

Chapter 3

Superpowers Walking a Tightrope: The Choices of April and May 1990

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This essay zeroes in on just a couple of months during some tumultuous years. It is a phase, in the spring of 1990, that happened after the initial diplomatic engagements following the opening of the Berlin Wall and before some of the final deals started emerging during the summer and autumn of 1990.

We chose to focus on these two months, in our contribution to this volume, precisely because this phase—and these choices—have received relatively little notice. It was, however, an extraordinarily delicate and difficult phase in which progress could well have collapsed—but did not.

Just to help readers set the scene: The East German elections of March 18, 1990 decided, in effect, that a unification of Germany would take place soon and it would take place as a West German annexation of the East. March 1990 was a decisive pivot for Germany’s “internal” unification process.

What diplomatically were called the “external” aspects of unification remained unsettled. These “external” aspects included more than half a million foreign troops deployed in the two Germanies under rights that dated back to the powers the victors had given themselves as occupiers in 1945. There had never been a German peace treaty that wrapped up and put aside those old powers.

Though it is difficult for 21st century readers to comprehend, in early 1990 Germany was still the most heavily militarized area of real estate on the entire planet. To put the scale of militarization then into some perspective, consider that the absolute peak of massed ground warfare on the European continent had been in late 1944, as enemy armies closed in on Germany from every direction. In 1990 there were more than twice as many tanks deployed in Europe then had been there

in late 1944. And in 1990 there were thousands of nuclear weapons deployed around Europe too.

Countries, above all the Soviet Union, had deployed such colossal forces for the Cold War confrontation and to manage Germany. In the tough spring 1990 diplomacy over the future of Europe, the United States, the West Germans, and their allies all listened to and worked on addressing reasonable Soviet concerns. At the top of that list was the question about how to manage future German power.

Related to this was the question of Germany in NATO, the main stumbling block to getting a final settlement for Germany. By May 1990 progress in the nuclear and conventional arms control efforts was also stalled practically across the board. In April, the Soviets had walked back understandings reached months earlier; Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was being joined in the arms control negotiations by top Soviet marshals.

The Two Other Crises of Spring 1990

To this unpromising situation, two more issues had to be factored in that were not part of the German question. One was a crisis everyone knew about. The other was a crisis almost no one knew about.

The crisis everyone knew about was the most serious challenge to the future of the Soviet Union that had arisen so far. Lithuania had declared its independence from the Union in March 1990. Gorbachev authorized military maneuvers in the republic, deployed additional troops there, confiscated private weapons and disarmed the local national guard, seized printing presses and Communist party property, and imposed economic sanctions—including a cutoff of oil and natural gas.

Privately, Gorbachev was feeling overwhelmed. In February, in a down moment, he had mused to Chernyaev about being ready to leave office. In April, grappling with Lithuania, he had the impulse of canceling all his upcoming meetings with foreigners, even an upcoming summit with U.S. President George H.W. Bush (though he soon changed his mind).

There was a strong camp that called on Gorbachev to uphold the Soviet Union, to crush the Lithuanians, and set an example. Analysts

can argue about whether a “Chinese solution” was still truly feasible in the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1990, we think it still was, maybe for the last time.

Such a Soviet move would not have been able to stop with Lithuania. In essence, it would have been the point where Moscow said: “Enough!” A full crackdown would probably have extended to other emergency measures, diplomatic defiance, a financial confrontation with Western creditors, and the reestablishment of a ‘socialism in one country’ kind of philosophy.

Gorbachev might have been tempted to lead such a counterrevolution. But then he would say, to Chernyaev, that a full crackdown on the republics might mean putting 100,000 people on trial. “We would be going back to 1937,”¹ he concluded, alluding to the peak of Stalin’s “great terror.”

For that, Gorbachev had no stomach. Instead, he tried an economic blockade of Lithuania. He had expected a popular revolt against Lithuania’s breakaway leaders. That did not happen. To his diary, Chernyaev confided, “He [Gorbachev] does not have a Lithuania policy, just pure ideology of power not to allow the breakup of the empire.”²

Meeting in Bermuda on April 16, Bush and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher compared notes on what Bush called Gorbachev’s “dilemma.” Both agreed the situation was getting worse. Thatcher judged that “the military is no longer on Gorbachev’s side.”³

Bush said that “if Gorbachev doesn’t get out of the Baltic dilemma, I can’t do business with him.... We have come so far, but there is a danger we could slide back into the dark ages.”

Gorbachev’s partial crackdown in Lithuania in April and May filled the American press with calls for a strong reaction from the United States. Bush noted to his diary that he was in “almost a no-win situation, and I keep hoping that Gorbachev will recognize the disaster this will bring him internationally.” Bush asked visiting senators what they suggested he should do; they had no answers to offer.

Seeing French President François Mitterrand in Florida only three days after his April meeting with Thatcher, Bush sought the French leader’s advice. Mitterrand urged patience and negotiations. “Gor-

bachev has inherited an empire. It is now in revolt. If the Ukraine starts to move, Gorbachev is gone; a military dictatorship would result.”

After an internal debate among his advisers, Bush decided to freeze plans to normalize trade relations with the Soviet Union until the Soviets lifted their economic blockade of Lithuania and resumed dialogue. He personally drafted a letter to Gorbachev on this. The Senate voted its own resolution with the same conclusion.

Meanwhile, Bush indirectly put pressure on the Lithuanians to soften their stand and come to the table. He encouraged an initiative from Mitterrand and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The French and German leaders wrote to the Lithuanians and urged them to “suspend” their independence declaration and resume negotiations.

The Franco-German work was backed by a similar message delivered to the Vilnius leadership by a senior Republican senator, Richard Lugar, acting with the help of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Bush and European leaders met with the Lithuanian prime minister in early May. Negotiations resumed; tensions calmed—for a while. Gorbachev (and Bush) stayed on their tightropes. Bush said privately at the time: “I don’t want people to look back 20 or 40 years from now and say, ‘That’s where everything went off track. That’s where progress stopped.’”⁴

Lithuania was the *public* crisis. The *secret* crisis was at least as serious. In October 1989 a Soviet defector had contacted the British government. By the spring of 1990 Thatcher, Bush and a few of their advisers had to make some very difficult choices.

In 1969 the American government had decided to shut down its biological weapons (BW) program; the British had done so ten years earlier. Both governments had concluded that such horrifying weapons were not militarily useful. The Soviet government also said it did not need them. In 1972 the superpowers led the way in signing the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which entered into force in 1975, to ban the development, production, or stockpiling of any such weapons. It was a historic agreement, eventually signed by more than a hundred countries.

During the 1980s the U.S. had raised concerns about some possible Soviet BW research, because of an apparent suspicious 1979 outbreak

of anthrax in the city of Sverdlovsk. But the Soviets heatedly denied the allegations. By the end of the 1980s, most opinion among people who followed the issue had swung in favor of the Soviet story of a public health problem from contaminated meat.⁵

Very few U.S. or British analysts still followed BW issues. The U.S. national security community still regarded BW as militarily useless. It worried a little, but not too much, about a Soviet BW program.

The Soviet defector who had come to the British in October 1989 had been the head of a key lab in what, he secretly revealed, was a very advanced and active BW program—extensive, extremely secret, and entirely illegal under the BWC. The program was not only manufacturing large quantities of BW for battlefield use; it was producing about a dozen different kinds of biological weapons: quantities of anthrax, smallpox (a disease the world health community thought had just been eradicated at last), pneumonic plague, and more. Sophisticated methods for weaponizing the viruses had been developed for possible strategic use in missiles to kill large numbers in a faraway enemy population. Active work was underway to develop viruses resistant to antibiotics (and also work to immunize Soviet soldiers).

At first, as these details were digested in early 1990 in the British and American intelligence agencies, the analysts could not quite believe what they were hearing. The Soviet BW program was worse than anything they had even imagined.

The agencies then did extensive work to verify as many details of the defector's account as they could from other intelligence sources. Verifiable details of the account checked out. But the agencies could not get into the sites to be sure or learn more. (It turned out that the defector had been truthful. In fact, the program was more elaborate than even he knew. The head of the whole BW program defected to the United States in 1992.)⁶

In April and early May 1990, at the very same time they were dealing with the Lithuanian crisis, Bush and Thatcher and their top aides were deliberating about what they should do about this startling information about the enormous, clandestine Soviet biological weapons program. They could not even be sure that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were aware of all these details.

It is actually rather astonishing, but true, that Bush and Thatcher seriously wondered whether the top leaders of the Soviet Union even knew about such a large and incredibly dangerous scientific and military program. This is a question no one would have ever asked when Leonid Brezhnev or Yuri Andropov were running the Soviet Union. (In fact, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze did know something about this program. The defection of the lab director had been promptly reported straight to the Politburo.)

If what the U.S. and British leaders now knew was made public, it would have been a shock and a sensation. To ordinary citizens, the revelation of such a hitherto secret Soviet arsenal would have been much scarier than anything going on in places like Lithuania. It is hard to imagine what would have happened to all the diplomatic work about Germany, arms control agreements, and everything else that, at that moment, was still so up in the air.

Thatcher and Bush and their top aides considered this. They assumed that, if confronted in such a public and embarrassing way, the Soviet government would instantly go into a full defensive mode and deny everything. Evidence about later Soviet behavior reinforces their supposition that denial would have been the order of the day. In such a public confrontation, the American and British leaders could not see how they would be able to get the program shut down—which was their most important objective—while also preserving a relationship with Gorbachev.

On the other hand, if they did *not* make what they knew public, the leaders might later be faulted for not having called public attention to the danger. And there was also a danger that the information might leak.

Thatcher and Bush together decided to keep the shocking discoveries about the clandestine Soviet biological weapons program as secret as they possibly could. Bush authorized a briefing for a small number of members of Congress. There were no leaks.⁷

Bush and Thatcher decided they would present the concerns to Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, in the hope that the Soviet leadership would secretly solve the problem, and do so in a way that U.S. and British experts could then verify. On May 14 and 15, the U.S. and British

ambassadors in Moscow made carefully prepared and coordinated presentations about their concerns to Chernyaev and the deputy foreign minister, Alexander Bessmertnykh. The two Soviets did not appear to know anything about the program.

According to Bessmertnykh's record of the meeting, the American ambassador (Jack Matlock) emphasized that the two governments wanted to try to solve this problem "without additional fuss." They "do not intend to raise the given question in a confrontational context and do not intend to make it public We are absolutely not interested in burdening our relations with a new problem on the eve of the most important negotiations at the highest levels."

In Moscow a couple of days later, Baker had decided he would deliver the BW message personally, to stress its significance. He made time for a substantial private discussion about the apparent BW program in person with Shevardnadze.

When Gorbachev came to Washington, Bush too decided to raise it personally. He waited until they were at Camp David and then pulled Gorbachev aside for a private discussion of the issue. Bush would raise it again at later summit meetings. Thatcher also personally raised the issue with Gorbachev during her trip to Moscow in June 1990 (her last as prime minister).

The immediate reactions from Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were defensive. They displayed little knowledge (this was only partially truthful) and promised to check into it. Gorbachev pushed back, saying that his government thought that the United States also had such a BW program. He offered to set up a program of mutual inspections and site visits.

The U.S. pursued that, a process that continued into 1991 with more top secret, high-level exchanges. The Soviets discovered the U.S. was telling the truth. By contrast, the U.S. inspectors discovered more Soviet cover-ups.

Gorbachev himself had already begun encountering prolonged difficulties in completely shutting down this program, difficulties he never fully solved. The issue would pass to his successor in 1992.⁸

At the time Bush, Baker, Scowcroft, Gates, and Thatcher wrote their memoirs, the details of what they and their intelligence agencies had known were still secret. Therefore, none of those memoirs discuss the BW issue, the many high-level discussions about it with the Soviets, or the choices the U.S. and British leaders had to make. (We have not seen evidence that the BW program details were shared at this time either with the West Germans or the French.) The historical literature therefore has so far not touched on this topic and the way it intersected with everything else that was going on.

While this secret crisis was unfolding, the top leaders might compartmentalize the concern, putting it in a sort of mental safe, just as the secret information itself was compartmented and so closely held. But the leaders did not forget about the Soviet BW program.

Even if left unstated, this was the kind of concern that might come to mind in a discussion about giving the Soviet government large-scale economic assistance. The U.S. leaders knew that some key members of Congress—who would have to act on any such request—also had this knowledge.⁹

Go Ahead on Germany Without Soviet Agreement?

In April and May 1990, the Americans took seriously the Soviet threat to decouple Germany's internal unification from the external issues. Moscow was threatening to maintain occupation powers and leave hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops in Germany, to be maintained at German expense (per East German-Soviet agreements that the Soviets insisted would remain in force).

The Americans quietly discussed contingency plans in which the U.S., Britain, and France would give up their occupation rights when Germany unified, even if the Soviets did not. In early May 1990, the two of us wrote that the Soviets “must know that, after a given date, the West will declare the game over, devolve their own Four Power rights, and deploy legal arguments to the effect that all Four Power rights—including the Soviets’—have now lapsed.” Moscow and Gorbachev would then have the unpopular task of insisting to the German people that they alone retained the right to stay in a newly united and democratic German state.¹⁰

Kohl had come to a similar conclusion. Unification had to go ahead. Foreign policy, he told the visiting British foreign secretary, was like mowing grass for hay: you had to gather what you had cut in case of a thunderstorm.¹¹

Yet the Americans and West Germans sought more creative ways to address Soviet concerns without such a blunt, dangerous, confrontation. Their ideas would use the institutions of the new Europe.

First, they stressed NATO and NATO's integrated military command. They had decided against a "French" solution for Germany.

The stock, cutesy quote, constantly repeated, and attributed to Lord Ismay, is that the purpose of NATO was to "keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." This is clever. It is not really right.

The basic genius of the European constructions was to temper all the old national conflicts in a wider political community. The old European Coal and Steel Community, a precursor of the European Community, included the vital industrial resources of France as well as Germany. NATO, then, was similar to the European Community, later the European Union, in that it was not just a control mechanism—it was a different kind of political and economic and even military community. The political community worked because its members were free and democratic.

Like other NATO members, West Germany did not have truly independent armed forces. It was not singled out; this was the situation of all NATO member forces in the integrated military command. All of them were assigned to NATO's command structures, so that the higher command and staff echelons were international. By retaining full German membership in NATO, the German military remained enmeshed in this international military structure.

NATO was also a key factor on the question of German nuclear weapons. Before Germany agreed to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969, governments had been arguing for ten years about whether Germans needed nuclear defenses. West Germans had their share of national pride and felt very threatened by Soviet military power. The renunciation of nuclear weapons finally made sense to them because of the NATO alliance. The West Germans could point to the assurance

of British, French, and—above all—American nuclear defense. For the systems in Europe, American nuclear defense was coordinated through NATO.

The other big constraint on the Germans would be the planned Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty. The West Germans and Americans were happy to limit a future German army, but only if and when other national armies in Europe were limited too.

After the first CFE treaty was concluded in 1990, it would limit alliance totals of military equipment and U.S. and Soviet stationed manpower. These would not necessarily limit *German* force size. The plan was that in the next round of CFE talks all countries would accept national manpower ceilings too. The Germans would then have national limits along with everybody else.

The Soviets did not want to wait for the ‘next’ CFE treaty after this one. The governments worked out a compromise solution, with some particular help from the American side. The plan would still be that all the CFE countries would accept such limits. Rather than be silent and noncommittal until that future agreement was signed, the West Germans would lean forward and simply make a unilateral political statement about the ceiling they planned to adopt in that future negotiation.

Thus, Germany would have committed itself to a future ceiling. But it would still stick to the plan that such a ceiling would only be binding when all the other CFE parties went along and joined in accepting limits too. The solution had another key virtue: it kept the pressure on the Soviets to come to agreement on the current CFE treaty and get that done in 1990, a very difficult task.¹²

This plan worked. The Germans made their commitment. They picked a total ceiling of 370,000 on the active duty strength of their armed forces. This was a meaningful reduction. In 1988 West German armed forces alone were about 490,000 strong; East German forces numbered about another 170,000. So, in theory, upon unity the combined German armed forces would be about 660,000 strong, and the Germans were pledging to cut them back to no more than 370,000, along with all the other CFE limits on military equipment.

The Germans complied with these limits, at great expense. The Germans ended up destroying nearly 11,000 items of major military equipment at a cost of about \$5 billion.¹³

As planned, the CFE treaty was signed alongside the Paris Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit in 1990. Also, as planned, the follow-on agreement (CFE 1A) was concluded alongside another CSCE summit, in Helsinki, in 1992. It added the binding national ceilings on troop strength for all of the other 29 countries that then were parties to the agreement (as by then the Soviet Union had broken up).¹⁴

German forces remained in NATO's integrated military command. This, plus the use of 'annexation/takeover' as the vehicle for unification, helped settle Germany's nuclear weapons status as well.

The old Federal Republic of Germany's acceptance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969 remained binding on unified Germany. The Two Plus Four Treaty (the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany) reaffirmed Germany's non-nuclear weapons commitment. Further, since the Western approach would not allow American forces to be stationed in the former territory of East Germany (the "special military status"), that area thus also became a nuclear-weapons-free zone as well.

In the spring of 1990 the West Germans and Americans had put together a serious and adequate package of assurances about how to address future German military power. These reassurances were probably more important to Moscow than the NATO membership issue itself. Germany's NATO membership was essential to this control concept. It, along with the planned CFE arms control system, allowed such controls to make lasting sense for the Germans.

In Moscow in May, Baker and his aide, Robert Zoellick, had started using and sharing a set of 'nine points' to summarize all the ways that the West was already addressing, or moving to address, Soviet concerns. These points, frequently reiterated, had real substance. And the United States, West Germans, and their allies followed through on every one of these points.¹⁵

All these agreements have been taken for granted for a long time. Yet it is worth remembering how much these understandings are inter-

twined with other structures, like CFE and NATO. If the wider structures disintegrate, long-entombed questions about German security, and the security of others, will return to Europe.

Kohl made another visit to Washington on May 17 to coordinate again with Bush before Gorbachev arrived in Washington two weeks later. Amid the meetings, the German and American leaders broke away for a more private discussion. Bush and Kohl had a private talk, practically alone.

Quietly sitting together in the Oval Office, Bush asked Kohl for his honest opinion about the core question: Did the German public want the American troops to stay, if Soviet troops left, as Bush thought they should?

Bush acknowledged the “isolationist” tendencies on both sides of the Atlantic. “It would be understandable,” he said, “if [the German people] didn’t want U.S. troops.”

Kohl’s answer was twofold. “The U.S. troop presence is related to NATO. What sort of NATO would it be, leaving U.S. troops aside? If the U.S. left, NATO would vanish and there might be only CSCE.” Where would be the security, including for countries like Norway or the smaller states?

Second, Kohl added, even if the Soviet Union withdraws, “it is still in Europe. If the U.S. withdraws, it is 6,000 kilometers away. That is a big difference.”

Looking at the future of Europe even beyond the year 2000, Kohl foresaw the Americans staying in Europe. If the Europeans allowed the Americans to leave, it would be “the greatest defeat for us all. Remember Wilson in 1918,” he said, referring to the failure to keep the United States engaged in Europe after World War I.

Kohl became emotional. Trained in history, Kohl felt deeply about issues and places of national memory. Looking ahead to his next visit to the United States, in a few weeks, he and Scowcroft had already made plans to tour Arlington Cemetery, a resting place for the remains of many American soldiers, sailors, and marines.

George, he said, don’t worry about those who draw parallels between U.S. and Soviet forces. We will push this through. We’ll put our

political existence at stake for NATO and the political commitment of the United States in Europe.¹⁶

Germany was not alone in such beliefs. Almost all the NATO member governments positively liked the alliance. Led by some with especially positive experiences and views among key ministers, like Norway or the Netherlands, the smaller governments felt enlarged and empowered by being part of a larger whole.

Therefore, it is a bit disorienting for us to read contemporary scholarly arguments about these years, accounts perhaps a bit colored by knowledge of what happened after 1990 and 1991, that see in this diplomacy an offensive American master plan to attain “preeminence” or “hegemony” in Europe (or some other imperious-sounding term currently in academic fashion). It should be apparent by now just how complex transatlantic and European power relationships were, and still are even now.

In 1989 and 1990, Bush was planning a gradual but large *downsizing* of the American military and U.S. defense spending, a plan he announced in August 1990 (a historic announcement that coincided, by astonishing happenstance, with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait). With the world changing and the tide of American presence in Europe going out, the Bush administration was trying to anchor a diminished but still reassuring military presence and ensure that America remained a European power. In that sense the administration felt defensive, not expansive.

In 1989-90 the United States was coming off a large national debate about U.S. decline and the powerful surge of economic nationalism so remarked upon by American and foreign observers. A core issue—as Bush opened up about so candidly to Kohl—was whether, and how, the United States would maintain a major presence in Europe at all. On this point, U.S. leaders were extremely attentive to European views and currents of European opinion, none more important than those in West Germany.

In this context, the true consensus position emerging during the spring and summer of 1990 was neither to abolish the alliances nor to extend them. It was a mix.

Unnerved by Moscow's April 1990 crackdown against Lithuania, the East Europeans were rapidly losing interest in retaining any defense alliance with Moscow at all. The West Europeans wanted to keep the alliance they had. Dangers did seem to have diminished for the moment, so there was no pressing need to create any new alliances.

What was pressing in the spring of 1990 was a widely shared sense of *uncertainty* about the future. On May 4, 1990, Bush used a commencement address in Oklahoma to discuss the need for a new kind of NATO, with a new strategy. He apologized to the graduating college students for dwelling on such a seemingly faraway topic.

The new mission, Bush explained, would be much more political. As for the military side, as Bush put it, "our enemy today is uncertainty and instability."¹⁷

That phrase seemed like a vague hedge. It was. It also turned out to be an accurate prediction.

Few, if anyone, predicted in May 1990 that NATO allies would face two wars just in the next year. One would arise in the Middle East: Iraq's August 1990 invasion and conquest of neighboring Kuwait. The other, for which the storm clouds were already gathering, was a set of wars that arose in the Balkans, as the disintegration of Yugoslavia led to wars that began in 1991.

The Soviet threat seemed to be gone. But new sorts of conflicts and dangers were already on the edge of bursting into flame. In April 1990 the Soviet government was placing an embargo on breakaway Lithuania and the threat of violence was obvious.

Leaders liked and generally trusted Gorbachev. But they were already looking beyond him.

For instance, by 1990 Kohl and Mitterrand were as close as cousins, or even brothers, including the occasional flareups. Meeting with Kohl at Mitterrand's country home in Latche near the southwest coast of France on a chilly, windy day in January 1990, the two men talked about what might come next in Moscow.

"The Gorbachev experiment will still go on for a certain time," Mitterrand predicted. "What will come after, if he fails?" "Ultras!" Mitterrand said, answering his own question. "Not Communists, but a tough

military dictator.” If the military won, Mitterrand thought they would stick with liberalization of the economy. “But the nationalist elements would stand strong in the foreground. Blood would flow in Georgia and other parts of the Soviet Union.”¹⁸

Conjectures like these were common in 1990. They were one reason why the existing allies valued their defense link to America.

Worries like these were also a reason to try to help Gorbachev stay in power. It was why Bush, Kohl, Mitterrand, Thatcher, and others all worked hard to find a way to help Gorbachev with the issue of Germany staying in NATO.

How to Help Gorbachev?

For his part, by May 1990 there was no doubt Gorbachev was interested in getting significant economic assistance for the Soviet Union. The Soviet desire for economic assistance surfaced at last when Shevardnadze spoke with Kohl in Bonn on May 4. It was getting hard for the Soviet government to borrow money to import goods, especially food. Their existing creditors (in Western Europe and Japan) would not make new loans.

Shevardnadze asked the West German government for help. Kohl was determined to help as much as he could.

Without informing his cabinet (but telling Genscher), Kohl contacted leaders of two major West German banks. He sent his national security advisor, Horst Teltschik, with the bankers to Moscow, in secret, to explore the Soviets’ needs and possible responses.¹⁹ The Soviets asked for a credit line of DM 20 billion (about \$12 billion) guaranteed by the West German government. The West German government could not back up that kind of loan.

Teltschik met directly with Gorbachev, who again linked the credit issue to continuation of his overall program of economic reform and *perestroika*. But Gorbachev was not interested in compromising on the security issues involving Germany. They at least agreed that Kohl would come back to the Soviet Union in the summer and visit Gorbachev in his home region, the Caucasus.

When Kohl met with Bush in Washington a few days later, the Soviet request for money was at the top of his agenda.²⁰ Kohl said his government could guarantee about \$3 billion in loans. He hoped the U.S. would guarantee some more.

Bush would not do it. He was still walking his tightrope. He had tried not to be too tough about Lithuania. But with the Lithuanian crisis not yet settled, adding more Soviet debt, without real Soviet economic reform, did not make sense to him. The secret biological weapons crisis (which we believe Kohl did not know about) could have been in the back of Bush's mind too, but we do not know.

Kohl urged Bush to change his mind.

But Bush stood firm. He did not think the Soviets could repay big new loans under their current circumstances.

Kohl still disagreed. He urged Bush to help Gorbachev, not wait for him to be overthrown.

Did Kohl think that there would be a military takeover? Bush asked.

Yes, said Kohl, by a civilian group backed by the military. He urged Bush again to think about the upcoming summit. Gorbachev needed to be able to stand beside the American president as an equal.

Bush promised to treat Gorbachev as an equal, moving forward on political relations and arms control. But the United States would not give Gorbachev money, not unless the Soviets changed their policy toward Lithuania.

The issue of economic assistance was left there for Bush to ponder as the U.S.-Soviet summit approached. Meanwhile, Baker was meeting with Shevardnadze, then Gorbachev, in Moscow.

The meetings did not go well. Baker made little headway with Gorbachev, but did deploy the set of nine assurances about managing Germany and changing NATO, which Zoellick had drafted and tried out earlier in the day.

For weeks, Chernyaev had privately urged Gorbachev to stop what he called this "nonsense," this "false patriotism of the masses,"

and adjust his position on NATO and not “again miss the train.” Gorbachev, however, still seemed adamant.²¹

Gorbachev moved the conversation with Baker to his agenda. He challenged the Americans’ real intentions toward the Soviet Union, given the clashes over issues such as Lithuania and Germany.

Then, just as Kohl had expected, Gorbachev presented to Baker the same kind of request for money that he had made to the West Germans. Gorbachev said he needed \$20 billion in loans and credits to overcome a significant funding gap over the next few years. The United States had to be involved, at least symbolically, in the loan effort. The next few years would be critical in easing the transition to a market economy.

Baker could offer Gorbachev little encouragement. It was hard to justify spending U.S. taxpayers’ money if the Soviets were still subsidizing the Cubans and economically squeezing the Lithuanians. Baker was essentially making the same points Bush had made to Kohl, in Washington, the day before.

Reflecting on this meeting in a message back to Bush, Baker’s leading impression was that Gorbachev was clearly feeling squeezed and would probably react strongly to any action that compounded his political difficulties at home. “Germany definitely overloads his circuits right now.”

It was one thing for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to no longer be enemies. It was still another long road for the U.S. to actually consider giving the Soviet Union large sums of money.

First, the United States at this point did not even have normal trade relations with the Soviet Union, something which Bush could not do alone. Any such deal would require support from the U.S. Congress, controlled by the opposing Democratic party. U.S.-Soviet trade relations were not yet even on the level the U.S. had with China (normal status, but temporary, up for renewal each year).

Next, someone would have to make a case about what the money was for—how it would actually be spent. After that, Bush would have to persuade the Congress, then embroiled in a taut battle with Bush over his determined efforts to move back toward balancing the budget, that the United States should appropriate large sums of money to a Soviet

government that, on the surface, still seemed to be in pretty good shape and was devoting an enormous part of its economy to its military-industrial complex and massively subsidizing governments like those in Cuba and North Korea.

After Baker returned from Moscow, Scowcroft laid out, in a very closely held memo, what he thought was the emerging “strategic choice” for Bush. This was the first time the Soviet Union had asked for help in this way from Western governments. “The decision,” Scowcroft wrote, “is not in essence about aid to Soviet economic reform—the chance that we can turn the Soviet economy around is a slim one indeed.”

“This is—and you should view it as such—a strategic choice about whether economic assistance is a direct and expeditious means by which to secure the victory of the West in the Cold War by obtaining the unification of Germany in NATO and the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Central and Eastern Europe.”

On that question, Scowcroft thought that a big investment, even \$20 billion, was worth considering. “Some will say that we would be paying for what the Soviets will have to do anyway—leave Eastern Europe and Germany.” But Scowcroft explained how difficult things could get. The Soviets “could make Central Europe a tense place for the next few years—years that are critical to the solidification of the Western gains of the recent period.”

It was true that the money to the Soviets might be wasted. It “would probably be spent on a quick infusion of consumer goods to blunt the impact of half-hearted economic reform measures.”

Nor would Congress support help “while the Soviet Union spends \$15 billion a year to arm its client states—\$5 billion in Cuba alone—and continues to strangle the Lithuanian independence movement.” But the U.S. had to concentrate on the most important problems, even if such an understanding about assistance would be a gamble on both sides.²²

Free to Choose

Mitterrand did not like to lean on Gorbachev. When he journeyed to Moscow to meet again with the Soviet leader, in late May, about a week after Baker left, the French president's tone was more philosophical. He threw in his weight on the German freedom to make the choice of alliances for themselves. "I do not see," Mitterrand told him, "how to forbid united Germany from choosing its alliances as agreed in Helsinki."²³

The notion of Germans debating about NATO was not idle theory. In election campaign after election campaign, anyone who had followed German politics that year, West or East, could see that their political leaders—West or East—were offering a full menu of options.

Free to choose: the Soviet government had said it agreed with that principle when it was codified in the Helsinki CSCE Final Act of 1975. This had always been an argument that had stuck with Gorbachev, resonating as it did so strongly with his other political principles.²⁴

By the end of May, as Gorbachev contemplated his trip to the United States, he faced a turning point in the course of East-West relations and *perestroika*. The stakes in continued cooperation with the West were enormous. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had stated both publicly and privately that their first priority was domestic reform. That meant cutting military expenditures and avoiding the distraction of a major international crisis.

In the spring of 1990 the Soviet Union appeared to be resigned to the failure of its policy in Eastern Europe. A long document prepared by the Central Committee staff spoke matter-of-factly about the changed political and ideological face of Eastern Europe. The analysis warned Soviet leaders that they currently had no policy to respond to this situation. There was a vacuum, and the West was filling it.

The USSR was withdrawing with "no rational explanation, with no regard for the immense material and spiritual investment that we made there." The policy guidance grasped at straws. There was still a chance to strengthen the Soviet cultural presence, interest in the Russian language, and so forth. The Central Committee staff even sug-

gested to a leadership desperately short of hard currency that a new policy in Eastern Europe might require a certain financial investment. "We should not economize," the staff told their impoverished leaders, "because this is a matter of capital for the future."²⁵

The fact remained, however, that Soviet policy in Eastern Europe—premised on the potential for reformed communism—was dead. Germany and Lithuania, however, were a different matter.

The division of Germany and Soviet dominance of its eastern half could be considered the most important achievements of half a century of Soviet foreign policy. This Soviet emplacement in the heart of Europe was the highest and last remaining measure of meaning from the vast sacrifices endured during the Great Patriotic War. Now the West and NATO were threatening to overrun this bastion of Soviet power. It seemed inconceivable that the USSR could submit supinely to such a reverse. Gorbachev's own political survival could be jeopardized by such a concession, and Gorbachev would face a full congress of the Soviet Communist party in July.

Gorbachev tried new economic reforms. On May 24 Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov announced a major new economic reform program, to include liberalizing prices. This would sharply increase the cost of food. The price of bread would triple. A wave of panic buying and public unrest followed. Gorbachev addressed the nation on television on May 27, pleading for calm.

The economic reform measures were eventually rejected by the Supreme Soviet before they could take effect. And, as if to underscore Gorbachev's beleaguered political situation, on May 29 the Russian legislature chose Boris Yeltsin as its president despite Gorbachev's opposition.

Kohl called Bush just before Gorbachev arrived in Washington. Again, Kohl pressed on U.S. money for the Soviets.

But Bush had decided against the kind of \$20 billion "strategic choice" that Scowcroft had invited him to consider. There was just too much against it. There were the problems with how the money would be used.

Also, though this was a seemingly technical detail, too time-consuming to explain in top-level meetings, there was a crucial issue of different legal authorities and institutions. Under its laws the West German government had much more scope to offer government-guaranteed loans to support its country's exports than was (or is) the case in the U.S. government.²⁶ Bush and Baker had trouble seeing how to get the federal government to guarantee loans on this sort of scale, and certainly not while Lithuania (and the BW program) were still unresolved.

It would be hard enough just to try and normalize trade relations. As Gorbachev was arriving, Bush had just been going through a very hard battle with the Congress over his decision to renew normal trade with China for another year.

So, Bush did not expect any breakthroughs with Gorbachev. He hoped to at least maintain forward progress.²⁷

In this essay, we will not go through the details of the Bush-Gorbachev summit discussions, including the famous meeting on May 31 in which Gorbachev matter-of-factly agreed that Germany should be free to choose its alliance status.

What is worth recalling again is that, the next day, the discussions came back to whether to sign a U.S.-Soviet trade agreement. Bush had checked views around his administration and on Capitol Hill. Opinions were divided, but Baker recommended going ahead with the deal.

Bush agreed. Gorbachev's apparent move on Germany probably contributed to the president's decision to help the beleaguered Soviet leader.

Moving from Washington to the presidential retreat at Camp David, for more relaxed and private discussions, privately, Bush raised the concerns about the discovery of the Soviet biological weapons program. Gorbachev was defensive and promised to look into it.

Gorbachev raised the question of economic aid, of U.S. government-guaranteed loans. Bush said that he wanted to help but needed to see more economic reforms, movement on Lithuania, and a reduction of subsidies to Cuba. Progress on Germany would also

create the right political climate for Bush to seek money from the Congress.

Bush did pledge that the G-7 would consider a broad multilateral assistance program, including substantial credits. They would do this at the Houston summit in July 1990, to be held right after the NATO summit in London.²⁸

None of the reporters at the post-summit press conference appeared to notice the significance of Bush's press statement mentioning Gorbachev's agreement that Germany was free to choose its alliance status. Nor did American officials call attention to it. They sensed that Gorbachev had finally turned a corner in his approach to the German Question, but the situation was tentative and shaky. Indeed, later in June, Shevardnadze continued to present a doctrinaire line in the discussions about Germany.

Bush carefully reported on his press statement in phone calls to Kohl, Thatcher, and Mitterrand. He did not dramatize the concession. He instead emphasized the need to follow up with a successful NATO summit in July.

None of the other leaders appeared, at least at first, to grasp the significance of the Soviet move; none even inquired about it. (Teltschik, however, noted that this was "a sensation.") Mitterrand did remark shrewdly that Gorbachev would be counting on achieving his security objectives through West Germany's domestic politics.

Bush then followed up with written messages. Again, Bush's tone was cautious: "We, of course, will have to see whether this reflects real flexibility in the Soviet position."²⁹

But, as Chernyaev recalled, the Americans were correct to take the exchange on Germany's right to choose very seriously. When asked later when the Soviet Union agreed to membership of a united Germany in NATO, Chernyaev "unhesitatingly" answered, "On May 30, at the Soviet-American summit in Washington."³⁰

Conclusion

In this chapter we just offer a snapshot of one phase in a remarkable story. It is a phase in which, to the outside world, no great events occurred.

But recall again what Bush said to Rice and others that spring: “I don’t want people to look back 20 or 40 years from now and say, That’s where everything went off track. That’s where progress stopped.”

Progress did not stop. The superpowers walked the tightrope. They found a way through the new crises over Lithuania and biological weapons. Though the United States could not see any economic aid panacea for the Soviet Union’s problems in the spring of 1990, the United States did move forward on normalizing economic relations, for the first time, with its former Cold War enemy. The United States and its allies did craft solutions for the core Soviet security concerns about Germany. The solutions used the institutions of the Cold War and the institutions of the new Europe coming into being.

Notes

1. Anatoly Chernyaev Diary, trans. Anna Melyakova & ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, 1990, entries for 22 & 30 Apr, pp. 25, 27, from National Security Archive online (hereinafter cited as Chernyaev Diary).

2. Ibid.

3. This summary and the following exchanges draw from Rice's recollections; George Bush & Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), pp. 222-29 (for quotes from April meetings with Thatcher and Mitterrand); James A. Baker, III with Thomas DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1995), pp. 239-44; Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, The End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, trans. Susan Emanuel (New York: Berghahn, 2009), pp. 240-41. "I don't want people to look back ...," Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn: From the Cold War to a New Era, The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1990* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), p. 404 (from Oberdorfer interview with Rice).

4. The use of Lugar as an intermediary arose from an American debate about whether the United States should pressure the Lithuanians to go along with the German and French initiative. Robert Gates, Robert Blackwill, and Rice were opposed, arguing that Washington should not leave its fingerprints on an effort to dissuade the Baltic states from seeking independence. Scowcroft, Baker, and Dennis Ross, however, believed that the Americans could send an "indirect" message to the Lithuanians that they wanted to see a resolution.

5. On the historical evolution of conventional wisdom about the Sverdlovsk issue up to this point, see Michael Gordin, "The Anthrax Solution: The Sverdlovsk Incident and the Resolution of a Biological Weapons Controversy," *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 30 no. 3 (1997): 441-80. When Gordin wrote this article, he did not know about the information that Soviet leaders of the BW program had already provided, from late 1989 onward, to the U.S. and British governments.

6. The first key defector, in October 1989, was Vladimir Pasechnik. Later there were other defectors and sources. The head of the Soviet BW program, and Pasechnik's supervisor, was Ken Alibek. In 1989 Alibek joined in the cover-ups, external and internal. In 1992 Alibek defected to the United States. He has since published a memoir about his work and his defection: *Biohazard* (New York: Random House, 1999). The best overall account of the Soviet biological weapons issues is now Milton Leitenberg & Raymond Zilinskas with Jens Kuhn, *The Soviet Biological Weapons Program: A History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). For more on the origins of the program, see Raymond

Zilinskas, *The Soviet Biological Weapons Program and Its Legacy in Today's Russia* (Washington: National Defense University Occasional Paper 11, July 2016); see also the valuable narrative in David Hoffman, *The Dead Hand* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), pp. 327-57. The Soviet program leaders, like Alibek, appear to have assumed that the U.S. and British also had large clandestine BW programs. They were profoundly shocked when they learned, including through Soviet site visits in the U.S., that this was not true and that the Americans and British had actually complied with the BWC.

The 1990s-era memoirs, including that of the U.S. ambassador, Jack Matlock, leave out any discussion of these BW issues. The British ambassador in Moscow, Rodric Braithwaite, another contributor to this volume, published his memoir in 2002, after the Soviet defector identities and information had been made public, and he gave some information about this. See Rodric Braithwaite, *Across the Moscow River: The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 141-43, but at that time Braithwaite did not feel able to discuss many of the other details that have since come out.

7. Some British officials apparently wanted to publicize all that was known and have a public confrontation with the Soviet government. Bush and Thatcher, and their top aides, did not agree. See the sifting of some of the evidence on this in Leitenberg & Zilinskas, *op. cit.*, pp. 582-92 and their notes.

8. For the Matlock-Bessmertnykh discussion, *Ibid.*, pp. 594-95. Leitenberg & Zilinskas have the best summary of the subsequent developments, including a substantial analysis puzzling over Gorbachev's handling of this issue. *Ibid.*, pp. 595-630. They are mistaken on a small factual point; they date the first Baker-Shevardnadze discussion of the BW issues on May 2; in fact, these discussions were on May 17, after the initial demarches at the lower-level. Hoffman did the initial reporting on Gorbachev's recollection of the first Bush-Gorbachev discussions of the BW problem. See *The Dead Hand*, *op. cit.*, pp. 350-51.

9. We believe the intelligence discoveries were briefed to the congressional "Gang of Eight," which would include the leaders of both parties in the House and the Senate, as well as the chair and ranking minority member of the House and Senate intelligence committees.

10. Rice and Zelikow to Blackwill, "Two Plus Four: The Next Phase," 10 May 90. U.S. documents cited without an archival location were reviewed by Zelikow in the early 1990s, before they were archived; Zoellick also made notes for himself around the same time, in his office files. He had discussed the issue with the West Germans and previewed it for Baker back in March. On that and also the difficult legal issue that would be confronted, effectively forcing the U.S. to adopt the kind of arguments that the Soviets had used in the 1950s during the Berlin crisis, see Philip Zelikow & Condoleezza Rice, *Germa-*

ny Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 246, 448 n. 9.

The British government disagreed internally on whether it was willing to let Four Power rights terminate. But Foreign Secretary Hurd and his team in London had about the same position as the Americans. They pushed back hard against concerns voiced in Number 10 and from their ambassador in Bonn, and insisted that the British should let their rights lapse when Germany unified. See Weston to Wall, 18 May 90, answering Powell to Wall that day, reacting to Bonn 634, "German Unification: The Timetable Accelerates," 17 May 90, in *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III: vol. VII, German Unification 1989-1990*, edited by Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton & Stephen Twigge (London: Routledge, 2010) (hereinafter cited as *DBPO-German Unification*), pp. 390-94; see also the earlier Foreign Office analysis by Hurd's policy planner, Robert Cooper, on "The Soviet Veto in the Two plus Four Talks," 6 Apr 90, in *ibid.*, pp. 371-72.

11. On the Hurd-Kohl meeting, see Teltschik, *329 Tage*, p. 235; Bonn (U.S. embassy) 15540, "Hurd's May 15 Visit to Bonn," 16 May 90.

12. On the details of this diplomacy, with the approach effectively settled among the Americans and West Germans in June 1990, see Zelikow & Rice, *op. cit.*, pp. 239, 267-68, 274-75, 306-07, 308, 323, 333.

13. On the eventual scale and cost of German CFE compliance, Celeste Wallander, *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies: German-Russian Cooperation after the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 104, 110.

14. CFE 1A was more formally called the Concluding Act of the Negotiation on Personnel Strength of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed in Helsinki in July 1992. In that agreement Germany reduced its ceiling to 345,000. France, which had about three-quarters of Germany's population, had a ceiling of 325,000. With nearly double Germany's population, Russia was granted a disproportionately large ceiling of 1.45 million, more than four times the German total. Ukraine, with about one-third the population of Russia, was granted a ceiling of 450,000.

15. The nine points were:

- (1) limiting the Bundeswehr in CFE II [as mentioned in the text, this pledge was made in 1990 without waiting for CFE II];
- (2) accelerating negotiations about short-range nuclear forces [Bush jumped over the negotiations in September 1991 with a unilateral withdrawal of practically all such weapons, which Gorbachev reciprocated];

- (3) ensuring that the Germans would not develop, possess, or acquire either nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons [this was done in the Final Settlement];
- (4) keeping NATO forces out of the GDR for a transition period [also done, with further details discussed in Soviet-West German talks];
- (5) developing a transition period for Soviet forces to leave the GDR [worked out between West Germans and Soviets];
- (6) adapting NATO politically and militarily [accomplished both in word and deed in 1990 and 1991];
- (7) getting an agreement on the Polish-German border [also done in 1990];
- (8) institutionalizing and developing CSCE [done in the 1990 Charter of Paris and the 1992 Helsinki CSCE summit, with solid Soviet, then Russian, participation]; and
- (9) developing economic relations with the Germans, while ensuring that GDR economic obligations to the USSR would be fulfilled [also worked out between the Soviets and Germans].

As Baker recalled, “Gorbachev took copious notes as I went through the list and made clear he approved of it very much.” Where Gorbachev still balked at that time, in mid-May, was the acceptance of a unified Germany in NATO. James Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, op. cit., pp. 250-51.

Citing “insights from international relations theory,” Joshua Itzkowitz Shiffrinson has argued that the U.S. made “informal assurances” not to extend NATO and that it made a “false promise of accommodation” of Soviet interests. The promise was false, he asserts, because, in 1990, the U.S. and its allies hoped to preserve NATO and because, in 1990, the door to possible future NATO enlargement was “left ajar.” Thus, “the United States was insincere when offering the Soviet Union informal assurances against NATO expansion.” “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion,” *International Security*, vol. 40 no. 4 (2016): 7, 40, 34, 38.

The context of the “left ajar” quote provides a more accurate snapshot of U.S. views not only in 1990, but also onward until 1993, after the Soviet Union had disintegrated. At the end of October 1990 Zelikow briefed Gates on the state of play, in the European Strategy Steering Group, on the question of: “Should the US and NATO now signal to the new democracies of Eastern Europe NATO’s readiness to contemplate their future membership?”

Zelikow reported that, “All agencies agree that East European governments should not be invited to join NATO anytime in the immediate future. There is general satisfaction with the way the State paper ended up handling the issue

of Eastern Europe [page numbers]. However, OSD [Cheney's civilian aides] and State's Policy Planning Staff (and possibly Zoellick) would like to keep the door ajar and not give the East Europeans the impression that NATO is forever a closed club." The rest of State preferred to just be "inscrutable," treating the issue "as premature and not on the table, while of course reserving our options as the political situation in Europe evolves." Zelikow through Gompert & Kanter to Gates, "Your Meeting of the European Strategy Steering Group," 26 Oct 90, pp. 4-5, Wilson files, Bush Library.

This reserved stance was precisely the approach that had animated the April 1990 Zelikow/Rice proposal to invite the Soviet Union and all other Warsaw Pact states to send "diplomatic liaison missions" to NATO, a U.S. proposal that NATO leaders adopted in July 1990, accepted by all the Warsaw Pact countries, and which then led to the 1991 creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council that included all those states, including the Soviet Union.

There were no agreements to scuttle or settle NATO's future contours, one way or another. The American sources, which we know well, do not say different. Perhaps more to the point, the other governments so centrally involved, like the Soviet and West German governments, also did not believe at the time that they had struck such an agreement, formally or informally. Those who did the work were professionals who knew what they were agreeing to, or not.

Bush, Baker, Kohl, and Genscher actually worked conscientiously and in good faith to accommodate Soviet and Russian security concerns. Those looking for informal assurances meant to accommodate such concerns can readily find them. They are the list of nine assurances Baker so carefully enumerated to Gorbachev in May 1990. This list was circulated and discussed among allied governments. It was repeatedly stressed in the subsequent diplomacy that led to the Final Settlement signed in September 1990.

16. Kohl-Bush memcons, Washington, 17 May 90, Bush Library; Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), pp. 236-39; *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90*, research supervision from Klaus Hildebrand & Hans-Peter Schwarz with Friedrich Kahlenberg of the Bundesarchiv, edited by Hanns Jürgen Küsters & Daniel Hofmann (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998) (hereinafter cited as *DzD-Einheit*), pp. 1126-27 (in which the record of the three meetings run together). The small discussion seeking the "honest opinion" was just with Bush, Kohl, Scowcroft, Teltschik, and the interpreters (the 10-1130 meeting). For that meeting the American record is more detailed than the German one, although the essence of the exchange is clear in both.

17. Bush address, Oklahoma State University, 4 May 90, Bush Library.

18. Kohl-Mitterrand memcon, Latche (near the coast, in the French Pyrenees), 4 Jan 90, *DzD-Einheit*, p. 685.

19. The account that follows is drawn from Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage*, op. cit., pp. 221, 226–228, 230–235.

20. The discussion that follows is drawn from *Ibid.*, pp. 237–238; Bush-Kohl memcon, 17 May 90, Bush Library.

21. For the Zoellick-Ross drafted presentation on Germany which Baker took into his meeting with Gorbachev, see briefing paper, “One-on-One Points: Gorbachev Meeting,” n.d. For Baker’s summary to Bush on his meeting with Gorbachev, see Secto 7015 (from Moscow), “Memorandum for the President: Moscow, May 18,” 19 May 90. For Chernyaev’s vehement private dissent, see Chernyaev diary 1990, 5 May, op. cit., p. 29.

22. Scowcroft to Bush, “A Strategic Choice: Do We Give Aid to the Soviet Union?,” 25 May 90, in Rice files, Soviet Union/USSR Subject Files, US-USSR Soviet Relations (2), Bush Library. The memo was drafted principally by Rice, working with Blackwill and Gates. It was highly classified at the time and handled outside of the normal paperwork system.

23. Quoted in Bozo, *Mitterrand*, op. cit., p. 253.

24. The language appears in “Principle I” of the “Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States” in “Basket I” of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, dealing with security questions: “They [the participating states] also have the right to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance; they also have the right to neutrality.” Within the American government, Zoellick had seized on this principle, months earlier, as a way to strengthen the West’s position since the CSCE document, though not legally binding, was one of the few bodies of principles clearly agreed to by both sides.

25. Central Committee staff to members of the Politburo, “O svazi ot-nosheniyakh s vostochnym-evropa,” May 1990, in Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD), Moscow.

26. The German government has long had relatively broad authorities to guarantee export-related loans, combined (not coincidentally) with close relationships between top government and banking leaders. An example is their “Hermes cover” program. In the U.S. government the strongest export credit guarantee authorities are confined to agricultural exports. The G-7 governments could help fund and persuade more loans to the Soviet Union by the international financial institutions, led by the IMF. This would require Soviet membership in the IMF, a process which began getting underway, precariously, in late 1990, and would then lead to setting policy conditions in order to get credit.

27. See Bush & Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, op. cit., pp. 276–78.

28. Based on our understanding of the discussion at the time. As far as we know, there is no written record of the Bush-Gorbachev side discussions at Camp David about credits or about biological weapons.

29. See Teltschik, *329 Tage*, op. cit., pp. 255–258; Bush-Kohl and Bush-Thatcher telcons, 3 Jun 90, Bush-Mitterrand telcon, 5 Jun 90, Bush Library. The written messages were sent out on June 4. Bush did tell both Kohl and Thatcher about the private discussions of credits and economic aid. The letter to Thatcher did not mention Bush's discussion of the biological weapons problem with Gorbachev. Some of those discussions were handled directly between Scowcroft and Charles Powell. Thatcher kept up to date on the BW issue. She followed up on the subject with Gorbachev when she went to Moscow later that month.

30. Zelikow interview with Chernyaev, Moscow, January 1994; Hannes Adomeit, "Gorbachev, German Unification, and the Collapse of Empire," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 10 (August–September 1994): pp. 197, 229 n. 28.