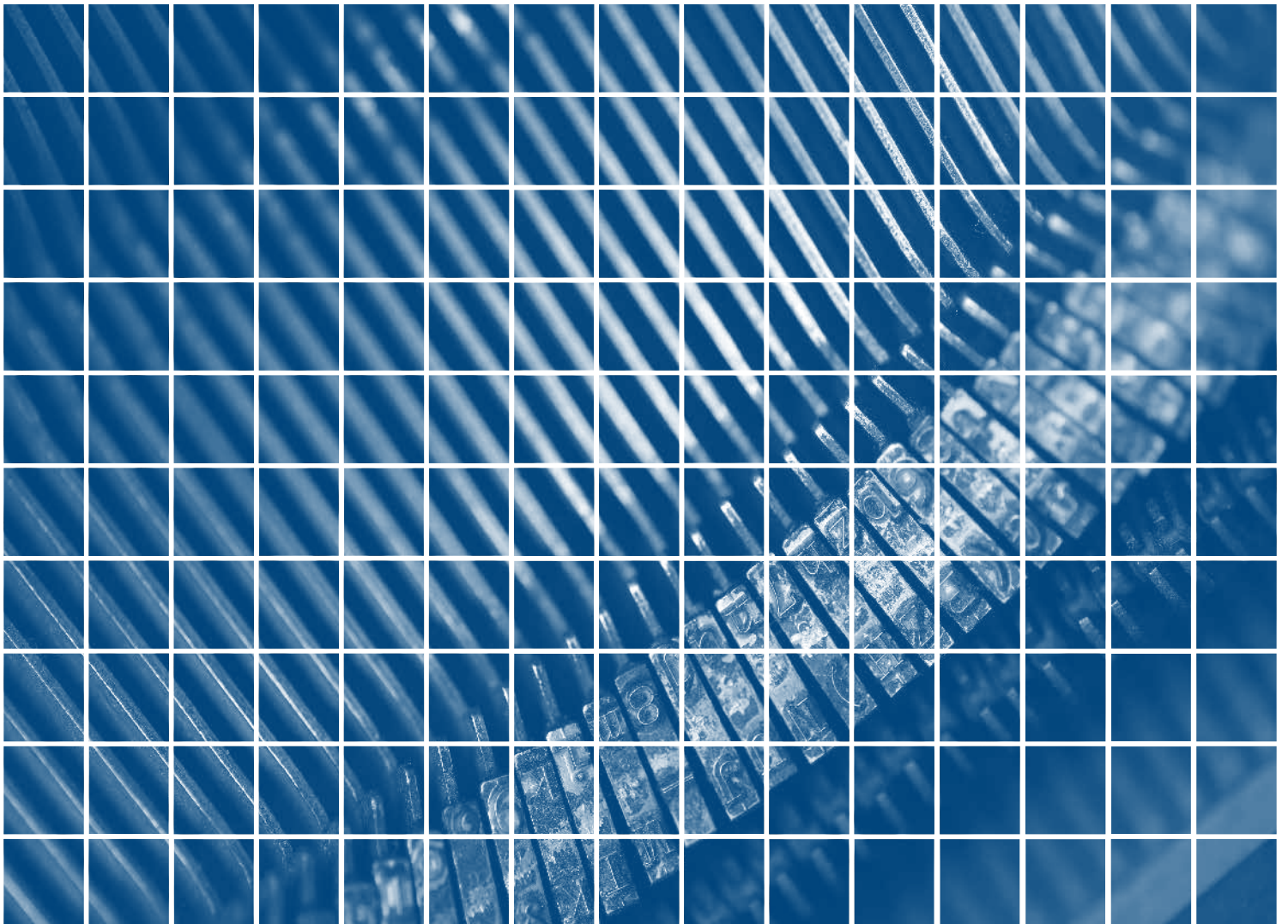


# The Road to the Charter of Paris

Historical Narratives and Lessons  
for the OSCE Today



# OSCE Network

OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions

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Design and typesetting | red hot 'n' cool, Vienna  
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# Acknowledgements

This project was encouraged by the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship and jointly sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. The OSCE Secretariat provided administrative and financial monitoring. We express our sincere gratitude for all this support. In particular, we would like to thank Dr. Petri Hakkarainen, who early on expressed a keen interest in the idea of a project looking back on divergent historical narratives from 1989 onwards to provide lessons learned for today's European security problems. Gernot Erler, Special Representative of the German Federal Government for the 2016 OSCE Chairmanship, prominently promoted it during the OSCE Security Days in Prague in June 2017.

We are most grateful that a distinguished group of eyewitnesses – former high-level CSCE diplomats – and leading contemporary historians provided new empirical evidence and much-needed food for thought for this report during a critical oral history workshop in Paris (all participants are listed in an annex). This first project workshop was hosted and financially supported by the Institut français des relations internationales (ifri), and our thanks go to Dr. Barbara Kunz and Catherine Naiker. We also thank the representatives of 20 member institutes of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions for contributing to this report by providing constructive feedback on an initial draft version of this report as a kind of “reflection group” of this project (all participants are listed in an annex). We also thank Liviu Horovitz (Center for Security Studies, ETH Zürich) for a careful review of our final draft and for very helpful comments and feedback. Last, but certainly not least, we thank Dr. Wolfgang Zellner, Dr. Frank Evers, and Naida Mehmedbegović Dreilich (CORE, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg) for their early encouragement and their tireless support for the project.

# Executive Summary

The current tensions between Russia and the West and the return to divided security in Europe have their root causes in an unfinished post-Cold War settlement after 1990, even if the West at the time felt it had achieved a fair new order for Europe's future. Seen from today, the hopes enshrined in the optimistic language of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe adopted at the CSCE summit in November 1990 – the first CSCE summit after the landmark Helsinki summit in 1975 – did not last long. The vision of a new European security architecture, based on cooperative and inclusive security and partnership between the former Cold War enemies, did not stand the test of the 1990s, with the Soviet Union collapsing and ethnic conflicts leading to the Balkan Wars and protracted conflicts in the post-Soviet sphere.

Encouraged by the OSCE Panel of Eminent Persons' (PEP) report of late 2015, this OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions report attempts to reconstruct the debates during the formative period for today's European security architecture, from the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 to the signing of the Charter of Paris a year later. We argue that a search for and evaluation of lost opportunities and an examination of divergent national narratives about what occurred during this crucial period can be useful in understanding both the origins and the essential elements of the current schisms in Europe.

The main aim of this report is to add the views of contemporary historians to a plurality of interpretations about what allegedly happened and why in 1989 and 1990. We feel that historians, used to reconstructing the past, can be of help navigating through a web of mutually contradictory narratives and interpretations. Contrasting popular myths and politicized memory with recently declassified archival sources and a growing scholarly literature about the events of 1989 and 1990, we think it is high time to inject more nuances and shades of gray into mostly black-and-white stories of success and failure in establishing Europe's post-Cold War strategic architecture. Sound empirical evidence and professional historical analysis are helpful tools to provide an antidote to the currently poisoned political discussions on European security, by clarifying misunderstandings on both sides about the starting point of today's divergence. Our report illuminates the extent to which frequently-heard individual narratives actually draw on history.

By focusing on the visions of pan-European security and the road to the CSCE Charter of Paris, our report closes a scholarly gap, as the very end of the Cold War and the beginning of the post-Cold War period has not yet been analyzed from an OSCE/CSCE perspective. The OSCE Network of Think Tanks was ideally suited to discuss various national narratives and interpretations, focusing on multilateral diplomacy (or the lack of it). Our multinational perspective was also supported by inviting

former high-level CSCE diplomats (including the first CSCE/OSCE Secretary General) to contribute to our discussions as key eyewitnesses.

While our aim was not to produce a new consensus narrative, two workshops contributed to a better understanding of the historical context of crucial decisions. They helped separate myths from facts and added significant insight into the events themselves. Debating contested history, focusing on unintended side-effects, is in itself a confidence-building measure. Thus we hope that our relatively small-scale project and this report may contribute to enhancing mutual historical empathy, dialogue, and trust between Russia and the West. While there is currently no political will among OSCE participating States to discuss the historical root causes of today's problems with Track 1, we are confident that Track 2 initiatives, such as ours, might be useful in drawing lessons from the recent past by channeling research-based historical knowledge to contemporary practitioners. Hopefully, obsolete thinking will give way to a new cooperative vision for European security, this time truly liberated from the ghosts of the past.

## Recommendations:

- ❖ **Translate this report into Russian and discuss the findings at an OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions (“OSCE Network”) workshop in Moscow in 2018 (1 day).**
- ❖ **Organize an OSCE Network event for Italian journalists covering Italy’s 2018 OSCE Chairmanship (e.g. breakfast or lunch event).**
- ❖ **Present the report’s findings to interested OSCE insiders (OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Delegations) in Vienna in an OSCE Network event in 2018 (e.g. breakfast or lunch event).**
- ❖ **Discuss potential future cooperation between the OSCE Network and EUROCLIO (European Association of History Teachers).**
- ❖ **Prepare a concept for a follow-up OSCE Network “history dialogue” project for November 2020 – the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1990 Charter for Paris.**





# Introduction: Return of History

## “Obsolete thinking is more dangerous than obsolete weapons.”

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Stuttgart, 7 May 1989

*In its report “Back to Diplomacy”, the OSCE Panel of Eminent Persons (PEP) in late 2015 encouraged a research project on the different narratives and the common history after 1990, bringing together scholars from different countries and aiming to set out more systematically the radically divergent views of the past and how and why they have developed.<sup>1</sup> The project this report concludes realized this idea. It involved eyewitnesses, historians, and think-tankers from across the OSCE space to untangle divergent narratives and draw lessons for today.*

**Divergent Narratives** Ghosts from the past still cast a negative shadow over current political dialogue in Europe<sup>2</sup>. In addition to tensions arising from the present, diametrically opposed narratives on the evolution of the European security order after 1990 prevent a common view of the causes and origins of today’s problems between Russia and the West<sup>3</sup>. For example, in recent years, Russian leaders, including Vladimir Putin and Sergei Lavrov, have frequently evoked the alleged “broken promise” of the West in 1990 not to expand NATO eastward (“not an inch”<sup>4</sup>, in US Secretary of State James Baker’s famous words uttered in a meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on 9 February 1990). By contrasting

Ukraine (and Belarus) with other ex-Socialist countries in East-Central Europe, US leaders have emphasized the significance of their integration (or rather co-option) into Western institutions to secure their orderly transition from socialism to democracy and a market economy. Also, the basic willingness of several US administrations and their European partners to integrate Russia into a working security order in Europe after the Cold War’s end has been highlighted in the Western counter-narrative to the Russian one.

**Politicized History** These narratives, which utilize and are based on different interpretations of the recent past and a selective reading of the historical record, continue to shape the world today. Narratives are intentionally used in international relations to further states’ goals relative to other states, but also internally in addressing domestic audiences and constructing a state’s foreign policy identity.<sup>5</sup> Narratives are a form of politicized history. They translate historical knowledge for political use, but this may also be internalized by actors as the only sensible view of the past. While narratives are not necessarily supported by the available historical record, the political imperatives of using history to certain ends leads them to claim to represent what in history is true and what is not.

1 Panel of Eminent Persons (PEP), *Back to Diplomacy* (Vienna: OSCE, 2015), p. 2.

2 In this report, “Europe” means the 57 OSCE participating States.

3 In this report, “West” means all states that are members of or are associated with the EU and/or NATO.

4 “Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker, 9 February 1990”, in: *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya / Thomas S. Blanton / Vladislav M. Zubok (Budapest: CEU Press, 2010), pp. 675-685.

5 Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). See also Kari Möttölä, “Finland between the Practice and the Idea: The Significance and Change of Narrative in the Post-Cold War”, in: Wolfgang Zellner (ed.), *Security Narratives in Europe: A Wide Range of Views* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017), pp. 11-33, pp. 11ff.

**A Clash of Narratives** The renewed division between Russia and the West is a major challenge for the post-1990 European security architecture and the OSCE. We argue that, unless the sources of divergent narratives are frankly debated, based on sound empirical, archival evidence and professional historical analyses, we will not be able to understand where we are today and why we got here from the prevailing mood of “euphoria, optimism, and confidence”<sup>6</sup> at the time of the Paris summit in 1990. The burden of different perceptions of the past bedevils the current debate about Russia’s role in Europe and a potential return to diplomacy, dialogue, and (eventually) cooperation.

**The Starting Point of Divergence** We argue that the Ukraine Crisis was a symptom and a consequence, but not the deeper cause of Russia’s disengagement from the European security order of 1990.<sup>7</sup> Already in 1994, Russia’s President Boris Yeltsin had warned the West against a “cold peace”<sup>8</sup>. Policies and institutional arrangements laid out in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War showed more continuity, as the US and its allies decided to continue to rely on existing organizations, such as NATO and the EC/EU instead of building or strengthening new, more inclusive, pan-European ones. This report focuses on the very starting point of the divergence and different interpretations of the same events. It concentrates on the crucial period of a little more than a year, beginning with the dramatic events in Central and Eastern Europe in the fall of 1989 and leading up to the Charter of Paris for a New Europe in November

6 As summarized by Max Kampelmann, member of the US delegation to the Paris summit in his foreword to Lori Fisler Damrosch (ed.), *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts* (New York: CFR Press, 1993), p. vii.

7 For an early discussion, see Stephanie Liechtenstein, “The Ailing Euro-Atlantic Security Architecture: Treat the Causes Not the Symptoms”, in: *Security and Human Rights Monitor* ([www.shrmonitor.org](http://www.shrmonitor.org)), 27 May 2015.

8 See e.g. “Yeltsin Says NATO Is Trying to Split Continent Again”, in: *New York Times*, 6 December 1994.

1990. We argue that, already in the course of 1990, the spirit of cooperation and the joint aspiration of an inclusive and undivided European security were seriously threatened.<sup>9</sup> Those months changed not only the direction of Europe’s history at the time: The interpretations and narratives of these events continue to shape the world today. The question of whether there actually was a “post-Cold War settlement” and if so, what its elements were and when it was achieved, are subject to interpretation. This is one of the key dimensions of today’s clash of narratives on the evolution of European security after 1990.

**Archival Sources** The temporal focus is intentionally narrow. Zooming in exclusively on the events of 1989-90 will allow us to benefit from more comprehensive archival access to original documents, which have recently been declassified. Archives in the US, Germany, the UK, France, Russia<sup>10</sup>, and elsewhere have been opened, allowing better grounded historiographical interpretations of what was going on behind the scenes in the early post-Cold War period. This helps structure the debate around the core topic: The road to the Paris Charter is of fundamental importance to the European security order. And finally, avoiding an unrealistic expansion of the scope of the project was essential for its completion by the end of 2017. The way is now paved for further, more extensive, historical follow-up research projects building on this report.

**Beyond Politicized History** Access to archival evidence is crucial for sound debates about the recent past. As long as official governmental documents are still classified (usually 25-30 years), scholarly

9 For an overview, see Christian Nünlist, “Contested History: Rebuilding Trust in European Security”, in: *Strategic Trends* (2017), pp. 11-31.

10 A selection of recently declassified Russian archival sources has been published in Stefan Karner et al. (eds.), *Der Kreml und die deutsche Wiedervereinigung 1990* (Berlin: Metropol, 2015).

studies have to rely largely on open sources, memoirs, and testimonies of eyewitnesses. Naturally, such first drafts of history are always based on limited empirical evidence. Unsurprisingly, a plurality of widely different, often one-sided perspectives of contemporary actors emerges. There is often a heavy selection bias. An initial phase of historiography, therefore, frequently promotes a politicized history, with former policymakers presenting their actions in the best possible light. Said history, in turn, offers a wide range of plausible interpretations that feed into conflicting narratives. This can be witnessed today, as conflicting narratives of the post-Cold War settlement<sup>11</sup> in Europe are politicized again.<sup>12</sup>

**Misuses of History** While we are tackling well-known claims (including the alleged Western no-NATO-expansion pledge of February 1990), we are trying to avoid using “myth” as an analytical concept, which works best in anthropological research and folklore studies. Myth-making about recent history is far less extensive and, in this report, we are rather dealing with and discussing different historical interpretations and their political usage. However, memory, politics, and identity all play an important role in creating narratives. Quite often, history is deliberately misinterpreted and misrepresented in individual narratives.<sup>13</sup> While it is true that academic history writing is also constantly rewritten and has

its inherent biases, we do not believe that the work conducted by professionals in the field, which is rigorously tested and subjected to thorough criticism by the historical community, represents just another “narrative” presenting a particular view of the past. At the same time, “historical facts” do not, of course, rest in archives, but are constructed through researchers’ observations, in this case, of documents stored in archives.<sup>14</sup>

**Two OSCE Network Workshops** This report is based on a project conducted within the framework of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions: Two workshops took place in September and November 2017. At an initial critical oral history workshop in Paris (5 September 2017), leading contemporary historians discussed the “Road to Paris” with high-level eyewitnesses who had negotiated the 1990 Paris Charter in Vienna and New York. These former CSCE diplomats filled important gaps in the scholarly literature. They also provided valuable input for this report, frankly discussing both the legacy of the Paris Charter and alleged “missed opportunities” in 1989-90. At a second workshop in Vienna (6 November 2017), a “Reflection Group” critically discussed, enriched, and “multilateralized” the initial draft of this report which had been compiled by the authors after the Paris workshop. The Reflection Group consisted mostly of representatives from members of the OSCE Network.

**Clio’s View – Track 2 Input by Historians** Debates on historical narratives need to be conducted with care, as such discussions could also easily further poison the political climate. The impression that the truth always lies in the middle of two contested

11 Since there was no clear-cut “peace treaty” or single document to conclude the Cold War, the “post-Cold War settlement” of 1989-1990 included several arms control agreements, the negotiation of the 2+4 deal on German reunification and several superpower summits in 1989-90. Conflicting interpretations about what was agreed during this multifaceted patchwork-like process is a key element of the clash of narratives on the evolution of European security after 1990.

12 See Frédéric Bozo et al., “On the Politics of History, the Making of Deals, and the Way the Old Becomes the New”, in: Frédéric Bozo et al. (eds.), *German Reunification: A Multinational History* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-11; Michael Gehler and Maximilian Graf (eds.), *Europa und die deutsche Einheit: Beobachtungen, Entscheidungen und Folgen* (Göttingen: V&R, 2017). See also, Nünlist, “Contested History”, p. 13.

13 Cyril Buffet and Beatrice Heuser (eds.), *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1998), p. ix.

14 Our understanding of “historical facts” is based on standard epistemology of empirical sciences, where facts do not exist independently from the researcher, but are the result of the scientific method. Apart from very basic historical events, this can only ensure an approximation of complete accuracy.

narratives and might be negotiated as a compromise would also be fatal. Instead of striving for the impossibly elusive goal of a consensus narrative, we strongly feel that a sober discussion of historical findings and interpretations, drawing on archive-based research and an understanding of the historical context, is needed to learn lessons from the past for today and find ways out of the current stalemate, to create trust again, and to overcome European insecurity. As a follow-up to the 2016 Network project “European Security: Challenges at the Societal Level”<sup>15</sup>, this project aims again to give Track 2 input to current discussions in the OSCE. The key objective is to channel research-based historical knowledge to policymakers in an accessible format. Insights into decisions made in the past and missed opportunities might help us rediscover a mutually acceptable vision for peaceful coexistence in Europe. We argue that a sustainable and stable peaceful European security order should be based on the original rationale and spirit of the post-Cold War settlement in 1989–1990 – namely that indivisible security in Europe needs to be built on shared values and objectives together with Russia, not against Russia.

**Input to Confidence Building** Based on fresh insights into the road to the Paris Charter in 1990, this report advocates for a dialogue on the conflicting narratives between Russia and the West, aiming at building confidence on the various sides. Communication is important for de-escalation, and dialogue is an important prerequisite for détente. Our project is intended to provide impetus for several follow-up Track-2 historical dialogue events to be launched in 2018, again with contributions from practitioners, policymakers, analysts and professional historians. It needs to be emphasized that dialogue does not mean appeasement, and that listening to and trying to understand the other side’s grievances is not the same as taking them at face value. History can be a useful guide towards a richer understanding of past policy decisions, but it should not serve as an excuse for Russia’s illegal military intervention in Ukraine in 2014. Great-power politics and resorting to the use of force in Europe should remain ghosts from the past that should stay in history books about the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup>

Zurich/Helsinki, 21 November 2017

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<sup>15</sup> See Wolfgang Zellner et al., *European Security: Challenges at the Societal Level* (Vienna: OSCE, 2016); Wolfgang Zellner (ed.), *Security Narratives in Europe: A Wide Range of Views* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017).

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<sup>16</sup> Liana Fix, “Time for a Helsinki 2.0?” in *Intersection*, September 2015.

# Paris 1990 and the Post-Cold War Settlement in Europe: The Historians' View

*The aim of this chapter is to present the general chronology and an analytical overview of events and processes leading to the 1990 Paris Charter. What follows is the current mainstream historians' view, based on newly available archival records and the most recent scholarly studies. At the end, we also point out the most contested issues and highlight the most obvious gaps in historical knowledge.*

**A Magna Carta of Freedom** The Paris Charter for a New Europe, adopted on 21 November 1990 by the 35 CSCE participating States, is a landmark document. It was published at the second CSCE summit, updating the 1975 Helsinki Final Act for a new post-Cold War era. It marked a milestone in the history of the CSCE/OSCE. It triggered the institutionalization of the Helsinki Process and confirmed the will of CSCE participating States to continue the dialogue forum for détente even after the end of the Cold War. The Paris Charter envisioned a new, undivided, inclusive Europe based on Western values, including democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. The Paris Charter stated that Europe was “liberating itself from the legacy of the past” and euphorically announced that “the era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended”. The document mirrored “the time of profound change and historic expectations”.<sup>17</sup> German Chancellor Helmut Kohl called the Paris Charter the “Magna Carta of freedom”, while US Secretary of State James

Baker characterized the new CSCE as “Europe’s conscience”.<sup>18</sup>

**A Common European Home** The idea of calling for a second Helsinki-type CSCE summit meeting was first advanced by Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, in his Strasbourg “European Common Home” speech on 6 July 1989.<sup>19</sup> After the unexpected fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, the Soviet leader urgently renewed his call to bring forward “Helsinki II” on 30 November 1989.<sup>20</sup> A special summit should deal with the new political situation in Europe after the revolutionary developments in Central and Eastern Europe, and draw a new political map of Europe. Gorbachev had used the metaphor of a “Common European Home”<sup>21</sup> since 1987 to advance

18 Helmut Kohl, *Regierungserklärung zu den Ergebnissen des Gipfelreffens der Staats- und Regierungschefs der KSZE in Paris und zum Europäischen Rat in Rom*, 22.11.1990, available at <http://www.helmut-kohl-kas.de>; James A. Baker III, “CSCE: The Conscience of the Continent”, Remarks at the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension, Copenhagen, 6 June 1990, published in: Samuel F. Wells, *The Helsinki Process and the Future of Europe* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1992), pp. 185-194.

19 CSCE, *Concluding Document*, Vienna, 19 January 1989, p. 13, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/40881>. In a speech in Warsaw in July 1988, Gorbachev had first suggested that a second CSCE summit would be worthwhile; Gorbachev, “Europe as a Common Home”, Strasbourg, 6 July 1989.

20 Vojtech Mastny, *The Helsinki Process and the Reintegration of Europe, 1986-1991: Analysis and Documentation* (London: Pinter, 1992).

21 Gorbachev introduced the idea of an “all-European home” in April 1987 in a major speech in Prague. He explained his philosophy of a “Common European Home” and a doctrine of restraint to rule out the use of force or threat of force in a major speech before the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 6 July 1989.

17 CSCE, *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, Paris, 21 November 1990.

a vision of a pan-European future.<sup>22</sup> The concept went back to the age-old Russian aspiration to be a part of Europe. For Gorbachev, European security and European integration were not instruments but the ultimate goal of Soviet foreign policy. A Common European Home would be based on universal human values, collective security, and economic integration. It included a vision of a continent without borders, where people and ideas could move freely. Gorbachev wished to turn the CSCE framework into the main structure of European security, by contrast to his predecessors, who had regarded the emphasis of the CSCE on human rights critically, although they attached great value to the ‘Pan-European process’, as they called it. At the same time, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact would gradually be dissolved, while the role of the USSR as a great European power would grow.<sup>23</sup>

**Bush’s Caution** At first, the US reaction to Gorbachev’s summit idea was rather hesitant. For the George H.W. Bush administration, the unforeseen revolutionary events in Central and Eastern Europe and the prospect of German reunification created a dynamic situation with a considerable degree of uncertainty over how events would unfold and how its relations with its European partners would develop as the Cold War came to a close. For a brief moment, the ghosts of isolationism and withdrawal from Europe reappeared as policy options. With the Soviet bloc collapsing and Moscow letting its Eastern European allies decide their own future, the US military presence in Europe was also questioned.

22 See Marie-Pierre Rey, “Europe is our Common Home: A Study of Gorbachev’s Diplomatic Concept”, in: *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004), pp. 33-65; Liana Fix, “European Security and the End of the Cold War: Gorbachev’s Common European Home Concept and its Perception in the West” (unpublished manuscript, LSE, 2012).

23 Svetlana Savranskaya, “The Fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev’s Vision of Europe after the Cold War”, in: Mark Kramer and Vit Smetana (eds.), *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), pp. 335-353, at pp. 336f.

In May 1989, President Bush acknowledged a growing role for Germany after the Cold War. In Mainz, he offered Kohl a “partnership in leadership”. In general, the Bush administration approached the Soviet Union and Gorbachev’s policy of détente with great skepticism.<sup>24</sup> The US was the last major Western country to give its green light for the CSCE summit in February 1990.<sup>25</sup>

**The Lost Year** After Gorbachev had earned Ronald Reagan’s trust from 1985 to 1988, Bush put US-Soviet relations on hold following his inauguration in January 1989.<sup>26</sup> Most of the year 1989 was, thus, “lost”<sup>27</sup>, while the Bush administration internally reviewed the US policy towards the Soviet Union. During this “Bush pause” in early 1989, the US mostly left Gorbachev’s initiatives on arms control and elsewhere unanswered.<sup>28</sup> While Gorbachev’s UN speech of 7 December 1988 on disarmament

24 See Svetlana Savranskaya / Thomas Blanton, *The Last Superpower Summits: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Bush: Conversations that Ended the Cold War* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2016), pp. 481-569.

25 James Baker, “From Revolution to Democracy: Central and Eastern Europe in the New Europe”, address at Charles University, Prague, 7 February 1990. Kohl had agreed already on 10 January 1990 to use the Paris summit of the CSCE in late 1990 for a “first exchange” about the future pan-European architecture.

26 In early 1989, Bush initiated a full-scale strategic review of US foreign policy, desiring a different direction rather than continuity with the previous republican administration. See Jeffrey A. Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), pp. 86-99.

27 In his memoirs, Gorbachev aide Anatoly Chernyaev described 1989 as “The Lost Year”. Anatoly C. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2000), p. 201. US scholars now agree that the Bush “pause” in early 1989 was a mistake and a “missed opportunity”. See David E. Hoffman, “1989: The Lost Year”, in: *Foreign Policy Blog* ([www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)), 4 November 2009: “The outcome might have been better had Bush recognized, early in 1989, what a historic period the world was passing through.” The insecurity of the Bush White House in 1989 is also candidly confirmed in the Bush-Scowcroft memoir *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

28 Thomas Blanton, “Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and the Revolutions of 1989: American Myths Versus the Primary Sources”, in: Mark Kramer and Vit Smetana (eds.), *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989* (Lanham: Lexington, 2014), pp. 279-304; Christian Ostermann, “The United States and German Unification”, in: Michael Gehler, *Europa und die Deutsche Einheit: Beobachtungen, Entscheidungen und Folgen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), pp. 93-117.

was praised as “the most astounding statement of surrender in the history of ideological struggle” (Daniel Patrick Moynihan) and was even compared with Woodrow Wilson’s 14-points (1918) or Churchill’s Atlantic Charter (1941) (New York Times editorial),<sup>29</sup> Bush was more reserved. His National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, approached Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika* policies very cautiously and summed up the prevailing feeling of the new administration in early 1989: “The Cold War is not over.”<sup>30</sup> Bush’s Secretary of State, James Baker, told Bush that Gorbachev was “attempting to kill us with kindness.”<sup>31</sup> It seemed in early 1989 that Gorbachev’s advisor, Anatoly Chernyaev, was to be disappointed in his hope that Gorbachev would succeed in “shaking off the fetters of the past in all aspects of foreign policy.”<sup>32</sup> Those “fetters of the past” continued to restrain the highest levels of the Bush administration and arguably postponed dramatic reductions in nuclear weapons and conventional armaments in response to the Gorbachev UN speech.<sup>33</sup> After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Washington linked US readiness to participate in a CSCE summit in 1990 to prior completion of CFE negotiations.<sup>34</sup>

**Heart of the Pan-European Architecture** Despite early US skepticism, the CSCE still played a central role in the FRG-American diplomacy in 1989-1990 during negotiations with the Soviet Union on a post-Cold War settlement in Europe. In his famous ten-point plan for German reunification, announced on 28 November 1989, Kohl emphasized in his eighth point that the CSCE process should remain the “part

of the heart of the pan-European architecture”, after he stressed the fact that the “EC should not end at the Elbe” in his seventh point. Interestingly, Kohl did not mention NATO (or the role of the Four Powers) in his ten-point plan (to the irritation of the Bush administration).<sup>35</sup> According to some scholars, this accentuation of the CSCE moment resulted from pure tactical considerations – not to antagonize Bonn’s Western allies and Moscow with the specter of NATO membership for a reunited Germany at that early stage.<sup>36</sup>

**Genscher’s Vision** The aspiration for a pan-European security architecture beyond the Cold War division was shared in Western and Eastern Europe at the time. In 1989-90, the FRG’s Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, earnestly wished to establish a new security order in Europe, modeled after the CSCE. To honor the Western partnership with Moscow, Genscher was even ready to dissolve NATO and the Warsaw Pact, echoing Gorbachev. His various promises vis-à-vis Gorbachev and the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, in early 1990 to transform the CSCE into the dominant security alliance in Europe were meant sincerely. Nevertheless, Genscher could speak neither for Chancellor Kohl nor for NATO, let alone for Warsaw, Prague, or Budapest.<sup>37</sup>

**Mitterrand’s Confederation of Europe** In 1989, French President François Mitterrand also imagined the possibility of a new security system in Europe,

29 “Gambler, Showman; Statesman”, in: *New York Times*, 8 December 1988. All other quotes are from Thomas Blanton, “When Did the Cold War End?”, in: *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (1998), p. 184.

30 Quoted Engel, *When the World Seemed New*, p. 87.

31 Quoted in George Bush / Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), p. 14.

32 Chernyaev, *My Six Years*, p. 202.

33 Savranskaya/Blanton, *Last Superpower Summits*, p. 461.

34 Baker, “From Revolution to Democracy”.

35 Ostermann, “United States”, p. 103.

36 Stephan Martini, *Die sicherheitspolitische Funktion der KSZE im entspannungspolitischen Konzept der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1975-1990* (Berlin: Mensch-und-Buch-Verlag, 2006). At the same time, the NATO card (“to keep down the Germans”) was played by the Bush administration to reassure Moscow, Paris, and London against the specter of a resurgent Germany.

37 Kristina Spohr, “Precluded or Precedent-setting? The NATO Enlargement Question in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990/1991 and Beyond”, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (2012), pp. 4-54.

overcoming the Cold War divide and making Europe's emancipation possible. On 31 December 1989, he offered Central and East Europeans a "Confederation for Europe" under French auspices as an alternative to eventually joining the EC. Mitterrand's project intended to include the Soviet Union, but to exclude the US. From 1986, Mitterrand advanced his vision to reconcile Eastern and Western Europe, emphasizing common values and pushing for more democracy in the East. Mitterrand's vision was echoed in the EC's willingness to engage the socialist states in deeper contacts and economic interaction in the latter half of the 1980s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Mitterrand tried hard to avoid a superpower deal on Germany and pushed for a European voice and a pan-European framework (e.g. the CSCE) for settling the Cold War. Meeting Gorbachev in Kyiv after the superpower summit in Malta on 6 December 1989, Mitterrand agreed with the Soviet leader that CSCE questions had to be dealt with before the German question. On 16 December 1989, he also warned Bush: "German reunification must not go forward any faster than the EC, otherwise the whole thing will end up in a ditch." All in all, for Mitterrand European integration (without the US) was always considered to be more important than the CSCE (which included the US and Canada).<sup>38</sup>

**Central and Eastern European Views** Countries of the Eastern Bloc initially also pointed to the CSCE as the preferred future structural design to fill the security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. In February 1990, for example, Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel called for all foreign troops to leave Eastern Europe and favored the replacement of NATO and the Warsaw Pact with a pan-European

38 Frédéric Bozo, "The Failure of a Grand Design: Mitterrand's European Confederation, 1989-1991", in: *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 3 (2008), pp. 391-412; Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009). The quote is from: <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/mem-cons-telcons/1989-12-16--Mitterrand.pdf>.

organization along the CSCE lines. At that time, Poland also thought a new European security structure would supersede both Cold War alliances – and agreed with Gorbachev's plea that the Warsaw Pact should be preserved, since it was needed, in Poland's view, during the turbulent revolutionary transition years to guarantee its borders. In February 1990, Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and other leading politicians were so alarmed about the prospect of a reunified Germany that they publicly called for a strengthening of the Warsaw Pact and keeping Soviet troops on Polish (and GDR) territory as long as the status of Germany and the German-Polish border were unclear.<sup>39</sup> Later on, some hope was also placed in the "Visegrád Group", established by the CSSR, Hungary, and Poland in February 1991.<sup>40</sup> Initial Central and Eastern European calls for joining NATO only emerged later in mid-September 1990, after the conclusion of the "2+4 Treaty" on German unification.<sup>41</sup>

**Neutrality Revisited** For the neutral countries in Europe (Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia), the fall of the Berlin Wall and the accelerated discussions about European security posed a dilemma. Their traditional, established role as "third party" brokers and mediators between East and West became redundant. While the neutrals had always strongly supported the Helsinki process

39 *Gazeta wyborcza*, 14 February 1990, p. 1; *Gazeta wyborcza*, 22 February 1990, p. 1; "Soviet troops in Poland", *Radio Free Europe Report on Eastern Europe* 1/9, 2 March 1990, pp. 15-17.

40 See Vojtech Mastny, "Germany's Unification, Its Eastern Neighbors, and European Security", in: Frédéric Bozo et al. (eds.), *German Reunification: A Multinational History* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 202-226, pp. 210-213. See also the excellent recent contributions by Andreas Schmidt-Schweizer, Miroslav Kunštát, and Dominik Pick on Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in Gehler/Graf, *Europa und die deutsche Einheit*, pp. 547-626.

41 When Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn on 21 February 1990 said that Hungary might "maybe sometimes be integrated into the political organs" of NATO, he did not demand a dissolution of the Warsaw Pact or Hungary's withdrawal. He preferred keeping Hungary in a reformed Warsaw Pact, seeking closer relations with NATO and strengthening pan-European security. See Karner, *Kreml*, pp. 65f.



and, thus, also supported the ideas of strengthening and institutionalizing the CSCE in 1990 and the replacement of the bipolar order, the emergence of new security threats called into question the entire concept of neutrality as practiced during the Cold War.<sup>42</sup> For the European neutrals (except Switzerland), joining the widening European integration process and restricting neutrality to its core of military non-alignment proved to be a way out of the dilemma. As non-NATO members, however, the CSCE/OSCE remained high up on their political agenda as a key framework for European security and the neutrals as “OSCE nostalgics” are, for example, overrepresented as OSCE chairs among OSCE participating States to the present.

**Scholarly Gaps and Contested Issues** The most contested issue in the historiography of the road to the Paris summit is probably the question of whether, during talks about German unification, the West, implicitly or explicitly promised Gorbachev not to enlarge NATO further to the East as part of the post-Cold War settlement. The alleged Western pledge not to expand NATO further to the East is mentioned in speeches by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to the present day. From a CSCE perspective, two central questions with respect to 1990 remain: 1) Was a future European security order, based on the pan-European CSCE at the time, really an alternative to NATO (or whether NATO and CSCE would complement and mutually reinforce each other)? 2) Were Western promises to build a new, inclusive, pan-European order with the Soviet Union (e.g. the Paris Charter vision)

meant sincerely – or were they merely tactics and empty promises to soften a “NATO-first” strategy? Furthermore, what was the connection of the roles anticipated for the CSCE and preparations underway in the EC to strengthen its role in foreign and security policy in the 1990s, as was subsequently agreed in the Maastricht Treaty? Scholars also discuss the role of personalities (Reagan, Gorbachev, Bush, Kohl, Genscher, Mitterrand, and others) from greatly varying perspectives. Terms such as, “Reagan victory”, “Reagan reversal”, “Bush’s restraint”, or “Gorbachev factor” demonstrate the importance personalities played alongside structural factors. Gorbachev’s vision of a Common European Home is also controversially discussed and sometimes treated as a “missed opportunity” to overcome the East-West divide in Europe.

<sup>42</sup> See P. Terrence Hopmann, “From Helsinki I to Helsinki II: The Role of the Neutral and Nonaligned States in the OSCE”, in: Heinz Gärtner (ed.), *Engaged Neutrality: An Evolved Approach to the Cold War* (Lanham: Lexington, 2017), pp. 143-160, at pp. 152ff. On Finland’s delicate position in 1990, see Juhana Aunesluoma / Marjo Uutela, “In Germany’s Footsteps: German Reunification and Finland, 1987-1994”, in: Michael Gehler / Maximilian Graf (eds.), *Europa und die deutsche Einheit: Beobachtungen, Entscheidungen und Folgen* (Göttingen: V&R, 2017), pp. 415-438.



# Paris 1990 in Conflicting Narratives

*Recent scholarship and a critical oral history workshop, convened in early September 2017 for the purpose of providing input to this report, have added important nuances to the previous mainstream historiography on the road to the 1990 Paris summit. The plurality of views and interpretations of the same events and their consequences were notable in the workshop. With respect to the post-Cold War settlement in Europe, there are not only two, but several competing narratives. All in all, the traditional optimistic reading of “Paris 1990” as the glorious end of the Cold War and the visionary beginning of a new period in Europe has been replaced by more emphasis on early structural deficits of the post-Cold War security order.*

**A Masterpiece of History** It has been said that the peaceful end of the Cold War in Europe was a true “masterpiece of history”<sup>43</sup> – and most of the credit for the *annus mirabilis* of 1989 was due to the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, and his outright refusal to use force to prevent the events unfolding in Eastern and Central Europe as well as against the Central and East European dissidents and protesters who crowded the streets in the revolutions of 1989.<sup>44</sup> Gorbachev’s proposal to bring forward the CSCE Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in 1990 rather than in 1992 and to upgrade it to a summit was mainly motivated by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. By suggesting a CSCE summit in late 1990 to discuss a new security architecture in Europe *before* tackling the delicate German

question, Gorbachev played for time and aimed to slow down the prospect of German unification. In his understanding, a general post-Cold War settlement in Europe had to precede a deal on Germany. In late 1989 and early 1990, this view was also initially shared in Paris and London. Mitterrand felt that only Gorbachev could prevent Germany’s reunification. Should Gorbachev fail, he would be replaced by a “general in the Kremlin”, Mitterrand commented.<sup>45</sup> However, Germany’s reunification in 1990 turned into another “masterpiece of history” – and it was achieved by the almost perfectly synchronized diplomacy of Washington and Bonn. They convinced allies and the Soviet Union alike that their suggested solution (Germany in NATO) was the best of all available options – not least “to keep the Germans down”.

**US Leadership – NATO First** In response to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the US strategy for Europe devised in 1989 and with Germany at the heart of a new Europe was dramatically accelerated. Sooner than expected, the German question had to be dealt with. For Washington, continued US (military) presence in Europe was key. NATO remained the crucial anchor for American presence and on-site power in Europe. In late 1989 (and throughout 1990), Bush avoided saying that the Cold War was over. At a press conference in Brussel, he explained: “If I signal to you that there’s no Cold War, then it’s ‘what are you doing with troops in Europe.’”<sup>46</sup> During a key conversation

<sup>45</sup> Jacques Attali, *Verbatim*, vol. 3 (Paris: Fayard, 1995), p. 932.

<sup>46</sup> George H.W. Bush, President’s News Conference in Brussels, 4 December 1989, in: *Public Papers of the President* (PPP). On 16 December 1989, he again publicly made the case against isolationism and Gorbomania: “I don’t want to see us decoupled from Europe; I don’t want to see us pull out of Europe”. Joint News Conference, St. Martin, 16 December 1989, PPP. Quoted from Jeffrey A. Engel, “Bush, Germany, and the Power of Time: How History Makes History”, in: *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 4 (2013), pp. 639-663, at pp. 655f.

<sup>43</sup> To borrow the title of an edited volume on the peaceful end of the Cold War in Europe published in 2010 by Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok.

<sup>44</sup> Svetlana Savranskaya, comment made at our Oral History Workshop, Paris, 5 September 2017.

with Kohl in Camp David on 24 February 1990, President Bush assured the West German chancellor that “we don’t fear the ghosts of the past; Margaret does”, thus making clear US support for German unification despite British (and French) opposition. In the same meeting, Bush also underlined the priority of NATO over the CSCE. Bush emphasized that the CSCE summit should not “be centered on Germany” or be used to “undermine Germany’s full membership in NATO”. For Bush, “the CSCE cannot replace NATO as the core of the West’s deterrence strategy in Europe and as the fundamental justification for US troops in Europe”, concluding that “if that happens, we will have a real problem”.<sup>47</sup> In July 1990, Bush’s advisors emphasized in internal discussions in Washington, D.C., that strengthening the CSCE at the expense of NATO was out of the question. Baker bluntly warned Bush in a memorandum that “the real risk to NATO is the CSCE”.<sup>48</sup> However, the future shape and role of NATO and how it would coordinate with the EC/EU and organizations, such as the CSCE/OSCE, remained unclear until well into the first half of the 1990s, in the absence of credible military threats in Europe.

**Perpetuating Institutions Dating from the Cold War** Based on archival evidence, historians including Mary Sarotte, Hal Brands, Joshua Shiffrin, Jeffrey Engel, and Christian Ostermann have convincingly argued that in 1990, the West, under US leadership, had decided to rely on and perpetuate “Cold War security institutions” (NATO and the EC, without the Soviet Union) rather than experiment with a new pan-European and inclusive security organization

<sup>47</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation, Bush-Kohl, Camp David, 24 February 1990”, in: Savranskaya/Blanton, *Last Superpower Summits*, pp. 601-607, at pp. 603 and 605.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion”, in: *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016), pp. 7-44, p. 31.

(CSCE/OSCE, including the Soviet Union).<sup>49</sup> The US and the FRG used the *rhetoric* of strengthening the CSCE and pan-European security mostly to balance their “NATO First” strategy – to soften Soviet (and initially also British and French) resistance against a reunified Germany. In public speeches and in meetings with their Soviet counterparts in 1990, US leaders promised that European security would become more integrative and more cooperative – and NATO less important.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Gorbachev was assured in 1990 that the West would limit NATO’s influence and instead strengthen the pan-European CSCE.

**A Broken Spirit of Cooperation** For this reason, present-day historians increasingly speak of a “broken spirit of cooperative security”.<sup>51</sup> Rather than focusing on the alleged “broken promise” of a non-NATO enlargement (a promise, which is largely based on a selective or tendentious reading of available evidence, as discussed below), Western historians agree that the Soviet Union in 1990 was promised an inclusive and cooperative future European security order. However, from the very beginning, European security in the 1990s was centered on the exclusive NATO (without Russian membership and without a Russian veto). Sarotte has coined the term “prefab model” for Western reliance on existing institutions

<sup>49</sup> Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, “The Unravelling of the Cold War Settlement”, in: *Survival* 51, no. 6 (2009-2010), pp. 39-62; Engel, “Bush, Germany, and the Power of Time”; Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), pp. 279-298; Shiffrin, “Deal or No Deal”; Ostermann, “United States”.

<sup>50</sup> These promises were part of the so-called “Nine Assurances” that Baker delivered to Gorbachev in May 1990 to get Soviet consent to NATO membership of a reunified Germany. To strengthen the OSCE was promise no. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Nünlist, “Contested History”, p. 20; Shiffrin, “Deal or No Deal”, p. 11. In 2014, Mikhail Gorbachev characterized NATO’s expansion into the East “a violation of the spirit of the statements and assurances made to us in 1990”. See Maxim Kórshunov, “Mikhail Gorbachev: I Am against All Walls”, in: *Russia behind the Headlines* (16 October 2014), available at [http://www.rbth.com/international/2014/10/16/mikhail\\_gorbachev\\_i\\_am\\_against\\_all\\_walls\\_40673.html](http://www.rbth.com/international/2014/10/16/mikhail_gorbachev_i_am_against_all_walls_40673.html)

(e.g. NATO and the EC). Yet, notably, NATO and the aspiring EC/EU changed their internal structures and operational goals after 1990.<sup>52</sup> Even in the early 1990s, as opinion polls from the time make clear, there was no widespread support for joining NATO in Central and Eastern Europe (with the notable exception of the Poles). Joining NATO, these polls document, was rather an elite project of the new leaderships, which feared a resurgence of the Communists. Majorities among the population rather preferred neutrality at the time.<sup>53</sup>

**Relaunching Europe Through the EC** While most (US) scholarly attention focuses on NATO, the perspective of the European Community (EC) is also crucial in the chronology leading up to and following the Paris Charter. The EC had an important stake in defining the new Europe and, while not by design, it also contributed to missed opportunities. Already in January 1989, EC members began to reach out to Eastern and Central European countries to join “the common destiny” of a “European Union” through the EC rather than through the CSCE.<sup>54</sup> The EC’s enlargement with Greece (1979), Portugal, and Spain (1982) opened the door to other former dictatorships and European integration had picked up speed even before the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly,

while thinking about including Central and Eastern European countries in the EC, there was no mention of the Soviet Union in that context in the internal EC discussions in the late 1980s.<sup>56</sup>

**“We Prevailed and They Didn’t”** Svetlana Savranskaya, one of the leading historians working on the end of the Cold War in Europe, has recently emphasized: “What is largely forgotten is that in the winter and spring of 1990, a common European home was still a real option, one of several on the table.”<sup>57</sup> The crucial question is: When and why was the “CSCE option” taken off the table? In retrospect, it seems that the “CSCE moment” in 1989-1990 was already over before it could take off. By mid-1990, the original Soviet goal of a CSCE summit and the floating pan-European visions had all collapsed. Faced with an impending economic collapse, Gorbachev had to accept reunited Germany’s membership in NATO – he was “bribed out” of Germany (Robert Gates). Nine days after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Condoleezza Rice had described the prospect of a reunified Germany within NATO as “the Soviet Union’s worst nightmare” and a situation that would “rip the heart out of the Soviet security system.”<sup>58</sup> Meeting in Camp David on 24 February 1990 to discuss the Western terms for German unification, Bush and Kohl nevertheless settled for full German membership in NATO. Bush did not treat Gorbachev as a (future) partner, but as a (defeated) enemy. Referring to the Soviet position against Germany in NATO, he said: “To hell with that. We prevailed and they didn’t. We cannot let

52 While US scholars working on 1990 concentrate on NATO for their “prefab” argument, the perpetuation and consolidation of the EC/EU – another child of the Cold War – after 1990 has so far received far less attention in US historiography. The EC was negotiating the 1992 process even before the Soviet collapse became evident.

53 This important, but mostly overlooked fact is mentioned in Vojtech Mastny, “The Cold War and European Security Identity”, in: Francesco Palermo et al. (eds.), *Globalization, Technologies and Legal Revolution* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012), pp. 317-342, at p. 337.

54 Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comment made during Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017. The quotes are from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives. The Dutch records make very clear that, already in the late 1980s, the EC was prioritized over the CSCE and that the EC should determine the future European architecture. The primacy of the EC in 1990 was also confirmed by Stefan Lehne at our Oral History Workshop in Paris, 5 September 2017.

55 N. Piers Ludlow, “Not a Wholly New Europe: How the Integration Framework Shaped the End of the Cold War in Europe”, in: Bozo et al. (eds.), *German Reunification*, p. 139.

56 Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comment made during Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017, based on her research in Dutch archives.

57 Savranskaya, “Fall of the Berlin Wall”, p. 349.

58 Scowcroft (drafted by Condoleezza Rice) to Bush, “The German Question”, 20 November 1989, quoted in: Shiffrinson, “Deal or No Deal”, p. 20.

the Soviet snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.”<sup>59</sup> Preparing for the Camp David meeting with Kohl, Scowcroft informed Bush about the importance of the event and its negative consequences for US-Soviet relations. “We are about to enter the most critical period for American diplomacy toward Europe since the formation of NATO in 1949”, he advised. “With unification increasingly appearing to be ‘wholly on Western terms’”, he emphasized that this “places us on a probable collision course with the Soviets.”<sup>60</sup>

**A Predetermined Summit Substance** By February 1990, the CSCE vision had definitely lost momentum. The German question had been dealt with outside of the CSCE framework and actually ended speculation about shaping a new pan-European security order. Ironically, when CSCE participating States finally convened in Vienna to start a multilateral negotiation about the Paris summit declaration, most of its substance had already been decided at the NATO summit in July 1990 in London. NATO leaders proposed that the CSCE summit in Paris should “decide how the CSCE can be institutionalized to provide a forum for wider political dialogue in a more united Europe”, including a program for regular high-level consultations, review conferences, a small secretariat, a mechanism to monitor elections in all CSCE participating States, a Conflict Prevention Center to exchange military information, discuss unusual military activities, and mediate disputes among members states, and a parliamentary body.<sup>61</sup>

59 Savranskaya/Blanton, *Last Superpower Summits*, pp. 604f. In a phone call on 28 February 1990, Bush informed Gorbachev about the new US position, but on 6 March 1990, Gorbachev still insisted that a reunited Germany in NATO was “absolutely excluded”. Ostermann, “United States”, pp. 112f. Only on 31 May 1990, did Gorbachev agree that a reunited Germany was free to choose an alliance according to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Karner, Kreml, p. 94.

60 Scowcroft to Bush, 14 February 1990, quoted in: Engels, *When the World Seemed New*, p. 335.

61 NATO, *London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance*, 6 July 1990, paragraph 22.

**Sowing the Seeds of Discontent** The deficiencies of the approach only became obvious in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the negative long-term effects of focusing on the exclusive NATO rather than the inclusive CSCE. Cooperation between Moscow and the West was replaced by an antagonistic relationship between Russia and the West. On 18 May 1990, Shevardnadze had warned – in a prophetic moment anticipating Yeltsin’s famous “Cold Peace” speech of December 1994 – that the West would pay a price for Germany in NATO: “If united Germany becomes a member of NATO, it will blow up perestroika. Our people will not forgive us. People will say that we ended up the losers, not the winners.”<sup>62</sup> Gorbachev was still optimistic about a future Soviet-Western partnership. On 21 May 1990, he suggested in a conversation with Alexander Dubcek (at that time Chairman of the Czechoslovakian Parliament) that “if united Germany joins NATO, then maybe we should also join this alliance” – an idea he also floated with Baker in mid-May and again in June 1990 during the Washington summit.<sup>63</sup> His suggestions were never taken seriously in the West. Even though Gorbachev would have preferred a CSCE solution for post-Cold War European security, by mid-May 1990 he seemed to have realized that NATO would become the future anchor of European security – and even played with the idea of Soviet NATO membership to avoid that the Soviet Union would be the only country excluded from the new European security architecture.

**“Not an inch”** The question of whether, between February and July 1990, Washington and Bonn promised the Soviet Union that NATO would not expand further to the East has produced a fascinating scholarly debate. Most scholars agree that the

62 Savranskaya/Blanton, *Last Superpower Summits*, p. 639.

63 Quoted in Savranskaya, “Fall of the Wall”, p. 350. On 18 May 1990, Gorbachev asked Baker: “After all, you said that NATO wasn’t directed against us, you said it was a new Europe, so why shouldn’t we apply?” Quoted in Engel, *When the World Seemed New*, p. 370.

talks in February 1990 only focused on German reunification and GDR territory. Future NATO membership of Poland, Hungary, or Czechoslovakia was not discussed with Gorbachev. A dissolution of the Warsaw Pact was still unthinkable at the time (February 1990), even if the new governments in Central and Eastern Europe assumed the Warsaw Pact would be transformed from a military into a political alliance.<sup>64</sup> The only exception that seems to hint indeed at a “broken promise” stems from a conversation between Genscher and Baker on 2 February 1990, when Genscher elaborated his plan that “NATO would not expand its territorial coverage to the area of the GDR **nor anywhere else in Eastern Europe**.”<sup>65</sup> However, Bush clarified in his letter to Kohl on 9 February 1990 that the US wanted a unified Germany in NATO. The GDR would enjoy “special military status” within NATO. He also made clear that the presence of nuclear-armed US forces on German territory were not negotiable.<sup>66</sup> That settled

the issue and removed any ambiguity.<sup>67</sup> Finally, NATO leaders at their summit in London in July 1990, again promised to transform the alliance from a military pact into a political organization and to make the CSCE “more prominent in Europe’s future”<sup>68</sup>. They declared the Cold War to be over and reached out to the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact as future partners.<sup>69</sup> During a brief window of opportunity, the US-Soviet partnership in a new world order indeed worked well. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, Gorbachev supported the West against the former Soviet ally Iraq. NATO’s transformation from a military into a political alliance, however, was ended when the West needed to rely on NATO and NATO allies in the run-up to and the actual fighting of the 1991 Gulf War. At the time, there was no place other than NATO for the US to multilaterally coordinate military operations with its European allies.<sup>70</sup>

64 Nünlist, “Contested History”, p. 20; Mark Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia”, in: *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009), pp. 39-61. See also Karner, Kreml, p. 64.

65 Quoted in Shiffrinson, “Deal or No Deal”, p. 22. Genscher had presented his plan in a speech in Tutzing on 31 January 1990. He had not consulted with Kohl in advance of his speech. By promising not to expand NATO and not to include GDR territory in NATO’s military structures, Genscher wished to give the Soviet Union security guarantees in order to get Moscow’s green light to German unification. See Spohr, “Precluded or Precedent-Setting”, pp. 13-18. Genscher also mentioned Poland (German minutes) or Hungary (British minutes) in a conversation with UK Secretary of State Douglas Hurd on 6 February 1990, emphasizing that Moscow needed to be assured that these countries would not join NATO should they leave the Warsaw Pact. Spohr, “Precluded or Precedent-Setting”, p. 20. Genscher made a similar argument again in Rome in talks with the Italian government on 21 February 1990, see Horst Möller et al. (eds.), *Die Einheit: Das Auswärtige Amt, das DDR-Aussenministerium und der Zwei-plus-Vier-Prozess* (Göttingen: V&R, 2015), p. 289.

66 Hanns Jürgen Küsters / Daniel Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), doc. 170. Kohl’s letter marks the official end of Genscher’s “Tutzing formula” for German unification. For Bush, it was important that NATO’s article 5 also included the defense of GDR territory. Bush confirmed the new position in his meeting with Kohl in Camp David on 24-25 February 1990.

67 Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), p. 183. See Spohr, “Precluded or Precedent-Setting”, pp. 43f. When Genscher still promoted his vision of a dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and the establishment of a collective security structure in a public speech in Luxembourg on 23 March 1990, Kohl wrote a harsh letter to Genscher, criticizing him for this position which was at variance to the official FRG position. See Kohl to Genscher, 23 March 1990, in: Möller, *Einheit*, pp. 380f.

68 NATO, *London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance*, 6 July 1990, paragraph 21. In his opening address, NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner declared: “The Cold War belongs to history.” North Atlantic Council, Verbatim Record, London, 5 July 1990, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/116133.htm>. Similarly, Warsaw Pact political leaders had also underlined the end of bloc thinking and the division of Europe on 7 June 1990. Their declaration stated that ideological enemy images were overcome. See Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne (eds.), *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2005), p. 676.

69 Already at the Malta superpower summit on 2-3 December 1989, Bush and Gorbachev had promised not to attack each other, emphasizing that both the fear of a nuclear war and the Cold War itself were things of the past. Anatoli Chernyaev, *Excerpt from Diary*, 2 January 1990, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu>.

70 Comments made by Philip Remler and William H. Hill at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

**Genscher's Plan** Genscher's consistent yet confusing role from January to July 1990 is one of the previously under-researched but fascinating pieces of the puzzle. In 2012, Kristina Spohr largely answered all questions regarding Genscher's role in the "broken promise" debate about NATO enlargement. Genscher was a true supporter of a post-Cold War security order in Europe based on a new pan-European structure. He suggested dissolving both NATO and the Warsaw Pact in January 1990 in Tutzing. In the crucial early February meetings in Washington, Baker supported Genscher's "Tutzing formula", before President Bush on 9 February 1990 clarified the US position, speaking about a special military status for the GDR rather than Genscher's "Tutzing formula" (a vague NATO non-expansion pledge). But in Washington, it was still feared until spring 1990 that Kohl and Gorbachev could conclude a separate deal and that "NATO will be dumped".<sup>71</sup> Kohl supported Bush's "NATO first" strategy, but Genscher continued to lobby for his CSCE vision – if only as "plan B" should Gorbachev still veto Germany's full membership in NATO. In mid-May 1990, Gorbachev still warned Baker that "a unified Germany in NATO will threaten the stability that has existed for the last 45 years", adding that "it will be the end of perestroika."<sup>72</sup> Genscher's euphoria towards the CSCE actually served Kohl tactically too, as pan-European rhetoric was important to get Gorbachev's consent to Germany being in NATO in May-July 1990.

**Egon Bahr's Alternative Concept** In the spring of 1990, Genscher was not the only Western politician that still tried to convince the Soviet leaders that the Cold War was over and that alternative security arrangements, grounded on a new partnership between the Soviet Union and the West, should be

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Ostermann, "German Question", p. 109.

<sup>72</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Gorbachev and Baker, 18 May 1990, quoted in Engel, *When the World Seemed New*, p. 360.

based on a new European peace order replacing both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. On 27 February 1990, Egon Bahr and Karsten Voigt met with Alexandr Jakovlev and Valentin Falin to discuss German unity and Europe's security architecture. Bahr claimed that in West Germany "practically nobody wants to speed unification, with the exception of a few CSU/CDU officials". He argued for a Central European security zone consisting of Denmark, the Benelux countries, the two German states, Poland, the CSSR, and Hungary as well as the US and the USSR, equipped with a "European Security Council". All national armed forces would be placed under an integrated command. For Bahr, this was a security concept for a "Common European Home". NATO should not be allowed to expand to Central Europe. Falin praised Bahr's vision since it was not based on continued enmity, but on partnership with a future good neighbor.<sup>73</sup>

**"The CSCE – Just a Dream"** On 18 May 1990, Baker offered Gorbachev "Nine Assurances", including the promise to make "an effort... to transform the CSCE into a permanent institution that would become an important cornerstone of a new Europe". When Gorbachev talked about the need to replace NATO and the Warsaw Pact and to build new security structures, Baker said: "It's nice to talk about pan-European security structures, the role of the CSCE. It is a wonderful dream, but just a dream. In the meantime, NATO exists..."<sup>74</sup> In retrospect, Gorbachev, who was praised both in 1987 and 1989 as *Time Magazine's* "Man of the Year", now appears as a tragic figure. In contemporary historical

<sup>73</sup> The transcript of this meeting was first published in 2015 in Karner, *Kreml*, pp. 195-203 (German translation).

<sup>74</sup> Savranskaya/Blanton, *Last Superpower Summits*, pp. 626-652, at p. 635. Interestingly, during the same meeting, Gorbachev suggested that the Soviet Union might also join NATO if the West insisted on NATO membership for reunified Germany. Gorbachev said: "Our potential membership in NATO is not such a wild fantasy. After all, there was a big coalition at one time, so why is it impossible now?" (p. 639).



memory in Russia, but also partly in the West, not only did Gorbachev lose the Cold War, he also lost the peace that followed it. Before the Wall came down, Gorbachev seemed to be riding high on a wave of popularity in Western Europe and he had found many prominent supporters for his Common European Home vision and his idea of a “Helsinki II”. Throughout 1989, the Bush administration was really worried that the US might lose the “popularity contest” against Gorbachev, with the West Europeans complaining about the apparent vacuum in US leadership.<sup>75</sup>

**Gorbachev’s Misperception** But as the archival records now make clear, between November 1989 and February 1990, the tides of fortune had turned. Bush and Kohl were now in charge of shaping events and pushing German reunification and a “NATO First” strategy. The Bush-Kohl tandem ended Gorbachev’s (and Mitterrand’s and Genscher’s and Bahr’s) “wonderful dream” of a new pan-European security order built around the CSCE and reassured France and Britain instead on taming a resurgent Germany through NATO. Gorbachev himself was one of the first to notice. After Kohl had presented his 10-point plan on German reunification, the Soviet leader bitterly complained to Genscher on 5 December 1989 and accused Bonn of having “prepared a funeral for the European process” by rushing ahead on the German question.<sup>76</sup> Events had clearly surprised Gorbachev. As Chernyaev and others have confirmed, foreign policy (including Germany) only received “5-6 percent” of Gorbachev’s

and the Politburo’s attention in 1989-90.<sup>77</sup> During a Politburo meeting on 26 January 1990, as a recently declassified protocol reveals, Gorbachev had still spread optimism. He believed at the time that he could play for time and delay German unification for “a few years”, with the support of France and Britain.<sup>78</sup> But this new evidence makes clear that in the run-up of his meetings with Baker and Kohl in February 1990, Gorbachev was still convinced in late January 1990 that the Warsaw Pact would survive and that the Soviet Union could use the presence of 350,000 Soviet troops in the GDR as a leverage to slow down German unification.

**A Rare Convergence** The negotiations over the summer of 1990 within the CSCE in Vienna about the Paris summit declaration proceeded fast and were largely uncontroversial because Gorbachev shared all Western values and principles, ending the ideological battles that had plagued the Helsinki Process since 1975. The Vienna PrepComm benefited from a rare convergence of Eastern and Western interpretations of the Helsinki principles, which for a few years indeed became universally shared principles. This convergence did not happen overnight in 1990 – it was rather a central part of Gorbachev’s New Thinking. Since the Soviet Union under Gorbachev moved towards Western Social Democrat thinking, “conversion” might even be the better term than “convergence”.<sup>79</sup> Seen from this perspective, the “road to Paris” started somewhere between 1985 and 1987. One eyewitness emphasized that the CSCE Copenhagen document had been agreed upon in June 1990 within a record time of only ten days, foreshadowing a smooth PrepComm process.<sup>80</sup> The

75 As emphasized by Svetlana Savranskaya at our Oral History Workshop in Paris on 5 September 2017. For an extended analysis of the insecurity and anxiety in the early Bush administration over the awareness that Gorbachev was more popular in Europe and had the initiative in proposing new departures in security policy, see Thomas Blanton, “U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989”, in: Savranskaya et al. (eds.), *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 49-98, at pp. 66-71.

76 Quoted in Savranskaya, *Masterpieces of History*, p. 655.

77 William Taubmann, *Gorbachev: His Life and Times* (New York: Norton, 2017), p. 465.

78 Karner, *Kreml*, pp. 58ff.

79 Barend ter Haar, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

80 Andrei Zagorski, comment made at our Oral History Workshop, Paris, 5 September 2017.

convergence lasted until the mid-1990s and thus became a key legacy of the Paris Charter. The fact that CSCE participating States in 1991 agreed that state sovereignty was less important and that human rights violations allowed for international interventions signified an important – even if only temporary, as later events would prove – new interpretation of the Helsinki Final Act. Sovereignty and non-intervention on the one hand and self-determination and human rights protection on the other hand had always been contradictory principles. But in the early 1990s, East-West interpretations about the relationship between the Helsinki principles converged for the first time since 1975.<sup>81</sup>

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81 Arie Bloed, “OSCE Principles: Which Principles?” in: *Security and Human Rights* 25, no 2 (2014), pp. 210-220.

# Narratives as Obstacles, Narratives as Resources

*We strongly believe that it is important not to shy away from confronting the existing “clash of narratives” about the evolution of the post-Cold War European security system. We share the conviction of the 2015 Panel of Eminent Persons’ report that historical narratives poison today’s political atmosphere and negatively affect Russian-West relations. The existing narratives need to be tackled and actively used to deal with the past and to overcome misperceptions largely drawn from myths rather than historical facts and well-grounded interpretations. Seen in this way, historical narratives are not an obstacle to moving ahead, but rather a crucial resource to engage in dialogue about the recent past.*

**Historical Analogies** Using the past and historical lessons to deal with today’s confrontation within the OSCE is a delicate undertaking. But clearly, the burden of the past bedevils the current debate about Russia’s role in Europe. Historical analogies are often invoked in discussions about the nature of the current state of affairs or in trying to explain how we arrived from the high hopes of 1990 at the hostilities of today. Some observers invoke the image of a “Second Versailles”, criticizing the alleged humiliation of Russia after 1991 and the absence of a “new Marshall Plan” for Russia in the 1990s. Other commentators complain about Russia’s neo-imperialist appearance, the claim for special treatment, the references to its unique civilization, and exclusive spheres of influence.<sup>82</sup> The cognitive recourse to the term “Cold

War” has experienced a revival since 2014.<sup>83</sup> Yet the historical analogy is misleading. Ultimately, it is dangerous because it implies that the West should respond to the alleged “Cold War 2.0” with a return to a strategy of containment, echoing George F. Kennan. None of the key attributes of the Cold War (orderly camps, ideological superpower contest and global character) apply to the current confrontation between Russia and the West.<sup>84</sup>

**Bush Revisited** Similarly, early historical schools such as the “Reagan Victory” or the “Bush Restraint” schools are difficult to overcome with more nuanced interpretations. Based on archival sources and recent historiography, the role of President Bush during 1989-90 needs to be revised compared with earlier studies. At the time and during the first wave of historiography, Bush was praised for his restrained and cautious US foreign policy at crucial moments during the 1989 revolutions, contributing to a peaceful end of the Cold War in Europe. New studies, based on declassified records, emphasize the lost momentum after Reagan and Gorbachev had developed mutual trust. Bush remained far more skeptical about Gorbachev’s intentions. His cumbersome foreign policy review process – the famous “Bush pause” – effectively put US-Soviet relations on hold for most of 1989 and left Gorbachev’s radical arms control proposals unanswered.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Robert Legvold, *Return to Cold War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016). The “new Cold War” narrative had already started with Edward Lucas’ book of the same title in 2007.

<sup>84</sup> Nünlist, “Contested History”, pp. 16-18.

<sup>85</sup> This was confirmed at our Oral History Workshop in Paris on 5 September 2017 by Anatolii Adamishin and Andrei Zagorski.

<sup>82</sup> Nünlist, “Contested History”, p. 12. See also Bobo Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2015).

**A Bush Victory** Historians now critically comment upon Bush's "NATO First" strategy in 1990, perpetuating and revitalizing Cold War structures (Mary Sarotte's "prefab model") and preventing a more sustainable pan-European security architecture in Europe with the Soviet Union / Russia rather than against the Soviet Union / Russia. While Bush is praised for his active and successful diplomacy leading to German unification, historians also agree that the Bush administration, in fact, already broke the spirit of cooperation in 1990, while settling the Cold War with Gorbachev.<sup>86</sup> Why did Gorbachev finally accept Germany in NATO rather than vetoing such a solution? His biographer William Taubman argues that Baker's "Nine Assurances" convinced the Soviet leader that the Soviet Union would become a part of the West and a partner of the US and Germany in post-Cold War Europe.<sup>87</sup>

**The Helsinki Process Revisited** A triumphalist narrative ("we prevailed") can also be detected in virtually all Western historiography on the Helsinki Process leading up to the end of the Cold War and the 1990 Charter of Paris. According to the standard Western narrative, the West introduced human rights into the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and duped the Soviets, who naively signed it without realizing the consequences. A direct road seems to lead from Helsinki 1975 to the dissidents of 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Like the "Reagan Victory" or "Bush Victory" narratives, it turns the Cold War into a "zero-sum game" with the West triumphant. As Laurien Crump-Gabreëls has pointed out, this is ironic, because the CSCE in fact attempted to transcend the Cold War's zero-sum mentality and to some extent succeeded in this. It is overlooked that

86 See Shifrinson, „Deal or No Deal“; Ostermann, „United States“; Engel, „Bush, Germany, and the Power of Time“; Sarotte, 1989; Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment*; Deudney/Ikenberry, „Unravelling“.

87 Taubman, *Gorbachev*, p. 548, 565. One important factor was also that Mitterrand told Gorbachev on 25 May 1990 that the French would not support Soviet obstruction against Germany in NATO.

the Soviet delegation in 1975 also endorsed human rights as a principle.<sup>88</sup>

**Parallel Processes** Two parallel historical processes were running in 1990, which makes "Paris 1990" difficult to understand. It represented different things to different participants: On the one hand, as it represented how the Cold War came to a close – for Bush the Paris Charter marked victory in the Cold War and a solution for problems of the past. On the other hand, a new post-Cold War European order was constructed – for the Soviets, the Paris Charter marked the beginning of a new order and it dealt with problems of the future.<sup>89</sup> The Paris Charter is perhaps the clearest articulation of the common Western and Russian vision of the future. However, this shared vision did not last long. A parallel vision of an enlarged Western Europe with Russia left out emerged. This new division of Europe became evident in 2014, but in retrospect it has been visible at least since the events in Kosovo in 1999 (if not already since NATO membership for a few selected former Warsaw Pact countries trumped the US idea of NATO partnership for all in 1994)<sup>90</sup>. Historians, including Mary Sarotte and Joshua Shifrinson, even date the beginning of today's confrontation to February 1990 and the "NATO First" strategy of George H.W. Bush. In April 1990, Chernyaev discussed the possibility of a future NATO expansion

88 Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017. Yuri Kashlev, head of the Soviet CSCE delegation in 1975, asked his wife: "Will you still support me if I make a decision that could make me lose my job?" He clearly saw human rights as leverage on the Politburo and very consciously endorsed the human dimension.

89 Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017. The Russian view was confirmed by Andrei Zagorski at our Oral History Workshop, Paris, 5 September 2017.

90 It needs to be emphasized that most people in the Bush White House as well as Clinton's Pentagon did not want to extend NATO to the East, arguing that the new countries would add defense burdens to the alliance rather than contributing to security. Philip Remler, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

to Poland, warning that this would be “a Cold War idea in a new era.”<sup>91</sup>

**The Fog of the Post-Cold War** In 1989-90 (and beyond), events were moving very rapidly and there was a great deal of uncertainty about Europe’s future strategic architecture and the future of institutions, such as the EC, NATO, and the CSCE. There were ambitions to strengthen both the EC and the CSCE, but in 1990 (and throughout the 1990s) it was unclear how the EC and the CSCE could actually contribute to European security.<sup>92</sup> In addition, throughout 1990, arms control negotiations were still ongoing and their outcome remained unclear. The delicate question of the Soviet troop withdrawal from the GDR also remained open until 12 September 1990. All actors found themselves on unfamiliar terrain. This “fog of the post-Cold War” contributed to Western preference of sticking with NATO rather than experimenting with new security institutions.<sup>93</sup>

**Unintended Side-Effects** We argue that there was no clear moment when the common Paris vision ended and a new confrontation between Russia and the West emerged. The path from Paris 1990 to Crimea 2014 was neither a linear nor a gradual decline back to animosity but followed a zigzag pattern. Misperceptions, misunderstandings, plainly ignoring each other and self-delusions on both sides complicated Russian-Western relations after 1990. Mistakes were made on both sides, but some of the more fatal long-term developments resulted largely from unintended side-effects of crucial decisions that made perfect sense for the respective side at the time.<sup>94</sup> For example, the Western desire to expand the

area of liberal democracy and the market economy to the East was aimed at increasing stability in Europe and to ensure US influence on the second largest economic entity on the planet after the end of the Cold War. The Clinton administration did not plot NATO expansion as anti-Russian containment for one reason - because no “Russian threat” was perceivable at the time. Rather it aimed at increasing stability in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>95</sup> Still, at the time, several senior American statesmen, including George F. Kennan, already called the policy of NATO expansion “a policy error of historic proportions” and “the beginning of a new Cold War” which would inevitably cause “a bad reaction from Russia.”<sup>96</sup>

**A Web of Narratives** The history of the road to Paris 1990 is much more than just a story between Bush and Gorbachev. As our discussions within the OSCE Network demonstrate, there is considerable variance within the standard “West” or “East” or “in-between” narratives about the evolution of European security after 1990. It is not only the US and West European narratives that differ. The Finnish, Swiss, French, German, Polish, Italian, Estonian, or Ukrainian perspectives add more nuance and complexity to the story.<sup>97</sup> Two excellent recent edited volumes on the multinational history of German reunification have added important new insights, even if their focus is on NATO enlargement and German reunification rather than on the CSCE and the Paris Charter.<sup>98</sup>

91 Quoted in Taubman, Gorbachev, p. 548.

92 William H. Hill, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

93 Comments made by William H. Hill and Wolfgang Zellner at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

94 William H. Hill, comment made at our Oral History Workshop, Paris, 5 September 2017.

95 At the same time, the question of whether Russia’s estrangement from European security might have been prevented by sticking to the early “partnership for all” (including Russia) strategy rather than offering membership to just a few remains one of the more interesting counterfactual history experiments.

96 New York Times, 2 May 1998. Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comments made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

97 See Zellner, *Security Narratives in Europe*.

98 Frédéric Bozo et al. (eds.), *German Reunification: A Multinational History* (London: Routledge, 2016); Gehler/Graf, *Europa und die deutsche Einheit*.

**Injection of Nuance** Our report injects nuance into the road to the Paris Charter. It seems that the strong rhetorical Western emphasis on the CSCE throughout 1990 was at least partly aimed at softening Soviet opposition to Germany's full NATO membership. The CSCE and pan-European inclusive security was prominently mentioned in Kohl's ten-point plan in November 1989, in Baker's nine assurances in May 1990, as well as in NATO's London declaration in July 1990. At the same time, various suggestions by the Kohl government and Central and East Europeans on how to substantially strengthen the CSCE fell through in the end due to consistent US opposition and skepticism about a strong institutionalization and strengthening of the CSCE at the cost of NATO and the EC. The long-term consequence of such a strategy of extending Western European integration only to Central and Eastern Europe rather than including Russia was, in William Hill's apt words, that there turned out to be "no place for Russia" in the European security architecture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>99</sup> The CSCE/OSCE never came first, which by implication meant that Russia never did.<sup>100</sup> Russia was indeed "left at the periphery of Europe".<sup>101</sup>

**Opportunity Was Missed Later** An eyewitness at our workshop emphasized that the 1990 Paris summit was not a "missed opportunity".<sup>102</sup> In his view, the opportunity was, rather, missed later, after the summit, when 1) the Soviet Union collapsed in late 1991 and a weaker Russia replaced the former Eastern superpower – Moscow was no longer an equal partner in the debates about shaping the future security order in Europe; 2) the new CSCE was unable to prevent and de-escalate conflicts in the former Soviet space and the Balkans Wars and

paled in comparison with a revitalized NATO; and 3) NATO and the EC/EU expansion collided with the CSCE/OSCE vision of pan-European security with Russia.<sup>103</sup> In the early 1990s, the optimistic vision enshrined in the Paris Charter faded away. Newly created CSCE institutions were too weak and too late to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict in Europe, and they received inadequate political and financial support from CSCE participating States. In addition, many in the West believed a military capability was needed to manage the consequences of the end of the Cold War, reinforcing the arguments of NATO over the CSCE/OSCE. Before drawing too many conclusions about "missed opportunities" in 1990, it might be necessary (once declassification makes archival documents available for research) to look at the 1990s and the evolution of European security institutions after the Paris Charter.

**Multinational Perspectives** Nuances help us better understand the slide from cooperation to confrontation – which was not intended in 1990 by either side. Our reconstructed history of 1989-90 certainly will and should be contested. The evolution of historical knowledge does not follow a linear pattern, where observations made from archival evidence translate into coherent and indisputable interpretations of significant events and their consequences. History as a form of knowledge is always open to debate. We still hope that a more differentiated perspective, based on archival material, will help us understand the other side in retrospect. Stereotypes and false information may gradually be overcome with the appearance of a variety of narratives on the events of 1989-90 and a newly emerging mainstream history, informed by multinational perspectives. Or to conclude with the words of Cicero (*De Legibus*): In the writing of history, the standard by which everything is to be judged, is the truth.

99 To borrow the title of an upcoming book by William H. Hill.

100 Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

101 Sarotte, 1989, cover.

102 Wilhelm Höynck, comment made at our Oral History Workshop in Paris, 5 September 2017.

103 See Nünlist, "Contested History", pp. 22-26.

# Conclusion

**Paris 1990 as Inspiration** Today, the 1990 Paris Charter is still an inspiration for a cooperative security order with Russia, built on universal values and common interests. OSCE participating States need to find a way back to thinking that today's common problems call for common solutions. The hope that relations between Russia and the West can and should improve again in the future may benefit from drawing lessons from the Helsinki process during the Cold War. "Helsinki 1975" helped salvage European détente and a pan-European dialogue during a more confrontational East-West period from 1977 to 1985 and in the midst of international crises (Afghanistan, Poland), and the semi-permanent dialogue in the CSCE decisively prepared the ground for the unprecedented convergence between East and West (or Gorbachev's conversion to Western thinking) in the run-up to the Paris summit. The capacity to engage in dialogue under such circumstances seems to have been lost today, as OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier confessed in November 2016.<sup>104</sup>

**Defrosting East-West Relations** Comparisons of today with past times are always delicate. Nevertheless, the confrontational rhetoric between Russia and the West in 2014-15 strongly reminds us of the dark years of the Belgrade CSCE follow-up conference in the late 1970s. With the Structured Dialogue, some dialogue and relaxation of tension between Russia and the West have returned to the OSCE – similarly to the Madrid CSCE conference in the early 1980s, which ultimately prepared the spectacular breakthrough in East-West relations in

Stockholm in 1986. It may be difficult, at the moment, to imagine the Structured Dialogue and the OSCE succeeding in laying the foundation for a return to cooperative, inclusive security in Europe within the next 4-5 years. However, it was also difficult to imagine that the Cold War would be defrosted from 1985 after the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979 or during the "year of maximum danger" (1983).

**Bilateralism Rules** In the standard triumphalist historiography about the importance of the Helsinki process for the peaceful end of the Cold War and the road to the Paris Charter, one obvious aspect is overlooked, namely the role of multilateral diplomacy or its lack thereof. Although the CSCE was the embodiment of multilateral diplomacy *par excellence*, our report makes clear that the road to Paris was mostly shaped by bilateral relations such as the Bush "pause" in US relations with Moscow or the crucial tandem Washington – Bonn in 1990. The primacy of bilateral diplomacy at the end of Cold War thus already anticipated the "broken spirit of cooperation", for which a multilateral framework needs to take priority.<sup>105</sup>

**Anatomy of Mistrust** 20 years ago, Deborah Welch Larson published "Anatomy of Mistrust", a brilliant study on how to build trust in a hostile climate based on the overcoming of the Cold War. Her findings about missed opportunities and conflict spirals during the Cold War seem highly relevant today. She emphasized the need for first and reciprocal steps (deeds, not words) to reduce tension and slowly build trust. Gorbachev's unilateral concessions come

<sup>104</sup> NRC *Handelsblad*, 17 November 2016. We thank Laurien Crump-Gabreëls for pointing out this Zannier interview.

<sup>105</sup> Laurien Crump-Gabreëls, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

to mind, even if deep mistrust prevented a faster Western response, as Western leaders were not sure whether Gorbachev was only bluffing.<sup>106</sup> Welch Larson also hinted at the danger of self-fulfilling prophecies, quoting President Clinton, who said in January 1994 that attempts to “draw a new line between East and West ... could create a self-fulfilling prophecy of future confrontation.” Still, he moved ahead with his plan to expand NATO membership to Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland - while Russian President Yeltsin argued: If there were no blocs or enemies anymore in Europe, why did the West still need NATO?<sup>107</sup>

Currently in 2017, the OSCE has a lot of work ahead of it to reverse self-fulfilling prophecies and to overcome deeply engrained narratives and myths that permeate many levels of societies in most OSCE participating States. If historians and eyewitnesses can debate missed opportunities and historically contextualize contested decisions, the realization might emerge that the current confrontation might not permanently endure, and that a return to real cooperative security in Europe might not be impossible.

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<sup>106</sup> Markku Reimaa, comment made at our Oral History Workshop in Paris, 5 September 2017.

<sup>107</sup> Deborah Welch Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust: U.S.-Soviet Relations during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 245.



# Recommendations

*How can we tackle existing historical narratives that are still relevant today in a non-confrontational manner? How can we use new archival evidence and fresh historical analysis to unravel outdated interpretations and build mutual trust within the OSCE region again? We argue that the key to reconciliation is increasing mutual historical empathy and injecting doses of nuance and complexity into existing simplistic and one-sided narratives. A series of follow-up events to our 2017 project, again organized by historians and with the participation of former government officials and practitioners to discuss and challenge origins of divergent narratives, would contribute to a better understanding of current conflicts over the political memory of the political and diplomatic history of Europe's reorganization in the 1990s.*

**Historical Empathy** Our new historical perspective on Paris 1990, based on archival research and dialogue with eyewitnesses and contemporary historians from East and West, aims at increasing mutual historical empathy<sup>108</sup> – Western empathy for the Russian view of a broken spirit of cooperation starting in 1990 and of the lack of a voice (and veto) for Russia in European security as a consequence of NATO/EU enlargement; but also Russian empathy for the Western view that the West in 1990 and beyond was mainly interested in stability and peace in Central and Eastern Europe after the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1990-91, it is hard to find proof in the historical records for a deliberate anti-Russian agenda in Western policy.

**Agree to Disagree?** Within the ongoing OSCE Structured Dialogue, it has been decided to “agree to disagree” about historical roots of current problems. Current multilateral dialogue is forward-oriented to deal with current problems, to improve military-to-military contacts, to recreate trust through mapping of military force postures to get a better understanding of capabilities and intentions behind military exercises etc. At the moment, there is no political will among OSCE participating States to “water down” the Track 1 Structured Dialogue to Track 1.5 or Track 2 exercises. Yet, at a later stage, it might make sense to think about feeding our “historical narratives” project into the OSCE Structured Dialogue – as the PEP’s diagnosis is still true that current divisions on Track 1 cannot be overcome without tackling their historical root causes. In our view, the discussion of root causes is already, in itself, a trust-building measure.<sup>109</sup>

**History Dialogue** By sensitizing the other side for historical contexts and by explaining controversial past decisions, we think that mutual trust can be rebuilt slowly between Russia and the West. The OSCE Network could offer to organize a series of seminars, workshops, and events in 2018 to further discuss the contested history of European Security after 1990. We suggest various “history dialogue” events for different audiences to tackle the problem of conflicting narratives.<sup>110</sup> A thorough attempt should be made to identify and outline divergent narratives on various aspects – some of them only briefly mentioned in this report – of the making of

108 For the concept, see P. Lee / R. Ashby, “Empathy, Perspective Taking, and Rational Understanding”, in: O.L. Davis Jr. et al. (eds.), *Historical Empathy and Perspective Taking in the Social Studies* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp. 21-50.

109 Comments made by Wolfgang Zellner and Stephanie Liechtenstein at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

110 Suggestion made by William H. Hill at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

the post-Cold War settlement in Europe. The work should be directed by professional historians in close collaboration with contemporary eyewitnesses, as was done experimentally in the Paris workshop in September 2017. This would lead to a better understanding of the internal logic and the evidence base of the different narratives. By learning about opposing narratives, mutual understanding is increased, even if one does not agree with the other side's narrative and even without necessarily reconciling different versions.<sup>111</sup> An exercise of this kind would contribute positively to a better understanding of the conflicts over the historical memory of the political and diplomatic history of Europe's reorganization in the 1990s. Debating different narratives can make both sides more critically aware of what has happened in the recent past, helping them to be more constructive today.<sup>112</sup>

**A Workshop in Moscow** Insights won during the workshops on historical narratives organized by the OSCE Network in May 2016 (Geneva), October 2016 (Moscow), September 2017 (Paris), and November 2017 (Vienna) have confirmed our conviction that it is important to address the root causes of today's European insecurity and to debate the clash of narratives among scholars and eyewitnesses. One idea would be to translate this report into Russian and to discuss it during a workshop in Moscow in 2018.

**Discussions with Journalists** Drawing on the established network of scholars and eyewitnesses from East and West, we could, for example, invite journalists covering the OSCE and European Security in selected OSCE participating States (Italy, Slovakia,

Norway) and discuss the emerging new historical mainstream perspective about 1990. Journalists play an important role in fostering (historical) empathy or its lack. The project's insights into OSCE history could be used to increase the curiosity of Italian journalists covering Italy's OSCE chairmanship in 2018.<sup>113</sup>

**OSCE History for OSCE Staff** We could also offer to discuss our findings at an internal OSCE event for OSCE staff in Vienna to better inform them about pan-European visions in 1990 and the reasons why they were not implemented after the end of the Cold War.<sup>114</sup>

**Involving History Students/Teachers** Similarly, we could reach out to history students at secondary level (and/or teachers) from the OSCE regions with the results of our project to discuss our findings on narratives on European Security. We should look for possibilities to cooperate with "EUROCLIO", the European Association of History Teachers.<sup>115</sup>

**Comparing History Textbooks** We think it might be interesting to engage the OSCE Network to do a comparative study of how history textbooks in different OSCE participating States currently discuss the end of the Cold War and the early post-Cold War period and which narratives they support. Results could be shared with the respective authors and publishers of history textbooks across the OSCE space.

111 William H. Hill, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

112 Comments made by Serena Giusti at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

113 Comments made by Stephanie Liechtenstein at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

114 Comments made by Ida Manton at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

115 Comments made by Laurien Crump-Gabreëls at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

**Alienation as a Process, 1992-1995** Several participants of our Vienna workshop emphasized that the “CSCE option” (namely to create a more significant status for the OSCE within the European security architecture) was, in their view, only removed by late 1994, but not yet in mid-1990.<sup>116</sup> Discussing this notion could help popularize the view of seeing Russia’s alienation from the security of the rest of Europe from 1990 to 2013 as a process that happened due to mistakes and unintended side-effects of well-intentioned decisions on both sides – and not to a hidden master plan of the US to harm Russia. It would be interesting to follow-up our “historical narratives” project with a focus on the years from 1992 to 1995, once access to archives has opened up, with a focus on NATO expansion and the European security model in the run-up of the institutionalization of the CSCE into the OSCE in late 1995.

**2020 – 30 Years after the Paris Summit** In 2020, we should use the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1990 Charter of Paris to organize a follow-up conference to debate the “road to the Paris Summit” and its legacy, making use of our discussions and reports produced in 2016 and 2017 and integrating insights resulting from our 2018 outreach events described above.<sup>117</sup> Planning for such a 2020 conference should start in 2019 and closely involve French scholars and the Norwegian OSCE Chairmanship.

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116 P. Terrence Hopmann, comment made at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

117 Comments made by Oleg Shakirov at our Vienna Workshop, 6 November 2017.

# Annex

## Disclaimer

*In the preparation of this report, valuable advice and various contributions were given to us by eyewitnesses (former CSCE diplomats), and contemporary historians / academics, most of them being members of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. Nonetheless, the views set out in this report are solely those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the participating eyewitnesses and academics listed below or the institutions they represent.*

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This report is the final product of a project of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. It is based on two workshops held in Paris (5 September 2017) and in Vienna (6 November 2017).

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