and the German compensatory payments to the previous owners. In any case, Gorbachev cannot be held responsible that this did not happen; rather it was a political decision of the government of the united Germany that was recognized by the highest German courts.

The *Volkskammer*, the *Bundestag*, the Polish Government, and the Border Question

There was another basic issue that pervaded negotiations on German unity from the beginning: agreement on the regulation of the German–Polish border.⁵⁴ Internationally some saw it as Kohl’s weak point, which particularly worried the government of Poland and other Eastern European governments, or as a “middling PR catastrophe,” as Condoleezza Rice saw it. The others, mainly Kohl himself and the chancellor’s office, thought that the border question was unnecessarily dramatized. Again and again the conflict flared up, particularly obviously with Tadeusz Mazowiecki and his foreign minister following the Ten Point Plan of the end of November 1989 or very emotionally in the meeting between Gorbachev and Kohl on February 10, 1990. Mazowiecki left no doubt about his position: Poland could not permit a “vacuum,” while the border treaty with the GDR of 1950 and the Warsaw Pact with the FRG of 1970 were no longer valid and no treaty had yet been made with a united Germany. At the beginning of February he had already demanded the participation of Poland in the negotiations of the six powers and on February 16 he asked for the “completion of a peace treaty on the border question with the Federal Republic and the GDR before the reestablishment of German unity.” On February 21, 1990, he suggested “at a press conference a step-by-step solution for a peace treaty. After the elections to the People’s Chamber the Polish government wanted to make a peace treaty with both German states in which the current borders would be recognized. After reunification the government of all of Germany should sign the treaty.”⁵⁵

Since November 28, 1989, the border question was also an internal political point of dispute between Genscher and the FDP, respectively, and Chancellor Kohl, as well as between the SPD and the CDU. Kohl had exchanged opinions with the organizations of expellees and tried to assure the Americans that this question would be solved by the first government of the united Germany. As mentioned, Genscher had, in response, made the Polish government the offer that both German parliaments would pass a resolution even before reunification. After the People’s Chamber election of March 18, 1990 a new dispute with new participants developed, namely between the two CDU governments in Bonn and Berlin as well as inside the government coalition and with various parties of the People’s Chamber and the Bundestag. The differences mainly concerned the legal interpretation of the Basic Law and the procedure of how, when, and through whom there would be a final treaty solution in the border question. Because, although the Polish government under Mazowiecki had supported the right to self-determination of the Germans and thus a possible unification since the middle of 1989, it wanted a border guarantee before unification. In response Kohl

was of the opinion that there was in the Basic Law a condition that did not permit the creation of a binding border treaty on the Western border before unification. This had to be done through the first total German parliament. Genscher and the other Bundestag parties—at least in very close agreement—insisted, however, that there could be a joint border guarantee by the two German parliaments without any transgression of the Basic Law prior to unification. At the beginning of March 1990 Kohl had even tried to tie the joint inclusion of both German parliaments in the border question to Poland's relinquishment of reparations and the treatment of the German minority in Poland into the bargain, leading to a lack of understanding and even outrage not only in Poland. In mid-May Kohl finally agreed that a joint resolution, or at least similar resolutions from both German parliaments, should be prepared.

The Polish demand for participation in the special 2+4 negotiations on the border questions and some security questions was agreed to, but the demand for ratification of a border treaty *before* unification by both German parliaments remained an open question, even if it was Mazowiecki himself who was only moderately pursuing this plan since the beginning of April: at the end of April the "Six" were presented with a Polish treaty concept that differed from earlier Polish demands in one essential point: the requirement that the treaty had to be initialed by the two, or three, parliaments was no longer explicitly stated. The Polish side was all the more incensed when in the middle of May in the unofficial proposal of the Federal government for a joint declaration on the final validity of the border was again not established and neither was the boundary line.

When it became known that the Federal Republic's foreign office had also spoken about border questions in the trilateral meetings, Kohl was on May 25 so angry that he made a call to the Foreign Ministry. Werner Weidenfeld describes the dramatic scene that followed, relying "on information from the foreign ministry:" State Secretary Sudhoff bore the full brunt of Kohl's anger, as the chancellor said "shrilly" that there were agreements with Genscher that there would be no talking with the Poles about the border question, that he as chancellor had the authority to set guidelines and wanted to make clear that "such talks about a border treaty were not acceptable." He wanted to introduce a joint declaration in the Bundestag after discussions within the coalition and with de Maizière. But he would not let the Poles tell him what to do. Sudhoff reminded him that the chancellor's office had previously agreed to the trilateral talks.⁵⁶ After this phone call Peter Hartmann of the chancellor's office phoned Sudhoff "in order to make clear that Kohl in no way was asking for a cancellation of the next trilateral round in the coming week," but there should be no discussion there of a treaty. The consequence of Kohl's telephonic performance was that there was no result at the next trilateral meeting of May 29. The West German side would continue to resist a concrete description of the border.⁵⁷

On May 30, shortly before Gorbachev's visit to Washington, Teltschik wrote a submission that dealt with two suggestions for the resolution of the Polish–German border question of the GDR and the Federal German government, of the SPD, and the Greens and had the following goals: “ideally extensive removal from the 2+4 talks of the border discussion and the limitation of Polish participation [*in these 2+4 talks—AvP*] to a minimum and where possible to move the Poles toward the acceptance of our approach.”⁵⁸ The GDR's proposal for a resolution had already been brought into the trilateral talks with the Poles, to the irritation of the Bonners, and the Polish negotiators had considered it acceptable, while the West German side “in accordance with their [*of the Chancellor—AvP*] instructions acted receptive” (Teltschik). The GDR's proposal was conceived as a first part that would be followed by another part, with treaty negotiations, prior to unification. The Federal government wished—and this sounds almost surprising after the reservations thus far—“not to [enter] into treaty negotiations,” but finish with the border question as a resolution, in order quickly to make possible the 2+4 treaty. The treaty proposal of the GDR was, however, “gratifyingly close to our ideas” (Teltschik). Indeed, when viewed from today, these differences and their explosive nature are hardly comprehensible; or perhaps: they are no longer the differences of the past twelve or eight months but different ones. While the chancellor's office was limiting itself to declarations of willingness and obligations in the recognition of the borders, their inviolability and all renunciation of territorial claims and at the same time emphasizing unity achieved through free self-determination, it could hope for acceptance from the other four in the international negotiations, while the GDR's proposal included more treaty negotiations but otherwise had the same content. In the proposal of the chancellor's office there was also no reference to a possible later treaty between Poland and one government of the whole of Germany.

Here—one might think—a change had taken place with Kohl that would still allow him to save face and the peace treaty proviso of the Basic Law to remain in force. Here, however, arises a basic question that relates to international law: would not the 2+4 treaty conform to a peace treaty settlement and thus be binding in international law, if it included a passage on the recognition of the borders and the abandonment of further border claims like the resolutions of both parliaments? Would, therefore, the peace treaty proviso be settled with the 2+4 treaty? According to general legal judgement these questions were answered with, “Yes.”⁵⁹

Although he had given in, the chancellor still remained distrustful of a joint resolution of the Bundestag and the People's Chamber, particularly if this touched on the border question and its association with international law. In the proposal by chancellor's office presented by Teltschik on May 30 there is no longer any mention of a connection with reparations questions or the status of the German minority in Poland or even the expellees' issue.⁶⁰ The expellees on *both* the Polish *and* the German sides were to be included in a later resolution. With his

reservations Kohl also contradicted the many clear and unconditional statements by the American president on the recognition of the Oder–Neisse border.⁶¹

The submission by Teltschik of May 30 and the Federal Republic's draft for the resolution of the Bundestag were, however, relatively clear on the question of the finality of the border and its course, even if not explicitly, but still in the reference to the treaties of 1950 and 1970. But in a letter to de Maizière of May 31, 1990⁶² Kohl made clear that he did not want GDR to rush ahead on the border question and that a joint resolution would not change anything in his [Kohl's] basic position: "Only the sovereign Germany as a whole will settle the question of the borders then through a treaty with the republic of Poland and according to international law." At the officials' meeting of the 2+4 negotiations on June 9, the Federal German delegation succeeded in getting the trilateral talks suspended. Through informal channels the Federal German government let the Polish government know what they must already have guessed: that the German side was not interested the negotiation of a treaty before unification.

Finally, on June 21, 1991, after further consultations between Kohl and Genscher, de Maizière, Vogel as chairman of the SPD, and the CDU/CSU, the joint resolution was accepted by the People's Chamber and the Bundestag. The text itself contains, contrary to some observations, no sign that there would be a later treaty between Poland and the united Germany.⁶³ In the debate in the Bundestag Genscher also refrained from any hint that there would soon be treaty negotiations or the continuation of trilateral meetings. On the following day, June 22, there was the second meeting of the foreign ministers of the 2+4 talks in Berlin-Niederschönhausen where the foreign ministers endorsed "a paper that had already been prepared by experts 'Prinzipien zu den Grenzen'" [Principles Relating to the Borders]⁶⁴ These five principles were

- first*, that the united Germany would include the territories of the Federal Republic, the GDR, and all of Berlin. Its existing external borders would be definitive on the day the final decision (of 2+4) takes effect;
- second*, that the united Germany and Poland will confirm "the existing western border of Poland in a treaty that is binding under international law;"
- third*, that the united Germany will not make any territorial claims;
- fourth*—and here one also senses the wishes of the Soviet negotiators as well—that the two German governments would ensure that the constitution of the united Germany "would include no provisions that were incompatible with these principles" (Präambel, Artikel 23 Satz 72 und Artikel 146 des GG) [Preamble, Article 23, Paragraph 72 and Article 146 of the Basic Law];
- fifth*, the governments of the four accept the "corresponding commitments and declarations of the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic formally and declare that their implementation will confirm the definitive nature of the united Germany's borders."⁶⁵

One might think that with the acceptance of these principles by the foreign ministers the key to unification had been found because with it both the peace treaty proviso and the worries of the Poles about a legal vacuum could be removed. But the dispute continued. At first the Polish reaction to the resolution of the two German parliaments was positive, with some reservations, and continued to give up an essential part of the Mazowiecki plan, namely the signing of a treaty *before* unification; on the other hand the Polish government observed that the resolutions of the German parliaments were not an agreement bound by international law. On July 3, 1990 Foreign Minister Skubiszewski presented a response from his government that described the as a step on the path to a treaty between Poland and the united Germany. At the same time the Polish government tied the “legal effectiveness” of this treaty temporally to the final settlement of the 2+4 negotiations.

Horst Teltschik writes that when he returned from the G7 Summit in Houston on July 12 a statement by the Polish prime minister was waiting; in this Mazowiecki asked “that the four power authority over Germany had to be preserved until the German-Polish border treaty was ratified. The chancellor wanted to write a letter to Mazowiecki opposing this tying together of these two issues.”⁶⁶ With this demand the Polish government, not unskillfully, applied pressure to the Federal German government and the negotiating officials who met on the following day. Because the time factor, that is, the lack of clarity on the time period between the taking effect of the “final settlement” and the German-Polish treaty had been the weak point of the “five principles.” At the “officials’ meeting” Kastrop asked the Polish representatives who were occasionally present to take back their demand, but they refused. The Polish representatives also wanted more: the settling of the border should be a “fundamental component of the regulation of peace in Europe,” which would actually have been in complete agreement with Kohl and pull the rug out from under the peace treaty proviso.⁶⁷ On the other hand the Federal government resisted when there was even only a hint of the idea of a “peace treaty.” The German delegation, as well as the Western delegation, could, however, point to the fact that through the title “Final Decision: of the 2+4 Treaty”⁶⁸ the problems associated with a peace treaty proviso no longer applied. There are differing reports on the unity of the Western views on this question at the upcoming coming foreign ministers’ conference in Paris on July 17 as well. France and England were completely sympathetic to the Polish argument that the regulation of the border should be part of a European peace settlement.⁶⁹ The Polish stance also agrees with the statements Mitterrand had made in the last talks with Gorbachev, and, in view of the special French-Polish relations, it is likely that there had been earlier discussions about this issue. The acting Soviet foreign minister and former Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Kwitsinski, was also won over to the Polish side.

Thus on July 13 Kohl wrote Mazowiecki a letter,⁷⁰ in which he expressed regret that the joint resolution of the two German parliaments had received so little a positive reaction in Poland⁷¹ and observed that he actually wanted a “comprehensive agreement on neighbourly and friendly relations.” But he had to assume that this did not accord “with your current thoughts.” Therefore he suggested that “the first treaty to be made between the unified Germany and the republic of Poland should limit itself to the border question.” The paragraphs for the content could be taken from the joint resolution of the People’s Chamber and the Bundestag. And then came the decisive passage:

You, Mr. Prime Minister, can assume that the government of the united Germany will be ready, within three months after the meeting of the united German parliament to send to your government a draft of a treaty based on the afore mentioned resolution. The Federal government is ready in the framework of the forthcoming “2+4” talks at the ministerial level [Paris on July 17, 1990—AvP] also to introduce such a declaration of intent into the “2+4” process.⁷²

It is easy to imagine, considering Kohl’s earlier positions, what an effort it was for him now after all to craft a temporal, namely a three-month, connection between the treaty between the united Germany and Poland and the “final settlement” and to incorporate a substantive statement on the German–Polish border question as a declaration of intent in the 2+4 document *before* unification (although, confusingly enough, this might have been the position of the officials of the foreign ministry). However Kohl also emphasized in this letter “that at the time of unification the combined German state would receive its complete sovereignty. A tying of this question with the coming into effect of the German–Polish border treaty is therefore not acceptable.” That he, however, anticipated both the contents and the time (three months) for this new sovereign entity seems somewhat contradictory and must have been a bitter pill, which he had to swallow because of the rapid completion of the 2+4 negotiations in the face of the deteriorating GDR, which had made earlier unification necessary.

The Polish government dropped its condition before the next 2+4 meeting of the foreign ministers. There are various explanations for why it did so: Kohl’s letter, Gorbachev’s support for Kohl’s position in the border question during his visit to the Soviet Union in the following days (which is still to be examined), or the inadequate support of the United States. Whatever the case—the process was continued on the basis of Kohl’s proposal.

One can only ask oneself: why not until now, why not before?

Was it for historical reasons alone, primarily in the case of the Poles who, after the Nazi–Soviet Pact, after the conquest and occupation by the German and the Soviet armies, that would permit no “vacuum” between the old and the new Federal republics? So many binding agreements had been made internationally

that such a legal vacuum posed no real threat. What were the chancellor's reasons when he fought with all his strength all "deviations" from the position opposition to linking the border treaty with the complete sovereignty of Germany and in the end, after much pressure, made a revision? But—as Gorbachev was to put it—it was simply a "matter close to the hearts of the Poles" following their historical experiences with Germany.

Why Kohl was less perceptive in regard to these sometimes seemingly exaggerated Polish fears than similar worries on the part of Gorbachev is not completely clear. Gorbachev, however, was less anxious and two days after the letter of Kohl to Mazowiecki guaranteed Germany complete sovereignty and suggested at the same time a separate treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union (see the next chapter).

If one looks at all this maneuvering, all these political oddities, less on the Polish side than on Kohl's regarding the Oder–Neisse border, if one analyzes his emotionalism with State Secretary Sudhoff, which Weidenfeld describes, if one adds his apparently emotional behavior in the meeting with Gorbachev on February 10 as well on the same subject (which the Soviet protocol mentions but the German one does not), and if at the same time one considers that Kohl was not so resistant in any other international question, did not act so emotionally and sometimes so emotional and sometimes acted trickily, one has to ask "why?" If one also takes into account that Kohl met with so much international criticism nowhere else but on this issue, then the question becomes more pressing, especially about the relationship of long-standing negative events to success.

What, in his eyes, was worth the struggle over the peace treaty condition compared to the mistrust that he aroused and the damage that was done from Poland to America? A possible and frequently given answer relates to the expelled in Germany. But it was Kohl himself who on February 10, 1990, emphasized to Gorbachev the broad acceptance in Germany of the Oder–Neisse border. If he really still was worried by refugees' organizations and other critics in his own ranks, which he also denied in his meeting with Gorbachev on February 10, or only did not want to enter into open disagreement with them, this concern turned out to be exaggerated: the joint resolution was passed in the Bundestag on June 21, 1990, with an overwhelming majority of 487 to 15 votes, with all the dissenting voices coming from the CDU-CSU camp.

And, even then if one takes Kohl's basic qualm, namely the proviso in the Basic Law on the peace treaty, as justifiable, two issues remain unclear:

The fundamental significance that Helmut Kohl gave this proviso in relation to the German–Polish border appears to me to have little justification because at the same time he was allowing reunification on the basis of Article 23, that is, without a new constitution and with the *retention* of the Basic Law. The Basic Law would lose its temporary character with unification and become final and this is what happened. But it would not have been possible to have further

unification or a new constitution with the simultaneous renouncement of territorial claims—or only then if he did not consider the reunification of the GDR, the FRG, and Berlin as the end of the unification process. But one does not want to or one should not suggest this of Kohl the European.

And the second ambiguity was that the chancellor was late in interpreting the applicable border section in the 2+4 treaty as a peace treaty proviso, but in other questions saw the 2+4 treaty as binding in international law and did not want to allow another peace treaty. Or to put it another way, it makes little sense, for that reason, to resist so strongly the binding condition that the Poles had suggested.

There remains another aspect that is difficult to explain, particularly in regard to the emotionalism and the position toward Poland, that conflicts with his usual careful politics: did Kohl, as “Adenauer’s grandson,” in spite of these European visions have an existential fear of entering history marked by the stigma of “surrender”? Even if this surrender of the Eastern territories led to unity and to further integration possibilities for Europe, as he emphasized repeatedly?

The final treaty between Poland and the united Germany followed on November 14, 1990, two months after the 2+4 Treaty. And it contained exactly the passages as in the joint resolution of the People’s Chamber and the Bundestag on the border question—with one exception: now the expulsions of both peoples—Poles *and* Germans—were mentioned.⁷³

Kohl in the Soviet Union and Falin’s Criticism

In Moscow

Before Kohl spoke with Gorbachev on July 15, 1990, Valentin Falin, head of the international department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, had written a memorandum to his general secretary and president.⁷⁴ He considered the upcoming meeting the last opportunity “to exploit reserves in the position of the GDR further and make progress in the negotiations.” The main questions for him were: (a) unification of the two German states or absorption of the GDR? and (b) NATO membership or neutrality or rather membership in both military blocs? The 2+4 negotiations had “become a mechanism, which helped to define Soviet concessions and dismantled the original rights of the USSR.” If unification continued in the same way the USSR would lose “all fundamental rights as a victorious power” while the Western powers would hold the “effective control levers” in their hands (primarily through NATO). Article 23 of the Basic Law was being used not only to “simplify to the fullest extent” the absorption of the GDR, but above all to legalize the “asymmetry in dealing with the rights of the USSR” and the obligations of the GDR and Bonn (toward the Soviet Union). Worth

noting was the tactlessness with which no one in Bonn had made the effort to remove the “most notorious provisions” from the Basic Law (e.g., in relation to the borders of 1937). Even if the GDR “dissolved” itself, the Soviet Union still had the right to station its troops there. The resistance of Bonn to regulating the border questions according to international law could indicate that Bonn wanted to correct even more “injustices” (Eastern territories). The Oder–Neisse border was not only a German–Polish but also an “all-European category.” The USSR was to lose its rights gained from the war while the Federal Republic, the cause of the war, was freed of all responsibilities.

To this point Falin’s memorandum was a complaint without a political concept, more of an unwillingness to accept the catastrophic collapse or a mourning of the past power of the USSR. Now he came to the subject of military status of the united Germany. Here he became politically practical: as long as foreign troops were stationed in one part of Germany, this had to be balanced by the stationing of troops in the other. “Above all a nuclear presence in the West will have a nuclear equivalent in the East. Either–or. There can be no half-measures here.” For Germany he demanded the prohibition of the production of nuclear weapons (which had already been established in the 2+4 negotiations). Falin interpreted the current behavior of Bonn in this way: “One strikes a temporary balance of the war in order to carry on the fight for the revision of the results of the Second World with greater effort in the next stage to, as can sometimes be heard out of German mouths, win the still unfinished final decisive battle against the Soviet Union.”

What could Gorbachev do with such a threatening scenario that provided only one concrete suggestion for political action: keep the Soviet army in the GDR, preserve the nuclear weapons there until the Americans withdraw. He made this demand at a time when the GDR was being governed by a political leadership (was not “dissolving” itself, at least not yet) that had committed itself to joining the Federal Republic according to Article 23, at a time when in the presence of Falin Gorbachev had said that the question of alliance membership was the Germans’ affair, and above all, when the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact were collapsing. What kind of risk of European conflict did this conjure up that Falin now wanted to warn about? And how could the Soviet Union have survived it? I interpret these passages from his second book—in the first he mentioned his memorandum only in passing—as a way for him to persuade his political friends of his former opposition to the policy of Gorbachev.

Also before the Gorbachev/Kohl meeting, but somewhat earlier, the American president informed the chancellor of his talks with Gorbachev and observed that Gorbachev was still “struggling” with German unification, but:

It was a step forward that he raised no objections to my statement at our press conference on Sunday when I said that he and I did not agree that the united Germany

should be a full member of NATO, but we did agree that the question of the alliance membership had to be decided by the Germans in accordance with the final Helsinki Accords.

Bush then continued, and the chancellor marked this at the margin with a double line:

So far as we can take into consideration the Soviet security interests outside the 2+4 negotiations—in our bilateral relationships, in Vienna, and at the NATO summit—our chances will increase for moving Gorbachev to accept a united Germany as a full member of NATO. He must know that full NATO membership is not a matter for debate, but we can help him in other ways.⁷⁵

Another preliminary remark on the meeting of Gorbachev with Kohl that followed: GDR foreign minister Markus Meckel had recently expressed his concerns about the 2+4 policy of the Americans and the Federal German government. The Americans saw it as a defence of Soviet security interests in relation to nuclear weapons and an attack on the presence of American and British troops in Germany as well as on the inclusion of the GDR in NATO. Genscher stated on July 12, which was shortly before the flight to Moscow, that he could not eliminate the differences with Meckel.⁷⁶ James Baker and Brent Scowcroft were no more successful than Genscher.⁷⁷ One might ask, in light of these differences, if the removal and the resignation, respectively, of the SPD minister from the cabinet of the great coalition in the GDR on August 15 and 20, 1990, from the federal government and perhaps also de Maizière does not fit well into this state of affairs and if the SPD in these decisions had lost sight of the international component.

Falin's suggestions and Meckel's critique were however of little help because, after all, at this time what options did Gorbachev really have to protect Soviet interests other than those Bush was offering? He still had hardly any chance, as at the beginning of the year, of accepting German membership in NATO only in the framework of a new European security system with the European countries and the United States, which he had, however, not pursued politically and strategically at that time. Although since April he had maintained this policy, his position had become extremely weaker so that he did not have the power to complete it: the hostage GDR had "crossed over" to the West, most of the Warsaw Pact countries had pulled out, and the Soviet Union was breaking apart. As a result he could actually negotiate only a few security and border guarantees and further steps in disarmament in return for Germany's NATO membership. Naturally this was also known—not only after the telex from the American president—by the chancellor, who now only had to try to defuse every potential source of trouble for his politics, which were already successful.⁷⁸

Horst Teltschik reported that the German delegation was in this situation very full of hope on the flight to Moscow. One reason was the invitation from Gorbachev to Kohl to the Caucasus. When the invitation to Arkhyz during the G7 summit in Houston was brought over, "I said to the chancellor: 'That is a good sign—because if Gorbachev wanted a quarrel, then he would not have it in his homeland.'"⁷⁹ As well there was optimism that the two main problems—the surrender by the four victorious powers of their rights and "the complete membership of the united Germany in NATO" would be solved.

Here it is surprising for the first time that Teltschik does not mention the agreement between Bush and Gorbachev of May 31, 1990, that NATO membership was the affair of the Germans, as if it had not existed. Instead he mentions an interesting small detail. Already before the meeting with Gorbachev, Kohl was ready to make a general agreement with the Soviet Union in return for NATO membership, which offered extensive security guarantees and the reduction of the top limit of the German armed forces to 400,000. According to Teltschik, during the flight Kohl started a quarrel with Genscher about an old disagreement with the Americans and with Stoltenberg:⁸⁰ the foreign minister wanted to reduce the limit to 350,000, "including the 25,000 member navy." Kohl accused Genscher of attempting to get a professional army through the back door, which angered Genscher. Then Kohl demanded a presidium decision of the FDP because of aberrant statements of the FDP politician, Möllemann, which the foreign minister refused: he, Genscher, would have to "then request that the CDU write a statement that it was a Christian party."⁸¹

President Gorbachev, completely exhausted by the party congress,⁸² and Chancellor Kohl, also exhausted from various summit conferences, first met in Moscow and on July 15 had a private meeting first with the presence of Anatoli Chernayev and Horst Teltschik as well as the interpreters.⁸³ After the exchange of general opinions, Gorbachev emphasized that a situation was now developing that had to bring Russia and Germany back together. "For him this goal was of the same importance as the normalization of relations with the USA." Helmut Kohl offered a "comprehensive agreement" between the united Germany and the Soviet Union, which could "now in a discreet way already be started." At the NATO Summit in London President Bush had taken up the proposal⁸⁴ "that the member states of both alliances should prepare under the roof of the CSCE a declaration on the renunciation of force and nonaggression. This could also be included in a bilateral agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union."⁸⁵ Beyond this, the chancellor hoped for the success of these meetings in three areas, "if the timeframe is to be kept:" first in the settlement of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the GDR, second on the membership of the united Germany in NATO, third in the future limit of the German armed forces.

Gorbachev's reply was not as concrete; rather he praised the chancellor in his recent politics and his influence on Washington, also praised Bush who was

making NATO more political, and made other similar observations. Both of them would now have to get their people used to the new situation. From the military and the journalists there were at the moment howls that he—Gorbachev—was going to sell the fruits of the victory in the Second World War for D-Marks. And then the president gave the chancellor “no agreement proposal,” as he put it, but rather “thoughts on the contents of an agreement on partnership and cooperation between the USSR and Germany.” The chancellor did the same with his observations on the contents of a bilateral agreement, which contained similarities to the “German-French friendship agreement.” Both assured each other that these were all very personal thoughts.

After they had approached each other in this way, Gorbachev searched for a affirmation in a troubled theme, namely the border question: the new Germany would after all be established in the borders of the Federal Republic, the GDR, and Berlin. “This is not a problem, the chancellor interjected,” the German protocol says. “He explained the process that the Polish government had suggested. This process was watertight and clear. The chancellor added that he did not always understand the Polish position.” He had made an offer to Prime Minister Mazowiecki that immediately after the unification of Germany, within three months, to sign a border treaty. And then Kohl brings in, not unskillfully, the various positions at different times: “His proposal went beyond that however. His goal was a treaty with Poland that would extend far into the future. The Polish government was hesitant.” But he could understand how Poland would react if Germany were to make a treaty with the Soviet Union.” In reply Gorbachev said prophetically: “This must be taken into consideration.”

According to the Soviet protocol Kohl said about his offer to the Polish government: “Two steps—first the borders and then the big treaty. The Poles do not hurry, avoid giving a final answer. But if Germany makes a treaty with the Soviet Union, they’ll lift their noses, begin to wail and point to history. It is necessary to consider how to avoid this, how to get the Poles to be sensible.” But, according to the Soviet protocol, Gorbachev did not even make the prophetic remark as in the German protocol, but continued, without answering, immediately to the next point.

The president stated—now again according to the German protocol—that, after the border question, “second, Germany must forego nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. He knew that this was also the position of the chancellor.” Kohl did not contradict him.

The short dialogue that followed is worth quoting in its entirety:

“Third,” Gorbachev continues, “the military structures of NATO must not be extended to the territory of the GDR. As well there must be an agreement for a transitional regulation of the presence of Soviet troops. Fourth, the four power rights must be removed.” The chancellor asked the president if this meant that Germany was to

receive its complete sovereignty after unification. President Gorbachev answered in the affirmative: "of course." (And repeats:) That assumes, however, that the NATO military structures would not be expanded to the GDR and a transitional regulation of the presence of the Soviet troops was agreed to.

President Gorbachev declared that the most important question was the membership of the united Germany in NATO. Legally the question was clear. In fact it appears that after the unification of Germany the territory of the authority of NATO would not be extended to the territory of the GDR. The issue is the regulation of a transition period. Membership in NATO remains preserved. However, as long as Soviet troops were stationed in the GDR, the range of NATO authority cannot be extended to the territory of the GDR.

Gorbachev emphasized this statement two more times.

Then the next essential point: the chancellor emphasized the interest of his government to end as soon as possible the four power rights and to achieve the full sovereignty of Germany. Gorbachev "understood" this and stated that he was ready to abolish the four power rights with the completion of the 2+4 treaty:

Gorbachev: The concluding document that will contain the main principles will give expression to the end of the four-sided authority without a transitional period.⁸⁶

In the Soviet protocol it is difficult to discern this decisive statement regarding the dissolution of the four-power rights "without a transitional period." Then Gorbachev said:

You insist that at the moment of the creation of a united Germany the forside rights and responsibilities are removed. This demand is not completely realistic because it requires the ratification of a relevant document by the "Six." It requires some time. I n p r i n c i p l e we could agree that in the document on the fundamental principles there is a definite statement on the removal of the four sided rights and responsibilities. The condition for this is the completion of a new agreement on the conditions for the presence of our armed forces in Germany in a time period of three to four years or the confirmation of the validity of all agreements with the GDR that at present regulate the presence of the Soviet forces there.⁸⁷

All of this sounds like the German version, but it is not as clear as the key sentence in the German minutes. There is much to indicate that Teltschik's notes accord with the ideas and perhaps also Gorbachev's statements; because the whole course of the talks in the next days were also directed at a surrender of the four power rights, the acceptance of the full sovereignty of the unified Germany *immediately*

with the completion of the 2+4 treaty, under the condition that there was an agreement on the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

Gorbachev therefore suggested that the question of a continued presence of Soviet troops should be taken out of the whole issue, so that it could be solved separately. In this way it would be possible to establish the complete sovereignty of Germany without the question of troop presence causing difficulty. Otherwise, the Soviet troops would remain as occupying forces (and would be seen as such, as the Soviet protocol put it).

This was unimportant for the chancellor and for Teltschik that was “the second surprise.”⁸⁸ Kohl confirmed that no NATO troops (or does he mean: no foreign NATO troops?) would be moved to the territory of the GDR.

The chancellor asked again—probably for the note-taker—and Teltschik also recorded everything for a third time: “If he has understood the president correctly, then the area of NATO would be extended to the territory of the GDR only after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.”

This was the common interest, replied President Gorbachev. The united Germany will be a member of NATO. De facto it must however appear that what is now the territory of the GDR does not belong to the territory of the NATO so long as Soviet troops are stationed (there). He does not question the sovereignty of Germany. Germany will remain a member of NATO. But nevertheless an agreement on the presence of Soviet troops was necessary. De facto it must appear that the GDR territory did not belong to NATO so long as Soviet troops are stationed there. De jure Germany will be a member of NATO. After one year there should follow negotiations on the complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops. A separate agreement will be made regarding the legal basis for the presence of the Soviet troops or the responsibilities of the GDR should be confirmed.

Teltschik's pen raced across the page. He wanted to record every word of the interpreter completely true to the original. This is how dramatically he described these minutes in his *329 Tage* [329 Days]. By contrast the chancellor remained “without a noticeable reaction.”

Kohl suggested that such an agreement should be drafted immediately. There was discussion of financial assistance for moving the troops, of new apartments for the dependants of the army, and of the time frame of four years until the departure of the Soviet troops, which caused more difficulty for him—according to Kohl—than for Gorbachev.

Horst Teltschik wrote in his “diary:” “The breakthrough has been achieved! What a sensation! We did not expect such clear statements. All signs were very positive, but who would have predicted such a result? For the chancellor this is an unbelievable triumph.”⁸⁹

Here too it is hard to believe that Teltschik does not mention the agreement in Washington between Gorbachev and Bush regarding Germany's NATO

membership. Gorbachev's agreements here in Moscow were certainly more concrete and of great significance for the settling of the questions that had to do with NATO membership, sovereignty, and the withdrawal of the troops, but they built on the Washington breakthrough, about which the chancellor's office had been informed not only by Bush's telex. Genscher sees this in the same way: In Washington was "the real breakthrough and Baker called me and said: 'It's all over,' Gorbachev . . . (also) committed himself openly. That was the decisive breakthrough for us, so that when we were in the Caucasus it was just a matter of questions, whose results were, namely . . . how long the Soviet troops stayed in Germany and how high the German payments are."⁹⁰

As these fundamental issues were settled and handed on to the departments to be dealt with further, the more relaxed parts of the delegation program followed: first a meeting with the whole delegation, which carefully confirmed the results of the private meeting, the drive to the airport, while Teltshik once more told the ambassador Klaus Blech and Dieter Kastrup, who was usually involved in everything, about the "breakthrough" in the NATO membership question, finally the flight to Stavropol and the drive to Arkhyz in the Caucasus, in Gorbachev's homeland. There everyone took walks, enjoyed the beauty of nature, the aroma of the harvest that was beginning. The pictures went around the world: the bosses in knitted cardigans, the descent to the river, Kohl and Gorbachev hand in hand. In the evening they sat together, told each other stories and anecdotes. The wives of the two government leaders were there and Teltshik described a great harmony between Raissa and Mikhail Gorbachev; Portugalov told me that it really was a great love, the only one of the leader of a country that he knew of.

On the night before the next meeting of Gorbachev with Kohl, Genscher, and the German delegation in the Caucasus, a furious Falin sat in his room and waited for the call from his president, whom he had asked for a talk. At midnight—according to the department head—the phone finally rang.

Gorbachev: *What did you (!) want to tell me?*

Falin: *In an addition to my memorandum I consider it my duty to draw your (!)⁹¹ attention particularly to three items.⁹²*

They wanted to "saddle" the Soviet Union with the annexation including all financial, moral, and legal costs. Through this "several hundred thousand people [would become] potential defendants." Gorbachev said: "Understood. Continue." Falin's second point was the united Germany's NATO membership: differently from in his memorandum, he demanded now simply "nonparticipation in the military organization [*like France—AvP*]. The absolute minimum—no nuclear weapons on German territory. Based on surveys, 84 percent of Germans were for the denuclearization of Germany."⁹³ The third point related to the property

question, which had to be settled by the time the 2+4 treaty was signed. For example, the Soviet experts were to calculate the ecological costs of the German attack in 1941, if the Germans introduced the subject of environmental damages in the GDR. Gorbachev then asked more specific questions, particularly regarding Article 23 of the Basic Law and about military status, but then said, "I will do what I can. But I am afraid that the train has already left the station." Later, in his book, Falin remarked in response that in that case all one could do was "to lie down on the track."

In the Caucasus

In Arkhyz, Gorbachev's home near Stavropol, on the following day, June 16, 1990, the agreements from the private meeting of Gorbachev and Kohl were fleshed out for the upcoming treaties and for publication.⁹⁴ Despite the fundamental clarification on NATO membership of the united Germany in Washington and the first specific definitions the day before in Moscow, a few fundamental disagreements remained. There was unanimity that there should be, in addition to the 2+4 document, a separate bilateral treaty between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, which would settle the conditions of the presence and withdrawal of the Soviet troops in connection with the complete sovereignty of Germany. According to the Soviet minutes of July 16 the general secretary said about the 2+4 document:

In our opinion the document should deal with all the principal questions that belong to the external aspects of German unification:

- *creation of a new Germany in the borders of the GDR, the FRG, and Berlin;*
- *the renunciation by Germany of nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological weapons;*
- *the relationship to the rights and responsibilities of the four powers⁹⁵*

The result will be the establishment of full sovereignty. In this connection it is necessary to state the existence of several problems for which a solution must be found.

Genscher: *Which problems do you mean, Mr. President?*

Gorbachev: *Mainly that the military structures of NATO do not extend to the territory of the GDR and that for a particular period that is to be determined jointly Soviet armed forces continue to be present. Yesterday we discussed with the chancellor the idea of making a separate agreement on the conditions of the presence of our troops in Germany. In the final document of the "Six" there was to be a statement in principle on this. In one word, it will be necessary to have a legal basis, otherwise the presence of our troops would be left in limbo.*

Genscher: *This final document of the "Six" we understand as saying that the united Germany in agreement with the final Helsinki document will have the right to choose which alliance it will join. You know that we are in favour of it being in NATO. There should be clarity between us in this regard.*⁹⁶

Then Kohl emphasized again that complete sovereignty also meant the freedom to choose an alliance, but now the points should be assembled to be dealt with at the end of the meeting. Here the Soviet and German protocols differ in a decisive question. In the German protocol the Soviet president made the following statement with regard to the expansion of NATO onto the territory of the GDR after the departure of the Soviet troops:

It is clear that the united Germany will remain in NATO. But an expansion of NATO territory must not occur as long as there are Soviet troops in the GDR.

The corollary of this is that, after withdrawal of Soviet troops NATO would be permitted to expand into the territory of the GDR. This sentence does not appear in the Soviet protocol at this spot. On this question and its refinements there would, two months later at the 2+4 negotiations, be conflict that shortly before their completion threatened them. Therefore, I want to quote the whole passage from the Soviet protocol.

Gorbachev: *A situation will arise that Soviet troops will be dislocated in the eastern part of Germany.*⁹⁷ *It is obvious that the structures of NATO cannot be expanded. This does not challenge the sovereign rights of Germany. Naturally it will be necessary to have a separate bilateral agreement on the conditions for the presence of our troops after the unification of Germany.*

Genscher: *The united Germany will be a sovereign state, but for a particular time Soviet troops will be stationed on its territory, there where the GDR was. This must be regulated by a separate agreement.*

Gorbachev: *Essentially the issue is merging our positions. Germany is member of NATO, but the sphere of action of NATO will not be expanded to the GDR.*

Twice Kohl asks again directly about this essential point:

As long as the Soviet armed forces are there?

Gorbachev (does not want to give a concrete answer): *Let us see how things progress. (...) The new sovereign Germany will tell us that it understands our concern and that the NATO states with their nuclear weapons will not move to the territory of the GDR.*

Kohl: *As long as the Soviet troops are there?*

Gorbachev: *When we talk about the withdrawal of our troops, we will discuss this condition. Then, at that time, there might be some movement in Vienna, there will be a new quality in the relations between the Warsaw Pact and NATO and everything will look different. Now what interests us is the immediate future. If any statements about the expansion of the sphere of NATO to the territory of the GDR come from your side, it will produce on our side a strong movement of resistance. This must be considered.*

Genscher: *There must be clarity in order to avoid doubt about the sovereignty of Germany. If we are asked, we will say that the question will be solved in accordance with the actual situation that is developing, but sovereignty will not be touched by it.*

Gorbachev: *Sovereignty is not being challenged. This is tactics. If anyone asks what will happen after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, we will answer that we will think about that when the time comes.*

Genscher: *In the framework of sovereignty?*

Gorbachev: *Yes.*

Shevardnadze (*more resistant than his boss in this question*): *The question of the troops is a matter of principle and requires agreement. If after the departure of the Soviet troops from the territory of the GDR, NATO moves in and nuclear weapons appear, then everything we have agreed on will be buried.*

Here in the Soviet protocol it becomes clear: the Soviet side gives no clear answer to the question if, *after* the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, an expansion of the NATO structures to the territory of the former GDR would be allowed or not at all, that is, never. On the contrary, Gorbachev emphasized, just like Shevardnadze, the danger for the Soviet Union of such a policy, the resistance to it or even an “explosion.” All these pointed objections are not found in the German protocol. At the same time, however, the Soviet leadership did not want to question the sovereignty of the united Germany. For this reason Genscher broached the subject again: the president spoke *in principle* once of a nonexpansion of NATO structures to the territory of the GDR, another time of the possibility of Germany’s making a decision in complete sovereignty after the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Genscher pointed to this contradiction, but at the same time appeared ready to let the question of NATO expansion to the GDR territory be answered later. The Soviet president therefore summarized:

Here the issue is of bringing together two fundamental questions—the sovereign rights of the unified Germany and therefore what is to be done in the future. Life changes very quickly and when the next stage has been reached, it is necessary to make the appropriate decisions. To hurry ahead would conjure up the most dangerous consequences. (...)

Kohl (sees this somewhat differently): *The sovereign Germany decides for itself which alliance it will join. We say that it will be a member of NATO. At the same*

time we say that while the Soviet troops are present the structures of NATO will not be expanded to the east. The sovereign Germany also has the right to make the decision of what is to be done after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from where they are now located.

According to the German protocol, Gorbachev agreed with this summary, but according to the Soviet protocol the Soviet foreign minister expressed disagreement:

Shevardnadze: *It would be wisest to record clearly that after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territory of the former GDR no foreign troops and nuclear weapons will appear, so that the territory cannot be used against the Soviet Union.*

Gorbachev: *In the agreement should be included the idea that the withdrawal of the Soviet troops will not be used for the creation of a threat to the security of the Soviet Union. Between us there will be an agreement that Germany is a member of NATO, but the withdrawal of the Soviet troops does not undermine the security of the Soviet Union.*

In the German protocol the drama of this debate is largely absent.

Minister Genscher draws Gorbachev's attention to the fact that he had said previously that Germany would decide after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in its sovereignty. Now he says that he assumed that no expansion of the NATO structures would follow. This is a change in the Soviet position.

Gorbachev: *1. No expansion of the NATO territory to the territory of what is now the GDR as long as⁹⁸ Soviet troops are present there. An agreement will be made regarding the presence of the troops. 2. He assumes that the NATO structures will not expand to this territory without a statement to this effect in the agreement.*

FM Genscher asked if during this time, i.e. the time of the presence of Soviet troops, German forces could be stationed in the GDR that were not part of NATO organizations. If there is unanimity on this?

President Gorbachev answered in the affirmative with the reason that Germany does after all have full sovereignty.

In the Soviet protocol Gorbachev remained contradictory in this question, even after the German foreign minister made the following offer.

Genscher: *It is necessary to clarify the question if in this time anyone's troops will still be on the territory of the GDR. It could be the German forces that are not attached to NATO.*

Neither Gorbachev nor Shevardnadze responded to this, but Kohl was more precise:

These will be soldiers of the (German) Bundeswehr that are not attached to NATO.

Possibly the chancellor emphasized that it would be troops of the *Bundeswehr* because de Maizière and Meckel decided to suggest to the Soviet side in this context a German “territorial defence troop,” which would take care only of the German borders and not be attached to NATO. However, it was apparently not yet settled if this territorial defence troop would also remain outside of the structures of the *Bundeswehr* or even be composed only of the troops of the NVA. The chancellor might also have been more specific in this because, according to the Soviet protocol, only German forces were mentioned. De Maizière even thought that Genscher was of the same opinion as he and Meckel were in this question, but he had “sent ahead” the GDR colleagues, because he himself did not want to or could not do so in consideration of the chancellor or the Americans.⁹⁹

Back to the negotiations: the chancellor looked for a formulation that could take into account these differences between the German and Soviet delegation, including of course the contradictions of Gorbachev himself.

Kohl: *It should not happen that a treaty is made and after a few years nuclear weapons appear. (...) I cannot suggest a statement now, but it absolutely must be found.*

Gorbachev: *Germany is unifying itself, receives political sovereignty, becomes a member of NATO, Article 5¹⁰⁰ takes effect. It could be that a related statement on the intentions will be suggested in the mentioned letter of the chancellor.*

Kohl: *I do not yet know how this sentence should be phrased. I would like again to confirm clearly that you assume that that after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the territory of the former GDR there will be, for example, no American soldiers and no nuclear weapons. Or are only nuclear weapons referred to?*

Gorbachev: *Neither foreign troops nor nuclear weapons.*

And now comes an incomprehensible change of direction: in clear contradiction to this last statement the general secretary immediately adds, according to the Soviet protocol, almost the opposite idea:

So long as the Soviet forces are present, there can be no troops for territorial defence present. Then, after the withdrawal of our troops, the Bundeswehr can appear, i.e. the parts that are integrated into NATO but without nuclear weapons.

All of the progress of the negotiation so far leads to the feeling that here in the last half of the sentence a “not” is missing; it should say: “i.e. the parts (of the

Bundeswehr) that are *not* integrated into NATO.” But a new examination of the original and also of the computer database in the Gorbachev Foundation revealed that in the original version there is no “not.” And the continuing negotiations show that at this point, according to the Soviet protocol, there was an unclear and unexplained break: now the Germans would be allowed to station divisions of the *Bundeswehr* that were integrated into NATO in the area of what would then be the former GDR. The acting Soviet foreign minister added to Gorbachev’s last sentence:

Kwitsinski: *And without the carriers of nuclear weapons.*

Kohl (repeats): *Complete sovereignty of Germany means that after the withdrawal of Soviet troops any German troops could be stationed on the territory of the former GDR, but no carriers of nuclear weapons will be included in their armaments. No foreign forces will be stationed on the territory of the former GDR.*

After this summary in the further course of the talks Gorbachev stated essentially only the necessity of the clarification and ratification of the bilateral treaty between the FRG and USSR “after the signing of the concluding document of the ‘Six.’”

Here the question arises about the reasons for Gorbachev’s change in his negotiation or the accuracy of the Soviet protocol. Because the Soviet leadership had only just with vehemence and dramatic statements opposed the expansion of NATO structures to the territory of the former GDR while the Soviet troops were still present *and also after* their departure, as well as against the stationing of German troops that were attached to NATO, and now this position was simply overturned and everything was permitted to the Federal German chancellor, or his foreign minister. As was known, in February there had still been strong differences between Genscher and Stoltenberg, between Genscher and Kohl, and between the GDR government in Berlin and the government in Bonn in the goals that had been battled over at first. There had still been talk only of German territorial groups that would be allowed to take their activities to the territory of the GDR after the departure of the Soviet troops and now this change. It cannot be assumed that this difference was not clear to Gorbachev or Chernayev, the “note-taker,” considering the other aspects of the progress of negotiations. Possibly the readiness to limit themselves to territorial troops, which was signaled by Genscher, combined with the offer of a bilateral treaty from Kohl, enough for Gorbachev, in this question, to recognize the complete sovereignty of the united Germany immediately after the signing of the 2+4 final document and the bilateral treaty. Perhaps it also appeared to the general secretary dangerous for the future, to demand from the government of a united Germany, that it treat one part of Germany as a NATO area but not the other. But the guarantees for Soviet security that were requested in return were small.

At any rate, after this decisive phase of the meeting, just like Genscher and Kohl, Gorbachev made a distinction between the parts of the *Bundeswehr* that were integrated into NATO and those that would be, as “territorial defence,” not attached to NATO. But the Soviet president did not grasp at the straw that Genscher and Kohl offered him: after the return of the Soviet troops to the USSR there would be only territorial defence troops that were *not* attached to NATO in the eastern part of Germany. Finally Gorbachev agreed to the presence of German NATO divisions without nuclear weapons on the territory of the GDR after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, however no foreign troops.

In the German protocol Gorbachev’s contradictory position is summarized:

President Gorbachev adds, if in the bilateral agreement it says, after the departure of the Soviet troops, nothing will be undertaken that compromises the security of the Soviet Union, then it does not represent a limit of the Sovereignty of Germany. It should not be written down that the united Germany will become a member of NATO, but this is the intention of the Soviet side. It should also not be written down that the GDR, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, will not become NATO territory, but the Soviet side has the understanding that in particular nuclear weapons will not be permitted. A Bundeswehr of the whole of Germany may be stationed on this territory.

In a later phase of this meeting Chancellor Kohl also summarized in the German protocol “that the full sovereignty of Germany meant that, after the departure of the Soviet troops, any type of German troops were allowed to be stationed on the present GDR, with the exception of those armed with nuclear weapons. However, no foreign troops would be allowed there.” Gorbachev requested that in the final document of the 2+4 negotiations a sentence would be included saying “that a bilateral treaty will be made regarding the presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the present GDR.” The chancellor saw no problem in this. As Gorbachev suddenly spoke of a period of five to seven years, Kohl reminded him that previously they had spoken of three to four years and made offers of assistance for the return of the Soviet soldiers to and their integration in their homeland. Gorbachev declared that he was satisfied with this. As well with the withdrawal of the Soviet troops the German side would reduce the number of its soldiers. “The upper limit will be 370,000 men,” the chancellor agreed at the end of the meeting, and this in three to four years, a number that Genscher had also mentioned before in the meeting, after Shevardnadze had assumed 350,000 men. Thus Kohl and Genscher had agreed to a middle value of the debate during the flight to Moscow—against the position of Stoltenberg who wanted to remain at the number of 400,000 men, and at least in opposition to some of the American leadership.¹⁰¹

De Maizière reports further that Genscher and he had previously already suggested an upper limit of 370,000 men to the GDR delegation for the Vienna

disarmament negotiations on conventional weapons, which sheds light on the relationship of Genscher to Kohl. Indeed the last prime minister of the GDR describes in this context again that Genscher had in some cases “sent ahead” the GDR representatives, to express things that he himself did not want to say, in order not to jeopardize his relationship with Kohl or the Americans, as in this case of the troop limits and in principle cases that had touched on the special status of the GDR territory in NATO or an all-European security structure.¹⁰²

Foreign Minister Genscher presented in this meeting in Arkhyz again the *German position on the border question with Poland*. The Federal German government did not agree with the Polish demand that Germany would be given full sovereignty only “when the border treaty between German and Poland had been completed.” Genscher referred to the joint decision of the Bundestag and the People’s Chamber regarding the “Completion of a border treaty.” The Poles also demanded decisions regarding the Basic Law and thus a change to the internal German law. At the 2+4 negotiations he had already said “that the rules that became irrelevant through German unification would be eliminated or changed. We stand by this. It is our sovereign right.”

Genscher: We are ready to conclude a border treaty but without the creation of special status for the Polish-German border. That would set an undesirable precedent. (...) If this continues, the Poles could demand the recognition of a special status for the Polish-Soviet border.

In the Soviet protocol no reaction from Gorbachev or Shevardnadze is recorded. In the German protocol, however, Gorbachev replied:

President Gorbachev emphasizes that for Poland this is a question of the heart.

M Genscher wants to be certain that the Soviet side sees this question as we do.

The chancellor interjects that there will be no problem with the border. We would have a serious inner political problem if the German-Polish border is made t h e border in Europe.

M Genscher asks if there was unanimity in this issue.

FM Shevardnadze answers this question in the affirmative.

There is nothing of this in the Soviet protocol. But Soviet agreement was not clear in the German protocol of the delegation meeting of July 16 either. If Shevardnadze’s agreement—Gorbachev did not express himself conclusively in either the German or the Soviet protocol—really was sufficient, to change the Polish position appears doubtful to me; because the Polish government was no longer oriented toward the Soviet government as had been the governments in the past and Shevardnadze was no enthusiastic champion of the German position.¹⁰³

Completely at the end Kohl requests that Minister Schäuble be invited to Moscow to discuss the problem of the Germans living in the Soviet Union. On this the Soviet protocol says: “We do not want all of them to leave. Conditions must be created for them so that they will stay at home.” Therefore, Schäuble might perhaps inform himself on this situation on the spot in Moscow. Gorbachev reported that the Supreme Soviet had taken a few steps in this question. “The population of the district of Ulyanovsk is ready, to take in a specific number of Soviet Germans. (...) And with regard to the trip of your minister of the interior, in response to an invitation from our minister of the interior to discuss questions relating to the fight against crime (...) come here and on the side find out about the situation of the Soviet Germans.” In the German protocol it says more judgmentally that Gorbachev finds the open declaration of the purpose of the trip too “pointed” and suggests that Schäuble be invited for the purpose of fighting international crime. “Then this invitation would present no problem. The chancellor states his agreement to this procedure.”

Thus the essential questions were cleared up. Left to be discussed were the aspects of the Soviet troop withdrawal that would lead to costs, though without mentioning any figures. It would be primarily Finance Minister Waigel and the acting chairman of the ministerial council Stepan Sitaryan who would discuss this matter. There was only one more issue that was agreement on: one could not anticipate the 2+4 treaty and therefore wanted to make public only—as Gorbachev put it—that “Germany received complete sovereignty. The united German sovereign entity must determine its alliance membership.”

Horst Teltschik saw in his summary for his government the positive results in that Germany would receive back full sovereignty internally and externally, the guarantee of support of NATO would apply for all of Germany from the first day of unification, that immediately formations of the *Bundeswehr* would be stationed on the territory of the GDR and in Berlin and “after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops could be integrated into NATO.” “This brings back to us positions, which for example in the Genscher/Stoltenberg statement of February¹⁰⁴ and in many positions of other German politicians [had been] long given up.”

These positive aspects for the German side lead to the question whether the readiness of the chancellor and the foreign minister¹⁰⁵ pushed Gorbachev “to the limit” or if he—as he said in 2002—wanted it this way.¹⁰⁶

The press conference for this meeting took place in Shelesnovodsk near the city of Mineralniye Vody (Mineral Water), which had an airport. There were crowds everywhere. In the sanatorium of Shelesnovodsk journalists waited. The press statement that had been prepared the day before by Teltschik and was delivered by the chancellor needed hardly any changes. It contained eight points:

First: The unification of Germany includes the Federal Republic, the GDR, and Berlin.

Second: After unification has taken place the four power rights and responsibilities will be completely removed. The united Germany receives at the moment of its unification its full and unlimited sovereignty.

Third: The united Germany can in the exercise of its unlimited sovereignty decide freely for itself if and which alliance it wishes to join. (Beyond Teltschik's submission it then said in the press statement:) This accords with the CSCE final act. (Then comes a further point that was not written by Teltschik since it was not meant to be presented as a joint result:) I have stated as the opinion of the Federal Republic of Germany that the united Germany would like to be a member of the Atlantic alliance. And I am certain that this also agrees with the view of the government of the GDR.¹⁰⁷

Fourth: The united Germany will make a bilateral treaty with the Soviet Union for the finalization of the withdrawal of troops from the GDR, which is to be completed within three to four years. At the same time there will be completed with the Soviet Union a transitional agreement dealing with the effects of the D-Mark on the GDR during this time period.

Fifth: As long as Soviet troops remain stationed on the former GDR territory the NATO structures will not be expanded to this part of Germany. The immediate application of Articles 5 and 6 of the NATO treaty (defence obligation) remain untouched from the beginning. Formations not integrated into the Bundeswehr (in Teltschik's version is missing the additional phrase: i.e. formations for territorial defence) can immediately after the unification of Germany be stationed on the territory of the GDR and Berlin.

Sixth: During the presence of the Soviet troops on the territory of the former GDR after unification (in Teltschik's version is missing: "according to our understanding") the troops of the three western powers should remain in Berlin. (Also not originally provided for:) The Federal German government will ask the three Western powers to arrange the stationing of troops with the respective governments through agreements.

Seventh: The Federal German government declares itself still ready to give a declaration of obligation in the current Vienna negotiations to reduce the armed forces of a united Germany within three to four years to 370,000 men. The reduction will begin with the taking effect of the first Vienna Agreement.

Eighth: A united Germany will abstain from the production, possession, and use of nuclear, bacteriological, and chemical weapons and remain a member of the non-proliferation treaty.¹⁰⁸

The "murmuring" among the journalists grew from point to point, reported Teltschik. These far-reaching results were not expected in such detail. Chernayev wrote that Gorbachev in these talks with Kohl had not even suggested "weakened" variations relating to NATO membership, which, however, some Soviet

politicians had expected.¹⁰⁹ Not included in these eight points was the 5 billion Mark credit of the Federal Republic to the USSR, because Gorbachev had expressed concern—only in the German protocol—that he would be reproached for selling the NATO membership for D-Marks. There would still be discussions about the exact amount of the costs of the departure of the Soviet army—and conflicts.

The two leaders of the negotiations thanked each other and Gorbachev emphasized that without the statements of the London NATO summit of July 6 these results would not have been achieved. This accorded with his policy already prior to the XXVIII party congress of the CPSU to place German unity in the context of changed alliance policies in order to give less scope to his opponents.¹¹⁰

Because of the poor communication possibilities the surprised allies found out rather late about the results of the German–Soviet negotiations. But because these results were at the top of the wish list that had been agreed to, soon after the initial bewilderment, telegrams of congratulations arrived in Bonn from all over the world.

The North Americas: Canada and Reunification of Germany in Comparison to the United States

The American Position

The United States under President George Bush Sr. had—to sum it up briefly—a clear strategy to contain the increasing influence of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev in Europe in 1989. He developed this strategy among others with Brent Scowcroft, his security advisor, and Bob Zoelick and presented it already at the NATO summit end of May 1989 in Brussels. He repeated it in his four points in Washington on November 29 and in Brussels on December 4, just after Kohl's Ten Points from November 28, 1990:

- Re-unification in self-determination
- In peace and step by step
- Recognizing the existing borders as they were fixed in Helsinki 1972
- Under the roof of NATO

Kohl did not mention in his Ten Points NATO and the acceptance of the existing borders in Europe and was harshly criticized by the Americans (as Condoleezza Rice declared in the interview with me) and by German Free and Social democrats for his silence on the German–Polish border. The Oder–Neisse border became—as has been demonstrated—a big problem during the whole process of unification.

Bush's conception of a "European house," where everybody can "walk from room to room," was directly connected with German reunification and taking West Germany as a "partner in leadership." However, reunification was not an aim for itself: it was embedded in Bush's conception of NATO as a more political organization and a free Europe keeping the Soviet Union more or less out of Europe.

Chancellor Kohl and President Bush became—as has been written—close partners in this process and their policy was in the end successful: Germany was unified under the roof of NATO, NATO later extended to the border of Russia, and democracies developed in Central Eastern Europe.

The Canadian Position(s)

What about Canada's role in this process? At a first glance the politics of Canada under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his Minister for Foreign Affairs Joe Clark were very similar to the strategy of President Bush. Kohl declared Mulroney to be one of those who supported him all the time. However, a second view shows interesting differences, especially between the parliament's "Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Trade" on the one side and the Canadian and US governments on the other.¹¹¹

Cold War and Canadian Détente Policy

The years between the 1970s and the mid-1980s were not the best for relations between Canada and the United States. There were vast political differences between the governments and their leaders. Prime Minister Trudeau did not support the Cold War policy of the United States, especially under President Ronald Reagan. Neither did he support the Cold War policy of the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. For other reasons, the relations with France were also tense.¹¹² Though Canada was a member of NATO, Trudeau's government criticized the armament policy of the United States, in particular the nuclear mobilization, and tried to reduce the tensions between East and West, especially with the Soviet Union. Trudeau called this policy his "peace initiative." He normalized diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China before the United States. His government pursued a détente policy, which was similar to the policy of the Swedish premier Olof Palme and of the West German chancellor Willy Brandt.

The government under Trudeau tried to establish better relationships not only with the Soviet Union and China, but also with independent states of the third world, including Cuba under Fidel Castro. The Canadian prime minister visited Cuba in 1976.¹¹³ It is said that Castro and Trudeau became close friends (Castro attended Trudeau's funeral in 2000). The policy of the United States was to try to isolate Cuba and to lead it into an economic disaster with the embargo of 1961. Trudeau vehemently opposed this move.

However, there was a fundamental difference between the West German “Entspannungspolitik” and the “détente policy” of Palme and Trudeau: The West German government aimed not only to reduce tensions between East and West but also to resolve the division of Germany. They hoped to attain better conditions for unifying Germany by reducing the conflicts with the Soviet Union (the slogan was: “Wandel durch Annäherung,” which translates as “change through approximation”). Whereas, the main aim of US diplomacy was to contain the influence of the Soviet Union in the world, especially in Europe.

Most of our Canadian interviewees complained that the attitude of the United States was to treat the Canadian government as the younger brother who should support the American policies against the Soviet Union. However, sometimes this younger brother stepped out of line and disturbed US policies. The interviewed diplomats said that there was always a struggle for recognition of Canadian influence in global affairs between Canadian and US diplomacies. One of them is Robert Fowler, a high-profile diplomat who served under several different prime ministers from Trudeau to Jean Chrétien. He believed that Canada was considered a “bystander” in world politics. According to him, the Canadian government did not promote itself enough as a world player. For instance, Canada was excluded from the negotiations after the Second World War in Yalta and Potsdam, although Canada was an important ally and had lost thousands of soldiers. In 1945 when the United Nations (UN) charter was being written, Canada promoted a permanent seat for the French but not for itself. Another development was that at the beginning of the G7 meetings Canada was not invited and was deeply concerned about it. Only after Canada asked President Ford directly did Canada become a member of the G7 group.

Cold War after 1984

In May 1979 the Liberals under Trudeau lost the elections for the Canadian Parliament and Joe Clark, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, became the prime minister of Canada. However, only seven months later he lost a no-confidence motion and as a result of the federal elections in February 1980, Trudeau came back as prime minister until 1984 when his Liberals were beaten by the Progressive Conservatives again, this time under the leadership of Brian Mulroney.

Nearly at the same time—in 1981—Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States. The governments under Reagan, and his successor George Bush Sr. and Mulroney had considerably better relations than under Trudeau. The main result of these new relations was the creation of the “Free Trade Agreement” and the “Goods and Services Tax.” It is said that the Canadian diplomacy pushed the US policies to include Mexico in this free trade agreement.¹¹⁴

As some of our interviewees stressed, Canadian diplomats tried to encourage the Americans to oblige Gorbachev and his delegation in Reykjavik in 1986. Yet, Ronald Reagan pursued his strong armament policy even shortly before Reykjavik in opposition to the Canadian diplomats.

Robert Fowler, one of the interviewed diplomats, said, the US president dismissed the “peace initiative” of then former prime minister Pierre Trudeau as inconsequential. However, only “18 months later (in Reykjavik), Reagan was saying very similar things about the peace initiative.” He “felt that the Americans wanted to be in charge and only *they* would change world politics and not the Canadians” (said with a sarcastic tone). It seemed that the Americans felt superior to the Canadians in all areas of international politics. Fowler viewed Helmut Kohl as being similarly dismissive of Trudeau’s Peace Initiative calling them the “silly little Canadians.”¹¹⁵

The diplomat John Noble was one of the main organizers of the Open Skies Conference in Ottawa where the “2+4” process started. He gave the first welcome speech because Mulroney was delayed because of a previous engagement. We asked him and other Canadian interviewees if Canada should and could have played a bigger role during the “2+4-process.” The foreign ministers from Italy and the Netherlands had spoken out against the “exclusive club” of the “2+4” participants and wanted other European countries to be involved. However, German foreign minister Genscher responded harshly in Ottawa: “You are out of the game.”¹¹⁶ Canada saw itself as a leader of the “middle power” countries, had troops in Germany, was a victor in the Second World War, a member of NATO, and was connected to all Arctic questions surrounding the strategic and military problems of NATO.¹¹⁷ Noble told us that there were different positions on this matter, but Foreign Minister Joe Clark was not really interested in the European question.¹¹⁸ Fowler said it was really a shame that Canada played only the role of a “housekeeper” because Canada had enough reasons to take on a bigger role within the forum¹¹⁹ perhaps with a special status role, like in the case of Poland.

A former Member of Parliament and the Foreign Committee, Bill Blaikie from the New Democratic Party, had made several speeches in the House of Commons against Chancellor Kohl’s attitude concerning the Polish–German border. Together with his colleague Jesse Flis, Bill Blaikie presented petitions in the House of Commons to support the Polish position against Kohl’s policy to postpone the recognition of the “Oder–Neisse-border” to the first session of the parliament of the united Germany.¹²⁰ Germany should accept the existing border at once. Blaikie had strong connections to the Canadian Polish Congress, which had a big influence on the Canadian politics.

In the spring of 1990 Members of the House of Commons and of the “Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade” including Bill Blaikie visited the Soviet Union and the Germanies from April 20 to May 5, 1990. Most of them became opponents of the official Canadian politics especially

in the question of NATO membership of a united Germany. At the beginning of their text concerning “*Germany and NATO*” the Canadian parliamentarians wrote cautiously:

*There was a fairly general agreement among the Germans we met that a united Germany should be a member of NATO, at least for a transitional period. The basic arguments are, first, that given its twentieth century history, a neutral Germany is in no one's interest; and, second, that in this period of rapid change it is essential not to upset the stabilizing influence of NATO.*¹²¹

These basic remarks in the report by the Canadian parliamentarians were also the position held among the members of NATO. However, after these basic declarations the report contains differences that did not conform to the official politics of their allies.

*At the same time, many Germans, in both the GDR and the FRG and at various points on the political spectrum, insisted that unification must occur as part of a process of creating a pan-European security system.*¹²²

The authors of the report mentioned that two concessions to Soviet security interests should be allowed: No NATO troops should be stationed on what is now East German soil and the 350,000 Soviet troops should be allowed to stay for a transitional time.

The memory of the war has—the Committee report states—a powerful influence in coloring Soviet thinking about German unification, but is perhaps not the determining factor.

*The real Soviet fear, we suspect, is that the settlement of the German question could have the effect, or be interpreted as having the effect, of excluding the Soviet Union from Europe. Mr. Gorbachev's central foreign objective, declared in his book *Perestroika* and repeated endlessly since, is to bring the Soviet Union into Europe and the wider world community as quickly and completely as possible.*

The parliamentarians of the Standing Committee wrote that the aim of a united Germany in NATO was a controversial matter. Therefore, the authors of the report considered different strategies:

- A neutral Germany (which is in no one's interest—see above).
- A special status like France. “But this approach is really only a variant of a neutral Germany and leaves the question of the country's security regime up in the air.”
- Gorbachev's consideration for Germany's membership in both alliances (including all members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact).

However, "... the question of Germany in NATO is more than the last great item of repair work of the cold war. Instead it is the first great item in building a new cooperative security system for Europe." And: "We think the impasse over the relationship between a united Germany and NATO will only be resolved by the West wholeheartedly embracing the Soviet Union's long term goal of participation leading to full membership in the European Community..."¹²³

The authors of the report of the Standing Committee added:

*Even if the alliances continue to demonstrate their recent capacity for new thinking, we should start building alternative structures of cooperative security that will, in all likelihood, eventually replace the alliances. This is where the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) comes into play.*¹²⁴

The last paragraph concerning this point was:

*In light of the foregoing, we would ask how the CSCE might best be developed as a creative and flexible institution for building confidence between the alliances and, at the same time, constructing new pan-European security arrangements. We would ask whether, in addition to having a Council of Foreign Ministers, the CSCE would be strengthened by having a parliamentary wing, such as might be provided by linking to the Council of Europe?*¹²⁵

Though the authors of the report of the Standing Committee knew that Canada had only "little or no say"¹²⁶ in the internal affairs of uniting Germany, the authors were sure, that the

*... transition years should have, as an underlying objective, the uniting of Europe, with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe occupying one end of the European home and Canada and the United States the other.*¹²⁷

Apparently, these conclusions were not the same as those of President George Bush and State Secretary James Baker, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and Foreign Minister Joe Clark, nor of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.¹²⁸ United Germany under the roof of NATO was the outcome of the "2+4" negotiations, especially the negotiations between Bush and Gorbachev that took place during the summit in Washington in early June 1990 in Washington.

However, the members of the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Trade were not insignificant political players; they played a large role in the Canadian politics and diplomacy making at the time. Bill Blakie declared in his interview, that it was not unusual for the "Standing Committee

on External Affairs and International Trade” to take different positions from Canadian policymakers, and he continued to hold the report’s main positions from June 1990 till 2013.

In contradiction to him and others, Paul Heinbecker, who served not only under Trudeau and Mulroney but later under Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, qualified the considerations of the standing committee as “pipe dreams.” His main arguments were:

*What do the Poles think? What do the Czechs think? And they were much less concerned, in my judgement at least, what it meant for Russia, than what it meant for themselves. They wanted to be on the inside, looking out. And they had plenty of good reasons for that. (...) You couldn't, you couldn't afford them the protection they wanted, in an organization that included Russia with a decision making veto. That would be, that would have been my judgment, that would be my judgment now. I don't think that these two things were reconcilable. (Including Russia and giving protection to the Poland, the Baltic States and the others, because Russia and the Soviet Union, respectively, have an imperialistic history.)*¹²⁹

Indeed, the Canadian government and most of the Conservatives would have agreed to this qualification, especially after the summit in Washington during the first days of June 1990. Most of the conservatives among the Standing Committee do not mention their role in this committee during its visit to the Soviet Union and to the Germanies. Immediately after their visit and the publication of the report their thoughts became obsolete in Canadian politics. For instance, it is to be questioned if the CSCE was capable of fulfilling the hopes of the Standing Committee. Nevertheless the strategic problems of excluding the Soviet Union from Europe and extending NATO to the East remain a large problem not only for Europe, but for the North Americas as well.

The Extension of NATO

From the end of the 1990s NATO extended to the East. Countries from Central Eastern and Eastern Europe joined NATO, and the alliance reached the borders of Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia (see the last chapter of this book). For the Russian side this development was and is a threat. Former Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy held an opinion similar to that of Robert Fowler, Bill Blaikie, and other Canadian diplomats and politicians, that this rapid extension of NATO was dangerous or even a mistake, because we have now a “new smaller Cold War.” Axworthy was a member of the Standing Committee and a member of the visiting group to the Soviet Union and the Germanies in the spring of 1990 and foreign minister of Canada from 1996 to 2000. However, his Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, as well as the Eastern European immigrant lobby groups

in Canada (and the States) appreciated the extension—and believed that there were no chances for an alternative.¹³⁰

Today, we have to ask if the exclusion of Russia from Europe and the extension of NATO gambled away the chance away to integrate the Russian Federation into Europe and to hinder it from unilateralist politics, for instance in the Caucasus or in Ukraine. The hostile mood among the Russian population against the West in which the Russian president Putin makes his expansionistic “Great Russian Policy” could be in part a consequence of the extension of NATO in the 1990s.

Signing of the Contracts

The Difficult Path to the Signing of the 2+4 Agreements

The Last Major Obstacles

Everything seemed to be back on schedule. The border question had been settled, the right to self-determination of the Germans had also been granted in the matter of alliance membership in Washington and complete sovereignty in Moscow, the NATO question, and the procedures for the withdrawal of Soviet troops were established.

At the next 2+4 conference of foreign ministers on July 17 in Paris, one day after the Caucasus meeting, the issue was, in the words of Bertolt Brecht, “die Mühen der Ebene,”¹ dealing with the routine details, in this context the implementation of the decisions and their final formulization for the treaties. However, GDR foreign minister Meckel had first of all to be convinced of the Federal government’s successes; the government of the GDR was not extensively or even correctly informed from Bonn but from Moscow. This was naturally annoying and Meckel’s grumbling that there were still problems between the two Germanies is understandable. But even to him it was clear that “it was all over.”²

How helpful the decisions in Moscow and Arkhyz were, not only for the Federal German Republic but particularly for the United States, is demonstrated with complete clarity on August 2 when the Iraqi army attacked Kuwait. Since NATO politics were now free of the German issue, all of American foreign and military policy could concentrate on this crisis. The most recent negotiations with the Soviets had also led to a great easing of the climate for cooperation between East and West. It is therefore surprising only at first

glance when Baker does not set the end of the Cold War at the completion of the 2+4 treaty:

The reason I write in my book that the Cold War ended, at least for me, on August 3rd, 1990, is because that was the day after Iraq invaded Kuwait, and I stood side by side with the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union at an airport in Moscow, and together we jointly condemned that invasion. That's the first time since the end of World War 2 that the Soviet Union and the United States' Foreign Secretaries had... had acted in that way, to... particularly against a Soviet client state—Iraq. And when Shevardnadze stood there with me and condemned that action and agreed to an arms embargo on Iraq, with the American Secretary of State—it pretty well showed the Cold War was over.³

The Iraq War then also led to a special meeting of the NATO foreign ministers' conference in Brussels on August 10. There Genscher informed his colleagues that the unification of Germany would be moved forward to October; otherwise the German question played no part. The files of the chancellor's office contain only two telephone conversations between the American president and the chancellor in the whole of August and in these the German question was not mentioned.⁴

In the specific agreements with the Soviet Union the most difficult of the remaining problems was not the treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union but rather the money: at one point the issue was the continuation of the trade agreement with the GDR that caused difficulties in the adoption of the D-Mark, then the costs of the stationing and withdrawal of the Soviet army. As well the time frame for the withdrawal of Soviet troops was brought in: the transport could not be achieved in three to four years, not in five to seven years at least.

After the discussions at various levels from the middle of August to the beginning of September between Dieter Kastrup and Yuli A. Kwitsinski, the two foreign ministers Shevardnadze and Genscher as well as between Theo Waigel and Stephan A. Sitaryan there was finally on September 7 a long telephone conversation between Kohl and Gorbachev.⁵ After preliminaries with memories of Moscow and Arkhyz they "got down to it" as never before. Kohl declared after the enumeration of the individual posts: "He considers a total offer of an adjustment in size of 8 billion DM as possible" and advised concentrating particularly on the building of apartments. Gorbachev remained firm and said "clearly" that this number would lead to a dead end and would undermine the cooperative work so far. He compared this amount to the estimate of the costs for the integration of the GDR that then was estimated at 500 billion D-Marks over ten years, that is, 50 billion D-Marks per year. (If Gorbachev had anticipated what the real costs would be...) According to "Soviet calculations," Gorbachev continued,

alone “the construction of apartments, with the necessary infrastructure (kindergartens, school, medical facilities) was [estimated] at 11 billion DM.” Kohl showed surprise, according to the Soviet protocol, at this “completely new point” of the infrastructure.

When no further progress was being made, Gorbachev threatened, unusually clearly and concretely, with the time constraints that Bonn faced: “Gorbachev emphasized, he was also thinking of 12 September when the 2+4 would meet in Moscow at the ministerial level. What instructions should he give FM Shevardnadze? He had to say that for him the situation was very alarming. It appeared to him as if he had wandered into a trap. The chancellor contradicted firmly—one could not and did not want to speak with each other in this way. This was not his aim and he knew also that this was not the aim of the president. Gorbachev pointed to realities.” Kohl indicated that there would be difficulties in meat shipments to the USSR after October 3, but invited Gorbachev, with reference to Bush, to a celebration of unity—“completely outside the protocol⁶—on October 3. For Gorbachev his presence depended on a good atmosphere. They agreed to a telephone call on the “following Monday,” September 10, without having accomplished anything.

In the chancellor’s office there was surprise about this “really dramatic” telephone conversation (Teltschik), which in the Soviet version is similar in content, but presents the Soviet position as essentially less sharp and less threatening. The acting chairman of the ministers’ council Sitaryan named the sum of 18 billion to Waigel. Waigel’s counteroffer was a maximum of 11 to 12 billion. During the next telephone conversation between the two heads of government on September 10⁷ Gorbachev suggested that “15 to 16 billion DM could surely be found” “so that no shadow would fall on what we have so far achieved between us.” He emphasized the struggle that he had carried on about this in Moscow; because “we cannot wait three to four months” for the money. “I am really in a very difficult situation and I can do nothing.” “I want to ask you to show understanding. (...) We are very modest in our requests.” After some back and forth Gorbachev said: “After the battles with our government, our finance people, and the military we see no possibility of going below 15 billion. Three billion must absolutely still be found.” In reply, Kohl, who was facing time constraints, said: “We would be ready to make ready an interest-free loan over a period of five years” and a payment of 12 billion. Gorbachev repeated: “So I have understood you correctly. You speak of two steps: you provide 12 billion DM for a period of four years for the support and removal of the troops, plus an interest-free loan.” Kohl confirmed the offer, and Gorbachev hoped that the knot had been untangled with this. Fifteen billion DM in total were thus envisaged. Kohl asked again about Gorbachev’s presence at the unification celebrations in Berlin on October 3 but received only a vague answer, at which point Kohl realized that he would have to wait for his reply.

All other treaty preparations progressed, even if there were problems with the Americans: the issues were the new legal basis for the presence of the allied troops in West Germany and West Berlin after the extinction of the old treaties of 1954 and the privileged air rights of the allied airlines. Besides it was necessary to negotiate on the property claims of American citizens and of the international Jewish communities and the Jewish Council of the GDR.

Particularly in the question of the stationing rights of the allied troops there were also differences in Germany between the defense and foreign ministries. The latter was in favor of a new agreement, the former for the preservation of the old one, because the Americans were worried that an open debate could create problems for the presence of the American troops, particularly from the SPD and the Greens. Baker asked Genscher on August 16 clearly to extend the old agreements. Genscher finally agreed. Appropriate extension agreements would be made, in addition to an agreement on the expansion of NATO troop statute to the GDR.⁸ Here Kohl had previously agreed with Genscher: no expansion of the NATO statute to the territory of the GDR before the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. The weapons on the territory of the GDR would finally be restricted to conventional weapons and the systems that applied to these. The Soviets wanted to link the upper limit of the German *and* the other foreign armies to their withdrawal, which also became a source of dispute, that could, however, be solved.

Just as it was thought that most of these obstacles had been eliminated, it appeared, as they were entering the home stretch that the question of the stationing of Western troops on the territory of the GDR was growing into an insurmountable hurdle: differences had appeared among the Western leaders, between the American, British, and German negotiators. The presence of German forces on East German soil was not a problem. But the question of foreign troops in the GDR remained a problem. According to the American personnel in the White House, Zelikow and Rice, Genscher and Shevardnadze on August 17 in Moscow spoke against any movement of troops on the territory of the former GDR.⁹ This appears to me, based on the information accessible to me today, false, because this prohibition was to be in force only during the time when Soviet troops were present and only for the foreign NATO forces. This was what had also been decided in principle also between Kohl and Gorbachev and Genscher and Shevardnadze, respectively, in the Caucasus.

Zelikow and Rice write: there was also unanimity “that foreign troops could not be stationed on the territory of the former GDR or carry out any military activities there” as long as the Soviet forces had not been withdrawn. Thereafter, that is, from the end of 1994, the West would be ready to agree that on the area of the former GDR no foreign troops would be stationed.¹⁰

This alleged unanimity must be kept in mind when one wants to analyse the following dramatic conflict, which almost on the last day prevented the signing of the 2+4 treaty.

The Americans and the British interpreted the Arkhysz decisions differently: no stationing of troops but not the prohibition of troop movements, in which they included maneuvers, aerial surveillance, etc. The Soviet delegation was incensed, but was looking for a compromise solution. Kvitsinski had for this reason suggested at the last 2+4 meeting of officials on September 11 in Moscow that to the sentence that foreign troops would not be permitted to be “stationed or deployed there,” a statement be added. “Deployed” should refer, as Genscher and Shevardnadze had also agreed on the same day, only to *larger* NATO maneuvers.¹¹ The British negotiator Weston stated, however, that the British government would interpret this phrase to mean that smaller maneuvers “of as many as 13,000” (!) would be allowed and the German government would decide in its sovereign capacity on this. After various unsuccessful negotiating attempts the meeting was adjourned, by Kvitsinski, who was chairman of the meeting, with hope placed in the ministers. On the evening of this same September 11 Genscher spoke with his British colleague Hurd¹² and urged him not to let the whole 2+4 negotiation to fail.

*Genscher: I informed Douglas Hurd that we had reached an agreement with Shevardnadze, showed him the text, and gave a summary of the meeting. Hurd nodded. I asked him to call his political director and inform him of the agreement with the solution that had been found, which happened.*¹³

As Genscher, who suffered from arrhythmia, arrived at his Moscow hotel toward midnight, a worried Dieter Kastrup met him and told him that the British political director Weston, “supported by the Americans, with the restraint of the French,”¹⁴ had kept to his position with the justification that otherwise NATO would not be able to fulfill its defence responsibility in relation to the GDR areas.¹⁵ In his memoirs Genscher emphasizes that the Soviets “went to the limit of their possibilities; still they placed the decision completely into German hands, without a guarantee of how this would appear at the end of five years.”

In response the Americans and the British—remember the apparent international unity mentioned by Zelikow and Rice—made the argument “that the Soviet proposal was with its general prohibition of the presence of allied troops in East Germany an attempt ‘to keep Germany’s NATO partner out of a part of its territory and away from its population.’ This was ‘incompatible with the apparent Soviet readiness to allow Germany to choose its alliance freely; and ‘represents a further permanent violation of German sovereignty.’”¹⁶

All this is clearly in contradiction to the ostensible international agreement “that foreign troops are neither allowed to be stationed on the territory of the former GDR nor carry out any military activities there.”¹⁷ Beyond this, the issue was German sovereignty, not that of the Americans or the British, who, however, quarreled over their own sovereign rights with the Germans. This statement that

after the actual agreement there would be “no defence” of the territory of the former GDR by NATO is false, because the NATO defence obligation to the GDR territory was not debatable at this point of the negotiations in the absence of NATO troops. The issue was security interests, in this case also the interest of the Soviet Union, to succeed in achieving the goal that during the years of their withdrawal there would be no stationing or transfer of foreign armed forces—not German ones—to East Germany; besides being a threat the presence of foreign armed forces was seen as in the Soviet Union and could have led to widespread opposition to the Soviet and the German government. All this, which had in the months before been taken into account, was at the last moment to be pushed over. Genscher assumes that John Weston received his instructions not only from Hurd “who wanted unification without conditions” “but also from London,” that is, the prime minister.¹⁸ The Soviet foreign minister was determined to cancel the foreign ministers’ conference where the 2+4 agreement was to be signed.

At this point Genscher decided on a Hollywood-style performance:¹⁹ he saw “the necessity to act” and, to the shock of the security officers, had the American secretary of state Baker awakened in the middle of the night, threatening to do it himself if they did not. Genscher then went with Elbe and Kastrup to the Hotel International where Baker and his colleagues received them in pajamas and bathrobes, all in the same gray hotel design. Genscher promised Baker that he would not let “the great work fail at the last moment,” “and this because of a question that was neither essential nor understood anywhere in the world.” There must be a signing the next day. Every minister must see if he wanted to be at the signing or not. “World opinion would then see who was missing from this ceremonial event.” He [Genscher] wished that Baker to be sitting beside him the following day. The threat of a cancellation through Shevardnadze and Gorbachev, who had in the meantime also been informed, should be taken seriously.

Baker replied that the United States had always stood beside Germany, it has also supported the British position, but he promised to help. Genscher asked him to phone Shevardnadze immediately so that the signing would go ahead.²⁰ When Shevardnadze learned that Weston’s suggestion had been withdrawn and that the concept of “deployment” would be explained at the signing—as planned—he let the signing take place.

The following morning Genscher spoke urgently with the French foreign minister Dumas: he [Genscher] had so far not asked him for a favor, but now he had to do so: “Make the situation clear to Hurd.” This is surprising to the extent that Dumas had sometimes expressed himself more clearly against the politics of unification than Mitterrand himself.

De Maizière reports that he had informed himself during the night so that on the next day he could point out to Hurd in the debate before the signing that Great Britain also had a special military status, and with the assistance of its foreign

troops no extensive maneuvers could be allowed on British soil. Did he want to give away this special status if he denied the Germans a similar one? Because there could not be two kinds of rights for NATO members. Hurd was somewhat surprised by this and gave up his—ostensibly unvarying—opposition.²¹

At the beginning of the conference Kastrup distributed the general suggestion for a solution, that the sovereign Germany with the concept “deployed” would “take into account the security interests of all alliance partners.” This was then accepted, in a somewhat expanded form, as explained in the following section. The signing of the final statement of the 2+4 negotiations could take place.

Today this dispute is hard to understand, but it was more than a tempest in a teapot. For the Americans and the British was it a matter of showing who was in charge, of American dominance, of old NATO military thinking, of thwarting the results of an onerous process of negotiation on the sovereignty of the united Germany with the protection of Soviet interests at the last second? The arguments against the transition measures seem in retrospect so petty, as Genscher already thought then, that no laudable justifications that can be found.

The Signing

On September 12, 1990, the “2+4 Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany” was signed in Moscow. It was the foreign ministers who signed this final document, not the heads of state or leaders of governments, as had been planned at odd times. The ceremony did not take place in a ceremonial fashion in the Kremlin or in another prestigious building, but instead in a simple Moscow hotel. But the contents of this settlement were of global significance.

In a preamble were named the conditions under which this treaty had been made: the peaceful relations after 1945, the overcoming of the division of the European continent, consideration for the rights of the four powers, the agreement with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of the final Helsinki Accord, consideration of the “security interests of all,” the readiness to strengthen disarmament, the creation of “appropriate institutional precautions in the framework of a conference on security and cooperation in Europe to give positive consideration” (!), honoring the right of self-determination and the sovereignty of the Germans “to arrange the goal of the final settlement with respect to Germany,” the acknowledgement that with the unification of Germany “the rights and responsibilities of the four powers in relation to Berlin and Germany as a whole would lose their relevance.”²²

Represented were the foreign ministers of the six participating countries: Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Lothar de Maizière, Roland Dumas, Douglas Hurd, Eduard Shevardnadze, und James Baker (in the order of their signatures). The occasional participation of the foreign minister of the Republic of Poland in Paris on July 17, 1990, is mentioned explicitly in the treaty.

The ten articles deal with the following aspects:

Article 1 names the territories that are being united, the external borders (the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany), the finality of the borders, the confirmation that there were no territorial claims. In Paragraph 2 it says: "The united Germany and the Republic of Poland confirm the existing borders between them in a treaty bound by international law."

Article 2 affirms that "only peace will issue from Germany" and every disturbance of peaceful coexistence, "in particular the carrying out of a war of aggression (!), is illegal and punishable."

Article 3 fixed the renunciation of nuclear, bacteriological, and chemical weapons, the reduction of the German armed forces to 370,000 "within three to four years;" the Federal German government assumes that the other negotiation participants will make "their contribution" "to the limiting of the number."

Article 4 contains the statement that the FRG, the GDR, and the USSR that they will settle the withdrawal of the Soviet forces and the duration of this withdrawal (until the end of 1994) in "treaty form" between the united Germany and the USSR; as well the connection with the limit of the personnel of the armed forces of the Federal Republic and the other states be made in § 3.

Article 5 settles the defence of the "territory of the present GDR" in accordance with § 4, that is, the stationing of only German formations "which are not integrated into allied structures." During "the period of the presence of Soviet forces" armed forces of the three Western allies "will at Germany's request" "continue to be stationed in Berlin;" their number should not be greater than at the time of the signing of the treaty; after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the "present German Democratic Republic and Berlin German armed forces can also be stationed in this part of Germany;" they can be attached to NATO, "however, without nuclear weapons." And then follows that sentence that was the last source of conflict: "Foreign armed forces and nuclear weapons or their carriers will not be stationed in or deployed to this part of Germany."

Article 6 confirmed the freedom of the united Germany to make alliances.

Article 7 states the dissolution of the rights of the four powers through the sovereignty of the united Germany.

Article 8 explained the ratification by the united Germany "as quickly as possible"—"this treaty thus applies to the united Germany."

Article 9 specifies that this treaty will take effect when the last ratification or acceptance document is deposited by the participating states.

Article 10 declares the applicability of this treaty in German, English, French, and Russian and the deposition of the original with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Besides the actual treaty there was a "concerted protocol note," which settled that question that was controversial to the end, the question of the movement of troops on the territory of the GDR, as stated in the note presented by Kastrup

and Genscher on the morning of September 12, which seems like a provisional foreign body in such a treaty:

All questions in relation to the use of the word “deployed,” as used in the last sentence of Article 5, Paragraph 3, are by the government of the united Germany in a sensible and responsible manner interpreted to take into consideration the security interests of every party to the negotiation, as stated in the preamble.²³

No more.

There was also an added “joint letter” by the two German foreign ministers regarding legal problems and the consequences of the period of Soviet occupation, which, among others, settled the questions of dispossession prior to 1949; this was an explosive issue in internal German disputes.²⁴

One day after the ceremony for the completion of the 2+4 negotiation, on September 13, Genscher and Shevardnadze initialed the “Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Partnership, and Cooperation” between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union. On November 14 followed the “Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland on the Confirmation of the Existing Border between them.”

With this the most important conclusions were made to the international negotiations on the unification of Germany.

Some Opinions from the Participants on the Conclusion of the 2+4 Treaties

For the Soviet Union it was not unimportant to have the signing in Moscow, because of its domestic effect, to avoid any impression of submission to the West. That the ceremony finally could take place in Moscow was due to a request by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, which Genscher implemented.

Genscher: I must say that a very gracious position was shown by both the English foreign minister and the American Secretary of State: the Soviets said we could finish in Moscow. I called both of them (...) and said: “Is this a question of prestige for you, because we are interested in seeing the signatures as quickly as possible because we do not know what can happen.” After all, a year later there was the putsch. And both the English and the Americans said immediately: “For God’s sake, sign as quickly as possible.” And so it happened that the signing took place on 12 September 1990 in Moscow.²⁵

The German foreign minister also gave a statement at the signing: “This is a historic moment for all of Europe. It is a happy hour for us Germans. Together we have come a long way in a short time.” Then followed thanks to the heads of government: Gorbachev, Bush, Mitterrand, and Thatcher—in that order.

In parallel Chancellor Kohl on September 12 gave a remarkably unemotional statement in the cabinet, in which he described the 2+4 treaty, thanked the participants, and hoped that with this and the planned treaty with the Soviet Union—the treaty with Poland was not mentioned but followed two months later—the “door to a future of good neighbourliness, of new partnership, and broad cooperation” with the Soviet Union would be “opened wide.” Kohl stated, however, that with the 2+4 treaty German unity in 1990 “was completed in harmony with all our friends, allies, neighbours, yes with all Europeans. I say this with a particular look at Poland and the parallel decisions of the German Bundestag and the People’s Chamber on the border question. This is the first unification of a country in modern history that took place without war, without suffering, and without a conflict that created new bitterness.”²⁶

Lothar de Maizière describes the situation in the Moscow Hotel where the signing took place, with a mixture of sentiment and humor:

*I confess that in the moment as I signed, I thought, you’ll take this pen with you. This is the most wonderful moment in your life, probably the most important. And I was completely surprised, as I got up, that all the other pens were gone too. Apparently the participants had the same feeling. Yes, the feeling that something is happening here that is unique in this century and for the German people as a whole—I almost had the feeling of grace and—anyway this was unbelievably emotional for me. When I went out I was completely disarranged.*²⁷

Nevertheless the completion of the 2+4 negotiations was not easy for the Soviets because the results marked the end of an era: the days of the Soviet Union as a superpower and as a powerful opponent of the United States were now history and were sealed with this treaty. And the factionalism at the end allowed the growth of worry about what could all still happen after the signing.

Anatoli Chernayev noted:

(I had already observed before,) that Eastern Europe was separating from us and that Western Europe was reaching for it, NATO and the European Union, were reaching for it. They themselves were striving in that direction. And really, these processes of integration threatened to isolate the Soviet Union.(...) And that is what happened too.

Mikhail Gorbachev said:

*If the Soviet Union had not fallen apart, the new relations between our two nations and countries [Germany and the Soviet Union—AvP] could have become a peace-loving axis of the whole European process and could have carried great weight in international affairs.*²⁸

Anatoli Chernayev observed:

*And as far as the Germans go, I am certain, because, in spite of everything, we have developed a special relationship with them over 300 years. The Germans were not opposed to the integration of Russia in Europe. But if you take all of Europe, Great Britain, France, the smaller countries, Europe as a whole was more afraid of Russia and didn't want it. The Germans were in this regard something special. They were ready to enter into a very close union with the Russians.*²⁹

Lothar de Maizière said:

This treaty was finally something like the end of the history that had begun with the burning of the Reichstag. (...) Eduard Shevardnadze signaled through several channels to Genscher, but also through a colleague to us, that it would not be acceptable if this were to become a Versailles for the Soviets. (...) After all we had to see that the only historical event that really shaped the identity of the Soviets was the victory in the Second World War. And then in Moscow there was such a mood, anyway: Stalin had won the Second World War, Gorbachev is losing it. We wanted to stabilize them, to support them (the Russians).

After the signing Gorbachev received Hans-Dietrich Genscher and said: "Fate has determined that the Soviet and the German sides were the most important actors in this process. Everything achieved this far would not have been possible without deep changes in the Federal Republic, the GDR, and the Soviet Union."³⁰

George Bush, who was certainly the main initiator of this process and decisively involved in the limitation of the role of the Soviet Union in Europe at the same time acknowledged some of its most important security interests, ponders Gorbachev's role in history and interestingly makes other emphases.

Bush: *And I think this will be one of Gorbachev's real contributions to history. Now some in Russia today will say: "He cost us the Union. He cost us Soviets our national pride." But I think more important than this—their national pride—was the fact that Germany had the right to be brought back together again.*³¹

Bush's security advisor, Brent Scowcroft (Kohl: "a subtle and reflective politician, not some kind of General Loudmouth"³²), Teltschik's direct partner in Washington, said of Gorbachev:

Well, in one sense the great loser. But, I think, he had the courage to know that he really couldn't stop it and he didn't have a better idea, a better alternative. I think, he knew inside that a neutral Germany in the center of Europe would be a bad, an

unstable Europe. And so, he finally had the wisdom and the statesmanship to say: "Okay, we agree."³³

Thus Gorbachev appears—as in the opinion of most of the US politicians—as the great loser, particularly in the NATO question, although it was exactly the Americans who were always getting the Soviet representatives to understand that NATO membership of the united Germany was also in the Soviet interest, at least in the long term.

To the question about her view of Gorbachev at the end of these negotiations a remarkably sensitive Condoleezza Rice replies with her remembrance of the signing of the 2+4 treaty:

I remember perhaps most intensely the signing ceremony in Moscow in September of 1990, after all of the details had been worked out. I remember thinking how odd it was that the Soviets had chosen to hold it in a hotel—not even in the Kremlin. And how much of an anticlimax it was that somehow the Foreign Ministers were left to sign this great document on what had been the central issue in European politics for fifty years. And as I stood there behind James Baker, watching him sign away American four power rights and responsibilities, I caught a glimpse of Gorbachev, kind of out of the corner of my eye. And he was stepped back behind some aides—he was not in the foreground. And the look on his face was almost blank, there was almost no emotion there. And I thought to myself: How must this be for the leader of the Soviet Union. For the leader of the United States, for France, for Great Britain, even if there were reservations in Great Britain and France, this was affirmation of fifty years of Western policy that Germany was now on Western terms, rejoining the community of nations. But for the Soviet Union it was a thorough defeat. And it had to seem that way to the leadership. And I felt at that moment that it was the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union. (...)

Interviewer: *And Genscher I think took Gorbachev in ...*

Rice: *It was Genscher who first saw Gorbachev standing there, kind of with no-one... no-one around him. And Genscher pulled him forward and then Gorbachev was suddenly on and there were smiles and applause and so forth and so on. But underneath you had a very strong sense that... that it was somehow over. That it was somehow over, not just for Soviet power in Europe but for the Soviet Union itself.³⁴*

This melancholy of this scene is contradicted by the words of Gorbachev when on the same day, September 12, he received Lothar de Maizière.

Gorbachev: *In Moscow a long objective process came to its logical end. A new page is opening in German-Soviet relations. And I believe that we certainly have occasion to look into the future with optimism.*

De Maizière: *I think we can only welcome what has happened. The process that is coming to a conclusion began in March of 1985.³⁵ The people of the GDR have followed very attentively the developments were caused by your perestroika. This was no indifferent observation. (...) From 1985 to 1989 you were for us in the GDR the absolute carrier of our hopes. We will in the united Germany forget neither you nor those who fought with you.³⁶*

Internal Unity

Even though the internal aspects of unity do not rank first in this book, the individual steps in its significance must be at least mentioned; because the plan for the creation of the inner and outer conditions of unity was not only complicated for this or that element but also for the coordination. The external aspects of unification were, if possible, to be dealt with before unification.

De Maizière: *We wanted October 3 to be the day of unity with full sovereignty. The plan that was chosen was that the victorious powers would suspend their reservations rights over Germany, ignore them, until the time when the last of the participants had ratified the treaty in their government bodies and it could be filed.³⁷*

This was achieved: after the introduction of the currency, economic, and social union on July 1, 1990, the internal conditions for unification to take place on October 3 had been created, both in spite of and because of the worsening economic condition in the GDR. Schäuble and Seiters, on the one side, and de Maizière's state secretary Günther Krause, on the other, conducted the negotiations for the unification treaty.³⁸ On July 22, 1990, the law for the return of five states was decided; on August 23 followed the decision of the People's Chamber of the GDR on joining the area of authority of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, and on August 31 the "Vertrag über die Herstellung der Einheit Deutschlands" (Treaty for the Establishment of the Unity of Germany) between the two German states was signed in Berlin.³⁹ The People's Chamber met for the last time on October 2 and on October 3 unification was completed.

Both decisions for the inner and the external aspects of unity and the treaties with the Soviet Union and with Poland ended the postwar period in Europe—almost, if one leaves aside the difficult restitution negotiations of the following years⁴⁰ and some of the problems of the Middle East and Eastern countries, which were occupied by the Germans during the Second World War.

Summary and Prospects for the Future

Some Conclusions

The reunification of Germany extended both Western Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) toward the East. This occurred without armed conflict, something that had been thought impossible for decades. At the same time, the specific rivalry engendered by the Cold War in the postwar period ended: Soviet-born socialism had collapsed, and capitalism had won. From the political perspective of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany this was a historically unparalleled success, which had also enabled the liberation of other states, especially those in Central Eastern Europe, from Soviet dominance and internal dictatorship and had brought about change after difficult times.

If these events are seen from the Soviet point of view, an inconsistent picture is revealed after reunification, both in the Russian media as well as in various personal statements: on the one hand the “great change” brought substantial personal freedom of space after 1985, on the other this development was accompanied by widespread crises due to lack of provisions and money, which sometimes greatly affected people’s lives. The events and results of the politics of 1989 and 1991 hurt the national pride of broad sections of the population, especially in Russia, due to the collapse of the “Soviet empire” and the “defeat” by the losers of the “Great Patriotic War” (i.e., Germany) and by the long-standing enemy during the Cold War, the United States. All old Soviet communists and Great Russian nationalists were affected by this view or even came together—a strong element of the later Great Russian policy under Vladimir Putin.

At the end of this book, knowing all the international arguments, one has to take less of a “German,” “Soviet,” or “American” point of view, but rather an

“international” or a “European” one, namely: did this development ensure the dominance over Europe by the United States for an indefinite time and was this a cornerstone of this successful policy, which was greeted not only in Germany but especially in Poland, in the Baltics, Czechoslovakia – in the “new Europe”? Or was there an attempt to develop a European policy, which, through the removal of the Cold War military blocs, would result in a European security system including the Soviet Union and the North Americas (United States and Canada), but under European dominance? The questions lead to further problem areas, for example to the independence or dependence of Europe or to the development of Russia and Ukraine afterward, which at the same time deepen our understanding of the real successful course of the story.

Files and Memoirs

First some methodological remarks: When scholars work with the subjective memoirs of witnesses, they are confronted with critical reservations about the “subjectivity,” “poor credibility,” or even the “falseness” of such memoirs. In contrast a criticism of files as historical sources is often not as sharp. Now that it has been possible to look at the files of the Federal chancellery and the Foreign Ministry, the GDR leadership, the Gorbachev Foundation, the French and the British files, what stands out is how different the various notes at the one and the same meeting are in their accounts of the course of the discussions. Also, the files reflect the interests of the particular governments and their transcript writers.¹ Files are therefore extremely “subjective” as well and led by interests. I share the usual concerns among historians about subjective sources—as a critical handling of such witnesses is part and parcel of historical work; but sometimes personal memoirs or diaries and interviews are extremely helpful, especially when the historical work is concerned with subjective points of view.

Nevertheless, as I began my examination, I was of the opinion that interviews with the *prominent figures* would bring little or nothing at all: of all people, leading politicians are used to the media and journalists, and use them for their own interests. They would want to use me to further their own aims and would not tell me anything new. All these thoughts were correct—well almost correct, and nevertheless I was wrong.

Consultations with all those politicians who were adept at handling media were extremely helpful: they showed much more clearly than the protocols where the true contradictions lay, who opposed whom, with which arguments, and where personal enmities existed. Also the significance of the opposition between party representatives of a country, between the chancelleries and the foreign ministries, or between the governments of different countries was more clearly outlined. Files, especially the protocols of discussions at the highest levels are moreover diplomatic documents in which the opposition was toned down or

smoothed over.² Some of them can only be understood with the knowledge from interviews.³ And some were truly new for me, for example Yakovlev's suggestion of a coup d'état to benefit Gorbachev or de Maizière's hint about Genscher's use of the GDR government to test the considerations of European governments about pan-European security structures. Conversely, transcripts and files are clearer about dates⁴ and the course of discussions, sometimes even giving information about the protagonists' own interests.

Also, and especially in this field, it is essential to consider both types of source material, to interpret or criticize them and compare them with each other. Only then is there a chance of unearthing new information and cognition—sometimes against hard-boiled politicians and their “spin doctors”.

American Dominance and German Interests, European Refusal and Delayed Soviet Reaction

After all the many and diverse distinctions, interpretations and derivations, rough lines of policies can be disentangled concerning German sovereignty and NATO expansion without a European security system including the Soviet Union.

The American–German Combination of Success

The reattainment of the national unity of the Federal Republic, Berlin, and the GDR was of great value to German politics under Chancellor Kohl. Helmut Kohl pursued this policy with a deep, certain and sometimes—when contrasted with “Kohl, the European”—an astonishingly unquestioned national conviction. And with strategic tenacity; with an attachment to the West, which was never in question; with an openness about the supplies problem and—less obviously—the security needs of the Soviet Union; with the wish to cement German and European integration, as well as with a feeling of power and the immediate possibilities of the historic events. It was to his advantage that he was initially underestimated by his counterparts.⁵ He could rely upon the support of a team that was professional, highly dedicated, and shared the same goals and in which Horst Teltschik with responsibility for foreign policy stands out. By the side of the Federal chancellor stood a foreign minister who had gained his reputation and experience under the policy of détente, who had a greater independence from the United States, but with just as strong Western ties, and shared Kohl's national convictions. He had an early strategic policy for European security, with a feeling for the concerns of the smaller East European states as well; a man with a sense of the need to act openly and who knew where he stood with Helmut Kohl and could make use of his contradictions to the chancellor in the East. His clear intervention, right up to the last minute, in Polish considerations, the special military status of the GDR, and the Soviet Union's worries about NATO troops on GDR territory, for example, brought

him respect in East Europe and mistrust in the United States, while Kohl's policy was unquestioned in the United States. The differences between them helped both the chancellor and the foreign minister in the end. They were each part of a joint success. The foreign minister could also rely upon the support of a team of career diplomats, who—sometimes in conflict with the Federal chancellery and especially with Horst Teltschik—were able to raise the European perspective. Frank Elbe and Dieter Kastrup were particularly noteworthy members of this group. Kohl and Genscher, the chancellery and the Foreign Ministry were highly effective sparring partners on the international stage even in their differences and conflicts or because of them. Genscher would surely have wanted to achieve more concerning Europe as a whole without the East–West borders, but was halted as soon as this policy touched upon NATO dominance in the negotiations and the Eastern expansion of the Atlantic Alliance. Kohl's weak point, which emerges more clearly from the Soviet protocols than the German ones, was his emotional stance on the Oder–Neisse question, which was probably due to his nationalistic convictions. Whatever the reason, this was seen as a disruptive influence by the East and by the United States. Otherwise the policy of the Federal government—given its interests and the direction of its strategy—was seen in the North American governments without major mistakes. Helmut Kohl himself criticized some developments: In 1990, he could not imagine that the Soviet Union had “folded up like a house of cards and thereby disappeared as a trading partner of the former GDR. Because of this important years have been lost to us in the transition, during which the GDR business concerns could have adjusted their production to meet the needs of the world market.” Whether he also meant by this the policy of the “Treuhand” (the institution that organized the privatization of companies in the former GDR) or the “de-industrialization” in the former GDR as a whole is not clear in this sentence, but would be consequential. “I am disappointed by the lack of readiness of West German industry to put their companies' own interests aside for the time being and to help where they can. The third misconception: I had believed that the Churches constituted a strong link between East and West.”⁶

For the Bush government, German reunification was naturally not itself of value, rather it was “a vehicle” for its own new Europe policy, which aimed at an undivided Europe under parliamentary democracies, market systems and with strong American influence in Europe. The starting point was resistance to the growing Soviet influence under Gorbachev in West Europe, as well as to the perception of Gorbachev as heralding democratic reform in East Europe and ending the Cold War. But Middle-East Europe was not (yet) democratic. In 1989 it was still under dictatorship and Soviet domination—even if that authority was crumbling—and the internal German frontier was the western border of this Soviet authority. Why not take Gorbachev at his word and demand democracy and self-determination for the new Europe, without being

overhasty and recklessly forcing him into a political wilderness, rather than including him under pressure? In the words of George Bush: "What use is a European house, when some of the rooms are closed off?"⁷ This policy had only one weak point: the United States had no political tools in Europe over which it could have had the sort of influence that it held within the Atlantic Military Alliance, NATO. The CSCE, to which America also belonged, was, in the view of the US government, a ponderous mechanism with a strong Eastern presence. Hence NATO had to be used more vigorously as a political instrument. Every other European institution should, on the other hand, have its effectiveness curtailed. The importance of the German Federal government had grown with the significance of the German question: it had become a "partner in leadership." Since the spring of 1989, policy had moved in this direction. Giving up NATO in favor of a European security system was never on the table, nor even open to discussion. In order not to antagonize the Soviet Union into developing an uncontrollable hostility to this policy, there was cooperation in matters of disarmament and security, as long as they did not bring into question the basis of the reunified Germany's membership of NATO. If seen in the context of American interests, then the Bush government's strategy was developed at the appropriate time, was enormously effective, and was ultimately, in combination with the Federal government, as successful in world political terms as only the Marshall Plan policy under the Truman presidency had been before. Evidently Bush himself was the real strategist who developed this policy along these lines with his security advisor Scowcroft and supported by Secretary of State Baker. The latter pursued his strategy with very clear aims, with an unambiguous directness and with a deep conviction of the exemplary character of the American market—and democratic—system. Both men were also supported by highly professional teams whose disagreements (especially between the Foreign Ministry and the security advisors in the White House) were resolved by the personal friendship between Baker and Bush.

This combination of American interests in Europe and West German reunification ambitions was the decisive precondition for the unification, the sovereignty, and the NATO membership of Germany. However, at the same time it brought with it a growing dominance of the United States in Europe, demonstrated the contradictions between the European states, limited Mitterand's ambitions for a more independent Europe, and ruled the Soviet Union out of Europe and out of its security structure for an indefinite period.⁸ For Hans-Dietrich Genscher this was a recurring problem in the negotiations, but for Helmut Kohl the contradiction between German unity and a European security system including the United States and the Soviet Union, but under European dominance, was seldom evident. George Bush and his team were the early initiators of the new European and German policy and the Bonn government joined in with its own independent interests in reunification and political aims. There is

still some dispute between German and American politicians regarding the origin of this strategy.

In contrast, the GDR government under Hans Modrow favored the preservation of two German states, to be formed under a community treaty, that is, a confederation, based on neutrality and a joining of forces with the Soviet Union. However, a neutral unified Germany was in no one's interest in Western or in Eastern Europe. De Maizière and his government admittedly stressed the conception of European security after the dissolution of the postwar military blocs; but they were too late with this strategy, as the Warsaw Pact, just like the USSR, was already collapsing and the Soviet Union had long supported the GDR as an independent state and accorded it neutrality for a short time. Apart from this, de Maizière's foreign policy (and especially Meckel's) met with opposition in Washington and Bonn and the GDR was essentially dependent upon Bonn's help.⁹

Success in the NATO-European policy helped the United States in the Gulf War over Kuwait 1990/91. The American secretary of state James Baker saw the actual end of the Cold War as the moment when the Soviet foreign minister supported the United States at the UN. The American–German unification policy and the war against Iraq were also linked in another way: the United States needed German help in this war and there were critical comments in the United States about the less than satisfactory German participation. In a ZDF interview, Helmut Kohl stated that he had paid the Americans “14 billion Marks” because, among other reasons, following German reunification the United States “deserved it like no other country.”¹⁰

There were other preconditions for the effectiveness of this combination of the United States and the Federal Republic, namely a corresponding policy from the Soviet leadership and the West European partners. Discussions about reunification have, in my opinion, viewed these preconditions, as well as the success or the policy itself from Western or German–American viewpoints. Now, after seeing the Soviet, French, and British protocols—the German ones anyway—they can be more precisely characterized.

The Soviet Policy

The German and Lithuanian/Baltic questions were the Achilles heel of the international and national policies of the Soviet government in 1989/90. Both show that even in Europe at the end of the twentieth century, “national questions” could be potent when there is dominance or even imperialistic suppression by powerful states such as the Soviet Union. This had been unexpected not only by the communists but also by most of the leading social-democrats of the Socialist International. National independence movements had been seen as a problem of the nineteenth century or the third world and to a large extent had been banished

from modern European politics. This was one of the “pipe dreams”¹¹ or greatest misjudgments, which became apparent in the years 1989 and 1990.

The German question was also a sore spot in the “reform of international politics,” for the entry of “democracy in diplomacy” as Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had proclaimed.¹² The Soviet leadership treated Lithuanian dependence as a *domestic* constitutional problem without any understanding of the history of the Baltic states. At first Kohl too, and less obviously even Mitterrand, supported Moscow centrism rather than Lithuanian independence, although not with the same stance that they supported the policy of German sovereignty and unity. Kohl seemed to believe that Lithuanian independence would have been a problem for German unity, if through this Gorbachev had been brushed aside by the Soviet military. It is one of the shortcomings of the hitherto German-centered literature about reunification, that this parallel process of the German and Lithuanian question has been so little considered.

A glance at the Politburo’s agenda and the notes from these sittings prove—and this is a further conclusion of this book—that the German question had nowhere near as much significance for the top party committee as the Baltic or the nationality problems.

Chernayev: *The Baltic Question was exceptionally important for us, because it was a decision about the Soviet Union: whether to be in it or not. It set up a domino-effect— one piece fell down, then the next and so on.*¹³

These other pieces had already been set in motion: in Azerbaijan for example, but not only there. Therefore the Lithuanian and the whole Baltic Independence Movement had great significance for German reunification—not as Kohl and Mitterrand had suspected, but because it shifted the weight of Soviet policy. In Lithuania the USSR itself was threatened, and the German question was “only” on the edges of its hegemonic area. It was therefore *because of* Lithuania that the compulsion for the Soviets to make concessions in the question of Germany and NATO became stronger.

A further conclusion is in the answer to the question: which of Gorbachev’s former opponents was against reunification? After compiling the differing texts, interviewing the opponents as well as the political friends of Gorbachev, and Gorbachev himself, the answer carries weight: opponents of perestroika such as Ligachev and even the (later) principal putschist Marshal Akhromeyev and KGB boss Kryuchkov were not against reunification in principle, rather they wanted “to gain more” from the United States and the Federal Republic with the security policy and the financial compensation for the costs of the Soviet Union. They hoped for a process lasting years through the ensuing negotiations. But they too were overwhelmed by developments and had nothing to set against the collapse of their own economy, the disintegration of the Warsaw

Pact, and the loss of the internal cohesion of the Union of the Soviet Republic. Their idea was based upon a view of the Soviet Union as healthy, which was not the case. They were making many arguments that the Soviet Union imploded because of its catastrophic economy, the demands of the military industrial complex, the lack of democracy, and the ethnic and national contradictions etc. It can be argued that Gorbachev, with his attempt for new autonomous rule for the Soviet Republics along with the accompanying constitutional changes, which was discussed in the Politburo on January 29, 1990, was the last powerful defender of this cohesion, not its “conservative” opponents—and he too failed. What could these men—who themselves came from the “Gorbachev camp” and lacked influential fractional or military backgrounds¹⁴—have changed in such a catastrophic situation to ensure that they were still in a position to continue to occupy Lithuania alongside the GDR? I mean that here in Western politics there was a notion about the strength of the Soviet generals, which was helpful on the one hand in reducing the time needed to arrange the “open window” (Kohl) for reunification. Furthermore an alleged threat of a putsch against Gorbachev in January 1990, which Shevardnadze later reported to Teltschik, was denied by Gorbachev himself¹⁵ and, according to the currently available material, was extremely unlikely.¹⁶ At this point, Gorbachev set his own trap because he himself used to emphasize such dangers. Against all imaginings of that time, Yeltsin was the real Soviet winner and was successful particularly because of his democratic stance on, among other things, the Baltic question. At the same time, the Soviet secretary general criticized Kohl because of his policy of destabilization after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Gorbachev was especially outraged about this, because in Bonn in the summer of 1989 they had both agreed that from the Bonn side there would be no exploitation of the East European complications and no policy of destabilization.

However, the main strategic problem for Soviet foreign policy was generally known to lie elsewhere: the potential threat of the expansion of NATO toward the East was, in the Soviet view, linked to the German question. The latter was therefore—an international weak point—linked to the greatest internal Soviet problems: the catastrophic supply situation and the deep economic crisis within domestic policy. The international and national weaknesses of the Soviet Union came together in the question of armaments. The Soviet leadership under Gorbachev had to, and wanted to, establish a policy of peace, which would help reduce the enormous military costs and the importance of the “military-industrial complex,”¹⁷ without letting the Americans have control of Central Europe. In view of the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the miserable state of the economy, and considering the growing nationality problems within the Soviet Union, the circle had been squared and quick decisions were therefore demanded.

It was a foreign visit, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, which gave another reason for the clear need for early decisions, namely the first visit of Honecker’s

successor, Egon Krenz and his frank report on November 1, 1989, in Moscow. Krenz made it clear to the Soviet leadership that the GDR too was not only socially, but also economically, threatened by the crisis it was caught up in.

*Gorbachev: I was truly surprised when after the removal of Honecker, a true picture of the condition of the GDR came to light.*¹⁸

Even the one, already quoted, sentence from the Politburo protocol of November 3 (“The GDR is living a third over its means”) indicated that there were reasons why already at the beginning of November 1989 Krenz had to ask whether the Soviet Union still stood fast to its paternal role in the GDR.

I am saying this to show that, at the beginning of November 1989, the Soviet leadership knew it had to develop a strategy in the event of the political and economical bankruptcy of the GDR. And this strategy had to contain extensive proposals about the future of the Warsaw Pact, because if the GDR, as the most important ally of the Soviet Union on the Western border of the Warsaw Pact, were to fall, then the whole military concept would no longer function, diplomatic initiatives would be less effective, and threatening situations would increase. The German question, therefore, placed the future of both military alliances in Europe at the top of the agenda.

In Bonn and Washington, the most important headquarters for this policy, reactions were quick, and just three weeks after the fall of the Wall these questions were placed onto the international agenda. And this was even after the visit of the Soviet scout Nikolai Portugalov, who was really only supposed to find out how far the thinking in Bonn had progressed but had provoked Kohl’s “10 Points” through his Non-Paper. This was because it was believed in Bonn—a huge misunderstanding—that Moscow was already thinking about reunification and even further ahead about the membership of the unified Germany in international alliances. Kohl’s “10 Points” were also a reaction to the suggestions of a “contractual community of interest” by Hans Modrow, who had supposedly received this idea—according to Portugalov—“whispered” from the International Department under Falin, which he however denied. In general Hans Modrow distinguished himself at this time through far-reaching strategic concepts, leading to his being overestimated at the time by the West. But today he is underestimated, as his policy could not be carried through.

Kohl’s “Ten Points” had not yet addressed the question of a confederated or united Germany’s membership of the alliance, but Bush’s “Four Principles” a day later, November 29 in Washington and renewed on December 4 at the NATO summit in Brussels, unmistakably reestablished the connection between German unity and NATO. The strategy was clear: yes to a reunified Germany but only under its membership of NATO. Through this, Kohl’s reunification policy was in a way validated by Washington, which left the West European critics little room

to differ since for varying reasons the Western European heads of government, who ranged from tentative to diffident, were made to see NATO reasoning by Washington. This also—unless some other strategic concepts could be found quickly—greatly restricted the scope for an independent European policy and the development of a new European security system.

What did the Soviet Union do in these weeks, when a fundamental fast rethink and new strategies were demanded? Gorbachev next asked the Western heads of government not to take advantage of the weaknesses in Eastern Europe, not to destabilize the situation, and insisted at the same time on the continued existence of the GDR as a sovereign state, whose existence safeguarded the stability of Europe. Such a call had already been made illusory and useless by the dismissal of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) leadership under Krenz in November—and Bush's four principles had already been laid on the table. In mid-December, the Soviet leadership attempted to engage more strongly the four powers responsible for Germany.¹⁹ On December 19, the Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze threw different strategic possibilities into the debate before the Political Committee of the European Parliament in Strasburg without offering any solutions, which made the participants aware of the political helplessness of the Soviets. However, until the meeting of advisors on January 25, 1990, in Moscow, there was internal indecision as to whether the Germans would be granted unity as the expression of their right to self-determination or not. The conditions for unity remained unclear: the demand for the military neutrality of a reunified Germany, raised with Hans Modrow publicly in Moscow on January 30, had not really been discussed with Baker, who nevertheless strongly opposed it on February 9. However, the demand for neutrality stayed in the air. Likewise on January 25, it was decided that there should be an intensification of the disarmament talks on all levels and a *simultaneous* withdrawal of Soviet and American armed forces from Central Europe, which Shevardnadze then dropped before Baker and again on February 11 in Ottawa at the Open Sky Conference. At almost the same time, Anatoli Chernayev thought about a "Six-meeting" with the Americans and the West Germans.

All these differences in strategy, indeed the demand for neutrality, missed out on a truly new strategic concept. The Soviet leadership was also unsuccessful as it could not drive a wedge between Europe and the United States or even between Bonn and Washington in this way (and perhaps did not want it at that time). In fact just the opposite. Apart from a large part of the German population, no European head of government wanted Germany to be neutral; the general view was that Germany had to be bound in a system of alliances. The question of neutrality distracted from the concept of Europe as a whole.

It was not until after the elections in the GDR, at the end of March, when Portugalov visited Teltschik again, and in April and May 1990, that Gorbachev revealed in conversations first with Lothar de Maizière, then with Horst Teltschik,

and especially with François Mitterrand, that a European security system after the dissolution of the present military blocs had recently been more seriously considered, and indeed with the participation of the Americans.²⁰ The question is why did this consideration come so late?²¹ Why hadn't the Soviet Union set in place a strategy against the reunification policy under NATO dominance at the end of 1989, making sure that German reunification would have been part of a European security system—including the Soviet Union and the United States with the dissolution of the military alliances? This was probably the only time that such a strategy had a real chance of success: imagine, if this had been the answer to Kohl's "Ten Points" or Bush's "four principles," not the insistence on sovereignty and the significance of an independent GDR for peace in Europe. What would have been the reaction in Germany, the result of a vote in the GDR, or the thinking in Paris?

However, this thought was presented, like most areas of Soviet policy, after everything had been washed away and the "bargaining chips" were lost: the GDR, most states of the Warsaw Pact, the parallel withdrawal of Soviet and American troops from Central Europe. How self-confidently had Gorbachev still played with these possibilities at the meeting of advisors on January 25.

Anatoli Chernayev thought at the beginning of our conversations in 1999 that it would have been impossible to create such a security system without a prior solution to the German question. Their concept was: first reunification and then the European security system. However later, in 2001 and 2002, he thought there would not have been a true strategic concept. Regarding a European security system, he said that Western promises would have been given, which could then not have been kept and the Soviet Union would not have been a true partner and no concessions would have been made to her. That would have changed only after autumn 2001 when the "war against terrorism" made the strategic inclusion of the Soviet Union necessary—however, this inclusion had already been necessary at the beginning of the Iraq war in 1990, as Baker stated.

As Portugalov said, Federal chancellor Helmut Kohl was not "stretched on the rack" in 1989/1990, that is, not really considering the choice between "reunification or Western relationship."²² That would not even have been the appropriate torture method. They would also have had to say: make up your mind whether to have German reunification under the roof of NATO or in the sphere of a security system for the whole of Europe including the North Americas. Furthermore, only the insistence on the parallel withdrawal of Soviet and American troops from Central Europe as the precondition for unity would have brought the Kohl policy of unity into difficulties. But Gorbachev did not play this "card."

Gorbachev only remained firm in financial, not political, matters until just before the end of the 2+4 negotiations. He himself does not see any mistakes

of historical significance in his policy that year, because from a certain point in time he himself wanted the reunified Germany to join NATO.²³ However his many and diverse strategic attempts, which failed, contradict this. Gorbachev's policy is therefore distinguished in the complex discussions here, less by a "masterly tactic" (*Der Spiegel*), but rather by maneuvering, dodging, and waiting, by following the decisions of the Western powers or achieving small concessions, by a lack of clarity in the statement of aims, and by imprecise leadership during negotiations.²⁴ But that does not mean that Gorbachev did not have a relatively clear assessment of the German and American interests. On the contrary, this just showed the conflict between a very far-sighted judgments on the one hand and his earlier weak strategic concepts and less clear positions of negotiation, that is, his (lack of) readiness to assert himself on the other. In the discussions and Politburo notes there is at least an explanation for this conflict: the priorities of his policy lay in Soviet domestic policy and the removal of the threat to the survival of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. Through the solution to the "German question" he could not only progress in the disarmament negotiations, but also reduce the costs of armament and obtain additional income from the Federal government for the repatriation of the (expensive) Soviet troops and their reintegration, which should benefit the restructuring of Soviet society. Moreover new standards were brought into Soviet foreign policy: the self-determination of East European parties and states, and not using the military to settle political differences. Democratic and moralistic principles were also to be initiated into international diplomacy, not just in the area of their hegemony. Gorbachev's dilemma was that he had to do this "undemocratically," without involving the Central Committee or the Politburo or even the highest Soviet or new democratic institutions after elections, as Yakovlev suggested.²⁵ Who could he and his team have taken support from? Chernayev considered it to be a cardinal error by his boss, to want to be supported by the (CPSU) Communist Party of the Soviet Union, by "his" party. It is exactly here that Yakovlev's reasons start for a "coup d'état" in favor of Gorbachev.

An expression of the hope of the Soviet leadership for a new moralistic style in diplomacy was that they believed in the words of the Western negotiation partners, such as Baker's promise not to want to expand NATO eastward or Kohl's promise not to destabilize the GDR. It is really astounding, this seemingly naïve belief in hardened diplomats, who above all had to assert their interests and gave verbal offers of agreement without the necessary written guarantees that they would be implemented in the policies. Gorbachev indeed appeared, according to someone in the protocols who hit out against him, to approach the West "with an open mind" (literal: "with an open soul"—Chernayev), while in Washington and Bonn the aim of the diplomacy in the implementation of interests in the Western questions consisted of concessions in the less important areas. Gorbachev tried to introduce principles of trust and reliability. He failed in this, mainly, I believe,

because he represented a country that had previously pursued policies for its own interests and power in an aggressive and hegemonial way. He was disbelieved because what he said was either thought to be a clever strategy, or seen as naïve and helpless. Gorbachev did not yield, even when it was clear that he would have no success with this strategy in the important matters. When the Soviet Union collapsed, he could not insist on fixed contracts, only on “goodwill” explanations. In particular, his hope and that of his staff, still to create a European security system *after* reunification was frustrated.

In the Russian view, Gorbachev’s contribution was less in the strategy to come into Europe and against NATO expansion but much more in his herculean attempt to lead the Soviet Union out of a bureaucratic, totalitarian system, and to give the East European states back their independence after 50 years of Soviet hegemony and oppression—without any military intervention.

Mitterrand and the Europeans

François Mitterrand’s view of German and European policy is the one that is most obviously changed by the Soviet and French protocols, along with my own view of him.²⁶ At first nearly all the Western and Eastern European state leaders rejected unity and used delaying tactics because of Germany’s history in the Great War and especially National Socialism, the Holocaust,²⁷ and the Second World War. German dominance in Europe was feared. Most of the leading West European politicians remained trapped within their old views of the Cold War and the Second World War, thereby preferring—whether consciously or not—the postwar order of the Cold War with the Soviet Union to a policy of unity and security for Europe as a whole, and finally voting for the expansion of West Europe and NATO under American dominance. The socialist Spanish head of government, González, and the French European politician, Dumas, were among the few exceptions. The strongest rejection of Kohl’s policy was led by the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher.²⁸ In the literature, François Mitterrand’s policy is nearly always treated as being similar to that of the British prime minister. The Soviet protocols that were confirmed by the French ones allow another Mitterrand to appear. Here it is clear that Mitterrand—similar to Kohl and Genscher at first—tried to bring at least four problem areas under one roof: German reunification, the unity of Western Europe, the integration of the whole of Europe at least where military questions were concerned, and the support of the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev.

It is clear that Mitterrand feared German unity if it endangered European unification, but a tentative attempt to reach at least a mid-term solution emerged after talks with Gorbachev on December 6, 1989, in Kiev. Mitterrand tried a careful sounding politics, unlike Kohl, for German unification to be within the sphere of a European security system including of the Soviet Union, after the

dissolution of the military blocs of the Cold War. However, he was very unsure whether Chancellor Kohl was so strongly in favor of German reunification that both the West European currency system as well as an integral European security system could be endangered.²⁹ Kohl's policy for West European unity was similar to Mitterrand's and after Mitterrand had pushed it strongly the West German government accepted that the European currency system and the Euro should come very soon, although in Kohl's opinion this was not directly in German interests.

However, it was highly likely that there would have been conflicts between Mitterrand and the governments in Washington and Bonn on the question of an integral European security system as a part or precondition for German unification. A security system that would include a united Germany, the other European countries, the Soviet Union, and the North Americas could have kept the United States as a power guarantee and Germany controlled. Kohl wanted unity to take priority and thought that the moment was advantageous. He could count on Bush's government not allowing NATO to become a political instrument dominated by European policy. In no instance would Bush have accepted or encouraged a leading European role in these institutions after the removal of the military blocs.

Therefore an integral European security system held obvious risks for the French government and could have led to French isolation. Hence Mitterrand repeatedly followed the British prime minister's ruthless policy of rejecting unity and put faith in the Soviet leadership, who he suggested should "play" their trump card of insisting that disarmament should mean a reduction of American troops from Central Europe as well as of Soviet ones. That would at least have been a precondition for a greater European importance in the questions of security. He was therefore disappointed when Gorbachev gave in to America on the simultaneous reduction of troops, without bringing a European security system, in which Germany would also have played a part. Mitterrand was—according to his advisor, Attali—concerned that long-term risks of war-threatened Europe, if Germany and the Soviet Union were excluded from it. The united Germany was integrated into an expanding NATO, after a European alternative was no longer possible, but the Soviet Union remained excluded. However, NATO was under American dominance, while Mitterrand would surely have preferred a solution with European institutions under European dominance. In the end both failed—Gorbachev as well as Mitterrand. The American government was extremely watchful for even the slightest signal that France intended to end the NATO sphere to benefit a European one.

Whether deliberately or not, Thatcher denied Gorbachev every support that she supposedly wanted to give him by delaying German unification. Because this provided no solution for the problem of a European security system, a system that would have endangered Gorbachev less than unification under NATO

expansion toward the East. Thatcher rejected reunification principally because of the growing importance of Germany (and the declining importance of Great Britain) in Europe. Mitterand's point of view was different, but after his failed attempt to win a European alliance for Gorbachev, he restricted himself to West European integration efforts by simultaneously voting for NATO expansion. The question obviously still remains, whether the Gorbachev policy of an integral European security system including the Soviet Union as well as the United States (and Canada) would have been considerably more advantageous. However, in view of the "generation-old fear" of the Germans that Thatcher and the other Western and Eastern Europeans had, this possibility remained only a weak alternative. And Gorbachev left it very late in the day before he was first moved to try to win over the West Europeans to such a solution. In the end they supported the expansion of NATO and the (West) European community toward the East. Mitterand admittedly still had concerns about the Germans, but he could have chosen a military-political integrated Europe as the first step for a political Europe without the former East–West border, if only he had received support from the Soviet Union and Western Europe. In contrast with his talks with the West Europeans, especially with Kohl, the French president openly promoted the idea to Gorbachev after December 6, 1989, but did not receive any support. The Soviet protocols bring these differences into the open but it remains unclear why Gorbachev responded so little to Mitterand. The attempts can be clearly seen in the suggestion of a joint trip to Moscow on December 6, 1990, as well as the consideration of the dissolution of the blocs and a new European security system on May 25, 1990. Gorbachev evidently saw more gain from Soviet collaboration in the neutrality of an entire Germany or the membership of both blocs than in an integral Europe. However, this view and the policy that followed contributed to NATO's rapid expansion to the borders of the former Soviet Union from 1998.

In conclusion again, if the policy of reunification is seen as a German problem and under German–American conditions, then it was a great success. But if it is looked at as a chance for an integrated Europe with a European security system including the Soviet Union and the United States, then unity under American NATO dominance is more ambiguous: On the one hand Western Europe expanded to the East with the new central-eastern members of the European Community with parliamentary democracies and a free market system; on the other hand NATO expansion endangered the possibilities of embedding the Soviet Union, or Russia, in Europe, controlled by a new alliance. That could mean, as the Canadian Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs feared: the Cold War would not end; its borders would only move further to the East with new uncertainties and dangers for Europe and the world.

Indeed, these dangers grew during the next decades even though NATO reduced (at the beginning of the 1990s) its troops and weapons in Europe.³⁰

Prospects for the Future

According to Chernayev and according to the Canadian Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, one of Gorbachev's main hopes was to come closer to Europe. That is confirmed by this research, which also reveals his very late strategy of spring 1990 to build a new European security system replacing the Warsaw Pact and NATO. However, these were not the aims of the US government under Bush Sr. and of the British under Prime Minister Thatcher, nor of West Germany under Chancellor Kohl or other European states—though France under Mitterrand (and East Germany under de Maizière and Meckel) probably had different goals.

On August 21, 1991, some of his former comrades in the Central Committee and the Politburo organized a putsch against Gorbachev. This putsch failed, but Gorbachev lost his power to Boris N. Yeltsin in the same year. The Soviet Union imploded in a deep crisis, was dissolved by the presidents of Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus who founded the “Commonwealth of Independent States” (CIS) on December 8, 1991. In 1999 Vladimir Putin became prime minister of the Russian Federation; he won the presidential elections in 2000.

The Baltic states Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia declared their independence from the Soviet Union in 1990; in 1991 it became official. Most of the southeastern Soviet republics received their independence after the founding of CIS. However, the Russian government under Putin did not accept the attempts to achieve independence in Chechnya and made lengthy and bloody war on Chechen insurgency. In the 1990s conflicts between former Yugoslavian republics resulted in NATO operations against Serbia.

At the NATO summit in Madrid in 1997 negotiations with Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary began over their full NATO membership, which followed on March 12, 1999. Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia became members of NATO in 2004 together with Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In 2009 Albania and Croatia followed. That meant that NATO had reached the border of the Russian Federation, Belarus, and Ukraine; this was seen as a threat in Russia.³¹

The struggle over the historic role of the Soviet Union has been much harsher in Russia and in the former republics of the USSR than in other involved countries. This struggle is not yet over and will probably last for a long time. The collapse of the Soviet empire and the decline in the standard of living of a large part of the population in the 1990s, parallel to the introduction of democratic institutions—has not led to favorable views of the latter or of the representatives of those responsible for these conditions. Mikhail Gorbachev especially is seen by large parts of the population as the president who is responsible for destroying the Soviet empire and giving former allies and even members of the Soviet Union to the West.³² And the Western governments have exploited the weakness of the Soviet Union and did not keep the promises they had made—particularly the promise not to extend NATO to the East.

That is one of the reasons, and perhaps the most important one, why the policy of President Putin has been so widely accepted in Russia up to the present day. The collapse of the Soviet Union with these losses is seen as the “biggest catastrophe in the 20th century” (!) by Putin.³³ That is the background for his attempts to rebuild a new “Great Russia” and his increasing reductions of democratic rights. This is also a background for the Crimea annexation and the struggles over Ukraine since 2013.

One must realize that current national myths will carry weight in politics and in the public awareness—especially in Russia and the other Central Eastern and Eastern European states but also in Germany and Western Europe. In the Russian Federation the danger is especially great that Russian nationalists and Soviet-oriented communists could join in an alliance.

The question is: where Russia is moving to if the European states are not successful in bringing Russia closer again to Europe. Into which dangers is Europe running if Russia becomes more hostile towards Europe or—the other way round—is kept out of Europe?

Today, decades after German reunification and about 15 years after NATO’s extension we can see not only the success of Europe and North America but also the dangers—much more than in the first two decades after German unification. Did the “old” Cold War really come to an end, if there is a new one with very hot elements because the old one left so many unsolved conflicts?

Notes

Introduction: The Historian as a Detective

1. In preparation of the two-part “docu-drama” titled *Deutschlandspiel* (*German Game*) to mark the tenth anniversary of the reunification of Germany, along with other broadcasters the Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen (ZDF) had had around 60 interviews conducted with the international main actors in the process. I took part in these. *Deutschlandspiel* was produced by Ulrich Lenze, and Hans-Christoph Blumenberg was the director. Blumenberg conducted a largest number of the interviews, while Thomas Schuhbauer and I conducted a smaller number. I also wrote the treatment and served as an academic advisor for the film project.
2. Compare the literature at the end of this book.
3. The official files of Gorbachev’s talks with other politicians are in the Presidential Archive. Those in the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow that I was able to look at were prepared at the time by clerks and translators. Most were countersigned by Chernayev himself, the main “note-taker” then. These meeting minutes stand apart under the comparisons that I carried out and appear, among others, to be authentic, because critical statements or sections are included, in which Gorbachev does not appear in the best light. Nor have I found any “retrospective foreshadowing” of particular views of Gorbachev or his discussion partners. The Politburo minutes are not official minutes, but rather later compilations of the notes made during the meetings by Medvedev, Skhakhnazarov, who has died, and Chernayev—that is, by Gorbachev’s people. These Politburo minutes also give a credible impression, particularly naturally in their original note form. The minutes are also marked, among other things, by the contradictions, on the basis of which I caught Chernayev, that rather supported the opponents of Gorbachev and now could be clarified through these notes. However, they are incomplete and the degree of their lack of completeness is seldom apparent.
4. *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik. Deutsche Einheit Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/99*, published by the Ministry of the Interior, edited by Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hofmann. Technical director: Klaus Hildebrand, Hans-Peter Schwarz, Federal Archives: Friedrich P. Kahlenberg, Munich 1998. (Henceforth cited as DzD.)
5. Auswärtiges Amt (ed.): *Deutsche Außenpolitik 1990/91. Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Friedensordnung. Eine Dokumentation*, Bonn 1991; Auswärtiges

- Amt (ed.): Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Dokumente von 1949 bis 1994, Köln 1995; Auswärtiges Amt (ed.): Umbruch in Europa. Die Ereignisse im 2. Halbjahr 1989. Eine Dokumentation, Bonn 1990.
6. Documents on British Policy Overseas, Serie III, Band VII, "German Unification 1989–1990," ed. Patrick Salmon et al., London 2009.
 7. Vaïsse, Maurice, and Christian Wenkel (ed.): La diplomatie française face à l'unification allemande. Verlag Tallandier, Paris 2011. These documents confirm my theses about Mitterrand's European and German politics, which I had developed already in 2002, as well as the British ones.
 8. Various sources in the Federal Archive (Bundesarchiv in Berlin, see the Bibliography).
 9. Some declared themselves ready for public discussions in the Institute for History and Biography of the Fernuniversität Hagen, for example the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the specialist for Germany in the Central Committee of the CPSU Nikolai Portugalov, the advisor to Chancellor Kohl Horst Teltchik, the last prime minister of the GDR Lothar de Maizère, then leader of the SPD Hans-Jochen Vogel, the dissidents Ulrike Poppe, Joachim Gauck, the specialist for state security Walter Süß, etc. (The records are in the Institute for History and Biography of the Fernuniversität Hagen, as is the case with all the cited interviews.)
 10. Alexander von Plato, Tomas Vilimek in Verbindung mit Piotr Filipkowski, und Joanna Wawrzyniak: Opposition als Lebensform. Dissidenz in der DDR, der ČSSR und in Polen, Berlin 2013, there the essay: Alexander von Plato: Revolution in einem halben Land. Lebensgeschichten von Oppositionellen in der DDR und ihre Interpretation, pp. 23–278.
 11. Mikhail S. Gorbachev: Letter to Alexander von Plato, Moscow, March 6, 2002.
 12. There are some exceptions; among others I would like to mention, especially Charles S. Maier: *Dissolution. The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany*, Princeton 1997 (with the focus on the development in the Communist parties and countries); Mary Elise Sarotte: 1989. *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, Princeton and Oxford, 2009 (this book, which I highly appreciate, was just published when my book was completed for the third edition [2009]; in this English edition I discuss her theses and very often I agree with her); Norman M. Naimark: *The Superpowers and 1989 in Eastern Europe*, in Mueller, Vienna 2014, who has a critical view on the American policy.
 13. Alexander von Plato: *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands—ein weltpolitisches Machspiel. Bush, Kohl, Gorbatschow und die internen Moskauer Protokolle*, Berlin 2009 (third edition).

I The Beginnings

1. Hanns Jürgen Küsters was the head of the group that released the Federal Chancellery's files concerned with reunification.
2. General Scowcroft was already a security advisor under President Ford. From 1989 to 1993 he was director of the National Security Council and a close advisor to President George Bush.

3. Senior director for European and Soviet concerns of the National Security Council of the United States from 1989 onward, before which he was temporarily responsible for questions of security under President Ford.
4. Political scientist and employee of the National Security Council.
5. In criticism of a paper about the committee of coordination of American European policy called “NSR-5.”
6. In the view of the chairwoman of the committee, Rozanne Ridgway.
7. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 55f.
8. Condoleezza Rice, political scientist at Stanford University, was brought into the White House by Scowcroft and was present at the talks between Bush and Gorbachev as a transcript writer and then as member of the American negotiation delegation at the 2+4 negotiations. Rice was later appointed head of the National Security Council by Bush Jr.
9. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 58.
10. Ibid, p. 56.
11. Interview with me on September 14, 1999.
12. See DzD, Hanns Jürgen Küsters’s introduction, p. 35.
13. Translated by Zelikow/Rice 1997 as “Partner in the leadership role,” p. 63.
14. See the memoirs of Margaret Thatcher, p. 1092ff. Küsters also quotes Howe as evidence for this, 1994, p. 560.
15. Bush’s speech in the Rheingold-Halle in Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 62.
16. Ibid.; more critical: Norman M. Naimark, *The Superpowers and 1989 in Eastern Europe*, in Mueller, Vienna 2014.
17. Interview with Horst Teltschik in “Bonner Generalanzeiger” of July 6, 1989, p. 13.
18. Horst Teltschik on September 27, 2000, in conversation with me.
19. Ibid.
20. De Maizière in “the Lüdenscheid conversation” with me on January 1, 2000.
21. Walters 1990, pp. 655–662; Walters 1991, 1994.
22. Horst Teltschik in “the Lüdenscheid conversation” with me on September 27, 2000. Hans-Dietrich Genscher confirms Teltschik in this matter and criticizes Rice und Zelikow’s description as glossed over with hindsight (Genscher in “the Lüdenscheid conversation” on April 25, 2001).
23. The last quotations: Hans-Dietrich Genscher in an interview with me on April 25, 2001 in Lüdenscheid.
24. Ibid.
25. Powell in an interview with me in 1999. Compare also Thatcher’s memoirs and Howe 1994, p. 560, Volle 1990, p. 130–144, Urban 1996.
26. Compare this with a later chapter in this book dealing with the Soviet policy on the German question. See also Gorbachev’s memoirs 1995, the books by Georgi Schachnasarow 1996 and Anatoli Chernayev 1992, 1993, and 1994 or my interviews with him such as Pfeiler 1991, Oldenburg 1991, 1992, Umbach 1992.
27. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 53 in a chapter with the ambitious title “Bush Takes the Helm.” Compare also with Garthoff 1994, Beschloss/Talbot 1993, p. 52 ff.; again more critical: Norman M. Naimark, *The Superpowers and 1989 in Eastern Europe*, in Mueller, Vienna 2014, Mary E. Sarotte, “Elite Intransigence

- and the End of the Berlin Wall,” in: *German Politics*, Nr. 2/1993, S. 270–287; Mary E. Sarotte, 1989: *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, Princeton and Oxford, 2009 (Chapter 1, p. 22 and Chapter 2, pp. 48–81).
28. Reagan’s demand “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down the Wall!” belongs to this context. Compare with Adomeit 1994a, p. 197–230, 1994b, p. 31–58.
 29. Introduction by Küsters, DzD, p. 35. Küsters has this letter from the Federal archives: BArch, B 136/29806, 212–30101 A5 Am 4 Bd. 21. The letter was confidential, without a date, and passed on by the US embassy in Bonn on May 12, 1989. According to an oral version of Hanns Küsters, the reasons why this letter was not published in the Federal Chancellery files was exclusively due to time limitations as the publication of the volume had been arranged for the end of May 1989, and also because of, among other reasons, George Bush’s visit to Bonn. At most, 10 percent of the Chancellery documents were not published, principally due to security reasons. When asked whether anything of significance had been left out, Küsters answered neither yes nor no. (Conversation, February 14, 2002.)
 30. 1989 to 1992 advisor in the State Department under Baker. He took up the “top position among the advisors,” write Zelikow and Rice (p. 51).
 31. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 57.
 32. Federal Government Press and Information Service, November 28, 1989.
 33. Condoleezza Rice in conversation with me on September 17, 1999 at Stanford University.
 34. My italics.
 35. From Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 19.
 36. Ibid, p. 223.
 37. According to Brent Scowcroft in an interview with me in 1999.
 38. Condoleezza Rice 1999, in conversation with me.
 39. In an interview with me on November 5, 1999 in Moscow.
 40. Jaques Attali: *Verbatim III* (1988–1991), Paris 1995.
 41. Jacques Attali in conversation with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg 1999.
 42. For Mitterrand’s policy on Germany in mid-1989, see among others Schabert 2005; Vaisse, Maurice and Christian Wenkel (Ed.) 2011: Dumas 1996; Kolboom 1990, p. 237 ff., 1991a, 1991b, p. 470 ff., Mitterrand 1996 passim, Védrine 1996, Weidenfeld 1998, pp. 56; Weisenfeld 1991, pp. 513–518.
 43. Compare with above all: Dowe/Eckart 1993, Gransow/Jarausch 1991.
 44. Vogtmeier, 1996; Dowe 1993; Clemens 1992.
 45. See the chapter “The North Americas: The States, Canada, and German Unification.”
 46. Many American historians who have dealt with the history of unification (see bibliography) and who are not to be ranked with the semiofficial statements of the policies of the Bush administration by Zelikov and Rice, such as for example Charles S. Maier 1997 (1999) who is very different and takes into account “long-range trends,” have given more attention to this aspect of the politics of détente in the conflict within Germany, even if still in a relatively small way. Different are, for example, B. Garton Ash 1993, as well as 1990 and 1994; also McAdams 1990, pp. 55 ff. and 1993; Pittmann 1992; However, even Mary E. Sarotte, who wrote a very differentiated book (*The Struggle to Create Post-Cold*

- War Europe*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), did not pay much attention to the importance of détente policy.
47. For the Social Democratic politicians these emphases on the politics of détente are understandable and necessary elements of their own self-representation and the importance of their politics for reunification against Kohl who, in their memory, had become too powerful (see as well the speeches of Hans-Jochen Vogel, who was for many years the leader of the fraction and the SPD, also in conversation with me on November 7, 2001.) See also Uschner 1992.
 48. Kohl in Diekmann/ Reuth 1999, p. 20.
 49. Appeasement had acquired a negative connotation because of Chamberlain's politics toward Hitler's Germany.
 50. Genscher in conversation with me on April 25, 2001.
 51. CSCE = Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.
 52. Genscher in conversation with me on April 25, 2001.
 53. OSCE = Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

2 Summer 1989: Gorbachev in Bonn

1. Charles Powell in conversation with me in September 1999.
2. Genscher in conversation with me on November 25, 2001.
3. Ibid.
4. Gorbachev 1995, p. 706.
5. The German minutes are printed in DzD, Dok. Nr. 2, 3 and 4 (the latter with a delegation), p. 276 ff., p. 287 ff.; the Soviet minutes are in the Gorbachev Foundation 9JUN12A +B, 89JUN13A+B, 89JUN14A+B.
6. All citations from DzD, Doc. No. 2, p. 283.
7. Gorbachev Foundation, 89Jun12B, p. 9.
8. Gorbachev Foundation, 89JUNI2B, S.9.
9. Kohl in: Diekmann/Reuth 1999, p. 38.
10. Gorbachev Foundation 89JUNI2A, p. 2.
11. This passage is not in the Soviet minutes, but only in Kohl's records in: Diekmann/ Reuth 1999, p. 41 as well as in the cited ZDF interview of 1999 (Take 151).
12. Gorbachev Foundation, 89JUNI2B, p. 12.
13. Gorbachev, 1995, p. 710.
14. Ibid., p. 39.
15. ZDF Interview in 2000, Take 151, p. 8.
16. Lüdenschneider Gespräche" with Nikolai Portugalov on November 1, 1999.
17. Interview with Horst Teltschik on September 27, 2000 in Lüdenschneider.
18. Cited DzD, p. 295.
19. The slight tension between the office of the Chancellor and particularly Horst Teltschik who was responsible for questions on foreign policy on the one hand and the Foreign Office under Genscher on the other hand will appear regularly. Compare Frölich, p. 9.
20. Genscher 1995, p. 628.
21. Kwizinski, Julij, b. 1936. 1986 to May 1990 Soviet ambassador to the FRG, May 1990 to 1991, representative of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the USSR.

22. *Lüdenscheider Gespräche* with Horst Teltschik, September 27, 2000.
23. C.f. Hertle/Stephan 1999, p. 45 f.
24. C.f. the report of the Politburo at the 8th congress of the Central Committee of June 1989 that was ready by Joachim Hermann but written by Honecker himself, as Krenz reported. (Hertle/Stephan 1999, p. 46, footnote 65).
25. On June 12, 1989, ca. 13:20, 20 minutes long. Gorbachev Foundation, 89JUNI2A.
26. Gorbachev Foundation, 89JUNI2A, p. 3.
27. The first also took place on June 12, 1989, from ca. 15:00 to 16:30, that is, after the meeting with the German president.
28. Gorbachev Foundation, 89JUNI12B; the German minutes according to DzD, p. 280.
29. In the German minutes this sharpness is missing. There it says only that Reagan “knew practically nothing about Europe.” But Reagan became president.
30. Soviet protocol, op.cit., p. 8.
31. DzD, p. 280.
32. *Lüdenscheid Gespräche*, loc.cit.

3 Gorbachev and the “Soviet Fatherhood” of the GDR

1. Also together with the usually forgotten Rudolf Seiters, the head of the Federal Chancellor’s Office (since April 1989) and coordinator between the ministries, also with the Permanent Representative in East Berlin, who presumably carried out the main preparations—an example of the power of images. And Hans-Dietrich Genscher became a perfect player on the piano of the media with a great sense for the significance of symbolic situations.
2. Genscher 1995, p. 24.
3. According to former member of the Politburo (candidate) Gerhard Schürer 1998, p. 160.
4. About this Poppe 1999, p. 349 ff. and in conversation with me on August 13, 2002, as well as interviews with members of the opposition in the bibliography.
5. Communiqué of the congress of the Political Advisory Committee of the Member States of the Warsaw Pact on July 7 and 8, 1989 in: *Europe-Archiv*, Folge 20/1989, p. 599.
6. The best known was the prohibition of the *Sputnik*, against which actually the only Politburo member to speak against it was Kurt Hager (Schürer 1999, p. 194).
7. Gorbachev in ZDF interview, p. 46.
8. Siegfried Lorenz: First Secretary of the SED Area Direction Karl-Marx-Stadt, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED.
9. Schürer, p. 191.
10. SAPMO-BArch, DY/30/JIV2/202/47 (Vol. 230).
11. *Ibid.*
12. Valentin Falin (head of the Department for international relations of the Central Committee) in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.

13. According to Igor F. Maximitshev, who at this time was the envoy at the Soviet embassy in East Berlin, in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999. Compare also Maximitshev/Hertle 1994a–c.
14. Reported by Falin in both his “Political Remembrances” (p. 484) and in the interview for the film “Deutschlandspiel.”
15. According to Heinz Keßler. Compare also Keßler 1996.
16. Nearly all interviewed members of the opposition (interviews by me until 2013) were completely impressed how a celebration for Honecker became one for Gorbachev. How far most of the members of FDJ in the presence of only narrowly expressed differences noticed that this sympathy for Gorbachev could be interpreted as an expression of dissatisfaction with Honecker cannot be determined.
17. Gorbachev in interview with Guido Knopp, year not known, p. 47.
18. Gorbachev 1995, p. 934.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 935.
20. Schabowski in an interview with Blumenberg (1999) and he repeated this scene in public interviews with me in 2003 and 2007.
21. Interview with Guido Knopp, p. 46 ff.
22. Gorbachev expressed himself similarly but not as sharply also in his memoirs, 1995, p. 936.
23. Gorbachev Foundation, 89OCT07A and 89OCY07B, also SAPMO-B-Arch, ZPA, J IV 2/2.035/60, latter printed in Küchenmeister 1993, pp. 240–251 (private conversation) and 253–266 (with the Politburo).
24. Falin 1993, p. 486 f.
25. Schürer, Interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
26. Kessler, 1999 in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg.
27. Medvedev, Vadim Andreyevich, b. 1929, was Rector of the Academy of Social Sciences from 1988 to 1990, full member of the Politburo of Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He is considered one of Gorbachev’s men.
28. The same Medvedev also in a meeting with Kurt Hager, who was responsible for culture in the politburo of the Central Committee of the SED, described the atmosphere in the talk between Gorbachev and the politburo on October 7, 1989, according to the minutes, as “open and honest”—which shows the expressiveness of diplomatic talks and their notes once again (SAPMO-BArch, SED, ZK, IV 2.2039/283: Rüdiger Stephan 1994, p. 162).
29. Portugalov in conversation with me on October 1, 1999 in Lüdenscheid.
30. The interpreter was Helmut Ettinger.
31. According to Küchenmeister 1993, p. 256 and p. 258.
32. Honecker resisted however, passed the “Observations” along to Mittag who shot them down in the Politburo (Schürer 1999).
33. *Ibid.*
34. Falin 1993, p. 487.
35. Krenz 1999, p. 78. Under “national” conditions Krenz was referring of course to the GDR as if in 1999 he was still assuming that the proclaimed “socialist nation” GDR existed. However, later he said and wrote that the theory of a GDR nation was one of the biggest mistakes of the SED.

36. Krenz reported that he knew nothing about this: *ibid.*
37. Compare on this subject interviews with Ulrike Poppe, one by Christoph Blumenberg, 1999, and one by me 2012 and with other opponents of the GDR in 2011 and 2012.
38. About the development of the opposition see Alexander von Plato: *Revolution in einem halben Land. Lebensgeschichten von Oppositionellen in der DDR und ihre Interpretation*, in: Alexander von Plato, *Tomas Vilimek in Verbindung mit Piotr Filipkowski und Joanna Wawrzyniak: Opposition als Lebensform. Dissidenz in der DDR, der ČSSR und in Polen*, Berlin 2013, pp. 23–278.
39. Based on various sources, on files of the legislative assembly members as well as the People's Police and interviews with participants and those responsible, with Egon Krenz, with the commissar SED district chief Hackenberg, with signatories of the appeal of the "Leipzig Six" and with activists and participants in the demonstrations, and presentations especially by Tobias Hollitzer and Uwe Schwabe (Hollitzer 1999, 2000; Dietrich and Schwabe 1994) Compare also Süß 1999, p. 302 ff.
40. The first secretary had been sick for a long time.
41. However, Helmut Hackenberg in an interview with a student before his death very energetically denied that there was an "order [*for the arming or even the use of firearms—AvP*]", but that fundamentally there was an order to move in without ammunition. I point out that the fighting groups who were employed to ensure that the demonstration had no weapons." However officers carried weapons. In response to allegations of the interviewer that Hackenberg was himself decisively involved in the police and military preparations, Hackenberg also did not dispute that weapons and ammunition were distributed to the guards—90 rounds according to the interviewer. This was normal and had nothing to do with the demonstration, answered Hackenberg.
42. The "Leipzig Six" consisted of Gewandhaus Orchestra Kurt Masur, who took the initiative, the secretaries of the district SED, Kurt Meyer, Jochen Pommert, and Roland Wötzel, the cabaret performer Bernd-Lutz Lange, and the theologian Peter Zimmerman. Their appeal was spread through the radio and flyers. There are varying opinions of the effectiveness of the appeal: demonstrators reported that it was hardly noticed, but certainly it had great significance that such prominent persons, particularly members of the SED district direction, expressed themselves in this way. Certainly it appears that Hackenberg who had not been informed before was angry at his associates in the district authority.
43. Egon Krenz confirmed this in: Krenz 1990, p. 135 ff.
44. Himself a member of the Central Committee of the SED.
45. Krenz 199, p. 90.
46. Interview with Hackenberg.
47. Egon Krenz in an interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
48. This version of the events in Leipzig is very plausible and supported by numerous conversations, by the referred to and unpublicized interview with Hackenberg, and reports (according to the "Sachstandsbericht" by Straßenburg to Minister of the Interior Dickel of October 10, 1989 at 20:00 a little later, in "Horch und Guck," Issue 23 (2/1998), and Holitzer 1999. At the same time Straßenburg

- emphasized his “decisive” role more strongly (oral statement by von Langener [Citizens’ Committee] and by Zarges [chief archivist Leipzig]). And Schabowski purposely or not places greater weight on the three members of the district management who signed the call for moderation by the “Leipzig Six”; but they had no authority to make decisions (Schabowski, p. 251f).
49. Hans-Joachim Friedrichs of the “Tagesthemen” of the Erstes (West)-Deutsche Fernsehen (ARD) broadcast at 22:30 an earlier recorded telephone conversation with Father Christoph Wonneberger of the St. Lucas Church in Leipzig and spoke about the sensation that three high functionaries of the SED of the district management had signed the appeal by the Six. That meant after all a first opening of the party across from those who were looking for a dialogue with it. This interpretation might have thereby found a great distribution—as the West German television in general played a weighty role in the unification process.
 50. Minister Keßler was in Cuba and Nicaragua from the October 12 to 18.
 51. Fritz Streletz in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
 52. Whether Krenz was honest here or not is difficult to decide now. It appears today rather as though there was no concrete advance agreement with the Soviets other than the general and repeated declaration of Gorbachev not to interfere in the other countries of the Warsaw Pact, and the talk that Harry Tisch was to have a few days later with Gorbachev, thus after the talk with Streletz on the plane.
 53. Interview with Streletz a.a.O.
 54. Gorbachev in interview with Guido Knopp (ZDF).
 55. Heinz Keßler in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
 56. Compare Wolle/Kowalczyk 2001 and the Television Series *Roter Stern über Deutschland. Sowjetische Truppen in der DDR* (Red Star over Germany: Soviet Troops in the GDR). That in this mixture of actual fear and the political worry that the direction of Gorbachev could lead to the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact or even of the Soviet Union did not result in military revolts is a phenomenon that is still surprising today and will be dealt with again below (see the chapter “The Military, the Marshal, and Gorbachev’s Chair”).
 57. This was told by those involved in the interviews, 1999.
 58. Schabowski, 1991a, p. 260. Schürer considered with fundamental criticism of Schabowski’s behavior after the *Wende* his report (Schabowski 1991b) about the removal correct (Schürer p. 193) See also Süß 1999, p. 298 ff.
 59. Schürer on the other hand speaks of a real agreement between Gorbachev and the leaders of the FDGB (The Free German Trade Union Federation).
 60. According to Schabowski 1991a, p. 260. There are no minutes of this discussion of Harry Tisch with Gorbachev in the Gorbachev Foundation, at least it was not provided to me.
 61. C.f. Herlte/Stephan 1999, p. 50.
 62. Honecker’s version in Andert/Herzberg 1990, p. 30, while according to Kenz 1999, p. 116, Stoph also proposed the “election of Egon Krenz as General Secretary.” According to Schabowski, besides the removal of Honecker, Stoph also demanded the removal of Mittag and Hermann. C.f. about Honecker’s removal: Schabowski 1990, 1991.
 63. Andert/Herzberg 1990, p. 30.

64. Przybłski 1991, c.f. also the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper of November 11, 1990.
65. Krenz 1999, p. 118.
66. Telephone conversation Gorbachev with Mitterrand on November 14, 1989, Gorbachev Foundation, 3713–3722.
67. Gysi/Falkner 1990.
68. Nikolai Portugalov in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg 1999.
69. The test, provided by Ambassador Kwizinski, is in SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, Bl. 11 and 12. The telephone conversation between Gorbachev and Kohl is printed in: DzD, p. 229f.
70. Gorbachev Foundation, 89OCT11.
71. Duisberg's submission for Kohl in DzD, p 455ff.
72. SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/V 2/2.039/319, Bl. 11 and 12.
73. Krenz 1999, p. 117.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 124 and 129.
75. Gorbachev also had made a confusing remark, as in the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Lukyanow on November 3, 1989, after his visit to China reported that on Tiananmen Square in fact 3,000 persons died: "(We) should be realists. They must behave just as we do. Three thousand. And what did this achieve? Sometimes one is forced to abandon a position. Simply strategy and tactics." (Another translation says: "So? Sometimes one is forced to retreat.") Gorbachev Foundation, Politburo Minutes of November 3, 1989.
76. This was the reality: Honecker had at the very end himself against the plan proposed Egon Krenz as his replacement. "Thereby he created the impression that he himself had suggested me as his successor. In fact it was the Politburo." (Krenz 1999, p. 126)
77. Ulrike Poppe in interviews with me in 2001 and similarly in 2012.
78. Von Plato: *Opposition in einem halben Land*, Berlin 2013.
79. Both in interview with Blumenberg, 1999.
80. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/317 from B. 9 to the end.
81. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/312. It begins with a policy letter by Bärbel Bohley and Monika Haeger of April 2, 1986, "handed over on 3.4 at 8:45" and continues until the fall of 1989.
82. Krenz 1999, p. 123.
83. Schürer 1999, p. 186f.
84. Filed as GVV5 (Geheime vertrauliche Verschlussache = top secret classified document).
85. Lothar de Maizière in conversation with me on November 1, 2000.
86. Alexander Schalck-Goldkowsky, born 1932, became in 1966 director of the area commercial coordination (KoKo), was in 1983 decisive for the achievement of the billion credit of the FRG to the GDR, since 1986 member of the Central Committee, was considered by Krenz for prime minister at first. Schalck-Goldkowsky surrendered to the West Berlin authorities on December 6, 1989 after being excluded from the party.
87. All quotes come from my conversation in 1999 with Lothar de Maizière.
88. De Maizière 1996, p. 95.
89. Conversation with De Maizière 1999.

90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. This summary is based on the various reports of Schürer, the background material of the SED Central Committee for the talks between Egon Krenz and Gorbachev, the report of the former president of GDR National Bank, Stoll, for de Maizière, and the reports of Lothar de Maizière himself.
93. OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
94. Niethammer/von Plato/Wierling 1991; or Schürer 1999, p. 324 ff. C.f. on the state of the GDR elite Jarausch 1995.
95. SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/329.
96. Alexander Nikolayewich Yakovlev, born 1923, previously ambassador to Canada, then director of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; 1986 to 1990, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union for Propaganda, Culture, and Foreign Politics; 1987 to 1990, member of the Politburo; 1990–1991, Gorbachev’s advisor.
97. SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/329.
98. SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/329, p. 10.
99. Here are also remarkable sentences that one wanted to prevent the sell off through an escape into the true values, in order to prevent inflation, since that would be the fastest and most effective way to destabilization.
100. SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, Bl. 128–169. Finally on the pages 128–169 also the minutes of the talk between Krenz and Gorbachev on November 1, 1989 in Moscow. Over the first page Krenz noted in handwriting “Top Secret.”
101. Modrow 1998 (*Perestroika*), p. 125.
102. The minutes of the German side are in the Bundesarchiv Berlin SAPMO-B-Arch DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, sheets 128–169, of the Soviet side in the archives of the Gorbachev Foundation, 89NOV01.
103. There is also a note about a talk of Comrade Günter Sieber (member of the Central Committee and director of the Division of International Relations of the Central Committee of the CPSU) on November 1, 1989 in the headquarters of the Central Committee of the CPSU with questions from Falin about the situation in the GDR, that in my opinion passed “more conventionally” than the one between Gorbachev and Krenz (SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, Bl. 170–174 with an attachment report about the working visit of Krenz to Moscow, Bl. 176–178).
104. This was how he put it in 1999 about his main interest in the talk with Gorbachev (p. 194).
105. Gorbachev, according to the Soviet minutes in the Gorbachev Foundation, 89NOV01.
106. Krenz 1999, p. 195.
107. Interview Egon Krenz with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg in 1999.
108. After the Soviet minutes: Gorbachev Foundation, 89NOV01.
109. Krenz 1999, p. 192.
110. This is the version that appears in the German minutes of this meeting between Krenz and Gorbachev (SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, Bl. 142) C.f. also Krenz 1999, p. 194.

111. Quoted from the minutes of the Politburo meeting of November 3, 1989, p. 589ff. Krenz had with Gorbachen on November 1 a somewhat different version chosen: "In order to meet the payment balance the standard of living expressed in percents would have to be reduced by 30." (Gorbachev Foundation 89NOV01)
112. *Ibid.*
113. Portugalov reported that Gorbachev was taken with Krenz, in contrast to him and Falin: "Oddly Mikhail liked him so much because for months already, even years, he had clung to the idea: Perestroika in the GDR is exactly the right thing. Then we will build the GDR together—possible together with the Americans—a European house. And all will be peace, joy, pancakes. Falin was there (in the talk between Krena and Gorbachev), I of course was not. Falin came back, called me to him and said, 'Do you know what Mikhail Sergeyevich said about Krenz?' 'What?' I asked. 'Keep Krenz for me, support him economically' And that is really too much. 'How should this be possible? A corpse on vacation can't be saved. So, I'll give him two weeks.' I may have erred by a few days. Because Krenz—really nobody wanted him." (Portugalov in interview with Blumenberg 1999).

4 Coincidence as a Helper: Pushing Movements, Driven Politicians

1. Abteilung Propaganda: "Erste Einschätzung der Demonstration und Kundgebung am 4. November 1989 in Berlin," November 6, 1989, SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV/2/2.039/317, Bl. 59ff. It differs fundamentally from the sharp reports about the Leipzig demonstrations, for example, of October 9, 1989.
2. *Ibid.*, sheet 63.
3. *Ibid.*, sheet 65.
4. There had already been discussions about the opening of the GDR borders in Bonn on November 6, 1989. Large "movements of refugees" were expected and there were considerations of greeting money in DM via the FRG and not the GDR in Marks, so that the latter would not appear to be a "benefactor." See on this subject the detailed record of the "Besprechung der beamteten Staatssekretäre" (discussion of the official state secretaries) on German political questions (Ministerial director Dr. Claus-Jürgen Duisberg in: DzD, Nr. 74, p. 482 ff.) and also File 4 (document 74 a, remark of Ministerial Director Ernst G. Stern, in: DzD, p. 487).
5. Krenz 1999, p. 229.
6. C.f. besides our interviews Hertle/Elsner 1999.
7. This is how the German specialists in the international department of the Central Committee of the CPSU around Valentin Falin were referred to. Portugalov was also included.
8. In interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
9. Especially Hertle 1996.
10. George Bush in an interview with me, 1999.
11. The minutes of this meeting in: DzD, Doc. no. 76 and 77, p. 492 ff. and p. 497 ff.
12. Kohl in a ZDF interview 1999. Kohl had "insisted, then there were many excuses, then we left, it was really absurd."

13. Genscher in *Ludenscheider Gespräch* on April 25, 2001.
14. This contradicts the views of various other person, primarily of Krenz (see below).
15. If this is true, then it could have occurred only through the envoy Maximytshev.
16. Eduard Shevardnadze in interview with Blumenberg, 1999.
17. Shevardnadze in ZDF Interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
18. In Interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
19. Interview with me, 1999.
20. Assembled from *Deutschlandspiel* interviews with Krenz and Schabowski.
21. Hertle assumes in the sixth edition of his history of the fall of the Wall that it did not occur until 23:30.
22. Boris Snetkov was the Supreme Commander of the Western group of the Soviet armed forces.
23. Aram Radomski in interview with Thomas Schubauer, 1999.
24. Interview von Blumenberg with Igor Maximichev, 1999.
25. Interview with Schabowski, 1999.
26. Interview Hans-Christoph Blumenberg with Egon Krenz, 1999.
27. Interview Hans-Christoph Blumenberg with Portugalov, 1999.
28. Because it was Gorbachev himself who requested a report via Kochemassov (Krenz in an interview, 1999).
29. In an interview, 1999.
30. In DzD, Doc. no. 78 of 10.11.1989, p. 501 f.
31. In Interview with Guido Knopp, 2000.
32. Teltschik in ZDF Interview, 1999.
33. In interview with Guido Knopp.
34. At the time General Secretary and Head of the Supreme Soviet. Gorbachev did not become president until 1990.
35. Teltschik in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
36. DzD, p. 504, footnote 1.
37. DzD, Doc. No. 80 of 10.11.1989, p. 504 f. The oral message was also passed on to Krenz and its content is almost the same, although the choice of words is somewhat sharper and in its concepts more “eastern:” for example “Berlin (West)” instead of “Berlin,” “BRD” instead of “Bundesrepublik,” etc.
38. SAPMO-Barch, DY/30/IV 2/2.039/319, sheet 15 and 16.
39. SAPMO-Barch, DY/30/IV 2/2.039/sheet 38–46.
40. SAPMO-Barch, DY/30/IV2/2.039/319.
41. DzD, Doc. No. 86, p. 513 ff.
42. From the office of Krenz in SAPMO-Barch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, sheet 22–25.
43. DzD, Doc. No. 87 of 11.11.1989, p. 515 ff.
44. Krenz 1999, p. 210.
45. *Ibid.*, Schalck-Golodkowski would be removed from the SED-PDS only one month later.
46. Gorbachev Foundation, 89NOV01; also Krenz 1999, p. 193 f. Krenz even mentions in his memoirs that Gorbachev “two years later still believed that I had saved Modrow from being removed in Dresden. But this was not necessary.” (*Ibid.* p. 194).
47. Interview with Anatoli Chernayev on October 2, 2001.

48. C.f. my interviews with Modrow on July 8, 2008, October 8, 2008, and November 11, 2009.
49. Both quotes from the *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* with Lothar de Maizière on November 1, 2000.
50. In *Neues Deutschland* of November 18 and 19, 1989; thus Modrow delivered the speech itself only four days after becoming prime minister.
51. Interview with Chernayev on October 1, 2001.
52. SAPMO-Barch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/317, sheet 168ff, especially sheet 169.
53. Extracts from material of Elf99 and from the interview with the directors Jan Carpentier and George Langerbeck with Thomas Schubauer 1999 and 2000.
54. A reminder: Portugalov, born 1928, was not a high functionary, but had an excellent knowledge of German and much experience with Germany. He referred to himself as a member of the so-called Germanistenfraktion.
55. A “Non-Paper” is a diplomatic term meaning a written document of another state that has not been officially endorsed.
56. Nikolai Portugalov in *Lüdenscheider Gespräche* on November 1, 1999; Teltschik confirmed it in the conversation with me later. C.f. Mary S. Sarotte *1989* (2009, pp. 72–74).
57. Cited after DzD 1998, 616ff.
58. What is referred to here is the joint declaration made during Gorbachev’s visit in Bonn.
59. DzD 1998, 616 ff.
60. Teltschik 1991, p. 44.
61. Teltschik in interview on September 27, 2000. This is how the contents of this talk are interpreted in most historical works, also by Weidenfeld in his highly informative book (1998, p. 81ff) because the effects of the visit concerned above all the politics of reunification and less at this time the questions about membership in the alliances.
62. In interview with me on November 1, 1999, in Lüdenscheid. I interviewed Portugalov several times: twice in 1999 and once each in 2000 and 2001.
63. Horst Teltschik in conversation with me on September 27, 2000. The “Non-Paper” is in his private collection.
64. In *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* on November 1, 1999.
65. This jibes with Portugalov’s and Modrow’s statements.
66. Interview with Chernayev of October 2, 2001.
67. DzD 1998, 616 ff, including the footnote in which the publisher once more refers explicitly to Portugalov as the messenger.
68. This note in the minutes leads to the question of why Portugalov was described by Kohl “as a small light” and by Teltschik at most a “weathervane” for the Moscow winds, if he was the “agreed upon” courier of Gorbachev.
69. Horst Teltschik in a letter to me of February 19, 2001.
70. Letter to me of March 6, 2002.
71. Portugalov in conversation with me October 1, 2001 in Moscow.
72. The conversation with Kryuchkov I carried out before Falin revised his position in this question, namely on November, 5, 1999 in Moscow.
73. Yegor Kusmitch Ligachev, born 1920. From 1983 to 1990 Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU for Cadre, Party Administration, and since 1988 also for Agriculture, from 1985 to 1990 full member of the Politburo.

74. Ligachev in conversation with me on November 5, 1999 in Moscow.
75. Weidenfeld 1998, p. 82.
76. Cf. Mary S. Sarotte 1989 (2009, pp. 72–74); she also sees the importance of Portugalov’s visit for the further development very clearly and titles this chapter “The Portugalov Push.” I emphasize a bit more that Portugalov wrote the “non-paper” for himself, that he asked not only for the conditions of reunification but of its future international alliances, especially the military ones, and that Teltschik assumed at that time that “Godfather himself”—that means Gorbachev—stood behind this non-paper.
77. Both, Portugalov and Teltschik, agreed in general on this interpretation.
78. Claus-Jürgen Duisberg and Rüdiger Kass (*Arbeitskreis Deutschlandpolitik*—Work group for German Politics), Norbert Prill, Michael Mertes, and Martin Hanz (the “ghostwriter” of the chancellor’s speeches), Horst Teltschik, his representative Peter Hartmann and two unit directors from Teltschik’s department, namely Uwe Kaestner and Joachim Bitterlich.
79. Present were the Rammstetter brothers, friends and personal confidants. The chancellor’s wife, Hannelore Kohl, typed and corrected on her old typewriter—a story that Teltschik disagrees with in his comments (compare the interview with Guido Knopp with the two Kohls, no year [1998] and the conversation of Teltschik with me on September 27, 2000).
80. According to Teltschik in conversation with me on September 27, 2000.
81. Press and Information Office of the Government, *Informationen aus Bonn*, November/December 1989.
82. Horst Teltschik in conversation with Press and Information Office of the Government, *Informationen aus Bonn*, November/December 1989. See also, Interview with me on September 27, 2000.
83. Ibidem.
84. Genscher in *Lüdenscheider Gespräche* with me on April 25, 2001.
85. Teltschik in conversation with me on September 27, 2000.
86. The Greens, Bundesgeschäftsstelle, *Kooperation statt Anschluss*, Bonn, 1990.
87. Diekmann/Reuth, p. 157.
88. *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, December 2, 1989.
89. Karsten Voigt, immediately after Kohl’s speech: “... we agree with you on all ten points.”
90. *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* with Hans-Jochen Vogel on November 7, 2001.
91. *Stern*, December 7, 1989.
92. C.f. Kohl in Kiekmann/Reuth, p. 163.
93. Statement of the government of the GDR in *Neues Deutschland* November 29, 1989.
94. C.f. *Der Spiegel* December 18, 1989, Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 541.
95. Modrow 1998, p. 103. C.f. my interviews with Modrow on August 7, October 8, and on November 10, 2009.
96. Ibid. Modrow cites Akhromeyev’s remembrances without exact citations.
97. Gorbachev Foundation, 89DEC02.
98. On November 29, 1989, Baker commented positively on reunification and in his report to the press about the Malta summit with Gorbachev on December 6, 1989. Bush repeated this view by his government (DzD, p. 633, footnote 2).
99. C.f. DzD, Doc. No. 119, p. 633 ff.

100. Regarding the visit of the GDR delegation and the relevant context, see Nakath/Stephan 1996, pp. 231–255.
101. There is a further indication that at least the Soviet foreign ministry still needed to be informed—how exactly also about the “Non Paper” is unknown until the present.
102. Kvitsinski in his book *Vor dem Sturm* cited from Modrow 1998, p. 103.
103. In addition to the documents, Biermann 1997, p. 342 ff. and Shevardnadze 1993, p. 240, also mentioned such moods.
104. Genscher 1995, p. 682 ff. C.F. also Gorbachev on the “Ten Points” and Genscher’s visit 199, p. 712 f.
105. It is not possible to list all the relevant academic works. Representative of the American literature I wish to mention Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 199 ff., because it provides the most detail about the general sources and is the only one to go further and refer to a Soviet file, that apparently Weidenfeld, who here represents the German literature, also used as a source (Weidenfeld 1998, p. 120 ff.); also Biermann 1997, p. 230 ff and p. 340 ff., Teltschik 1991, p. 67 f., Kiessler/Elbe 1993/ p. 69.
106. In Weidenfeld this sentence was more freely and therefore better formulated after a double translation from Russian to American English and then into German: “He believes apparently that he is setting the tone and is marching ahead.”
107. This sentence is not mentioned either in Zelikow/Rice or Weidenfeld.
108. In the German translation of Zelikow and Rice this sentence is the same. In Weidenfeld it is even sharper: “This has all not been thought through.” But it does agree with the original overall.
109. Gorbachev Foundation, 89DEC05. Hans-Dietrich Genscher does not quote this sentence in his memoirs; he quoted other critical expressions just as rarely. It is understandable that he did not do so at that time in order to moderate the situation. Why he still did not quote it years after the reunification is hardly understandable—possibly out of personal consideration for Shevardnadze and Gorbachev.
110. All quotes are from the Soviet protocol in the Gorbachev Foundation 89DEC05.
111. DzD, p. 634.
112. Both with reference to the fact that with this politics of reunification Gorbachev’s position was endangered.
113. According to Kohl in the ZDF interview with Guido Knopp.
114. Interview with Charles Powell the close advisor of the British prime minister and direct contact of Horst Teltschik. See also Anderson/Kaltenthaler/Luthardt 1993.
115. Interview of Hans-Christoph Blumenberg with Jacques Attali, 1999.
116. DzD, p. 473.
117. *Lüdenscheider Gespräche* with Horst Teltschik on September 27, 2000.
118. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 19.
119. This and the following quotes on the meeting in Kiev are from the protocol of the Gorbachev Foundation 89DEC06.
120. The British prime minister was also criticized: “Mrs. Thatcher does not respond adequately to the changes in the world and isolates herself.”

121. Attali in an interview, 1999.
122. From Weidenfeld 1998, p. 157.
123. Kohl among others in a ZDF interview 1999: “There was a, yes, an almost hostile atmosphere in the room. In all my years as chancellor in the EU/EC I have never experienced a comparable atmosphere.” Even Andreotti spoke of a “Pangermanization,” though he later became a friend in the politics of unification.
124. Jacques Attali, *Verbatim III* (1988–1991), Paris 1995, p. 450; similarly also in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg 1999.
125. The same was reported by Genscher in a conversation in 2001, that he had then during the formulation of the final file of Helsinki carried opposite Gromyko. See also Genscher in Chapter 2.4.2 *Entspannungspolitik und deutsche Einheit*.
126. Allan Clark in his memoirs (*locis citatus*).
127. Chamberlain was referred to as an appeaser after 1938.
128. Portugalov in *Lüdenscheider Gespräche* on November 1, 1999; more sophisticated is Klaus Larres: *Margaret Thatcher and German Unification Revisited*, lin Mueller et al. 2014.
129. Attali in conversation with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999. Frederic Bozo confirms this view on Mitterrand’s politics concerning reunification and European unity—including his differences to Thatcher. C.f. Frederic Bozo: *Mitterrand, The End of the Cold War and German Unification*, translated from the French by Susan Emanuel, New York: Berghahn, 2009. The same does Georges Saunier: *France, the East European Revolutions, and the Reunification of Germany*, in Mueller et al. 2014, and Tilo Schabert: *Mitterrand et la réunification allemande. Une histoire secrète* 1981, Paris 2005.
130. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 202.
131. *Ibid.*, footnote 104.
132. “Stop or postpone” were her later words.
133. Genscher in *Lüdenscheider Gespräche*.
134. Shakespeare’s “John Lackland” is in German “Johann Ohneland”; Johann is the origin of Hans (Modrow).
135. Cf. My interviews with Modrow in 2008 and 2009; Arnold, Karl-Heinz: *Die ersten hundert Tage des Hans Modrow*, Berlin 1990.
136. According to Modrow 1999, p. 376, in his book one year earlier Modrow wrote that Foreign Minister Fischer himself was present.
137. Modrow’s complete reprimand of Gorbachev: “While the USA did nothing without letting the Federal Republic know about what it was doing, Gorbachev did not even inform his own people thoroughly and anyway the GDR was always the last link in the information chain” (Modrow 1999, p. 416). C.f. my interviews with Modrow in 2008 and 2009.
138. The “Point” form seems to have been widespread: Gorbachev six, Vogel five, Kohl ten, and Bush had “Four Principles.” That this counting, which seems almost automatic, was intended to cut rough swathes through the complexity of developments is naturally only a conjecture.
139. According to Modrow 1998, p. 126 ff.
140. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 211.
141. DzD, p. 637.

142. Baker 1996, p. 167.
143. Ibid., p. 167; Modrow 1998, p. 105 f.
144. DzD, footnote 1, p. 658.
145. Letter, Foreign Minister Baker to Chancellor Kohl, n.d., in DzD, Doc. no. 125, p. 658.
146. Rice in interview with me, 1999.
147. Baker 1995, p. 168; Modrow 1998, p. 105; Zelikow/Rice, p. 212.
148. Modrow 1998, p. 130 ff.
149. According to Weidenfeld 1998, p. 159. On December 9, 1989 in Strasbourg Mitterrand had emphasized to Kohl that he did not want to compete with Kohl in his visit to the GDR and especially not in that time (December 20), as it had been suggested in the media. But that such a problem could occur had been seen by Mitterrand or he would not have mentioned it to Kohl. On his side Kohl did say that it was “an ideal time” for Mitterrand’s visit to the GDR, but then he visited the DDR before the French president. (DzD, doc. no. 117, p. 628 ff.)
150. Interview de Margerie with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 2000.
151. Genscher 1995, p. 704 f.
152. See my interviews with Modrow 2008 and 2009.
153. All quotations from Modrow 1999 (*Ich wollte ein neues Deutschland*) [I Wanted a New Germany], p. 393 f.
154. Teltschik 1991, p. 95.
155. Teltschik 1991, p. 96.
156. Modrow 1999, p. 403 f.
157. In an interview with GDR television, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (ed.), Bulletin of December 15, 1989.
158. Genscher 1995, p. 697 ff.
159. Kohl in interview with Guido Knopp, 1999.
160. Ibid.
161. ZDF interview Modrow Tape 83/05:17 f.
162. ZDF interview Modrow Tape 84/06:01:25 ff (interviewer’s name is not given).
163. The private meeting between Modrow and Kohl is not printed in the Federal Chancellor’s files but only the one that followed immediately after among a wider circle. In these there were only reports about the private meeting before it (DzD, Doc. no. 129, p. 668 ff.).
164. Presentation of Deputy Assistant Under Secretary Ludewig to the chief of the Chancellor’s Office Seiter, Bonn, December 13, 1989 in DzD, doc. 122, p. 643 f.
165. DzD “Schreiben des Bundeskanzlers Kohl an den Generalsekretär Goratschow”, Bonn, December 14, 1989, doc. 123, p. 645ff. The letter was sent only later, probably on December 18, 1989, through confidential channels.
166. Teltschik reports for the whole year 1989: 343,854 migrants.
167. All quotations from DzD, doc. no. 123, p. 645.
168. DZD, doc. no. 126, p. 658 f.
169. All quotes from DzD, doc. no. 129, p. 668 ff.
170. This list is not in the files of the chancellor’s office.

171. Modrow 1999, p. 392.
172. "Information für die Mitglieder des Politbüros," n.d. (but still for Krenz!), (SAPMO-B-Arch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/320, Bl. 5–7). Here it also says, with some displeasure, "the opening of the Brandenburg Gate signifies the recognition of the unity of Germany"; as well it cast doubt on the other security measures, including the border troops. But then there is a change: "If a crossing point at the Brandenburg Gate cannot be avoided a written guarantee or a bilateral agreement should be considered, according to which the West Berlin police as well as the allies secure the border Berlin (West)—Berlin, capital city of the GDR." "For the opening of the Brandenburg Gate a price must be negotiated on our part (!)." Opening without cars, restriction to foot traffic. The American ambassador Vernon Walters had declared on November 12, 1989 at a meeting with the Soviet ambassador in East Berlin, Kochemassov, that it was only his personal opinion when he said that the Brandenburg Gate had to be opened. (SAPMO-BArch, Central Committee of the SED- Office Egon Krenz, DY30/IV 2/2.039, Bl. 26–33.)
173. Kohl held fast to this idea, reports Horst Teltschik, even though Seiters and Teltschik were opposed to it (Teltschik 1991, p. 88). This is one story that does not escape historical irony, because a chorale had already once played a part against the German hymn "Deutschlandlied," though from another direction: in 1949 after the discussion of the constitution the parliamentarians, lacking a national anthem—the *Deutschlandlied* was prohibited—sang a chorale: "Ich hab' mich ergeben mit Herz und Hand." (I have given myself with heart and hand [to God]).
174. Kohl in interview with Guido Knopp 1999.
175. Arnold Vaatz, interviewed by Melanie List and Alexander von Plato, Dresden November 17, 2009, March 9, and April 8, 2010. C.f. our interviews with the former dissident and later Lord Mayor of Dresden Herbert Wagner, March 6, 2009 in Dresden.
176. Rice in interview with me, 1999. In her book Zelikow and Rice wrote that "the enthusiastic participation of the people of the whole world (showed) the desire of East Germans for reunification and Kohl took the opportunity offered to him (...) Even in Washington the worry began to spread that the chancellor and his party could act imprudently" (Zelikow/Rice 1997, 214f.)
177. Exactly: 1989 = 343,854 vs. 39,832 in 1988.
178. C.f. on the opposition movement in the GDR especially: Lindner 1998, Meckel/Gutzeit 1994, Dow/Eckart 1993, Gransow/Jarusch 991, Thaysen 1990, *Gesamtdeutsches Intitut* 1990, Fricke/Lechner/Thaysen 1990, Knabe 1989, Rein 1989.
179. A concept from the time between the February and October Revolutions in 1917 in Russia, as the Soviets took over a kind of ruling function beside the "real" government.
180. According to Linder 1998, Thaysen 1990, p. 45, Maier 1990, p. 29.
181. Ulrike Poppe in interview with Blumenberg. Nearly in the same words she repeated this statement in four interviews with me from 2007 until 2011.
182. Gunther Begenau in interviews with me in 1998 and 2008.
183. Ibid.

184. Those who signed first at the press conference on November 26, 1989: Götz Berger, lawyer; Wolfgang Berghofer, community politician; Frank Beyer, director; Volker Braun, writer; Reinhard Brühl, military historian; Tamara Danz, rock singer; Christoph Demke, bishop; Siegrid England, educator; Bernd Gehrke, economist; Sighard Gille, painter; Stefan Heym, writer; Uwe Jahn, construction manager; Gerda Jun, physician/psychotherapist; Dieter Klein, political economist; Günter Krusche, general superintendent; Brigitte Lebentrau, biologist; Bernd P. Löwe, peace researcher; Thomas Montag, doctor; Andreas Pella, construction engineer; Sebastian Pflugbeil, physicist; Ulrike Poppe, housewife; Martin Schmidt, economist; Friedrich Schorlemmer, priest; Andrée Türpe, philosopher; Jutta Wachowiak, actress; Heinz Warzecha, general director; Konrad Weiss, filmmaker; Angela Wintgen, dentist; Christa Wolf, writer; Ingeborg Graße, nurse. Walter Janka, who—as was announced—could not take part in the press conference for organizational reasons, agreed with the appeal, but had nevertheless did not sign it.
185. Interview in Frankfurter Rundschau of November 9, 1989, *Kontrovers. Die Wende in der DDR*, Bonn July 1990.
186. Joachim Gauck confirmed this to me on February 26, 2002 in an public conversation and again in 2008 in an interview with me.
187. From Leipziger Volkszeitung of December 12, 1989.
188. C.f. on the meetings of the Runde Tisch SAPMO-BArch, DY30/J IV 2/2/2309.
189. DzD, p. 716 ff. According to this the participants in the meeting besides Seiter were: *Demokratischer Aufbruch*: Erhard Neubert, Fred Ebeling, Dr. Gericke, Andreas Apelt; *Demokratie Jetzt*: Konrad Weiß, Dr. Hans-Jürgen Fischbeck; Grüne Partei: Dr. Christine Weiske; *Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte*: Herr Weißhuhn; *Unabhängiger Frauenverband*: Dr. Ina Merkel (SED-PDS); *Neues Forum*: Bärbel Bohley, Dr. Brandenburg; *Grüne Liga*: Gisela Henze, Falk Zimmermann; *Vereinigte Linke*: Bernd Gehrke.
190. SAPMO-BArch, DA/3/1 of December 7, 1989.
191. Gunther Begenau in interviews with me in 1998 and 2008.
192. See Timofeeva 2002.
193. In this context the records of Georgi Shakhnasarov (1996), who was widely seen as a friend and political confidant of Gorbachev are particularly interesting because he speaks of a military-industrial complex, against which Gorbachev had to assert himself and did indeed do so. (*The Price of Freedom: Gorbachev's Reformation through the Eyes of His Aide*, 1993) as well as Yakovlev (see the chapter "Yakovlev pleads..." C.f. my essay, "Opposition Movements and Big Politics in Re-Unification of Germany," in Mueller et al., Vienna, 2014.
194. Horst Teltschik in conversation with me on September 27, 2000.
195. Institute for Sociology of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, printed in the periodical *Argumenty i Fakty* und cited from Maier 1990, p. 100.
196. Modrow 1998, p. 111. C.f. my interviews with Modrow, 2009 and 2010.
197. Ibid.
198. DzD, Dokument Nr. 127, S. 660. Emphasis by Ministerial Director Hartmann, who wrote the summary for Kohl.
199. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 217. Gorbachev himself does not explain this speech.

200. Ibid., p. 217.
201. Zelikow/Rice 1997. The two authors refer to interviews that they themselves carried out with Tarassenko in October 1991 (Rice) and in June 1993 (Zelikow).
202. DzD, p. 676 ff. Die speech itself was an attachment: "Wortlaut der Rede AM Schewardnades vor dem politischen Ausschuß des EP zur deutschen Frage," in: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. Nachrichtenspiegel I. Nr. 353, 20. December 1989, Anhang III. See also Europa-Archiv (Dokuments 5/1990, D 129–D132).
203. Condoleezza Rice in interview with me on September 17, 1999.
204. C.f. the interview with Shevardnadse with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg for the ZDF-docudrama *Deutschlandspiel*.
205. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 217 ff. The two authors rely on interviews they carried out personally with Tarassenko in October 1991 (Rice) and in June 1993 (Zelikow).
206. Interview with Shevardnadze with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg for the ZDF-docudrama *Deutschlandspiel*, 1999.
207. Ibidem.
208. Falin 1997, p. 199 f.
209. Shevardnadze in the interview, 1999.
210. Anatoli Chernayev in conversation with me on October 2, 2001: "I believe anyway that he (Falin) was disappointed when not he but Shevardnadze was appointed foreign minister."
211. Even in the case of Zelikow and Rice, who as members of the staff in the White House should actually have had been able to present an exact picture of the political currents in the Politburo, there is no outline of personalities of the Politburo.
212. Yegor Ligachev in conversation with me on November 5, 1999 in Moscow.
213. At the end of November 1989, Modrow expressed a similar thought: "No one wanted reunification then, neither in the East nor in the West. Also not the population of the GDR." According to *Spiegel* there were in an unrepresentative waren in einer nichtrepräsentativen poll 71 percent of the population of the GDR were opposed to reunification, only 27 percent in favor. (Statement of the government of the GDR in *Neues Deutschland* of November 29, 1989). However, that should change soon.
214. Ibid.
215. Conversation of October 2, 2001.
216. I have no Soviet protocol for this meeting because I was allowed to see the protocols of the meetings in which Gorbachev participated.
217. Baker 1996, p. 182.
218. Shakhnasarov 1996 (in German), p. 150, and footnote 9.
219. Anatoli Chernayev in conversation on October 2, 2001.
220. Vladimir Kryuchkov in conversation with me November 5, 1999, in Moscow.
221. Compare his two books that have appeared in German: *Politische Erinnerungen und Konflikte im Kreml* (see bibliography).
222. Teltschik in conversation with me on September 27, 2000.
223. Valentin Falin in conversation with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg, 1999.
224. Anatoli Chernayev in conversation with me on October 2, 2001 in Moscow.

225. See also Falin 1999 (originally 1997), p. 198 ff., or Falin 1993, p. 492.
226. Today Falin's veracity is questioned by some participants (Teltschik, Chernayev, in parts Portugalov), primarily because of his contradictory positions. We do not always know if they originated in the growing alternative to Gorbachev that he could not express too clearly earlier because of party discipline and a required diplomatic loyalty or if he expressed it more clearly after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
227. Anatoli Chernayev in conversation with me on November 5, 1999 in Moscow.
228. Falin writes that this meeting was the first meeting of a crisis group dealing with German unity, which he had suggested. On the other hand no other participant mentions this. Falin 1995, p. 489 ff.
229. Gorbachev 1993, p. 714 f., and Chernayev 1993, p. 296 f.
230. Falin's political memoirs appeared first in 1993, then in paperback in 1995.
231. Valentin Falin, *Konflikte im Kreml. Zur Vorgeschichte der deutschen Einheit*, Munich 1997, quoted from the Siedler version, 1999.
232. Georgy Shakhnazarov (in German: Georgi Schachnazarow 1996, originally: Shakhnazarov): *The Price of Freedom*, 1993, p.150.
233. Kryuchkov in an interview, November 1999.
234. The content of this footnote comes from the version that was provided to us as the original although it was, as one can see from the contents of the footnote, apparently a later copy. That this footnote was written later Anatoli Chernayev explained to me with an earlier planned publication.
235. Elke Sherstyanoi generously assisted me with the translations.
236. Even still on March 6, 2002 in his written answers to me.
237. For example Biermann 1997, p. 388 ff.; Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 233. It appears that Falin had the same problems in determining the date because he writes only that it took place "at this time" (Falin 1995, p. 489).
238. Ryskov, Yuri Alexeyevich, born 1930, from 1985 to 1991 head of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and from 1985 to 1990 at the same time full member of the Politburo of the CPSU.
239. Yasov Dmitri Timofeyvich, born 1923, Marshal of the Soviet Union, 1987 to 1991 Minister of Defence of the USSR, later in the putch against Gorbachev.
240. Ivashko, Vladimir Antonovich, 1932 to 1994, 1989 to 1990 First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine.
241. According to Falin Gorbachev also opened the meeting but with a completely different sentence: "What can be done? All approaches can come under discussion except for the deployment of our troops" (Falin 1993, paperback version of 1995, p. 489). In his book *The Last Ten Years of a World Power* Chernayev wrote that he (Chernayev) "was the first" to speak and suggested that "we orient ourselves strictly according to the position of the FRG, because in the GDR we [had] absolutely no baking in the GDR" any more (1993, p. 296). According to the record this was Gorbachev's own consideration.
242. Literally: Modrow is fleeing from the SED (!).
243. According to Shakhnazarov Gorbachev's first sentences are somewhat different: "The events in Germany bring us, our friends, but also the Western powers into a difficult situation. The SED is collapsing. Now it is clear that unification is

- unavoidable, and we have no moral right to oppose it. Under these conditions what matters is that the interests of our country are preserved as far as possible. Included in them are the recognition of existing borders, a peace treaty that provides for the withdrawal of the Federal Republic from NATO, but at least the withdrawal of foreign troops, and a demilitarization of all of Germany.” As well, Gorbachev advised the friends to think about a union of the SED and SPD (Shakhnasarov 1996, p. 150). All of this sounds very much like a later smoothing and Shakhnasarov writes this passage also in context that should verify Gorbachev’s recognition of Soviet interests.
244. In one version of this record are the words “in reality” added. Both versions are archived in the Gorbachev Foundation under the date January 27, 1990. If this other version is an early version of the one provided by Chernayev could not be ascertained. Probably it also originates with him.
 245. The Polish border problems could affect not only German-Polish, but also the Polish-Soviet ones; because in 1945 the eastern border of Poland was pushed westward. The clarification of the German-Polish disagreement could therefore bring with it similar wishes for the settlement of this issue in East Poland into Soviet-Polish relations and thereby could become a potential insecurity for the Soviet Union.
 246. Chernayev, in interview of December 7, 2001, about Kryuchkov: “Kryuchkov was always in favour of what was accepted by the majority.” But for the question of this book it is of new interest that the KGB chief also in this record assumed the necessity of reunification and thereby confirms his stance from the interview.
 247. Modrow did not do this so clearly, when on the same day he met chancellor’s office minister Seiters and, without having consulted with the *Runde Tisch*, handed over a suggestion relating to the “treaty community” that went further (“Modrowplan”). Although here there was mention of an application from the GDR for membership in the EU, he assumed a first step to confederation within a longer process, while Kohl at this time wanted to proceed directly to unity after an election in the GDR without intermediate steps. Seiters noted in this regard, “clear that extensive contractual provisions could not be completed before the election” (DzD, p. 707). The “Modrow Plan” is also printed in DzD, p. 713 ff. Some see in this suggestion a “change in stance” in East Berlin (Weidenfeld, p. 224 f.), which does not immediately come out of the document, but after the connected “positive signals” of a despondent Modrow who absolutely needed financial assistance, might not be completely wrong.
 248. Chernayev in our interview on December 7, 2001, while we were leafing through his diary from 1990 and came across a remark by Falin recorded there but not in the minutes: “I (Chernayev) added another note here: ‘And this is what the the wisest person on Germany!’” Here, as in his book of 1993 Anatoli Chernayev confirms that Falin also represented this concept. (p. 296).
 249. May 6 was originally the date of elections in the GDR that was then presented through Modrow and the *Runde Tisch* on March 18, 1990.
 250. Parentheses in the original.
 251. Notes in the original.
 252. Gorbachev 1993, p. 715a.

253. Falin 1993, in the version from 1995, p. 490. This sentence sounds very much like a later prophylactic justification against possible accusations.
254. Chernayev 1993, p. 296. These essential passages are also confirmed by his diary of 1990.
255. Anatoli Chernayev in ZDF interview with me, November, 1999.
256. Chernayev in interview, 1999.
257. The source is given as the telephone call of Gorbachev with Mitterrand on January 14, 1989 (Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 200). I have access to the Soviet protocol of this call; this statement is, however, there (Gorbachev Foundation 89NOV14). This telephone call is actually interesting only because it concerns the next meeting between them. They agree in the rejection of the speed of the unification process, but both stick to Kohl; overall “Gorbachev could welcome this development (in the GDR)” if it were not for the efforts at unification in the GDR.
258. Condoleezza Rice in interview with me on September 17, 1999 at Stanford University.
259. This how Knopp quotes Kohl in the ZDF interview with him in 1999.
260. Teltschik in conversation with me, a.a.O.
261. In conversation with Modrow, Chernayev interviews with me on October 2, 2001, Gorbachev in his memoirs 1993, p. 712 ff. Zelikow and Rice also suspect that Gorbachev wanted to “rebuff” Kohl with his desire for a visit because of the “Ten Points” (Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 214).
262. Shevardnadze, however, explains his resignation 11 months later with such a threat.
263. Normally 13 billion DM are given, in reality it was 12 billion in assistance, plus 3 billion in interest-free credit (see below).
264. Conversation between Falin and Blumenberg, a.a.O.
265. Interview with Anatoli Chernayev on December 11, 2001.
266. In a letter to me of March 6, 2002.
267. Extract from Anatoli Chernayev’s diary from January 28, 1990.
268. In the letter to me of March 6, 2002.

5 2+4, 4+2 or 33+2? The Centers of Power Take Over the Negotiations on the International Aspects of Unity

1. This word—not the CSCE plan—was used by Baker in his memoirs (Baker 1996, p. 173).
2. Ibid.
3. Genscher 1995, p. 709.
4. Genscher in *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* on April 25, 2001.
5. C. f. on the parallels between Yalta and the later 2+4 negotiations: Timothy Garton Ash 1993, p. 508 ff.
6. Modrow observes, however, that this meeting was probably an initiative of the Soviet ambassador in East Berlin rather than of Moscow. (Modrow 1998, p. 106).

7. In Baker it is 10.1., but probably 12.1. is meant, as it appears from the files (DokUS-AM 11920 “Shevardnadze Message on Germany—Corrected Text,” according to Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 559, footnote 10).
8. Protocol of the advisory meeting of January 25, 1990. See the chapter: Decision for the Acceptance of Germany Unity? The Advisor Meeting of January 25, 1990.
9. Genscher 1995, p. 692 ff.
10. Baker later placed this meeting on December 12 and the Soviet ambassador Kochemassov existed for him only with his first name “Vyacheslav” (Baker 1996, p. 165).
11. There is, however, no indication of this bad mood in the protocol of the talk that Rudolf Seiters, minister of the chancellor’s office, had after the ambassadors’ meeting of the four victors with the three Western ambassadors. (C.f. DzD, Nr. 121 Gespräch des Bundesministers Seiters mit den Botschaftern der Drei Mächte, Bonn, December 13, 1989, p. 641 f.).
12. As is generally forgotten today, in Great Britain it was the Labour Party, and particularly its leader Neil Kinnock, who, in contrast with Margaret Thatcher, supported reunification, while in Germany the SPD, specifically Lafontaine (differently from Hans-Jochen Vogel) was more restrained in certain aspects of unification.
13. These sentences are a compilation from Baker 1996, Genscher 1995, Zelikow/Rice 1997, as well as my conversations with Baker and Genscher.
14. Genscher himself (1995, p. 696) says that he uttered these sentences sharply and in English.
15. Baker und Genscher in interview with me, also Genscher 1995, p. 696, Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 213.
16. Genscher 1995, p. 696.
17. *Ibid.*, S. 716. Without this dramatic attitude against a “new Versailles” on the German side see also Sarotte 2009, pp. 65 and pp. 61.
18. This was, as Baker noted, an idea of Rick Burt, formerly ambassador in the Federal Republic and negotiator in START (Baker 1996, p. 166).
19. *Ibid.*
20. See the chapter on the origin of the 10-Point Plan and the relevant excerpt from the interview with Horst Teltschik.
21. See the chapter “Consensus Effort in Europe.”
22. All quotes from DzD, doc. nr. 120 “Gespräch des Bundeskanzler Kohls mit Außenminister Baker Berlin (West), 12. Dezember 1989, p. 636 ff.
23. C.f. for example the letter from the Polish Prime Minister Mazowiecki to Kohl of January 30, 1990, in: DzD, p. 744 f., which, however, contains another veiled criticism.
24. Genscher 1995, p. 712. His emphasis.
25. Quote from Genscher, 1995, p. 713.
26. Conversation of Nikolai Portugalow, Ulrich Lenze, and me on May 10, 1999 in Berlin.
27. Baker in interview with me 1999.
28. There were already similar declarations in the Helsinki and Warsaw agreements.
29. Genscher 1995, p. 714.

30. In a conversation with the producer of *Deutschlandspiel*, Ulrich Lenze, and me on May 10 1999 (see the protocol) and two other times in later conversations, most recently in a conversation in Moscow at the beginning of October 2001.
31. In conversation with me on September 25, 1999 in Washington.
32. Cf. Zelikow/Rice 1997 or the interview with Rice in 1999.
33. However, as will be shown later, both German parliaments would issue a declaration on the German-Polish border in the summer of 1990 and the German government would put an end to this debate through the Polish-German border treaty of November 14, 1990, that is, after unification. See the chapters: "The People's Chamber, the *Bundestag*, the Polish Government, and the Border Question" and "The Conclusions."
34. Cf. Beker, Avid and Simona Kedmi: *German Unification. A Jewish-Israeli Perspective*, Jerusalem 1991.
35. Baker 1996, p. 176, Genscher 1995, p. 716 f. See also Sarotte 2009, pp.
36. This is not mentioned by Zelikow and Rice in relation to here position in the White House. However, see the position of Philip Zelikow in his essay US Strategic Planning in 1989–90, in Muller et al., Vienna 2014.
37. Chernayev 1993, p. 296 and p. 457.
38. How far Shevardnadze had a different view can unfortunately not be learned from the protocols; in one he is in favor of the 4+2, in the other he worried, as mentioned, that this solution or a purely four-power conference would let the "NATO people" dominate.
39. Modrow 1998, p. 111.
40. Modrow 1999, p. 414.
41. DzD, Doc. 145A, p. 713 ff.
42. *Ibid.*, 114.
43. SAPMO-BArch, DA/3/ /10 of 29.01.90; Modrow 1999, p. 412; c.f. Herles/Rose 1990.
44. 10. *Sitzung des Runden Tisches* SAPMO-BArch, DA/3/ /10 of January 29, 1990.
45. Gorbachev 1995, p. 714.
46. ZDF-Interview with Guido Knopp, p. 53.
47. Modrow 1999, p. 415 f.
48. The conversation with Modrow is in the Gorbachev Foundation under: 90JAN30.
49. Which means at least 150 billion Marks in the currency at that time.
50. There had been incidents and complaints (c.f. SAPMO-BArch, Büro Egon Krenz DY/30/2/2.039/206–GSSD–1984–1989), but now such problems were indeed increasing and there were new subjects of criticism, for example the destruction of the environment (c.f. for example, SAPMO-BArch Büro Egon Krenz 1983–1989. DY 30/IV 2/2.039/334).
51. All quotes from the Gorbachev Foundation 90JAN30.
52. Incidentally Gregor Gysi had made a suggestion the middle of January with the demand that all foreign troops be withdrawn (Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 235).
53. Furthermore: Friday was January 26, contrary to Chernayev's diary, in which it is Thursday, namely the 25th. It is only a small difference that has less significance for the contents than for the assessment of the sources.

54. Modrow 1999, p. 416.
55. All quotes from the Gorbachev Foundation, doc. 90JAN30.
56. The version from *Neues Deutschland* is printed in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik III/ Bd.8a*—1990, Bonn 1991, p. 49 ff., also in Gorbachev Foundation, 90JAN30, as an appendix.
57. Weidenfeld p. 228; Biermann 1997, p. 395 f.
58. Until now Modrow is really upset about Gorbachev, because he “forgot” already one week later this agreed connection between neutrality and reunification. However, Modrow knew, in the meantime, that a neutral united Germany would not have been accepted by nearly every neighbor or ally of Germany. I interviewed Modrow three times, lastly on June 6, 2010, and even then he showed his anger at Gorbachev just concerning this question very clearly.
59. Modrow 1999, p. 415.
60. Weidenfeld 1998, footnote 42, p. 719.
61. DzD, doc. No. 156, p. 748 f.
62. Gorbachev writes in his memoirs that Baker came to Moscow on February 9, 1990; he mistakes the date of his talks, which actually took place on February 9, 1990, for the arrival time. But Baker had already had meetings with his Soviet counterpart before these talks, in fact already on the evening of February 7. Baker emphasized many times, according to the Soviet protocol, that he would take the time in order to clear up problems.
63. Baker 1996, p. 182.
64. In the meantime some of the Soviet minutes are published, but—as I mention in this and the following two chapters—they differ from files in the German and the American archives and sometimes from the Soviet ones that I got to read between 2000 and 2002 in Moscow. Zelikow und Rice quoted passages on this meeting, but they rely on the American protocol that was taken by Dennis Ross, political chief of staff in the State Department. This document is, however, not yet open; presumably the two authors had special access because of their political involvement. C.f. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p 259 ff. und footnote 58. C.f. also Beschloss/Talbott 1993, Oberdorfer 1991.
65. Cf. mainly Gorbachev’s memoirs (1995) or those of Shakhnasarov and Chernayev (1993), Baker (1996), Teltschik (1991), and others.
66. All of the following quotations come from the Soviet protocol of the meeting of M. S. Gorbachev with James Baker on February 9, 1990, at which only they were present, a meeting of the two where E. Shevardnadze was occasionally present, and a second meeting of an “expanded group” (Archives of the Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB09a und 90FEB9b).
67. For example, in Weidenfeld the heading of the chapter on the meeting of Kohl with the Soviet General Secretary is: “Gorbachev Clears the Way,” although this heading would be completely applicable to the relatively short section on Gorbachev’s meeting with Baker (Weidenfeld 1998, pp. 234 and 237 ff.).
68. Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB09a.
69. This is surprising, because Shevardnadze had been at the advisors’ meeting of January 25, where the six grouping (4+2) was agreed to. Either he had not agreed with the “4+2” suggestion (but a vote had not been recorded) or he rejected it, as is to be concluded from the second version of this protocol.

- However, according to Falin (1993 [Taschenbuch 1995], p. 491) and in whose presence Shevardnadze had later received from Gorbachev “the strict instruction” to “insist on the 4+2” version.
70. Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB9b.
 71. Anatoli Chernayev in conversation with me on December 6, 2001.
 72. Dulles, then secretary of state, wrote, for example, on May 9, 1958: “I think about Germany, that it will present a danger to the world, until it is closely allied with other countries, that a separation is no longer possible. Tying Germany to France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and the USA—that is the way to make Germany harmless” (Link 1984, p. 22).
 73. Falin claims in his memories of this time to have heard exactly this from Gorbachev (see Falin’s political memories, 1995 [Taschenbuch] p. 489 ff.).
 74. Gorbachev Foundation 90FEB9b. This formulation aims at a general NATO membership as well as at a limited “French” membership for the united Germany.
 75. Sarotte 2009, p. 110.
 76. In Baker’s memoirs, as well as in the American protocol, which he quotes, Gorbachev phrases his remarks on France and Great Britain similarly: “who is going to be the major player in Europe.” (Baker 1996, p. 183). In Zelikow and Rice it is the same version as Baker’s (Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 260).
 77. Baker 1996, p. 183.
 78. Ibid.
 79. Gorbachev 1993, p. 716.
 80. Here Anatoli Chernayev’s guess that Baker tactic was to speak with guile about the alleged unknown position of the German government in the question of 2+4 becomes understandable: because of course Baker knew that it was exactly the Germans who at this time preferred the form of “2+4.” On February 3, 1990 he had, as Baker himself writes, received Genscher who was “enthusiastic” about this form.
 81. DzD, Doc. nr. 170, p. 784 f.
 82. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 265. The formulation “special military status” of the GDR was used by Wörner, NATO General Secretary at the time, in a speech in Hamburg on February 8, 1990; it was incorporated by Blackwill and Zelikow and permitted by Scowcroft for Bush’s letter of February 9, 1990.
 83. Literally: “totally possible.”
 84. In his memoirs Gorbachev repeats only Baker’s statements, among them the guarantee not to expand NATO to the current eastern borders, but Gorbachev does not repeat this remark, not even in his summary at the end of the chapter, in which he expresses the reasons for his support of reunification. Gorbachev, 1995, p. 716. Sarotte believes Gorbachev in this point: “This agreement was extremely significant to the Soviet leader. He later recalled it as the moment ‘that cleared the way for a compromise’ on Germany. (...) Unwisely, Gorbachev let the meeting end without securing this agreement in any kind of written form.” (Sarotte, 2009, p. 110). I agree with the latter point; however, Gorbachev’s talks with Baker, the general secretary is on the one hand not clear in accepting Germany’s unity and against a membership of a united one or two Germanies in NATO, but did not agree to it; and on the other hand he did not contradict explicitly Baker’s strategic considerations with his own strategy of a new security

- architecture in Europe which could replace NATO and the Warsaw Pact. That would come ten weeks later—and then it was too late. Here, on February 9, Gorbachev did not even press Baker on the question of the withdrawal of American and Soviet troops in Europe as a condition for German unity.
85. Ligachev in conversation with me on November 5, 1999 in Moscow.
 86. From the ZDF interview with Modrow, Tape 82/04:14:30–04:16:01.
 87. Some suspect that Baker had made the declaration that NATO authority would not be carried over to the GDR area only in consideration of Genscher. (John Kornblum in his interview of November 3, 1994 in Weidenfeld 1998, p. 723, footnote 52). This appears to me rather unbelievable because here there was a constant exchange between Genscher and Baker, and Baker declares that all the solutions connected with these were his, which he—as mentioned—presented to Genscher who was “excited” by this idea.
 88. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 226: “Both Washington and Bonn hoped that Modrow would be able to keep his country together until the elections in May.”
 89. DzD, Doc. no. 154, p. 744 ff.
 90. The Kohl-Eagleburger meeting is printed in DzD, Doc. Nr. 153, p. 739 ff.
 91. *Ibid.*, S. 743.
 92. In the files of the Chancellor’s Office, DzD, Doc. no. 166.
 93. *Ibid.*, p. 775.
 94. Teltschik 1991, p. 127.
 95. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 262.
 96. The Genscher version was too sharply distinguished from their own by the colleagues in the White House (Zelikow und Rice), possibly also because Baker had asserted to Gorbachev along the following lines: there would be no extension of NATO to the territory of the GDR. Here the small rivalry between the White House and the State Department become visible.
 97. In the files of the Chancellor’s Office DzD, Doc. no. 170 (the private letter 171), p. 784 f.
 98. What could be meant here? The intrinsic political role of NATO in the Cold War? Or simply NATO as a political instrument? Why then the concept of the original political role?
 99. DzD, p. 784 f.
 100. Zelikow and Rice also describe this as a “binding agreement” of Baker (p. 261), presumably not quite finished with presenting as the “better” approach the harder line of Bush, to whom were closer than the secretary of state.
 101. Baker did not mention that he stressed the threat of a neutral Germany.
 102. Baker’s letter according to the chancellor’s office files, Doc. no. 173, p. 793.
 103. DzD, Doc. no. 174, p. 795 ff.
 104. Gorbachev Foundation, meeting protocols, 90FEB10A.
 105. DzD, Doc. 175, Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB10B.
 106. In Bonn there was great awareness of the significance of this visit while preparations were being made for it and it was compared with the first visit by Konrad Adenauer in Moscow.
 107. This refers to the assistance that Kohl referred to as a particularly important measure that would build trust in a difficult time at the beginning of this visit. (See the section in chapter 3, “A Grand Reception” in Bonn.)

108. This renewed offer of help is quoted in much more detail in Russian than in German.
109. In the description of the desolate conditions in the GDR Teltschiks protocol is much more detailed.
110. That Kohl did not do this was one of Modrow's main points of criticism because the necessary materials were not provided.
111. In the German protocol there is greater emphasis that "both sides" should learn the lessons from history (op.cit., p. 798).
112. START = Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (abbreviated as SNW in the Russian protocol).
113. In Rapallo 1922: Completion of a treaty of Germany with the Soviet Union, in which both broke out of their international isolation and both relinquished the payment of war damages and the costs after the war. There was fear particularly in Poland and among Germany's wartime opponents that this alliance was directed against them.
114. DzD, p. 799.
115. This section is, surprisingly, much more sensitively put in regard to Soviet fears.
116. The Federal Constitutional Court was, in laying out the basic law, of the opinion that neither the Federal government nor the Bundestag could speak for the united Germany, but only the complete German parliament (according to the peace treaty). In regard to the problems related to this issue during unification, see also the chapters "The People's Chamber, the Bundestag, the Polish Government, and the Border Questions" as well as "The Conclusions."
117. According to the German protocol: "Will the Federal Republic disappear?" General Secretary Gorbachev asked. Did the Chancellor not fear this?" (laughs)
118. This was, however, exactly what he had stated with regard to the border question.
119. In the German protocol it is more credible: "With regard to the election campaign in the GDR, the general secretary must know that in the case of Thuringia and Saxony it is a matter of ancient German provinces that are characterized by a long party history." (p. 801).
120. In the German protocol is added to the interruption by Gorbachev: "... that the Federal Republic influences the GDR through all channels. But this is the affair of the Germans." (Ibid.)
121. This sentence does not appear in either of the two protocols.
122. In the German protocol: "The Chancellor emphasized once more his position that peace should issue from German soil. This assumes, however, that the internal peace is preserved." (DzD, p. 802)
123. In the German protocol: Kohl wanted to achieve the "internal support of the majority of the affected Germans."
124. This is a surprising figure of speech of Gorbachev: it introduces a theme but at the same time relates it to his opponent and then takes it up again.
125. DzD, p. 804.
126. In the German protocol it makes more sense: "In return the West would keep NATO together." (DzD, p. 804)
127. Gorbachev Foundation, meeting protocol, 90FEB10B.
128. According to Horst Teltschik 1993, p. 141 f.
129. Teltschik 1993, p. 143.

130. Declaration of Chancellor Kohl to the press on February 10, 1990 in Moscow in: Facsimile, DzD, p. 812 f.
131. This scene was filmed.
132. Teltschik in *Lüdenschneider Gespräch* with me on September 27, 2002.
133. Teltschik 1993, p. 143. My emphases.
134. Modrow in ZDF-Interview Reel 83/00:13:29 ff.
135. In conversation with Elke Scherstjanoi and me on February 28, 2002.
136. Gorbachev's letter to me on March 6, 2002.
137. This sentence is not complete in the Russian original.
138. Chernayev in his book, 1993, p. 297.
139. The Soviet protocoll indicates that this phone call must have taken place on February 12 and not on "the next day" after Gorbachev's meeting with Kohl, as Modrow remembers. It is recorded in: Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB12.
140. Modrow 1998 (*Die Perestroika, wie ich sie sehe*) (Perestroika, as I see it), p. 114.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
142. Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB12.
143. Gorbachev Foundation, politburo meeting of January 29, 1990.
144. This idea of Modrow's is also found in Timothy Garton Ash 1993, p. 513.
145. On Ottawa Shevardnadze 1993, p. 236 ff.
146. Falin in conversation with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg 1999.
147. Falin 1995 (first edition, 1993), p. 491.
148. *Ibid.*, p. 492.
149. See the telephone conversation between Bush and Kohl of 13.2.1990 in: DzD, Doc. nr. 180, p. 826 f.
150. Baker 1996, p. 193 f. The American Secretary of State does not trace this "confusion" only to the inadequate communication between the chancellor's office and the Bonn foreign ministry and the bad relationship between Teltschik and Genscher, but also to the workers of the National Security Council, that is, Scowcroft, who "were working on the President to decline to approve" the 2+4 formula—for whatever reason. Weidenfeld thinks that the confusion goes back to a remark by Teltschik to Scowcroft, that he was not informed about the details of the 2+4 process and had finally found out the essentials from Baker (Weidenfeld 1998, p. 729, footnote 89).
151. C.f. on the conference in Ottawa, particularly Genscher 1995, p. 724 ff., Kohl in Diekmann/Reuth 1999 (first edition 1996), p. 268 ff., Baker 1995, p. 187 ff., Weidenfeld 1998, p. 250 ff., Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 271 ff.
152. The concept "obtaining of German unity" resulted from the insistence of Genscher and with the support of Baker (Baker 1996, p. 195).
153. Baker 1996, p. 195.
154. Genscher in *Lüdenschneider Gespräch* 2001, loc.cit.
155. The putting together of these politburo minutes is not yet finished; therefore it is possible today to have only a limited examination. I suspect that this collection will remain incomplete because the three who took the minutes did not take part in all the meetings. As well not everything is going to be opened (information from Chernayev on March 2, 2002). Still the collection of agenda is relatively far advanced. The question of what extent Modrow was informed of the 2+4 process by the Soviet foreign ministry, could be answered only after the opening of the

- archives of the Soviet foreign ministry. In the holdings of the prime minister of the GDR, however, I could find no evidence about this.
156. Thus is confirmed among others Weidenfeld 1998, p.726, footnote 78.
 157. About Canada's role in this process see the chapter about the North America—Canada and the United States.
 158. Cf. Antonio Varsori: Italy, the East European Revolutions, and the Reunification of Germany 1989–92, in: Mueller et. al., Vienna 2014.
 159. Baker in an interview with me 1999. Here he was not even including the Eastern European countries.
 160. Shevardnadze in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg 1999.
 161. However Schvardnadze had opposed the four power suggestion, according to one of the two versions of the protocol of the advisors' meeting on January 25, 1990, because it would have perpetuated the dominance of the Western powers.
 162. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 272.
 163. Baker 1996, p. 192.
 164. Interview with Chernayev on December 11, 2001. I carried out this interview together with Elke Scherstjanoi, who also translated.
 165. Interview with Chernayev on December 6, 2001.
 166. Interview with Chernayev on December 11, 2001.
 167. As Gorbachev had himself considered possible at the advisors' meeting.
 168. What is remarkable is that, contrary to Chernayev's statement in the version of Baker's memoirs that I have, there is neither the agreement that NATO would not expand an inch toward the East nor the excuse that he said this in order to get the Soviets to favor German unity.
 169. Konstituierende Sitzung der Arbeitsgruppe Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik des Kabinettausschusses Deutsche Einheit (Inaugural Meeting of the Working Group Foreign and Security Politics of the Cabinet Committee German Unity), Bonn, February 14, in: DzD, Doc. no. 182, f. 830 f.
 170. Ibid.
 171. This had already been Genscher's formulation in Tutzing, which he had even before the change in the American position presented and now—after this change—repeated.
 172. Teltschik 1993, p. 149.
 173. According to Bahrmann/Links 1999, p. 255 (February 28, 1990).

6 Elections in the GDR and Their Consequences

1. Submission of Chief Officer Mertes to Chancellor Kohl, Bonn, February 2, 1990, in: DzD, p. 749 ff.
2. DzD, Doc. No. 157A and 157B, p. 751 and 752 f.
3. DzD, p. 751.
4. Telephone conversation Modrow–Gorbachev of February 12, 1990, in: Gorbachev Foundation, 90FEB12.
5. Talks between Chancellor Kohl and Prime Minister Modrow in Davos, in: DzD, p. 753 ff.; c.f. my interviews with him in 2009 and 2010.
6. Bahrmann/Links 1999, p. 224.

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 756.
9. DzD, Doc. 169 and 169A.
10. DzD, Doc. No. 145a, p. 713 ff.
11. According to the Bonn protocol he did not this time speak of “cost compensation.”
12. Meeting of Chancellor Kohl with the prime minister of the GDR, Bonn, February 13, 1990, in: DzD, Doc. No. 177 (private meeting), p. 814 ff.
13. BArch, B 136/20579, 221–35014 Ge 33 Vol. 2, DzD, footnote 5, p. 816.
14. Meeting of Minister Seiters with the Ministers without Portfolio of the GDR, Bonn, February 13, in: DzD, Doc. 178, p. 819 f.
15. The marginal *Grüne Liga* was one of the few organizations that still expressed opposition to unity before the elections; the others were in favor under various conditions. Some conditions, such as the constitutional assembly with a new constitution, were moving already at this time—from a practical political perspective—far into the future.
16. Printed in DzD, Doc. 179, p. 821 ff.
17. DzD, op. cit., p. 822 and p. 823.
18. Gerd Poppe in conversation with me on February 14, 2002 and with Tomas Vilimek in 2011. Concerning opposition in GDR see Alexander von Plato, *Revolution in einem halben Land. Lebensgeschichten von Oppositionellen in der DDR und ihre Interpretation*, in: Alexander von Plato and Tomas Vilimek in Verbindung mit Piotr Filipkowski and Joanna Wawrzyniak, *Opposition als Lebensform. Dissidenz in der DDR, der CSSR und in Polen*, Berlin 2013, pp. 23–278.
19. Both concepts were used during Kohl’s meeting with Modrow and the Ministers without Portfolio: the concept “accession” from the West German side, to describe the voluntariness of the people of the GDR, the concept “annexation” by the Ministers without Portfolio to make clear the dominance and enormous strength of the Federal Republic. There was another objection to the concept of “annexation:” this concept, in German *Anschluss*, had overtones of the annexation of Austria by Germany under Hitler, although there was a high degree of support then as well.
20. All quotes by Kohl and Modrow in: Diekmann/Reuth 1996, p. 266 f.
21. Von Plato 2013, pp 31.
22. De Maizière in interview with me on November 1, 2000.
23. Wolfgang Schäuble in conversation with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg 1999.
24. This chapter title refers to a broadcast by the GDR writer Daniela Dahn in “Deutschlandradio.”
25. Concerning Opposition in GDR before and during the election of March 18, 1990 c.f. particularly Ehrhart Neubert, *Unsere Revolution*, Berlin 2009, Ilko-Sascha Koalczuk, *Endspiel. Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR*, München 2009, von Plato 2013.
26. Institute for Sociology of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, published in the periodical *Argumenty i Fakty* und quoted from Maier 1990, p. 100.
27. Also in the unrepresentative life history interviews that Niethammer, Wierling and I conducted in 1987 in the GDR Helmut Schmidt was also in the GDR

- the most popular German political leader in postwar Germany (Niethammer/v. Plato/Wierling 1990).
28. With some correction, namely in the percentages for Bündnis 90 instead of 2.17: 2.89 percent.
 29. At that time Mitterrand also did not assume the continued existence of the Federal Republic with the GDR joining according to Article 23 of the Basic Law, but rather assumed a new Germany after unification; C.f. Bozo 2009 and Saunier 2014.
 30. This last quote by Kohl is in Diekmann/Reuth 1996, p. 269. The concept “fourth reich” was in principle less a French and more an English expression of a fear.
 31. The sentence, that he wanted to do everything together with the chancellor, is also in the German protocol, but not the sentence about the old married couple, but rather is mentioned by Kohl in: Ibid. p. 272.
 32. Teltschik 1993, p. 189 and p. 195.
 33. The protocol is printed in the files of the Chancellor’s Office, DzD, Doc. No. 192, f. 860 ff.
 34. Brief by Director Teltschik for Chancellor Kohl, Bonn, February 22, in: DzD, Doc. 191, p. 857 ff.
 35. Ibid.
 36. In the Gorbachev Foundation in the minutes of the politburo of November 29, 1990. (I have access to the complete document.)
 37. DzD, Doc. No. 235, p. 987 f.
 38. Meeting with the Ministry Director Teltschik with the advisor of the Department for International Relationships of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Portugalov, Bonn, March 28, 1990 in: DzD, Doc. No. 232, p. 981 ff.
 39. DzD, Doc. 274, p. 1103 ff. C.f. also the joint letter of Mitterrand and Kohl to President Landsbergis of April 28, 1990. Cf. Schabert 2010, pp. 315–333.
 40. Teltschik 1993, p. 187.
 41. The protocol of this meeting is not available in the files of the Chancellor’s Office and therefore probably belong to the 10 percent of the documents that, according to the organizer of these files, Hanns Jürgen Küsters, were not made public mainly for security reasons (Conversation with Hanns Jürgen Küsters of February 14, 2002). I therefore am relying on Horst Teltschik’s *329 Tage* (1991, p. 190).
 42. DzD, Doc. No. 232, p. 982.
 43. Related files from Duisberg und Nehring in: DzD, Doc. 245 und 246, p. 1012 ff.
 44. Teltschik 1993, p. 198.
 45. De Maizière 1996, p. 81.
 46. The following quotes are from GDR Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière’s declaration: “Regierungserklärung zum demokratischen Neuanfang in der DDR-Gesellschaft und zur deutschen Einheit” (New Beginning on the Society of the GDR and on the subject of German Unity) in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Band 8a—1990, p. 167 ff.
 47. On the history of mentalities after the change of 1989 and 1990 see besides the demoscopic panel analyses of the Allensbacher Institute also »Erfahrungsgeschichte der DDR, Study Guide of Fernuniversität Hagen of 2000 that I published; and von Plato and Vilimek 2013.

48. De Maizière in *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* with me on November 1, 2000.
49. Ibid.
50. DzD, Doc. No. 249, p. 1021 ff.
51. WP = Warsaw Pact (Warsaw Treaty).
52. In DzD, Doc. No. 245, p. 1012 ff.
53. VKSE = Verhandlungen über Konventionelle Streitkräfte in Europa. (Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe).
54. C.f. about this DzD, p. 1011 (Meetings of Teltschik with de Maizière und Minister Reichenbach) or the already mentioned passage on Teltschik's visits in Teltschik 1993, p. 197 ff.
55. De Maizière in conversation with me on November 1, 2000. He repeated this story in our public conversation in November 2009. Horst Teltschik observed in this regard that de Maizière told him on April 16, 1990 that Kochemassow had asked him to come for a meeting and the prime minister would have gone. "I said to him that this would be a mistake, the ambassador should come to him as prime minister, not the other way round" (Teltschik 1993, p. 198).
56. In the non-paper itself this last sentence is not put this way, but rather expresses only the idea that all four-power treaties, in particular the Potsdam Agreement, must be observed. The non-paper is dated April 16, 1990. Non-Paper der Regierung der UdSSR zu Fragen der deutschen Einheit (Non-paper of the government of the USSE in the matter of German Unity), in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Bd. 8a—1990, p. 161 ff.
57. De Maizière in conversation with me on November 1, 2000, in *Lüdenscheid*.
58. Highlighted by me.
59. Teltschik 1993, p. 127. See also the introduction by Hanns Jürgen Küsters in DzD, p. 91.
60. All of them were dissidents from the protestant church, pastors resp. Theologians; with all of them I made interviews: with Markus Meckel on January 15, March 13, 2009, and February 22, 2011; with Misselwitz a talk on June 6, 2014, and Rainer Eppelmann on september 9 and 27, 2007. To complete this list: I interviewed de Maizière twice: on November 1, 2000 and on November 4, 2011.
61. All quotes are from the "Non-Paper der UdSSR," 19 April 1990, in: DzD, Doc. No 250, p 1023 f.
62. De Maizière in *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* on November 1, 2000.
63. Conversation of de Maizière with Gorbachev in Moscow on April 29, 1990 in: Gorbachev Foundation, 90APR29.
64. Letter of Bundesbank President Pöhl to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Frankfurt (Main), March 30, 1990, in: DzD, Doc. No. 239, p. 1002 f.
65. *Presse- und Informationsdienst der Bundesregierung* of January 1, 1990, in Maier 1990, p. 90.
66. Helmut Kohl, with others, in interview Guido Knopp 2000, Take 151, p. 6.
67. Horst Siebert—economic researcher and at the time president of the Institute for International Economy of the University of Kiel—in *Handelsblatt*, supplement 1990/48.
68. *Stuttgarter Zeitung* of February 10, 1990.
69. De Maizière in *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* with me on November 1, 2000.

70. Submission of Tietmeyer, representative of the Chancellor, and the Ministerial councilor Ludewig to Chancellor Kohl, Bonn, May 13, 1990, in: DzD Doc. No. 276, p. 1108 ff.
71. Weidenfeld/Korte (*Handwörterbuch*) 1992, 759 f., Kohl somewhat differently, Diekmann/Reuth 1996, p. 335.
72. Diekmann/Reuth 1996, p. 336.
73. De Maizière: Even the Bourbons, after getting rid of Napoleon, did not carry out a (complete) restitution of property (in conversation with me on November 4, 2009) in Stade.
74. De Maizière in *Lüdenscheider Gespräch* on November 1, 2000.
75. The text is included in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Band 8a—1990, a.a.O., S. 215 ff.
76. De Maizière 1996, p. 98/99. De Maizière bases this information on the former (vice) president of the GDR State Bank, Wolfried Stoll (c.f. my conversation with de Maizière in Stade on November 4, 2009).
77. In the meantime it is much more, at least about 1300 billion Euros until 2009.

7 What Is National, What Is International in the 2+4 Negotiations?

1. See the statement of Minister Director Hartmann in the chapter: “6.2.3 The Statement of the de Maizière Government,” where he complained—to repeat it—that de Maizière did not say any word about NATO: “NATO and NATO membership of a unified Germany were not mentioned at all.”
2. C.f. with striking internal experiences: Misselwitz 1996 and my interviews with Markus Meckel (15 January 15, March 13, 2009, February 22, 2011) and my talk with Misselwitz on June 6, 2014. Cf. Sarotte 2009, pp. 152.
3. Chernayev 1993, p. 297.
4. Ibid.
5. Kohls Presseerklärung vom 6.5.1990 (Kohl’s statement to the press of May 6, 1990) in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* Reihe III/Band 8a—1990, p. 212.
6. Kohl in Diekmann/Reuth op. cit., p. 331.
7. Genscher 1995, p. 780.
8. All quotes from Genscher’s report on the 2+4 negotiations on May 5, in: Genscher 1995, p. 768 ff., here p. 772.
9. As was later revealed—according to Teltschik—shortly after, the USSR would have been unable to pay.
10. C.f. on this section Teltschik 1991, p. 230 ff.
11. Teltschik in conversation with me on September 27, 2000.
12. Including a conversation with me. See Teltschik 1991, 230 ff.
13. Portugalow in conversation with me October 1, 2001 in Moscow.
14. Soviet protocol of the meeting of Gorbachev with Horst Teltschik in the Gorbachev Foundation, 90MAY14.
15. Letter from Horst Teltschik of February 19, 2002.
16. Letter from Gorbachev of March 6, 2002.
17. Ibid.

18. "Aufzeichnungen der Unterredungen von M. S. Gorbatschow mit F. Mitterrand (Treffen unter vier Augen) 25. Mai 1990," (Notes of the Talks of M. S. Gorbachev with F. Mitterrand [Private Meeting] May 25, 1990) in: Gorbachev Foundation, 90MAY25.
19. Chernayev mentioned this to me frequently.
20. At another point in this meeting Mitterrand describes very exactly what the Germans, rather than their government, think about Gorbachev's suggestion: "I can, like any person, make mistakes, but, from what I know of my partners in NATO, there is no chance that they would agree to such a suggestion [*membership of a united Germany in NATO—AvP*]. Do you know who would be most receptive to your suggestion? The Germans themselves. I mean the public, but not the 'staffs'."
21. I could not find out in my talks in Moscow or from Anatoli Chernayev if Mitterrand had asked this question because he had been informed by Chernayev or someone else that Gorbachev had at the beginning of May stated in the politburo that he would rather let the disarmament negotiations fail than allow the membership of the united Germany in NATO.
22. Emphasis in the original.
23. In the meeting Eagleburger—Kohl, in: DzD, S. 743.
24. "Vorlage des Ministerialdirigenten Hartmann an Bundeskanzler Kohl, Bonn, 30.5.1990," (Submission of Ministry Directory Hartmann to Chancellor Kohl) in: DzD, p. 1162 ff.
25. The last two are from the submission by Hartmann in: DzD, p. 1163.
26. According to Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 361.
27. Baker 1995, p. 214.
28. C.f. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 363; Baker 1995, p. 222.
29. Baker 1995, p. 217 and 218.
30. C.f. the Soviet meeting protocols in the Gorbachev Foundation, 90MAY18A und 90MAY18B.
31. I note the adjectives in the parentheses because they appear in the Soviet protocol but not in Baker's report.
32. Baker 1996, p. 221.
33. Here the Soviet protocols and the reports by Zelikow und Rice (p. 363), by Baker in his memoirs, (p. 218 ff.) or in Weidenfeld (p. 466 ff.) are all quite alike. In the Soviet protocol, however, Gorbachev's position is presented at greater length and more clearly. As well the provocative stance against the United States becomes clearer.
34. Telephone conversation of Chancellor Kohl with President Bush, May 30, 1990, DzD, Doc. Nr. 293, p. 1161 f.
35. Gorbachev Foundation, 90MAY31A, 90MAY31B, 90JUN01, 90JUN02A, 90JUN02B.
36. C.f. Tilo Schabert, "France and the Baltic States during the Presidency of Francois Mitterrand." *Baltic Worlds* (2/2011) and in www.balticworlds.com (August 1, 2011).
37. This is not an unsubtle formulation because it lets Baker "save face." But during Baker's visit to Moscow on February 9, 1990 there was no mention of a limit in the "not stationing" of NATO troops in the territory of the former GDR.

38. Here Baker expresses what Bush and Scowcroft had just referred to as “premature.”
39. Baker added that the president wanted to “discuss in detail with him” this question.
40. Contrary to Mitterrand’s suggestion, Gorbachev was thus representing the following position: the united Germany should for a certain period be in both military blocs until these had been transformed or had dissolved.
41. Here Bush expresses clearly the American interest: NATO yes, CSCE no or not yet. But in this he contradicts one of Baker’s nine points, which aimed at the recognition of the significance of the CSCE process. Although the weak point of the argumentation lies here, just as Baker’s in February, Gorbachev did not, just as little as in February, touch on this weak point. But he struggled against this position at another level.
42. Bush in an interview with me 1999 in Washington. Incidentally, besides Gorbachev and Shevardnadze the following persons also took part in this summit meeting on the Soviet side: S. F. Akhromeyev, that is, the later putschist, also A. A. Bessmertnich, A. F. Dobrynin, V. Falin, Yu. D. Maslyukov, A. A. Obuchov, E. M. Primakov, and, with an almost illegible signature, the notetaker Anatoli Chernayev who left the following day. On the American side besides Bush and Baker were also L. Eagleburger, M. Fitzwater (the speaker), R. Gates, D. Metlock, B. Scowcroft, R. Seitz, and R. Zoellick.
43. Gorbachev Foundation, 90JUN01, 90JUN02A, 90JUN02B.
44. C.f. the Soviet protocol of the meetings of Gorbachev with Thatcher in Moscow in the Gorbachev Foundation, 90JUN08.
45. My conversation with Hans-Jürgen Messelwitz, June 6, 2014. His report sounds as Meckel has to experience a kind of humiliation during the further 2+4 meetings.
46. Sarotte 2009, p. 172.
47. Gerhard Fieberg and Harald Reichenbach (ed.): *Enteignung und offene Vermögensfragen in der ehemaligen DDR*. 2 Bde., Köln 1991.
48. On the results of this dispute see mainly the unity treaty and its “Anlage III ‘Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Regelung offener Vermögensfragen’ vom 15. Juni 1990” [Attachment III “Joint Statement on the Regulation of open Property Questions” of June 15, 1990] in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* Reihe III/Band 8b—1990, p. 7 ff. especially. p. 603 ff.; Schäuble 1991, Wambach 1991; Stern/Schmidt-Bleibtreu 1990; Krum/Prokop 1994.
49. The exact text is printed in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* Reihe III/Band 8b. 1990, p. 678 ff.
50. This is an interesting indication; because during these months the Politburo was already no longer deciding on the Soviet policy toward Germany—in this all the negotiating partners agreed—but rather Gorbachev alone in the essentials, assisted by his closest advisors and Shevardnadze. In the Politburo minutes opened to us there was no statement on this whole affair, which, given the degree of their lack of completeness, does not mean that there was no such meeting.
51. All quotes from the conversation of de Maizière with me on November 1, 2000.
52. Skhakhnasarov 1996, p. 152.
53. *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* Reihe III/Band 8b—1990, S. 679.

54. C.f. on the following section primarily: *Dokumente zum Konflikt um den deutsch-polnischen Vertrag*, 1991, pp. 760–764; Pflüger/Lipscher 1993; Mackorw 1995, p. 32 ff.; Ludwig 1990, S. 99–116; Jacobsen/Tomala 1992; Bingen 1993; Baczkowski/Buszko/Cziomer/Pilch 1987; Wolff-Poweska 1990; Teltschik 1990, pp. 3–14; v. Münch 1991.
55. Hanns Jürgen Küsters in his introduction to the files of the Chancellor's Office, in: DzD p. 115.
56. According to Weidenfeld 1998, p. 496.
57. Ibid.
58. "Vorlage des Ministerialdirektors Teltschik an Bundeskanzler Kohl, Bonn, 30. Mai 1990" [Submission by Ministerial Director Teltschik to Chancellor Kohl, Bonn, 30 May 1990] in: DzD, Doc. No. 296, p. 1165 ff. with attachments.
59. See my conversation with Gottfried Mahrenholz, former vice president of the Constitutional Court (Highest Court) on June 12, 2002. C.f. also Hom 1990, pp. 2173–2176. Cf. Bald: Zum außen- und sicherheitspolitischen Grundgesetz der deutschen Staaten. Der völkerrechtliche Rahmen der 2 plus 4 Verhandlungen, in: S+B Vierteljahresschrift für Sicherheit und Frieden, Nr. 2/1990, S. 59–65.
60. A short time later Finance Minister Theo Waigel tried again to make such a connection between the border question, Germany's minorities, and the rights of the expellees (Weidenfeld 1998, p. 500).
61. Bush also broached this subject again with Kohl in his telephone call with the chancellor on March 20, 1990, in: DzD, Doc. No. 224, "Telefongespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Präsident Bush, 20. März 1990," p. 961 ff.
62. Letter of Chancellor Kohl to Prime Minister de Maizière, Bonn, May 31, 1990, in: DzD, Doc. No. 298, p. 177 f.
63. The text of the joint resolution is printed in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik* Reihe III/Band 8a—1990, p. 411 f. Among other things Weidenfeld observes that in the "identical resolutions" of the People's Chamber and the Bundestag "is signalled a final settlement that would be binding in international law after unification" (1998, p. 499).
64. "Zweites Treffen der Außenminister der Zwei plus Vier, Berlin-Niederschönhausen, 22. Juni 1990," in: DzD, Doc. No. 325, p. 1249 ff.
65. "Anlage 1 (zum Außenministertreffen Zwei plus Vier), Prinzipien für die Diskussion unter Tagesordnungspunkt 1," in: DzD, Doc. No. 325A, p. 1251.
66. Teltschik 1991, p. 311. Mazowiecki's statement and the letter of the Polish foreign minister are not printed in the files of Chancellor's Office.
67. As in the report on the "Sechste Gesprächsrunde Zwei plus Vier auf Beamtenebene unter Beteiligung Polens, Berlin-Niederschönhausen, 3./4. Juli 1990" [The sixth round of talks two plus four on the official level with the participation of Poland, Berlin-Niederschönhausen, July 3/4, 1990], in: DzD, Doc. No. 339, p. 1293 f.
68. "Abschließende Regelung" [Completed Regulation] is what it was called in the German version when it was passed on September 12, 1990.
69. C.f. on this Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 369 ff.; Ludwig 1991, p. 84 ff.; Weidenfeld 1998, p. 502 ff.; Haijnitz 1995 passim.
70. "Schreiben des Bundeskanzlers Kohl an Ministerpräsident Mazowiecki, Bonn, 13. Juli 1990" [Letter of Chancellor Kohl to Prime Minister Mazowiecki, Bonn, July 13, 1990], in: DzD, Doc. Nr. 349, p. 1339f.

71. This statement is rejected in Mazowiecki's reply, in DzD, Doc. Nr. 371 "Schreiben des Ministerpräsidenten Mazowiecki an Bundeskanzler Kohl, Warschau, 25. Juli 1990" [Letter of Prime Minister Mazowiecki to Chancellor Kohl, Warsaw, July 25, 1990], p. 1418 ff.
72. DzD, p. 1339.
73. *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Band 8b—1990, p. 672 ff. (Zwei-plus-Vier-Vertrag vom 12. September 1990) [Two Plus Four Treaty, September 12, 1990], p. 868 ff. (Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Republik Polen vom 14. November 1990) [Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland of November 14, 1990].
74. Valentin Falin 1999 (*Konflikte im Kremlin*) [Conflicts in the Kremlin], p. 202 ff.
75. Telex of President Bush to Kohl, June 4, 1990, in DzD, Doc. No. 299, p. 1178 ff.
76. There were also a more general statement by de Maizière on July 5, 1990 in the People's Chamber and "clarifications" by Meckel that reveal the differences, primarily in the idea of a territorial army made up of groups of the People's Army, as suggested by Meckel with Gorbachev's support in opposition to the expansion of NATO.
77. Teltschik 1991, p. 311. Information on the talks of Scowcroft with Meckel is in Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 456 and p. 626, footnote 17, based on Zelikow's notes on the talks of Meckel with Scowcroft, not on the files of the meeting with Baker.
78. The Canadian prime minister Mulroney said at the G-7 summit "that no one at this summit could surpass the chancellor: Germany had won the World Cup in soccer, was achieving unity, had been chosen to host the world's fair, and was a pioneer in environmental questions" (Teltschik 1991, p. 307).
79. Conversation with me on September 27, 2000.
80. See also Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 370 ff.
81. Teltschik 1991, p. 317 f.
82. At the XXVIII. Party congress of the CPSU, where there had been violent disputes about all of Gorbachev's politics, he was still on July 10, 1990 confirmed as General Secretary of the CPSU. Ligachev, who had on this perhaps last opportunity opposed Gorbachev, suffered what was for him a disastrous defeat against the candidate Gorbachev for the new office of Acting General Secretary, Vladimir Ivashko. Ligachev's position there, as he told me was his usual one: in favor of reunification, but opposed to the annexation of the GDR to the Federal Republic (c.f. Kaiser 1992, p. 336 ff.; Kvitsinski 1993, p. 37 f., Chernayev 1993, p. 302 ff.).
83. The Soviet protocol is in the Gorbachev Foundation, D90JUL15; the German one is in: DzD, Doc. No. 350, p. 1340 ff. In Gorbachev 1993 (Summit meetings), pp. 162–177 are printed excerpts from the Soviet protocol, in addition to *Die Weltwoche* of February 18, 1993 and of February 25, 1993. C.f. the relatively detailed passages in Teltschik 1991, p. 319 ff.; Chernayev 1993, p. 305 f.; Gorbachev 1993, p. 161 ff.
84. A relevant proposal by Gorbachev had been delivered a day before, on July 14, in Moscow to NATO General Secretary Wörner (Gorbachev Foundation, 90JUL14).
85. DzD, p. 1342.

86. My emphasis, because the immediate effectiveness of the 2+4 treaty was a difficult point for Poland (and at the beginning also for the chancellor) and could have led to opposition from the Soviet leadership.
87. My emphasis.
88. Teltschik 1991, p. 324.
89. Teltschik 1991.
90. Genscher in conversation with me on April 25, 2001.
91. These “you’s” differ in Russian and in German: The use of the formal you (“Sie” in German) from those at the bottom, as used here by Falin, and the informal you (“Du” in German) from those at the top, as used here by Gorbachev, is no coincidence: this was the usual hierarchical interaction with the CPSU, as Portugalov told me with various examples.
92. These sentences are included in both of Falin’s books, on p. 494 (*Politische Erinnerungen*, 1995) and p. 208 (*Konflikte im Kreml*, 1999). This latter book was moreover translated for the *Siedler-Verlag* by Helmut Ettinger, for many years the Russian interpreter of the leading GDR politicians.
93. Falin 1999, p. 208.
94. The Soviet protocol of the meeting of President Gorbachev with Chancellor Kohl (and delegation) is in the Gorbachev Foundation as 90JUL16, the record of the Chancellor’s Office, this time by Ministerial Director Walter, in: DzD, Doc. No. 353 “Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Präsident Gorbatschow im erweiterten Kreis, Archys/Bezirk Stawropol, 16. Juli 1990” [Meeting of Chancellor Kohl with President Gorbachev in a wider circle, Arkhyz/Stavropol District, July 16, 1990], p. 1355 ff. Participants on the Soviet side were besides Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, acting Prime Minister Sitaryan, Acting Foreign Minister Kwizinski, Ambassador Terechov, Speaker Maslennikov, and the interpreter Kurpakov. Marshal Akhromeyev was, according to the official list, not present, contrary to Shevardnadze’s statement in the interview (see the section “The Military, the Marschal, and Gorbachev’s Chair” in the chapter “Putsch against or for Gorbachev?”) On the German side the participants besides Kohl and Genscher were: the ministers Waigel and Klein, Ambassador Blech, Teltschik, Kastrup, Haller of the Ministry of Finance, Neuer and Weiß as interpreters.
95. This point about the four powers does not appear in the German protocol.
96. Cited from the Soviet protocol.
97. According to the interpreter the word here is “dislocating,” not departing, but redistributing.
98. My emphasis.
99. According to de Maizière in conversation with me on July 19, 2002.
100. In regard to the general protective obligation of NATO to its members, here also for the territory of the GDR.
101. Zelikow and Rice, however, write that in Washington there had already been agreement of such a limit, if in return they were given the recognition of the complete membership of the united Germany in NATO. Teltschik and Scowcroft had agreed to this at the G7 summit in Houston (Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 455 ff.).
102. As expressed in conversation with me on July 19, 2002.
103. During the departure in the helicopter Genscher and Shevardnadze spoke about third round of the 2+4 negotiations that would begin in Paris in the next days:

- “For Genscher what is important is to get the support of Shevardnadze against Poland. He appears visibly unenthusiastic and wants to keep himself out of this if possible” (Teltschik 1991, p. 339).
104. See the chapter “Differences between the Foreign and Defence Ministries in Bonn.”
 105. The “Cooperation between Kohl and Genscher” had formed “without friction:”—a “pleasing sight” (Teltschik 1991, p. 339).
 106. In the letter answering my question on this topic (op.cit.).
 107. This last sentence was also not intended to be in Teltschik’s prepared statement and might have annoyed GDR Foreign Minister Markus Meckel who, however, was just about to resign from the government of GDR anyway, so that on August 20, 1990 Lothar de Maizière took over the office of foreign minister.
 108. This is a compilation of reports from Hans Klein 1991, p. 305 ff., und Teltschik 1991, p. 340 f.
 109. Chernayev 1993, p. 305.
 110. Thus in the Soviet foreign ministry after the sending of the statements from the London summit on July 6 the resolution was analyzed within an hour and a rather positive answer was composed so that Ackromeyev could not put his stamp on it. The point was not to let the German question be discussed separately openly in the Soviet Union and within the party, in order to weaken the emotions in relation to the loser of the Second World War, that is, Germany, through the connection with the disarmament and peace initiatives of NATO and Warsaw Pact (C.f. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 453, whose evidence is an interview with Tarassenko; see also Pavel Palazkhenko 1993, who had been Gorbachev and Shevardnadze’s interpreter and who evaluated positively the NATO declaration in the press). Later Baker said that he learned through Shevardnadze what a significant effect a positive NATO statement would have for the Soviet Union (Shevardnadze 1991 [1993 edition], p. 257).
 111. The following is based on a project during 2012 and 2013 at the University of Winnipeg (Canada). Students and I interviewed some of the leading Canadian diplomats of that time, and we visited the National Archives in Ottawa. The result of this research is published under the title “Canada’s Role in Ending Cold War and Unifying Germany,” in: *Oral History Forum*, Winnipeg 2014 (in publishing process) with essays of Natalie Bartmes, Karen Brglez, Hayley Caldwell, Christopher Clement, Holly McElrea, Amanda Kotowicz, Christopher Kshyk, Alexander von Plato, Stephen Spence, Suzanne Zalewski. This chapter is based on my summary of the project.
 112. France supported the movements for an independent Quebec; de Gaulle had to shorten his visit to Canada in 1967 after he had shouted his famous sentence: “Vive le Québec libre!”
 113. Robert Wright (2007), *Three Nights in Havana. Pierre Trudeau, Fidel Castro and the Cold War World* (Toronto: Harper Collins).
 114. Canada was initially opposed to including Mexico in the deal, but overcame this reluctance and decided to seek trilateral negotiations to create the Free Trade Agreement. See Maxwell A. Cameron and Brian W. Tomlin, *The Making of NAFTA: How the Deal Was Done* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

115. Fowler interview, loc. cit.
116. See Alexander von Plato: *Revolution in einem halben Land, Lebensgeschichten von Oppositionellen in der DDR und ihre Interpretation*, in: Alexander von Plato und Tomas Vilimek unter Mitarbeit von Piotr Filipkowski und Joanna Wawrzyniak: *Opposition als Lebensform. Dissidenz in der DDR, der CSSR und in Polen*, Berlin 2013 (LIT Verlag), p. 266.
117. “To take only one example, the information we received during our visit that the Soviet nuclear test site may be transferred from the far east to the (west) shocked us into a recognition of our geographic and environmental interdependences” (Report of the Committee’s Visit to the Soviet Union and the Germanies, April 20 to May 5, 1990, edited by the “Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade” in June 1990, pp 2 and 3.
118. John Noble: “Well, well I don’t think we tried very hard. Joe Clark was not that interested in Europe. Up until the time I took over as Director General of International Security he had a tendency to avoid NATO meetings.” (Interview with John Noble on January 25, 2013).
119. Robert Fowler interview, loc. cit.
120. Canada. House of Commons. (Hansard) 34th Parliament, 2nd session, June 27, 1990.
121. Report of the Committee’s Visit to the Soviet Union and the Germanies, April 20 to May 5, 1990, edited by the “Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade” in June 1990, p 24.
122. Report p. 24. For instance, the authors of the report quote Hans-Jürgen Misselwitz from the East German Foreign Ministry: “In general, they [*the Soviets—AvP*] are very supportive of the wider European approach to security, but they have no idea how to do it. The West should give them constructive ideas, to help the Soviets feel at home. They know that the old system does not work. They are on the losing side, but the West should give them the chance not to feel like losers” (p. 24).
123. Report, loc. cit. 28, accentuation from me—AvP.
124. Report, p. 30.
125. Ibid, p. 31.
126. Ibid, p. 21.
127. Ibid, p. 4.
128. However, the Report mentioned that Clark sometimes had similar thoughts, for instance when he said: “. . . the Alliance should turn outwards to embrace its old adversaries and new friends” (ibidem, p. 29). In my opinion Genscher also had the hope of integrating the Soviet Union in European Affairs; he was skeptical about excluding the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation from Europe.
129. Alexander von Plato, Karen Brglez, and Chris Clements: Interview with Paul Heinbecker on January 21, 2013 in Ottawa.
130. Interview with Lloyd Axworthy by Karen Brglez and me in Winnipeg on November 2, 2012. In 1997, Axworthy was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize because of his engagement against land mines. (See his book *Navigating A New World: Canada’s Global Future*, Toronto 2003.)

8 Signing of the Contracts

1. The whole sentence is: “Die Mühlen der Gebirge liegen hinter uns—vor uns liegen die Mühlen der Ebene” (Bertold Brecht: *Wahrnehmung* [1949]) Sometimes it is translated as: “The troubles of the mountains are behind us—in front of us are the troubles of the plains.”
2. C.f. my conversation with Markus Meckel on February 22, 2011 and Hans-Jürgen Misselwitz on June 6, 2014.
3. Baker in conversation with me in 1999.
4. DzD, Doc. Nr. 390, p. 1484 f., and Doc. No. 406, p. 1514; c.f. also Teltschik 1991, p. 350, 358; Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 473.
5. The Soviet protocol is in the Gorbachev Foundation, 90SEN07, the German one is printed in: DzD, Doc. No. 415, p. 1527 ff. Theo Waigel was German finance minister, Stephan A. Sitaryan was vice prime minister of the USSR.
6. According to the Soviet protocol.
7. The telephone conversation is not included in the files of the chancellor’s office for reasons 90SEN10 and was signed by I. A. Kurpakov. C.f. for the German side Waigel/Schell 1994, p. 52 ff.; Teltschik 1991, p. 359 ff.; c.f. also Duisberg 1994, p. 465 ff.
8. Here the open files on both sides are slim. Therefore, I rely particularly on the statements of the participants. C.f. also the detailed and informed description of Weidenfeld 1998, p. 590 ff., also Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 482 ff., and Gerhards 1989, p. 394.
9. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 486.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 491 f.
11. C.f. Genscher 1995, p. 492 ff.; he reports on his meeting with Shevardnadze in as much detail as he reports of his attempts to open up the blocked situation through talks with others, particularly Hurd. Cf. also Elbe 1993.
12. C.f. primarily Kiessler/Elbe 1993, p. 209 ff., Genscher 1995, p. 869 f.
13. Genscher 1995, p. 870.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Zelikow and Rice maintain that Frank Elbe in his memoirs had not mentioned the Americans because—in my words—he, especially the Germans, wanted a British scapegoat because they feared the Americans. They also say that it was easier for Dieter Kastrup to name the British stubbornness than the American one. Because the Americans were of the same opinion as the British. Now one can ask the reverse, why Zelikow and Rice as reason for this German position cite Elbe not Genscher and further observe that Kastrup would also have put all the blame on the British but not on the Americans. That this might be incorrect is supported by, among others, the quote from Genscher’s memoirs that appeared earlier than the book by Zelikow and Rice. I emphasize this because here becomes visible a growing basic dispute between the positions of Genscher and of the American government in such a decisive question.
16. Zelikow/Rice 1997, p. 491. The quotes are from a report by Zoellick to Baker.
17. This contradiction is not even noticed by Zelikow and Rice who wrote these contradictory statements.

18. Genscher 1995, p. 873.
19. Ibid, S. 871.
20. Zelikow and Rice reject this version: Baker strengthened the American position and with Genscher discussed the possibility of leave the word “deployed” in the text, but to ask for an oral statement that it related only to maneuvers. Now this had been exactly the position of Kvitsinski, Shevardnadze, and Genscher; however, the two American authors say that there had not been the “suggestion [*of the expansion of the NATO maneuver area to the former GDR—AvP*]” and that this, therefore, could not be taken back. At hardly any other place in the book by Zelikow and Rice is the primacy of their political opinion over scientific reliability so clear. They were after all also representatives of the Bush administration.
21. According to de Maizière to me on July 19, 2002.
22. Printed as a whole in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Band8a—1990, p. 672 ff.
23. Ibid, p. 678.
24. Ibid, p. 678 ff.
25. Genscher in conversation with me on April 25, 2001.
26. “Erklärung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Helmut Kohl in der Sitzung des Bundeskabinetts am 12. September 1990 in Bonn,” [Statement by Chancellor Dr. Helmut Kohl in the sitting of the Federal Cabinet on September 12, 1990, in Bonn] in: *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Band8b, S. 688 ff.
27. De Maizière in interview with Hans-Christoph Blumenberg.
28. Gorbachev in a letter to me March 6, 2002.
29. In interview of December 11, 2001.
30. Genscher 1995, p. 874.
31. Interview with me, op.cit.
32. According to the Soviet protocol of the talks between Gorbachev and Kohl in Moscow on July 15, 1990 Kohl said: This is a subtle and reflective politician. Not some kind of General Screamer. Scowcroft knew Clausewitz and understands that the Soviet-American relations have to be put on a new basis (in: Gorbachev Foundation, 90JUL15).
33. Scowcroft in an interview with me 1999.
34. Interview with me 1999.
35. That was the year when Gorbachev came into power.
36. Gorbachev Foundation, “Aufzeichnungen des Gesprächs zwischen dem Präsidenten Gorbatschow und dem Ministerpräsidenten de Maizière am 12. September 1990,” [Account of the conversation between President Gorbachev and Prime Minister de Maizière on September 12, 1990], 90SEN14.
37. De Maizière in interview with me November 1, 2000.
38. C.f. in the vast literature on this subject Schäuble 1991a.
39. Both are printed in *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, Reihe III/Band 8a—1990, S. 435 ff. und S. 447 ff.
40. For instance the “Compensation to Forced Labourers” (C.f. Plato, Alexander von, Almut Leh, and Christoph Thonfeld (Ed.). *Hitler’s Slaves. Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, New York/Oxford 2010).

9 Summary and Prospects for the Future

1. Only one example from Kohl's visit in Moscow on February 10, 1990: the lack of the paragraph about the Polish–German border in the German minutes, which is, however, to be read extensively in the Soviet minutes and shows Kohl's emotional attitude in this question.
2. For instance, in his minutes for his office and the chancellery Genscher did nearly conceal the sharp reaction in Moscow on December 5, 1990 to Kohl's "Ten Points"; on the other hand, in this case the Soviet minutes described the aggressive mood of this meeting very clearly ("not even Hitler would have allowed himself this").
3. It only became clear from interviews that Portugalov wrote the "non-paper" by his own hands for the meeting with Teltschik on November 21, 1990, which "electrified" Teltschik and caused the "ten points."
4. That is generally true despite the difficulties in determining the date January 25, 1990 as the date of the meeting of the advisors from a subjective source, namely the diary of Chernayev.
5. Nikolai Portugalov who was fluent in German used a humorous and memorable saying "Helmut Kohl sprang as a bedside rug and landed as a tiger." (in conversation with me in 2000).
6. In the "Ost-Illustrierten," "Super-Illu" Nr. 40 from September 28, 2000, p. 8 ff.—only here so clearly expressed.
7. An unrecorded part of our conversation in Washington 1999. I would like to recall a statement by Scowcroft, which I quoted at the start (see p.21): "I think, fundamentally it was Gorbachev, who was speaking some wonderful words. But thus far in early '89 the words were not matched by actions and the structures of the Cold War in Central and Eastern Europe were still in place. So, what we wanted to see, were actions which would start to dismantle those structures. And, of course, crucial to it all was Berlin and German reunification. That would be a clear signal that the Cold War was over." (From a conversation with me in 1999).
8. After my lectures with similar themes there was occasionally this audience reaction: "Your arguments could be understood as anti-American." Absolutely not. I try to find out the various interests and strategies of the different countries. The American government was very successful in the implementation of their strategies in 1989/90. Other countries have other interests and that must lead to conflicts. In contradiction: it is the revelation of impressive strategic thinking in American politics on the basis of strategic interests that is so rare in Europe and especially in European universities. Therefore others called my position "pro-American." Both are wrong.
9. Mary Elise Sarotte explained in her book *1989* why "the third model—Gorbachev's vague vision of pan-European structures (largely excluding the United States)" failed. (Sarotte 2009, p. 198) However, I think that the concept of a new strategic alliance in Europe should not exclude the North Americas. It was based on the idea that it should replace NATO and Warsaw Pact and that means including every country in these alliances, the United States and the Soviet Union as well as all the others. Nevertheless,

in this concept the United States would have lost much of their influence. Therefore the Bush administration did refuse it and Kohl as well. For him it was clear that reunification could not be managed against the United States. One of the reasons was: He needed the Americans against nearly all the other European governments who were afraid of a united Germany or even a “Fourth Reich.” For instance, Thatcher could only be won for a united Germany by an extended NATO. As described above, the idea of an all-European security architecture came up very late in March 1990 in the Soviet Union after some other “models” failed before, also in East Berlin by de Maizière, Meckel, and Misselwitz, when the “Allianz für Deutschland” had won the elections and when Warsaw Treaty collapsed. Gorbachev’s “trumps” had disappeared.

10. An interview with Kohl by Guido Knopp, *Take* 151, p. 1 ff. Stephan Bierling wrote, it was even 17.9 billion Deutsche Marks = about \$12.73 billion from \$61.1 billion overall; \$52 billion were paid by other countries (especially by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia). (Stephan Bierling, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, München 1999, p. 279.)
11. For example, the German leader and main candidate for the federal election in 1990, Oscar Lafontaine said this sometime during his election campaign.
12. For other comparisons see: Wettig 1993, pp. 45–63.
13. In conversation with Elke Scherstjanoi and myself on December 6, 2001.
14. Even the minister for defence, Jasov, who took part as well in the putsch on August 21, 1991, was neither from the military, nor supported by them.
15. Gorbachev: “At the beginning of 1990 there were no real plans (or opportunities) to organise a coup through the generals or in other ways. There were grumbles, criticism from various assemblies and protests in varying circles, but no conspiracy.” (In a letter to me from March 6, 2002.)
16. In between there have been earnest discussions by scholars whether or not the putsch on August 21, 1991 was led by Akhromeyev, Khrushchev, Yasov, and others, to “protect” the Soviet Union from continuing developments, which could have led to its destruction. Such as at the conference “The Cold War and the Tension,” which was led by the Institut für Allgemeine Geschichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften and the Akademie für Diplomatie from June 27 to 29, 2002, in Moscow. Discussing this subject was the former ambassador Dubinin as well as the scholars Anatoli Utkin und Alexander Kvarsov.
17. A Western concept, which Georgi Shakhnazarov used for the close relationship between politics and industry (not only the immediate armaments industry) in the Soviet Union, in order to show its sturdy character in contrast with Gorbachev’s policies. In the conversations with me Chernayev used the same expression (see above).
18. In his written answer to me from March 6, 2002.
19. Although two weeks later Shevardnadze—according to *one* version of the protocol of the meeting of advisors on January 25, 1990—voiced the concern that through a four-power negotiation, the Soviet Union could be weakened.
20. Again, the United States should not be excluded from NATO; I stress this point because it is sometimes asserted (Sarotte 2009, p. 198).

21. Teltschik wrote that Portugalov raised this question according to an agreement with Anatoli Chernayev already during his visit in Germany on March 28, 1990 (see the chapter “The Soviet Union, German Unity, and Lithuanian Independence”).
22. Probably the ties to the West would have been highly beneficial to Kohl, here completely the heir of Adenauer. And so the former Federal chancellor stressed on March 30, 1990 in front of Margaret Thatcher that he was not prepared to pay any price for German unity “especially not that of neutrality” (Teltschik 1991, p. 189, also in “Iswestija” from April 6, 1990).
23. In his letter to me from March 6, 2002.
24. Gorbachev swung between whether he should treat the United States or the (West) Europeans as the “main partner,” particularly in the spring of 1990. When with the Europeans he spoke out against the United States and when in Washington, against the Europeans and Germany in particular. Therefore a consistent line benefitting a European security system including the United States was hardly recognizable.
25. He also appointed no particular commission as was customary, apart from in such a case like German unity.
26. This view is confirmed later by Frederik Bozo 2009, who had access to the then opened French files in the Elysée Palace, and by Tilo Schabert, *Mitterrand et la réunification allemande. Une histoire secrète 1981*, Paris 2005; Tilo Schabert, “France and the Baltic States during the Presidency of Francois Mitterrand.” *Baltic Worlds* (2/2011) and in www.balticworlds.com (August 1, 2011).
27. By the way, in one of the first sessions, the new Volkskammer (People’s Chamber) declared German responsibility for the Holocaust—for the first time in this East German Parliament.
28. As has already been mentioned in an interview from 1999, Thatcher’s advisor Powell agreed with an assessment of Margaret Thatcher in her book *The Downing Street Years* that the British policy for reunification was a “failure.”
29. Saunier (2014) and Bozo (2009) as well as Schabert support these theses.
30. I would stress this ambiguity and these dangers much more than most of the Western historians, even more as Mary Elise Sarrotte in her book from 2009 (1989) and more as Svetlana Savtanskaya et al. did it their *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Eastern Europe 1989*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, Budapest/New York, 2010.
31. Most of these countries became members of the European Union as well.
32. Some of my Russian interviewees, in particular who were in opposition in 1991 like Ligachev or Kryuchkev, called Gorbachev a betrayer.
33. These words by a Russian president are hard to understand by foreigners because the “Great Patriotic War” is so important for the Russian self-perspective. For German historians who understand the importance of the Versailles Treaty for “the German self consciousness” and the refusal of democratic institutions in the Weimar Republic they might see this Russian development with anxiety but also with analytical understanding without excusing the “Great Russian Policy” of Putin.

Chronology

*For reasons of space only the most important events are included here; more detailed information can be found in the following chronologies: Bundesminister für innerdeutsche Beziehungen (Hg.): *Informationen Nr. 17/1989–2/1990 (Chronik)*, Bonn 1990. *Chronik der Ereignisse in der DDR* (Edition Deutschland Archiv), Köln 1990. Hannes Bahrmann, Christoph Links: *Chronik der Wende. Berlin 1995 und 1999*.

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1. Institute for History and Biography in the Open University of Hagen, Germany (Institut für Geschichte und Biographie der Fernuniversität Hagen).
2. Gorbachev gave me a short interview in 2001 and answered my questions in a letter on March 6, 2001.
3. Done by a student.
4. Hain and Schirmer were interviewed publicly on November 7, 1999 in the “Fachhochschule Hagen.”
5. See von Plato, Tomas Vilimek 2013.

Chronology*

May 1989

May 2: Hungary is the first Warsaw Pact country to open its border with the West. The barbed wire fence along the border with Austria is gradually dismantled.

May 7: Opposition groups prove that the GDR employed fraudulent practices at local elections; the first spontaneous protests take place in several cities.

May 30: During his first visit to Chancellor Kohl in the Federal Republic of Germany US president Bush declares his support of a Europe without borders and offers Germany the status of “partner in leadership.”

June 1989

June 12–14: During his visit in Bonn Soviet party leader and head of government Gorbachev recognizes “the right to self-determination of the Germans;” Kohl assures him that he will not destabilize the situation in the GDR.

July 1989

July 6: Before the European parliament in Strasbourg, Gorbachev declares his support for an end to the confrontation between East and West and the unity of Europe.

August 1989

August 8–23: During the summer holidays masses of GDR citizens flee to Federal German embassies, which are soon forced to close because of overcrowding: East Berlin (August 8), Budapest (August 14), Prague (August 23); emergency reception camps are set up.

August 19: Following a “Paneuropean picnic” near Sopron, 900 GDR citizens succeed in fleeing from Hungary to Austria.

August 25: Hungary receives generous credit at the first German-Hungarian summit conference.

September 1989

September 4: Beginning of the Leipzig Monday demonstrations that become bigger week after week; there are demands for fundamental democratic rights, among them the right to assembly and the freedom to travel.

September 9/10: Founding of the “Neue Forum.”

September 11: After the stream of GDR citizens continues to increase, Hungary completely opens the border with Austria, in agreement with the Federal German Republic; during the following week there is a mass exodus of 57,000 people.

September 30: In Prague Federal German foreign minister Genscher announces to the refugees a forthcoming departure to the West: then with special GDR state railway trains around 5,500 citizens of the GDR depart from Prague and around 800 from Warsaw through the territory of the GDR to the FRG.

October 1989

October 4: 2,500 representatives of opposition groups issue a joint declaration, in which they demand the democratic reform of the GDR and free elections under UN supervision.

October 7: Following the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the GDR there are protest demonstrations in many cities; the demonstrations are broken up by brutal police action; Gorbachev, on an official visit, calls for reforms.

October 9: Mass demonstration in Leipzig with 70,000 participants; the police did not intervene.

October 17: At the sitting of the SED politburo, party leader Erich Honecker is forced to resign; Egon Krenz is suggested as the successor.

October 18: The Central Committee of the SED confirms Erich Honecker's resignation as general secretary of the SED; election of Egon Krenz as his successor; removal of Central Committee of Secretaries Günter Mittag (Economy) and Joachim Herrmann (Agitation and Propaganda).

October 23: Mass demonstrations in many cities of the GDR under the slogan “Wir sind das Volk” [We are the People].

October 24: The election of Egon Krenz as chairman of the State Council and the National Defense Council by the People's Chamber leads to new protests.

October 26: In a first telephone conversation with Helmut Kohl Egon Krenz states that the GDR would remain socialist and no unification was on the agenda; he requests respect for GDR citizenship.

November 1989

November 1: At his inaugural visit in Moscow Egon Krenz informs Mikhail Gorbachev of the GDR's bleak economic situation and asks for assistance.

November 2: During German-French consultations Kohl informs Mitterrand that in his unification politics he had the support of the prime ministers González (Spain), Martens (Belgium), und Santer (Luxembourg).

November 3: For the first time the GDR allows its citizens direct departures from Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic; in trains and endless lines of “Trabis,” 10,000 people arrive in the West; the leadership in Prague demands from the GDR a rapid resolution of the travel problem.

November 4: Mass demonstrations of more than 500,000 people in Berlin wanting freedom of the press, assembly, and travel; there is no demand for unification with the FRG.

November 7: Resignation of the GDR government under Willi Stoph.

November 8: Resignation of the SED politburo; reelection of Egon Krenz as general secretary.

November 9: That evening SED politburo member Schabowski suddenly announces the opening of the western border; that same night thousands stream to the Berlin Wall and force the border open; after 28 years of division there are joyous celebrations everywhere.

November 9–14: During Kohl and Genscher’s (interrupted) trip to Poland a “break-through” in German-Polish relations is achieved with the signing of several agreements for cooperation.

November 13: Election of Hans Modrow as the new leader of the government of the GDR and Günter Maleuda (DBD) as the new president of the People’s Chamber.

November 17: Government statement by new Prime Minister Hans Modrow; suggestion for a treaty community with the Federal German Republic; announcement of cooperation with the European Community.

November 21: In Bonn Portugalov, a member of the International Section of the Central Committee of the CPSU, presents a “non-paper,” in which the question of reunification and the future membership of the united Germany in military alliances is raised.

November 26: Publication of the appeal “Für unser Land” [For our Country], in which many prominent personalities declare their support for the statehood of the GDR.

November 28: Chancellor Kohl presents his “Zehn Punkte Programm zur Überwindung der Teilung Deutschlands und Europas” [Ten Point Plan for Overcoming the Division of Germany and Europe], which envisages the incremental construction of a federal state; Egon Krenz states that he supports the existence of two German states.

December 1989

December 1: The People’s Chamber decides to remove the claim to leadership of the SED from the constitution and issues an official apology on behalf of the GDR government for its participation in the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

December 2/3: Summit conference of George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev on the *Maxim Gorkiy* at Malta: Bush does not express any opposition to the idea of two German states.

December 3: The politburo and the Central Committee of the SED resign en masse; a working committee takes over the direction of the SED; State Secretary Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, responsible for foreign exchange transactions, flees to the West.

December 4: At the NATO summit in Brussels US president Bush states his “four principles” on German unification, with which he supports Kohl’s ten points; besides a “peaceful and gradual unification” this also includes the recognition of the existing borders in Europe and commitment to NATO.

In Moscow the political advisory committee of the Warsaw Pact states supports Gorbachev’s “six points” on the German question: recognition of the postwar order with two German states; the GDR is described as a stabilizing factor in Europe and “our strategic ally.”

December 5: At the meeting with Foreign Minister Genscher in Moscow Gorbachev expresses unusually sharp indignation at Kohl’s Ten Point Plan, which had not been coordinated with him;

Prime Minister Hans Modrow and Rudolf Seiters, head of the Chancellery, agree on a German-German currency fund for the financing of individual travel.

December 6: Egon Krenz resigns from the office of leader of the State Council and the National Defense Council; Manfred Gerlach (LDPD) becomes the acting head of state;

In Kiev French leader Mitterrand discusses with Gorbachev the question of German unification within an all-European framework and criticizes Kohl’s tempo.

December 7: Start of the discussions of the *Runde Tisch* (Round Table), where the government makes a commitment to coordinate important political decisions with the opposition groups that had been formed and to make all information public.

December 8/9: At the EC summit of the Western European state and government leaders in Strasbourg the right of the Germans to unity is accepted in principle and a connection of the unification process with European integration is requested, the Euro is decided as the common currency; Kohl is criticized for his unification tempo; particular opposition comes from Great Britain.

December 9: At the Special SED party meeting the Berlin lawyer Gregor Gysi is elected the new head of the SED; the party wants to begin an internal renewal.

December 11: At the Leipzig Monday demonstration the debate over German unity reaches a critical point: with greater strength, the demonstrators chant “Deutschland einig Vaterland” [Germany united fatherland] and “Wir sind *ein* Volk” [We are *one* people] instead of “Wir sind *das* Volk” [We are *the* people].

In the headquarters of the Allied Control Council, at the Soviets’ request, for the first time in 18 years a meeting of the ambassadors of the four powers takes place, which outrages the German government.

December 12: Working breakfast of Baker and Kohl, where the German chancellor states that it is not he who was determining the speed of reunification, but the people in the GDR; it was necessary now to show them the way to unity.

US secretary of state Baker states to the Press Club in Berlin that the Soviets would have to accept the continued existence of NATO if the Warsaw Pact were to dissolve; it is necessary to get Moscow to agree to a united Germany in NATO; immediately after a meeting of Baker with GDR government leader Modrow in Potsdam, where the pact question is, however, not dealt with.

December 14/15: NATO foreign ministers’ conference in Brussels where German unity is hailed. Genscher criticizes the meeting of the ambassadors of the victorious powers,

because Germany should never again be seated at the “cat’s table,” that is, relegated to the sidelines.

December 16: The SED breaks officially with its Stalinist past and expands its name; it is now called the SED PDS (*Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*) [Party of Democratic Socialism] and then from February 4, 1990 only PDS.

December 17: In opinion polls in East Germany 73 percent express support for an independent GDR, only 27 percent prefer a state in common with the Federal Republic.

December 19: Speech by Shevardnadze to the political committee of the European Parliament, in which he—contrary to Gorbachev ten days ago—speaks of reunification as a possibility, at the same time he addresses problems of European stability and Soviet security interests without expressing a concept; the speech makes the helplessness of Soviet foreign policy clear to the West.

December 19/20: At their first meeting in Dresden Modrow and Kohl agree to negotiations on a German-German treaty community; Modrow wants “cost compensation” of 15 billion D-Marks, which the Federal chancellor refuses; Kohl makes a speech in front of the *Frauenkirche* and is cheered by tens of thousands; the crowd keeps shouting, “Unity, unity.”

December 21: French president Mitterrand is cautious with regard to reunification during his visit as the first Western head of government to East Berlin.

December 22: The Brandenburg Gate is opened.

December 24–26: At midnight on December 24 visa requirements and minimum currency exchange regulations for citizens of the Federal Republic for visits to the GDR are ended. 380,000 West Germans and 760,000 West Berliners travel to the east during the Christmas holidays; two million citizens of the GDR visit the West.

December 31: The total number of people who have left the GDR for the Federal Republic has increased almost tenfold in one year from 39,832 in 1988 to 343,854 in 1989.

January 1990

January 2: President of Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel, visits both German states four days after taking office and expresses reservations about possible German unity.

January 8: The West-CDU demands that its sister party in the East leave the GDR government in order to distinguish itself more clearly as an opposition; party chairman Lothar de Maizière decides, however, because of the difficult conditions in the country, in favor of preserving the coalition government.

January 11: The People’s Chamber finalizes a new travel law that guarantees the freedom to travel to all citizens. Modrow emphasizes in his government statement that reunification is not on the agenda for him at this time; he invites the opposition parties to participate in the government but rejects a veto right for them.

January 15: In the early evening 2,000 demonstrators in East Berlin occupy the Ministry for State Security, which is from then on controlled by a citizens’ committee.

January 17: Government leader Modrow sends a proposal for an agreement for the improvement of the relations between the GDR and FRG in accordance with the consultations

of December 19 on the creation of a treaty community; this proposal receive no response, however, because Chancellor Kohl wants to negotiate only with a legitimate government after the elections.

January 20: Establishment of the *Deutsche Soziale Union* (DSU) in Leipzig, which (with the support of the West German CSU) campaigns for the achievement of German unification as quickly as possible.

January 25: The government of the GDR passes a resolution permitting complete freedom of trade and businesses with foreign involvement; the CDU removes its ministers from the government in order to clear the way for an opposition election alliance.

At a meeting of Gorbachev with various ministers and advisors the situation in the GDR is analyzed and it is recognized that the country can no longer be preserved and it is no longer possible to stand in the way of German unity, but under definite conditions (including no membership of the united Germany in NATO, but rather neutrality, simultaneous withdrawal of American and Soviet troops from Central Europe); Marshal Akhromeyev is directed to begin making preparations for the eventual withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the GDR.

Meeting of representatives of the *Runde Tisch* with Kohl's Chancellery Minister Seiters in East Berlin; here the opposition expresses its opposition to a takeover of the GDR by the FRG.

January 28: Prime Minister Modrow proposes the establishment of a transitional government that includes the opposition and moving the elections forward to March 18; he reports that the budget deficit has grown to 17 billion Marks.

January 30: During his visit to Moscow the GDR Prime Minister Modrow presents the "Modrow Plan:" treaty community, confederation of the two German states, unification of Germany in neutrality; the Soviet state and party leader states that he will not oppose a unification of the Germans.

January 31: In Tutzing Federal German foreign minister Genscher develops a concrete concept for German unity: the unification of the Federal Republic, the GDR, and Berlin with border guarantees for Poland and a special status for the GDR territory with NATO membership of the united Germany.

February 1990

February 1: Prime Minister Modrow surprises everyone with a three-step plan for German unity; it provides for the gradual construction of a confederation and neutral status for the united Germany with its seat of government in Berlin.

February 3: During Genscher's meeting with Baker in Washington the 2+4 formula for the settlement of the external aspects of German unity is decided upon.

Meeting of Modrow with Kohl in Davos: the GDR asks for loans and Western assistance, but Kohl remains tentative; Modrow considers the D-Mark possible as the "sole currency" in a currency union or a treaty community.

February 5: The People's Chamber agrees to the "Regierung der Nationalen Verantwortung" [government of national responsibility], in which eight representatives of the opposition receive the post of minister without portfolio.

The *Demokratische Aufbruch*, the *Deutsche Soziale Union*, and the CDU agree to run in the elections to the People's Chamber on March 18 as the *Allianz für Deutschland* [Alliance for Germany].

February 6: According to a representative popular survey, 76 percent of the GDR's citizens had now come to favor a unification of the two German states. It is believed that the Social Democrats would have the best chances in the elections.

February 7: The Federal German government decides that there would be a currency and economic union with the GDR in the near future and forms for this purpose a cabinet committee *Deutsche Einheit* [German Unity].

February 7–9: In Moscow (after consultations with his French counterpart Dumas) US secretary of state Baker discusses an appropriate mechanism for the regulation of the external aspects of German unity, in which he suggests a negotiating group made up of the two German states and the four victorious powers of the Second World War and rejects the inclusion of all of the CSCE states; Baker insists on the continued presence of American troops in Germany and the continued membership of the united Germany in the Western military alliance, but he does accept that there would be no expansion of NATO to the east; Gorbachev wants to think about this, but does not express opposition to German unity under these conditions.

February 8: British prime minister Margaret Thatcher abandons openly her reservations about the unification of the two German states.

February 10: During negotiations between Chancellor Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow the Soviet side gives its agreement to German unity but insists on a clarification of the alliance question.

February 13: During the visit of the GDR government delegation under Prime Minister Modrow to Bonn the establishment of a joint commission of experts for the preparation of the currency union is agreed to. The request of the GDR side for a Federal German solidarity payment is refused.

February 12–14: The two German states and the four victorious powers of the Second World War agree at the edge of the "open sky" disarmament conference in Ottawa to begin negotiations on the external aspects of German unity.

February 19: The *Runde Tisch* expresses clear opposition to an "annexation" of the intended states of the GDR by the Federal Republic under Article 23 of the West German Basic Law; NATO membership of the united Germany is also fundamentally rejected.

February 20: With the finalization of the new electoral law the People's Chamber paves the way for the first free election in the GDR on March 18; the German-German currency commission meets for the first time.

February 21: The Polish prime minister Mazowiecki demands that a German-Polish border agreement be signed by both German states before unification; Chancellor Kohl does not want to make such a declaration until after unity and with a Polish waiver of reparations, in response to which France and the United States speak in favor of an early border guarantee.

February 24/25: Kohl and Bush agree at a meeting at Camp David that the united Germany should remain a member of NATO.

March 1990

March 1: The government of the GDR decides on a path toward a market economy, to change publicly owned businesses into capitalist entities, and to establish a *Treuhand* office for that purpose: also a legal plan for the freedom of Western businesses to establish themselves there is approved.

March 6: A GDR government delegation, which also includes the opposition ministers without portfolio, meets in Moscow with the Soviet leadership, in order to vote on the further German unification process.

March 12: At its last meeting the *Runde Tisch* again rejects the adoption of the Federal German Basic Law (article 23) for the GDR; it suggests a new constitution for the whole of Germany, which would be voted on separately after the elections.

March 14: First 2+4 meeting of officials in Bonn.

March 17: Prominent individuals from East and West call for a referendum on the question of the continued existence of the GDR or unification with the Federal Republic. The feeling is that such a fundamental question should not be decided by governments alone.

March 18: In the first democratic elections in the GDR in 40 years the *Allianz für Deutschland* is the surprise victor with around 48 percent of the votes. In 12 of the 15 districts the CDU is in first place. The SPD reaches second place with barely 22 percent of votes. The PDS receives over 16 percent. The civil rights groups, who had initiated the “turning point” in the country, garner only under 5 percent of the votes.

March 28: French president Mitterrand and British prime minister Thatcher openly agree to German unity.

April 1990

April 5: The working group *Neue Verfassung der DDR* [New Constitution of the GDR] of the *Runde Tische* presents its proposal and asks the parliamentarians to give it priority over single laws in putting it into effect.

April 11: The coalition agreement of the big coalition government under Lothar de Maizière (CDU) of the fractions of CDU, DSU, DA, the Liberals, and the SPD aims at the rapid unity of Germany on the basis of Article 23 of the Bonn Basic Law.

April 16: The Soviet Union expresses in a “non-paper” opposition to unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law and demands that internal and external unification should be synchronized.

April 19: In his government statement de Maizière supports unity according to Article 23 of the Basic Law but sees it taking place in a transitional process of several years.

April 20 to May 5: Members of the Canadian House of Commons who were also members of the “Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Trade” visited the Soviet Union and the two Germanies. In their report they supported an pan-European military Alliance instead of NATO and Warsaw Pact in opposition to the Mulroney government.

April 24: Federal German chancellor Helmut Kohl and GDR prime minister Lothar de Maizière announce the introduction of the D-Mark in the GDR on July 1; earnings and pensions will be converted at the rate of 1:1, savings up to 4,000 Marks also at 1:1; then at 2:1.

April 25: With 179 to 167 votes the People's Chamber rejects the proposal of the fraction *Bündnis 90/Grüne* to debate the suggestion of the *Runde Tisch* for a new GDR constitution.

April 28: In Moscow a GDR delegation under Prime Minister de Maizière and Foreign Minister Meckel discusses the process of German unification and Gorbachev expresses support more clearly than ever before for a European security system and the dissolution of the military blocs and opposes membership of the united Germany in NATO. De Maizière supports these considerations.

Polish foreign minister Skubiszewski sends a proposal for a fundamental treaty to the Bonn and Berlin governments; at the EC special summit on German unity and the consequences for Europe, the member states express support for German unification but at the same time for locking German and European integration together; German unity should take place under one "European roof;" it was intended that there would be a gradual incorporation of the GDR into the EC along the way to unity.

May 1990

May 3: First round of negotiations of both German states with Poland on the final settlement of the border question; Bonn rejects a basic treaty and wants to discuss only a joint statement on the border question that would be adopted by the People's Chamber and the Bundestag.

May 4: Shevardnadze provides Kohl with Gorbachev's request for credit of 5 billion DM for dealing with the acute supply shortages in the Soviet Union.

May 5: At the first 2+4 foreign ministers' conference in Bonn Shevardnadze suggests that the internal and external aspects of German unity be separated and expresses opposition to NATO membership of the united Germany; both ideas are not taken further, however, because of the opposition of the other participants.

May 6: At the first free local elections in the GDR the CDU once again becomes the strongest party, even with a 6 percent loss in votes.

May 8: In Brussels the GDR and EC sign a trade and cooperation agreement for a term of ten years; the EC foreign ministers state their readiness to abolish the visa requirements for GDR citizens traveling to EC countries from July 1, since on the same day the internal German border controls will be removed.

May 13: The Federal German chancellor's advisor Teltchik flies to Moscow with the bankers Wolfgang Röllner and Hilmar Kopper for credit negotiations; during a personal meeting with Gorbachev new ideas about a European security system are mentioned as well as united Germany's membership in NATO

May 18: With the signing of the state treaty on economic, currency, and social union in Bonn the first decisive step toward state unity is completed; with this the GDR gives up sovereignty over finance and monetary policy from July 1; the Federal Republic in return

grants subsidies to the state finances of the GDR and subsidizes pensions, health, and unemployment insurance.

May 25: Gorbachev meets Mitterrand; wide-ranging considerations are expressed regarding a new European policy: “overcoming of the blocs,” “European confederation,” and “all-European security structures.”

May 30: The GDR cabinet decides on a free market as of July 1. Subsidies, even for basic requirements, will then be canceled. At first, however, there will be state support for rents, leases, and transportation and energy tariffs.

May 30 to June 3: During a meeting with Bush in Washington Gorbachev agrees to the free choice of alliance membership of the united Germany.

June 1990

June 6: The council of ministers discusses a new *Treuhand* law, through which it will be possible to introduce the quickest possible, profitable disposal of public property.

June 9–12: In Washington GDR prime minister de Mazière proposes to US president Bush that with the membership of Germany in NATO there should also be a reform of NATO to make it more of a political organization, which Bush supports.

June 21: Both parliaments adopt a statement on the final recognition of the Oder-Neisse border as the western border of Poland; this also includes a renunciation of territorial claims.

June 22: During the second 2+4 foreign ministers’ conference in East Berlin the Soviet side suggests a gradual withdrawal of all victor powers from Germany; only after that would Germany again receive its complete sovereignty; all the other participants express support for the simultaneousness of inner unity and external independence.

July 1990

July 1: The economic, monetary, and social union agreed to by Bonn and East Berlin takes effect, at which time the D-Mark becomes the currency in the GDR; as well the most important economic and social laws are taken over by the Federal Republic; the border controls between the two German states are removed.

July 5/6: At the NATO summit of the Western states and heads of government in London there is a statement of readiness to work with the Warsaw Pact countries and put an end to earlier enmity.

July 15/16: At the negotiations in Moscow and in his Caucasian homeland, Gorbachev agrees with Kohl that the united Germany can decide “for itself and freely” which alliance it wishes to join; Kohl expresses his agreement to the reduction of German troops to 370,000 men and to provide financial support for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. With the 2+4 document Germany would immediately receive its full sovereignty, but it would make a bilateral treaty with the Soviet Union agreeing that there would be no expansion of NATO structures to the GDR territory; only *Bundeswehr* units outside of NATO would be allowed to be stationed there during this time.

July 17: At the third 2+4 foreign ministers' meeting in Paris, in which the Polish foreign minister Skubiszewski also takes part, it is unanimously agreed that German unity involved only the GDR, the FRG, and Berlin, but no other areas, and that the existing borders would be fixed in accordance with international law; by the time of internal German unity the external questions would be dealt with as well.

July 22: The People's Chamber passes a state establishing act; according to this on October 14 in place of the 15 GDR districts there would be five new states.

July 24: The GDR government coalition begins to break up; first the Liberals leave the government, three weeks later the Social Democrats follow.

August 1990

August 2: Faced with the imminent bankruptcy of the GDR prime minister de Maizière travels to Chancellor Kohl's vacation spot on Lake Wolfgang (Wolfgangsee) and asks that German unity take place as soon as possible within a few months.

August 10: At the end of the NATO foreign ministers' conference in Brussels on the Iraq War, which had just broken out, Federal German foreign minister Genscher informed his colleagues that German unification would take place this autumn.

August 23: At a special sitting the GDR People's Chamber decides with 294 votes to 62 to join the Federal Republic of Germany according to Article 23 of the Basic Law on October 3, 1990.

August 31: In East Berlin the German–German unification treaty is signed, which, in around 1,000 pages, settles the details of the GDR's joining of the Federal Republic; for the property issues the principle “Restitution before Compensation” championed by the FDP applies.

September 1990

September 5: Financial negotiations with the Soviet Union in Bonn on assistance for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Germany; among other things, the construction of 36,000 apartments is provided for.

September 11: On the night of September 11/12, negotiations almost break down because of British and American views on maneuvers in Germany and the accompanying “troop deployments” of NATO units to the area of the GDR even during the presence of Soviet troops; after midnight Genscher gets Baker out of his hotel bed; finally there is agreement on an additional protocol note, according to which NATO maneuvers were to take place in the east of Germany only with consideration of the security interests of the Soviet Union.

September 12: At the end of the fourth and last 2+4 foreign ministers' conference the “Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany” is signed, with which Germany receives back its full sovereignty and its external borders are fixed; the Soviet troops will be withdrawn by the end of 1994, the united Germany remains in NATO.

September 22: Federal German chancellor Kohl promises at an event for the upcoming Bundestag election in Magdeburg that the economic problems in East Germany will be solved “in a very few years.”

September 24: With the signing of the protocol by GDR minister of defence and disarmament Eppelmann and the Soviet high commander of the Warsaw Pact, General Lushev, the exit of the GDR from the Warsaw Pact is sealed.

October 1990

October 2: The GDR People’s Chamber dissolves itself with a ceremonial meeting in the East Berlin *Schauspielhaus*; in the evening there is a huge “Festival of Unity” in front of the West Berlin Reichstag building, in which almost a million people participate until after midnight; in other parts of the city there are demonstrations in opposition.

October 3: Germany’s unity is established.

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In addition I interviewed during the years 1999 to 2010 for the Institute for History and Biography:

Joachim Gauck, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Gottfried Mahrenholz (Vice President of the Highest Court of Germany—Bundesverfassungsgericht), Lothar de Maizièrè, Gerd Poppe, Ulrike Poppe (two times), Nikolai Portugalow (1999, 2000 und 2001), Horst Teltchik, Anatoli Tschernajew (five times in 1999 and 2002), Hans-Jochen Vogel (SPD boss), Walter Süß (Specialist on MfS), Gottfried Hain (Mayor of Guben/Neiße) and Herbert Schirmer (cofounder and speaker of the “Neue Forum,” until October 3, 1990, minister for culture in the government of Lothar de Maizièrè).⁴

From 2011 to 2014 I conducted more than hundred interviews with dissidents from the GDR for a project on opposition in the GDR, ČSSR, and in Poland⁵, among them:

Jens Reich and Rolf Henrich (founders of the “Neue Forum”), Rainer Eppelmann (minister for defense and Disarmament in the cabinet Lothar de Maizière), Markus Meckel (foreign minister in the same cabinet), Marianne Birthler (Bündnis90/Die Grünen, Minister for Education in Brandenburg and successor of Joachim Gauck), Herbert Wagner (CDU, Lord Mayor of Dresden), Arnold Vaatz (minister of the Chancellory in Saxonia), again Ulrike Poppe, Jürgen Ziemer (one of the leading dissidents from the protestant church in the GDR)—and two talks with Hans-Jürgen Misselwitz (former undersecretary of state under de Maizière resp. Meckel)

In 2012/2013 students and I made interviews with former diplomats and politicians, representatives of immigrant organizations; among them:

Lloyd Axworthy (former Foreign Minister), Bill Blaikie (former minister in Manitoba, dean and deputy speaker of the House of Commons in Ottawa), Robert Fowler (diplomat, former deputy minister of Defence of Canada), Paul Heinbecker ((diplomat under three governments and former speechwriter of Premier Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney), Jeremy Kinsman (diplomat, ambassador to the European Union, high commissioner to the UK), Gaetan Lavertue (former diplomat and deputy minister of foreign affairs), John Nobel (diplomat and organizer of the “Open Skies Conference” in Ottawa in February 1990)

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| 2. Sitzung | DA/3/ /218.12.89 |
| 3. Sitzung | DA/3/ /322.12.89 |
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| 15. Sitzung | DA/3/ /1505.03.90 |
| 16. Sitzung | DA/3/ /1612.03.90 |

(The Law on Unification and Treaty Community [Das Vereinigungsgesetz und die Vertragsgemeinschaft] were discussed in the Meeting 12 Meeting, the constitution in Meetings 1, 8, 10, 11, 12.–14, and 16; the reaction to the visit of Chancellor Kohl in Dresden together with the minority vote about this visit in Meeting 2).

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