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Frédéric Bozo, a professor at the Sorbonne and author of a number of major works on French foreign policy and U.S.-European relations, is one of France's leading specialists on the history of international relations. His book *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande: De Yalta à Maastricht*, which was based on some extraordinary source material that he was able to get access to in Paris, came out in 2005, and in the years that followed he presented some of his key findings to the English-speaking world in a series of articles.¹ A few months ago an English translation of the whole book was published, and that, of course, is the volume we are concerned with here.

What basically was Professor Bozo trying to do in that book? His most obvious goal was to assess the common argument that the government of French president François Mitterrand in 1989 "sought to slow down, if not altogether block" the reunification of Germany. The conclusion he reached is quite clear. To be sure, Mitterrand and his associates would have preferred it if the "march toward German unity" had taken "a more moderate turn and a slower rhythm." The French president's preference was "for a process of unification that would be controlled and stretched over time." But "*at no moment*," he writes, "*did French diplomacy seek to slow down, let alone impede, German unification.*" That, he says, is the "key finding" that emerged from his study of the evidence. (xiii, xxi, xxii, xxvi; the sentence is italicized in the original text)

But the book does a good deal more than just develop that basic point. Bozo's more fundamental goal is to help us understand what the Mitterrand policy actually was—to help us understand the role that France played in that extraordinary period, when the Cold War was liquidated and a new international order came into being.

And what, he asks, "was the key objective of Mitterrand's diplomacy in that period"? His answer is again very direct: "it was about setting the process of German unification, and more generally the exit from the Cold War, within a strong European and international framework" (xxii). And why did the Mitterrand government approach the problem in that way? Bozo cites three factors. First, there was the desire to avoid a "return to 1913"—that is, the wish to avoid "the danger of fragmentation and of nationalism" (xxiii). Second, the French government was worried about the effect too hard a line—a line based too narrowly on Germany's national interests—might have on the political position of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev: Mitterrand and his associates were concerned about the possibility of a "dangerous backlash" within the USSR (xxiv; also 41). The third and most important factor had to do with "Mitterrand's grand European design" (xxv). Mitterrand's

¹ Frédéric Bozo, "Mitterrand's France, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification: A Reappraisal," *Cold War History* 7, no. 4 (2007); Frédéric Bozo, "The Failure of a Grand Design: Mitterrand's European Confederation, 1989–1991," *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 3 (2008); Frédéric Bozo "France, German Unification and European Integration," in Frédéric Bozo et al., eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and Frédéric Bozo, "'Winners' and 'Losers': France, the United States, and the End of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 5 (November 2009).

dreams for Europe, especially for a stronger European Community in the western part of the continent, were the “alpha and omega of French policy,” the “central element” of Mitterrand’s vision, the “first objective” of French diplomacy during this period (xxv, 22, 65). And the German question, from the start, lay at the heart of that policy: it was important to “contain German power” (99); it was only by “building Europe” that the German problem could be managed (65-66) and a reunified Germany could be prevented from “balancing between East and West” (99; also 22).

The reviewers all think that this book is very impressive. Robert Hutchings calls it a “magisterial volume.” Jacques Lévesque views it as a “remarkable piece of scholarly work.” Will Gray thinks it’s “superb” and Philip Zelikow considers it an “excellent, essential, addition to historical scholarship on the end of the Cold War in Europe and the construction of a new international system.”

But on one key point at least two of the reviewers—Lévesque and Hutchings—felt that Bozo had gone too far, and that has to do with the book’s core argument that Mitterrand sought neither to prevent nor even to slow down the unification of Germany. They have no quarrel with the basic point that the French president did not try to keep the two Germanies from coming together. Mitterrand, it is quite clear from the analysis in the book, was no Margaret Thatcher. But in their view he certainly sought to slow the unification process down, and Zelikow also thinks this was the case. Indeed, Bozo’s own evidence and arguments, Lévesque and Hutchings suggest, point toward the conclusion that the Mitterrand government did seek to “slow down” the unification process. And Hutchings points to some outside evidence—for example, the transcript of a telephone conversation between Mitterrand and Gorbachev that took place a few days after the Berlin Wall came down—that tends to support that conclusion.²

What is to be made of the Mitterrand policy? This is a basic issue here, both for Bozo and for the reviewers. France, Bozo thinks, played a significant and fairly positive role in this story. “Would the end of the Cold War,” he asks, “have constituted such a success for international diplomacy without the European factor to which France, in concert with the Federal Republic, contributed more than any other? Would the democratic and economic transition of Eastern Europe, the return of Germany to unity and full sovereignty, the disintegration of the USSR, and the recomposition of the European order all have happened in an orderly and stable manner without the major contribution of European construction and the Franco-German relationship? Almost twenty years after the fact, has not the enlarged European Union effectively become the main structuring element of the Old Continent?” (xxvi)

² The record of the Mitterrand-Gorbachev telephone conversation of 14 November 1989 is available online in the National Security Archive’s Electronic Briefing Book 293, doc. 18 (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB293/doc18.pdf>). In that conversation, Mitterrand laid out the French position: the “real feelings” of the German people had to be taken into account, but the issue of “changing borders” would have to wait for a while. It was important, he said, not to take “any hasty actions” which could destabilize the situation. “There is a certain equilibrium that exists in Europe,” he said, “and we should not disturb it.”

It's not hard to guess how he would answer those questions, and most of the reviewers also give the Mitterrand government on balance fairly good grades. By January 1990, Hutchings writes (reiterating a judgment he had made in 2008), "Mitterrand had come to realize that unification was coming" and therefore "sought to work with the Germans to gain certain assurances about the European integration process, in the end securing French interests rather well." And Zelikow thinks that Bozo's point that "Mitterrand's pan-European vision may be even more relevant now than it was twenty years ago" is a "powerful insight." Gray, on the other hand, wonders whether the Mitterrand policy in the final analysis made much of a difference. The united Germany, he writes, "was going to accept the Oder-Neisse border no matter what." And Mitterrand, he says, "did little to change [German chancellor Helmut] Kohl's thinking about Europe, since the chancellor was already determined to pair German unification with a redoubled commitment to European integration." And he thinks Mitterrand was mistaken—indeed, foolish—to build his policy in large part on the assumption that the U.S. government was "prepared to disengage from Europe." How could any observer, he wonders, come to that conclusion, given how hard the Americans were pressing for the inclusion of the unified Germany in NATO?

As for Bozo's basic point about Mitterrand not wanting even to slow down the unification process, at least one of the reviewers, Jacques Lévesque, seems to feel that that line of argument might perhaps be a touch too defensive—that in fact (and this too, as he points out, is quite clear from Bozo's analysis) there were perfectly good reasons "for Mitterrand to be deeply concerned by the pace of Kohl's rush to German unification" and for wishing it to proceed at a more deliberate speed. My own view, for what it is worth, is that the reunification of Germany would affect the whole international system and was therefore not just a matter for the Germans themselves to deal with. It was perfectly legitimate for other powers to be involved in this process, and their involvement was in fact sanctioned by one of the core traditions in international relations thought, the tradition built on the idea of the balance of power. "Every nation has its rights, but Europe also has her rights"—that basic principle was proclaimed in the early nineteenth century, but the major powers in 1989, even Germany, also thought that the interests of any particular country had to be balanced against everyone's interest in the stability of the system as a whole, and it's hard to see why anyone should fault them for approaching the problem in that way.³

But what are we to make of the particular policy Mitterrand pursued in 1989? The French president thought that by "building Europe" German power could be contained, and that the creation of a single European currency would be a key means of accomplishing this (99, 120). But how, one wonders, was all this supposed to work? How exactly would European structures, and especially the single currency, contain German power? If the unified Germany basically accepted the new status quo, that Germany would have no problem working with her neighbors, no matter what European structures were in place. But if that

³ The quotation is from the London Protocol of February 1831 relating to Belgian independence, and is cited in William Lingelbach, "The Doctrine and Practice of Intervention in Europe," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 16 (July 1900), 7.

Germany wanted to pursue any sort of revisionist policy, it is hard to see how those European structures would prevent her from doing so, especially since (as French officials themselves admitted) Germany was already “predominant” in the European Community (184). And why in particular was it assumed that a single currency would play a key role in containing German power? Europe, after all, had a single currency in 1914. It was called “gold”: each major national currency was simply a name for a certain amount of gold. But that did little to prevent the First World War from breaking out.

Mitterrand believed that “building Europe” was of fundamental importance and that the German question could only be managed in that context. But was that belief simply an article of faith, or did it rest on hard analysis? In other words, was there a well thought out strategy at work here, or was Mitterrand simply buying into the European mystique? I wonder.

And there’s one point in particular that makes me wonder about how carefully this issue was thought through by Mitterrand and his associates. The French president was thinking in terms of a European Community that “would gradually assert itself as an international power” (66); the goal was a more independent Europe, a Europe with a distinct political personality of its own (14). As key French officials understood, this meant a Europe that was capable of defending itself (245). But in the nuclear age, wouldn’t a common defense have to have a nuclear component? And wouldn’t Germany, already seen as the “predominant” power in the European Community, have to share in the control of that nuclear force? And yet, as Bozo shows, for Mitterrand any nuclear sharing with Germany was out of the question (13, 59, 245). Were the French therefore marching along a road whose endpoint—full German participation in the defense of Europe, even on the nuclear level—they could scarcely bring themselves to accept?

If a truly independent Europe could hardly be brought into being if its most important member state was to be treated permanently as a second-class citizen, then there was no real alternative to the NATO system. A non-nuclear Germany went hand-in-hand with a continuing American presence in Europe. But Mitterrand’s dream was to see the United States move to the margins of the system: the strategy based on “building Europe” was seen as the alternative to a strategy based on America continuing to remain a major European power. And that dream was linked to the assumption that the end of the Cold War and the unification of Germany would lead to the collapse of the NATO system. The French were convinced that a “unified and sovereign Germany would not accept for long the political and military constraints currently weighing on the FRG, whether integration in NATO or the foreign military presence on its soil” (193-194; also 129, 245). They were convinced of this, even though (as Zelikow points out and as Bozo notes on 206 n. 112) the Germans were telling them that this was simply not so.

And this was not just abstract theorizing. Those beliefs led Mitterrand to announce that France would be withdrawing her troops from Germany (245, 281). The Americans, as Zelikow points out, “were startled. This French move to quit Germany would undermine the case for US troops staying.” One has the impression that French thinking was a bit muddled, but in the final analysis a more sober calculation prevailed. The Mitterrand

government, Bozo writes, “did not want to take the risk of precipitating the evolution of a more autonomous Germany” (195) and in the final analysis played a key role in making sure the NATO system survived. On the question of whether the united Germany would remain in NATO, Bozo says, “Mitterrand’s diplomacy proved wholly in solidarity with his allies” and “paradoxically played an important role in convincing Gorbachev not to oppose it” (209) The French president, in fact, “seems to have been the first to convince Gorbachev of the unavoidable character of a unified Germany in NATO” (275 n. 207). Mitterrand, Bozo argues, in a meeting with the Soviet leader in May 1990, had “well and truly convinced Gorbachev” of the futility of trying to prevent the new Germany from remaining in NATO. And the French president was able to have that effect on Gorbachev, Bozo suggests, precisely because France was the least NATO-minded of the western powers (253-254).

So the important thing here was not Mitterrand’s “vision” of a unifying Europe and a diminishing American presence, but his support in practice for the continuation of the NATO system. And it was in that latter area, ironically, that he made what was perhaps his most important contribution.

Participants:

Frédéric Bozo is currently professor at the Sorbonne (University of Paris III, Department of European Studies). Bozo was educated at the Ecole normale supérieure, at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris and at Harvard University. He received his doctorate from the University of Paris X - Nanterre (1993) and his *Habilitation* from the Sorbonne - Paris III (1997). His focus is on French foreign and security policy, transatlantic relations and Cold War history. His book publications include: *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, first published in French by Odile Jacob, 2005); *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, first published in French by Plon, 1996). He also co-edited *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008, with M.-P. Rey, N. Piers Ludlow & L. Nuti) and he published a book of interviews with Stanley Hoffmann, *Gulliver Unbound: America's Imperial Temptation and the War in Iraq* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004). Other books published in French include: *La Politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945* (Paris : La Découverte, 1997); and *La France et l'OTAN. De la guerre froide au nouvel ordre européen* (Paris : Masson, 1991). He has published articles in *Cold War History*, *Contemporary European History*, *Diplomatic History*, *Politique étrangère*, and *Survival*. He is currently working on a book on the 2002-3 transatlantic crisis over Iraq.

Will Gray is an associate professor of history at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. His first book, *Germany's Cold War*, appeared with UNC Press in 2003. Following that he served as one of five editors of the *Encyclopedia of the Cold War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008). Gray's current project, “Trading Power”, concerns the transformation of West German ambitions from military affairs to economic leverage during the 1960s and 1970s. Gray studied at Princeton and the Free University of Berlin and holds his doctorate from Yale University.

Currently Diplomat in Residence at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University,

Robert Hutchings has been appointed Dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, effective March 2010. During a public service leave from Princeton in 2003-05, Hutchings was Chairman of the U.S. National Intelligence Council in Washington, D.C. His combined academic and diplomatic career has included service as Fellow and Director of International Studies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Director for European Affairs with the National Security Council, and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State, with the rank of ambassador. He has also served as deputy director of Radio Free Europe and on the faculty of the University of Virginia, and has written widely about U.S. foreign policy and European politics. He is author of *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, among other books and articles on U.S. foreign policy and European affairs. His current research on global strategy springs from a series of structured strategic dialogues with key leaders and scholars in China, Russia, India, Brazil, South Africa, and a dozen other countries around the world. A graduate of the United States Naval Academy, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.

Jacques Lévesque is Professor of Political Science at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He is a member of the Royal Society of Canada. He holds a Doctorat d'Études Politiques of the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris. His books include *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution* (New York, Praeger/Holt Rinehart and Winston 1978); *Italian Communists versus the Soviet Union* (Berkeley, IIS 1987); *L'URSS et sa politique internationale, de Lénine à Gorbatchev* (Paris, Armand Colin 1988); *L'URSS en Afghanistan 1979-1989* (Bruxelles, Complexe, 1990); and *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, University of California Press 1997). He is currently working on Russia's relations with the Muslim world.

Marc Trachtenberg got his Ph.D. in history from Berkeley in 1974, taught history at the University of Pennsylvania for the next twenty-six years, and has been a professor of political science at UCLA since 2000. He is the author of a number of books and articles on twentieth century international politics, most notably *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963*, which came out in 1999. His book *The Craft of International History*, a guide to historical method for both historians and political scientists, was published in 2006.

Philip Zelikow is the White Burkett Miller Professor of History at the University of Virginia. Zelikow began his professional career as a trial and appellate lawyer in Texas. After further graduate study he joined the Foreign Service of the United States and was posted overseas and in Washington, including service on the NSC staff for President George H.W. Bush. His Ph.D. is from Tufts University's Fletcher School. Since 1991 he has taught and directed research programs at Harvard University and at the University of Virginia. In addition to his academic work he has assisted various parts of the US government and has taken two public service leaves for returns to full-time government service. He also advises the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's program in global development. In Fall 2009 he was

a Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin. Back now at Virginia, he is working on a history of U.S. foreign policy begun by his late friend and collaborator, Ernest May.

Anyone who lived through the final denouement of the Cold War, from 1989 to 1991, recognized that this was a unique historical moment. Crowds took to the streets in capitals across the communist world; regimes fell on what seemed like a monthly basis; and then there was the constant parade of summit meetings. In a more subtle way, perhaps, scholars of the “long” Cold War from 1945-1989 can still be dazzled by the sudden acceleration of events from 1989-91. For decades, Europe’s foreign ministries churned out obscure and ultimately fruitless proposals on arms control or German unity or European monetary union. Then, in a remarkable burst of activity, breakthroughs came on multiple fronts: the crumbling of the Warsaw Pact, the unification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Maastricht Treaty.

Frédéric Bozo has chronicled this period in exhaustive detail with one goal in mind: to assess the role of French diplomacy – and specifically President François Mitterrand – in the shaping of events. As an established figure in French Cold War history, Bozo enjoyed marvelous access to Mitterrand’s papers and to the files of the French foreign ministry. Considering that the official publication of French diplomatic papers has only just reached the first half of 1968, Bozo’s unique access to the files from 1988-1991 provides a tremendous leap forward in our understanding of official French thinking.

The results are superb, precisely because Bozo does not overplay his hand. At most, the volume comes across as mildly revisionist: whereas earlier authors (and the German media) tended to portray Mitterrand as an obstacle to German unity, Bozo is able to show beyond a doubt that the French president deliberately eschewed a blocking role. Instead he sought to deflect German policy, ensuring that the course of unification would not have destabilizing consequences for Europe as a whole. Mitterrand would have preferred a more gradual process but gave way to the logic of events (specifically, the breakdown of state authority in East Germany in early 1990). Compared with the openly Germanophobic Margaret Thatcher, and even the nervous bureaucrats at the Quai d’Orsay, Mitterrand comes across here as a loyal and constructive partner to Helmut Kohl.

But in the end, did Mitterrand make a difference? Did the “settlement” of 1989-91 bear his handwriting? Aside from an act of abstention – that is, declining to play the spoiler – what affirmative results can be seen in French diplomatic endeavors? Bozo devotes long passages to arm-twisting over the Polish border: Kohl did not want to offer final recognition of the Oder-Neisse border until after German unity had been achieved. Not surprisingly, the transitional government in Warsaw found this alarming; so too did French and British diplomats. Yet German officials repeated time and time again that the hold-up was technical, having to do with the legal status of the West German government vis-à-vis the future unified Germany. Kohl acknowledged his short-term political interest in avoiding a final settlement until after elections could be held; but he also stressed in plain language that there was not even a remote possibility of a shift in borders. Despite these assurances, Mitterrand acted to draw Poland as a guest into the “2 + 4” process, the formal negotiations between the two German states and the four World War II victors that represented the

official forum for closing out the German Question. Thus pressured, the East and West German parliaments passed statements affirming their intention to conclude a final border settlement with Poland. At best, this was a pyrrhic victory for Paris: it may have reassured Warsaw, but the display of French mistrust antagonized Bonn unnecessarily (though the damage was temporary). United Germany was going to accept the Oder-Neisse border no matter what. In this case, French diplomacy might be seen as complicating the flow of events without fundamentally changing the outcome.

Similarly, Mitterrand did little to change Kohl's thinking about Europe, since the chancellor was already determined to pair German unification with a redoubled commitment to European integration. In many respects it was France that gave way, accepting European monetary union on German terms. Likewise, Paris now acknowledged the need to strengthen "political" Europe through the creation of a European Union – another longstanding German ambition. To be sure, Bozo persuasively highlights Mitterrand's success in dictating the form of the European Union: supranational elements such as the parliament and the European Commission would take a back seat to inter-governmental agency. The European Council, the circle of elected European leaders, would emerge as the biggest winner of the Maastricht Treaty of December 1991. Even here, though, it would seem less the *content* of Mitterrand's initiatives than his very *person* that proved decisive. Kohl perceived his warm friendship with Mitterrand as a distinctive and possibly unique foundation for the future of Europe, and this too spoke for the centrality of personal (inter-governmental) relationships over and above Brussels-based institutions.

Overall, Bozo's book is the kind of focused monograph that emphasizes *how* events played out rather than pondering might-have-beens. This is not a criticism: it is extremely useful to see how Mitterrand, his staff, and the Quai d'Orsay responded to developments on a week-to-week basis. Consider, for example, Bozo's explication of French thinking about the place of united Germany within European institutions. Conventional *realpolitik* suggested that adding 17 million East Germans to West Germany's population would transform the Federal Republic into a European juggernaut. Scholars love to cite the bon mot about French observers "loving" Germany so much that they "preferred two of them." But in January 1990, officials at the Elysée Palace reached the opposite conclusion (pp. 184-85). If a reformed, post-communist GDR were to join the European Community as an independent state, they realized, there would henceforth be two sets of German commissioners in Brussels and two German leaders on the European Council. What, then, if Austria *also* proceeded to join? French diplomats began to focus, pragmatically, on accommodating a single enlarged Germany within existing European structures; they even extracted a promise from Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher that a united Germany would not seek more commissioners or greater parliamentary representation than France enjoyed. Episodes such as this provide insights into the nature of political power within the EU, where sovereign government voices within European councils count more heavily than traditional measures of strength.

While insisting (plausibly enough) on the centrality of Mitterrand to the diplomacy of 1989-91, Bozo is careful to acknowledge that the French president did not get everything he wanted. The United States did not melt away from engagement in Europe, as virtually

every French planner anticipated; the CSCE did not emerge as the dominant forum for addressing pan-European security needs; and the European Union failed to develop a robust common foreign policy, as seen in the ineffective European response to the butchery in Yugoslavia. As I read Bozo's evidence, "Gaullist" assumptions predisposed French diplomacy to a high degree of wishful thinking. How or why would any observer of the George H. W. Bush administration conclude that the United States was prepared to disengage from Europe, in light of its promotion of "new tasks" for NATO and its firm insistence that united Germany remain within the Atlantic alliance? In facilitating such an outcome, Mitterrand would appear to have undermined his own priorities for European independence.

Bozo's answer is to appeal to the long run: in the past decade, he insists, the EU has begun to develop more of an independent security identity. But one is still left to ponder why Mitterrand did not press alternatives to NATO more forcefully during the fluid opportunities afforded by the waning of the Cold War. Bozo insists that France was not "marginalized," and that an exclusive focus on German and American leadership in 1989-90 is misplaced. Who could disagree that European voices need to be taken into account? In the final analysis, though, Bozo's book corrects the standard narrative mainly by taking note of Mitterrand's surprisingly agreeable cooperation with goals articulated by Helmut Kohl and George H. W. Bush.

Practical-minded readers of this forum will have noticed that a distillation of Bozo's central arguments is now available in the November 2009 issue of *Diplomatic History*. Even so, scholars of the period will find it worth their while to consume this book in its entirety. Each chapter is well-conceived and compelling, and Susan Emanuel's translation is smooth and highly readable. Berghahn Books is to be commended for making this work, first published in France in 2005, available to the Anglophone scholarly community.

This magisterial volume is a welcome contribution to the scholarship on German unification and takes its place among the essential studies of this dramatic period. The author was afforded unique access to French archives, both public and private, supplemented this documentary record with several dozen interviews with key participants, and embedded this diplomatic history within the broader sweep of French foreign policy at the end of the Cold War. It is the first and so far the only comprehensive account of French diplomacy during the period and is among the very few studies that offers parallel assessments of German, Soviet, American, and British diplomacy.

If the “first draft” of the history of this period was told chiefly from the German and American perspectives, with only limited access to the internal deliberations of other protagonists, Frédéric Bozo’s account belongs to the “second draft” that incorporates the new archival material from German, Soviet, U.S., British, and French sources. It is also explicitly revisionist, seeking to counter what the author considers the German-American triumphalism of the earlier accounts.¹ Therein lies its chief weakness.

Professor Bozo has chosen – needlessly and unwisely, in my view – to burden this otherwise superb study with a central thesis that simply does not stand up. His central revisionist argument, rendered in italics, is this: “*At no moment did French diplomacy seek to slow down, let alone impede, German unification.*” (xxii) Had the author been satisfied with the claim that French diplomacy never sought to prevent unification but only to manage the process in a way consistent with French interests, he would have no argument from me. But the extravagant claim he makes – that France never sought even to slow down the process – is untenable, as Bozo himself amply (if inadvertently) demonstrates later in his book.

Let me first underscore the many points on which we agree. First, all the main actors, not least the Germans themselves, were caught unprepared by the speed of the process beginning in late summer 1989. I have argued that American statesmen were better prepared than others, but we, too, scrambled, not always successfully, to keep up with the ever-accelerating pace of events. German, French, and American leaders all changed course in late December and early January – from favoring a “gradual, step-by-step” approach to accepting that unification was coming very fast and adjusting accordingly. Second, none of Germany’s allies embraced unification unconditionally. The day after Chancellor Kohl’s dramatic “ten point” speech in late November 1989, Secretary of State James Baker laid out “four principles” that should guide the process of inter-German rapprochement, two of which contradicted Kohl (NATO membership and the inviolability of existing borders).²

¹ My own memoir is among those in the first wave of scholarship: Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider’s Account of U.S. Policy in Europe, 1989-92* (Washington and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

² Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 100.

Professor Bozo is thus correct in saying that Washington, like Paris, sought to “manage” the process. Third, both French and American diplomatic approaches were guided by overarching (and often conflicting) conceptions of the broader future of Europe – a “French path,” as Bozo puts it, versus an American conception of a “new Atlanticism.” In this respect Bozo demonstrates a clear parallelism between French and American approaches: France insisted that unification take place within the context of a more united Europe, while the United States wanted a united Germany embedded within NATO. It is an important insight, which frames U.S.-French rivalry before, during, and after this period.

My overall judgment about French diplomacy during the period of German unification, which I continue to hold after reviewing an enormous volume of formerly classified documents from the U.S., German, Soviet, and now (thanks to this book) French archives, is this:

The totality of the evidence suggests that Mitterrand and especially foreign ministry officials at the Quai d’Orsay were caught unprepared and reacted instinctively and clumsily to the prospect of German unification, but that by January of 1990 Mitterrand had come to realize that unification was coming and so would not jeopardize French-German relations in a vain effort to stop it. He therefore sought to work with the Germans to gain certain assurances about the European integration process, in the end securing French interests rather well.³

Bozo goes farther, insisting that France did not mean to impede or even slow down German unification. Yet American diplomats at the time, including this reviewer, certainly believed that to have been the case. So did all the other main protagonists. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher reported that President Mitterrand was “even more concerned” than she was and that the two of them had agreed to work together to “check the German juggernaut” (as she indelicately put it).⁴ New archival evidence from Moscow makes it clear that whatever French intentions may have been, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev believed that France and Britain were with him and acted, in the critical period immediately following the fall of the Wall, on the basis of a perceived anti-unification coalition.⁵ Chancellor Helmut Kohl feared such a coalition and believed that France was

³ Robert Hutchings, “The United States, German unification and European integration,” in *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*, ed. Frédéric Bozo et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 125.

⁴ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1993), pp. 796-7.

⁵ See, e.g., the transcript of the Mitterrand-Gorbachev telephone conversation on November 14, 1989 (Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Notes of A.S. Chernyaev, trans. Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive), as well as the transcript of the Mitterrand-Gorbachev meeting in Kiev, December 6, 1989, cited below.

trying to “play the Russian card.”⁶ According to Bozo’s own account of Mitterrand’s controversial trip to the GDR in December 1989, “East German leaders *would choose to see* [in Mitterrand’s public statements and in the economic and cultural agreements signed] a confirmation of France’s support for GDR sovereignty and of its confidence in the regime’s durability.” (p. 143; emphasis added) Would Professor Bozo really have us believe that East German, West German, Soviet, British, and American leaders all misread French intentions, or that they willfully “chose” to misinterpret them?

Bozo’s central thesis undergoes a transformation as it becomes increasingly indefensible. The initial claim that “at no time” did French diplomacy seek to “slow down, much less impede” unification mutates into the less controversial one that France did not try to “block” or “oppose” it. For example, Bozo asks, “Did France during this same period [i.e. November-December 1989], as has been much alleged, try to oppose German unification?” (p. 134) But the allegation was that France sought to slow down and exercise control over the process via the Four Power mechanism and its hyperactive bilateral diplomacy with the Soviet and British leaders, who were, in Bozo’s words, “equally concerned... to moderate German evolution” (p. 136). Thus Bozo’s answer is that “French diplomacy was prone to use it [i.e. the Four Power process] – not (as has been asserted) to block the process, but to manage it.” (p. 138) Toward what end? Here is Bozo’s summation of Mitterrand’s position on German unification:

The process should unfold peacefully and democratically; it should neither challenge guaranteed borders... nor upset European equilibriums; and it should not overtake the evolution in the East, the Community strengthening in the West, or the emergence of pan-European structures at the East-West level. German unity, in other words, could not occur without the completion of necessary European transformations. (p. 136)

The French position, then, according to Bozo, was that unification “*could not occur*” without “necessary European transformations” that would, even in a conservative estimation, take many years if not decades to complete. This was exactly what we American diplomats feared at the time – that France would use the Four Power mechanism and its bilateral diplomacy to slow down and otherwise impede German unification in order to control the process according to France’s preferred timetable. Bozo has debunked his own thesis – that “*at no moment did French diplomacy seek to slow down, let alone impede, German unification.*” Clearly, in this early period immediately following the fall of the Wall, French diplomacy *did* seek to slow down and impede unification, and Bozo’s own account confirms this. (Later on, as I have noted, French diplomacy recovered and in the end acquitted itself well.)

What accounts for French behavior in this early period? Bozo is right to object to the characterization of French policy as opposed to German unification per se. The explanation for French actions lies elsewhere. Certainly the French were caught unprepared and

⁶ Werner Weidenfeld, *Aussenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998), p. 158, as well as pp. 94-5 and 109-110; Horst Teltschik, *328 Tage* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1991), p. 47.

instinctively sought to gain some degree of control over what seemed to be a runaway unification train. As Bozo shows persuasively, there was also a strategic calculus that demanded fitting a soon-to-be-unified Germany into a “Miterrandian vision” of Europe’s future.

There is another, so far unexplored, explanation – namely, that flawed French analysis of the dynamic of change in Europe led to flawed French policy. Whereas we in Washington saw in the Polish elections of June 1989 the beginning of the end of communist regimes everywhere in eastern Europe, including the GDR,⁷ the “Miterrandian vision” at this time was of a set of “de-Sovietized” but still socialist regimes that could endure for many years to come. (p. 63) Whereas I in particular, as the principal East Europeanist on the National Security Council staff, saw the election of Tadeusz Mazowiecki as the breakthrough event,⁸ Bozo attaches no such significance to it. (pp. 84-5) As to the new GDR leadership that replaced Erich Honecker, whereas we at the NSC staff in Washington saw Egon Krenz and then Hans Modrow as transitional figures with no chance of producing a stable government, the French continued to believe in the reformability and viability of the GDR regime. (pp. 91-3, 115-16, 123, 142) “Modrow’s reform program... seemed to offer the regime a real chance to maintain itself, by the same token delaying the prospect for unification,” Bozo concludes, in what seems to have been either wishful French thinking or the conscious goal of French policy. (p. 123)

In sum, the “Miterrandian vision” of Europe’s future was flawed from the very beginning. It foresaw a prolonged period of rapprochement between the West and a reformed but still socialist east. This is why Mitterrand told Gorbachev in their Kiev meeting in December 1989, “We should not change the order of the processes.... Kohl’s... ten points have turned everything around. He mixed all the factors together, he is rushing.”⁹ This perspective may have been consistent with the Cartesian logic and extreme Realism that are characteristic of French diplomacy, but it was essentially *unrealistic*, as events amply proved. By contrast, we on the American side embraced a rapid pace of German unification not as a matter of policy preference but as a product of our analysis of the dynamic unfolding before us.

Bozo tries to make the case that U.S. diplomats also believed in the potential viability of the GDR regime in the period immediately following the fall of the Wall. Citing Zelikow and Rice, he writes that the “American ambassador in the GDR” also believed (along with the

⁷ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 9-10

⁸ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 72-4.

⁹Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Notes of A.S. Chernyaev, trans. Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.

French) that a reformed GDR could survive as a separate state. (p. 115) But as Zelikow and Rice make clear on the page Bozo references, the citation came from the political counselor, Jonathan Greenwald, who was the number three in the U.S. embassy. Moreover, Bozo conveniently chooses to omit their key qualification: “Greenwald’s views did not reflect U.S. government policy.”¹⁰ We did not believe in the sustainability of the GDR regime after that fall of the Wall for anything more than a brief transition period.

There are other examples of the author’s highly selective use of sources in characterizing American policy. Early on, he cites Henry Kissinger’s suggestion that the United States and the Soviet Union reach an agreement on the future of Eastern Europe as if it were “Washington’s thinking.” (p. 40) But Kissinger’s idea was thoroughly repudiated by the U.S. administration, as I and many other American officials, including Secretary of State James Baker, made clear.¹¹ Bozo surely knows this, but he chose to omit the part of the record that did not suit his argument. Later, Bozo cites a Quai d’Orsay document as viewing the Malta Summit as a Soviet-American attempt to impose a superpower “condominium.” Someone in the Quai may well have reached such a conclusion at the time, but, as Bozo knows very well, the entire memorandum of conversation of that summit meeting has been published and translated, thanks to the Gorbachev Foundation and National Security Archive.¹² Yet Bozo chooses not to cite the verbatim record of the Malta summit. Was this because nothing that was actually said between the two leaders could possibly be construed as supporting the connotation he prefers to leave with the reader?

This questionable use of source material acquires particular importance in that the book relies so heavily on interpretations of French sources made available only to Bozo. It undermines the reader’s confidence that the French documentary record has been faithfully rendered.

Once Professor Bozo gets beyond this early period and his determination to rehabilitate the image of French diplomacy, his scholarship becomes more evenhanded. His analyses of the “European relaunch” and of the “new European architecture” are important additions to the existing literature, and his treatment of U.S.-French discussions about the possibility of France’s rejoining NATO’s integrated command is by far the best and most detailed account of this “missed rendezvous.” (pp. 331-43) They contribute not only to our understanding

¹⁰ Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 104 and 402 n8.

¹¹ See, e.g., Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, p. 37; James Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989-92* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), p. 40; Jack F. Matlock, Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador’s Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 190-2.

¹² Gorbachev Foundation, Fond 1, Opis 1, trans. Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB298/Document%2010.pdf>.

of the period of German unification but also to the ongoing transformation of European and transatlantic security.

Frédéric Bozo's book is a remarkable piece of scholarly work. It gives much more than its title might suggest. Even though the French approach and policies are its main topic, the book is also a multidimensional study of the end of the Cold War. Besides the French, the American, Soviet, German and European perspectives and goals are carefully kept present all along the book and related to each other in a very sophisticated and inter-informative manner. The book is therefore a significant contribution to the abundant literature on German unification and the end of the Cold War and its welcome translation to English will certainly contribute to keep debates going on.

Bozo's study is the first widely and fully researched publication on French policies during this fascinating historical period of time. In this respect it fills a major gap and will remain the reference book for many years to come. Bozo had access to an immense variety of unexploited public and private archives. His analysis then goes well beyond Mitterrand's inner circle. It presents the perceptions and prescriptions of different state bureaucracies and other significant players. In spite of the amount of work needed for that purpose, the author took the time needed to investigate the behavior of other international actors, sometimes even reaching out to their archival materials.

The central argument of the book is a frontal attack on the conventional wisdom about France's policies on German unification, according to which Mitterrand did all he could to slow down and obstruct German unification. This is certainly an oversimplification that needed to be questioned and even challenged. In doing so, however, Bozo overstates his case. He asks as "indeed a central question : did French diplomacy then try to slow if not halt these events...?" His immediate and clear-cut answer is "By no means". (p. xxi) To halt or block German unification is one thing. To try to slow it down is however something else. There is no doubt that Mitterrand did very much of that, and for good reasons. There is no need to rely extensively on Jacques Attali's *Verbatim* to find this out. Though he maintains his all-encompassing claim, Bozo sometimes seems to implicitly contradict it. He writes that Mitterrand wanted to impose a European framework to the process of unification. Mitterrand wanted this "à tout prix" (which literally means at any price) which we find in the original French book. No translation of "à tout prix" or any equivalent words appear in the English version. (p. xxxviii) Bozo who fully masters the English language and probably closely supervised his translator may have decided not to appear conceding any inch of ground to the conventional wisdom... But willingly or not, he actually does.

Indeed, and most fortunately, Bozo does not distort facts or evidence in order to make his case. All the evidence (and even the demonstration) is in the book to fully understand why Mitterrand would have preferred a much slower process of German unification and did much to have it, but never at the cost of jeopardizing the key special relationship between France and Germany. Some "End of the Cold War" historians will probably be irritated by Bozo's insistence on his "central" claim but will definitely acknowledge the major contribution he made to their field of on-going work. His "central" argument is not so central after all.

The main reason why Bozo keeps opposing the idea that Mitterrand wanted to slow down the process of unification, is because conventional wisdom has often characterized it as being out of touch with an unavoidable historical trend, and as showing a preference for the international status quo, supposedly deriving from the “free ride” that France was taking during the Cold War. But there were many other and much sounder reasons for Mitterrand to be deeply concerned by the pace of Kohl’s rush to German unification and for wishing to have it slowed down. They are very well documented in Bozo’s book. Let us consider a few of them in order of increasing importance.

In the weeks that followed Kohl’s November 28 speech to the Bundestag that took the whole world by surprise by proposing an agenda for German unification, a few days only after the sensational and entirely unexpected opening of the Berlin Wall, Mitterrand was genuinely concerned by a possible backlash in the USSR against Gorbachev and his policies. This had nothing to do with keeping the status quo. One can say the exact contrary. Having accepted (or tolerated if one prefers) a non-communist government in Poland in September and a decision in favor of entirely free elections in Hungary, Gorbachev had gone a long way in overcoming the status quo and the division of Europe. The continuation of such a process that was already going beyond all the best expectations a year before, indeed needed to be preserved by a careful handling of the German situation. In the summer of 1989 George Bush senior had made an official visit to Poland and Hungary. With Lech Walesa he advocated restraint. In a private conversation with his advisers, he worried about a rapid change of regime (that actually took place a few weeks later) saying that “it would be more than the market can bear”¹ No one has blamed Bush for going against the course of History.

Thatcher objected to Kohl’s rush to unification for reasons substantially different from Mitterrand’s. Her objections were much stronger and were basically of a geopolitical nature. She feared a resurgence of Germany’s power and its hegemony in Europe. For Thatcher, a united Germany was “historically a dangerous power.”² Mitterrand’s chief concern was not about traditional balance of power considerations. It had to do with the shape of the European order to come. The preservation of NATO was definitely not one of his preoccupations. It was the opposite for Bush who decisively supported Kohl’s course of action after the latter gave him the strongest assurances that a united Germany would fully belong to NATO. For the future of the European order as Bozo demonstrates it, Mitterrand’s main task by the end of 1989, was to make sure that the process of European integration would continue to go on. The postwar reconciliation between France and West Germany had been built and consolidated on the basis of the gradual European economic integration, led by their partnership. This process of integration was seen as the main ingredient of peace, not only between France and West Germany but also among the countries of

¹ See M.R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels* (Boston, Little Brown, 1993), p. 87.

² From the diary of her foreign policy advisor George R. Urban, *The Times*, Sept. 26, 1996, quoted by Peter Alter, *The German Question and Europe* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 133.

Western Europe as a whole. Therefore Mitterrand saw a decisive reinforcement of the European Community as a most urgent task that should match if not precede the pace of German unification. He saw it as a guarantee that the European Community would be a main pillar and the driving force of a new European order to come. In this crucial respect his views and apprehensions were again fundamentally different from Thatcher's. She was convinced that a reinforcement of the Community could only result in a stronger hegemony of a united Germany in Europe.

As Bozo convincingly demonstrates, Mitterrand successfully used all the weight of French influence in West Germany, built on their long-standing partnership, to convince a wavering Kohl to make the decisive steps for the creation of the economic and monetary union, which together with an agreement on an institutional transformation of a federative orientation, paved the way to the Maastricht Treaty and the creation of the European Union.

As it plainly comes out of the book, Mitterrand's vision of the future of Europe was not limited to that of the European Community and Western Europe. Contrary to Bush whose chief concern for the future of Europe was nearly limited to NATO, Mitterrand advocated a pan-European architecture meant to include Eastern Europe and the USSR. In this respect, his perspective had much in common with Gorbachev's. It is important to understand in what sense.

As we know, it is the inclusion of the united Germany in NATO that met the staunchest and longest resistance of Gorbachev in the whole process of German unification. His opposition was not primarily based on military and geopolitical considerations. These of course were the main concerns of the Soviet military and of conservative communist cadres. But it was different for Gorbachev and his "europhile" reformist entourage³. They knew that the inclusion of East and West Germany in NATO would deprive the Warsaw Pact of its "raison d'être" and spell its rapid disintegration. The Warsaw Pact had been the USSR's anchor in European affairs. That is why Gorbachev and Shevardnadze kept insisting that "German unification had "to be organically linked and synchronized with the European process and the creation of an essentially new security structure in Europe"⁴ where the USSR would have found its place. Reaching to Europe had been a chief if not a main goal of Gorbachev's foreign policy. He demanded the institutionalization and the transformation of the CSCE into a new international organization and authority in matters of European security, economic and political cooperation. With the accelerating pace of events, in order to buy time for achieving such an ambitious and complex goal, Gorbachev proposed to let Germany go unified while postponing a definitive settlement of its international status. But he finally gave up to Kohl's opposition to such an approach.

³ I have extensively developed this point in: Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989, The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997), Chapter 13.

⁴ See *ibid*, p. 227.

As Bozo indicates, Mitterrand's outline for a post Cold War pan-European confederative order had much to do with Willy Brandt's long term view of his "Ostpolitik" and the positions of the German SPD, in 1989 and before. As for Gorbachev's vision of a new European order these had not waited for the fall of the Berlin Wall to begin taking shape. The three of these visions bore a social democratic imprint.

Finding a way to anchor Russia in Europe has been one of the major missed opportunities of the end of the Cold War. It has been deeply resented shortly after, by Yeltsin and the most Westernizers of his initial entourage. For that missed opportunity, French policies in 1989 are certainly not at fault.

Frederic Bozo's book is an excellent, essential, addition to historical scholarship on the end of the Cold War in Europe and the construction of a new international system. In scope and detail, it parallels the 1995 book I wrote with Condi Rice.¹ That book was an international history of the episode based on the US government's records, most of which were still classified (though cited for future reference), some Soviet records, interviews, and the already considerable published material available in German, English, and Russian.

The 'winners' in 1989-1990 were more eager to open their records to some review. I was a beneficiary of that; so were those working with records of Chancellor Helmut Kohl (many of which have now been published). Many Soviet and East German records have become available in other ways. Regrettably, British records and records from Hans-Dietrich Genscher's Foreign Ministry are only now starting to become more available

Some well placed people in Paris soon realized that their side was being portrayed as a 'loser,' and a rather sore loser at that. (Though that was not my view, as Bozo acknowledges.) French archival custodians dealt with this problem constructively; opening the key papers to Professor Bozo. He appears to have handled this opportunity with great care and skill.

The value is great. My co-authored book with Rice, for example, was relatively weak in its handling of French policy. The French sources were then scant or turned out to be unreliable, like the published diaries of Jacques Attali (mentioned in a 1997 preface to the paperback edition). Thus Bozo's work is indispensable for the French dimension of the story.

Bozo's work has much more value, though, than simply rounding out the French dimension. It is a factual cross-check on many other accounts, including mine, for all the diplomatic encounters in which France took part. Bozo is judicious in weighing the evidence. For instance, in December 1989 Mitterrand wished to go to East Germany, stepping into a revolutionary situation. He had the wit to ask (and be seen to have asked) Kohl if this was OK. Notice how thoughtfully Bozo handles the resulting exchange: "Kohl, while advising caution, confirmed that Mitterrand had no reason to give up the trip. Mitterrand evidently wanted to defuse the issue without going back on his decision, while Kohl (who deep inside himself no doubt scarcely approved of Mitterrand's initiative) could not ask him to give it up. The misunderstanding, unspoken, persisted." (p. 141)

¹ Philip Zelikow & Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). The 1997 paperback edition has a new preface which discusses a few other sources that were published in the intervening years. To slow down the rush to theoretical generalization about the event, the preface also offered an appropriately complicated outline of the dependent and independent variables in the case.

Bozo is very much concerned to disprove the allegations, made by Thatcher and others, that Mitterrand fully shared the British prime minister's hostility to German unification. In this effort Bozo has some success. Mitterrand wanted to slow things down, but not so much as Thatcher. He was sympathetic to Gorbachev, yet not quite in agreement. He and Kohl understood each other, despite occasional friction. Some around Mitterrand, like Attali, were more anti-German, and these sentiments had wide currency in the French political class. But amid the storms, Bozo proves that Mitterrand held fast to two firm beliefs: in a Franco-German partnership at the core of Europe; and in a pan-European architecture for managing the continent's political economy and security requirements. And Mitterrand also sought and attained good relations with the United States, specifically with President George H.W. Bush. (The relationship between the two foreign ministers was not so good.)

Mitterrand the man and Mitterrand the leader remain elusive. The details accumulate from all the meetings. But the resulting image of Mitterrand remains indistinct, as if painted by Seurat, in faint pastels, shrouded in mist. Other nominal leaders of the French government, like Attali or the foreign minister, Roland Dumas, or the defense minister, Jean-Pierre Chevenement, seemed to add little to the quality of French statecraft. The brightest lights in Bozo's book are an outstanding set of career officials: men and women like Jacques Lanxade, Elisabeth Guigou, Bertrand Dufourcq, and Caroline de Margerie.

As an illustration, zoom in on the moment when France is considering whether to shift gears from the completion of European monetary union to add another momentous idea, a project for political union, that could change the European Community to a European Union. This is a story that Bozo properly pulls into the foreground of the diplomatic narrative.

The Germans had pressed the idea. One of Mitterrand's advisers, Guigou, had urged him to accept it. Mitterrand vacillated. In March 1990, as the Germans pushed again to launch this idea as a Franco-German initiative, Guigou pressed harder. Bozo shows the impressive set of arguments she and her colleagues arrayed to persuade their president, including the way the political project might ease acceptance of the monetary union too. Bozo shows how Mitterrand slowly gives way. (pp. 235-240) The result was a critical initiative, announced in Dublin in April 1990, that would eventually lead to the Maastricht Treaty and an EU (now modified further by the Lisbon reforms).

Bozo reveals to us the work of a very impressive, high quality career service offering penetrating analysis of fast-moving events. This aspect of his book is another strength, quite apart from what it reveals about French policy, because the acute observations of the French officials will enrich any historian's reflections on the unfolding German, American, Soviet, or British plans. Often, though, France was observing more than leading. For this result, Mitterrand was more responsible than his bureaucrats. By this point, at the end of the 1980s, Mitterrand had a gift for finding a shrewd political stance on the issue at hand. But such positions seldom placed him on a commanding height (by contrast to his influence in the early 1980s).

The contrast with the Mitterrand of 1981-1983 was reinforced in the summer of 1990. After NATO had reworked its strategy at a landmark July 1990 summit in London, Mitterrand chose the post-summit conference as an occasion to announce that France would withdraw all its troops from Germany. The Americans were startled. This French move to quit Germany would undermine the case for US troops staying. True, French officials had resented the heavy-handed way the Americans and other allies had managed the summit, but Thatcher also felt steam-rolled and had not started lobbing hand grenades. French officials acknowledged that the NATO summit outcome was important and valuable. They were far from concluding that it was in France's interest to help push the American military out of Germany or Europe. Mitterrand professed to believe that German public opinion would no longer tolerate the presence of any foreign forces, but the German government was telling him that the opposite was true. So it is hard to resist the sense that Mitterrand liquidated nearly half a century of French participation in securing Germany because of "irritation," a pique that was only nominally about "European security being taken in hand by the Atlantic Alliance...." (p. 281)

The theme of Atlanticist versus pan-European security solutions is important in this book, as it should be. After German unification was attained, Bozo documents a major French proposal to create a pan-European confederation. The proposal fell flat in 1991. After the Balkan crises, NATO's role in European security ended up seeming stronger than ever. Bozo dispassionately recounts all this. (And in 2010 France has again drawn closer to NATO.) But Bozo concludes his book with a powerful insight. As the United States has become more and more preoccupied by topics outside of Europe, Washington's will to remain a European power has ebbed, even as the forms of Atlantic security remain. Thus, Bozo contends, Mitterrand's pan-European vision may be even more relevant now than it was twenty years ago.

Author's Response by Frédéric Bozo, Sorbonne (University of Paris III)

I am most grateful to the H-Diplo editors for having selected my book for a roundtable review and to the participants for having agreed to read it attentively and write such stimulating commentaries. For a diplomatic historian from a (non UK) European country, having one's book translated into English is a unique experience. One really gets a sense of the liveliness of debates in the English-speaking academic community as compared with the situation in individual European countries. I am truly heartened to see that the English version of my book elicits much interest even from scholars whose main focus is not necessarily on French policy.

I was of course flattered to read the appreciative commentaries made by the reviewers. Although it would be inappropriate to dwell too much on the praise, I won't conceal the fact that I was pleased to see that my book seems to have reached its main goal: to prompt a re-evaluation of the role of France in these events. All four of the reviewers—granted to various degrees and with some important nuances—indeed seem to agree with my central claim that the heretofore dominant narrative of François Mitterrand's negative reactions to the events of 1989-1991 and opposition to Germany's unification needs to be revised. (Ironically, this is less the case in France—and in Germany—where some continue to give credence to the “black legend” of Mitterrand's alleged opposition to German unification.¹) In this, the reviewers' assessment of my book matches an undergoing revision among international historians: in her recent, widely acclaimed account of the events of 1989-1990, Professor Mary Elise Sarotte writes that Mitterrand “was an uneasy but crucial facilitator of German unity, not its foe,” and she identifies him as one of the few “key actors” that played a major role in shaping the events that unfolded after the fall of the Berlin Wall.²

I was also pleased to read that beyond France's role in these events, the reviewers seem to believe that another value of the book is to contribute to a more general reconsideration of the narrative and interpretation of the end of the Cold War. Here again with nuances, all of them somehow acknowledge the usefulness of taking into account what Professor Philip Zelikow calls the “French dimension” in order to better understand the wider picture. They agree that the preceding narratives and interpretations were often too focused on the roles of the United States and the Soviet Union in these events, and that the various European actors, factors and processes need to be brought into the picture, as my book tries to do. Here again, the reviewers echo Sarotte, who writes: “[T]he United States and the Soviet Union were the two most important countries during the Cold War, but they were not the

¹ See Frédéric Bozo: “Mitterrand et la chute du Mur: en finir avec la légende”, posted on the news website rue 89, 3 October 2009 : <http://www.rue89.com/2009/10/03/mitterrand-et-la-chute-du-mur-en-finir-avec-la-legende>.

² Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3, 50.

only important countries in the shaping of the post-Cold War European order...the endgame was heavily European.”³

Let me now turn, as the reader surely expects, to some of the objections or questions raised in the roundtable. Among the wealth of useful commentaries contained in the introduction and the reviews, in my view three series of remarks are of particular importance.

The first has to do with the characterization of French policy faced with German unification. As Professor Trachtenberg notes, both Professor Jacques Lévesque and Professor Robert Hutchings are uneasy with an important aspect of my thesis: although they do not refute the key point, i.e. that Mitterrand’s France did not wish nor try to block German unification, they believe I go too far when I state that Paris did not even try to slow it down (Professor Zelikow also expresses mild scepticism, writing that “Mitterrand wanted to slow things down, but not so much as Thatcher.”) Lévesque and Hutchings, however, make two very different if not outright opposite uses of this criticism: while both insist that Mitterrand did try to slow things down (he “did very much of that,” writes Lévesque; “French diplomacy did seek to slow down and impede unification,” writes Hutchings), the former thinks that this was “for good reasons” while the latter clearly thinks this was a mistake that taints the record of French policy in 1989-90, in contrast with what he believes was a far more supportive U.S. policy.

Professor Lévesque’s criticism is constructive, and it gives me a chance to clarify an important point. His concern is—rightly—to contextualize: Lévesque reminds us that faced with the events of 1989-90, responsible leaders had every reason to be apprehensive of these developments and of a possible backlash, not least with regard to Gorbachev and perestroika, which could have been severely damaged as a result of the sudden loss of the Soviet “empire” in Eastern Europe and an excessively rapid German unification (in fact the backlash did occur in August 1991 when Gorbachev suffered an attempted but ultimately failed coup). The backlash could also have taken the form of an outburst of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe after the thaw (it eventually took place in Yugoslavia in 1991). Lévesque’s comments, in other words, remind us that the “rosy” scenario of a peaceful German unification was not written in advance, and that there were many other possible outcomes, some of them far less appealing. (Interested readers will find a more developed exposition of his arguments in a chapter he contributed to a volume I co-edited on Europe and the end of the Cold War.⁴)

Mitterrand was a responsible statesman, and he did share those concerns: as I write in my book, the preservation of the Gorbachev experience was his main preoccupation throughout the period, and he was wary of a possible return of disruptive nationalism—a

³ Sarotte, 209.

⁴ See Jacques Lévesque, “In the Name of Europe’s Future: Soviet, French and British Qualms about Kohl’s Rush to German Unification,” in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and Leopoldo Nuti (eds), *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 95-106.

fear he frequently expressed by talking about the need to avoid “a return to 1913.” There is no doubt that, for all these reasons, in the aftermath of the fall of the Wall he did wish the process of German unification to be progressive and channelled internationally. But he was not alone: it is fair to say that all of the main international leaders to some extent shared these apprehensions and, at least initially, preferred a gradual movement towards German unification. In my view, this was also the case, to a degree, of President George H. W. Bush: “Gorbachev said you are in too much of a hurry”, Bush told Chancellor Helmut Kohl after the Malta summit in early December 1989; he was evidently passing his own message, telling Kohl that “Gorbachev’s chief problem is uncertainty” and that “we need to find a formulation which doesn’t scare him, but moves forward.”⁵ The preference for such a gradual movement generally prevailed until it became obvious, by mid-January 1990, that unification would be rapid as a result of the sudden and irremediable collapse of the GDR.⁶

But much as I agree (and I clearly say as much in the book) that Mitterrand would have initially preferred a gradual realization of German unity (again, like other major players), I do not believe that he actively tried to enforce such a scenario. No doubt, in the critical several weeks from the fall of the Wall to the end of 1989, Mitterrand wanted to gauge the attitudes of the other major international players: hence his bilateral meetings with Gorbachev in Kiev (6 December), with Prime minister Margaret Thatcher on the margins of the EC Strasbourg summit (8 December), and with Bush in Saint-Martin (16 December). Perhaps his attitude would have been different had he sensed a willingness among his partners, especially Bush—and not only, as was the case, Thatcher and to a lesser extent Gorbachev —, to pull the brakes; he may in that case have gone for what Sarotte describes as a policy of “restoration” (of the Four Powers’ rights) with a view to delaying German unification—again, blocking it altogether was for him simply out of the question.⁷ But all of this is counterfactual.

⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Bush and Kohl, Brussels, 3 December 1989, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Bush Presidential records, WHORM Subject Files.

⁶ I fully share Sarotte’s analysis on this whole problematic of “acceleration:” see *1989*, chapter 3, esp. 99 ff. I also note that her rendering of U.S. policy in late 1989-early 1990, which does not exclude the concerns that also existed in Washington, differs from previous accounts which have generally described Washington’s support of German unification as serene and unconditional from start: this is the case in Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) and, even more so, in Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider’s Account of U.S. Policy in Europe 1989-1992* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997).

⁷ The key players here were no doubt Bush and Mitterrand. In my judgment, the only situation in which the latter might have chosen a policy of “restoration” (except for an unforeseen incident, such as some violent move by Soviet troops in Berlin and the GDR) would have been if the former had been in that same disposition. In turn I feel that Bush would probably have seriously considered such a policy had Mitterrand—whom he very much respected and whose key role in Europe he appreciated—been more alarming and critical of Kohl’s policy.

My bottom line is thus as follows: while Mitterrand would have liked things to move more slowly, he did not think this could be effectively imposed on the (West) Germans, including a resorting to the Four Powers' rights.⁸ He may have deplored it. But there is a big difference between wishing things to go slower and actively trying to slow them down—as Thatcher did⁹. The only way in which Mitterrand thought one could slow things down was by advising Bonn to slow them down—as Bush did. He certainly did much of that—true, to little avail.

I find Professor Hutchings' commentary more perplexing. Hutchings clings to the idea that Mitterrand did try actively to impede German unification. He adds that his "overall judgment" on French policy was and remains that Mitterrand initially "reacted clumsily" to the prospect of German unification, while also acknowledging that, by January 1990, he "sought to work with the Germans to gain certain assurances about the European integration process, in the end securing French interests rather well." Fine. Had he only criticized my characterization of Mitterrand's policy, I would have had no argument with him: after all, there's always a measure of "spin" in the writing of a historical narrative, and I wouldn't have reacted to his willingness to keep his own "spin" on this whole affair.

But whereas Lévesque says that even though I may have somewhat overstated my point in the preface, I "[do] not distort facts or evidence in order to make my case," Hutchings seems suspicious of my scholarship. He believes that my rendering of U.S. policy (which by the way is not the main focus of my book) is biased and that I make a "highly selective use" of sources, e.g. when I deal with the December 1989 Bush-Gorbachev Malta summit, for which he says I chose to ignore the memorandum of conversation that has been published. But it seems Hutchings has made a highly selective reading of my book, since I do use that record (although I do not make direct quotes from it: again, this is a book on French, not on U.S. policy).¹⁰ The imputation, by the way, strikes me as odd: why would I have deliberately left aside an important document which turns out to confirm my impression of U.S. caution when dealing with the German question in the critical month of December 1989, an attitude that, once again, I believe was strikingly parallel, if not similar, to the French attitude?¹¹

⁸ See my analysis of France's attitude regarding the meeting of the four ambassadors in Berlin on 11 December 1989 (an attitude that on that day turned out to be less lenient vis-à-vis Soviet obstructionist objectives than that of U.S. diplomats!): Bozo, *Mitterrand*, 137-9. And of course, on 20 January 1990, Mitterrand essentially rejected Thatcher's willingness to reactivate the quadripartite mechanism in order to slow things down, judging that this was a "judicial, legal" approach but one that would be neither effective nor acceptable to the Germans: Bozo, 174.

⁹ This is the key difference between Mitterrand and Thatcher : see Frédéric Bozo, "Thatcher's European Delusions," *Prospect*, (on line edition), www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2009/11/thatchers-european-delusions/

¹⁰ Bozo, 154 (footnote 85).

¹¹ Sarotte's reading of Malta (77-78) and what was said there about Germany is very similar to mine.

By adding that I have “undermine[d] the reader’s confidence that the French documentary record has been faithfully rendered,” Hutchings further questions my intellectual honesty.¹² I wonder why. Maybe my offence was to redress his earlier, heavily prejudiced reading of French policy. For his initial “overall judgment” was not along the relatively benign lines he recalls in his review above: his 1997 book in fact contains an almost thoroughly negative appraisal of French policy, which is by and large described as one of sheer opposition to German unification and willingness to coalesce with the UK and the USSR against it.¹³

In the review essay which he wrote on several books that appeared on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, Professor Zelikow, discussing my own book (together with Sarotte’s) gracefully wrote that “[W]hen historical scholarship works as it should, historians build on prior work to extend and improve it.”¹⁴ I wonder whether professor Hutchings agrees. Let me also add that this is not a zero-sum-game: reevaluating the record of French policy in 1989-90 does not diminish the merits of U.S. policy, of which I am an admirer.

Sadly, this leaves me with little space to address the other two points which I wanted to discuss here. The first point derives from Professor Gray’s insightful review. While he recognizes the “loyal and constructive” role of the Mitterrand diplomacy, in particular as a result of the strong Mitterrand-Kohl partnership, he asks whether Mitterrand in the end really did “make a difference” and whether the final settlement of the German question did “bear his handwriting”. Although he acknowledges that “European voices need to be taken into account,” Gray thinks that in the end my book “corrects the standard narrative mainly by taking note of Mitterrand’s surprisingly agreeable cooperation with goals articulated by Helmut Kohl and George H. W. Bush.” In the same vein, Professor Zelikow thinks that Mitterrand, in this period (unlike in the early 1980’s, when he held his famous Bundestag speech), was “seldom on commanding heights” and that “France was observing more than leading.” These are perfectly legitimate comments and they deserve an answer.

¹² Hutchings also suggests that the evidence I used was made available to me only. But this is not the case: Professor Sarotte (like other scholars who have asked for them) has had access to the same boxes as the ones I used from the Mitterrand presidency in the French national archives; as for the French foreign ministry’s archives, they are now available to all researchers: see www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/archives-patrimoine_3512/chute-du-mur-berlin-ouverture-anticipee-archives-diplomatiques_19850/index.html

¹³ See e.g. Hutchings, 90, 93, 104-6, 112, 116; his general bottom line on Mitterrand and the end of the Cold War is that the French president tried “to retard history’s course” (no less): see Hutchings, 17.

¹⁴ Philip D. Zelikow, “The Suicide of the East ? 1989 and the Fall of Communism”, *Foreign Affairs*, November-December 2009, 138. Zelikow writes that “in scope and detail, [my book] parallels” the one he wrote with Condoleezza Rice in 1995. I can confirm that Zelikow’s and Rice’s book served as a template as I wrote mine.

Professor Gray illustrates the point with two examples. The first is the German-Polish border issue, which was indeed a major preoccupation for Mitterrand (and became briefly a bone of contention between him and Kohl). For Gray, Mitterrand's "arm-twisting" with the Germans on this issue was of little use since Kohl was determined to have a united Germany recognize the border anyway and only eschewed such a recognition before the achievement of unity for legal or technical reasons. The result, he concludes, was an unnecessary quarrel with Bonn.

But for Mitterrand, the preoccupation with the border issue (shared not only in London, but to some extent in Washington as well) did not stem from a fear that Bonn/Berlin would not recognize the Oder-Neisse line after unification (he perfectly understood and accepted the legal point, and he never doubted Kohl's personal assurances). Rather, it had to do with the way this would eventually be done. Mitterrand wanted a strong political commitment on the part of the FRG (and of the GDR) before unification as well as a solid legal guarantee after unification (not only through a German-Polish treaty, but within the two plus four settlement) because he considered the border issue to be characteristic of the need for an internationally negotiated settlement of the German question as opposed to one that only rested on the good will of one man, however respectable. In other words, it was for him a question of method, not of substance. By forcing Kohl to clarify his discourse in spite of his electoral—and in a sense demagogical—preoccupations (due to the political influence of the *Vertriebene* in the CDU-CSU alliance), he wanted him to recognize that the international aspects of the unification could not be dealt with unilaterally, but had to be dealt with internationally. German unification, as he had said in July 1989, could not be done "with forceps." Mitterrand's insistence on the Oder-Neisse issue no doubt contributed to this a great deal.

Professor Gray's second example involves the question of Europe. Professor Gray thinks that Mitterrand hardly achieved a major breakthrough when the German chancellor agreed to renew his commitment to European construction against the backdrop of German unification, since Kohl had always said that the latter would have to be paired with an acceleration of the former. In other words, Gray says that because Kohl was a committed Europeanist anyway, this recommitment to pursue European construction was not to the credit of Mitterrand.

I partly agree with Professor Gray. Here he puts his finger on a fundamental point: the "Junktum" between European integration and German unification was an essential one, not an instrumental one. This is why it is wrong to portray what happened between France and Germany in 1989-90 as a quid pro quo, France accepting German unification because Germany accepted the continuation of European integration (in particular EMU and what became the Euro): this rendering is wrong because France accepted German unification as a matter of principle, and Germany of course wanted to continue European integration; unlike what is commonly reported, there was no actual "deal," not even at the Strasbourg summit in December 1989, simply because it had been agreed for decades that the two processes had to go hand in hand, a notion Kohl and Mitterrand had discussed over and

over before the events of 1989.¹⁵ This in my view does not diminish their merits: it reminds us that the groundwork for what happened then had been prepared long before. But statesmanship was nevertheless important in 1989-90 to make sure that the deal endured: here, it seems to me, Mitterrand and Kohl must be given credit for successfully translating in actual policy terms what remained until then an abstract concept. Had Kohl failed to understand the need to restate Germany's European article of faith at this critical juncture (as he did as a result of Mitterrand's insistence), things could have gone less smoothly—and yes, France could have played the “spoiler.”

So my response to both Professors Gray and Zelikow would be this: it is easy to underestimate Mitterrand's (and Kohl's) contribution to the settlement of the German question if one underestimates the importance of the European dimension of this settlement. The Atlantic dimension—having the Soviet Union agree to unified Germany's continued membership in NATO—, no doubt, was more dramatic, and for this U.S. policy deserves full credit (although France, as Gray and Trachtenberg underline, was helpful). A German unification paired with German neutrality would certainly have produced a less appealing result than the one actually reached in summer 1990 of a unified Germany that would remain a full member of NATO. But consider also what would have been the result of a German unification that would not have been accompanied by a relaunch or even the continuation of European integration. So I continue to believe that there was a remarkable parallelism in 1989-90 between U.S. policy (and its Atlantic priority) and French policy (and its European priority). Both were decisive contributions to the settlement of the German question.¹⁶

This leads me to the third and last point I wanted to pick up from the stimulating comments contained in the roundtable discussion, one that has to do with foresight and hindsight. To what extent, twenty years after the facts, were the decisions made by France (and others) visionary? Were these decisions, in other words, consistent with what turned out to be the actual direction taken by history, and are they still of any relevance to the present situation? Discussing all aspects of this question would take us too far, so I will concentrate on what is perhaps the most important of these aspects: the future of the U.S. presence in Europe.

Here, I face the skepticism of two reviewers, who with regard to French policy in 1989-90 are retrospectively puzzled with what they describe as a combination, on the one hand, of the reemergence of the typically “Gaullist” assumption that the United States would inevitably recede from the Old Continent after the Cold War and that a Europe-centered system had to emerge and replace the NATO system, and on the other hand a reluctance to more actively challenge the United States' domineering role in Europe and that very NATO

¹⁵ On this, see Frédéric Bozo, “France, German Unification and European Integration,” in F. Bozo, M.-P. Rey, N. P. Ludlow and L. Nuti, *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008).

¹⁶ On this, see Frédéric Bozo, “Winners' and ‘Losers:’ France, the United States, and the End of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History*, 33, no. 5 (November 2009), 927-58.

system. Professor Trachtenberg writes that “the important thing here was not Mitterrand’s ‘vision’ of a unifying Europe and a diminishing American presence, but his support in practice of the continuation of the NATO system.” As for Professor Gray, he believes that “‘Gaullist’ assumptions predisposed French diplomacy to a high degree of wishful thinking” and he underlines that Mitterrand “did not press alternatives to NATO” very forcefully.

Both Trachtenberg and Gray seem to conclude that the reality of French policy was in fact more conservative than revisionist. I believe it really is a matter of seeing the glass half empty or half full. In the overall context of 1990, Mitterrand’s decisions do appear to be cautious not to challenge the U.S. presence in Europe. The reasons for this cautious approach were manifold: the understanding that the United States was itself determined to remain for the time being a European power, the fact that the Soviet Union would, for the foreseeable future, remain a potentially dangerous entity, and the need to consolidate the Euro-Atlantic framework in which the new Germany would remain embedded (there was little hope of developing an increasingly cohesive and assertive Europe if NATO were to crumble).

But seen from 2010, it is hard not to recognize a certain visionary quality to Mitterrand’s belief—indeed inherited from de Gaulle—that, in the long run, the kind of massive U.S. engagement in Europe that had prevailed during and as a result of the Cold War would eventually give way to a much more volatile presence. True, the Balkan wars were a catalyst for the U.S. post Cold War European reengagement. But once these conflicts were settled in the late 1990s and 9/11 erupted, it became clear that the U.S. disinterest in Europe as an object (but not necessarily as a potential partner in global security) could but intensify. In that, the administration of George W. Bush proved not to be an aberration, as confirmed by the evident lack of interest of Barack Obama’s administration in a Europe that is essentially at peace. I find it remarkable that, on this key point, the reviewer who seems to agree the most with my analysis is Professor Zelikow, who twenty years ago was busy (as well he should have been) challenging the “Gaullist” assumptions of President Mitterrand together with his colleagues in the George H.W. Bush administration.

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