Diplomacy & Statecraft

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdps20

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To cite this article: Kristina Spohr & Kaarel Piirimäe (2022) With or without Russia? The Boris, Bill and Helmut Bromance and the Harsh Realities of Securing Europe in the Post-Wall World, 1990-1994, Diplomacy & Statecraft, 33:1, 158-193, DOI: 10.1080/09592296.2022.2041816

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2022.2041816

DIPLOMACY & STATECRAFT
2022, VOL. 33, NO. 1, 158–193
https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2022.2041816

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

With or without Russia? The Boris, Bill and Helmut Bromance and the Harsh Realities of Securing Europe in the Post-Wall World, 1990-1994

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ABSTRACT

Much controversy exists over the making of Europe's security architecture after the end of the Cold War, specifically *how* and *why* the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO] emerged as the preferred solution to the continent's security conundrum, and where this development left Russia. These questions have puzzled historians and political scientists. Crucially, they also continue to resonate politically, as the Ukraine crisis of 2021/22 shows. For more than 15 years, the Vladimir Putin government has propagated the view that Western governments reneged on binding pledges made to Moscow in 1990 during German unification diplomacy that NATO would *never* expand beyond Germany into Central and Eastern Europe, or even what had been theSoviet space. As well as accusations of Western betrayal, Russian leaders have also talked of an expansionist American agenda, all of which supposedly culminated in 'nothing, but [the wilful] humiliation' of Russia. Existing scholarship has largely fixated on Russo-American 'Great Power' relations. By exploring the competitive co-operation within the Boris Yeltsin-Bill Clinton-Helmut Kohl triangle, this article depicts the push-and-pull factors within and between East and West, and especially inside the Alliance, as these three leaders set out to secure a post-Wall Europe together that was far more complex and multi-layered than hitherto appreciated.

'He's a great guy – *Prachtkerl* – natural, open and direct'. This was how the Russian president Boris Yeltsin, described Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, in his memoirs. In December 1996, when Yeltsin had been re-elected president with the help of American and German moral support as well as 'political stabilisation loans', Kohl visited him while he was recovering from heart surgery. 'It wasn't really a diplomatic visit', Yeltsin wrote, 'he just wanted to encourage me after the operation. I am still very grateful to him for this human gesture. I invited him to dinner and realized that he wanted to infect me with his desire for life. He tasted every dish and drank Russian beer. . . . I liked that'.[1] For America's president, Bill Clinton, there was a real

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connection with the German chancellor, too – one that bridged party-political divides and lasted long beyond their political careers. 'I loved him', said Clinton in his eulogy during Kohl's Strasbourg memorial in July 2017. 'I loved this guy because his appetite went far beyond food, because he wanted to create a world in which no-one dominated, a world in which cooperation was better than conflict'. He felt deep respect for Kohl, not only for his acute political instinct, but also for his legacy. 'The 21st century in Europe', Clinton proclaimed in the memorial tribute, 'really began on his watch'.[2]

The feelings of friendship, likeability, and trust were mutual. The three leaders, physically imposing and emotionally demonstrative, all rose from humble, small-town beginnings and immediately developed a close personal relationship. Kohl occupied the centre, both geographically between White House and Kremlin, and politically, leading a middle Power in the post-Cold War world and acting as intermediary between the big two Powers. He was also a loyal North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO] member, convinced European, and friend of Russia. Above all, he served as the emotional hub for both Clinton and Yeltsin. Theirs were not simply political friendships. They were touchy-feely politicians, who cultivated alpha male bonding in ways no woman politician could or would, from vodka drinking to sweating it out in a sauna.

Their triangular relationship was often stormy as Yeltsin, who wanted reform, needed money, and grappled with power whilst seeking to maintain – or revive – Russia's status as a global force, frequently clashed with them. Nobody could ever be sure which Yeltsin would show up for meetings: the backslapping, good-natured chap or his angry, red-faced twin; the sober friend or the incoherent, giggling drunkard.[3] Boris could be 'snarling bear and papa bear, bully and sentimentalist, spoiler and dealmaker'. His politics was frequently impulse driven, his positions inconsistent.[4] Nevertheless, there often appeared method to his madness, and deep down his Russian pride pervaded him – always. Kohl and Clinton tried to be Yeltsin's 'partners' and 'allies', as they so often proclaimed and the Russian wanted so much. Their joint project involved creating a new, peaceful Europe without walls and without fear – one built around democracy, open markets, common values, and common security. If personal engagement and sympathies pushed them towards co-operation, the realities of the international environment ensured that competition, even rivalry, persisted.

Russia's search for its identity – westward or inward and authoritarian, integrationist or self-standing Great Power – made finding mutually agreeable solutions difficult. Russian desire in retaining influence in Europe, and particularly *Zwischeneuropa*, was bound to clash with America. Their spheres of interest overlapped. Moreover, the intermediate states developed their own

agency, desiring to make their own choices of political alignment. NATO enlargement, from the moment the idea started to gain political traction, swiftly emerged as one of the most contested issues that would continually strain relations between Washington and Moscow.

Not that German-American relations were always smooth. After all, a significant power differential existed between Bonn and Washington, their country's histories and geostrategic outlooks differing. Yet, Kohl and Clinton were united in their efforts to establish a new post-Cold War order and a lasting peace founded on shared values – even as they each pursued separate national interests. They believed that there should be a strong – and eventually wider – European Union [EU] and an enlarged NATO so that Germany would be surrounded by allies instead of being on the front line of potential Eastern European instability. The chancellor and president, alone and together, paid much attention to Russia's heightened sensitivity regarding status and its simultaneous aspiration for international inclusion – such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT], the G7, or by working out a special NATO-Russia partnership. They saw their financial support and political endorsement of Yeltsin as an essential, personal investment in the making of Russian democracy and the establishment of market structures in Russia. Over Moscow and Europe's security, Kohl and Clinton leaned on and pushed each other. This was 'competitive co-operation'[5] amongst allies, indeed amongst 'partners in leadership'.[6]

Ultimately, neither Kohl, who left the political stage in 1998, Yeltsin, who quit office in 1999, nor Clinton, whose presidency ended in 2001, found a place for Russia in the basic architecture of European security. In the eyes of many, they all failed. Yet, perhaps a good solution did not exist – one that would satisfy everyone equally. After all, whilst American, Central, and West European interests initially at least appeared to align and evolve in the same directions when it came to embracing the capitalist and democratic political order, Russian ambitions ultimately were never entirely clear, if not too different – and democracy stillborn. What is striking, however, is how hard this male trio tried to move beyond competitive co-existence[7] and systemic as much as strategic rivalry[8] that had marked relations during the bipolar era to create a new more constructive and more integrationist form of 'engagement'.[9] It was through competitive co-operation that they aspired to 'strategic partnership' in a new post-Wall word.[10]

Yeltsin, Clinton, and Kohl interacted as human beings, political leaders, and representatives of their states and, after Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and American President George H.W. Bush disappeared from the scene, they came to shape the post-Cold War European order. Each pursued their visions and interests as they emerged on the global stage in 1989–1990; they side-lined competitors and competing ideas inside their own and amongst their governments, managed their disagreements, and used their intimate personal

connexions as they sought compromises whilst trying to stay on top of their domestic woes. The first year the triumvirate was complete and working in full swing was 1993; and it was then that as a solution to the European security conundrum, NATO's opening eastward appeared firmly on the international agenda.

Although much has been written on this issue,[11] the focus has been on America and Russia alone when the agency of both the states involving *Zwischeneuropa* and America's Western European allies clearly were central to how NATO's open door policy came into being and how it was pursued. *Zwischeneuropa* constituted the Europe *in-between* NATO Germany and Russia.[12] Furthermore, much early research centred on the processes of alliance enlargement – the 'how' – less on the motivations and calculations that drove key players – the 'why'. One view holds that America strategically pushed for expansion taking advantage of Russia's temporary weakness, causing it nothing but humiliation; the other suggests that Clinton gave in to pleas from Central and Eastern Europe [CEE] and found himself confronted by a resurgence of Russian nationalism and imperialistic impulses that put Moscow on a course of confrontation with the West.[13] This analysis rebalances this bilateral fixation that has led to a rather artificial interpretative divide.

Exploring the Yeltsin-Clinton-Kohl triangle allows the picture of push-and-pull factors within and between East and West to emerge, especially inside NATO; it was far more complex and multi-layered than thus far appreciated, especially by American scholars fixated on Russo-American 'Great Power' relations. Through their 'necessary' bilateral partnerships combined with their genuinely personal triangular connection,[14] the three leaders avoided open rift and conflict and kept moving on in a co-operative manner despite their differing strategic interests. Yet, what becomes evident is that the root causes, systemic and political, about why Russia would ultimately find itself outside NATO and thereby excluded from the new Euro-Atlantic security order from the Atlantic to the Black and Baltic Seas lies in this early phase of intense diplomatic engagement. In the long view, their Bromance could only gloss over deeper irreconcilable differences that persist to this day between the Euro-Atlantic world and Russia; and still, it was perhaps thanks to it that a relatively stable security architecture in Europe's heart came into being.

The original contours of the new post-Berlin Wall European security order emerged from the diplomacy surrounding German unification. The way in which the German question was resolved – East Germany's absorption into West Germany and by default into existing Western institutional frameworks, the European Community [EC] and NATO – affected how a 'new' Europe after the Wall was forged out of the old. In this process, German self-

determination and agency lay at the heart whilst intense Soviet-American engagement played an overarching role in the international diplomacy of 1989–1990.[15]

On the question of how to secure the continent – and united Germany – so-called 'all-European' structures did not win the day. This occurred despite efforts made especially by Gorbachev, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and French President François Mitterrand, who each looked at variations of a new pan-European security system built around the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe [CSCE] or EC/EU to embrace the two halves of the continent including Soviet Russia, but not necessarily the United States.[16] Even Kohl initially focused on the EC and suggested widening it to the East 'beyond the Elbe'.[17] But he soon reoriented himself, embracing Germany's role as America's partner in leadership, bilaterally and within the Atlantic Alliance. What mattered most to the Bush Administration was perpetuating NATO both to help safeguard order on the continent and ensure that America kept a foot in Europe. This is what formed the core of America's 'Architecture for a new Europe'.[18]

This decisive German-American alignment then conspired against any gradual pan-European paths. Furthermore, rather than German unification being managed within an all-European institutional framework, it took on a life of its own as a catalyst to create a security structure around Germany on Western – if not to say American – terms. Given Bush's resolve, 'NATO' would 'not only survive the end of the Cold War but also shape the post-Cold War future'.[19] But America did not simply impose its will and act unilaterally. When finally settling the German question, Kohl in competitive co-operation with his coalition partner and foreign minister, Genscher, acted as true American allies – as they pursued in lockstep with Bush the 'unified Germany in NATO' line. Moreover, the German tandem worked hard on the Soviets in their efforts to persuade Gorbachev that it was in Russia's interest to see unified Germany harnessed by the Alliance and under international control rather than wish for a bigger, neutral demilitarised giant in the heart of Europe left unbound.

Genscher's spring campaign to 'de-demonise' NATO in the eyes of the Kremlin whilst pointing to the Germans' right freely to choose their alliance – in full accord with CSCE principles and billions of Kohl's deutschmarks – were key elements in Germany's diplomatic effort. By the end of the summer, it allowed Bonn and Moscow to settle their remaining Second World War issues as well as yielding Gorbachev's consent to Alliance membership of a fully sovereign united Germany – albeit with former East German terrain in perpetuity under 'special status'. Indeed, as specified in the 2 + 4 Treaty of 12 September 1990, no foreign forces or nuclear weaponry were allowed in the new *Länder* even after the Red Army's envisaged completion of troop withdrawal in 1994. Through

an almost seamless string of interlocking summit talks, especially within the Soviet-German-American leadership triangle, this compromise was forged in a genuine 'spirit of cooperation'.[20] In the process, Kohl and Gorbachev developed genuine trust and built an earnest 'political friendship' – one that they would hold for the rest of their lives. Bush's national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, later reflected: 'There was no Versailles, no residual international bitterness' no 'victory for "us" and defeat for "them"'.[21]

Regarding the later much contested issue of NATO's enlargement eastwards from the Oder-Neisse line, no binding written agreements on the Alliance's delimitation – in perpetuity – had been entered in 1990 during the diplomacy surrounding the final German settlement. Nobody offered any formal pledges, and no treaties were negotiated prohibiting such future development. Gorbachev, for one, had not made any requests or even mentioned the need to codify the future size and boundaries of the Alliance.[22]

NATO had initiated a process of self-transformation at its June 1990 London summit. Bush stressed the need to 'build a transformed alliance for the new Europe of the 21st century'.[23] It was central for NATO *not* to appear as a closed club, even though Alliance membership was obviously not an immediate concern – neither for Washington, which considered enlargement 'out of the question',[24] nor transforming CEE countries that remained members of the Warsaw Pact until its dissolution in July 1991. Indeed, the former Soviet satellites at first directed their interest towards the CSCE; and hoping to consolidate their young capitalist democracies, they looked towards the EC for Western aid. They welcomed the Alliance's 'London Declaration' of intent to 'enhance' its 'political component', 'extend to them the hand of friendship', and start building 'new partnerships with all nations of Europe' for a more 'united continent'. In fact, all Warsaw Pact countries including the Soviet Union were invited to 'establish regular diplomatic liaison' with NATO as part of the effort to foster collaborative thinking on how best to manage this historic period of change.[25]

On a global plane, too, Bush's America now considered its relationship with Gorbachev's Soviet Union as co-operative rather than confrontational. Having declared a 'new world order'[26] grounded in the rule of international law, Bush and his Administration set out to build a 'global commonwealth of free nations'.[27] But co-operative bipolarity proved ultimately fictive. In December 1991, the Soviet Union, a construct that had lasted seven decades, disappeared.

America had to confront a new world disorder; and in Europe, great uncertainty and anxiety pervaded the eastern and southeastern edges of the old continent. Ancient ethno-national and religious rivalries bubbled up and borders were redrawn, regional conflict was brewing in former Soviet space –

from Transnistria to South Ossetia to Nagorno-Karabakh – and in the former Yugoslavia. Generally, fear of spillover effects, local tensions over minority rights, transnational mass refugee flows, and the risk of uncontrolled nuclear weapons proliferation formed part of a combustible mix. The danger of 'Eastern' instability and 'Balkanisation' spreading 'West' was present, raising the political stakes for all extortionately high.

In this chaotic situation, concerns amongst the CEE, the Baltic States, and several of so-called post-Soviet Newly Independent States [NIS] over an emerging 'grey zone' or a 'no-mans-land' in *Zwischeneuropa* began to intensify. Everybody understood that for all the talk of a genuine East-West rapprochement, the 'main pillars of the new Europe' remained 'those of the old' Western half of the continent, although by then these were in a process of major modification and reinvention.[28] The Baltic Three in particular were anxious about their future security. Fearing they might be the real losers of the 1989 'Carnival of Revolution' if being left out to hang to dry alone,[29] they were especially keen to bandwagon with the CEE as they lobbied for close ties with NATO. They also felt they had a special case amongst former Soviet Republics and with America because during the Cold War, Washington had been their staunchest *de jure* supporter in upholding the Western non-recognition policy of Baltic annexation into Soviet Russia in 1940.[30]

Thus, for most Europeans – with the exception of the neutrals – NATO started to crystallise as the key security-framework on the continent. The newly formed North Atlantic Co-operation Council [NACC] that extended the Euro-Atlantic Community 'east from Vancouver to Vladivostok',[31] naturally placed NATO in a novel and 'more important role'[32] than CSCE, EC/EU, or Western European Union [WEU] when it came to fostering stability across the post-Wall European space. Crucially, in an open letter to NACC in December 1991, Yeltsin declared not only Russia's willingness to co-operate with the Alliance but defined his long-term goal as Russian membership.[33] In this light, NATO's perpetuation beyond the Cold War seemed to represent a win-win solution for all around.

Considering shifting pressures on strategies and alignments deriving from the new geopolitical realities after Soviet collapse, the United States and its allies needed to evaluate carefully both 'the ramifications of NACC expansion' and 'the possibility of expanded NATO membership'.[34] This assessment in winter 1992 tied directly into how best to keep NATO relevant for the future – beyond its narrowly defensive mission and current territorial confines. 'The bulk of conflicts' were likely to arise 'out of area' in Eurasia. Some in Washington pondered the implications of NACC's widening to the NIS. Questions abounded. If NACC's liaison programme stayed the same, would broadening membership risk diffusing the credibility of the Alliance? Might it push the CEE and Balts 'to look elsewhere' – the EU/ WEU – for their security?

In other words, was the continuation of NACC 'a recipe for its eventual demise and a weakening of NATO'? To counter this possibility, should NATO open its door to the states of the Europe *in-between*? But would this 'redivide Europe, isolate Russia, Ukraine and other members of the CIS'? Finally, should NATO open to Russia? Then the danger might arise that 'instability could become an in-house matter' and the Alliance fundamentally transformed.

As Bush's national security team contemplated possible pathways and their consequences, the following view appeared to be gaining ground: whilst NACC should continue developing the liaison processes, it also ought to pursue 'special links with the northern tier NACC countries [Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia]'. This would help with differentiation amongst NACC members and help better position the '*Trojkat*' of Warsaw, Budapest, and Prague 'for eventual membership' – if America and NATO decided in future to take that route. The pressure from the CEE 'on the only effective security organization' was certainly intensifying; and in their search for direct access to America's 'hard security' umbrella, joining NATO was seen as the preferred, perhaps only option.[35]

This context helps understand the reasoning in the first serious intra-American debate regarding the 'opportunity' to 'go beyond the word "premature" in discussing membership'. It certainly was a geo-strategic 'opportunity' linked to a broader geo-economic calculation. The wider conclusions drawn by the Bush White House in winter 1992 were clear: not to 'sit and wait' until the political, economic, and security dynamics in Europe and the former Soviet space came into focus, as some in the State Department favoured, but to stake out America's position early whilst the situation was still in 'flux'. In sum, to 'ensure pride of place in the new Europe', NATO like the other main Western European organisational structures would have to 'evolve eastward'.[36]

Whether, when, and how transforming these initial American designs into an operational all-NATO policy would remain to be seen. More imminently, the Bush Administration had other foreign policy priorities. Despite proclaiming in January 1992 that America had become 'the leader of the West' and 'the world', Bush was less keen to jump on the triumphalist bandwagon of unipolarity than the neoconservatives were. Instead, he was determined to create a new post-Soviet partnership with Yeltsin to facilitate predictability and prosperity across the old continent.[37] The Administration was relieved that the shift from the Soviet Union to Russia, from Gorbachev to Yeltsin, came about swiftly and smoothly, even though almost immediately there were questions about the nature of Yeltsin's rule and direction of the new Russia's democratisation and economic reform processes. Worse, beyond inner European turmoil, former Soviet clients' 'renegade' behaviour – North Korea, Iraq, Libya, and Pakistan – especially concerning nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons programmes disturbed America, too.[38]

Still, 1992 seemed 'the dawn of a new era' in Russo-American relations.[39] Determined to see on-going strategic arms reduction negotiations through to completion, Bush succeeded. Having concluded START I with Gorbachev on 31 July 1991, START II followed with Yeltsin as signatory on 3 January 1993. Russia still sat alone with America at the nuclear top table, which for Moscow was of great symbolic importance. Equally, in New York, the United States welcomed Russia onto the United Nations [UN] Security Council as the direct Soviet successor, and Bush keenly supported Kohl in his desire to perpetuate the G7 + 1 relationship, a process initiated with Gorbachev at the G7 London Summit a year earlier. Status and optics clearly mattered to the new man in the Kremlin.[40] Yeltsin was no bit-player – even though his was now a truncated country. Russia remained a 'nuclear superpower', albeit one 'in anarchy', as Yegor Gaidar, Yeltsin's first prime minister, put it.[41] The problem was that the Soviet nuclear arsenal was spread around Russia, independent Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, the Soviet Black Sea Fleet confined to Ukrainian waters and territory, and former Soviet troops still stood on German, Polish and Baltic soil. Was the Kremlin in control?

At the UN on 31 January 1992, Yeltsin presented a 'new Russia' that, unlike the still developing People's Republic of China, had freed itself from the 'yoke of Communism' and left 'tyranny' behind; its 'new foreign policy' was committed to disarmament, co-operation, and peace abroad. He considered 'America and the West' not merely 'partners' but 'allies'.[42] Yeltsin repeated the same message to Bush privately that same day. Although James Baker, the secretary of state, would subsequently call this meeting 'truly special and historic' by moving Russo-American relations 'beyond containment', Bush was unmoved at the time.[43] He kept the language of 'allies' out of their joint *communiqué*. 'We are using transitional language', Bush explained, 'because we don't want to act as if all our problems are solved'.[44]

Almost as soon as the meeting ended, Bush found himself preoccupied with his doomed re-election campaign amid recession and riots, whilst Yeltsin returned to confront even bigger problems: a hostile Russian Parliament frustrated by soaring inflation, massive food shortages, rampant corruption, and extreme poverty. The scale of the Russian problem preoccupied both Washington and Berlin. Bush wanted to appear as leading but struggled with a sceptical Congress, hostile Pentagon, and divided American public opinion, all reluctant to help their lifelong antagonist. By the summer, the Germans were alarmed. At the Munich G7 summit, Horst Köhler of the German Ministry of Finance proclaimed, 'We cannot finance the transition in its entirety …. That is not feasible'.[45] With all the Big Seven afflicted by slow growth, high interest rates, chronic budget deficits, and serious unemployment levels, they bickered at Munich over a response. Global economic governance seemed stalled – more competition than co-operation.[46]

Crucially, Munich was the moment when Yeltsin decided that he would not go 'down on his knees' to beg for money or a seat at the summit table. As Robert Strauss, America's ambassador at Moscow, explained to Bush, Yeltsin did not want to be 'the exotic visitor from a different world'. He wanted to be 'accepted as an established friend'. The trouble was that since Russia was no longer capable of 'unilateral action on the world scene', it was effectively forced to look for a 'special bilateral relationship with the United States' to secure its 'continued place at the big table'. Such 'lockstep' with Washington would ultimately be inadmissible in Moscow, Strauss believed, because Moscow held an 'abiding determination that it remain a great power' that other Great Powers would have to 'respect as co-equal'.[47]

Strauss was not wrong. As 1992 ended, there was a heightened sense that for all of Yeltsin's pro-democracy rhetoric earlier in the year, Russia was in fact still 'groping for an identity and a place in the world'.[48] In December, the more traditionalist Viktor Chernomyrdin replaced the reformist Gaidar, whilst Yeltsin's policy of restraint in the former Soviet space was coming increasingly under attack by conservatives within his own government as well as opponents in the Supreme Soviet to whom the former Soviet Army's retreat from Eastern Europe felt a particular humiliation. Russian reluctance to take historical responsibility for Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and pull out its military by due process created much anxiety in the Baltic Sea area. Clearly, Russia's move from imperial to a post-imperial sense of self, if attainable – or even desirable – was going to be a thorny road.[49]

The CEE worried about Russia's future intentions and the viability of their transformation processes in the face of international uncertainty. However, in June, at the Oslo North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting, the American deputy secretary of state, Lawrence Eagleburger, gave an interesting signal when stating, 'we need not … mistake alliance stability for inflexibility. Indeed, even the very composition of the alliance may need to expand, at the appropriate time, taking full account of our rigorous democratic standards and the need to preserve the strong fiber of common Defense'.[50] American policy had become more forthright about an open NATO door – despite beliefs such a prospect was at least several years, if not a decade, away.[51]

What America had to determine were the positions of its key Western European allies and how to forge a common NATO line? In this regard, American attention focused on the 'critical' issue of the future handling of Russia. Washington could certainly not accept what it considered Britain's dogmatic view, namely that Russia could never join NATO. Such a course would be 'interpreted by Russians as a long-term strategy to isolate it from Europe'. America should thus downplay any discussions on the need for collective defence against a resurgent Russian threat.[52] Yet, tackling the Russia question was not uncomplicated. Yeltsin liked to talk about 'integration', but would Russia ever want to give up sovereignty or submit to pre-

existing rules and frameworks, such as those of the EU or even NATO? Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev shed some light here, spelling out that he was pursuing 'a special relationship' with the EC/EU, not 'membership, but close cooperation'. Likewise, he was keen on Russia joining GATT and a NATO partnership.[53] He did not think of the Alliance as a 'threat', though it was clear that an 'increase in NATO ties with CEE states' affected Russian internal politics negatively.[54] Russian hostility towards NATO enlargement was thus an obvious risk, or cost, for the West – one, it seemed, the Bush Administration was ready to accept.[55] Time would have to tell how to square the circle of Russia's place in Europe with that of Russia's place in the world.

For the moment, given extreme Russian volatility, Bonn and Washington focused on the devil they knew – Yeltsin. Bush by then was on his way out – having lost his re-lection bid to the young and dynamic Democrat, Clinton. Therefore, the stage was Kohl's. In December 1992, on his first trip to the Kremlin since Soviet collapse, Helmut made every effort to woo Boris, his new 'friend' in need, hoping that Yeltsin would manage to stay the course. He expressed confidence that Yeltsin would overcome 'with great vigour' his country's problems: to that end, he announced $11.2 billion of debt relief for Moscow until 2000 and offered an extra $318 million towards new housing in Russia for former Soviet troops, whose complete withdrawal from Germany Yeltsin agreed to fast-forward by 31 August 1994.[56]

Kohl and Yeltsin, at this pivotal hour, stood at the beginning of a '*Männerfreundschaft*' – male bonding – a new kind of special, personalised Russo-German relationship marked by an immense optimism about Russia's future as a parliamentary democracy under a reformist president. Interestingly, within months, at their July 1993 meeting with plenty of straight talking in the sweltering *banya* on the shores of Lake Baikal, relations would gain a new level of intimacy. The famous 'sauna friendship' had been born.[57] How Clinton would relate to this male duo and their budding bromance and what, if any, new impeti he would bring to the negotiating table, was anyone's guess.

The mood in America remained decidedly inward looking when Bill Clinton, a former governor from Arkansas, took office in January 1993. Without any foreign policy experience, he was fixated on one overriding goal: reviving the American economy. To this end, he proclaimed, 'I will elevate economics in foreign policy, create an Economic Security Council, similar to the National Security Council, and change the State Department's culture so that economics is no longer a poor cousin to old-school diplomacy'.[58] Yet, Clinton did not arrive in Washington with a pre-set play-book or grand strategy. Only over the course of his two terms in office did 'an increasingly coherent policy' emerge; and it did so 'in response to events on the ground and as the Administration's own views matured'.[59]

The Clinton White House priorities nevertheless soon became clear. The new president wanted to ramp up American support for democratic reform in Russia and raise the profile of economic themes in United States engagement abroad, the latter entailing the ratification of the North America Free Trade Agreement, finalising the GATT Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, and jumpstarting Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation. Yet, to Clinton's chagrin, he first had to tend to crises in Somalia and Haiti, whilst in Europe, the 'Balkan Tragedy' worsened by the day.[60] When it came to Europe's security architecture and the Russia-*Zwischeneuropa*-NATO conundrum, 'enlarging and modernising' the Alliance was not part of a Clintonite 'preexisting grand design'.[61] His Administration's efforts would build on the legacies – draft plans for a 'democratic "zone of peace"' – left by the Republican predecessors.[62]

With constant concern about 'Eastern' volatility, the more general perspective took hold that the enlargement of the space of stability, democracy, and market economies from the former 'West' to other parts of Europe could be the most important means to eliminate *Zwischeneuropa*. The goal: to alignthe Europe of institutions with the Europe of the map. Americans and their European allies understood that a single 'overarching structure' could not deal with the great variety of security challenges facing a diverse continent; these ranged from the bloody Yugoslavian wars to shaky new CEE polities to the need to secure former Soviet nuclear weapons and materials. Accordingly, they began working towards a *system* in which *all* existing institutions – EU, WEU, the Conference, later Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], and NATO – could be adapted and transformed to play complementary and mutually supporting roles across the continent.

Still, when it came to 'hard security', all eyes were on the Atlantic Alliance; and all wanted to work closely with Moscow – to dampen, and where possible, eliminate the most dangerous residues of Cold War competition and rivalry, whilst looking to assist Yeltsin, financially and politically, in the complex struggle to re-form his vast country.[63] Ignored was Yeltsin's desire to subordinate NATO and all the other organisations to the CSCE/OSCE as the overarching structure. Clinton telephoned Yeltsin almost as soon as he had stepped into Oval Office. 'Now that I have become President', he said, 'I want to re-emphasize with you my commitment that Russia be a top priority for U.S. foreign policy during my Administration. I am determined that, together, we create the closest possible U.S.-Russia partnership' and 'use the power of our two countries for the good'. Keen quickly to get close and personal with his new American counterpart, Yeltsin was 'anxious to meet' and 'know you as "Bill"'. The ice had been broken – Bill and Boris were off to good start.

Clinton also conferred with Kohl. He sought 'counsel and advice' from the experienced chancellor – now ten years in office – whilst Kohl underlined his desire for a close 'personal relationship' and 'cooperation' with America

'across the board'.[64] Kohl also was desperate to assure Clinton over 'Maastricht Europe'.[65] A few weeks later in late March, during their first meeting, he stated that it was not a choice *between* 'Europe' and 'the U.S'. Rather Germans wanted 'European unity' *and* 'good U.S.-European relations'. We, he insisted, 'want America to be with us and American troops to stay in Germany'. He had laid a marker on German loyalty to the transatlantic relationship. As regards Russia, both spelled out their overriding worry: that Yeltsin could fall if economic and political transformation did not soon take root in the country. This could mean trouble for peace and stability in the heart of Europe. Kohl's 'simple philosophy' was 'if we do not assist Yeltsin then he has no chance. If we do assist him he has a chance, but his survival is not certain. If he is toppled then things will be much worse and more expensive for the West, which would have to re-arm'. In Kohl's view, 'the best improvement in NATO's security' would therefore 'come from investing in democracy and market structures in Russia'.[66] This 'paramount challenge', however, was not simply an American or even bilateral matter. The rest of the G7 would have to co-operate with them.[67]

Kohl further warned: 'The Russians are proud people' and the West should not 'allow the feeling to develop in Russia that they are victims'. Clinton personally ought to lead. 'Money counts, but so does psychology, and that must be tied to people'. Kohl was putting his stake on Yeltsin even if that involved a risk. In Clinton, Kohl had found his perfect partner to deal with the Russian leader. They were in tune and rapidly built trust as only allies could whose 'chemistry' was right.[68] 'The most important thing . . . is that we are together in support of Yeltsin', Clinton replied, not merely 'as a person but as the embodiment of our values'.[69] From the outset, he and Kohl clearly believed in the power of their rather person-oriented, *mano-a-mano* policy style. They thus entertained high hopes for their investment in Yeltsin's political success.

All winter , ahead of a referendum on his economic reform policies and a vote of confidence in him set for 25 April 1993, Yeltsin was embroiled in a serious power struggle with rivals in Russia's Congress of People's Deputies. When Clinton met Yeltsin for summit talks in Vancouver in early April – three weeks before Yeltsin's moment of destiny – Russia was in 'great disorder'.[70] Unlike previous summits, economics – not security – dominated the agenda. In this way, Vancouver appeared a watershed. 'We are friends and partners, Bill', Yeltsin told Clinton. Russia 'pursues equitable relations in foreign policy', he added. 'When you come, you will see a real difference in Russia . . .. It is a country that has felt freedom and civil liberties'. So 'when you label us as Communists, we get offended'. Of course, he admitted, 'we will have difficulties along the road, but we will manage'. Whilst both knew that much of this rhetoric reflected mindless optimism, they at least shared a non-antagonistic, common vision as they tried to envisage the future. According

to Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who joined them for lunch, they seemed 'to be getting along like a house afire'.[71] None of this could however detract from the harsh political realities of a lengthening 'unipolar moment' – the fact that over the past 12 months, the disparity between Russian and American power had widened.

Yeltsin desperately needed dollars. Russia could only pay $2.5 billion in 1993 – owed to the International Monetary Fund [IMF] – on all of its outstanding foreign debt obligations. And while Russian-era debt ran at $9 billion, the Kremlin, after agreement with the NIS that April, now also owned all the assets *and* crucially the foreign liabilities – some $109 billion – of the former Soviet Union; it added up to an astronomical total sum of $114 billion, circa 50% of Russian GDP.[72] Yeltsin also needed the West's goodwill. Russia's main creditors were the industrialised countries (Paris Club) commercial banks (London Club), and some of its former communist bloc countries. Owed some $40 billion, Germany remained Russia's most important creditor by far. Still, Yeltsin knew that he could count on Clinton and Kohl because, to them, Russia really mattered, and they were keen to have the G7 and EU share the burden. Ultimately, Yeltsin did not walk away empty-handed from Vancouver. Clinton presented him with a $1.6 billion dollar package intended to help promote free-market skills at the grass-roots level across Russia.[73]

To make the summit a success, Yeltsin had worked hard on the optics of equality between the Big Two. He made certain he held his own in areas where he retained political influence, for example, applying linkage between human rights of ethnic Russians outside Russian territory and troop withdrawals from the Baltics. He also took a firm stance on Russia's influence in the 'near abroad' and the 'role of the Russian army in Abkhazia, in Moldova and in Tadjikistan'. When it came to military reach, Russia was still a Power with sway.[74] And in preparing for the press conference, the Russians insisted to the Americans, 'we had better not use the word "assistance"(*pomoshch*)', but co-'"support" (*sovpoderzhka*) or "cooperation" (*sotrudnichestvo*)'. Clinton quipped that he would say 'partnership'.[75] Public relations was a most important aspect of this meeting, helping Yeltsin's politically survival at home. Otherwise, Vancouver produced few tangible results.[76]

Hoping to influence Russian politics with financial tools – backed by the World Bank, IMF, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – the G7 decided on 15 April 1993 to offer a $43.4 billion assistance plan towards currency stabilisation efforts and delay 1992–1993 debt repayments to 2003. Money for Moscow in truth meant money for Yeltsin ahead of the Russian referendum.[77] It worked. At the end of the month, 58.7% of Russian voters affirmed their trust in Yeltsin and 53% approved his socioeconomic approach. Clinton and Kohl were pleased. They had both happily thrown their support behind the Russian president, and he had pulled through. Looking to their joint tasks and challenges ahead, Kohl told Clinton: 'your success is my

success'. They were definitely working together and for the long haul – hopefully from now on with a bit more predictability on Russia's part.[78] As in Vancouver, the July 1993 Tokyo G7 was an all-out effort to present Yeltsin as an equal participant and'a bridge' between the club's 'European and Asian flanks'.[79] And thanks to Clinton and Kohl, Yeltsin appeared to have earned a recurring if not permanent part in the Group's meetings. Yet, the Kremlin's goal of full 'practical integration of Russia into the world economy' and official G7 membership remained elusive. There was no declaration of the 'eight' as Yeltsin had hoped.[80]

Trust in Yeltsin's staying power was difficult to maintain as long as his tug-of-war with the Supreme Soviet – partly democratic, partly a Soviet relic – persisted, whilst Russia's economy continued to spiral out of control. Nevertheless, Yeltsin managed to hang on thanks to increasingly autocratic rule. In late September, he disbanded – in violation of the Constitution – the Supreme Soviet and Congress of People's Deputies, announcing parliamentary elections to a new State Duma and Federation Council on 12 December 1993. After thwarting an apparent putsch, he got further public acceptance for a new constitution built around a strong presidency the same month. Yet, as if to underline the increasingly undemocratic trend in Russian politics, new Duma elections brought a surprising defeat for reformers. Vladimir Zhirinovsky and his ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party gained a major victory with 22.92% of the votes. Having campaigned on reincorporating the former Soviet republics into Russia, Zhirinovsky's electoral success brought Russia's post-imperial trauma clearly into the open. His rise and great popularity amongst retreating ex-Soviet armed forces personnel especially shocked the Germans, with the German media extensively reporting about the rise of a 'Russian Hitler'.

Despite these threatening domestic undercurrents, when Yeltsin called Clinton shortly after, his voice had a fresh confidence. 'With a new Parliament', he explained, 'the mood in our society has turned toward the economic agenda, and we are again busily engaged in the reform effort. We have our government in place. And we still have a President, and that President will ... stay in office until June 1996'. Yeltsin was in a bullish mood; his next elections would take place in the same year as Clinton's – they were, after all, in the same boat and on a par.[81]

Unable to translate his success in the domestic power struggle into desired outcomes in foreign policy, Yeltsin's euphoria proved short-lived. Clinton, in turn, having followed Russia's stormy trajectory for 12 months, now was convinced that NATO ought to open up. If the West gave the CEE the 'cold shoulder', they might find themselves "reabsorbed within the 'Russian ambit' in less than a decade.[82] Recent events unsurprisingly sent chills across the continent – particularly in Germany, Estonia, and Latvia, where Russian troops remained stationed, as well as the keenly integrationist Central

European Visegrad 4 group: Poland, Hungary, and the quietly divorced Czech and Slovak republics. Whilst these latter four ratcheted up pressure on the Alliance regarding membership, the Balts reacted by publicly announcing for the first time their desire to join NATO to 'consolidate the democratic gains of the past few years on the European continent'.[83] Deep in Europe's psyche, serious unnerving reawakened about Russia as the exuberant East-West love affair of 1992–1993 appeared to be rapidly cooling.

Visiting Yeltsin in January 1994, Clinton had 'mixed impressions of the situation in Moscow', as he summed it up for Kohl. Continuing to believe in 'Yeltsin's government's commitment to reform', he worried about its lack of an 'articulated [economic] strategy', Yeltsin's disconnect from the Russian people, and the perennial foreign policy problem areas, not least the neuralgic points: Ukraine and the Baltics. Clinton again leaned on Kohl for support: 'I think he believes you and I know him best and are his biggest supporters in the outside world. I would appreciate it if you would call him'. Kohl agreed to do so[84]; and two weeks later, in Washington, DC, he reported back.[85] Clinton's visit 'had been a success'; he had done 'many things' that had given Yeltsin – who was 'sensitive, even soft' – a real 'psychological boost'. Yeltsin, Kohl added, 'has told me that you and I are the only ones trying to help. I told him that you are serious'.

Keen on banishing any 'fatalism' about the 'prospect' of a 'bad bear',[86] Kohl and Clinton remained fixated on Yeltsin as a friend with whom they could do business.Others were more sceptical. In February 1994, Clinton's national security advisor, Anthony Lake, felt that 'the country is already going to the bad' and was adamant that Washington 'should not encourage the Russians to think that they can interfere in various questions in a negative way because we have given them the status of "partner"'.[87] Similarly, the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Lee H. Hamilton, judged, 'relations with Russia were seen increasingly as rivalry rather than partnership'.[88] Despite the split between pessimists and optimists,[89] Western policy-makers remained intent on retaining Russian co-operation. Kohl and Clinton were trying to hammer out a mutually acceptable solution to secure Europe with Yeltsin in ways that would calm the nerves of the Europeans *in-between*, satisfy the 'old' Allies, whilst avoiding playing into Russian fears of isolation or, worse, encirclement. Long-lasting security for all could only be achieved with, not against, Russia.[90]

Throughout 1993, the issues of European security and NATO's future role and size had gained political traction. Behind the scenes, the Clinton team further pondered and developed the designs of the Bush Administration. As the political dynamics started shifting and the NATO question entered public debate, all sides began considering varying pathways and converting them into operational policies. It was in this phase that Europe's post-Cold War security architecture began taking shape in earnest.

Just over a month into Clinton's presidency, on 3 March 1993, Manfred Wörner, NATO's secretary general, had proposed in a private conversation with Warren Christopher, the secretary of state, holding a NATO summit later that year. Such a summit could publicise 'NATO's outreach to the East' and the region's 'ongoing transformation', whilst pointing out that integrating former Warsaw Pact states 'into the NATO orbit' remained difficult due to Russia's 'unstable and unpredictable' situation. Still, as Wörner explained, 'pressure' from the CEE 'to move closer to NATO' was growing, not least because of 'anxiety over potential instability at home and in the region'. Combined with the question of eventual EC/EU and possibly WEU membership by 'traditional European neutrals [Sweden, Switzerland, and Austria]' – 'the issue whether a state could join' was irrevocably on the agenda.[91] However, with Clinton focused on Yeltsin and Russia, and much of the Administration deeply involved in the Somalia crisis and torn over the question of American-Allied military engagement in the wars in former Yugoslavia, others saw an opportunity to step into limelight with their own, competing proposals.

On 26 March 1993, the day Clinton and Kohl first met in Washington, German Defence Minister Volker Rühe gave a landmark speech on 'Shaping Euro-Atlantic Policies: A Grand Strategy for a New Era' in London in which he lobbied for NATO to open its door to aspiring CEE candidates. Rühe was the first ministerial-level Allied official to make this case publicly. Even more strikingly, he consciously chose not to consult or inform his chancellor or foreign minister of his *démarche*. He had drafted the lecture with his trusted chief of policy planning, Admiral Ulrich Weisser, alone – wanting to make his own geostrategic mark.[92]

'Eastern Europe must not become a conceptual no-man's-land', Rühe insisted. Without the CEE, strategic unity in Europe would remain an illusion. For him, NATO's opening was a precondition for European integration because building a common market without a common security umbrella would be impossible. Moreover, Rühe felt 'morally obliged' to 'ensure that those countries that had enabled us all to overcome the division of Europe and the division of Germany enjoyed the same sense of security that we did'. Opening Western institutions was urgent; the Atlantic Alliance should not become a 'closed shop'.[93] Generally, successful reforms in *Zwischeneuropa* was the 'greatest strategic challenge' because 'if the West does not stabilize the East, then the East will destabilize the West'. A strategic vacuum would see conflict over spheres of influence between Russia and the West that could be in nobody's interest.[94] Rühe was adamant about finding balance between 'co-operation' with Russia and the 'integration' of East-Central Europe. He would later write that the correct approach to Moscow entailed taking practical steps

so that Russia would be recognised and could feel itself as NATO's strategic partner, whilst ensuring that its special status would not hinder NATO's integration process of new partner countries.

Apart from enthusiasm in Eastern Europe, Rühe's remarks received an 'icy' reaction, and not just from the NATO ambassadors in attendance. At home, he was criticised by military top brass for going it alone, especially since the chancellor remained reticent on enlargement; the retired but still towering figure Genscher was openly against the idea; and his successor, Klaus Kinkel, was completely undecided.[95] As German officials bluntly told their American colleagues: 'Rühe's views did not represent mainstream thinking in Bonn'.[96] Ironically, 'within several years every one of Rühe's core ideas would be embraced by the U.S. and would become official Alliance policy'.[97]

In Washington, Congressional Republicans especially, but also Clinton's foreign policy team, duly noted Rühe's speech.[98] What moved the president, however, were meetings with four Central European leaders who visited Washington on the opening of the Holocaust Museum in April. Poland's president, Lech Walesa, did not hold back, warning Clinton: 'We are all afraid of Russia . . .. If Russia again adopts an aggressive foreign policy, that aggression will be directed toward Ukraine and Poland. The United States', Walesa stressed, 'needed to prevent this from happening'.[99] Czech President Václav Havel and his Slovakian counterpart, Michal Kováč, were more diplomatic. They did not see any 'imminent threats' but wanted 'very much to be part of NATO'. Havel further pressed the civilisational theme: Czechs were 'Europeans who embrace European values', he declared.[100] Hungarian President Árpád Göncz, in turn, used military language describing Hungary as a front-line state between a war-torn Yugoslavia and a chaotic Ukraine. The CEE should not be 'buffer states', he stressed, but rather 'extensions of the West'.[101]

Clinton seemed affected by what he heard. Soon after, he apparently asked Lake, 'Tony, why can't we do this'.[102] The president was beginning to come round to thinking actively about NATO's opening and its wider implications. By June, when French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur floated the idea of a 'Security Pact' amongst European nations, Clinton made no secret that he was no fan. He applauded 'European integration, including a security component', but he stated firmly, 'at the same time, I want to emphasize that NATO remains key, and we are committed to it'. What Balladur's initiative indicated, Clinton conceded, was that 'the nature' and 'goals' of the Atlantic Alliance" needed clarification. In this vein, he was now ready to hold and lead a NATO summit.[103]

The Bosnian meltdown – combined with Russia's instability – gave Clinton a fresh sense of urgency that America had to tackle 'NATO's future'. If he and NATO did nothing and the Bosnian situation worsened, public perception of the Alliance and Euro-American relations 'could suffer serious damage'. It

boiled down to the 'simple question of US credibility in the world', Lake told British officials.[104] The Balkan's genocidal wars acted as a catalyst for crucial Alliance decision-making: how the Euro-Atlantic security order was to be re-made.[105]

In the August 1993 *NATO Review*, Christopher wrote: 'At an appropriate time, we may choose to enlarge NATO membership'.[106] That moment, he stressed, 'is not now on the agenda'. First, 'we need more quiet consideration amongst Allies, and less public discussion'. In Washington, Lake had launched a policy review process to look at NATO options in Eastern Europe.[107] 'In light of the potentially difficult and dangerous challenges that still lie before many CEE states', he asked on 5 July, 'should we begin to plan now for eventual incorporation into NATO of some or all of them? If so, should we develop criteria and timetables? What effects would such steps toward expansion have on NATO's credibility and unity, on the security environment in CEE and on Russia?' He underlined that America had 'a major stake in the success of reform in CEE'. The consolidation of market democracy in the 'center of Europe' was crucial for the 'extension Western values and institutions eastward'.

Whilst American officials debated the merits and pitfalls of widening NATO,[108] the West received 'sensational news' on 25 August.[109] Yeltsin and Walesa had signed a *communiqué* that suggested that Moscow did not object to Poland joining NATO. Considering that Kozyrev rejected such an idea only days earlier, everybody was stunned.[110] What is more, not only did the Russian president make similar noises next day in Prague, Yeltsin also announced the pull-out of all remaining former Soviet troops from Lithuania and Poland soon after his visit to Central Europe.[111] Had Moscow's position become amenable to NATO's eastern enlargement?

To Warsaw's chagrin, Yeltsin's apparent generous behaviour produced muted Western reaction at best. The American ambassador to Russia, Thomas Pickering, warned Washington that Yeltsin had 'made gestures to his hosts during previous visits abroad that were quickly walked back by his government'.[112] He was right. In a letter to Clinton in September 1993, which also went to Kohl, Mitterrand and John Major, the British prime minister, and within days leaked to the press,[113] Yeltsin argued that although Moscow was 'sympathetic' to East European concerns, joining NATO was not the answer. 'A truly pan-European security system' was. In addition, he advocated that Russo-NATO relations ought to be 'a few degrees warmer' than those of the 'Alliance with eastern Europe'. As if to justify his anti-NATO position, Yeltsin claimed, 'the *spirit* of the treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany … and especially its provisions that prohibit the deployment of foreign troops within the eastern lands of the Federal Republic of Germany, precludes the option of expanding the NATO zone into the East'. This was akin to a small political bomb.[114]

Over the next weeks, Christopher, Kinkel, and his advisor, Dieter Kastrup, plus Wörner, discussed 'Yeltsin's comments about the Final Settlement 2 + 4'. The Germans recognised the political and psychological substance of Yeltsin's remarks but made clear they considered his 'reference "formally" wrong relating to NATO expansion'.[115] Wörner felt even more strongly, stating bluntly, 'the West should reject any relationship between that settlement and NATO's expansion'. After all, Eastern Europe had not been addressed in the 2 +4 Treaty; it did not touch on NATO's *future* boundaries in any way. Here, in Yeltsin's letter, was effectively a first rewriting of history by Russia, with potential far-reaching geopolitical consequences.

In a mood of push back, Wörner pressed his colleagues towards '"anchor-[ing] some of these [CEE] nations once and for all to the West"'. He sensed a 'historic moment of opportunity regarding NATOs engagement in the East'. If lost, who knew if it would occur again? NATO now had to speak clearly; it could not 'leave Eastern Europe out in the cold'. Wörner did not touch on the Baltic States. He merely suggested in general terms not ignoring former Soviet Union countries, whilst Russia and Ukraine would probably require a special relationship. Amongst all this, what crystallised was the NATO's secretary generals' conviction that enlargement had to be 'the centrepiece' of an upcoming summit. That theme was to turn the conference into 'dramatic moment for the Alliance'.[116]

Kohl meanwhile stuck to his Russia-first approach. The NATO summit should concentrate on the Alliance's 'restructuring and reorienting', whilst the CEE needed telling that they 'could count on NATO support but not membership'.[117] Speaking to Clinton, he mused, 'I do have my doubt about the possibility of these countries joining NATO and becoming part of it', to which the American replied, 'My thinking along those lines is very similar to yours'.[118] Uncertainty over what were realistic expectations and reasonable calculations dominated their mood as Yeltsin was quite literally battling it out to stay in power in Moscow.

The Clinton Administration's internal debate over NATO's future and expansion assumed a new intensity in October 1993 – in the aftermath of the unruly Russian events.[119] With the president's backing, Lake had taken the offensive with a 21 September speech at SAIS-Johns Hopkins University. Entitled 'From Containment to Enlargement', its nub was *not* NATO expansion. Instead, Lake presented what would become the American strategy of global engagement. This included the broadening out of the community of democracies worldwide. Still, he saw NATO as a stabilising force in Europe – an 'anchor' for trans-Atlantic stability that should come with an updated provider role of 'essential collective security' in a 'new era'.[120] The Alliance would have to work hard jointly to redefine a common future. But inside America, too, a compromise was needed between those promoting 'protectionism' and those lobbying for active American 'engagement abroad'.[121]

When it came to Europe's military security, there was the further serious issue of bridging the internal divide between Russia-sceptics – pressing for rapid NATO expansion – and Russia-
firsters – worried about Moscow's reactions and seeing no advantages in offering Alliance membership to the CEE for what could they contribute to common defence.[122]

The White House decided to commit in principle to enlargement at the January NATO summit but avoided articulating any criteria and specifying timing or potential candidates. Concurrently, looking to confront the Balkan crisis together with Russia whilst seeking to square the enlargement conundrum under CEE pressure, it helped lay out a new, more inclusive pathway, Partnership for Peace [PfP]. PfP would be open to neutral and non-aligned nations as well as the CEE, the Balts – who Clinton recently met for the first time[123] – Russia, and Ukraine, plus other NIS. Under its aegis, Europe would 'be defined not by geographical boundaries but by a state's affirmation of the principles of the agreement and its active participation in NATO's PfP'.[124]

Crucially, whilst some in the Pentagon preferred to see in PfP a substitute for enlargement, Rühe and Wörner – like Lake and Christopher – fixated on the portrayal of PfP as a stepping-stone to full membership at some undefined later date[125] – something to which the *Zwischeneuropa* states clung.[126] As the United States began setting priorities, it started drawing its own lines in the former Soviet space. That autumn, Tallinn noted that the 'Baltic exceptionalism' of the Cold War years was back. Nicholas Burns, responsible for the former Soviet Union at the National Security Council, informed Estonian diplomats that America did not intend to 'treat the Baltic states the same way' as 'other former Soviet regions'. Washington would be tough with Russia about Baltic aspirations. Estonians were pleased, but equally worried about America's implied willingness to accept a Russian sphere of influence elsewhere.[127] Was a second Yalta in the offing?[128] Burns later admitted to the Estonian foreign minister that the United States was trying to define the boundary of American interests. Such frontier was running 'somewhere in the Caucasus'.[129]

The PfP's launch signalled in effect a two-track Alliance eastern policy: the aim eventually to open NATO to new members, albeit slowly and cautiously, whilst combining this approach with an expanded effort to engage Russia. How it would work depended on whether the 'good bear'[130] would prevail – who, in Yeltsin's words, wanted to enjoy 'its natural admission' to the 'Euro-Atlantic space'[131] – or whether Russian intentions would ultimately 'turn sour'.[132]

Warning signs of the latter were certainly already apparent in late 1993. Hardliners on the Supreme Soviet aside, Yeltsin had to confront the anti-reformist security and military apparatus, especially the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service [SVR], formerly a branch of the Soviet secret police.

Headed by Yevgeni Primakov, the SVR published a rare 'open' report on NATO enlargement in November, arguing that as long as the character of the Alliance remained unchanged, its expansion in Russia's direction would require a 'fundamental rethink' in Moscow of Russia's defence policies. NATO remained a threat, and Russia should not be 'indifferent' to developments that affected 'its interests'. Indeed, 'renewed Russia' ought to have its opinion taken into account by the West.[133] Primakov's assertive move not only raised pressure on Yeltsin to embrace the hardliners more. It served as a direct personal challenge to the pro-Western Kozyrev – indeed, in the same way perhaps that Primakov had previously undermined Kozyrev's Soviet predecessor, Eduard Shevardnadze.[134] Conservative-nationalist forces were clearly gaining ground and tightening their grip – born out in the Duma elections later that month.

Yeltsin remained relatively unfazed – confident of riding out the stormy domestic waters. Hearing from Christopher about PfP for the first time, he thought it a 'brilliant idea', a 'stroke of genius', because 'all countries in CEE and NIS would be on equal footing and there would be a partnership and not a membership'.[135] Crucially Russia would be no 'second-class citizen'. When Christopher added about considering membership 'in due course' – 'a longer term eventuality' – Yeltsin did not engage. It was as if he had not heard. Had he missed the statement? Or had he chosen to ignore it? He did after all take on board Christopher's subsequent point, affirming Clinton's focus on the 'Russo-American strategic partnership', before proceeding to end the discussion by waxing lyrical about the Clinton Administration's extreme generosity towards Russia and his 'complete trust' in the president and the United States. Ultimately, as this exchange revealed, Russia was more equal than others in Yeltsin's eyes – not least in Europe. That was his focus, and he would carry this theme for the rest of his presidency, especially when it came to Russia's relationship with an enlarging NATO. For the triangular dynamic with Kohl and Clinton, it meant two things. As the chancellor's 'friend', Yeltsin and Russia gathered respect from Germany with access to a steady stream of deutschmarks; as the president's active 'partner', Yeltsin's Russia could appear globally as America's co-
equal. On 10 January at the NATO Council Meeting in Brussels, Clinton declared that PfP set in motion a 'process' that would 'lead to the enlargement of NATO'.[136] Two days later in Prague, he said the question was no longer 'whether' but 'when and how' NATO would welcome new members.[137] For Yeltsin, who wished to see PfP as a replacement rather than stepping-stone to enlargement, this was a heavy blow.[138] The Alliance in turn received a boost. Member-states had pulled together and, in competitive co-operation, they had come up with what seemed a perfect fudge as NATO began to engage in earnest with the East. With the strategy

established, its implementation became key. And here, just as over the previous four years, the question of how to appease the man in the Kremlin and integrate Russia loomed large in the minds of Clinton and Kohl.[139] The German chancellor had a clear view how to proceed:

> Politics is like a marathon. The first 20 kilometers are tough, but the key is to come out strong in the end. You have to want to complete the final lap . . .. Given time, we will be able to bring Yeltsin around on the NATO question. But, this will take a long psychological campaign. We need to present the issue in a way that he comes to see it as his own idea.[140]

'Developing the closest security relations with Russia' formed a crucial prong in Kohl's – as much as Clinton's – *Ostpolitik*. Nobody was sure what form such a relationship would take and how it would materialise, but everyone seemed keen to try to make it work. Russian domestic volatility could mean serious instability and pose a threat to European peace. For Kohl, this was even more reason to 'cultivate close relations'.[141] He thus supported Yeltsin as a leader whom he trusted as a friend but also in whom he had faith as a politician capable of reforming and democratising the vast country and integrating it into the global economy and Western political structures. Dealing with Yeltsin for Kohl was a *Chefsache* – a matter for the boss[142]; he often bypassed Kinkel and the Foreign Ministry, whilst Rühe and the Defence Ministry were left to pursue their own more America and NATO-oriented agenda.

The sauna-rapport between Kohl and Yeltsin was highly symbolic. Helmut was Boris' emotional hub. But he was also Bill's. Whilst Kohl and Clinton quickly became friends, they also weregenuine partners and allies – despite their countries' obvious power asymmetries. They largely acted in harmony and on European security, aligned their strategic goals to ensure peace, stability, democracy, and open markets across the continent. Both were determined to bring to fruition Bush's Europe 'whole and free'.[143]

The new post-Wall Russo-German-American cosiness, however, covered deeper ambiguities; for all the genuine personal sympathies and partner/friendship rhetoric, there was always pragmatic contingency planning – how to safeguard vital interests if Russian reforms failed. German *Russlandpolitik* was a mixture of helping Moscow achieve 'co-operation and integration' whilst equally looking to NATO for 'reinsurance' – *Rückversicherung* – against 'Eastern' chaos spreading 'West'. Bosnia and the 'Balkan Tragedy' showed Western policy-makers Europe's future if eastern and southeastern Europe instabilities remained unaddressed.[144]

To be sure, co-operation with Russia had little to do with political altruism. Rather, it allowed Germany to pursue vital national security interests. Close ties with the Kremlin had helped Kohl bring about a unified Germany in NATO and ensured timely Soviet troop withdrawal from German soil. With money for Moscow, the chancellor proved an energetic advocate of a policy of

steadying Russia. A bigger NATO, as first publicly advocated in early 1993 by Rühe – not the Clinton Administration and against Kohl's initial instincts – was expected to stabilise the continent. Surrounded on all sides by partners and friends. Germany would no longer be the Alliance's eastern front-line state, nor the feared historical hegemon dominating the heart of Europe.[145]

Germany's location did mean that it would have a 'special responsibility in this process'. Whilst Kohl's government did not wait long after the Brussels summit before actively starting to push for Poland's inclusion in the Alliance, Bonn never sought to act unilaterally. The chancellor was an avid advocate of what he considered the European peace project and keenly lobbied for the EU opening to *Zwischeneuropa* as long as aspirant states were ready and could fulfil all admissions requirements. Meanwhile, the 'Alliance as a whole' would undertake NATO's eastern expansion under the 'firm leadership of the United States', said Rühe in 1994.[146]

In all this, Russia's future place and handling remained the key problem. Generally, Kohl's approach, in tandem with Clinton, seemed to work. Not only did constant German and American financial injections facilitate Yeltsin's re-election in 1996, Clinton and Kohl helped Yeltsin with other political successes. Russia's 1993 GATT application went to its successor, the World Trade Organisation, in 1995, the G7 turned into the G8 with Russian membership in 1997, and, the same year, NATO and the Russian Federation signed the 'Founding Act – on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security'. It was to guide relations by building increased trust, unity of purpose, and habits of consultation and co-operation in the new Permanent Joint Council.

This political agreement – which was not a legally binding treaty – committed NATO to carry out its collective defence and other missions by 'ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces'.[147] Significantly, the same would also pertain to the territories of the former Warsaw Pact states, three of whom – Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic – were invited that summer to join NATO. The Alliance had opened its door to the East – and Yeltsin begrudgingly swallowed that pill.

Kohl and Clinton went to great lengths in their efforts to provide window dressing to help with appearances as they developed the Russo-Western 'partnership'. The inconvenient truth as regards Russian unease if not plain unwillingness to integrate seriously and the West's growing suspicions regarding Russian ambitions in its 'near abroad' – *blizhnee zarubezh'e*[148] – had largely been papered over. In the course of the 1990s, Russia sadly lost itself – with democracy stillborn, corruption rampant, and an economy in freefall. Yeltsin may have felt 'nothing but humiliation'[149] after Red Army withdrawal was complete and Russia's post-Cold War strategic loss was plain for all to see on the fiftieth anniversary of Victory Day in May 1995 – but neither Kohl nor Clinton had set out to weaken Russia. Germany's massive financial support

over almost a decade, and the intensity of German-American political engagement with Russia should not be underestimated and by no means taken for granted.

By 1997, the power asymmetries between the American-led Alliance and Russia came inexorably in to view. Clinton kept reassuring Yeltsin that he would 'leave open the possibility of Russia in NATO'.[150] But the personal bonds amongst Yeltsin, Clinton and Kohl could no longer mask the competitive edge that kept pervading Western relations with Russia. Nor could they prevent the growing estrangement between Moscow and Washington and many European capitals, the more Washington took on a globally assertive role, the more forcefully *Zwischeneuropa* pressed westward to NATO and the EU, and the more the men in the Kremlin obsessed over Russian sovereign actions and re-establishing the country's 'Great Power' status.

Complications also arose from the personal dynamics of the budding triangular love affair because Yeltsin – even without alcohol – acted erratically, and Kohl and Clinton responded pragmatically. In front of bigger audiences – and on the domestic front – Yeltsin played the decisive, even peremptory leader who knew what he wanted and insisted on getting it. In private sessions and calls, he tended to switch from assertive to receptive, often becoming susceptible to Kohl's and Clinton's blandishments and suasion. At the same time, Yeltsin liked to joke to make tactical, short-term gains for public presentation. His public persona, projecting self-confidence and exuberance, disguised how pliant, offhand, and informal he could bebehind closed doors.[151]

In this way, despite real strategic shifts that began to occur as the states from Europe *in-between* started joining the 'institutional West', Yeltsin somehow seemed to evade confronting the realities that came into being under his watch. Just as choosing not to hear or engage with what Christopher had said about future Alliance expansion in autumn 1993, Yeltsin seemed to pursue his own fantasy ideas when at the Helsinki summit in 1997. He suggested to Clinton a *secret* 'verbal, gentlemen's agreement' that 'no former Soviet republics would enter NATO'. Even more fancifully, at their last meeting in Istanbul in 1999, he asked Clinton, 'just give Europe to Russia'. America after all was not in Europe. 'Bill, I'm serious', he insisted: 'Give Europe to Europe itself. We have the power in Russia to protect all of Europe, including those with missiles'.[152]

This exchange and specifically Yeltsin's proposal, which utterly ignored the geostrategic realities of the late 1990s and the agency of and choices made by the independent, intermediate states of *Zwischeneuropa*, was wishful thinking. So, too, were perhaps Clinton's views that Yeltsin's election victories had been a 'triumph for democracy'[153] – that history would come to judge Boris Yeltsin kindly because he had been 'courageous and steadfast on the big issues: peace, freedom, and progress'. It was the same Yeltsin, after all, who as early as in

1993, by rewriting the constitution and creating a 'super-presidency', had 'replanted the seeds of autocracy in Russia' that his handpicked successor in the new millennium could set out to exploit.[154]

Notes

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97 Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 32.
98 Ibid.
99 Memcon of Clinton-Walesa talks, 21 April 1993, WJC-DL2015-0780-M, 77–80.
100 Memcon of Clinton-Kovac talks, 21 April 1993, Ibid. 0783-M; "Address by President Vaclav Havel at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.," 22 April 1993, WJC-DL2015-0807-M, 36–45. Cf. Joanna A. Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut: Analysing Poland's Policy towards Russia, 1989–2009* (London, 2010), 64; Kozyrev, *Firebird*, 81.
101 Memcon of Clinton-Goncz talks, 21 April 1993, WJC-DL2015-0133-M.
102 Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 24. See also Jenonne Walker, "Enlarging NATO: The Initial Clinton Years," in Hamilton and Spohr, *Open Door*, 263–75.
103 JMJONES/Sec State cable to CIA for Amb Harriman, 26 June 1993, VRR Case No/Doc F-2007-01893/C06243927. With his European 'Security Pact' idea, Balladur had launched the latest French attempt to nudge America gently out of Europe, whilst eyeing a French leadership role in continental affairs. A year earlier, Mitterrand had challenged Bush by toying with the activation of the EU's military arm – the WEU – in the Balkans. Nothing came of this due to serious internal EU divisions, with Britain and Germany pursuing completely different strategies regarding conflict-resolution in the former Yugoslavia. Obviously, Mitterrand was keen to exploit France's European room for manoeuvre – as a nuclear Power with a seat on the UN Security Council but outside NATO's military structures. He did so hoping to gain political advantages in the post-Cold War world but, significantly, also out of fear over potential American disengagement after the Soviet foe had disappeared. The Americans, for all their stress on partnership with Paris and emphasis on NATO-cohesiveness, were always somewhat suspicious of French manoeuvres and intentions and, in security matters, found bilateral dealings with Bonn and London much more straightforward. See Spohr, *Post Wall Post Square*, 511–13.
104 "Former Yugoslavia: Change in US Policy," July 1993, PREM 19/4513.
105 Cf. Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 76–77, plus Rühe, "Opening NATO's Door," 272–79; Walker, "Enlarging NATO"; Wesley K. Clark, "NATO Enlargement and Russia: A Military Perspective," in Hamilton and Spohr, *Open Door*, 263–75, 549–65; see also Horovitz, "Great Prize," 10–17. Cf. Draft "NATO Summit – The Substantive Framework," 2 July 1993, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-11996/C06569992.

106 Warren Christopher, "Towards a NATO Summit," *NATO-Review* 431/4 (1993), 3–6.
107 Presidential Review Directive /NSC-36, Subj: U.S. Policy Towards Central and Eastern Europe, 5 July 1993, https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/prd/prd-36.pdf.
108 Cf. Vershbow to S/NIS – Eric Edelman et al., Cover letter re: framework paper for the NATO Summit, 2 July 1993, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-11996/C06569991; Draft "NATO Summit – The Substantive Framework," 2 July 1993, Ibid. M-2017-11996/C06569992; Gundersen to Oxman, "NATO Expansion to the East," 20 July 1993, Ibid. M-2017-12009/C17578755.
109 Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 37.
110 Jane Perlez, "Yeltsin "Understands" Polish Bid for a Role in NATO," *NY Times* (26 August 1993). See also USDoS cable [1993-Warsaw-12734], "The Yeltsin Visit: Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future," 1 August 1993. Cf. Kozyrev, *Firebird*, 214–17, Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 47–48.
111 Richard Boudreaux, "Deal Clears Way for Russian Pullout from Lithuania," *LA Times* (31 August 1993); Dean E. Murphy, "Last Russian Troops Depart from Poland," Ibid. (19 September 1993). Cf. Jonathan Eyal, "Russia Behaves, but for How Long? The Withdrawal of Russian Troops from the Baltics is a Signal the West Must Act On," *The Independent* (1 September 1994).
112 Pickering quote in Sarotte, "Enlarge NATO", 15. Cf. Pickering to Sec State, 8 October 1993, VRR Case No/Doc Room M-2017-12019/C06554765. See also Talbott, *Russia Hand*, 95–96.
113 Weisser, *Sicherheit für ganz Europa*, 42; Roger Cohen, "Yeltsin Opposes Expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe," *NY Times* (2 October 1993).
114 State Department, "Retranslation of Yeltsin letter on NATO expansion" (15 October 1993): https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4390818/Document-04-Retranslation-of-Yeltsin-letter-on.pdf.
115 State Department cable, 8 October 1993, in Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 49. On the 2 +4 Treaty, German NATO membership, and the "special status" of East German territory (the terrain beyond the Elbe), see Spohr, "Die Geschichte der NATO Osterweiterung". See also notes 20, 22 and 24, above.
116 HKTHOMAS/Sec State cable, 3 September 1993, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-12017/C06555192.
117 Holbrooke/AmEmb Bonn to Sec State, 30 October 1993, WJC-DL2015-0771-M.
118 Telcon Clinton-Kohl, 7 October 1993, WJC-DL.
119 See Weisser, *Sicherheit für ganz Europa*, 44; Sarotte, "Enlarge NATO," 18.
120 Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," at SAIS-JHU (21 October 1993): https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html.
121 Ibid.
122 Stephan Kieninger, "New Sources on NATO Enlargement from the Clinton Presidential Library," 18 February 2020, Blog post, Wilson Center, Washington DC. See also Davis to Sec State, Strategy for NATO's Expansion and Transformation" (7 July 1993): https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/dc.html?doc=4390,816-Document-02-Strategy-for-NATO-s-Expansion-and.
123 Kroos telefax to Pohl, Telefax, 16 October 1993, Ilves to Velliste and Luik, Pruuli, and Einseln, Teema: KIIRARUANNE Eesti olukorrast USAs, 30 September 1993, EV saaatkond Washingtonis to EV President, Aruanne Presidendile, 5 October 1993, all EST VMA [Estonian Foreign Ministry Archive/Eesti Välisministeerium Archiiv, Tallinn] osakond, Ameerika Ühendriigid, poliitised memorandumid ja aruanded, 10.8.-31.12.1993. Estonians asserted to the Americans their firm intention to 'integrate in European organisations incl. in NATO'; and considering NATO's noises of an opening door, the Balts were clear that they did not want to be left out in the cold. See also "White

House Statement on the President's Meeting with Baltic Leaders" (27 October 1993): https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1993-10-04/pdf/WCPD-1993-10-04-Pg1912.pdf; Johnson/AmEmb Vilnius to Sec State, 24 October 1993, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-11495/C06545150.

124 Quote from American Department of Defence options paper – mid-October 1993 – for a Principals' Meeting on 18 October on "Partnership for Peace with General Link to Membership": quoted in Sarotte, "Enlarge NATO," 20. Cf. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 48–51.

125 See Weisser, *Sicherheit für ganz Europa*, 45–51.

126 Memcon of Clinton-Havel/Czech leaders talks, 11 November 1994, Memcon of Clinton-Walesa-Goncz-Kovac-Havel talks, 12 December 1994, both WJC-DLLP-WJC/DOS-16-1; SEISENBRAUN/Sec State to NSC/US Del Sec, 12 December 1994, VRR Case/Doc M-2017-11,497/C06545265. See also JLEVINE/ Sec State to AmEmb Budapest, 9 October 1993, Ibid. M-2017-12,024 /C06555227.

127 T. H. Ilves, Kiiraruanne Eesti olukorrast USAs, 30 September 1993, Estonian Embassy in Washington (EEW), EST VMA, 1.7.1993–31.12.1993.

128 J. Morrison, "Yalta II or Realpolitik?," *Washington Post* (6 September 1994).

129 Meeting between Foreign Minister Jüri Luik, Nicholas Burns, and Robert Frasure, 3 October 1994, EEW, EST VMA, 1.7.1994–31.12.1994.

130 US Del Sec to Sec State, 16 January 1994, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-11649/C06548772.

131 "Christopher meeting with Yeltsin" (22 October 1993): https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/16380-document-08-secretary-christopher-s-meeting

132 Greenstock, "Telegram to Foreign Office: US/Russia, 11 February 1994," PREM 19/5113/2.

133 «Перспективы расширения НАТО и интересы России», ст. 4 (26 November 1993): http://www.yeltsincenter.ru/digest/release/den-za-dnem-26-noyabrya-1993-goda. Cf. NATO report summary, *Izvestiya* (16 November 1993), 4: NSA FBIS-SOV-93-226.

134 On Primakov's role in Shevardnadze's resignation, see Spohr, *Post Wall Post Square*, 363. Cf. Kozyrev, *Firebird*, Chapter 6; Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (Lanham, MD, 2019), 57–94.

135 See note 131, above.

136 "Remarks to the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, January 10, 1994," in Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, *William J. Clinton, 1994*, Book 1: *January 1-July 31, 1994* (Washington, DC, 1995), 19.

137 "The President's News Conferences with Visegrad Leaders in Prague, January 12, 1994," Ibid., 40.

138 Kozyrev, *Firebird*, 253-54.

139 Talbott, *Russia Hand*, 115.

140 Memcon of Clinton-Kohl talks, 5 December 1994, WJC-DL2015-0776-M.

141 Holbrooke/AmEmb Bonn cable to WH WashDC, 8 August 1994, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-11306/C06544293.

142 Weisser, *Sicherheit für ganz Europa*, 98.

143 See Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1990–1994*, 563; "Bush Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz, Germany"; Helmut Kohl, *Berichte zur Lage 1989–1998: Der Kanzler und Parteivositzende im Bundesvorstand der CDU Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf, 2012), 445.

144 Whilst Kohl genuinely hoped to build a stable Russo-German/Western partnership, Germany's co-operative *Russlandpolitik* approach was not pure idealism; it also entailed the cool calculation of seeking to contain the problem of Russian instability and unpredictability through multilateral control. In parallel, Kohl believed both the EU and NATO could only secure *Zwischeneuropa* – socio-economically and politically –

through integrative efforts via enlargement. See Spohr, *Germany and the Baltic Problem*, 132–34; "Weshalb Deutschland die NATO braucht," *GSP-Einblick* 11(October 2020): 3; Kohl, *Erinnerungen, 1990–1994*, 646–47.

145 A 29 January 1992 CIA report, "The United States in the New Europe", notably stated: "On a growing range of issues … the United States is dealing with a more assertive Europe, operating either a formal or informal EC caucus. A politically resurgent Germany is increasingly shaping EC and broader European debates …. Europeans on the whole want a continued US role in the region. East Europeans and smaller EC states are especially clear on this. The Europeans generally see Washington as essential to preserving world stability and, more parochially, to integrating the new Germany into a stable order." The report is in Gompert, ESSG (CF01301-009).

146 Holbrooke/US Office Berlin cable to Sec State, 10 September 1994, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-12044/C06570079; Kohl, *Erinnerungen, 1990–1994*, 644–47.

147 Founding Act – on Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, Paris (27 May 1997): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm.

148 Regarding Western views on Russia's ambitions in its former empire and those policies' incompatibility with any integrationist aspirations, note the following German statements. On 29 March 1993 Kohl told his Party, "Russia would certainly not be[come] a member of a [European] Community, but would rather be tied to us [the West] through association": Kohl, *Berichte zur Lage 1989–1998*, 444. In September 1994, Rühe told an American-sponsored conference in Berlin what Kohl and, perhaps, Clinton could not – the harsh reality that whilst Russia had "special status" as a "major European power," it could be "integrated, neither into the European Union nor into NATO": Holbrooke/US Office Berlin cable to Sec State, 10 October 1994, VRR Case No/Doc M-2017-12044/C06570079. See also William Safire, "ON LANGUAGE; The Near Abroad," *NY Times* (22 May 1994).

149 Memcon of Yeltsin-Clinton talks, 10 May1995, WJC-DL2015–0782-M-1. Cf. Sergey Radchenko, "'Nothing but Humiliation for Russia': Moscow and NATO's Eastern Enlargement, 1993–1995," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 6-7 (2020): 769–815.

150 Memcon Clinton-Yeltsin talks, 21 March 1997, WJC-DL2015-0782-M-2.

151 Talbott, "Boris and Bill".

152 Memcon Clinton-Yeltsin talks, 21 March 1997, WJC-DL2015-0782-M-2; Memcon of Clinton-Yeltsin talks, 19 November 1999, WJC-DL2015-0777-M.

153 Claudia Rosett, Steve Liesman, and Neela Bannerjee, "Can Yeltsin Help Increase Voters' Living Standards?," *Wall Street Journal* (5 July 1996).

154 Fred Weir, "Why Boris Yeltsin's Legacy is Rosier in the West," *Christian Science Monitor* (25 April 2007).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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