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INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION (2+4 NEGOTIATIONS) AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY

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ABSTRACT
After the Second World War, by the decision of the Potsdam conference, the territory of Germany was divided into 4 occupation zones of the allies. Ideological differences with the USSR, as well as different ideas about what the future of Germany would be, forced the Western allies to unite and then grant independence to the Germans. As a result, in 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was formed in the former American, British and French occupation zones. In response, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) appeared in the east - in the former Soviet occupation zone. 1989-1990 was a period of unexpected events in international politics. The most important of these events was the unification of the divided Germany. When the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, policymakers faced the unprecedented challenge of establishing the foundation for a unified, stable, and prosperous Germany within a peaceful Europe. What were policymakers' expectations as they sought to create viable institutions for a world beyond the Wall and indeed the Cold War? And how did these expectations related to the eventual outcome of their efforts? With the reunification of Germany, and even before that, some concerns and fears about a united Germany began to resurface in Europe. France and England made every effort to prevent or at least delay the reunification of Germany. Nevertheless, with the support of the United States and the consent of the USSR, Germany was reunited and became a fully sovereign state.
Keywords*:* FRG, GDR, reunification, USA, USSR, France, Britain

INTRODUCTION

The German-German rapprochement stirred up the public consciousness of almost all European countries, especially the closest allies and neighbors of the FRG and the GDR. Politicians, diplomats and scientists were aware that the emerging scenario of events on German soil entailed serious structural changes in Europe. Concern that this process could go unchecked and cause irreparable damage to peace, security and stability on the continent grew in all European capitals. The prospect of a rapid state unification of the FRG and the GDR threatened to destroy the already fragile balance, the foundations of which were noticeably undermined as a result of the continuing disintegration of the European "socialist camp" (Павлов, 2022). Paris and London initially took a rather tough position on the German question, where they clearly feared that Germany would become a new "superpower", which would inevitably lead to a decrease in the role of France and Great Britain in European and world affairs. France was particularly worried, which can be explained both by its geographical position and by its negative historical experience of relations with the Germans. The Paris-Bonn axis, which had been created with difficulty and which had given France the opportunity to actively influence the process of Western European integration and in the future to occupy one of the commanding heights in a "united Europe," was clearly cracking with the appearance of a powerful united Germany on the map of the continent. Discussion of the German question was made dependent on the demilitarization of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and on the rapprochement of their positions.

1.The main part of the article

The directionality of political change after November 1989 was driven by the imperatives that leaders had to seek and offer reassurance, restraint, and commitment. Each of the countries facing the prospect of German unification had worries. Britain and France worried about a more powerful and united Germany

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that operated outside European institutions, particularly the EC—and they worried about a Soviet backlash that might unseat Gorbachev. British prime minister Margaret Thatcher wanted to slow the process of unification down and saw Gorbachev and French president Mitterrand as potential allies (Anderson, 1999, p. 33). The Soviet Union—Gorbachev in particular—worried about its former ally being absorbed in Germany and the West. The expansion and encroachment of NATO loomed. The United States worried that Germany would drift out of the Atlantic system and fracture the Western alliance precisely at the moment when it was most triumphant. West German leaders worried about gaining the acceptance of its peers for a unified Germany. All of these leaders saw these problems in the context of various institutional configurations that would provide the anchors for assurances and signals of restraint and commitment—institutions that would also shape the wider logic of the European and great-power order. In the first instance, it was Helmut Kohl who was under pressure to reassure the Soviets and his European counterparts that a unified Germany would continue to be a good partner—restrained and embedded in European and Atlantic institutions. In an important speech to the Bundestag on November 28, 1989, Kohl outlined a ten-point program for German unification. It would be a staged process—exchanges, travel, movement toward "confederative structures," culminating in a single federal Germany. Kohl sought to reassure Germany's neighbors, arguing that inter-German relations should take place within a larger European process that would allow for "an organic development which takes into consideration the interests of all parties concerned and guarantees a peace order in Europe." (Zelikow, 1997, p. 120). Kohl did not mention NATO in his speech, but in a message to President Bush following the speech, the chancellor reaffirmed West Germany's "unwavering loyalty" to NATO (Zelikow, 1997, p. 122). This strategy of linking German unification to European integration became the centerpiece of Kohl's diplomacy in the months that followed. The idea was to reassure the other great powers that a unified Germany would be deeply embedded in European institutions. It was a strategy of binding—so as to reduce the resistance of worried neighbors to a more powerful Germany. "Pool sovereignty," Elizabeth Pond argues, "quickly became the preoccupation of Chancellor Kohl," who shared the nightmare of his "famous nineteenth-century predecessor, Otto von Bismarck—a Germany surrounded by a hostile coalition of neighbors." And so, his strategy of "warding off this danger was to bind his countrymen irrevocably to a pan-European structure and preclude 'renationalization' of defense and foreign policy on the continent." (Pond, 1999, p. 39). The basic orientation of German policy was to reassure its neighbors— both East and West—that a unified and inevitably more powerful Germany would be deeply enmeshed in wider regional institutions. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher articulated this basic German view in a January 1990 speech:

> "We want to place the process of German unification in the context of EC integration, of the CSCE process, the East-West partnership for stability, the construction of a common European house and the creation of a peaceful European order from the Atlantic to the Urals." (Zelikow, 1997, p. 335-338).

Genscher and other German leaders did not always mention NATO in these statements, which worried American officials in the early months of the unification debate, but the basic message was clear: to gain agreement on unification, Germany was prepared to further bind itself to its neighbors. The United States sought not only to reassure Gorbachev that Soviet security was not at risk in the unfolding developments but also to offer support to Kohl as he tried to allay the worries of European leaders. In September 1989, when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visited Moscow, Bush sent a message along to Gorbachev stressing that change in Eastern Europe should not be taken as a threat to the Soviet Union (Sarotte, 2014, p. 73). In Washington on November 12, Secretary Baker had a weekend lunch with the Soviet ambassador and communicated his understanding of the importance of "keeping order." (Bush, 1989, p. 67). At a summit of Soviet and American leaders in Malta in early December, Bush indicated to Gorbachev that the United States had not tried to exploit developments in Eastern Europe.

The central goal of American policy during these months was to ensure that a unified Germany remained firmly anchored in the Atlantic alliance. And during late 1989, the United States began pursuing a policy of linking support for German unification to assurances about Germany's continued commitment

to European and Atlantic institutions. President Bush presented this view as American policy at a NATO meeting in Brussels on December 4 and later stated it in public: "Unification should occur in the context of Germany's continued commitment to NATO and an increasingly integrated European Community, and with due regard for the legal role and responsibilities of the Allied powers." (Bush & Scowcroft, 1998, p. 3). The American president argued that NATO should remain the guarantor of stability in Europe, and to this end, the United States remained committed to Europe. In effect, German unification would be rendered acceptable to its neighbors by the same means that a revived West Germany was rendered acceptable after World War II: Germany would be embedded in wider Euro-Atlantic institutions. The NATO alliance and European economic integration would bind Germany to Europe, and the United States would ensure agreement by adding its own security commitment. This sort of reassurance was necessary because the British and French leaders remained wary of a unified Germany. In a meeting with Bush at Camp David on November 24, 1989, Thatcher had restated her view that German unification would destabilize Europe, undercut Gorbachev, and work against the prospects for democracy in Eastern Europe. Mitterrand too had such concerns. In a meeting with Bush on St. Martin in the Caribbean on December 16, the French leader again reaffirmed his view that German unification must be linked to developments in NATO and the EC. Arms control, EC integration, European monetary union, and American cooperation with Europe must all be addressed together to create a new Europe in which German unification would be a part. "Otherwise," Mitterrand warned, "we will be back to 1913 and we could lose everything."(Bush, 1989, p. 201). These sorts of institutional linkages appeared over and over again in the following months. Specifically, the German pledge to redouble the commitment of a unified Germany to European integration was an essential part of the process of reassurance and the signaling of restraint and commitment. This was because Germany's European neighbors had serious concerns about how Germany would relate to the EC—concerns that Chancellor Kohl and his colleagues had to allay. According to Jeff Anderson, these were twofold. One was a general worry on the part of European partners about German unification and its implications for stability in Europe and the "European project." The other was a worry about securing an EC accession for the GDR as it made its transition. Both were concerns about how Germany would operate within the EC. As Jeff Anderson notes, "Bonn sought to signal and secure the maximum amount of continuity with its relationship to the EC." In emphasizing the connections between German unification and European integration, Kohl was able to build support for his cause (Anderson, 1999, p. 33).

At a meeting of EC leaders in Strasbourg on December 8, Mitterrand was able to gain Kohl's support for convening an intergovernmental meeting to amend the EC's Treaty of Rome to prepare the way for a new treaty of economic and political union. In return, the EC leaders adopted a statement that endorsed German unification within the context of wider European developments. Again in March 1990, Chancellor Kohl announced that his government was committed to the goal of economic and political union. This was reinforced one month later when Kohl and Mitterrand called for the convening of an intergovernmental conference on political union to run in parallel with the formal discussions over a European Monetary Union. It was these steps that set in motion negotiations that led to the Treaty on European Union, negotiated at Maastricht in December 1991 and signed by the leaders of the twelve European member governments in early February 1992. Germany was binding itself to Europe, even in the face of domestic German unease about economic and political union. Kohl was signaling that his country would indeed wear the "golden handcuffs" that tied a unified Germany to Europe (Ash, 1193, p. 358). Gorbachev and the Soviets initially rejected the idea of German unification—certainly a unified Germany within NATO. The initial position of Gorbachev was that the two German states were legal entities that should remain so. As the East German collapse and calls for unification proceeded, the Soviet position moved to support for some sort of confederation or "treaty community" between the two German states. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze sought to slow the momentum toward unification by proposing to reactivate the four-power rights in Berlin. Technically speaking, Berlin was still officially under four-power jurisdiction. The Soviet strategy was to take the control of events out of the hands of West Germany and to seek accord with worried British and French leaders over the pace and destination of political change. The Soviets called a meeting of fourpower

ambassadors so as to deliberate on "the control mechanisms created by the former allies of the anti-Hitler coalition." (Stent, 1999, p. 102).

When German unification became impossible to stop, Gorbachev insisted that a unified Germany could not remain within NATO. Unification was possible, but Germany must be neutral and its military power limited. On Germany remaining in NATO after unification, Gorbachev told the press in Moscow on March 6, 1990: "It is absolutely out of the question." The goal of American policy in the spring of 1990 was to gain Soviet acceptance of a unified Germany within NATO. The first move was to resist Gorbachev's efforts to settle the question of Germany's status among the Four Powers, a forum that would allow the Soviets to hold out for German unification contingent on its neutrality. The critical move occurred at the Ottawa summit in February 1990 of NATO and Warsaw Pact ministers when the parties accepted the United States proposal for a Two-plus-Four formula. This agreement put the decision into the hands of the Germans themselves, leaving the Allied parties in a secondary position to ratify Germany's determination of its status. The United States also worked with its allied partners to allay Soviet fears about a unified Germany. The Soviets sent mixed signals. In a meeting with Secretary of State James Baker in February 1990, Gorbachev indicated that the Soviets did not worry about a united Germany. At other moments, Soviet leaders were less certain. At a Kremlin meeting on policy in January 1990, there were split opinions. Gorbachev adviser Anatoly Chernyayev, for example, thought that a united Germany inside of NATO was not a threat—quite the contrary, it was a source of some eassurance, particularly if Kohl linked unification to an "all-European process." Others, such as Valentin Falin, thought it was wrong to accept the absorption of East Germany into West Germany and NATO. The United States tried to convince the Soviets that a unified Germany outside of NATO would be more dangerous than a Germany inside of NATO. This argument was advanced by Baker in talks with Shevardnadze in Moscow in February 1990. The Soviets by this time understood that unification could not be stopped. It was a question of Germany's external affiliations. Shevardnadze argued that a unified Germany might eventually become militaristic and threaten the Soviet Union, hence their proposal for a disarmed and neutral Germany. Baker turned the argument around and posed the question to Gorbachev: Assuming unification takes place, what would you prefer: a united Germany outside of NATO and completely autonomous, without American forces stationed on its territory, or a united Germany that maintains its ties with NATO, but with the guarantee that NATO jurisdiction or troops would not extend east of the current line? (Gorbachov, 1996, p. 529). Baker's argument in Moscow was that embedding German military power in Western institutions was preferable to neutrality, even to the Soviets. Gorbachev notes in his memoir that the second part of Baker's statement eventually formed the basis for a compromise over Germany's militarypolitical status. This was so even though at the time of the Moscow meeting the Soviet leader was unprepared to accept the proposal. The opening for compromise dealt with the specific guarantees that might be attached to unification about the size and configuration of NATO and German forces. In the months that followed, the United States and German leaders sought to reassure Gorbachev that NATO could provide the needed "safety net." The Germans were themselves open to putting limitations on the positioning of NATO troops within what would be the former East Germany. In May 1990, Secretary Baker went to Moscow with a package of incentives prepared for talks within the Two-plus-Four talks—the so-called nine assurances. The steps that the West would be willing to take to meet Soviet security concerns included assurances that unification would be accompanied by new conventional and nuclear arms limitation a greements; a German affirmation not to possess or produce nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons; agreement that NATO troops would not be stationed in the former territory of the GDR; and a promise that NATO would undertake to revise its strategy and its posture within a transformed Europe (Zelikow & Rice, 1997, pp. 263–264; Garthoff, 1994, pp. 426–427). Most of these assurances had been presented to the Soviets during the previous few months, but the repackaging of them was itself part of the process of changing Soviet thinking. In German meetings with the Soviets during this period, they presented their own package of reassurances that dealt with force levels and territorial limitations as well as promises of economic assistance. The turning point came in May 1990 during Gorbachev's visit to Washington. Although he initially proposed that a united Germany must belong to both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the

Soviet leader conceded on this visit that all countries had the right to choose their own alliances. In agreeing to this principle, Gorbachev was effectively agreeing that Germany had a right to stay within NATO. The Four Powers could not dictate German alliance membership. In agreeing to this principle and allowing the Germans themselves to decide, the dispute over German membership in NATO was on the way to resolution (Oberdorfers, 1991, p. 429).

The Soviet leader heard American officials again make the argument that binding Germany to NATO was the most effective security strategy for all parties concerned. The Soviet Union was again being asked to see NATO—and Germany's role in it—as a security institution that could reduce Soviet worries rather than aggravate them. The American promise to recast NATO's mission was meant to make the alliance all the more acceptable. The great contest over what European institutions would emerge to support and contain German unification ended less than a year after the Wall went down. The Western institutions—NATO and the EC—were in place and available, and ultimately they served the needs that all p arties had for reassurance and restraint. The Bush administration, of course, c hampioned these institutions as the vehicle to accommodate and embed a unified Germany. This policy took shape almost immediately after November 9. As Secretary Baker prepared for his trip to Europe, State Department counselor Robert Zoellick wrote a memo that emphasized the importance of these various layers of Atlantic and European institutions. He argued that there was a need for a "New Atlanticism and a New Europe that reaches farther East." But the "architecture of the New Atlanticism and New Europe should not try to develop one overarching structure. Instead, it will rely on a number of complementary institutions that will be mutually reinforcing," including NATO, the CSCE, the WEU (Western European Union), and the Council of Europe (Sarotte, 2014, pp. 77-78). Secretary Baker publically presented these ideas in a speech to the Berlin Press Association on December 12, arguing that the three great institutions to Europe—NATO, the EC, and CSCE—should be adapted to provide the multilevel framework to absorb the coming changes. The slogan was a "new Atlanticism for a new era." (Kozyrev, 1995, s. 14). The existing Western institutions were expansive and integrative— allowing new members and new configurations of states. They were also institutions that reinforced multilateralism and restraint. In a period of rapid and dramatic power shifts—and the worries and opportunities that flowed from this transitional moment—those institutions proved most critical. Behind the diplomacy of German unification and European reorganization was a deeper saga of the American and Soviet negotiations that set the stage for the events in Germany and the end of the Cold War. The events leading to the September 1990 treaty that ratified the unification of Germany and transformed the relations across the Euro-Atlantic world cannot be understood outside of the larger context of American-Soviet diplomacy that ended the Cold War (Павлов, 2022, p. 356). The determination of Germany's military-political status was accompanied by a search for solutions to a whole range of purely military problems. In most of these measures, the Western negotiators accommodated Soviet wishes. However, with regard to the size of the armed forces of a united Germany, it was decided that it should be determined only at the Vienna talks, taking into account the establishment of corresponding ceilings for the armies of other European states. Of fundamental importance for finding solutions to the German settlement was the visit to the USSR in mid-July 1990 by G. Kohl and his talks with M.S. Gorbachev (Kozyrev, 1995, p. 159). This visit was preceded by three important summits of Western leaders in Dublin, London and Houston, which had a decisive influence on changing the USSR's position on the German question. At these meetings, the issues of providing large-scale economic assistance to the USSR and of providing it with security guarantees in the military-political sphere were resolved. On the evening of July 15, M.S. Gorbachev and G. Kohl arrived from Moscow to the highland village of Arkhyz in the Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Region, where they continued their dialogue. They discussed in detail the external aspects of German unification, as well as the related problems of further development of bilateral relations. During the discussion of the external aspects of German unity, fundamental decisions were reached on the future military-political status of a united Germany, on the limits of the number of German armed forces, and the inadmissibility of the spread of NATO military structures to the territory of the GDR.

The results of the talks between M.S. Gorbachev and G. Kohl in Arkhyz drew a line under the months-long discussion about the place of the future Germany in the European military-bloc structures. The surrender of the Soviet positions was explained by the desire not to be forced out of Europe and to integrate into the system of European economic and political cooperation, as well as the expectation of being able to build privileged relations in the future with the new European giant - a united Germany (Oberdorfer, 1991, p. 125). On August 30, 1990 in Vienna, before the participants in the talks on conventional armed forces in Europe, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the FRG G.D. Genscher, in full agreement with the Prime Minister of the GDR, made a statement according to which the government of the Federal Republic of Germany was obliged to reduce the armed forces of the united Germany within 3-4 years to 370 thousand people. This reduction was to begin from the moment the first treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe came into force. On September 12, 1990, in Moscow, the foreign ministers of the six states participating in the "2 + 4" negotiations signed the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (Воробьева, 2000, p. 248). The treaty for the first time unambiguously, in a form that excluded any possible interpretations, set forth the final nature of the external borders of a united Germany, which were defined within the framework of the FRG, the GDR and Berlin. It also contained a clear commitment not to have and not to make territorial claims against other states in the future. These commitments were reinforced by Germany's promise to remove from its constitution any provisions that contradicted them, and above all Article 23, which allowed for the possibility of extending the Basic Law of the FRG to "the remaining parts of Germany", which included the former German lands lost as a result of the Second World War. The consequence of the treaty was the complete renunciation by the FRG of its previous "legal position", which proceeded from the existence of the Reich within the borders of 1937. The most important component of the document was the agreements on military-political issues. The obligations of the governments of the FRG and the GDR that only peace would emanate from German soil, their renunciation of the production, possession and disposal of weapons of mass destruction were solemnly confirmed. The treaty provided for a reduction in the number of armed forces of the united Germany to 370 thousand people within 3-4 years (the treaty included an agreed statement made by the GDR and the FRG on August 30 in Vienna). The treaty determined that the Soviet Union and the united Germany would regulate the conditions and duration of the presence of Soviet troops on East German territory, as well as the conditions for their withdrawal by the end of 1994. As for the military-political status of the former territory of the GDR it was established that until the withdrawal of Soviet (later Russian) troops from there, only German territorial defense formations not integrated into NATO would be stationed on East German soil (Ахтамзян, 2010, p. 254). Thus, Germany, having reunited, contributed significantly to the security of both Germany and Europe by supporting the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO as a leading power in the EU in the 1990s.

Conclusion

Summarizing the historical role of the foreign policy aspects of the German unity: the granting of full sovereignty to a united Germany, participation in military blocs and the final recognition of its borders were resolved in the negotiation process according to the "4+2" (actually "2+4") formula. FRG and GDR plus four winners). With the adoption of the treaty of final settlement in relation to Germany, the application of the rights and duties of the four states was suspended. Germany, having reunified, strengthened its place in the European and Transatlantic security system. Thus, after reunification, Germany, under the leadership of Helmut Kohl, made great contributions to both the further development of the EU and security issues within NATO. These contributions were mainly due to the fact that, as the leading power of the EU, Germany supported both the deepening of integration processes in the EU and the expansion of the EU and NATO to the East, expanding its security zone to the East, and significantly contributing to the security of Germany and Euro-Atlantic.

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