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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

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The twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the ensuing unification of Germany has contributed to a number of significant journal forums and books. H-Diplo missed the November date but has a series of roundtables coming out on the event, starting with a roundtable released on 5 February 2010 on a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary European History* on “Revisiting 1989: Causes, Course, and Consequences.” Subsequent roundtables include Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (2009), and Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, editors, *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (2010).<sup>1</sup>

Mary Sarotte’s study focuses on summer and autumn of 1989 and assesses the changes that led to the opening of the Wall and the ensuing struggle to create a new post-war Europe with the question of the future of Germany at the center of the diplomatic negotiations. The reviewers agree that Sarotte has created a succinct study that is based on impressive multi-national archival research and interviews. Sarotte successfully weaves together a seamless narrative with challenging analysis and consideration of alternative proposals for the creation of a post-Cold War order in Europe centered around the historic German question. As Meena Bose and Hope Harrison emphasize, Sarotte successfully looks forward during this period, leaves room for contingency and events to disrupt and change the plans of policymakers, and at the same time retains a historical perspective on the flow of events. They agree that the writing is superb.

The reviewers do not question Sarotte’s narrative or the assessment of the contributions of Western leaders, ranging from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher grumbling from the sideline about the speedy move to German unification to French President François Mitterrand’s endorsement of Kohl’s strategy in order to strengthen the European Community, as well as Mikhail Gorbachev’s critical stances on the major issues. President George H.W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker also played a significant role in backing Kohl’s strategy, especially his desire to keep a united Germany in NATO, but rejected Kohl’s suggestions that Washington support Germany’s increasing aid to Gorbachev as a quid pro quo for the withdrawal of the Red Army from East Germany and Moscow’s acceptance of Germany staying in NATO.

The reviewers have some reservations about Sarotte’s assessment of four options advanced to resolve the German question. Sarotte’s response provides a stimulating follow-up to the reviews:

- 1) Sarotte develops within her narrative four main alternatives that were proposed on German question and the post-Cold War European order. These include: 1) restoration—restore the Four Power governance after WWII which Gorbachev

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<sup>1</sup> Another recent study is Constantine Pleshakov’s *There Is No Freedom Without Bread! 1989 and the Civil War That Brought Down Communism* (2009). For German sources on the fall of the wall, see footnote one in Hope Harrison’s review.

recommended to maximize Soviet influence; 2) the revivalist model in which the two Germanies would work together in a confederation, a concept that Kohl and East German groups advanced; 3) a heroic plan advanced by East German groups and eventually Gorbachev in which NATO and the Warsaw pact would be scrapped and replaced by a multinational system of separate political orders but international economic and military institutions; and 4) the prefab model favored by the Western powers and Kohl in which West Germany would move its institutions into East Germany in a unification process including the European Community and NATO institutions. (6-9) In her response to the reviews, Sarotte notes that “I sought to establish typologies, not probabilistic values.... My goal ... was not to demonstrate that all four variants were equally likely.” (1)

- 2) The reviewers do not question Sarotte’s assessment that the first two solutions lost support fairly quickly as Kohl had no interest in putting West or East Germany back under Four Power control and subordinating his and Germany’s interests to Moscow, London, Paris, and Washington. The revivalist model also lost support when Kohl and his advisers realized the extent of decline in East Germany as well as the prospect of escalating violence as East Germans turned on the Stasi, and the Red Army’s presence increased concerns about what might happen if conditions deteriorated further.
- 3) Sarotte’s assessment of the third solution, the prefab model of unifying Germany with West German institutions and its connections with the Western powers, and her assessments of the contributions of Western leaders to the successful process also is not challenged by the reviewers. As Harrison points out, Sarotte persuasively demonstrates the skillful leadership that Kohl provided to accomplish this objective with support from Washington and Paris and carping from the sidelines from Prime Minister Thatcher. James Sheehan and William Wohlforth agree that Sarotte captured the concerns of President Bush and Secretary Baker that Germany might end up outside of NATO and their successful support for Kohl’s approach when he shifted to prefab unification with an emphasis on moving with all deliberate speed to complete the process before further deterioration in the Soviet Union. The reviewers also agree that Sarotte’s depiction of Gorbachev’s engagement on this critical issue demonstrates his strengths and weaknesses as his leadership came under increasing challenges at home. Gorbachev certainly worried about German unification and recognized the significant challenges that a united Germany in NATO would pose for him with his critics and Soviet security as NATO moved to the east. Faced with a crumbling economy, a lack of funds, the question of what to do with the 400,000 Red Army troops and 200,000 dependents in East Germany, and growing separatism in the Soviet empire itself, Gorbachev ultimately agreed to a time-table for the withdrawal of the Red Army, unification, and Germany being in NATO with restrictions on any nuclear weapons and non-German forces in the former East Germany.
- 4) The questions of the reviewers—Sheehan and William Wohlforth—are directed at the heroic model, the advocacy by East German groups and Gorbachev for a

transformation of Europe from Cold War organizations to a new, multilateral order. Sarotte does note that support for this concept never gained much traction with Western leaders, especially Kohl, Bush, and Thatcher, and Sarotte concludes that “the prefab model was the most workable in the time available.” (2) Sheehan questions the viability of Gorbachev’s support for this option: “Gorbachev’s options ... were fatally compromised, first by his own decision not to use force to preserve the Soviet imperium, and second, by the manifest failure of his economic policies.” (2) Wohlforth agrees that Gorbachev’s backing for this approach was critical, but Gorbachev “never was able to articulate the heroic model in any but plaintive, general terms,” and lacked time, policy-making resources, and the confidence that if he tried “to slow down the unification train” he might get left without any German aid that he needed. (3)

- 5) The reviewers also challenge Sarotte’s conclusion that emphasizes the mixed results of Kohl’s leading role in moving the Cold War order and institutions into a united Germany. This solved the German problem but did not attempt to address the Russian problem. Harrison suggests that Sarotte attributes too much blame on the West for Russian resentment at being left out of NATO and at NATO’s continued movement to the East despite Gorbachev’s discussions with Bush and Baker on this point.<sup>2</sup> Sheehan suggests that Sarotte is too critical on the failure of Western policy-makers to create a fundamentally new order in Europe, something like the heroic model, as opposed to an extension of the Cold War order without the Cold War. (3) Wohlforth, moreover, suggests that 1989 was not an “ordering moment, like the end of the Napoleonic Wars or World War II.” The end of the Cold War highlighted the failure of the Soviet challenge to the Cold War order and affirmed the views of Western leaders and the public that they and their institutions had triumphed. “It is a sadly familiar story in international politics,” Wohlforth concludes: “those with power to make a better world rarely have the incentive, and those with the incentive rarely have the power.” (4)
- 6) In her response, Sarotte expands on the U.S. role in the process with a discussion under the heading: “The Question of Policymakers’ Willingness to Learn from History.” Sarotte compares the response of U.S. leaders in 1945-1949 and 1989-1990 with emphasis on the contrast between Washington’s effort to include their defeated foes, Germany and Japan, in the earlier period, and Bush and Baker’s focus on getting the Soviets out of East Germany. “In other words,” Sarotte suggests, “buy them off as quickly as possible; do not help them to solve their problems or avoid hard choices. Exploit their weaknesses and get rid of them. Make it sound diplomatic in public, but let them hang on rope of their own creation.” (4) Sarotte concludes that U.S. policy-makers missed an opportunity to resolve not only the German question but also the Russian question by bringing a Gorbachev led Soviet Union into the West. (4) Wohlforth anticipates this issue in his review noting that “more enlightened statecraft by the Cold War’s victors would have worked out some

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<sup>2</sup> See Harrison’s note 5 for a discussion of differing views on this point and Sarotte, 1989, 109-115.

way to embrace Russia,” although he notes “good reasons” for doubts on this point. (4) There may also be too much looking back and not forward on this issue. In contrast with 1945, the Soviet Union was not militarily defeated, occupied, and pressured to reform along the model of Germany and Japan. The Soviet Union still existed even if it lost its western empire and, as Sarotte notes, one major reason why Washington and Kohl pushed for a speedy conclusion was the prospect of Gorbachev being replaced by a more aggressive regime backed by the Red Army that would abandon self-determination for a restoration of the empire. Sarotte also points to Washington’s repeated rejections of Kohl’s proposals that the United States join Germany in providing economic assistance to help Gorbachev. Kohl kept billions of Deutsche marks flowing to Gorbachev to keep the process moving even when Gorbachev complained that they disappeared in Moscow shortly after they arrived and he could not find them. Would U.S. dollars have had a similar fate?

### Participants:

**Mary Elise Sarotte’s** newest book, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, appeared with Princeton University Press on 9 November 2009, the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It won the 2009 DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in German and European Studies and was selected as one of the “Best Books of 2009” by *The Financial Times*. Sarotte’s previous publications include the books *Dealing with the Devil* and *German Military Reform and European Security*, plus a number of scholarly articles. She has also worked as a journalist for *Time*, *Die Zeit*, and *The Economist*, and appears as a political commentator on the BBC, CNN International and Sky News. Sarotte earned her BA in History and Science at Harvard and her PhD in History at Yale. After graduate school, she served as a White House Fellow, and subsequently joined the faculty of the University of Cambridge. She received tenure there in 2004 and became a member of the Royal Historical Society before returning to the U.S. to become Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California (USC).

**Meena Bose** is Peter S. Kalikow Chair in Presidential Studies at Hofstra University and Director of Hofstra’s Peter S. Kalikow Center for the Study of the American Presidency. She received her undergraduate degree in international politics from Penn State University (1990), and her master’s and doctoral degrees from Princeton University (1992, 1996). She is the author of *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (1998), and editor of the reference volume *The New York Times on the Presidency* (2009). She also is co-editor of several volumes in presidency studies and a reader in American politics, and she is a contributor to the textbook *American Government: Institutions and Policies*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (2011), by James Q. Wilson and John J. DiIulio, Jr. Her current research focuses on presidential leadership in the United Nations.

**Hope M. Harrison** received her BA from Harvard and her Ph.D. from Columbia. She is an Associate Professor of History and International Affairs at George Washington University. For the 2009-2010 academic year, she is a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the German Federal

Foundation for Reappraising the East German Dictatorship (Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur). Her current book project examines German debates since 1989 about whether and how to treat the Berlin Wall as a site of memory. Her first book, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton, 2003), won the Marshall Shulman prize of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in 2004. Professor Harrison has published numerous articles on Soviet-East German relations, the cold war, and the Berlin Wall, and she has appeared on CNN, C-SPAN, BBC, the History Channel, and Deutschlandfunk. She was Director for European and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council from 2000-2001.

**James Sheehan** is Professor Emeritus of History at Stanford University. He received his PhD at the University of California at Berkeley. His most recent book is *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe* (2008). He published an essay on “The Transformation of Europe and the End of the Cold War” in *The Fall of the Berlin War: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989*, edited by Jeffrey Engel (Oxford University Press, 2009). He is now working on a book about the origins of modern states.

**William Wohlforth** is the Daniel Webster Professor at Dartmouth College. His most recent books are *The Balance of Power in World History* (2007; co-editor, with Stuart Kaufman and Richard Little) and *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (2008; co-author, with Stephen Brooks). He has published numerous articles on international and strategic affairs, most recently “Re-Shaping the World Order” in the March/April 2009 issue of *Foreign Affairs* (with Stephen Brooks) and “Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War” in the January 2009 issue of *World Politics*. He is currently the editor in chief of the journal *Security Studies*.

The opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, transformed global politics, marking a dramatic and highly symbolic end to the Cold War in Europe. For twenty-eight years, the wall had represented the divide between democracy and communism. When East Germans began streaming through the wall, they changed the international order that had existed since the end of World War II. Of immediate importance was the future of Berlin and Germany, which would have significant implications for the United States and Soviet Union (soon to be broken apart into independent republics) as well.

Mary Elise Sarotte's examination of the events in 1989 and 1990 that led to the creation of a unified Germany presents a compelling historical analysis of the key actors, choices, and decisions in this period. The extensive primary research in U.S., European, and Russian archives, complemented by interviews with key policy makers in the debate over German reunification, makes an original contribution to understanding how the structure of the post-Cold War era developed. Sarotte contends that the "imperfect choices" (203) in 1989-1990 about the international order led to a situation where "the model that won was not the most visionary one." (10) Of particular significance was the decision to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to include reunified Germany but leave out the Soviet Union; Sarotte finds that this exclusion "generat[ed] fateful resentments that shape geopolitics to this day." (4)

In focusing on 1989, Sarotte begins with two key questions: "What changed during summer and autumn 1989? Why did it become the year that the wall opened?" (16) Both events external to Germany and internal actions contribute to the explanation. One reason involves the Tiananmen Square protests in China that spring, which were brutally quashed by authorities. Although East German leaders did not join the international outcry over the Chinese government's harsh use of force against the protestors, neither did they repress their own protestors later in the year, thus "negat[ing] the Tiananmen model in the European context." (21) Furthermore, in the United States, the new presidential administration of George H.W. Bush was not willing to continue existing policies without careful review. As Sarotte puts it, the Bush administration "intentionally stepped back" (25) in 1989, and "neither the United States nor the Soviet Union served as leaders for the events that unfolded." (22) Because neither superpower exercised leadership, the East German people began taking action on their own against their government, culminating with the fall of the wall on 9 November 1989.

Sarotte captures well the excitement and uncertainty as November 9 unfolded, and identifies the importance of television in bringing about its dramatic conclusion. In previous weeks, East Germans had begun to depart their country in droves, going to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and then seeking entry to West Germany. On the evening of November 9, a spokesperson for the East German Politburo casually mentioned in a press conference that citizens would be able to use border crossings to exit from the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Questioning the spokesperson afterward, U.S. newscaster

Tom Brokaw mentioned crossing the Berlin Wall, but the spokesperson demurred. Nevertheless, television broadcasts began announcing that the wall gates were open, and Sarotte writes that television thus became “not a placating but rather a motivating factor.” (41) As crowds descended upon the gates, the border guards decided to avoid battle, and opened the barriers. Some three million GDR residents traveled to West Berlin and West Germany in the following three days.

The opening of the wall raised the question of who would govern post-Cold War Europe. As Sarotte writes, “Europe was the site of the culminating round not only of a contest of geopolitical power but also of modernities . . . a Western versus a Soviet one.” (6) Sarotte presents four models of governance under consideration in 1989-1990: the “Soviet restoration model,” in which the Soviet Union would regain the power it held in Germany immediately following World War II; the German “revivalist model”, in which the two Germanies would govern together in a confederacy; the “heroic model of multinationalism,” in which European states would maintain political sovereignty while becoming increasingly integrated economically and militarily; and the “prefab model,” in which existing institutions such as NATO would expand to incorporate newly democratic territories. (6-8)

Sarotte carefully demonstrates how West Germany, East Germany, the United States, Soviet Union, and France negotiated possibilities in 1989-1990, and how the “prefab model” ultimately became the governing structure. Under the “Two Plus Four” agreement, the two German states were unified as a single state, and the four countries that had controlled Germany following World War II (the United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France) formally ceded their authority over Berlin. Soviet troops withdrew from Germany, and NATO’s jurisdiction extended eastward to encompass all of the newly unified country. In addition to providing funds to assist the Soviet Union to withdraw, Germany also promised not to allow foreign troops or nuclear weapons in its eastern territory. (184)

This highly persuasive analysis of how the post-Cold War European order was established in 1989-1990 will be of great interest to scholars of American politics, comparative politics, and international relations. Of particular significance is Sarotte’s argument that German chancellor Helmut Kohl was the primary actor in this process, not leaders of either superpower; as Sarotte writes, “if there were any one individual to emerge as the single most important leader in the construction of post-Cold War Europe, it would have to be Kohl rather than [George] Bush, [Mikhail] Gorbachev, or [Ronald] Reagan.” (3) At the same time, Sarotte also recognizes how events propelled action in this critical period: “At many points, all state leaders, superpower and otherwise, were simply reacting to change. They had to propose models of order for the future precisely because they were overwhelmed by disorder.” (210)

This book amply fulfills its purpose of explaining how German unification and NATO expansion emerged in 1989-1990. Although the following questions do not fall within the scope of the analysis, some discussion of these issues in the conclusion would be useful. How might the United States and Soviet Union have exercised more vigorous leadership in this period to influence the new international order? Was the opportunity ripe for re-

evaluating the purpose of NATO (a subject that would gain traction later in the 1990s)? What conditions would be necessary today to permit an overarching reassessment of the choices made nearly two decades ago?

With solid research and clear writing, this book makes a major contribution to Cold War studies and international politics. The comprehensive archival research and accessible prose commend it for scholars as well as the classroom.

This extensively researched and wonderfully written book came out at the perfect time, on the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the process which led to German unification less than a year later. Sarotte has consulted archives, private papers, and public sources in the U.S., Russia, Germany, France, the UK, and Poland, as well as conducted interviews with key players, to tell the important story of the process, centered in Germany, of transitioning from the Cold War to the post-Cold War world in Europe. In so doing, she steps back from the details (which she also renders vividly) to ask some key questions: what were the various possibilities envisioned for a united Germany in (an increasingly united) Europe? And why was the blueprint for a united Federal Republic of Germany (on West German terms) in NATO the winning one in what Sarotte likens to an architectural competition? Why did competing blueprints lose? And what have been the longer-term consequences of this process, twenty years later? In this reviewer's estimation, the strength of the book is in the answering of the first three questions and the weakness of the book is in her narrow way of addressing the fourth question.

Sarotte's book is so clearly and engagingly written that it is a model and will be of use for both experts and students alike. The author does a wonderful job of weaving together many different sources from five countries to describe the events of 1989-1990 at multiple levels: the East Germans on the streets who wanted the right to leave or the possibility to stay and change the system, the East German dissidents who wanted to reform socialism, and the various and changing aims of leaders in Bonn, Berlin, Washington, Paris, London, Moscow, and Warsaw. The essential partnership between president George H.W. Bush and German chancellor Helmut Kohl as well as the separate efforts by both of them to win over the British, French, and, mostly importantly, the Soviets in the project of uniting Germany on western terms is told in great depth in the book. While much has been written, particularly in German, about the events of the fall of 1989 which led to the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November,<sup>1</sup> much less has been written in English,<sup>2</sup> and no other book on the

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Hermann Hertle is especially prolific in his publications. See the following books by Hertle of which there have generally been multiple printings over several years, with the most recent printing cited here: *Chronik des Mauerfalls* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2009), *Der Tag, an dem die Mauer fiel* (Berlin: Nikolai Verlag, 2009), *Die Berliner Mauer—Monument des Kalten Krieges/The Berlin Wall—Monument of the Cold War* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag 2009), *Der Fall der Mauer* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996). Hertle has also helped produced multiple television documentaries about the fall of the Wall, with the two most important being "Als die Mauer fiel. 50 Stunden, die die Welt veraenderten," a co-production of SFB/MDR/NDR/SWF/DW/CINE IMPULS, with editing by Dr. Hans von Brescius, premiered on 4 November 1999, 9p.m., 89 minutes, ARD; and Hertle provided the idea and the historical advice for Marc Brasse & Florian Huber's documentary film, "Schabowski's Zettel. Die Nacht als die Mauer fiel," a production of Monaco Film und Spiegel TV Media in cooperation with NDR, SWR, Deutsche Welle und United Docs, premiere, ARD, 2 November 2009. Finally, Hertle also oversees a website on the Berlin Wall, [www.chronik-der-mauer.de](http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de).

<sup>2</sup> Hence, Sarotte published an engaging summary in *The Washington Post* of the unlikely opening of the Berlin Wall announced mistakenly by East German Politburo member Guenter Schabowski on the evening of

subject brings together such a broad range of sources on both the events of fall 1989 and the process leading to German unification. Even those who are acquainted with the exciting, nerve-wracking developments of the fall of 1989 will find themselves eagerly turning the pages of Sarotte's narrative. Previous books on the path from 9 November 1989 to German unification on 3 October 1990 were either written before many documents were available or are memoirs written by former policymakers emphasizing one part of the story.<sup>3</sup>

Sarotte argues persuasively that the reasons the West German system was transferred wholesale to East Germany via the Basic Law/Constitution of West Germany (instead of convening an all-German constitutional convention) and the reasons that the united Germany became a member of NATO (instead of remaining neutral or somehow being in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact) can be found in the combination of the ongoing exodus of East Germans to West Germany, the inability of the leading East German dissidents to connect with the people at large, the strong negotiating skills and clear vision of Kohl and Bush, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's weak negotiating skills and distraction by domestic Soviet crises, and French President François Mitterrand's realization that he could trade German unification for a deepening integration process within Europe. Accordingly, as Sarotte writes, using her architectural metaphor, "the prefabricated structures that had served West Germany well—its alliance, constitution, currency, and market economy—[were moved] eastward to replace the ruins of Eastern socialism."<sup>4</sup>

The breadth and depth of the five core chapters of the book unfortunately get lost with Sarotte's narrow conclusion focusing on Russia. In examining the legacy of the German unification process and focusing on Russia's later growing resentment at being left out, particularly from NATO, Sarotte seemingly puts all the blame on the West for getting Russia to agree to Western terms of German unification in 1989-1990 and does not consider developments in Russian-Western relations, Russian foreign policy, or in Russian domestic politics since 1990 that have caused tensions between Russia and the West. Sarotte argues in the book and in opinion editorials that verbal (yet never written) pledges to Moscow by

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9 November 1989, "How it went down: the little accident that toppled history," *Washington Post*, 1 November 2009, p. B1.

<sup>3</sup> For early books on the unification process, see Steve Szabo, *The Diplomacy of German Unification* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Elizabeth Pond, *Beyond the Wall* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1993); and Manfred Goertemaker, *Unifying Germany, 1989-1990* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994). The most top-level memoirs on the 1989-1990 period are by George Bush, Brent Scowcroft, James Baker, Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice from the US; Helmut Kohl, Horst Telschik, and Hans-Dietrich Genscher from Germany; Mikhail Gorbachev, Eduard Schevardnadze, Anatoly Chernyaev, and Andrei Grachev from the Soviet Union; and François Mitterrand from France. For fascinating new information on the role of the Soviets in Kohl's 10 Point Plan of 28 November 1989 via the Soviet Central Committee's German expert Valentin Falin, see the documents released in November 2009 on the website of the National Security Archive, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB296/index.htm>, and the Archive's forthcoming book, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989*, CEU Press, A National Security Archive Reader, forthcoming, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Sarotte, 1989, p. 194.

president George H. W. Bush and secretary of state James Baker that once all of Germany was in NATO, the alliance would not expand any further eastwards justifiably led Russia later to feel betrayed by NATO expansion.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Sarotte concludes that although the events of 1989-1990 led to many great results within Germany and even within a deepening European Union, they also left one large, very dissatisfied power in Europe, namely Russia, which accordingly has weakened the longer-term success of the 1989-1990 transformation of Europe. While Sarotte says that the answer to the question of whether the West “lost” Russia as early as 1990 is elusive, she gives the clear impression that she does in fact blame the West and the 1989-1990 process of German unification for “losing” Russia. In this reader’s view, this is much too narrow and one-sided a conclusion for such a rich book.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See also Sarotte’s, “Enlarging NATO, expanding confusion,” *International Herald Tribune*, 30 November 2009, p. 8. For a counterargument to Sarotte’s about the justification of Moscow feeling betrayed by the later expansion of NATO, see Mark Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” *Washington Quarterly* 32:2 (April 2009) pp. 39-61. There are also problems with Kramer’s argument, which holds too much to the letter of agreements (or lack thereof) and not enough to the spirit of U.S.-Soviet agreements on Germany and implicitly on NATO in February and July 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Sarotte, 1989, pp. 211-214.

Review by James Sheehan, Stanford University

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Among the many stirring events of 1989, the opening of the Berlin Wall was symbolically the most powerful. In the first place, by capturing a set of complex processes within Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action, it became extraordinarily telegenic. The Wall was, moreover, a familiar symbol of the Cold War, just as Berlin was a city loaded with memories of East-West confrontations. Most people had seen the famous images of the Wall's construction, the extraordinary crowds that greeted John Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech, and Ronald Reagan's challenge, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." The Wall stood for Communism's failures—Why else did the regime have to try so hard to prevent its citizens from leaving?—and for its ruthless oppression—written on the bodies of those who perished while trying to escape. Since its collapse, the Berlin wall has turned out to be a remarkably malleable symbol. Richard Schade of the University of Cincinnati has counted more than ninety installations of parts of the wall in the United States, many of them embedded in narratives far removed from Berlin or the Cold War.

Mary Sarotte begins her fine new book with this lapidary statement: "On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall opened and the world changed." Her emphasis is not on the origins of this global transformation (although she has a great deal of interesting things to say about it), but rather on why the world changed the way it did and whether the direction of change was set from the start.

The outcome, she argues, was not inevitable. Rather there were four potential models of a new order, each of them possible as the crisis unfolded. First, in late 1989 there was what she calls "the Soviet restoration model," that is, a return to the "old quadripartite mechanism of four-power control exactly as it used to be in 1945." Second, emerging almost at the same time, was Helmut Kohl's "revivalist model," which involved the creation of a confederation of German states, blurring the lines of sovereignty with "two states in one German nation." By early 1990, Gorbachev had replaced the restoration model with "a heroic model of multinationalism," which envisioned a radical remaking of Europe from the Channel to the Urals. The western allies, led by the Federal Republic and the United States, countered with what she calls "the prefab model," in which existing domestic and international institutions expanded eastwards to fill the vacuum created by communism's collapse. The central theme of Sarotte's book is why the prefab model prevailed.

There is a great deal to admire in this book. It is widely and deeply-researched, gracefully written, and admirably concise. I especially liked the author's ability to express the human dimensions of her story by combining an analysis of big issues and long range trends with carefully-chosen vignettes and contemporary quotations. The book is full of astute and totally convincing judgments. She recognizes, for instance, the enormous importance of the Hungarian decision to open their border, an event every bit as significant as the opening of the wall on 9 November. She also underscores the profound impact of the demonstrations at Stasi Headquarters on 15 January, which made everyone, in both the east and west, aware of the dangers of social unrest as the German Democratic Republic disintegrated. On

the international scene, she calls our attention to the frequently underestimated role played by François Mitterrand, whose cooperation with Helmut Kohl isolated Margaret Thatcher and made a European solution to the German problem possible.

Although I greatly enjoyed and profited from reading *1989*, I am not entirely convinced that the situation was as open as Sarotte wants to argue. By the time the Cold War's endgame began in the summer of 1989, Gorbachev's options—that is, both the revivalist and the heroic multinationalist models—were fatally compromised, first by his own decision not to use force to preserve the Soviet imperium, and second, by the manifest failure of his economic policies. It is doubtful whether a “Chinese solution” could have worked, but there can be no doubt that by abandoning even the threat of force, Gorbachev undermined the defenders of the status quo at the same time that he emboldened their opponents. Defending the communist regimes in Eastern Europe was not, it became increasingly apparent, something for which people were prepared to kill—or to die. Equally important, the collapse of Gorbachev's attempts to revitalize the Soviet economy—the goal driving both his foreign and domestic politics—weakened him at home and throughout Eastern Europe at the same time that it increased his dependence on western (especially German) economic aid. This desperate need for hard currency ultimately forced Gorbachev to swallow the bitter pill of a unified Germany integrated with the west, a pill washed down with large quantities of Deutschmark.

Kohl's confederative model was never really a viable option once it was clear that opening of the German-German border could not stop the hemorrhaging of immigrants from east to west. The continued movement of people out of the GDR created the danger of domestic unrest as well as international conflict: what would happen if the East German state and society collapsed? Would the Soviet forces remain in their barracks? Would unrest spread westward? Both before and after 9 November, stability remained the ultimate goal of West German foreign policy: eventually Kohl and his advisors recognized—correctly in my view—that without the wall, national unification was the best, indeed the only way to stabilize the situation. And once they saw that unification was unavoidable, then the preservation of existing institutions (the “prefab model”) became, both in Bonn and in Washington, the safest path to stabilization.

Sarotte questions the conventional wisdom that, “even two decades later, it is hard to see how the process of German unification could have been handled any better.” By not being bold and visionary enough, she suggests, policy makers missed a big opportunity to create a fundamentally new order in Europe. Perhaps. But isn't it equally possible that George H.W. Bush's always cautious, sometimes timid approach was just what was needed in situation where the world was changing so rapidly? It is, of course, easy enough to imagine better solutions to the problems that arose, with such breathtaking suddenness, in 1989. But it seems to me much easier to imagine worse outcomes to what was, after all, the greatest non-violent revolution in world history.

As Sarotte rightly reminds us, 1989 was not only the end of one era, but also the beginning of another. Her book does a great deal to explain the institutions that continue to shape what, for want of a better name, we can call the post-Cold War world. Nevertheless, from

the perspective of someone who has spent his scholarly life studying modern Germany, the most striking things about 1989 are what disappeared from the historical stage. Among these disappearances none is as historically resonant or politically important as that complex of geopolitical and ideological issues known for a century and a half as “the German question.” It seems highly probable that 9 November 1989 was the last time that Berlin would seem to be at the center of world history.

Mary Sarotte has written a fast-paced, thoroughly researched narrative of the high politics of the end of the Cold War in Europe that packs a powerful analytical and explanatory punch. I'm hard pressed to recall a book in which heavy historical scholarship is displayed with so light a touch, or one that dissects dauntingly complex and controversial arguments with such deceptively simple, persuasive prose. I have no doubt that it will long stand as the definitive book on its subject.

I could easily go on in this vein, filling this review with praise for *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. But even though it would reflect my sincere assessment, a review like that would be a disservice to H-Diplo readers and Professor Sarotte herself. Far better to engage her arguments about the now taken-for-granted outcome: the adaptation and expansion of pre-existing Cold War institutions to the post-Cold War world rather than the creation of a genuinely new order based on new institutions. This basic strategic choice was made on the matter of German unification, which Sarotte rightly puts at the center of her analysis. This choice was the founding event of the post-Cold War era. It is what we got instead of a Vienna or a Versailles. The choice is still with us, Sarotte stresses, and it is important to understand its origins.

Sarotte makes two main arguments about the triumph of what she calls the “pre-fab” model in 1989-1990: that of all the statesmen of the Cold War's end, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl deserves the most credit (or blame) for the contours of the diplomatic settlement; and that other kinds of settlements—including a “heroic” model that would have included Moscow and therefore ended four centuries of ambiguity about Russia's relationship with the west—were very serious historical possibilities. The book sometimes seems to be making a third, normative argument: that a post Cold War order on the heroic, inclusive model, would have led to a better and more secure world. This theme appears with such persistence that some readers take it to be the main point. “Sarotte argues convincingly,” Angela Stent notes in a blurb on the book's jacket, “that the United States and its partners missed a one-time opportunity to devise a post-Cold War architecture that would have made Europe more secure.” But the book does not really make this argument, and for good reason.

The book's strong narrative makes the first argument about apportioning causal weight among the various state actors extremely compelling. Sarotte does not make the mistake of assuming that diplomacy was always in the driver's seat here. She weaves into the narrative larger historical forces, notably communism's declining ideological appeal and economic performance, as well as its skyrocketing hard currency debt. She assesses carefully the roles played by key non-state actors, such as the GDR's small dissident community and ultimately its masses of dissatisfied people. She is duly sensitive to all sorts of historical contingencies.

But the actual settlement was a matter of statecraft, where preferences did indeed clash, and one set of preferences—those of Helmut Kohl and his American ally—unambiguously

won the day. Exploiting the large German secondary literature, copious archival materials, extensive interviews, and many other sources, Sarotte shows how Kohl and his aides were ahead of the curve at each critical juncture, and how their policies pushed events on faster and more favorable tracks. The George H. W. Bush administration's reputation for savvy statecraft remains intact—but much of it is owing to an inspired decision to back Kohl. Gorbachev's pacific instincts and lack of strategic acumen, caused in part by a radically deteriorating domestic setting, show up here in ways consistent with other accounts. Margaret Thatcher behind the scenes is as she appeared in them, only more so. Mitterrand comes through as a savvier and more important player than many earlier accounts held, though perhaps not quite to the degree portrayed recently by Frederic Bozo.<sup>1</sup> But Kohl and his aides ended up being the key state actors, their chief decisions helped seal the GDR's fate and they were the ones to whom Moscow made the concessions that enabled a reunified Germany in NATO. The bottom line is that history dealt the West German chancellor a strong hand and he played it exceedingly well.

Sarotte's second argument about the plausibility of alternative models for the Cold War settlement is not as powerfully supported by her narrative. And that is unavoidable, because making an argument like that demands counterfactual analysis that would have taken her way outside the closely-paced narrative that is the book's chief virtue. Needless to say, the case for the *possibility* of alternatives is a slam dunk. But it always is. Other pathways are always possible. The question is not possibility but *probability*. How likely were alternatives to pre-fab? Sarotte shows how two possible alternatives—restoring four-power rights over the German question a la 1945, or reviving the idea of a German confederation—were both “overtaken by events more quickly than anyone imagined (7).” And that is crucial, because in order for these kinds of strategies to work, actors have to get in front of events. They need time. Because no one could forecast how quickly the GDR and the whole interconnected Central European Communist establishment would unravel, no one had the time to get these policy responses off the ground. And because two of the most powerful state actors—the FRG and the U.S.—soon saw that speed was in their interest, they did not use their formidable capabilities to slow things down but rather the opposite—which further hampered opponents of the prefab model.

The probability that other models would prevail thus hinged on the probability that “events” on that large scale might have gone substantially differently—so as to buttress rather than overwhelm other options. That is a complex question that preoccupies a whole literature on the demise of European communism, but the evidence in this book, focused mainly on the GDR, does not contradict the implication of works by scholars such as Jeffrey Kopstein and Stephen Kotkin that the odds were stacked strongly against any effort to keep the GDR alive for long.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (Berghan Books, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany, 1945-1989* (Chapel Hill: UNC, 1997); Stephen Kotkin, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

The rapid pace of events, captured so well in these pages, also conspired against the most interesting alternative model, Sarotte's "heroic" internationalist settlement. Its champions—Gorbachev, dissidents in the GDR, West German socialists—were weaker and more disorganized than its opponents. And though the list of potential supporters of the heroic model looks long on paper, only one really mattered. Without the Soviet Union to solve the collective action problem, a genuinely new security architecture was a non-starter. When you tot up the reasons Gorbachev's Moscow was not up to this task—some covered by Sarotte, others not—the heroic model begins to look like a very long shot indeed. With his own country collapsing around him, Gorbachev never was able to articulate the heroic model in any but plaintive, general terms. With his domestic opponents on both the communist, union-preserving side and the "democratic" Russian- and republic nationalist side gaining traction, Gorbachev could not use the normal governmental machinery of decision-making to articulate a real policy. And if these constraints were not enough, Gorbachev had genuine concerns about the strategic optimality of a serious effort to slow down the unification train. He worried that France, the UK, and other skeptics would simply free-ride, letting him take the heat for standing against Germans' national aspirations while cutting lucrative deals for themselves. Not wanting to be played for a sucker, worried about spoiling a potentially profitable relationship with the united Germany, and hearing strategic advice forecasting NATO's imminent demise, Gorbachev was not going to serve as the proactive linchpin of a coalition against the pre-fab settlement.

As a result, the heroic model fails to fulfill the role Sarotte assigns it in the set up of her book. Her gripping, fast-paced narrative, in which the press of time and power looms large, overwhelms it as decisively as events did in reality. No one ever had the time or resources even to articulate it in any but the vaguest terms. Indeed, in describing its actual outlines, Sarotte is barely able to fill a page and half of text. Compared to NATO and the whole Cold War order, it looks like a bit of foam on the long wave of history.

Indeed, if you step outside the details and look at the structure of the situation, the deck begins to look even more stacked against the heroic model. It's not just that the actors with most power didn't want it. Rather, it's that the end of the Cold War simply wasn't an "ordering moment," like the end of the Napoleonic Wars or World War II. Those events ripped apart and discredited the institutional arrangements that preceded them. They wiped the slate clean, making the construction of novel institutions not only necessary but relatively easy. The Cold War's end, by contrast, did not destroy or discredit the order the United States had sponsored in the Second World War's wake. It reflected the destruction and discrediting of a revisionist *challenge* to that order. The collapse of this challenge ratified the basic soundness of western institutions, both domestic and international. The defenders and beneficiaries of the western international security order faced no incentive to jettison it when all events testified to its soundness and robustness. It's a sadly familiar story in international politics: those with the power to make a better world order rarely have the incentive, and those with the incentive rarely have the power.

Finally, there is the normative question. On this, I share Sarotte's sense—and I wrote as much back on the tenth anniversary of the wall's fall— that more enlightened statecraft by

the Cold War's victors would have worked out some way to embrace Russia.<sup>3</sup> But on that, too, there are good reasons for doubt. Sarotte quotes former Secretary of State James Baker to make the point that "almost every achievement contains within its success the seeds of a future problem." But this applies as surely to the heroic model as to prefab—if not more so. Would the problems created by including Russia have been worse than the problems created by excluding it? It would take counterfactual analysis of Russia's hypothetical course informed by deep-going research on that country's domestic politics to obtain even a speculative and unsatisfying answer. Sustaining the normative argument would have taken Sarotte even farther away from her narrative, which is doubtless why she chose not to pursue it.

None of this is to imply that *1989* is anything less than a splendid work of historical scholarship. Like any such work, this book raises important questions that can't be answered within its structure. By explaining in vivid detail how statecraft and power interacted with larger material and ideational forces to produce the Cold War's end on western terms, Sarotte has made a signal contribution.

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<sup>3</sup> William C. Wohlforth, "German Reunification: A Reassessment" in *The Cold War—Reassessments* Arthur L. Rosenbaum and Chae-Jin Lee, eds. (Monograph Series #11) (Claremont: The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, 2000).

For an author, it is a very welcome development to have one's book selected for discussion in an H-Diplo roundtable. The resulting commentaries provide an unusual combination of timeliness and expertise; popular reviews offer the former but not always the latter, but waiting for the latter often means that the historical moment in which the book appeared has moved on. This is particularly noticeable with regard to a study such as mine, which was tied to an anniversary (the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 2009).

I am therefore very grateful to the reviewers, Professors Bose, Harrison, Sheehan, and Wohlforth, for pushing aside the stacks of work on their desks to assess my book so insightfully and so soon after its appearance. (I am further grateful to the staff of H-Diplo for producing one useful roundtable after another, year after year.) It is of course enjoyable to read the reviewers' kind words about the strengths of the book but it is their critiques that prompt the most fruitful speculation. Their comments raise more issues than it is possible to address in this brief response. In the space that I have, I will highlight three questions: (1) one about probability, (2) one about desirability, and (3) one about policymakers' willingness to make decisions rooted in a larger historical consciousness.

#### *The Question of Probability*

The responses of Profs. Harrison, Sheehan, and Wohlforth, as well as comments by Charles Maier in another forum, have caused me to realize that an implicit argument of my book should have been stated much more explicitly. In setting up four main alternatives for a post-Cold War European order – which I have labelled the restoration, revival, heroic, and prefab models – I sought to establish typologies, not probabilistic values. The reviewers here and elsewhere have questioned the likelihood of outcomes other than prefab succeeding. My goal, however, was not to demonstrate that all four variants were equally likely (which I do not believe).<sup>1</sup>

Rather, my aim was to cast the contours of the actual post-Cold War settlement into relief by setting it in a comparative framework with serious alternative outcomes, thereby making its strengths and weaknesses more visible. Indeed, in the historical evidence I found even more – and more outlandish – potential outcomes to the contest of 1989-1990. There was, for example, a briefly discussed Soviet-Polish notion of having multinational Warsaw Pact forces move into East Germany after the Berlin Wall opened. They would, in theory, serve as a balance to multinational NATO forces in West Germany while a future settlement for Germany was under debate. The chance of such a deployment actually happening was, I decided, zero; hence I passed over this alternative future in a brief mention in the book.

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Charles Maier for this point, made after a seminar on my book at the Davis Center, Harvard University, October 19, 2009.

The outcomes that I chose to analyze in detail, in contrast, were those that seemed to me to have nonzero likelihoods of occurring if certain possible historical events came to pass. In other words, a minor violent incident with starving and desperate Soviet troops could, I believe, have escalated to a larger outbreak of violence and retribution. Deaths in divided Germany could have provoked an anachronistic exercise of quadripartitism (my restoration model). Alternatively, more active coordination among West Germany's essential European allies to slow down the process (which would have been possible if François Mitterrand had been won over, hence the reason he is crucial) could have forced Kohl to go more slowly with legal integration than he wanted. This chain of events would have favored the revivalist model. Possible is not the same as likely, however, and the book does say that the prefab outcome was the most workable in the time available.

### *The Question of Desirability*

Prof. Sheehan in particular believes strongly that the actual outcome, which I have termed the prefab model, was indeed the best of all possible results. He finds that George H.W. Bush did "just what was needed". In different ways, both Prof. Harrison and Prof. Wohlforth also question the notion of the desirability, likelihood and indeed significance of a possible better settlement with Russia. Although these expert reviewers do not make this mistake, some popular reviewers addressing the same issue have set the choice up as a crass normative "either/or" – either heroism (inclusion of Russia), or prefab (exclusion of Russia) – with one of those outcomes presented as good and the other as bad, according to the reviewers' preferences.

In setting up the organizational framework for my book, I conceived of my four models not as four independent and equal constructs but as points along a spectrum of desirability. They range from less desirable (a Tiananmen Square in Europe) to most desirable (a post-Cold War settlement that addressed not only the German problem but also relations with Russia). The actual outcome of 1989-1990 occupies a point far in the direction of the desirable end of the spectrum. The lives of East Europeans in particular became vastly freer, and without bloodshed. In other words, I do not find the prefab settlement to be undesirable; but I do find it to be less than ideal.

### *The Question of Policymakers' Willingness to Learn from History*

This finding leads to my third and final point, and the one most contentious among the H-Diplo reviewers. At its heart is the likelihood of policymakers learning from history.

Winston Churchill once famously summarized his basic belief about the conduct of international relations as follows: "In war, resolution; in defeat, defiance; in victory, magnanimity." We may recognize the wisdom of his statement separately from the debates over whether or not Churchill managed successfully to live according to it. In researching the years 1989-1990, what struck me about the animus of U.S. foreign policy – and, by extension, that of its West German ally – was its essential difference from U.S. foreign policy at the resolution of the last great transatlantic reordering moment, namely 1949. Put differently, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. foreign policy faced a very similar challenge three times,

namely, structuring relations with former enemies across the Atlantic after emerging victorious from a situation of conflict. The leading thinkers on foreign policy in the post-World War II (WWII) period stumbled a number of times as they sought to decide on a course of action; the 1945-1949 period is hardly a model of how to deal with post-conflict reconstruction. But during it, they did maintain an awareness of the history of *their* previous reordering moment, namely 1918; the same appears (from the evidence available to date) not to have been the case in 1989-1990.

Why is this significant? Another Churchill quip is useful in explaining why. He famously remarked that U.S. policymakers could always be trusted to do the right thing in the end after having exhausted every other conceivable alternative first, and this line characterizes 1945-1949 well. Truman and his advisors arrived – after various false starts and domestic political challenges – at a decision that rejected the isolationist solution of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and prioritized the integration of defeated enemies into new international programs and structures such as the Marshall Plan and ultimately NATO. In other words, they came to a solution that showed a high degree of magnanimity to defeated foes. This result arose, of course, not just from altruism or historical understanding; it resulted from the desire of the U.S. and its former WWII allies and enemies to make common cause against Soviet power. (And the events of 1950 and NSC-68 would also later transform this policy in deeply unfortunate ways.) Obviously, no such inimical power arose to concentrate minds similarly in the course of 1989-1990. The significant point is, however, not the enemy but the example. There may not have been an equivalent to Stalin in 1989, but there was the example of success in the past. Indeed, in their new book Campbell Craig and Fred Logevall call the Marshall Plan “the most successful single foreign policy initiative ever undertaken by the United States.”<sup>2</sup>

Had those in charge of U.S. foreign policy in 1989-1990 chosen to learn from the enlightened self-interest of their own predecessors, they would have prioritized the integration of their defeated enemy into their own post-conflict structures. One method would have been to work with Gorbachev to flesh out his vague plans to create real alternatives, rather than deride and dismiss his “common European home” concept completely; Gorbachev repeatedly begged Washington to do so. As Wohlforth rightly points out, the Gorbachev plan did indeed stay vague. Its details can be summarized briefly, as they are not numerous. But all ideas have their incipient phases, and this one was not doomed from the outset. Indeed, one of the reasons that Bonn and Washington intentionally picked up the pace was precisely because they feared such plans might become more specific. In order to prevent Gorbachev and his aides from getting their bearings and thinking through the future more carefully, they forced the pace of events, and succeeded in keeping Moscow off balance. But a grand heroic model was hardly the only method to integrate Russia into a post-Cold War settlement. Less ambitious but more practical solutions existed. Another alternative would have been the extension of prefab to Russia via NATO, a request Gorbachev made as early as May 1990 when it was clear that heroism was failing. In addition, the legitimately elected 1990 leaders of both

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<sup>2</sup> Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009): 91.

Czechoslovakia and East Germany were interested in ways that they could serve as a peaceful “bridge” between East and West to help integrate both halves of the continent.

In my research, I found little sign of interest among U.S. foreign policymakers in integrating former enemies into post-conflict structures, that is, in learning from the successful history of the last major reordering moment in transatlantic relations. Soviet requests to create institutions of partnership among former enemies met with derision in Washington and Bonn. The actual animus of U.S. foreign policy (public rhetoric notwithstanding) was quite different, and quite consistent: in the words of Robert Gates, then Deputy National Security Advisor and currently the Secretary of Defense, it was to “bribe” the Soviets out. In other words, buy them off as quickly as possible; do not help them to solve their problems or avoid hard choices. Exploit their weakness and get rid of them. Make it sound diplomatic in public, but let them hang on rope of their own creation. As Bush said, “we prevailed, they didn’t;” while undoubtedly accurate, such an attitude cannot even by its most charitable supporters be called magnanimous.

The strategy of Washington and Bonn – speed up the pace as much as possible and present the world with one *fait accompli* after another – was brilliantly executed and phenomenally successful in the short-term, as I detail in my book. But it was not possible to bribe the Soviets, later Russians, permanently out of Europe or out of existence. One of the rare opportunities in history to resolve not only the German question but also “four centuries of ambiguity about Russia’s relationship with the west” (Wohlforth) faded away as a result, and will not come again soon. Moreover, I disagree with critics who say that events were too chaotic in 1989-1990 for such a far-reaching approach to have been considered. As William Hitchcock’s fine recent book *Bitter Road to Freedom* shows, the situation on the ground in Europe after WWII was much more dreadful than in 1989.<sup>3</sup> Yet those in charge of U.S. foreign policy nonetheless thought long-term. They knew that a crisis was a terrible thing to waste, as it provided opportunity for lasting change in international relations. Indeed, as Sheehan points out, the integration of first divided and then united Germany into the West eventually solved the German problem. It is hard not to regret the lack of attempts to do the same with Moscow in 1989-1990.

In closing, let me be clear: I am not arguing that attempts to integrate the Soviet Union (later Russia and other states) would automatically have succeeded. I am arguing, however, that they should have been tried. A far-sighted statesman would have moved beyond a taunting “we won, you didn’t” attitude and recognized the merits of strategic restraint and long-term integration. But Bush had told the American electorate that he “didn’t do the vision thing” and he did not. What resulted from his foreign policy leadership was by no means unfortunate, but it was not ideal. He defended the interests of the United States, but perpetuated (as I describe in the conclusion to my book) the European contest between deterritorialization and provinciality into the post-Cold War world, with the front line moved eastward. In other words, I can agree with Sheehan’s belief that Bush did “just what was needed” from a relatively narrow and largely American

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<sup>3</sup> William Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 2008). I am grateful to Prof. Hitchcock for a phone conversation on this subject.

point of view. From other aspects, however – that of collective security, or of transatlantic relations more broadly – it becomes apparent that more was needed. As a result I remain convinced that, even as we celebrate the anniversaries of the undeniable successes in 1989-1990, we must also make time for an acknowledgment of the missed opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>On the need for more candor about the end of the Cold War, see my op-ed, “Enlarging NATO, Expanding Confusion,” *The New York Times*, November 30, 2009.