

Beyond containment? The first Bush administration's sceptical approach to the CSCE

Sarah B. Snyder

Department of History, University College London, London, UK

This article analyses the first Bush administration's policy toward the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), finding that as with Soviet-American relations and US policy toward Eastern Europe, the administration diverged from the foreign policy of its predecessor. Whereas previously the CSCE had been a forum to encourage progress on human rights, promote reform in Eastern Europe, and encourage cooperation with the Soviet Union, under Bush it became a tool to manage the transformation of Europe and preserve the Atlantic alliance. This new approach was guided by uncertainty about the CSCE's usefulness as a multilateral forum, scepticism about Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, and a preference for stability.

Introduction

Despite his early hesitations about the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Ronald Reagan and his administration were actively involved in the multilateral negotiations and saw the process as useful to advancing their foreign policy objectives.¹ Given George H. W. Bush's eight years as Reagan's vice president, observers might have expected a high degree of continuity in their foreign policies, including on the CSCE. Yet United States CSCE policy was intimately connected with American policies toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; therefore when the new Bush team decided it needed to reevaluate United States policy toward those countries, its stance on the CSCE was subject to revision as well. In the end the Bush administration employed the CSCE very differently than Reagan and his advisors had

Email: s.snyder@ucl.ac.uk

¹ The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was a multilateral conference structure made up of 35 North American and European countries that facilitated confidence building measures, human contacts, and other types of interaction despite the East-West division of Europe.

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done. Whereas the Reagan administration eventually used the CSCE as a forum to encourage progress on human rights, promote reform in Eastern Europe, and encourage cooperation with the Soviet Union, Bush's aides came to see it as a tool to manage the transformation of Europe and preserve the Atlantic alliance, making CSCE policy a further example of discontinuity between the two administrations.²

The scepticism that the Bush administration maintained toward the CSCE was likely due to several factors. First, Bush and his foreign policy team questioned the utility of the CSCE as a multilateral forum as well as some specific commitments made by the previous administration. Second, and perhaps more important, the administration's hesitation about the CSCE fit into a broader picture of distrust of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's programme of reform and Bush's efforts to develop a new approach toward Eastern Europe. Third, the administration prioritised stability over transformation and did not demonstrate a strong commitment to human rights. Given the intersection of these issues, exploring US CSCE policy in these years illuminates some of the principal tenets of Bush's foreign policy.³

As early as his January 1989 confirmation hearings, Secretary of State designee James Baker, who had served in the previous administration as chief of staff and treasury secretary, indicated 'some reservations' about the United States's acquiescence to holding a CSCE conference on the human dimension in Moscow, arguing more progress was needed by the Soviet Union. His pronouncement was a signal that the Bush administration would diverge from Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz's engagement with the Soviets through the Helsinki process.⁴ The Moscow Conference on the Human Dimension, scheduled to be held in 1991 and address human contacts, information, culture, and other issues, was agreed to at the closing session of the Vienna CSCE review meeting. After several years of negotiations, agreement was reached just before the end of Reagan's term, which had been a key objective for Shultz.⁵ The push to complete the talks before Reagan left office indicated an awareness that a new administration could lead to undesirable delays as well as concerns about how Bush might approach the CSCE. Considerable reform on radio jamming, political prisoners, and exit visas had been a condition to United States agreement. State Department officials such as Shultz took great pride in their role in encouraging such progress; Baker's comment therefore foretold a new foreign policy philosophy.

² For more on Reagan's CSCE policy, see Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 135–216.

³ Bush's CSCE policy has not yet received sustained attention in the scholarship on the period.

⁴ Don Oberdorfer, 'Baker Wary of Soviet Rights Meeting', *Washington Post* 19 January 1989, A7. Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott suggest there was early evidence of divergence on Soviet-American relations, arguing that when Reagan visited Gorbachev, Bush declared, 'The Cold War isn't over' and reportedly questioned Reagan's 'sentimentality' for Gorbachev. Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 9. The term Helsinki process refers to the initial Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1972–75) and all of the related, international meetings that followed.

⁵ Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 212.

Perhaps this new approach to the CSCE was due to the considerable improvements in Soviet human rights practices in the final years of Reagan's term. As Baker noted during one of his visits to Moscow:

I would say that we both agreed that progress on the human rights leg of our agenda has been quite good over the past two or three years. The list of refuseniks has dwindled considerably. The Soviet Union is permitting much freer emigration. They are even legislating that into their laws. So, we do have a changed situation. We will always have human rights on our agenda, but there's a different situation than there was three to four and five years ago.⁶

More likely it reflected different priorities. The Bush administration was less concerned with reforming the human rights practices of communist regimes than its predecessor had been. In Bush's 1980 campaign for president, he outlined a realist approach to human rights violations: 'We should consider our strategic interests in the world as well as the human rights question.'⁷ Similarly, Bush's diary entries do not suggest human rights were of great concern to him.⁸ Bush's published writings contrast with those of Reagan in that he does not seem to have been moved in the same way by the plight of individuals in Eastern Europe suffering from human rights violations.⁹ Furthermore, his chief foreign policy aide Brent Scowcroft had been sceptical of emphasising human rights as a priority in United States foreign policy since the 1976 election.¹⁰

Bush's 'strategic pause'

Differences between the Reagan administration's approach toward the CSCE and human rights as opposed to Bush's were connected to a broader project of distinguishing Bush's foreign policy from that of Reagan. According to Baker, Bush 'personally was quite conscious of the need to put his own imprint on policy.'¹¹ In the words of other observers, the Bush administration wanted to pursue a foreign policy that was more than 'Reagan-plus.'¹² As part of Bush's effort to develop his own foreign

⁶ Press Release, 9 February 1990, Folder 20, Box 161, James A. Baker III Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. (Hereafter James A. Baker III Papers.)

⁷ Herbert S. Parmet, *George Bush: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 212.

⁸ George Bush, *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 416. See also Andrew Preston, 'The Politics of Realism and Religion: Christian Responses to Bush's New World Order', *Diplomatic History* 34:1 (January 2010): 104.

⁹ Bush's most emotional response to human rights violations came in relation to the Cambodian genocide. Jeffrey A. Engel, ed. *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush: The Making of a Global President* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 81, 251, 282.

¹⁰ David F. Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft: Internationalism and Post-Vietnam War American Foreign Policy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 57, 63.

¹¹ James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1995), 68.

¹² Derek H. Chollet and James M. Goldgeier, 'Once Burned, Twice Shy? The Pause of 1989', in William C. Wohlforth, ed. *Cold War Endgame: Oral History, Analysis, Debates* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 149.

policy, he initiated a reevaluation of American policy toward the Soviet Union.¹³ According to Baker, Bush wanted to assure himself that ‘Gorbachev was for real.’¹⁴ In Bush’s view, the reassessment of American policy toward the Soviet Union was intended ‘so we can move out in front of Gorbachev.’¹⁵ While the review was underway, Soviet-American relations were largely placed on hold, in what became known as a ‘pause’.

Bush’s strategic pause was about more than proving he was his own man and escaping Reagan’s foreign policy shadow. It also reflected that Bush retained almost none of Reagan’s foreign policy advisors; Colin Powell was one exception. Instead he turned to James Baker, Brent Scowcroft, and Dick Cheney as his chief foreign policy aides; all brought attitudes about negotiations with the Soviets formed in the 1970s, not the Reagan years. Cheney and Scowcroft first gained considerable foreign policy experience in Gerald Ford’s White House with Scowcroft serving as Ford’s National Security Advisor and Cheney as Chief of Staff. The frustration of pursuing détente with the Soviet Union and Reagan’s sharp criticism of the policy in the 1976 election campaign had left Scowcroft and Cheney hesitant to cooperate with Soviet leaders.¹⁶ This led Scowcroft to be, in his own words, ‘very hard-nosed about Gorbachev.’¹⁷ Scowcroft signalled his distrust when shortly after Bush’s inauguration he asserted ‘the Cold War is not over.’ Furthermore, he expressed some caution about the consequences of such an end: ‘There may be, in the saying, light at the end of the tunnel. But I think it depends partly on how we behave, whether the light is the sun or an incoming locomotive.’¹⁸ According to diplomatic historian David Schmitz, Scowcroft’s approach to United States foreign policy was also shaped by what he saw as the failure of Woodrow Wilson’s efforts to ‘transform Europe.’¹⁹ Such an interpretation of Versailles helps to explain the Bush administration’s resistance to reshaping Europe fundamentally after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although Baker played a less influential

¹³ National Security Review – 3, 15 February 1989, <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/nsr.php> (accessed 2 June 2011).

¹⁴ Christopher Maynard, *Out of the Shadow: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2008), 15.

¹⁵ Bush, *All the Best*, 418.

¹⁶ For further discussion, see Chollet and Goldgeier, ‘Once Burned, Twice Shy?’ 143; Sarah B. Snyder, ‘Through the Looking Glass: The Helsinki Final Act and the 1976 Election for President,’ *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 21:1 (March 2010): 87–106; Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft*, 54; and Leo P. Ribuffo, ‘Is Poland a Soviet Satellite?: Gerald Ford, the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, and the Election of 1976,’ *Diplomatic History* 14 (Summer 1990): 385–403. Donald Rumsfeld’s memoirs are also particularly revealing on this point. For example, discussing the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) negotiations, Rumsfeld wrote: ‘I was concerned that the Soviet Union had not proved to be true to its word in previous negotiations. The Soviets were not forthcoming about the level of their defense expenditures. They also appeared to have been violating at least the spirit of the first SALT by concealing missile silos and other military infrastructure.’ Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 229.

¹⁷ See Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft*, 95

¹⁸ David Hoffman, ‘Gorbachev Seen as Trying to Buy Time for Reform,’ *Washington Post* January 23, 1989, A9.

¹⁹ Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft*, 11.

role in Ford's administration, he had run Ford's reelection campaign and thus likely internalised some of the same messages as Cheney and Scowcroft on the toxicity of the pursuit of détente to Ford's reelection hopes. Bush's aides suspected that Gorbachev's reforms were intended to strengthen the Soviet Union at American expense. Their review marked an attempt to avoid seduction by Gorbachev and coolly reevaluate Soviet-American relations. Any evaluation of the administration's approach to the CSCE must be located within an assessment of how the 'strategic pause' shaped its policy toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Bush outlined his new strategy for incorporating the Soviet Union into the broader European and international community and encouraging further democratisation, economic reform, and changes in Soviet foreign policy at a 12 May 1989 commencement speech at Texas A & M University.²⁰ The administration, however, maintained a competitive approach to the Soviet Union. Within the Bush White House, many including Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater were frustrated by what they viewed as a media infatuation with Gorbachev at the expense of Bush and his initiatives. In order to change the narrative and highlight the presumed emptiness of Gorbachev's rhetoric, Fitzwater characterised Gorbachev as engaging in a public relations strategy in a 'drugstore cowboy fashion', intended to highlight that the Soviet leader was making 'promises he can't keep'.²¹ Over the course of 1989, American suspicions subsided as steps by Gorbachev demonstrated that his reforms were more than rhetorical, particularly when he did not intervene in Eastern Europe. For Baker, the Soviet response to the fall of the Berlin Wall demonstrated the United States could work with Gorbachev:

They told us early on they weren't going to use force to keep the empire together. And when they didn't that proved that they were telling us the truth and that they could be trusted and that we could do business with them.²²

In addition, as Bush's term progressed, Soviet and American leaders met and developed personal relationships.

Despite the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union itself remained, in 1989, a heavily armed communist state with which the United States hoped to reduce

²⁰ George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 53–4. In addition, the Bush White House began to think about what a Soviet Union would look like without Gorbachev as its leader. To that end, in an address at the Coast Guard Academy shortly thereafter, Bush again emphasised the need for institutionalisation of reform in the Soviet Union. Parmet, *George Bush*, 386, 388–9; and Maynard, *Out of the Shadow*, x. 39. Many observers, however, were frustrated by the slow pace of the pause and the lack of political innovation it produced.

²¹ Marlin Fitzwater, *Call the Briefing!: Reagan and Bush, Sam and Helen: A Decade with Presidents and the Press* (New York: Random House, 1995), 230–3.

²² Maynard, *Out of the Shadow*, 41. Similarly, the event offered Bush the opportunity to reassure the Soviet Politburo that he would not capitalise on instability in the Soviet sphere of influence. William Forest Harlow, 'And the Wall Came Tumbling Down: Bush's Rhetoric of Silence during German Reunification', in Martin J. Medhurst, ed. *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H. W. Bush* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2006), 43.

tension. After he had been in office for several months, Bush wrote to Gorbachev to propose they meet in person: 'I just want to reduce the chances there could be misunderstandings between us. I want to get our relationship on a more personal basis.'²³ The resulting December 1989 meeting in Malta was the first between the two leaders since Bush took office. In the months leading up to the summit, the Bush administration tried to signal a new stage of Soviet-American relations, one characterised by cooperation and proclaimed to represent a 'New World Order'. Scowcroft later admitted that the Bush administration 'cooked up' the new world order as a framework for presenting the new Soviet-American relationship, and soon after announcing it the White House began disassociating itself from the concept.²⁴

Demonstrating its continued scepticism about Gorbachev's reforms and concerns that he was getting undue international attention for his proposals, the Bush administration put together a 'basket of initiatives' to ensure that Gorbachev could not seize the advantage from Bush at the meeting.²⁵ At Malta, the Bush White House did not intend to shy away from uncomfortable topics such as human rights and regional contacts altogether. Bush planned to press Gorbachev to institutionalise the progress his government was making on human rights and to act on outstanding divided family and refusenik cases.²⁶ Bush also encouraged further improvement, urging Gorbachev to address emigration so that Bush could waive Jackson-Vanik. To that end, Bush gave Gorbachev a list of cases of interest to the United States, noting he hoped that by the subsequent year the United States would have no more lists. Gorbachev reportedly said, 'Let us know how many immigrants you want, and we'll send them to you!'²⁷

At the summit, Bush tried to assure the Soviet leader of his favourable intentions. Meeting with Gorbachev on the U.S.S. *Belknap*, the president said:

I hope you've noticed that as change has accelerated in Eastern Europe recently, we haven't responded with flamboyance or arrogance so as to make your situation more difficult. They say, 'Bush is too timid, too cautious.' I am cautious, but not timid. I've tried to conduct myself in a way so as not to complicate your difficulties.²⁸

Bush's stance was driven by concern about provoking a conservative backlash or crackdown in the Soviet Union, either of which could jeopardise reform there and in Eastern Europe.

²³ Bush, *All the Best*, 433.

²⁴ Bartholomew H. Sparrow, 'Resumption of History: The Rise and Fall of the New World Order', (paper presented at the Society of the History of American Foreign Relations annual meeting, June 2011).

²⁵ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, 144.

²⁶ Theme Paper: US-Soviet Priorities in 1990, 20 November 1989, 2008-1240-MR, Bush Library.

²⁷ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, 158; JAB Notes from 12/2-3/89 Malta Meetings, Folder 12, Box 108, Baker Papers; Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 162-3; White House Fact Sheet on the Meeting With Soviet Chairman Mikhail Gorbachev in Malta, 4 December 1989, bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/papers/1989/89120400.html (accessed 22 May 2006); and Press Themes: Washington Summit, 22 May 1990, www.foia.state.gov/documents/foiadocs/1539.pdf (accessed 6 June 2011).

²⁸ Parmet, *George Bush*, 410-1; and Fitzwater, *Call the Briefing!*, 261.

At Malta, American and Soviet leaders saw evidence of a new relationship. Despite the stormy seas, Bush regarded Malta as 'enormously successful.'²⁹ Bush reported to the press that:

the climate of the meetings was without rancor and without hostility. I remember a time when I first met Mr. Gorbachev and we talked about human rights, and he became visibly agitated with me for raising it. And I think there's been a great evolution in his thinking on that question, and certainly on his relations with the United States, just as there had been an evolution on my thinking.³⁰

Scowcroft regards the Malta meeting as an important turning point in Bush and Gorbachev's personal interaction. Although the initial meeting did not resolve all issues between the two countries, it did enable the Bush administration to forge its own, productive relationship with the Soviet leadership.³¹ Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze viewed the meeting so favourably, he declared it where 'the cold war quietly came to an end.'³²

A Europe whole and free

Scowcroft argued that changes in the Soviet Union not only necessitated a reassessment of Soviet-American relations but also a broadening of United States policy from focusing primarily on the Soviet Union to paying greater attention to Eastern Europe. As part of that move, he wanted to change how the United States differentiated among Eastern European states. Up until this point, American foreign policy had long rewarded states such as Romania that exhibited some independence from the USSR in international relations; Scowcroft argued a more appropriate policy would be to favour states energetically pursuing political and economic reform.³³ A memorandum outlining the national security review to be undertaken regarding Eastern Europe argued: 'We often speak of Eastern Europe as a whole but, of course, we must treat the countries individually. The policies that we design must take discriminating account of the pace and direction of reform in each of these nations.'³⁴

Initially, Bush articulated American hopes for Eastern Europe and encouraged reform through speeches in Hamtramck, Michigan and Mainz, Germany. Bush and his aides saw the progress in Poland as validation of long-time United States policy; notes

²⁹ Bush, *All the Best*, 448. Fitzwater disagrees with press characterisations of Bush lacking 'vision,' arguing his conduct of the Malta summit demonstrated otherwise. Fitzwater, *Call the Briefing!*, 245–6, 255.

³⁰ Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters in Malta, 3 December 1989, bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/papers/1989/89120304.html (accessed 26 March 2006).

³¹ Maynard, *Out of the Shadow*, 51; Chollet and Goldgeier, 'Once Burned, Twice Shy?' 158; and Notes, Malta Summit, 2–3 December 1989, in Munteanu, ed. 'The End of the Cold War.'

³² Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* trans. Catherine Fitzpatrick (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991), 98.

³³ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 38.

³⁴ National Security Review – 4, 15 February 1989, <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/nsr.php> (accessed 2 June 2011).

by a Bush aide in connection with the Hamtramck speech indicate the administration's conviction that changes in Eastern Europe demonstrated that, 'Containment has worked.'³⁵ Several weeks later, Bush travelled to Germany where he suggested what was at stake in the changes taking place in Eastern Europe: 'The Cold War began with the division of Europe. It can only end when Europe is whole.' More explicitly, he challenged the continuing division of Europe using Gorbachev's own rhetoric: 'There cannot be a common European home until all within it are free to move from room to room.'³⁶

As a means of implementing the administration's differentiation policy, Bush travelled to Hungary and Poland in July 1989. Hungary and Poland had made the greatest progress to date in terms of political pluralism, reducing restrictions on travel, and bridging the East-West divide. In planning his trip to Hungary and Poland, Bush consciously exercised restraint: 'The visit, however, was intended primarily to encourage reformers there, yet I had to be cautious about what I said and did ... If massive crowds gathered, intent on showing their opposition to Soviet dominance, things could get out of control.'³⁷ To highlight, and in some respects reward, the liberalisation of Polish politics, Bush met with General Jaruzelski and members of Solidarity, including Lech Wałęsa.³⁸ In retrospect, Bush reported: 'We had unmistakably demonstrated our support for the process of reform, had done it in a way which gave heart to the Poles without things getting out of hand, and had avoided provoking a backlash.'³⁹ Polish-American relations expert Gregory Domber, however, notes that Bush's 1989 visit was far more sombre than the high energy trip he made as vice president in 1987 when he had an 'exuberant' session with Wałęsa and the two made a surprise appearance together.⁴⁰

In Hungary, a demonstration of the change underway in the country came when Prime Minister Miklós Németh gave Bush a piece of the barbed wire that had until recently separated Hungary from Austria. In Budapest, Bush recognised the potential role the CSCE could play in facilitating change in Europe: 'The hopeful process of Helsinki points the way to the enhancement of freedom in Central Europe – to a new basis for security and cooperation in all of Europe.'⁴¹ Despite the significant changes, Bush remained cautious in his characterisation of Eastern Europe and was unwilling to declare the Cold War over:

³⁵ Backgrounder for Press Briefing, President's Trip Files to Poland/Hungary 7/89 [1 of 2], OA/ED: CF00716, Subject Files, Condoleezza Rice – 1989–1990, NSC, Bush Library.

³⁶ Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany, 31 May 1989, American Presidency Project. For more on Gorbachev's use of the term 'common European home', see Marie-Pierre Rey, 'Europe is our Common Home': A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept', *Cold War History* 4:2 (January 2004): 33–65.

³⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 115.

³⁸ Gregory F. Domber, 'Skepticism and Stability: Reevaluating US Policy during Poland's Democratic Transformation in 1989', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13:3 (Summer 2011): 70–1.

³⁹ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 123.

⁴⁰ Domber, 'Skepticism and Stability', 73.

⁴¹ Press Release, 11 July 1989, President Bush's Trip to Poland, Hungary, and the Netherlands 7/9-18/89 [1 of 2] OA/ID: CF 00868, Roman Papadiuk Files, Bush Library; and Parmet, *George Bush*, 406.

I don't like to use 'cold war' . . . That has a connotation of worse days in terms of East-West relationship. I think things have moved forward so that the connotation that those two words conjure up is entirely different now. And yet I don't want to stand here and seem euphoric—that everything is hunky-dory between the East and the West on arms or on differences in the economy or no how we look at regional problems. We have some big differences, still. But let's encourage the change. And then I can answer your question in maybe a few more years more definitively.⁴²

The challenge faced by the Bush administration was to encourage reform in Eastern Europe without inducing a backlash and provoking reform-oriented leaders to reverse course. Although Bush shared Scowcroft's interest in Eastern European liberalisation, he wanted to avoid instigating a crackdown like the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968.⁴³ An even greater priority than preventing internal repression, however, was a conscious effort not to inhibit reform by embarrassing the Soviets.⁴⁴ Just as Reagan's adoption of a policy of quiet diplomacy after the 1985 Geneva summit may have enabled progress on Soviet human rights violations, Bush's cautious approach may have given Gorbachev more latitude in his reform, suggesting some continuity between the two administrations and facilitating the eventual relinquishment of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe.⁴⁵ After his visits had ended, Bush reiterated that his goals in Poland and Hungary were not to 'poke a stick in the eye of Mr. Gorbachev' but rather to encourage further Soviet reforms.⁴⁶ Bush's continued focus on Gorbachev and the Soviet Union despite his travels supports Domber's contention about the administration's 'scepticism' about the prospects for successful Eastern European revolutions.⁴⁷

Only several months later, East Germans breached the Berlin Wall. Freedom of passage between East and West Germany inspired widespread celebrations, although not, notably, at the White House. The administration's response at the time suggested it was out of touch with the enormity of the events unfolding. Before the infamous press conference in which Bush displayed little enthusiasm for the fall of the wall, Bush told his press secretary Marlin Fitzwater, 'I'm not going to dance on the Berlin Wall.

⁴² Parmet, *George Bush*, 406.

⁴³ Beyond not wanting to accelerate the course of reform, Domber has argued the Bush administration took 'steps to slow the pace of change when the democratic revolutions in Poland and Hungary were nearing a crescendo.' Domber, 'Skepticism and Stability', 54.

⁴⁴ This priority fit with Scowcroft's interpretation of the dangers of humiliating a defeated enemy, such as happened in the aftermath of World War One. Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft*, 120.

⁴⁵ Sterling Kernek, 'Realism in the Post-Cold War Era' in Kenneth W. Thompson, ed. *The Reagan Presidency: Ten Intimate Perspectives of Ronald Reagan* (MD: University Press of America, 1997). Gorbachev appreciated that the United States refrained from exploiting Soviet problems for its own gain. For more on Reagan's quiet diplomacy, see Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 164–6.

⁴⁶ Press Release, 13 July 1989, President's Trip to Poland, Hungary, Paris Economic Summit and the Netherlands (7/89) [1 of 4], OA/ID: CF 00867, Roman Papadiuk Files, Bush Library.

⁴⁷ Domber, 'Skepticism and Stability', 54, 78.

The last thing I want to do is brag about winning the cold war, or bringing the wall down. It won't help us in Eastern Europe to be bragging about this.⁴⁸

Bush did ensure that no one could accuse him of bragging about the fall of the wall. Indeed, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-ME) charged Bush with 'timidity' in his foreign policy toward Europe.⁴⁹ CBS reporter Lesley Stahl said: 'People are celebrating the end of the cold war, and President Bush acts like he's asleep.'⁵⁰ To external observers, Bush reacted too cautiously in his immediate response and when he finally spoke about the development at greater length in his Thanksgiving Day address. Rather than using the speech to respond in a concrete way to the facts on the ground in Berlin, one observer has written that Bush made only 'a generic celebration of democratic values.'⁵¹ Bush's limited response reflected both his cautious nature and his lack of vision for a post-Cold War order. The motivations for new approaches toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as well as the conservative nature of those policies are essential context to understanding how Bush's administration conceived of and operated in the CSCE.

No pause for the CSCE

Although the Bush administration instituted a strategic pause in its relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in a bilateral context, in the multilateral CSCE such a step was not possible. The schedule of CSCE meetings had been largely set before Bush entered office and to have suggested revision could have created an international diplomatic incident. In Bush's first year, therefore, the United States participated in CSCE negotiations but demonstrated a lack of engagement.⁵²

The Paris Conference on the Human Dimension (CHD) opened in late May 1989 amid accelerating reform in Central and Eastern Europe. The changes in Eastern Europe fostered improvements in East-West relations and facilitated positive steps at Paris. In particular, changes in Soviet policy led to less intransigence on Helsinki issues, enabling the CSCE to become a more productive forum.⁵³ In his Mainz speech several days after the meeting began, Bush recognised an opportunity for the CSCE to facilitate change in Eastern Europe:

⁴⁸ Fitzwater, *Call the Briefing!*, 262; Maynard, *Out of the Shadow*, 42; Harlow, 'And the Wall Came Tumbling Down', 43; and Michael Cox and Steven Hurst, 'His Finest Hour?' George Bush and the Diplomacy of German Unification', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 13:4 (December 2002): 125–7. Scowcroft supported this approach. Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft*, 119–20.

⁴⁹ Harlow, 'And the Wall Came Tumbling Down', 38.

⁵⁰ Fitzwater, *Call the Briefing!*, 264.

⁵¹ Harlow, 'And the Wall Came Tumbling Down', 47.

⁵² The Bush administration's uncertainty about the utility of the CSCE stands in contrast to Schmitz's characterisation of Scowcroft as the 'biggest advocate' in the Ford administration for American attendance at the CSCE summit in Helsinki. Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft*, 46.

⁵³ United States representatives also met informally with Soviet officials at several points during the Paris meeting to try to resolve individual cases. William Korey, *The Promises We Keep: Human Rights, the Helsinki Process and American Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 283–5.

I propose we strengthen and broaden the Helsinki process to promote free elections and political pluralism in Eastern Europe... The foundation for lasting security comes not from tanks, troops, or barbed wire; it is built on shared values and agreements that link free peoples.⁵⁴

The administration, however, sent conflicting signals on the CSCE. Baker did not attend the opening session of the Paris Conference on the Human Dimension, which was seen as evidence of the Bush administration's distance from the CSCE. American officials active on the CSCE, such as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, had urged Baker's participation.⁵⁵ Yet, as a State Department official explained, '... we and several of our allies believe that CSCE implementation reviews should be held at the experts level only... ministerial level attendance in Paris could create an unhelpful precedent for attendance at the Moscow Conference in 1991.'⁵⁶ As at many earlier CSCE meetings, there was a range of proposals seeking to advance respect for human rights. For example, Western proposals sought to ensure religious freedom, minority rights, freedom of movement, the rule of law, trade union rights, and freedoms of assembly, association, and expression.⁵⁷ During the meeting other Eastern European states also demonstrated new approaches to human rights and the CSCE. For example, Hungary shifted away from the traditional Warsaw Pact position on exit visas, submitting a proposal with the United States and Austria pressing for their liberalisation.⁵⁸ United States delegate Representative Steny Hoyer (D-MD) even introduced a proposal on free, multi-party elections.⁵⁹ Although considerable reforms had been implemented in Eastern Europe, Hoyer's proposal was at the least overly optimistic. The interagency dialogue surrounding Hoyer's proposal is currently unavailable, making it unclear how the aggressive outline for political reform fit within Bush's dual priorities of encouraging reform while exercising caution. Although regarded as a productive session, Paris ended without a concluding document due in part to the short period since the end of the Vienna meeting.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany, 31 May 1989, American Presidency Project.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 280; and Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, From Vienna to Helsinki: Report on the Inter-Sessional Meetings of the CSCE Process, 102nd Congress/2nd Session. Shultz, however, had not attended the 1985 CSCE Experts Meeting in Ottawa or the 1986 CSCE Experts Meeting in Bern, which were comparable to the conferences on the human dimension.

⁵⁶ Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 281.

⁵⁷ CSCE/CDHP.1, 14 June 1989, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Archives, Prague, Czech Republic; CSCE/CDHP.2, 14 June 1989, *ibid*; CSCE/CDHP.6, 16 June 1989, *ibid*; CSCE/CDHP.8, 16 June 1989, *ibid*; CSCE/CDHP.29, 19 June 1989, *ibid*. (Hereafter OSCE Archives.)

⁵⁸ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Hearing, 'Paris Human Dimension Meeting: Human Rights in the Helsinki Process', 18 July 1989, 100th Congress/First Session.

⁵⁹ CSCE/CDHP.33, 20 June 1989, OSCE Archives.

⁶⁰ Although had the delegations desired a concluding document, Romania would have been an impediment. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 'Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe', October 1990, CSCE Folder, Box 1 Unprocessed, Joint Baltic American National Committee, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and

'A new age of Europe'

The dramatic changes in Eastern Europe in the year between the CHD meetings in Paris and Copenhagen meant that many traditional Helsinki points of controversy between East and West were no longer contentious. In a further sign of the fundamental changes within some CSCE states, the Conference on Economic Cooperation in Europe held in Bonn from 19 March to 11 April 1990 outlined support for market economics.⁶¹ Meetings such as Bonn and Copenhagen charted the way for Eastern Europe to adopt democratic pluralism and market economics. Bush told graduates at the University of South Carolina that the United States intended to 'work to broaden the mandate of the CSCE'. He announced his approach to the upcoming Copenhagen CHD, saying:

Less than a month from now, as one of the 35 nations of the CSCE, the United States will take part in a conference on human rights, including free elections, political pluralism, and the rule of law. And I've instructed Ambassador Max Kampelman, head of our delegation, to seek a new consensus on these cornerstones of freedoms, rights, and democracy. As I said last week at Oklahoma State University, we must work within the CSCE to bring Eastern Europe's new democracies into this commonwealth of free nations.⁶²

The proposals Bush enumerated were intended to institutionalise political reform in Eastern Europe to ensure that the recent liberalisation would become permanent. Importantly, however, Bush did not conceive of making the CSCE into a formal institution that some readings of the term 'commonwealth' might have implied.

CSCE delegates to Copenhagen repeatedly remarked on the fundamental changes in Eastern Europe, with the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs heralding the changes in Eastern Europe as 'nothing less than a transformation of our Continent'. He went on to attribute considerable responsibility to the CSCE for these changes, saying 'The CSCE is at the core of these developments... it was also a blueprint for action... when Europe now speaks of human rights, it increasingly does so in one language.'⁶³ Secretary of State James Baker echoed his sentiments, saying: 'My friends, we are present at the creation of a new age of Europe', and discussed how dissidence in

Footnote 60 continued

Arie Bloed, ed. *The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972–1993* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 92–4. (Hereafter JBANC.)

⁶¹ Document of the Bonn Conference, <http://www.osce.org/eea/14081> (accessed 11 November 2012).

⁶² George Bush, 'Remarks at the University of South Carolina Commencement Ceremony in Columbia', 12 May 1990, American Presidency Project.

⁶³ Statement, Pertti Paasio (Finland), 5 June 1990, CSCE, Conference on the Human Dimension, Copenhagen, Statements, 1990 [1 of 3], Box 8, OSCE/CSCE Files, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, João de Deus Pinheiro also eloquently outlined similar ideas. Statement, João de Deus Pinheiro (Portugal), 6 June 1990, CSCE, Conference on the Human Dimension, Copenhagen, Statements, 1990 [3 of 3], Box 9, OSCE/CSCE Files, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives.

Eastern Europe had been inspired by Helsinki monitors 'who risked their lives and liberty to advance the cause of freedom for others.'⁶⁴

American objectives for Copenhagen included the adoption of proposals on free elections, the rule of law, and political pluralism. A number of Paris proposals were reintroduced at Copenhagen, where there was a high degree of consensus. The United States, joined by other allies, again introduced a proposal on elections – that they be held regularly, allow universal suffrage, and offer guarantees that participation be open to different political parties, individuals, and organisations, which was not fully implemented in the concluding document.⁶⁵ One of the most broad-reaching and widely supported proposals, however, advocated the significance of the rule of law and such rights as freedom of expression, freedom to assemble and demonstrate, freedom of association, including membership in a trade union, freedom of thought, freedom of movement, freedom of private property and was included in large part in the concluding document. The proposal was intended to alter the fundamental foundations of state and society in Eastern Europe.⁶⁶ That such proposals could gain support from Eastern and Western states at the Copenhagen meeting evidenced the dramatic shifts that had taken place in Europe. Systemic changes in CSCE states were reflected in the rearrangement of states supporting and opposing many proposals first submitted at Paris. For example, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) announced it was now co-sponsoring eight Western proposals on freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the role of NGOs.⁶⁷ Commenting on the new configurations, United States ambassador to the Copenhagen meeting Max Kampelman, who had struggled to elicit cooperation from the East at the 1980–83 Madrid CSCE review meeting, wrote: 'The Soviets have been extremely cooperative with me and ready to accept most anything within reason. The newly initiated democracies began to feel their oats.'⁶⁸

The Copenhagen meeting moved the Helsinki process beyond emphasising human contacts and human rights in that the concluding document declared an explicit connection between Europe, the CSCE, and pluralistic democracy. For many, the Copenhagen concluding document reaffirmed their belief in the power of the CSCE to influence the course of the Cold War. Between the Bonn and Copenhagen agreements, the CSCE had facilitated commitments to pursue democratic systems based on the

⁶⁴ Press Release, 11 June 1990, C.S.C.E. Ministerial 10/1/90, Chronological File, 1989–93, Speech File Backup Files, Speechwriting, White House Office of, George Bush Library. Under pressure from the Commission, Baker attended the opening of the Copenhagen meeting. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, From Vienna to Helsinki: Report on the Inter-Sessional Meetings of the CSCE Process, 102nd Congress/2nd Session.

⁶⁵ CSCE/CHDC.2, 5 June 1990, OSCE Archives; and Statement, Steny Hoyer (United States), 15 June 1990, in Commission on Security and Cooperation Hearing, 'Copenhagen CSCE Meeting on the Human Dimension', 18 July 1990, 101st Congress/Second Session.

⁶⁶ CSCE/CHDC.16, 8 June 1990, OSCE Archives.

⁶⁷ CSCE/CHDC.Inf.4, 14 June 1990, OSCE Archives. See also CSCE/CHDC/Inf.2, 11 June 1990, OSCE Archives; CSCE/CHDC/Inf.5, 18 June 1990, *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Telegram, AmEmbassy Copenhagen to SECSTATE, 27 June 1990, Box 35, Max M. Kampelman Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota (Hereafter Max M. Kampelman Papers).

rule of law and a market economy. At Copenhagen, the delegates committed themselves to free elections, representative government, the rule of law, and a range of fundamental freedoms not previously adhered to under communist regimes. The Copenhagen agreement included protections against torture and promoted democratic values.⁶⁹ The significance of the Copenhagen CHD went beyond the dramatic scope of the terms agreed to at Copenhagen to the likelihood that these provisions would actually be implemented throughout the CSCE, still a new phenomenon in the Helsinki process.

Kampelman wrote to the State Department that the United States delegation in Copenhagen had fulfilled Bush's mandate, announced at the University of South Carolina, to achieve a document on 'general elections, political pluralism and the rule of law, the key building blocks of accomplishing freedom.'⁷⁰ Shortly thereafter the president issued a statement commending the agreement in Copenhagen as fulfilling the goals he had articulated and 'laying precisely that foundation for freedom.'⁷¹ 'The promise of the 1975 Helsinki Accords now has become a program of democratic action,' a White House statement declared, heralding the Copenhagen document.⁷² Traditional CSCE issues such as divided families and political prisoners were largely resolved by the end of the Copenhagen meeting. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe, however, produced new challenges for the CSCE to confront.⁷³

Copenhagen prompted greater US engagement with the Helsinki process, but American scepticism nonetheless remained about the utility of the CSCE and particularly its potential institutionalisation. Baker, on background, said, 'I think the Europeans have always been favorably disposed toward a greater role for CSCE than has the United States. After all, we have talked at length about the importance of NATO to a continuing US role in Europe and it remains very important.'⁷⁴ When the Bush administration repeatedly talked about developing a 'new architecture' for Europe, the role it intended for the CSCE was largely unclear. Notably, the Bush administration opposed utilising the CSCE as a forum to discuss German reunification.⁷⁵

Given that the CSCE was not established or structured to thrive in a time of such transition, various adjustments to what was now acknowledged to be a productive

⁶⁹ Thomas Buergenthal, 'The Copenhagen CSCE Meeting: A New Public Order for Europe', *Human Rights Law Journal* 11 (1990): 217 – 31.

⁷⁰ AmEmbassy Copenhagen to SecState, 27 June 1990, Box 35, Max M. Kampelman Papers.

⁷¹ Press Release, 29 June 1990, Box 35, Max M. Kampelman Papers.

⁷² Statement by the President, 29 June 1990, Box 35, Max M. Kampelman Papers.

⁷³ Helsinki Commission Staff to EUR/RPM, 28 March 1990, Box 35, Max M. Kampelman Papers. The CSCE states turned their attention to dilemmas such as ethnic tension, the future role of European military alliances, and CSCE institutionalisation. The rising tension and violence in Yugoslavia, in particular, presented a considerable crisis for the CSCE, which did not have an effective deterrent mechanism, raising questions about possible modifications to the CSCE framework.

⁷⁴ Press Briefing Transcript, 4 June 1990, Folder 16, Box 163, James A. Baker III Papers.

⁷⁵ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 236–7.

European framework were considered. The Soviet Union proposed elevating the CSCE to replace the existing East and West military alliances and dismantling NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁷⁶ According to Gorbachev, both he and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl wanted to use the CSCE to overcome the divisions in Europe and establish a European security system built around the CSCE framework. The United States, much as it had done in early discussions about a European Security Conference in the 1960s, did not support the idea of replacing NATO with the CSCE, an institution based on a consensual decision-making process, which the United States believed was ill-suited for such a role.⁷⁷ The United States's view was no doubt also driven by the belief that elevating the CSCE would lead to the departure of American forces from Europe, invariably reducing United States influence there.⁷⁸

The future of the CSCE was therefore under regular discussion, including at the 1990 Washington summit. With the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union was without its buffer of satellite states, long thought essential to preserving Soviet security. Gorbachev therefore struggled with how to confront potential German unification and the changing security circumstances in Europe. At the Washington summit, Bush and Gorbachev agreed to fortify the CSCE, as one step to assuaging Soviet concerns about German reunification.⁷⁹ With the GDR as a member of the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union had always retained some level of control over potential German aggression, and Gorbachev saw the CSCE as a possible mechanism to keep a newly reunified Germany in check as it was an institution devoted in part to European security to which the USSR and Germany would both be parties. As a result of its own commitment, the United States was able to convince the Soviets to accept existing CSCE formulations on peaceful change of borders and freedom to choose a military alliance to govern a unified Germany.⁸⁰

Although not raised as prominently or as often as in the Reagan years, the Bush administration continued to press for Soviet compliance with the human contacts provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. Bush's briefing materials for his Washington summit meeting with Gorbachev urged him to pressure the Soviet leader on human rights, suggesting that institutionalisation would facilitate 'the foundation of a genuine partnership between us'.⁸¹ Bush pushed Gorbachev in particular on remaining

⁷⁶ Jacques Levesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 227. The Warsaw Pact formally dissolved on 1 July 1991.

⁷⁷ Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 309.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Pond, 'An Overview', in Samuel J. Wells, Jr. ed. *The Helsinki Process and the Future of Europe* (Washington, DC: The Wilson Center Press, 1990), 2.

⁷⁹ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 274.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 274; Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983–1991* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 417, 427, 429; Telegram, 19 May 1990, www.foia.state.gov/documents/foiadocs/000053DC.pdf (accessed 10 May 2006); Chronology, 'CSCE Meeting and Conferences, 1989–90'; Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Box 1, Subject Files, Press Office, Bush Library; and Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 251–2, 254–5.

⁸¹ Human Rights, 1 June 1990, Washington Summit June 1990, OA/ID: CF0717 [2 of 4], Subject Files, Condoleezza Rice Files, NSC, Bush Library.

refusenik and divided family cases and told Gorbachev that an emigration law needed to precede any Soviet-American trade agreement.⁸² Beyond the issue of replacing NATO, the United States was reluctant even to institutionalise the CSCE. Proponents asserted that it would allow the CSCE to address situations like the crisis in Yugoslavia better and, more broadly, would ensure the CSCE would have real authority in Europe.⁸³ Kampelman, however, expressed concerns about such significant changes to the CSCE:

I believe that one of the strengths of the Helsinki process was the fact that it was not institutionalized. It does not have a staff; there is no building, there is a kind of informality about it that is not bureaucratized. I now hear discussions suggesting that should be changed. I look at institutions like UNESCO, and the idea of institutionalizing the Helsinki process becomes frightening. I doubt it can fulfill its goals in that format.⁸⁴

For years, CSCE diplomats had avoided saddling the CSCE with a heavy bureaucracy, but changing circumstances in Europe and a new potential role for the CSCE led some to think institutionalisation might be effective in ensuring adherence to Helsinki ideals. John Maresca, a United States diplomat involved with the CSCE since its inception, said: 'The Helsinki process is based on a loose amalgam of meetings. To grow and take on real importance, it needs to be more concrete and relevant to the everyday problems of Europeans.'⁸⁵

With the institutionalisation of the CSCE as a principal topic, the CSCE foreign ministers met in New York in October 1990 to prepare for a CSCE summit in Paris the following month.⁸⁶ Bush addressed the delegates gathered for the ministerial meeting in New York, touting the role of the CSCE in the transformation of Europe: 'Together we have brought about the end of Europe's division and set our eyes on a new Europe, whole and free . . . There – in the human rights and fundamental freedoms set down in Helsinki 15 years ago – we find the cause and catalyst of what I call the Revolution of '89.' He also emphasised the CSCE's remaining centrality to Europe: 'Today – with that new Europe within reach – the CSCE remains central to all that Europe can become.'⁸⁷ Baker similarly praised the CSCE as the 'conscience of the continent'. At the same time, he was clear the United States would maintain its commitment to NATO.⁸⁸

⁸² Press Themes: Washington Summit, 22 May 1990, www.foia.state.gov/documents/foiadocs/1539.pdf (accessed 22 May 2006); Notes, 2 June 1990, Folder 1, Box 109, James A. Baker III Papers; Bush to Summit Press Corps, May 1990, FO 006-06 Case No. 143344SS, White House Office of Record Management, Bush Library; and Beschloss and Talbot, *At the Highest Levels*, 217.

⁸³ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 258; and Pavel Pazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 160, 186.

⁸⁴ Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 354.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁸⁶ Communiqué of the New York Meeting of the CSCE Foreign Ministers, 2 October 1990, CSCE, Box 1 Unprocessed, JBANC.

⁸⁷ Press Release, Remarks by George Bush, 1 October 1990, CSCE NY Ministerial Meeting 'Statements', Box 45 Unprocessed, JBANC.

⁸⁸ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 231–2, 473.

The United States favoured NATO as its primary connection to Europe because, as Baker reports in his memoirs, he found the CSCE 'an extremely unwieldy and frustrating organisation'. Thus, it is understandable that he and Bush did not want to abandon the strong NATO alliance for the CSCE, which was untested and structurally weak, as the institution through which the United States pursued its interests in Europe.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, Baker's and Bush's support for a stronger CSCE foretold their eventual acceptance of a small institutional bureaucracy for the CSCE.

Paris summit

Given the fundamental transformation of Eastern Europe by 1990, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze pushed to move forward the CSCE summit, scheduled for 1992. Gorbachev writes that his idea was met with 'suspicion' at first, but eventually an interim summit was scheduled for Paris in November 1990.⁹⁰ At the summit opening, French President François Mitterrand noted the unique nature of the changes in Eastern Europe: 'It is the first time in history that we witness a change in depth of the European landscape which is not the outcome of a war or a bloody revolution.' He went on to say: 'For forty years we have had stability without freedom in Europe. Henceforth we want freedom with stability.'⁹¹ Bush wrote in his diary that the American speech at the CSCE Paris Summit was the 'shortest' with the exception of the head of the European Community, Jacques Delors. He wrote: 'We were supposed to speak for fifteen minutes, total. I was eight minutes. Said as much as the others and set an example.' It is possible to read some scepticism about the CSCE into Bush's pride at the brevity of his remarks, although Bush also cited a truism he learned in his days at the United Nations that 'the smaller the country, the longer the speeches.'⁹² At Paris, which many CSCE observers regarded as marking the end of the Cold War, the sweeping shifts in the East-West relationship were formalised and, as Gorbachev noted, 'heralded a new, post-confrontational era in European history.'⁹³ Representatives from all CSCE states signed two documents: the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁹⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 515, 548; Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 407; and Heraclides, *Security and Co-operation in Europe*, 136; Speech By Mikhail S. Gorbachev to a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 9 December 1989, Vojtech Mastny, ed. *The Helsinki Process and the Reintegration of Europe, 1986–1991* (New York: Institute for East–West Security Studies, 1992), 195.

⁹¹ Statement, François Mitterrand, 19 November 1990, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Box 1, Subject Files, Press Office, Bush Library; and Melvin Croan 'Germany and Eastern Europe', in Joseph Held, ed. *The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the 20th Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 388.

⁹² Bush, *All the Best*, 488.

⁹³ Croan 'Germany and Eastern Europe', 388; and Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 548.

Building Measures, which expanded and strengthened the CSBM terms agreed to at the Stockholm Conference in 1986.⁹⁴ The charter declared: 'The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended', and further emphasised the CSCE commitments to human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and market economics.⁹⁵ It also established structures and institutions to develop the Helsinki process further, such as the formation of a Council of Ministers, Committee of Senior Officials, Secretariat, Parliamentary Assembly, Office for Free Elections, and Conflict Prevention Centre, but it did not establish a military alliance.⁹⁶ The CSCE institutions represented an acknowledgement that although East-West conflict had dissipated, serious problems remained in Europe. Institutionalisation of the CSCE, which broadened its activities, was one of a number of steps taken to heal the former East-West divide in Europe.⁹⁷

Also at Paris, the NATO and Warsaw Pact states signed the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which limited conventional forces in Europe and was described by a Bush administration official as 'probably the most ambitious arms control treaty ever concluded.'⁹⁸ The Joint Declaration of Twenty-Two States, which declared an end to East-West conflict between the two alliances, was also signed.⁹⁹ After the important agreements on democracy and market economics signed at Copenhagen and Bonn, declaring an end to East-West military animosity suggested that the Cold War, if not completely over, was ending.

⁹⁴ The negotiations that produced the Vienna Document on CSBMs had been in session since 9 March 1989 and were the second phase of the Stockholm conference held from 1984–1986.

⁹⁵ Charter of Paris for A New Europe, November 1990, <http://www.osce.org/mc/39516> (accessed 9 November 2012); and Rob Zaagman, 'The Second Basket of the CSCE: History, Helsinki-II and Afterwards', in Bloed, ed. *The Challenges of Change*, 181.

⁹⁶ Charter of Paris for A New Europe, November 1990, <http://www.osce.org/mc/39516> (accessed 9 November 2012); Press Briefing, 1 July 1992, National Security Council, Walter Kanskiener Trip Files 6/92-7/92 President's Trip to... [8] Pre-Summit Prep., Box 2 of 5, 2000-1333-F, George Bush Library; and Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 'The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: An Overview of the CSCE Process, Recent Meetings and Institutional Development', February 1992; Heraclides, *Security and Co-operation in Europe*, 137; and Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 357. At the same time, the United States advocated a slow process of institutionalisation and wariness about establishing too much bureaucracy due to its belief that much of the vibrancy of the CSCE was found in the involvement of NGOs and private individuals. Press Briefing Transcript, 14 November 1990, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe OA 6788, Box 6, Alpha File, Subject File, Fitzwater Files, Press Office, Bush Library. The Paris summit also set a schedule of meetings of foreign ministers every year and meetings of heads of state or government every two years.

⁹⁷ Andrew J. Pierre, 'The United States and the New Europe', *Current History* 89:550 (November 1990): 354.

⁹⁸ Press Briefing, 15 November 1990, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Box 1, Subject Files, Press Office, Bush Library.

⁹⁹ Joint Declaration of Twenty-Two States, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Box 1, Subject Files, Press Office, George Bush Library; and Heraclides, *Security and Co-operation in Europe*, 144–5.

Accelerating change in Moscow and the CSCE

Despite widespread change, Bush remained conservative in his approach to the CSCE and the Soviet Union, suggesting it was not only the CSCE's 'unwieldy' nature that motivated his administration's continued commitment to NATO. Flying back from his 1991 visit to the Soviet Union, Bush wrote to Gorbachev: 'Perhaps some Ukrainians were disappointed, because they wanted to hear a clarion call for "independence now."' My speech, instead, called for the Republics working matters out with the Center, stating that it is not for us to dictate regarding the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁰ Bush's speech was derisively termed 'Chicken Kiev' by conservative columnist William Safire who characterised Bush as 'lectur[ing] Ukrainians against self-determination, foolishly placing Washington on the side of Moscow centralism and against the tide of history.'¹⁰¹ Bush's cautious message was swiftly overtaken by events and specifically the conservative backlash he had feared.

Responding to Gorbachev's political and economic liberalisation as well as his approach to nationalist movements in some union republics, conservative forces in the USSR acted, initiating a coup while he was on holiday in the Crimea. Bush responded by garnering support for Gorbachev in the West and speaking with Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic President Boris Yeltsin to promise his political backing. 'We are making very clear to the coup plotters that there will not be normal relations with the United States as long as this illegal coup remains in effect', said Bush in a public statement.¹⁰² In the face of international uproar, domestic protests against the coup plotters, and the unwillingness of the military to act against the demonstrators, the coup collapsed and Gorbachev returned to Moscow to resume power, however briefly. In the aftermath of the August coup, Yeltsin told Bush he appreciated the 'tremendous moral support from you the last several days.'¹⁰³ Other Western states also rallied to bolster Gorbachev publicly.¹⁰⁴

The long-awaited Moscow Conference on the Human Dimension opened in September 1991, three weeks after the failed coup, which overshadowed much of the meeting. In his opening speech, Gorbachev characterised the defeat of the coup as a triumph for human rights.¹⁰⁵ Baker echoed Gorbachev in his opening statement: '[The] CSCE has no divisions of tanks. It has instead the moral authority that flows from [the Paris Charter] principles. But as we saw on the streets of this city three

¹⁰⁰ Bush, *All the Best*, George Bush, 530.

¹⁰¹ William Safire, 'After the Fall', 29 August 1991 *New York Times*.

¹⁰² Parmet, *George Bush*, 495–6.

¹⁰³ Memorandum of Conversation, 21 August 1991, USSR Coup Attempt 1990 [1], OA/ID: CF01308-012, Subject Files, R. Nicholas Burns Files, NSC, Bush Library.

¹⁰⁴ The United States threatened to boycott the Moscow meeting, to open the following month, if the coup succeeded.

¹⁰⁵ The Soviets questioned going forward with the Moscow meeting given the turmoil in the Soviet Union, but CSCE ambassadors in Moscow argued that it would offer support to the reforms undertaken by the Gorbachev government. Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 390.

weeks ago, at critical moments people armed with principles have overwhelmed tanks.¹⁰⁶ Most of the issues originally slated for discussion at the Moscow CHD, such as release of political prisoners and freedom to leave one's country, had been addressed in the earlier CHD meetings in Paris and Copenhagen and implemented in the intervening months. Instead, the Moscow conference closely examined the outbreak of nationalist tensions.¹⁰⁷ One of the most significant concerns about a human rights meeting in Moscow had been access for NGOs, which had become increasingly part of the fabric of the CSCE to the conference and delegations. As it turned out, openness was not a problem once the meeting began, and there was a myriad of Soviet NGOs active in connection with the meeting.¹⁰⁸

The Moscow document, like the text agreed to at Copenhagen, demonstrated how far acceptance of human rights had progressed in the previous years. The CSCE states noted continuing progress on Helsinki compliance but rising ethnic, national, and religious discrimination and violence. They expressed concern about human rights, democracy, and the rule of law as well as capital punishment, migrant workers, the protection of journalists and artistic freedom.¹⁰⁹ United States delegate Thomas Buergenthal wrote: 'I would not have thought that Moscow could advance much beyond Copenhagen, but it clearly did.'¹¹⁰ Despite Buergenthal's claims, the commitments made in the Moscow document were not at the same level of significance as those agreed to at Copenhagen. The Moscow document expanded the human dimension mechanism, outlined an independent judiciary, addressed situations of public emergency such as a coup, and contained commitments on freedom of domestic travel, protections for journalists, preservation of cultural heritage and safeguards for migrant workers. It did not, however, fundamentally alter the nature of Europe as the Copenhagen document, with its robust commitment to pluralistic democracy, had done. At Moscow, new, important commitments were made, but none that rose to the level of the political content of

¹⁰⁶ Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 393.

¹⁰⁷ CSCE/CHDM.33, 25 September 1991, OSCE Archives; CSCE/CHDM.36, 25 September 1991, *ibid*; CSCE/CHDM.37, 26 September 1991, *ibid*; CSCE/CDHM.46, 26 September, *ibid*; CSCE/CHDM.47, 26 September 1991, *ibid*; and Jeri Laber, *The Courage of Strangers: Coming of Age with the Human Rights Movement*. New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 365.

¹⁰⁸ DeConcini and Hoyer to Petrovskiy, 14 June 1991, Box 36, Max M. Kampelman Papers; and Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 366–9.

¹⁰⁹ CSCE/CHDM.49/Rev.1, 3 October 1991, OSCE Archives.

¹¹⁰ Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 414. Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs Boris D. Pankin reminded delegates of the long and troubled course of the Moscow conference proposal: 'The doubts about how sound was our choice of Moscow as the venue for the finale of the all-European symphony on the theme of the human dimension in modern politics continued to haunt our offer to convene this Meeting in the Soviet Union since the time when that offer was made five years ago in November 1986. And we today have every reason to feel gratified that the holding of the Meeting at this juncture of transition has justified our confidence in the powerful democratic potential of our people and in its commitment to the ideals of freedom, justice and human dignity.' Statement, Boris Pankin (USSR), CSCE, Conference on the Human Dimension Moscow – Statements, 1991 [2 of 2], Box 10, OSCE/CSCE Files, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives.

the Copenhagen agreement. By the close of the Moscow CHD, it was increasingly clear that the CSCE was no longer dominated by blocs or superpowers. Former communist states were using the forum to turn westward, assert their place in Europe, and forge the types of East-West connections that Western European proponents of the CSCE had initially hoped it would facilitate. In many ways, the Bush administration had missed its opportunity to use the CSCE for its purposes or to assert its leadership of the evolving body.

Conclusion

As if making their way through a checklist, Bush administration officials repeatedly raised exit visas, divided families, and other traditional CSCE issues in their meetings with Soviet leaders.¹¹¹ They were not, however, activists in this respect. Even when the personnel remained the same, such as with Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Richard Schifter who was held over from the Reagan administration, the pace of the representations seemed slower. For example, Schifter wrote to Helsinki Watch Executive Director Jeri Laber to highlight his continuing involvement in Soviet human rights issues and pointed out that he had travelled to Moscow twice in 1991. In the first half of 1988, however, he had estimated that American and Soviet officials were meeting every six weeks to discuss human rights issues.¹¹² As mentioned earlier, this divergence owes something to the White House's level of commitment to human rights. More predominant, however, was the outlook of the president and his vision for the CSCE.

Given the state of availability of records at the Bush Library, some of these conclusions may warrant further revision.¹¹³ The source base of this paper, however, leads to the conclusion that the Bush administration's distance from CSCE mechanisms and traditional issues are rooted in two factors: Bush's conservative preference for stability over transformation and low prioritisation of human rights. Bush and his advisors careened from one formulation to the next, never setting on a lasting approach to this rapidly changing world. Importantly, none outlined administration policy toward the Helsinki process or on human rights. My research suggests that Bush did not seek to transform Europe or the Cold War order. Rather,

¹¹¹ For example, Baker repeatedly reported that he had raised issues such as emigration in his bilateral conversations with Shevardnadze. Press Release, 7 March 1989, Folder 10, Box 157, James A. Baker III Papers; Press Release, 12 May 1989, Folder 17, Box 158, *ibid*; and Press Release, 26 September 1989, Folder 32, Box 159, *ibid*.

¹¹² Schifter to Laber, 18 October 1991, New York – United States – Foreign Policy – USSR – Correspondence (1991–1992), Box 21, Country Files, Chris Pancio Files, Record Group 7, Human Rights Watch Records, Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library; and Anatoly Adamishin and Richard Schifter, *Human Rights, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), 144, 149.

¹¹³ Considerable progress has been made in releasing Bush administration records since Executive Order 13489 eased access to presidential papers, but much work remains.

concern for stability and appeals for caution dominated his foreign policy record in Europe. When change did come, he administered the transition but did not lead it. Scowcroft has said, 'President Bush recognised historic change was taking place. He didn't create the change. But what he did is manage it in a way that these really cataclysmic changes in the world structure took place without a shot being fired.'¹¹⁴

Mitterrand reportedly disparaged Bush to Gorbachev saying that Bush 'lacks original thinking altogether.'¹¹⁵ It may be more appropriate to say that Bush lacked imagination.¹¹⁶ In his view, containment and the Atlantic alliance structure had worked. Therefore, as Mary Sarotte has outlined, the administration adopted the 'prefab model' of 'taking the West's prefabricated institutions, both for domestic order and international economic and military cooperation, and simply extending them eastward.'¹¹⁷ The Bush administration did not take the United States in new directions when the Cold War ended as the reasons for American success offered an outline for its future. Bush hoped to preside over the transatlantic order the United States had aspired to throughout the Cold War rather than conceive of or implement a new approach to a new world order.

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¹¹⁴ Maynard, *Out of the Shadow*, 128. In Jeffrey Engel's view, Bush intended 'to keep the world moving in the right direction' rather than to transform the role of the United States in the world. Jeffrey A. Engel, 'A Better World – but Don't Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years On', *Diplomatic History* 34:1 (January 2010): 45.

¹¹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, 5 July 1989, in Munteanu, ed. 'The End of the Cold War.'

¹¹⁶ Former secretary of defense James Schlesinger suggested the Bush administration was 'lost without its Cold War map.' Quoted in Sparrow, 'Resumption of History.'

¹¹⁷ In Sarotte's view, the 'prefab model' promoted stability but led to continuing tension in Europe. Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 8.