The Polish Institute of International Affairs
Transatlantic Leadership Network

Editors
Sławomir Dębski and Daniel S. Hamilton

EUROPE WHOLE AND FREE: VISION AND REALITY

Praise for *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality*

"The goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace remains as vital today as it did in 1989. This important book brings together policymakers and experts from both sides of the Atlantic for a timely discussion of how to achieve that goal for the 21st century."

— Madeleine K. Albright
Former Secretary of State between 1997–2001

"Europe is not yet Whole and Free as we dreamt it would be in the heady days of 1989. But Europe is wholer and freer than it has ever been in its history. Russia and Belarus are the only two countries whose people are denied the right to choose their own government. One day they will have that right which the rest of Europe now enjoys. This volume of essays is essential reading for those who wish to understand the last 30 years; three decades of European history which, whatever the setbacks and disappointments, have transformed our continent and the lives of those who are its citizens."

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served as Foreign Minister and Minister of Defence
in the United Kingdom Government between 1992–1997

„A great book about Europe's finest years, a convincing but unfinished strategic architecture."

—Volker Rühe
served as Federal Minister of Defence
in German Government between 1992–1998

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Vision and Reality

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Sławomir Dębski and Daniel S. Hamilton (eds.), *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality*

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Contents

chapter two

INSTITUTIONS

chapter three

FUTURE

Preface

In his May 1989 speech in Mainz, Germany, U.S. President George H.W. Bush announced that Europe and the world faced a great opportunity. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, there was a chance to end political and ideological rivalry, remove the Iron Curtain, unify Germany, and restore freedom to the peoples of Central Europe:

> In Poland, at the end of World War II, the Soviet Army prevented the free elections promised by Stalin at Yalta. And today Poles are taking the first steps toward real elections, so long promised, so long deferred. (...) As President, I will continue to do all I can to help open the closed societies of the East. We seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe. And we will not relax, and we must not waver. Again, the world has waited long enough.

Indeed, Europe had been waiting for this moment since the end of World War II. 1945 brought freedom and peace to the peoples of Western Europe. However, the eastern part of the continent was choked with the iciness of the Cold War, cut off from the free part of Europe by an Iron Curtain, and incorporated into the Soviet sphere of influence. As the Hungarian poet Sándor Márai wrote about Central Europe's experience:

Soviet soldiers freed our lands, but they could not give us freedom because they themselves did not have it.

Europe had been divided because of divisions about Germany; the Iron Curtain was built as an outcome of the German problem. Therefore, the future of Europe, the dreams of its unification, and the freedom of nations left in the Soviet sphere of influence after Yalta were all associated with the need to overcome the division of Germany.

On the 40th anniversary of the Yalta conference, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote:

> Yalta is unfinished business (…) Thoughtful Europeans realize that the future of Europe is intertwined with the future of Germany and of Poland. Without spanning, in some non-threatening fashion, the division of Germany, there will not be a genuine Europe, but continuing Russian domination of Poland makes Russian control over East Germany geopolitically possible. Thus the relationship between Russia on the one hand and Germany and Poland on the other must be peacefully transformed if a larger Europe is ever to emerge.[1]

In May 1989, the president of the United States invited all political forces in Europe, including former rivals from across the Iron Curtain, to build a new community: *Europe whole and free … whose creation was to guarantee peace and optimal conditions for development.*

Thirty years after presenting this vision, it is worth considering the significance of Bush's vision for the history of transatlantic relations, for Europe and for the whole world. Only from the perspective of time can we assess how prophetic it was, what it really changed and to what extent it could be realised.

The reality is that 30 years on, despite tremendous progress, Europe as a continent is not entirely whole, free, or at peace. Some parts of the continent are more secure than at any time in the previous century. Others face conflict or are war zones. European borders have once again been changed by force. Vast parts of the continent are no longer under the thumb of domestic autocrats or foreign overseers, but Europe is not fully

free. Europe is no longer divided as it had been, but new divisions have emerged, which means the continent is not entirely whole.

Is the vision of a united Europe still attractive? For whom? What else should be done to bring it closer to fruition? What does it depend on today? To address these questions, we turned to a group of several dozen outstanding American and European experts dealing with European issues, transatlantic relations, strategic problems and security. Some are practitioners, people who at various stages and in different capacities participated in attempts to implement the vision of Europe whole and free. Others constantly deal with issues that interest us and often face challenges associated with implementing Bush's vision. Some authors are rising stars, experts who may in the future be responsible for the shape of the Old Continent, may influence the policy direction of their own countries and may participate in global debates on the nature and condition of peace and the means of its defence.

The authors we invited represent very different political perspectives and viewpoints. Everyone, however, is without exception bound by the conviction that overcoming divisions in Europe is a path toward the security of the continent and one worth seeking in the name of peace.

We thank our authors for their contributions and their insights. The views and opinions they express are their own and do not reflect or represent those of any institution or government.

To assist the reader, our authors' answers have been grouped into three thematic sections: Roots, Institutions, and the Future. Citations are found in the endnotes, along with an index and short biographies of the authors. We also include as a key reference George H.W. Bush's original Mainz speech.

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We hope you enjoy the book.

Sławomir Dębski, Daniel S. Hamilton

CHAPTER ONE
ROOTS

Sławomir Dębski

Peace without Victory

When Stalin broke the Yalta Accords and "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic" an Iron Curtain fell across Europe, the United States assumed responsibility for the fate of a free and democratic Europe. In March 1947, President Harry Truman proclaimed in Congress:

> At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.[1]

European security and prosperity demanded American engagement to create a community capable of collective defence, to raise the

Old Continent from economic ruin, and to guarantee conditions for development. This conviction led to the Marshall Plan, the institutionalisation of mutual transatlantic defence, the creation of the North Atlantic Alliance, and initiated a process of European integration. Soon, NATO and the European community became institutional emanations of cooperation among the most developed nations of the world.

Truman borrowed the understanding of "free people" from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who, before a joint session of Congress on 26 December 1942 rhetorically asked: "What kind of people do they think we are?" Here, "they" referred to Hitler and Mussolini. By replying to his question, Churchill defined the identity of the Grand Coalition: "we" meant the free nations striving for the liberation of Europe from the bondage of German Nazism and Italian fascism.

Forty years later, President Ronald Reagan spoke before a sitting of both houses of parliament in London and intoned Churchill's question to define "we" in the context of the Cold War. For him, it meant a community united over the goal of liberating Europe from communism: "Free people, worthy of freedom and determined to not only remain so but to help others gain their freedom as well." Here, Reagan proclaimed the crusade for freedom—a political strategy going beyond containment of the imperial aspirations of the Soviet Union. It was no longer just about publicly expressing solidarity with the nations to the east of the Iron Curtain (John F. Kennedy, Ich bin ein Berliner speech, 26 June 1963). Reagan mobilised European allies and increased political pressure on the civilisation of enslavement. On the one hand, the U.S. strove to weaken communist regimes and undermine their legitimacy. On the other, they offered to cooperate with the Soviet Union for global security and Europe.

The new period of technological rivalry initiated by Reagan, along with increased political pressure and economic sanctions that cut the USSR off from advanced Western technology, led to a situation in which Soviet communism was able neither to keep pace with the U.S. in technological development nor to offer its own society an alternative to the Western way of life. It was thanks to these politics that the U.S. succeeded in reaching a series of disarmament agreements with the Soviet Union, such as the limitation of strategic weapons (START 1) or the liquidation of intermediate-

range rocket arsenals (INF); something that contributed to withdrawing them from Europe also.

Mikhail Gorbachev—as it turned out, the last leader of the Soviet Union—attempted to salvage the authority of the Communist Party and maintain its legitimacy to govern. However, the glasnost and perestroika policies he initiated led to the democratisation of social relations, first in the Soviet Union and, subsequently, with the satellite states. In this way, the communist parties in Central Europe gradually lost an important element that secured their power—the threat of Soviet intervention.

Standing before Reagan's successor in the White House was the task of setting a new aim around which a pan-European community and their interests could be shaped. And here again, the U.S., just as 40 years earlier, assumed the responsibility for fashioning a new peaceful order and defining the political "we."

In April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson presented to Congress his vision of order intended for Europe after World War I:

> Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace or only a new balance of power? … Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must be not only a balance, but a community of power, not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace … It must be peace without victory … [as] only peace between equals can last; only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit.[2]

In proposing an end to the Cold War, George H.W. Bush alluded to this American tradition of contemplating the European order and, in a certain sense, put forward his own vision of "peace without victory." During his Europe Whole and Free speech, he avoided antagonising the now former Soviet adversaries by inviting them to join in commonly defining the understanding of "we" by creating a community joined in "the vision, concept of free people in North America and Europe working to protect their values." The road to achieving this goal was through cooperation over the unification of Germany (which led to the 2+4 conference in 1990 and the ultimate reunification of the German Democratic Republic with the Federal Republic of Germany), accepting free, democratic elections as

a pan-European systemic standard, and in cooperation in technological advancement and significant restrictions on military potential.

In response to this American vision, Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, announced an end to the Brezhnev Doctrine, which limited the sovereignty of Central European states, and invoked the image of "a common European home." In his speech before the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, he accepted the American offer of "peace without victory." He ruled out the eruption of armed conflict on the continent and "the very possibility of the use or threat of force, above all military force, by an alliance against another alliance, inside alliances, or wherever it may be."[3] This vision provided the impetus for harmonising a continent-wide developmental model and, after several years, led to the gradual enlargement of NATO and the European Union. The combined nullification of the Brezhnev Doctrine and denunciation of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact by the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in December 1989 were important Soviet contributions toward the newly formed European order. A new spectre was haunting Europe—the spectre of the collapse of communism, of peace without victory, without vanquished or victors but with a common triumph over the Cold War division of the continent.

Unintended Consequences of Systemic Transformations

One element of America's policy toward dismantling the Yalta division of Europe was creating the conditions that would allow communist elites in Central Europe to peacefully relinquish and hand over power to democratic movements. Here too the notion of peace without victory was applied. The U.S. supported the democratic transformations in Central Europe and the new democratic authorities there supported American policies of overcoming the Cold War division of Europe and basing continental security on mutual cooperation. One example is Poland, whose neighbours all changed after the Cold War. To the west emerged a reunited Germany. To the south, the Czech and Slovak Republics replaced Czechoslovakia. To the east, instead of one neighbour—the Soviet Union—Poland shared its

borders with four new states: Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. With all its new neighbours Poland signed treaties of friendship and cooperation and became the epicentre of political stability in the new post-Yalta Europe. Through this, Poland also became an important ally to Washington in realizing the vision of Europe whole and free.

New social, political, and economic elites were shaped under American patronage in Central Europe. In essence, these were a synthesis of former communist elites and dissidents. In many instances, the synthesis demanded America's protection for former communist authorities or members of the communist security apparatus. This was a rather standard element of American politics toward systemic transformations, but for the idea of creating a united, free and democratic Europe, it had a few important negative, unintended consequences.

First, American protection of former communist elites was, in essence, a form of external intervention in the democratisation process. Democracy is a self-regulating system of government. Every form of external interference that favours a certain political side—for example, by guaranteeing political inviolability—always threatens the possibility of the oligarchisation of social relations, limiting democratic controls and, in the long term, social tensions. The repercussion of this sort of American intervention in all Central European states severely delayed the processes of de-communisation and lustration. Without any doubt, the delays negatively impacted the quality of democratic systems in Central Europe.

Second, the American umbrella over the systemic transformations in Central Europe was incorrectly interpreted in Russia as a geopolitical action intended to expand America's sphere of influence. The misinterpretation stemmed from the old tendency to view the world in geopolitical terms. In turn, this old viewpoint often ignored the actual political aspirations of Central European societies toward integration in transatlantic and European structures. With the exception of Slovakia after 1989, no political power came to office in the other Central European states advocating an alternative to NATO and EU membership. Social aspirations were a major regional political power harmonising with the vision of Europe whole and free, which nevertheless broke with the paradigm of geopolitical rivalry.

During the Cold War, the free world proved the superiority of its development model. Russians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and the other nations of Central and Eastern Europe who emerged from communism with aspirations of sovereignty did not feel that they had lost. Rather they rejected their developmental aberrations—communism and the Soviet command economy—and regarded this as their own success. In 1990, 90% of Russians correlated "normalcy" with accepting the Western lifestyle and 32% believed that state reformers should imitate the U.S. (32% said the same about imitating Japan). Only 17% named Germany as an example to follow, 11% cited Sweden, and 4% favoured the Chinese example.

The negative experiences associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's systemic transformation under President Boris Yeltsin contributed to a change in social attitudes. Vladimir Putin exploited this situation by transforming the weak, corrupt Russian democracy he inherited into an authoritarian system. In 2005, Putin announced that the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." Under the influence of this and similar assessments, over half of Russians began negatively evaluating the fall of the USSR and conveying a positive attitude toward totalitarian, Soviet symbols.

Gleb Pavlovsky, one of the ideologues responsible for transforming the Russian political system into an authoritarian one, once proposed the thesis that for Russia, the Cold War ended differently than for the Western world. According to him, Francis Fukuyama's famous essay best conveyed the mood of the post-1989 era by claiming that after the end of the Cold War came "the end of history." Liberal democracy was victorious over the communist ideology but, at the same time, the West lost its last ideological opponent. But the Russians did not consider themselves to be defeated. They saw the bankruptcy of communism as the beginning of a new era of nihilism in which no norms applied.[4]

Against this backdrop, social acceptance of the facade of democracy in Russia was born. New Russian elites convinced the society of how further democratisation threatened disintegration and how this process could only be stopped by imperialistic methods, which began re-emerging in foreign and domestic politics. At the same time, it became impossible to

collectively create a new pan-European "we" with a Russia headed toward authoritarianism.

Here, it is worthwhile to remember that even during the Gorbachev period, the vision of Europe whole and free did not apply to the territory of the Soviet Union, for no one envisioned the possibility of its disintegration. Gorbachev's attempts to forcefully contain the Soviet republics' independence aspirations, for example in Vilnius and Tbilisi, ended in fiasco and contributed to the collapse and later decision to dissolve the Soviet Union.

Geopolitics Strikes Back

The vision of Europe "whole and free" was conditional. Achievement of the idea was based on the assumption that all peoples of the new community, including Russia, would fundamentally obey the norms of international law and political obligations stemming from membership in the UN or OSCE, including the 1990 Paris Charter. This meant, first and foremost, renouncing one-sided use or the threat of force in international relations, respecting the sovereign equality of states, the inviolability of state borders, and refraining from intervening in states' internal affairs.

Only for a short period of time were Moscow's elites forced to regard these principles as also applying to the former Soviet republics and their independence aspirations. The reason for this was quite prosaic. In order to speak of an end to the Cold War through the idea of peace without victory, Russia could not feel defeated. A defeat would mean the loss of global power status as well as its legal-international attributes, especially permanent-member status in the UN Security Council. From a formal perspective, the Russian state that emerged after the dissolution of the USSR was a new entity. Whether it would be recognised internationally as the legal successor of the Soviet Union was left to the goodwill of the members of the international community. In order to gain a positive decision, Russia had to accept the existing territorial order.

If in 1991, for example, Russia had announced territorial claims against Ukraine or any of its other neighbours, it would not have been recognized

as the USSR's legal successor and would have lost its place on the UN Security Council. For Russia to assume the rights associated with the USSR in the UN, all remaining members of the UN would have to consent, including Ukraine. All that would be needed was one dissenting vote to prevent Russia from having veto power in the Security Council. It is difficult to imagine Kyiv accepting Russia's proposal while at the same time being under Russian pressure over territorial claims.

When Russia was recognised as the successor to the USSR, the imperialist tradition of viewing relations with former Soviet republics as internal Russian affairs was revived in Moscow. Consequently, the Western-supported emancipationist aspirations of new states within the post-Soviet space were seen in Russia as a violation of the principle of cooperation based on the Europe whole and free vision. Russia's political about-face began in September 1993. During his visit to Poland in August of that year, Russian President Boris Yeltsin declared his recognition of Poland's aspiration for NATO membership as understandable: "in perspective, the decision of sovereign Poland aiming for European integration is not contradictory with the interests of other states, including Russia."[5]

Three weeks later, Yeltsin issued a letter to the leaders of the United States, France, the UK, and Germany in which he rescinded his Poland position. "In general, we prefer a situation where the relations between our country and NATO are by several degrees warmer than those between the Alliance and Eastern Europe."[6] Russia proposed also that NATO and Russia jointly extend security guarantees to the countries of the region, instead of them joining NATO. This was a critical moment. Despite Western efforts, Russia rejected the principle of sovereign state equality. At the same time, it also rejected cooperation for European political democratisation in the spirit of the "peace without victory" idea offered in the Europe whole and free vision. Instead Russia, for the first time, demanded a return to the old geopolitical, imperial schemes, reintroducing the Concert of Europe and recognising the inequality of European states.

This is how Krzysztof Skubiszewski, former Polish foreign minister and a leading architect of the post-Cold War European order, read Russia's intentions. On 4 October 1993, he commented on Russia's new postulates as such:

> Poland's pursuit to join NATO is part of our policy … It is a policy of linking with Western defence and security organisations, making them to a larger extent European through Poland's participation, instead of—as thus far—maintaining only their Western character. The division of Europe will be different. This policy corresponds to the most vital interests of Poland, to maintaining its hard-won independence—we will not give up this policy. … Just as we will be opposed to isolating Russia, we equally reject the placement of Poland in a buffer or grey zone between West and East. The idea of Russian guarantees leads to such a zone, one of imminent dependence. There is no mention of them in the Wałęsa-Yeltsin declaration. We already had bad experiences with such guarantees—in the 18th century before the partitions, and in the 20th century in Tehran and Yalta. Our policy is an independence policy within the framework of Euro-Atlantic security.[7]

From then on, Russia has made conscientious attempts to abate the integration processes of European states by demanding differentiated membership status for new members. It demanded that NATO refrain from deploying more serious forces in new member states. It attempted to gain "compensation" from the EU in exchange for eastern expansion. It opposed the pro-European aspiration of elites in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Finally, in order to halt the aspirations of former Soviet republics from gaining the full-fledged community status of a member building Europe whole and free, Russia used military strength against Moldova in 1992, Georgia in 2008, and Ukraine in 2014. By these actions, Russia broke fundamental European peace norms agreed upon in the Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE in 1975, the 1990 Paris Charter for the New Europe, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, and a whole series of bilateral understandings.

After the aggression against Ukraine in 2014, Putin openly declared that Russia finds itself in a war with the West. During his remarks at a 2014 conference in Valdai, he blamed the West for forcing upon Russians their values "instead of establishing a new balance of power, essential

for maintaining order and stability, they took steps that threw the system into sharp and deep imbalance."[8]

What Kind of People Do We Think We Are?

Politics based on the vision of Europe whole and free has proved to be one of history's most effective instruments for spreading freedom and prosperity. Today, the states of Central Europe constitute the fastest-developing part of the continent. As long as Russia will continue to use its strength to contain democracy from expanding and curb freedom on the entire continent, however, European security and prosperity will remain in jeopardy. This is especially true today as Europe finds itself in a more difficult situation than in 1919 or 1989.

American leadership in the free world is not only weaker, it must also compete with autocratic developmental models in Europe—Russia—as well as in Asia. China, the largest autocratic power in the world, is competing with the democratic world not only economically but also ideologically. The West, which transgressed an ideological demobilisation after 1989, made a strategic error by accepting the Chinese developmental "one state, two systems" model as good enough to accept China into the WTO. Meanwhile, one of China's systems is based on freedom, the other on unfreedom. A synthesis of both systems is not possible since authoritarianism, supported by the power of the state, will always dominate over freedom devoid of such support. In this way, China, by assuming to be a free market economy, gains an advantage over the free world. Moreover, they are exporting their developmental model abroad.

One of the most important lessons from the fall of communism was the empirical experience of millions that showed how democracy and the free market determine successful development and prosperity. By accepting the Chinese "one state, two systems" approach, the West seriously weakened the strength of its lesson. Today, the autocratic developmental model, supported by China and Russia, is becoming more and more popular not only among developing states but also among democratic elites in many countries. To successfully counter this trend, the West must once

again reintegrate itself, redefine its political community and the term "we." Paradoxically, this will be most easily achieved within Europe by utilising the aspirations of societies in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans to actively take part in the Europe whole and free vision. By returning to the road of NATO and EU political enlargement, free nations can regain their identity.

Kori Schake

The Vision Thing

President George H.W. Bush's 1989 "Europe whole and free" speech is a landmark at the end of the Cold War between the Soviet bloc and the West. It is that moment in time when the Free World begins to imagine a Europe of genuine cooperation and inclusion, moving past the generational tasks of preserving Western Europe from the Soviet menace, and sustaining West Germany's voluntary allegiance to the West. Its purpose was to consolidate the gains achieved by the defence of Western Europe during the Cold War and those made newly possible by the people of Eastern Europe and some former Soviet states liberating themselves.

To President Bush's enduring credit, he seized that moment with seriousness and creativity, offering policy initiatives that invited the former Soviet states into security cooperation, balancing former Eastern European states' desire for protection, prosperity, and incorporation into the West with concern for Russian sensitivity to how much their power had diminished.

For all the derision cascaded on President Bush for "the vision thing" domestically in the U.S., he had a clear, resonant idea for what Europe after the Cold War could be. His administration crafted policies and fostered NATO alliance unity and international acceptance to enact the vision.

Whereas his successors mistakenly assumed that the arc of history bends toward freedom, Bush understood freedom had to be fought for, worked for, and nurtured. Perhaps the most important passage from the "Europe whole and free" speech was that "weaving together the slender threads of freedom in the East will require much from the Western democracies."

Why didn't it work? During the Bush administration, it did. Subsequently, it faltered, predominantly due to decisions made by the Russian government: Yeltsin's choice of Vladimir Putin as successor, Putin's charade of relinquishing power in 2008, closing down political opposition and civic space, efforts to disrupt and subordinate neighbouring states. Russia under Putin's rule rejected not only the offer of participating in security cooperation on terms equal to other European states but the very concept that Russia benefits from secure and prosperous states on its borders. And that concept is fundamental to achieving a Europe whole and free.

The Speech

It's hard to read the text of Bush's speech without being overwhelmed by nostalgia for all that seemed possible in 1989, for an American government that understood the majesty of what had been achieved and the gravity of the decisions they were making. Bush's speech accomplished four crucial things: it affirmed NATO's continuing purpose; celebrated the prospect of German unification; provided concrete, practical policy initiatives to reduce tensions and build common security; and, committed to support legitimate Soviet security interests.

NATO. Bush starts the speech in gratitude: "the generation coming into its own in America and Western Europe is heir to gifts greater than those bestowed to any generation in history: peace, freedom, and prosperity. This inheritance is possible because 40 years ago the nations of the West joined in that noble, common cause called NATO." Grounding the future in appreciation of the efforts that brought the West its success was graceful. It also made clear that the U.S. was, and intended to remain, a European power.

The Soviet Union had proposed a "common European home" excluding the U.S., and Bush's speech did a masterful job succinctly weaving together NATO's accomplishments in ways that made a powerful case for sustaining the alliance—a case that needed to be made in the West as well as in Moscow:

> First, there was the vision, the concept of free peoples in North America and Europe working to protect their values. And second, there was the practical sharing of risks and burdens and a realistic recognition of Soviet expansionism. And finally, there was the determination to look beyond old animosities. The NATO alliance did nothing less than provide a way for Western Europe to heal centuries-old rivalries, to begin an era of reconciliation and restoration. It has been, in fact, a second Renaissance of Europe.

The German Question. Bush chose to give his major speech about ending the Cold War in Germany with Chancellor Kohl by his side. He extolled Germany's strength during the Cold War, calling it courageous and magnificent. Without any hesitation about what Germany might become, he called out "Let Berlin be next—let Berlin be next!" But he also used Germany's experience as an example of what was possible in the present: "If ancient rivals like Britain and France, or France and Germany, can reconcile, then why not the nations of the East and West?"

Bush understood better than most leaders that a unified Germany would be the anchor of a post-Cold War Europe, and fostered rather than attempted to prevent it (as other Western leaders did), lending American support to achieve terms favourable to Europe's security and sustaining of the transatlantic relationship. His encouragement of a unified Germany, his gentle insistence that neither we in the West nor those in the East had anything to fear from a strong, prosperous, united Germany was essential in setting the conditions for the post-Cold War order.

Constructive Policies. Proposals in the speech incentivised Soviet cooperation in moving beyond the Cold War. It offered waiving Jackson-Vanik penalties and ending sanctions that had been put in place against the Soviet Union, expanding the Helsinki Accords, cooperating on environmental issues (this coming after the Chernobyl reactor crisis),

limits on military personnel and equipment (tanks, armoured personnel carriers, combat aircraft, combat manpower outside national territory) in the region from the Atlantic to the Urals, greater transparency for military exercises, and an accelerated timetable for achieving all these U.S.-Soviet agreements. It provided an ambitious agenda incorporating issues of concern to the Soviets (ending sanctions, limits on U.S. forces in Europe, funding and technology for environmental cleanup and prevention).

Bush's policy initiatives gave concrete form to the speech's promise that legitimate Soviet security concerns would be respected. They removed sanctions that inhibited the Soviet economy and stigmatised it diplomatically, limited NATO—and particularly U.S.—military forces both numerically and in the categories of the West's comparative advantages (combat aircraft), and accelerated the timetable to demonstrate the seriousness of the Western intent.

The Russian Problem. Bush's "Europe whole and free" speech sought to reassure the Soviets that the U.S. would not take advantage of their retreat—but he did so without accepting the Soviet approach to making themselves secure by denying security to others. "Let the Soviets know that our goal is not to undermine their legitimate security interests. Our goal is to convince them, step-by-step, that their definition of security is obsolete, that their deepest fears are unfounded."

Gorbachev's proposal in 1987 for a "common European home" was, and clearly remains, Russia's preferred European security architecture, principally because it excludes the United States. Russia's problem, then and now, is that other European states want American participation, want promises of American protection because they don't trust Russia.

The Soviet leader's public comments at the Malta summit in December of 1989 seemed to accept the terms on offer by the West: "The world is leaving one epoch and entering another. We are at the beginning of a long road to a lasting, peaceful era. The threat of force, mistrust, psychological and ideological struggle should all be things of the past." What Gorbachev permitted to occur, allowing former Warsaw Pact states their freedom and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, are the difference between a Europe soaked in blood to attain its freedom, and the memories of Berlin's wall being smashed to pieces by its exultant people. We should look on the

events from 1989 to 1991 and marvel so much was achieved with so little bloodshed.

But even Gorbachev sent tanks into Lithuania and Latvia in 1991 to quell democratic movements (something President Bush resolutely condemned); German Chancellor Helmut Kohl feared the window for German unification could close quickly. Peoples that had suffered under Soviet dominion were not wrong to fear Russian recidivism.

It is hard now to reconjure just how tentative progress felt in the time of transition, how much might have been different if the coup attempt in August 1991 had not been quashed by Boris Yeltsin and democratic forces in Russia. Removal of Russian troops from occupied countries would likely have stopped, hopes for freedom crushed, Germany forced to accept the hard choice of unification or continued NATO membership (and Germany would almost certainly have chosen unification), the West disentangling Germany from NATO's integrated military command and withdrawing troops westward, subsequent arguments over where to station the 325,000 American troops that had been in Germany, debates within the U.S. about why so prosperous a Europe could not marshal the forces for its own defence.

There has been a major effort by the Russian government to blame the West for the deterioration of relations. In particular, they argue NATO's incorporation of new members from those states that had been subject to Soviet occupation took advantage of Russia at a time of weakness, encroaching on its sphere of influence and increasing the threat of attack by hostile states and military forces on its borders.

And there is some truth to the Russian recrimination: NATO would not have admitted Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic in the 1990s—much less Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania in 2004, Albania and Croatia in 2009, and Macedonia in 2019—if the alliance thought the Russian response would be to invade those countries or further westward. But the alliance thought Russia, too, was becoming Western.

NATO moved very slowly and worked very hard to reassure Russia in order to ascertain that the expansion would not provoke an attack by the Soviet Union. NATO resisted for years the clamouring by the newly independent states to be admitted to the alliance, created the Partnership

for Peace to forestall pressure for quick admission and make transparent the process and terms countries needed to meet to qualify, established a NATO-Russia Council to give Russia a stature distinct from other non-NATO states. The alliance eagerly entered into arms-limitation treaties to reduce forces and increase the transparency of military activities, even unilaterally reducing alliance nuclear forces by 90% (Russia made no corresponding reductions). In order to signal to Russia that it posed no threat by expanded membership, NATO pointedly did not station troops in those countries admitted to membership or increase the military capabilities of the alliance commensurate with the additional obligation of defending its expanded territory. Russia's resentment that countries that had been forced into Soviet dominion yearned so ardently for inclusion in the West is the wages of Russian and Soviet oppression of them; it is Russia's fault, not ours.

We in the West ought not to accept the argument that Russia should dictate the terms of sovereign countries' foreign policies. We have never believed Russia's claims deserve greater weight than those countries' claims for themselves. But we ought also to admit that throughout the Cold War we conceded the practice—the countries of the Warsaw Pact, the Baltic States, and even Finland had their sovereign right to choose their security arrangements infringed by the Soviet Union and we did not prevent it. So, Russia is not wrong to say that we indulge our principles now that we have the power relative to Russia to enforce them.

Russia is also not wrong that we in NATO delude ourselves when we claim we are a solely defensive alliance. Our decision to deploy outside of NATO territory in support of the UN in Bosnia negated that claim because we elected to become an organisation that seeks to provide security on our periphery—if there were a moral equivalence between NATO and Russia, it could be argued that Russia's intervention in Chechnya is comparable. But, of course, there is no moral equivalence—Russia had no UN Security Council resolution and committed war crimes in its conduct of operations.

Russia is also not wrong in its grievance about the 1999 NATO war in Kosovo, which was entered into without benefit of a UN Security Council resolution. NATO used military force on its own authority to protect people from their government. That does make NATO a different kind of alliance—one not limiting itself just to the defence of its territory or to international

action under the authority of the UN, but justifying its use of military force as a humanitarian intervention. NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya, justified under the UN's "responsibility to protect" further alarmed Russia that international support was coalescing around Western attitudes. But we thought Russia, too, was coalescing around Western attitudes; slowly, grudgingly, but ultimately.

Even without paranoid theories that the U.S. is fomenting "colour revolutions" intending to build to a crescendo with regime change in Russia, a Russia that is not becoming Western does have a basis for concern about NATO ballooning into an all-purpose, self-justifying force hemming in Russian influence. And Russia is simply not going to countenance an international order in which the advance of democracy and human rights supersedes the state's sovereignty to do whatever it chooses within its territorial boundaries.

But even conceding all those arguments, what has gone wrong is not NATO responding to new challenges in creative ways that expand the zone of peace in Europe. It is Russia choosing not to be part of that expansion. Russia's narrative erases from the story their choices that increasingly persuaded Western governments that Russia was becoming an authoritarian state that did not respect the rule of law or the sanctity of international borders or the sovereignty of other states or acknowledge that humans have inherent rights. Nor did Russia believe in the principle of state sovereignty it demanded for itself since it sought to intimidate or corrupt other societies.

What has gone wrong that has prevented a Europe whole and free is the strangulation of political representation and civil society in Russia as Putin consolidated power. His Russian government prefers to stand outside Europe and threaten it than join Europe and participate in it. It has chosen to be a spoiler rather than a beneficiary, and that is likely to remain true for as long as Putin remains in power.

Russia poses a direct military threat to the free countries of Europe, as demonstrated by their reckless challenges to Western airspace and destabilising short-notice large-scale military exercises at NATO's borders. They are in violation of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and many others.

They surreptitiously participate in our domestic debates to exacerbate our divisions and interfere in our elections. They foster corruption and recidivist tendencies. Russia's invasions of Georgia and Ukraine have succeeded in driving up the cost to NATO of admitting new members, as demonstrated by the ebbing of support for Georgia's and Ukraine's bids since Putin's 2007 Munich Security Conference speech described NATO expansion as a "serious provocation."

Russia is not Europe's only challenge: creeping recidivism corroding the rule of law, political turbulence resulting from migration and economic crises, Britain consumed with an internal discussion about whether to leave the EU. But these are the continual challenges of free societies to find solutions to perturbations. Russia's actions have clarified our current challenge by reminding us of both the value and the vulnerability of free societies. We need not wonder what the Russian government's intentions are. We need to protect ourselves against them, strengthen our resilience in responding to them, and continue our devotion to the five principles Bush's Secretary of State James Baker outlined in 1991 to make Europe truly whole and free: self-determination consistent with democratic principles, recognition of existing borders, support for democracy and rule of law, preservation of human rights and rights of national minorities, and respect for international law and obligations.

And Europe should do more of this work itself. As Jim Goldgeier has persuasively argued, "the more time, energy, and resources America focuses on the China challenge, the more it requires a Europe capable of managing threats and challenges in its own neighbourhood."[1] Russia is not so powerful that Europe cannot contain its malevolent actions.

But what yet needs doing should not obscure all that has been achieved since Bush's 1989 speech—it is no less than the elimination of Eastern Europe. There is now just Europe. It isn't completely whole, it isn't completely free, but it is so much better, so much safer, so much more prosperous, and so much freer than it was before President Bush called on those of us in the West to support the brave men and women in the East yearning to share in the truths we hold to be self-evident. The countries of Europe can now choose their governments and their security arrangements.

Russia causes the West serious problems but should be thanked because it did not prevent by force the independence efforts of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The U.S. and Canada should be thanked for their long-standing commitment to Europe's security and willingness to extend their commitment to additional countries in Europe. The bureaucrats of NATO should be thanked that they found creative initiatives to buy time and set standards to make members into contributors for our common security. The governments, Commission, bureaucrats, and people of the European Union should be thanked for their neighbourhood policy, legal, and regulatory obstinacy and oversight, and financial generosity that pulled Eastern Europe West and have been a magnet for Ukraine and other states in transition. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe should be thanked for its dedication to mediating and bearing witness during conflicts. The people of what used to be Eastern Europe should be thanked for reminding us that the yearning for liberty and human dignity are universal and for their courage in claiming those things for themselves.

And George Herbert Walker Bush should be thanked for having the vision, generosity of spirit, and determination to reach across the Cold War divide.

Ulrich Speck

Making Plan A Work: For Europe, the American Presence Remains Essential

George H.W. Bush's speech in Mainz on 31 May 1989 remains a document of extraordinary foresight. With it, the U.S. strategy for dealing with the coming revolution of the European order was largely set. The overall goal was a Europe "whole and free and at peace with itself." The historical change in Europe to which America responded was driven by political liberalism: "The momentum for freedom comes from a single powerful idea: democracy." Bush laid out two major directions for U.S. strategy for Europe. The first is self-determination: "We seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe." The second is close cooperation: "The path to freedom leads to a larger home, a home where West meets East, a democratic home, the commonwealth of free nations."

With this blueprint for change, Bush remained true to America's 20th-century vision for Europe: a closely cooperating configuration of free,