

H-Diplo | Robert Jervis International Security Studies Forum

Roundtable Review 16-6

Stephanie L. Freeman. *Dreams for a Decade: International Nuclear Abolitionism and the End of the Cold War*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023. ISBN: 9781512824223.

7 October 2024 | PDF: <https://issforum.org/to/jrt16-6> | Website: rjissf.org | Twitter: @HDiplo

Editor: Diane Labrosse
Commissioning Editors: Thomas Maddux and
Kevin Grimm

Production Editor: Christopher Ball
Pre-Production Copy Editor: Katie A. Ryan

Contents

Introduction by Naomi Egel, University of Georgia.....	2
Review by Andrea Chiampan, University of Toronto.....	6
Review by Anthony Eames, George Washington University.....	12
Review by Dario Fazzi, Leiden University.....	15
Review by Henry Richard Maar III, California State University, Northridge.....	20
Response by Stephanie L. Freeman, US Department of State.....	26

Introduction by Naomi Egel, University of Georgia

In today's context of heightened nuclear dangers, nuclear disarmament may seem like a faraway dream. Today's nuclear landscape is characterized by threats of nuclear use, states modernizing and sometimes expanding their nuclear arsenals, violations and withdrawals from arms control treaties, and the possibilities of new states developing nuclear weapons. The prospects for arms reductions, let alone disarmament, seem bleak. Yet in the 1980s, the quest for nuclear disarmament came to capture the attention of much of the United States and Europe, from ordinary citizens to longstanding peace activists to high-level political leaders. Understanding how nuclear abolitionism gained such cross-cutting support and came to shape the political landscape in both the United States and Europe during the 1980s provides insights regarding how it might do so again in the future.

In *Dreams for a Decade*, Stephanie Freeman weaves together the efforts of a wide range of actors pursuing disarmament, from US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to peace activists in the United States and across Europe. Tracing these efforts across the 1980s, she shows that these actors differed significantly in their visions of how to pursue nuclear disarmament and at what expense, as well as what other issues they linked to nuclear disarmament. Freeman argues that nuclear abolitionism “was a diverse and global force that united political adversaries and reshaped political discourse and policy” (241). It shifted the thinking on arms control of US and Soviet leaders from limits to reductions, and in doing so, helped lead to the end of the Cold War.

Rather than focusing on one primary set of actors (e.g., Reagan and Gorbachev or European or US peace activists), Freeman expands scholarly understandings of the range of what nuclear disarmament efforts involved in the 1980s, and how they related to one another. In doing so, she makes an important contribution to a growing scholarship on the nuclear 1980s that examines the relationship between disarmament efforts and the end of the Cold War.¹ In particular, *Dreams for a Decade* shows how many European (and especially Eastern European) disarmament activists contextualized nuclear abolitionism as part of a broader effort to change the geopolitical landscape in Europe and reduce the divisions between East and West. In the book's conclusion, Freeman considers what made antinuclear activism so much more powerful in the 1980s than in previous decades, emphasizing the duality of personally invested leaders in the

¹ See, for example, Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War*, (Cornell University Press, 1999); Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle against the Bomb, Volume 3, Toward Nuclear Abolition* (Stanford University Press, 2003); William M. Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze in a Cold War: The Reagan Administration, Cultural Activism, and the End of the Arms Race* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2017); Henry Richard Maar III, *Freeze! The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Susan Colburn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Anthony M. Eames, *A Voice in Their Own Destiny: Reagan, Thatcher, and Public Diplomacy in the Nuclear 1980s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023); Vincent Intondi, *Saving the World From Nuclear War: The June 12, 1982 Disarmament Rally and Beyond* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023).

United States and the USSR, combined with the mass involvement of ordinary people across national borders.

Furthermore, rather than ending the disarmament decade with the end of Reagan's presidency, *Dreams for a Decade* extends it to consider President George H. W. Bush's approach to disarmament. Contrasting Reagan and Bush, Freeman shows how the differences in their approaches to disarmament both reflected broader ideas about the Cold War and shaped opportunities for disarmament activists to influence US policy on this issue. She argues that Bush embodied traditional Cold War thinking and sought to ensure that the United States dominated the post-Cold War order. This meant a devaluing of disarmament and a renewed reliance on nuclear deterrence. *Dreams for a Decade* makes the claim that Bush "bears the primary responsibility for this missed opportunity to achieve more dramatic nuclear arms reductions as the Cold War drew to a close" (244).²

The four reviewers, Andrea Chiampan, Anthony Eames, Dario Fazzi, and Henry Richard Maar III, commend Freeman for the book's nuanced depiction of the varied actors involved in pursuing nuclear disarmament in the 1980s, as well as the extensive evidence Freeman marshals in support of her claims. Chiampan underscores Freeman's combination of "diplomatic, transnational, and microhistory." Fazzi in particular highlights the book's contribution in providing a transnational contextualization of the disarmament movement and the Nuclear Freeze Campaign in particular. Maar finds Freeman's argument and evidence that disarmament activists pressured both Reagan and Gorbachev on arms control policy to be highly persuasive. In particular, he emphasizes the strength of Freeman's evidence that the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign shaped Gorbachev's initiatives on both arms control and on a "common European home." Eames, meanwhile, applauds Freeman for drawing human rights and the Helsinki process into the broader story of nuclear abolitionism in the 1980s, and for examining the connections between these often-separated aspects of the late Cold War period. Eames, Chiampan, and Maar also praise Freeman's extension of the nuclear abolitionist movement timeline to examine the impact of the Bush presidency on nuclear disarmament.

All reviewers also note Freeman's distinctive framing of Reagan as part of a broader nuclear abolition movement. For Eames, this prompts "important considerations about how an arms control synthesis came into being." Yet Chiampan, Fazzi, and Maar all question Freeman's interpretation of Reagan as a disarmer, emphasizing Reagan's pursuit of nuclear modernization. They argue that although Freeman provides an impressive array of evidence in support of Reagan's private opposition to nuclear weapons, referring to both grassroots activists and Reagan as nuclear abolitionists elides important differences in the level of these actors' commitments to disarmament.

² Although it is notable that the largest reduction of nuclear weapons took place under George H. W. Bush's presidency, through START and the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives.

All three of these reviewers underscore the distinction between Reagan's private views and the policies pursued by his administration. If Reagan was largely unable to enact policies that reflected his private preferences when his aides disagreed, how much did his private preferences matter? Fazzi emphasizes Reagan's rejection of significant arms reductions that would have required a significant compromise on the Strategic Defense Initiative, as well as the expansion of uranium mining in the United States under his tenure. Chiampan likewise notes that Reagan presided over the largest nuclear weapons buildup in US history. Maar further questions the extent to which Reagan was uniquely important in leading to the end of the Cold War and raises several hypothetical scenarios that might have led to similar outcomes without Reagan's presidency.

In her response, Freeman explains that she uses a broad-tent conceptualization of who counts as a nuclear abolitionist, and that ideas about how to pursue nuclear abolitionism and at what expense often conflicted with one another. She clarifies that she considers Reagan an abolitionist because his goal was nuclear disarmament, even if his policies and aides did not always reflect this, and notes situations in which he sought nuclear arms reductions even against the advice of his aides. Freeman also re-emphasizes the discrepancies between Bush and Reagan's approaches to nuclear abolitionism, and that they were dramatically different partners for Gorbachev in the nuclear disarmament effort.

Dreams for a Decade is a tremendous contribution to understanding the diversity of activism on nuclear abolitionism, the interplay between grassroots movements and leaders on a common issue, and factors that led to the end of the Cold War. It is truly an international history of nuclear abolitionism during the 1980s and contains valuable lessons for scholars, policymakers, and activists today. The thoughtful reviews in this roundtable raise important questions about the relationship between different actors in nuclear abolitionist efforts and further contextualize this book into a broader historiography of the late Cold War and antinuclear activism.

Contributors:

Stephanie L. Freeman is a Historian in the Office of the Historian at the US Department of State. She earned a PhD in history at the University of Virginia and previously spent four years as Assistant Professor of History at Mississippi State University. She is the author of *Dreams for a Decade: International Nuclear Abolitionism and the End of the Cold War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023). Her work has also appeared in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* and *The Reagan Moment: America and the World in the 1980s* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

Naomi Egel is Assistant Professor of International Affairs at the University of Georgia and a faculty fellow at the Center for International Trade and Security. Her research examines the politics of international weapons governance and has been published in the *Journal of Politics*, the *European Journal of International*

Relations, Research & Politics, and the *Review of International Organizations*. She holds a PhD in Government from Cornell University.

Andrea Chiampan is a Marie Skłodowska Curie Postdoctoral Fellow in the history department at the University of Toronto and the University of Venice. He holds a PhD in International History from The Geneva Graduate Institute. Prior to joining the University of Toronto, Andrea was a Swiss National Science Foundation Fellow (SNSF) and Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). His research focuses on interactions of politics, diplomacy, and technology in the Cold War. His current research project analyzes the history of GPS as a Cold War byproduct

Anthony Eames is the Director of Scholarly Initiatives at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, where he oversees the development of academic alliances and is responsible for fellowships and programs to support scholarship on the Reagan presidency, legacy, and era. He holds a PhD in History from Georgetown University and an MA jointly conferred from King's College London and Georgetown University. He is the author of *A Voice in Their Own Destiny: Reagan, Thatcher, and Public Diplomacy in the Nuclear 1980s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023) and co-author, with John Baylis, of *Sharing Nuclear Secrets: Trust, Mistrust, and Ambiguity in Anglo-American Nuclear Relations, 1939-Present* (Oxford University Press, 2023). He has spoken and published widely on nuclear and national security issues in journals and other outlets, including for *The Journal of Military History*, *Technology & Culture*, and *War on the Rocks*. In addition to his work at the Institute, Anthony teaches for George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.

Dario Fazzi is a Professor of Transatlantic and Environmental History at Leiden University, the Netherlands. He has published extensively on anti-nuclear movements, transatlantic protests, US global base politics, and anti-toxics campaigns. His latest book is *Smoke on the Water: Incineration at Sea and the Birth of a Transatlantic Environmental Movement* (Columbia University Press, 2023).

Henry Richard Maar III is a modern US historian with interests in the history of peace activism, the Cold War, and American foreign policy. He is the author of *Freeze! The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022). He is a board member of the Peace History Society and a lecturer in the History Department at California State University, Northridge.

Review by Andrea Chiampan, University of Toronto

There is so much to like in *Dreams for a Decade*. Stephanie L. Freeman expertly marshals an impressive array of archival primary sources across the United States and the United Kingdom, spanning presidential libraries and national archives to the personal and organizational papers and special collections at Swarthmore College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the Library of Congress, the London School of Economics, and Princeton University. *Dreams for a Decade* is not only well-researched but beautifully written, too. The narrative is particularly engaging. Freeman takes readers smoothly across events and anecdotes of great geopolitical and cultural significance from Eurovision 1982 to the 1986 Reykjavik summit between President Ronald Reagan and Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev, from the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp established in 1981 to the ending of the Cold War. Freeman is interested not only in the classic duality between summit politics (top-down) and grassroots activism (bottom-up) but also in people.

From prominent peace activists like Randy Kehler, E.P. Thompson, and Randall Forsberg to less-known ones like Barbara Einhorn and Jan Pukalik, Freeman admirably adds depth to the narrative through their personal stories. This blend of diplomatic, transnational, and micro-history is as unusual as ambitious, yet quite refreshing.¹ Moreover, Freeman is to be commended for confidently advancing bold and clear-cut historiographical claims, which are a rare occurrence in first monographs. Freeman pushes her arguments and conclusions to the very limit of what the sources allow, and perhaps even beyond.

While there is very little to critique in terms of the book's research depth and narrative, I am less persuaded by Freeman's interpretation of the role of grassroots movements in ending the Cold War and the book's characterization of Reagan's arms control policies and grand strategy in the 1980s. Freeman argues that "nuclear abolitionists played a significant role in ending the Cold War" (4). Within the category of "nuclear abolitionists," Freeman includes both grassroots groups—focusing in particular on the Freeze Movement in the United States and the European Nuclear Disarmament (END)—as well as Gorbachev and Reagan. Freeman's narrative challenges the prevailing scholarly interpretation of the Reagan administration's arms control policy.²

She argues that early in Reagan's tenure he "became convinced that the best way to prevent a nuclear conflict would be to abolish nuclear weapons altogether" and "pursued this goal of a nuclear-free world for the remainder of his presidency" (2). In this interpretation, Western anti-nuclear movements, Eastern European peace activists, Reagan, and Gorbachev, therefore, were all nuclear abolitionists working toward the same goal. Against this backdrop, Freeman argues that "the 1980s was a unique decade during which the radical goal of nuclear abolition enjoyed support from both grassroots movements across the globe and the

¹ On a personal note, Freeman's book receives bonus points for mentioning songs by two out of my top three favorite bands—Jethro Tull and Genesis, before Peter Gabriel's departure, of course.

² For instance, James G. Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2014).

leaders of the two superpowers, Reagan and Gorbachev” (3). Only their “different strategies led Reagan and grassroots anti-nuclear activists to dislike and mistrust one another” (3). While European activists “sought the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Europe as a precursor to talks on complete nuclear disarmament,” (16), and US movements sought to “freeze” the arms race, Reagan believed that disarmament was viable only through nuclear weapon modernization programs and rearmament to allow the United States to bargain from a position of strength (“peace through strength” 38, 44, 60).

In other words, the administration’s frantic race to close yet another imaginary missile gap with the Soviet Union through gargantuan defense budgets was but a means to the ultimate end: nuclear abolitionism. The shared abolitionist views of Reagan and Gorbachev made the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and, by extension, the end of the Cold War possible. Freeman also argues that Western grassroots movements were pivotal in shaping Reagan’s arms control policies in his first term, forcing the administration to negotiate over European INF earlier than desired. While Eastern European grassroots movements had a “profound influence” (6) in shaping Gorbachev’s views of a post-Cold War nuclear-free Europe. Finally, while the nuclear abolitionists in Freeman’s narrative succeeded in ending the Cold War, they could not eliminate nuclear weapons. Against the prevailing benign views of the George H.W. Bush administration’s management of the Cold War endgame, Freeman pins this failure squarely on Bush.³ She argues that the president was ultimately responsible for backtracking on Reagan’s abolitionism to ensure that the post-Cold War global order remained centered on security through nuclear deterrence and the United States’ preponderance of power.

Two out of the arguments mentioned above are persuasive. Firstly, the Bush administration certainly worked zealously to undo the Gorbachev-Reagan idealist framework for a post-Cold War order. It did so not so much to ensure that nuclear weapons maintained their central role in perpetuity, but more generally to ensure continued US dominance in the new global order.⁴ Second, the argument over the connections between Eastern and Western movements and the related influence of peace activists on Gorbachev’s foreign policy, in particular the secretary’s idea of a “common European home,” is convincing. To be sure, this interpretation is not entirely new, but it is nonetheless valid, pertinent, and well-crafted.⁵

There is, however, a fundamental weakness in Freeman’s argument, which ultimately hinges on the definition of “abolitionism” (or lack thereof), and who should be considered a nuclear abolitionist and who should not. *Dreams for a Decade* offers no such definition and proceeds from the questionable assumption that Reagan, Gorbachev, and the activists were all nuclear abolitionists working towards ending the Cold

³ Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation*; and Jeffrey A. Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

⁴ Thomas Blanton, “U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989,” in Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Central European University Press, 2010), 49-98.

⁵ Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 1999).

War. This fuzziness over the definition of an analytical category that is so central to the book's overall argument is problematic. This overly inclusive and cavalier use of the category "abolitionism" ultimately undermines the strength of Freeman's argument.

In other words, if Reagan, Gorbachev, and the people of Europe and the United States all belonged on the same spectrum, it goes without saying that abolitionism had a pivotal role in the Cold War endgame. Who else, if not the leaders of the two superpowers, should hold such a title? In a sense, the argument then becomes tautological. Freeman's book enters a crowded historiographical debate about who should be most credited for ending the Cold War: Reagan, Gorbachev, or peace activists.⁶ She argues, in effect, that this very question may be flawed, for all these actors worked towards the same goal though through different tactics. Yet, if Gorbachev and Reagan are to be credited for ending the Cold War, then peace activists are once more demoted to an ancillary role. Logically, either Reagan and Gorbachev were abolitionists all along, and in their attempt to eliminate nuclear weapons ended up ending the Cold War, or the anti-nuclear movement was instrumental in instilling abolitionism in the leaders of their countries, and thus played a pivotal role in the Cold War endgame. It is hard to see how all actors could simultaneously have held the same crown.

In a recent review of *Dreams for a Decade*, Paul Rubinson suggested taking nineteenth-century slavery abolitionism as a frame of reference. In that context, Rubinson points out:

Abolitionists were just one type of activist on an antislavery *spectrum* that also included gradualists, moderates, and others. Perhaps it might be more useful to similarly imagine an anti-nuclear spectrum upon which freeze activists, END members, Gorbachev, Reagan occupy an array of spots rather than deem them all equally ardent nuclear abolitionists.⁷

I agree with Rubinson's take. In the book's introduction, Freeman writes that during the 1980s "nuclear abolitionism was an international phenomenon that existed on a spectrum" (4). Nevertheless, there are no

⁶ Matthew Evangelista, "Explaining the End of the Cold War: Turning Points in Soviet Security Policy," in Njølstad, *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (Frank Cass, 2004), 118-34; Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford University Press, 1996); Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia University Press, 2000); Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (UNC Press, 2009); Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994); Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); Simon Miles, *Engaging the Evil Empire: Washington, Moscow, and the Beginning of the End of the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2020); Beth A. Fischer, "The United States and the Transformation of the Cold War," in *The Last Decade of the Cold War*, 226-40.

⁷ Paul Rubinson's Review of Freeman, *Dreams for a Decade, Peace & Change*, (11 August, 2023), online version); <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/pech.12639>.

further references and development of the idea of a spectrum. One could still make the argument about overlapping abolitionist vocations across actors, but more qualifications and granularity are required.

Setting that aside for a moment, more concretely, one can take issue with Freeman's characterization of Reagan's abolitionism and its interaction with the anti-nuclear movement. Going back to the idea of an abolitionist spectrum, it is difficult, if not impossible, to argue that Reagan opposed nuclear weapons in the same way anti-nuclear activists (or Gorbachev) did. It is equally hard to argue that Reagan's nuclear abolitionism emerged in 1945 and endured unabated into the 1980s.⁸ It is even harder to argue that Reagan's abolitionism translated into policy consistently throughout his two terms. Also, the effects of the Freeze movement on Reagan's foreign policy are generally overstated here. After all, if Reagan was an abolitionist all along, and there was no "reversal," then what exactly can the activists be credited for?

It is well established that Reagan certainly harbored intermittent private feelings about nuclear weapons that aligned with abolitionism.⁹ Yet, can the president who oversaw the largest nuclear weapons buildup in history, canceled detente, staffed his administration with bellicose trigger-happy advisers, and led the superpowers nearly as close to nuclear war as in the Cuban Missile Crisis truly be considered a nuclear abolitionist?¹⁰ In other words, it is not clear why we would accept Reagan's private feelings about nuclear weapons rather than his five years—up to Gorbachev's rise to power—of consistent, unabated aggressive rearmament and anti-detente policies in the pursuit of military superiority over the Soviet Union. Reagan spoke (occasionally) of a world without nuclear weapons. Perhaps Reagan's feelings were sincere, but words—let alone feelings—do not constitute a grand strategy. Reagan's actions, particularly in his first term, tell a different story. This is a case of 'actions speaking louder than words.' The Reagan administration was imbued with anti-Sovietism, militarism, and pro-nuclear dogmatism. While, as Freeman highlights, it is true that the administration's policies were largely driven by embattled advisers who did not share Reagan's private peace views, this dilutes rather than strengthens her argument. If Reagan's views were not heard, they did not translate into policy and were therefore of marginal relevance. Let us not forget who Reagan actively and consistently recruited as his advisors: Vice President Bush, who once boasted America's ability to "win" a nuclear war¹¹; Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who was not content with effective deterrence but aimed at "prosecuting a global war with the Soviet Union"¹²; Deputy Under Secretary of Defense T. K. Jones, who offered that "with enough shovels," Americans could survive a nuclear war; all they needed to do was "dig a hole, cover it with a couple of doors and then throw three

⁸ Rubinson, Review of Freeman, *Dreams for a Decade*.

⁹ Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation*; Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (Hill and Wang, 2007); Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Random House, 2005); Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cornell University Press, 2016).

¹⁰ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 863.

¹¹ William M. Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze in a Cold War: The Reagan Administration, Cultural Activism, and the End of the Arms Race* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2017), 3-6.

¹² Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze*, 4.

feet of dirt on top.”¹³ Reagan enlisted over 30 members of the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), the right-wing proto-neocon organization that throughout the late 1970s condemned detente with the Soviet Union, abhorred SALT negotiations, and campaigned in favor of nuclear rearmament. This included prominent figures in critical positions such as INF Chief Negotiator Paul H. Nitze, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) Eugene V. Rostow, and National Security Advisor Richard V. Allen. Another hefty portion of the administration’s staff came from the infamous “Team B,” a group of embattled Cold Warriors created by the urging of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB)’s most prominent voice, theoretical physicist, and the father of the H-bomb Edward Teller. The group included Harvard historian and Director of East European and Soviet Affairs in Reagan’s National Security Council (NSC) Richard E. Pipes, amongst others, and argued that Soviet leaders were hell-bent on world domination, while the CIA had consistently underestimated its capabilities leading the United States to underspend on nuclear weapons and fall behind Moscow.¹⁴

That said, arguing that Reagan was an abolitionist at heart may still be plausible, but only if these immense contradictions are not underplayed leaving the impression that Reagan consistently worked to eliminate nuclear weapons and that abolitionism informed his policies throughout.

Then, there is the key issue of how, and how much, the grassroots movements influenced the administration’s policies. Freeman argues that the activists’ influence was the largest in Reagan’s first term and abated in his second. Freeman’s depiction of Reagan’s adoption of the zero option is a prime example not only of such influence but also of Reagan’s desire to abolish nuclear weapons. There is, however, little evidence that the zero option “appealed to Reagan’s anti-nuclear streak” or that Reagan believed “the Soviets might find it compelling” (61). The zero option was largely a public policy device architected to undercut movement’s strength in the United States and Europe and take the moral high ground over the Soviets. The administration knew that Soviet officials would reject it, but hoped this would help European leaders, in particular West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who were dealing with their own domestic anti-nuclear movements. Unlike in the United States, in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) the anti-nuclear sentiment was decisively embedded within political parties, including Schmidt’s Social-Democratic Party (SPD). In other words, in this context, the anti-nuclear movements played an important role in shaping the US position with the European allies functioning as a transmission mechanism between European activism and US policymaking.

Ultimately, interactions between the anti-nuclear movements and Reagan boiled down to the administration’s consistent and successful attempts to co-opt the movement to contain its reach. Ingeniously, this was done not to achieve a common goal—abolition—but to derail it. The Reagan administration, in fact, never seriously negotiated INF between 1981 and 1983 and was hardly heartbroken

¹³ Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze*, 4.

¹⁴ Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze*, 6.

when Soviet officials walked out of the negotiations in Geneva.¹⁵ This seems incompatible both with the characterization of Reagan as an ardent abolitionist as well as with Freeze inducing some form of reversal in the president. When presented with pivotal opportunities to embrace significant reductions, the president consistently chose to pass. For instance, the 1982 “Walk in the Woods” package, which was hastily put together by Nitze and his counterpart Yuli Kvitsinsky, and which would have provided a reasonable and equitable solution to the INF problem, was barely considered.¹⁶ Even at the height of the Reagan-Gorbachev summitry at Reykjavik in 1986, Reagan overlooked Gorbachev’s yielding to US positions and ultimately decided to favor a moonshot armament project like SDI over concrete and immediate reductions. The 1987 INF Treaty was again primarily due to Gorbachev’s compromising rather than Reagan’s proactiveness.

Dreams for a Decade is undoubtedly the most daring contribution to the vibrant historiographical debate over whether Reagan or Gorbachev ended the Cold War and whether anti-nuclear activists succeeded or failed in their quest to influence policy.¹⁷ Freeman claims that the ending of the Cold War came about thanks to a group effort of unlikely and unwitting allies. *Dreams for a Decade* also stands as an excellent, very readable synthesis of the anti-nuclear movement in the United States and Europe, although one wonders if the primary focus on Freeze and END does not obfuscate evident distinctions within a transnational movement made of hundreds of different groups. *Dreams for a Decade* aptly captures the genesis and development of this transnational movement with many original insights and is bound to become a fundamental piece of research both in the literature on the Cold War ending and the role of grassroots movements in international relations.

¹⁵ Andrea Chiampan, “The Reagan Administration and the INF Controversy, 1981–83,” *Diplomatic History* 44/5 (2020): 860–84.

¹⁶ Chiampan, “The INF Controversy.”

¹⁷ Henry Richard Maar III, *Freeze! The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Paul Rubinson, *Rethinking the American Antinuclear Movement* (Routledge, 2018); Aaron Donaghy, *The Second Cold War: Carter, Reagan, and the Politics of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); Angela Santese, “Ronald Reagan, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and the Nuclear Scare of the 1980s,” *International History Review* 39/3 (2017): 496–520; Lawrence S. Wittner, *Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present*, vol. 3 of *The Struggle Against the Bomb* (Stanford University Press, 2003); and, Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze*.

“Heroes of the Cold War: Nuclear Abolitionists”

A little more than 40 years ago, *Newsweek* declared that a “nuclear book boom” had taken hold of the American public’s imagination.¹ Monographs offering a variety of solutions to the perils of the nuclear age came from antinuclear activists, government officials, gender scholars, scientists, clergy and theologians, labor leaders, journalists and playwrights, and just about every other corner of civil society. Even Dr. Seuss got in the mix with the publication of the *The Butter Battle Book* in 1984.² Beset by the nightmares of the nuclear age, Cold War citizens were clearly dreaming about a world free of nuclear weapons.

Stephanie Freeman’s *Dreams for a Decade* is part of another nuclear book boom now underway that shows how the nuclear politics of the 1980s eschewed the orthodox wisdom and traditional power structures of domestic and alliance politics in order to overcome the Cold War. Within the last two years, books from Susan Colbourn, David Craig, Luke Griffith, Andrew Hunt, Vincent Intondi, Henry Maar III, and the author of this review, among others, have combined to make the nuclear 1980s a central feature of the historiography of the Cold War.³ Taken together, these books reveal that the nuclear crises of the 1980s remade not just international diplomacy, but also pop-culture, the features and practice of democracy, civil discourse, the relationship between expertise and governance, the connection between religion and politics, environmental consciousness, sexuality and power, and the moral fundamentals of humanity, among other basic assumptions about human existence. Freeman’s book engages these themes in mapping out the winding path nuclear abolitionists followed in their quest to disarm the Cold War superpowers.

Freeman’s introduction and early chapters establish that nuclear abolitionism was no monolith, but rather a “diverse and global force in the 1980s” (4) that was comprised of both grass-roots antinuclear activists and government officials—most prominently President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. While the framing of Reagan as a nuclear abolitionist is not altogether new, situating Reagan within the broader movement for abolition rather than as an antagonist to grassroots activism leads to important

¹ Peter McGrath, “The Nuclear Book Boom,” *Newsweek*, April 12, 1982

² Dr. Seuss, *The Butter Battle Book* (Random House, 1984).

³ Andrew Hunt, *We Begin Bombing in Five Minutes: Late Cold War Culture in the Ae of Reagan* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2021); Henry Richard Maar III, *Freeze: The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons that Nearly Destroyed NATO* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Anthony Eames, *A Voice in Their Own Destiny: Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Public Diplomacy in the Nuclear 1980s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023); Vincent Intondi, *Saving the World From Nuclear War: The June 12, 1982 Disarmament Rally and Beyond* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023); David Craig, *Apocalypse Television: How The Day After Helped End the Cold War* Luke Griffith, *Unraveling the Gray Area Problem: The United States and the INF Treaty* (Cornell University Press, 2023).

considerations about how an arms control synthesis came into being.⁴ Freeman provides outstanding character sketches of prominent abolitionists such as Randall Forsberg, Randy Kehler, David Cortright, E. P. Thompson, and Mary Kaldor, among others, while also providing a detailed assessment of the movements and organizations that they spearheaded, primarily the Freeze movement and European Nuclear Disarmament (END). This contribution to social movement scholarship is no small feat. The records of the decentralized disarmament movement spread across the State Historical Society of Missouri, the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, and the London School of Economics Special Collections are anything but neatly organized and easily deciphered.

As Freeman pulls the thread of grassroots activism throughout *Dreams for a Decade*, she draws in another major phenomenon of the late Cold War: human rights and the Helsinki process. For far too long scholars of the Cold War have artificially separated the campaign for human rights and the nuclear disarmament movement. *Dreams for a Decade* complements both nuclear narratives and the work of Sarah Snyder, William Schmidli, and other human rights scholars.⁵ Lawrence Wittner and Matthew Evangelista had previously highlighted the importance of the connection between Western antinuclear activists and Eastern European dissidents for the end of the Cold War.⁶ Freeman adds more nuance, showing that the tension between Western peace activists and Eastern European dissidents over whether to prioritize human rights, denuclearization, or the dissolution of the blocs evolved into a process of transnational learning that ultimately shaped Gorbachev's 'new thinking' on geopolitics. Though the German antinuclear movement and corresponding green politics have often been framed as Western Europe's most important source of activism, Freeman convincingly asserts that the British and Dutch activists were the strongest and best positioned to engage Eastern European dissident groups such as Charter 77 or the Committee for Social Resistance (KOS).⁷

Turning to Moscow, Freeman shows us that the convergence of antinuclear activism and the Helsinki process was a driving force behind Gorbachev's sales pitch for a "common European home." She qualifies that "Gorbachev's vision of a united Europe diverged from the one presented by the European peace

⁴ Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006); Ken Adelman, *Reagan at Reykjavik: Forty-Eight Hours That Ended the Cold War* (Books, 2014).

⁵ Sarah Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); Rasmus Sinding Søndergaard, *Reagan: Congress, and Human Rights: Contesting Morality in US Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020); William Michael Schmidli, *Freedom on the Offensive: Human Rights, Democracy Promotion, and US Interventionism in the Late Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2022).

⁶ Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 1999); Lawrence Wittner, *Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement* (Stanford University Press, 2003).

⁷ Andrew Tompkins, *Better Active Than Radioactive!: Anti-nuclear Protest in 1970s France and West Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2016); Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke and Jeremy Varon, *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

movement in that it included a place for the Soviet Union” (170). Taking her arguments one step forward, it seems that Gorbachev’s was too focused on the West in his attempts to reform the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc. His key misjudgment was that his support for political self-determination would increase the popularity of socialism in Eastern Europe while simultaneously making a reformed Soviet Union more palatable to Western Europe so as to further develop economic ties. The reality is that Gorbachev never found the right sequencing or balance for his military, economic, and political reforms in order to meet his goal of an integrated Europe that followed the lead of a modernized Soviet state.

The other key narrative of the book comes out of the White House. Freeman adds another voice to the Reagan rehabilitation project, which continues to tear down the caricatured image of the 40th president as an uninformed warmonger who was led by his staff and dragged into history by Gorbachev. Instead, Freeman reinforces an emerging consensus that Reagan’s negative qualities were trumped by his status as a visionary leader of high emotional intelligence with a keen sense of strategic timing.⁸ He balanced his sustained interest for reinvigorating diplomacy with the Soviet Union with sizable investments in American nuclear and military capabilities as part of a strategy to attain negotiating leverage and to safeguard against the failure of diplomacy. This portrait of Reagan stands out even more in comparison to his Vice President and successor George H.W. Bush, who, Freeman argues, was trapped in conventional Cold War thinking and “bears the primary responsibility for the missed opportunity to achieve more dramatic nuclear arms reductions at the Cold War drew to a close” (244).

Too many histories of the final chapter of the Cold War end with Reagan, not Bush. Too many histories of citizens and social movements isolate activism by cardinal issue. Too many histories of the West in the 1980s fail to develop perspectives from the Eastern bloc. Freeman avoids all these traps and sets a positive example of how to integrate official and unofficial narratives. She has undoubtedly accomplished her aim of showing us that nuclear abolitionists of many varieties deserve the lion’s share of the credit for ending the Cold War. However, her case that scholars have overlooked the importance of nuclear abolitionists in the resolution of the four-decade long superpower conflict is overstated. Nearly every author cited in this review and many others contend that nuclear abolitionists broke the Cold War’s *raison d’être*. Nevertheless, *Dreams for a Decade* should become required reading for students of the nuclear age.

⁸ William Inboden, *Peacemaker: Ronald Reagan, The Cold War, and the World on the Brink* (Dutton, 2022).

A few months ago, in a roundtable on Henry Maar's recent book on the nuclear Freeze campaign, I praised Maar's insight into President Ronald Reagan's "ambivalent, almost oxymoronic approach to war and peace."¹ It is difficult to reconcile Reagan's militant and uncompromising anti-Communism, his role in the recrudescence of the Cold War nuclear tensions, and his support for one of the largest peacetime military build-ups in US history with his numerous openings to nuclear negotiations, which eventually resulted in the first historical ban of an entire class of nuclear weapons with the signature of the 1987 INF treaty.² Stephanie Freeman's book is another welcome and decisively thought-provoking addition to this fascinating historiographical puzzle and debate. Freeman contends that Reagan's incongruity was only apparent, and that his opposition to nuclear weapons never really changed. Freeman sees no twists of faith and considers Reagan as a consistently committed nuclear abolitionist. This argument constitutes both the book's most intriguing and original contribution and one of its most problematic aspects.

Freeman weaves coherently together the rise of the varied wave of antinuclear protests that emerged from the late 1970s onward with the international political developments that characterized the last decade of the Cold War. Through a meticulous research that engagingly reconstructs the US administration's internal debate over nuclear negotiations with the Soviet Union vis-à-vis the mounting domestic and international concerns over the acceleration of the nuclear arms race, Freeman contends that international nuclear abolitionism, which to her encompasses both antinuclear grassroots activism and government leaders' support for a nuclear-free world, crucially contributed to the reversal of the nuclear arms race and the end of the Cold War (4-5). In so doing, Freeman establishes a clear connection between movements and organizations like the nuclear Freeze campaign, which aimed to stop nuclear rearmament and possibly reverse it, and those political leaders who, like Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, envisioned and tried to craft a world without nuclear weapons.

Freeman's study thus helps to further understand the full extent of the influence that such an unprecedented, massive, transversal, and popular mobilization against nuclear weapons had on US—and international—nuclear policymaking.³ According to Freeman, Reagan, along with a few key administration

¹ Review by Dario Fazzi in H-Diplo Roundtable XXIV-14 on Maar, Freeze!: The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War, online at https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/11920119/h-diplo-roundtable-xxiv-14-maar-freeze-grassroots-movement-halt#_Toc120633170, accessed on August 30, 2023.

² Just to give a glimpse of how varied literature still is on the point of Reagan's approach to war and peace, see, among others, Christian Smith, *Resisting Reagan, The U.S. Central America Peace Movement* (The University of Chicago Press, 2022) and William Inboden, *The Peacemaker: Ronald Reagan, the Cold War, and the World on the Brink* (Dutton, 2022).

³ Several historical works have provided convincing narratives on the influence of nuclear fears on Reagan's nuclear stances. See, for instance, Christian P. Peterson, *Ronald Reagan and Antinuclear Movements in the United States and Western Europe, 1981-1987* (Mellin, 2003); Kyle Harvey, *American Anti-Nuclear Activism, 1975-1990: The Challenge of Peace* (Palgrave, 2014); William M. Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze in a Cold War: The Reagan Administration, Cultural Activism, and the End of the Arms Race* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2017).

officials, did not simply bandwagon on the popularity of the Freeze messages, transforming and diluting its core propositions in order to capitalize on a widening antinuclear consensus, as some scholarship has suggested.⁴ On the contrary, as Freeman notes, Reagan shared with Freeze and antinuclear campaigners a genuine desire to get rid of nuclear weapons and this, to Freeman, puts him in the ranks of nuclear abolitionists.

Freeman provides ample evidence to show Reagan's unwavering support for the idea of eliminating nuclear weapons in the form of diary entries, private conversations with his secretaries and advisers, NSC meetings, talks with family members, public utterances, and diplomatic exchanges with Soviet leaders. Freeman historically contextualizes these instances and connects them with the contemporary rising fear of apocalyptic devastation that modern nuclear arsenals brought about in the early 1980s. She argues that the conviction that a nuclear war could not be won and should not be fought under any circumstance was so deeply rooted in Reagan's mind that it convinced the president to endorse and actively pursue nuclear abolitionism, at times even against the advice of his administration members. And in this regard, Freeman's book correctly emphasizes the criticism and the strong opposition that the President had to face on multiple occasions while trying to carry out his ambitious nuclear abolitionist agenda.

This is surely an original way of looking at Reagan's role, his persona, and his struggles within his own administration, which vividly renders the tragedy that people in charge of nuclear choices faced throughout the tensest stages of the Cold War.⁵ But the book has another important merit, which consists in transnationally framing the composite antinuclear wave of the 1980s, and the Freeze in particular. Freeman's narrative pays attention not only to the US protagonists of the Freeze but also to the contemporary development of the European Nuclear Disarmament (END) campaign, shedding further light into the legacies of the broader antinuclear movement that the Euromissile crisis triggered across the Old Continent.⁶ Freeman treats the Freeze as one of the most popular manifestations of the widespread nuclear abolitionism across the Atlantic that merged discourses of environmental protection, social justice, and peace with visions of a post-Cold War, denuclearized Europe. Here lies perhaps one of the most important elements that Freeman adds to the discussion about the Freeze's role in the end of the Cold

⁴ David Meyer, *A Winter of Discontent: The Nuclear Freeze and American Politics* (Praeger, 1990); Michael Stewart Foley, "No Nukes and Front Porch Politics: Environmental Protest Culture and Practice on the Second Cold War Home Front," in Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, Jeremy Varon, eds., *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 186-205; Angela Santese, "Ronald Reagan, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and the Nuclear Scare of the 1980s," *The International History Review*, 39:3 (2017): 294-310.

⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May, Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy since 1945* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁶ David Holloway, "The Dynamics of the Euromissile Crisis, 1977-1983," in Leopoldo Nuti, Frederic Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, Bernd Rother, eds., *The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 2015), 11-30; Susan Colbourn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed NATO* (Cornell University Press, 2022)

War.⁷ Nuclear abolitionists, among whom Freeman includes the leaders of the two superpowers, may have suffered from tactical and political defeats, conservative reversal, and even allegations of naivete; yet they successfully promoted a new nuclear thinking that, irrespective of whether one abides by the idea of the nuclear taboo, crucially contributed to preventing an all-out nuclear war from happening and to destructing the essence of the Cold War confrontation.⁸

I also have a few quibbles about Freeman's book. The first one is related to Freeman's operative definition of nuclear abolitionism. At times, the narrative essentializes it. Freeman's overall theoretical apparatus is indeed grounded on the idea that Reagan and the antinuclear campaigners only disagreed on the tactics they wanted to use to achieve their common goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. On the one hand, Reagan strenuously defended further investments in strategic defense under the idea that this would have made nuclear arsenals obsolete; on the other, antinuclear campaigners and grassroots organizations opposed rearmament, and insisted on the necessity of (progressive) de-nuclearization. Reagan's trickle-down anti-nuclearism, however, differed significantly from antinuclearists' gradualist approach. For one, Reagan proved to be so uncompromising on the Strategic Defense Initiative that even when the possibility of negotiating serious nuclear arms reduction treaties with Soviet officials opened, he constantly refused to give up on his 'Star Wars' proposal. His peace-through-strength approach, when applied to nuclear weapons, implied the perpetration and expansion of an extensive military-nuclear complex, which antinuclear critics continued to oppose fiercely. Stripped of tactical differences, then, what would be left to nuclear abolitionism if not just a general repulsion at nuclear war? With talks of nuclear winter, prospects of human extinction, and nightmares of Armageddon populating the collective imagery in the 1980s, who could look with favor at an all-out nuclear war?⁹ An almost absolute repugnance of it had already been engraved in the minds of most people, and this, at least in part, was the result of four decades of varied antinuclear protests and appeals.¹⁰

⁷ On this discussion, see Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle against the Bomb, Volume 3, Toward Nuclear Abolition* (Stanford University Press, 2003) and Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁸ Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁹ Spencer R. Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images* (Harvard University Press, 1989); Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, and Jeremy Varon, "Introduction: Between Accidental Armageddons and Winnable Wars: Nuclear Threats and Nuclear Fears in the 1980s," in Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, Jeremy Varon, eds., *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*, 1-24.

¹⁰ Robert A. Divine, *Blowing on the Wind: The Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1954-1960* (Oxford University Press, 1978); Milton Katz, *Ban the Bomb: A History of SANE, The Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, 1957-1985* (Praeger, 1986); Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb. Volume 2: Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* (Stanford University Press, 1997); Vincent J. Intondi, *African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement* (Stanford University Press, 2015); James L. Nolan, Jr., *Atomic Doctors: Conscience and Complicity at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age* (Harvard University Press, 2020).

Given the fact that a consensus had been established on the undesirability of a global nuclear war, the main challenges that nuclear abolitionists were confronted with in the 1980s revolved around the effectiveness of their tactics, focusing on how to realize the nuclear-free world that they were imagining, how to reverse the catch-22 that nuclear deterrence had brought about throughout the Cold War, and how to guarantee peace, stability, and security at the same time.¹¹ For these reasons nuclear abolitionists—as amply shown by Freeman, especially in her analysis of the debate between END leaders Mary Kaldor and E.P. Thompson—often held a comprehensive view of the threats that nuclear arsenals represented, warning against the risk of accidents and mismanagement that affected the whole nuclear fuel cycle and industry.¹²

How then is a nuclear abolitionist point of view à la Reagan reconcilable with constant investments in the nuclear complex? Uranium mining, for instance, boomed in Reagan's years, leaving a track of nuclear toxicity and devastation that is hard to square with the pursuit of nuclear abolitionism.¹³ Reagan's particular form of nuclear abolitionism might thus have needed at least further characterization, perhaps defining it as a genuine yet rather common aversion to nuclear war, which Reagan shared with millions of Freeze and antinuclear campaigners worldwide, without necessarily considering it as a total rejection of the nuclear arms race. In sum, applying nuclear abolitionist lenses to Reagan's political trajectory may not do entire justice to the still-relevant differences between the President's views and other forms of nuclear criticism.

A second critical point refers to the cultural side of the story. Numerous analyses have shown how the Freeze and the 1980s antinuclear wave were the result of both long-standing scientific and intellectual efforts as well as several attempts to implement antinuclear politics.¹⁴ Radical and liberal thinkers, along with nuclear scientists, had been advocating for nuclear disarmament since the dawn of the nuclear era.¹⁵ In the 1960s, their voices had been joined by those of students, women's groups, veterans, public intellectuals, celebrities, and environmentalists. After the Three Mile Island accident, when a reactor almost melted down at a nuclear power plant nearby Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a wide movement for the protection of the global environment against the threats that both the military and the civilian application of nuclear power entailed re-emerged across the Atlantic.¹⁶ Moreover, campaigns like Freeze benefitted from the

¹¹ Nicholas Thompson, "Nuclear War and Nuclear Fear in the 1970s and 1980s," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46:1 (2011), 136-149; Spencer R. Weart, *The Rise of Nuclear Fear* (Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹² Stephanie L. Freeman, *Dreams for a Decade*, 170. On the risks of the nuclear fuel cycle and the protests against it, see, among others, John Wills, *Conservation Fallout: Nuclear Protest At Diablo Canyon* (University of Nevada Press, 2012)

¹³ Doug Brugge, "The History of Uranium Mining and the Navajo People," *American Journal of Public Health*, 92:9 (2002): 1410-1419; Traci Brynne Voyles, *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹⁴ Petra Goedde, *Politics of Peace*.

¹⁵ Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

¹⁶ Dario Fazzi, "The Nuclear Freeze Generation: The Early 1980s Anti-Nuclear Youth Revolt between 'Carter's Vietnam' and 'Euroshima,'" in Knud Andresen and Bart van der Steen, eds., *A European Youth Revolt in 1980-1981* (Palgrave, 2016)

popularization of post-apocalyptic scenarios that from the appearance of the TV-movie *The Day After* had a deep impact not only on Reagan but also, and more generally, on the broader US culture.¹⁷ Whereas Freeman acknowledges certain elements of this cultural transformation, her narrative omits other important manifestations, like for instance the popular 1979 *No Nukes* concerts and the Musicians United for Safe Energy initiative.¹⁸

Thirdly, Freeman's argument does not adequately distinguish among the interests that were at play in those localities where concerns about the nuclear arms race emerged with the strongest vigor over the course of the 1980s. Freeman's narrative here must necessarily be general and overarching. Yet, the pressures coming from such peripheries as Woensdrecht in the Netherlands or Comiso in Italy were similar only in terms of their scope, while differing in terms of nature and short-term goals.¹⁹ The moral appeal and the mobilization capability that Dutch Christian organizations could rely on was replaced, not without risks, by the hard work of labor unions in places like Sicily, where the antinuclear protests faced not only political antagonism but also the resistance of local criminal groups.²⁰ The national objectives and obstacles of anti-nuclear campaigners should therefore be more carefully weighed against common, transnational goals, which prevail in Freeman's analysis.

All in all, though I may be convinced of Reagan's consistent antinuclear disposition, I am not completely sold on the idea that such a disposition paralleled the efforts of the contemporary, broader, international nuclear abolitionists. After all, grassroots campaigns like Freeze re-popularized antinuclear criticism after years in which the Vietnam War, détente, nuclear coexistence, economic and energy crises had reshuffled people's priorities, making the vision of a nuclear-free world available and appealing to a new generation of citizens. People started connecting the nuclear arms race with structural militarism and economic and environmental justice. Compared to the liberal discontent that had characterized the early stages of the Cold War, the 1980s antinuclear protests could rely on a wider array of strategies, means of communication, political alliances, and, most importantly, on a sedimented and consolidated awareness of the consequences of a nuclear war that was, very likely, the precondition of Reagan's nuclear aversion.

¹⁷ Kyle Harvey, *American Anti-Nuclear Activism, 1975–1990*; William M. Knoblauch, *Nuclear Freeze in a Cold War*.

¹⁸ Blake Slonecker, *A New Dawn for the New Left: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm, and the Long Sixties* (Springer Nature, 2012); Susan Hamburger, "When They Said Sit Down, I Stood Up: Springsteen's Social Conscience, Activism, and Fan Response," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, 9:1, "Glory Days: A Bruce Springsteen Celebration," Fall 2007, 182–202.

¹⁹ Ruud van Dijk, "'A Mass Psychosis': The Netherlands and NATO's Dual-Track Decision, 1978–1979," *Cold War History*, 12:3, 2012, 381–405; Renato Moro, "Against Euromissiles: Anti-Nuclear Movements in 1980s Italy (1979–1984)," in Elisabetta Bini, Igor Londero, eds., *Nuclear Italy: An International History of Italian Nuclear Policies during the Cold War* (EUT, 2017), 199–212.

²⁰ Paolo Gentiloni, Alberto Spampinato, Agostino Spataro, *Missili e mafia. La Sicilia dopo Comiso* (Editori Riuniti, 1985).

 Review by Henry Richard Maar III, California State University, Northridge

The historiography of the late Cold War is expanding at a rapid pace. Armed with new archival findings, scholars who were not actively engaged in the Cold War politics of the 1980s are reexamining the events that comprise the Cold War endgame.¹ Stephanie L. Freeman's *Dreams for a Decade: International Nuclear Abolitionism and the End of the Cold War* fits into this new scholarship on the late Cold War by bringing a dual-focus on how antinuclear activism and the vision of both US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev combined to end the Cold War. Freeman offers a richly researched account that examines evidence from both governmental holdings and peace-activist collections. Whereas scholars of the "Reagan Victory School" have posited that the end of the Cold War was the result of Reagan's get-tough policies, Freeman rejects these claims.²

Tied into Freeman's interpretation of Reagan is an older, yet, still quite relevant question: was there a Reagan Reversal?³ For Freeman, there is no reversal, since Reagan's antinuclear instincts long predated the presidency. Freeman also pushes back on scholarship that attributes the end of the Cold War solely to activist pressures finding that activists needed Reagan to end the arms race as much as Reagan needed them (II).⁴ Moreover, Freeman sets her work in opposition to that of scholars who praise President George H. W.

¹ See, for example, Simon Miles, *Engaging the Evil Empire: Washington, Moscow, and the Beginning of the End of the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2020); Aaron Donaghy, *The Second Cold War: Carter, Reagan, and the Second Cold War* (Cambridge, 2021); Henry Richard Maar III, *Freeze! The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Susan Colburn, *Euromissiles: The Nuclear Weapons That Nearly Destroyed Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Anthony M. Eames, *A Voice in Their Own Destiny: Reagan, Thatcher, and Public Diplomacy in the Nuclear 1980s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023).

² Among other works that fit within the "Reagan Victory School" see, Martin Anderson, *Revolution: The Reagan Legacy* (Stanford University Press, 1990) John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (Oxford University Press, 1992); Jay Winik, *On The Brink: The Dramatic Behind the Scenes Saga of the Reagan Era and the Men and Women Who Won the Cold War* (Simon & Schuster, 1996); Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1996); Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War: The Epic Story of his Forty Year Struggle and Final Triumph Over Communism* (Double Day, 2002); Richard C. Thornton, *The Reagan Revolution I: The Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Trafford Publishing, 2003); Paul Kengor, *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Triumph Over Communism* (New York, 2006); Steven F. Hayward, *The Age of Reagan: The Conservative Counterrevolution: 1980–1989* (Crown Forum, 2009); Francis H. Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War: Conservative Strategists and America's Cold War Victory* (Potomac Books, 2012); William Inboden, *The Peacemaker: Ronald Reagan, the Cold War, and the World on the Brink* (Dutton, 2022).

³ Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (University of Missouri Press, 1997). In my view, I too see a shift within the Reagan administration, one of rhetoric and public image, driven by public opinion, domestic politics, and the need to outflank antinuclear activists (and not due to Reagan's personal antinuclear beliefs).

⁴ David Cortright, *Peace Works: The Citizen's Role in Ending the Cold War* (Westview Press, 1993); Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against The Bomb, Vol. 3: Towards Nuclear Abolition: A History of the Nuclear Disarmament Movement 1971–Present* (Stanford University Press, 2003); Maar, *Freeze!*.

Bush's so-called "deft handling" of the late years of the Cold War, holding him as responsible for not going further with arms control initiatives. Thus, at the outset, Freeman has set her work apart from numerous different schools of thought related to the late Cold War. Freeman offers a nuanced thesis that in some ways seeks a middle ground between scholars who emphasize Reagan's personal anti-nuclear beliefs⁵ and scholars of the anti-nuclear movement.

Throughout her work, Freeman nicely blends the voices of both the activists and the actions of statesmen in the late Cold War. She provides excellent background on antinuclear organizations such as the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and SANE (the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy) in the US as well as organizations in Europe such as European Nuclear Disarmament (END), the UK's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), and the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council (IKV), among others, and we further see the various connections made between these distinct organizations. Freeman also provides excellent background on the various members of the Reagan administration early on, including their relationships to Reagan and how they perceived the nuclear question.

Freeman persuasively demonstrates that antinuclear activists pressured both Reagan and Gorbachev on arms control. In the first year of the Reagan administration, Freeman observes how the "surge" in grassroots antinuclear activism "accelerated" the administration's timetable for initiating strategic arms reduction talks and further pushed the administration to create a "bold arms reduction proposal" in order to "placate" the movement (55, 72). Moreover, Freeman offers strong evidence that Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which would (theoretically) intercept and destroy nuclear warheads as they were launched from silos or submarines, was in large part a response to the growing strength of the antinuclear movement (88-89). In the case of Gorbachev, Freeman offers us perhaps the strongest evidence yet of the contribution of END and other activists on Gorbachev's various proposals, from his announcement of a unilateral moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons, to the unilateral reduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, to his "common European home" initiative (215-218, 225-227). In the latter case, Freeman finds that the various revolutions of 1989 "actually intensified Gorbachev's resolve" to pursue the initiative and further helps explain his unwillingness to intervene militarily in a place like Czechoslovakia (233-234). Freeman also includes impressive background information on a number of important East European peace and human rights groups and finds connections within these groups to END.

Although Freeman is correct to argue for the importance of antinuclear activism, her argument on the significance of President Reagan to the outcome of the Cold War is less persuasive. For Freeman, Reagan was a "budding" abolitionist (75). She offers strong evidence of his personal revulsion towards nuclear weapons (especially when she contrasts Reagan's views on this issue with those of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher or Vice President and presidential successor George H. W. Bush). Yet much of Reagan's own antinuclear views were kept private until it was politically opportune to make Reagan (and by

⁵ See among other accounts, Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (Random House, 2005).

extension his administration) appear to the public as “abolitionists too” (as a secret memo from Reagan’s second National Security Advisor William Clark suggests, 71-72). While Freeman argues that Reagan “assumed the presidency with a sincere desire for dramatic arms reductions,” it was not at all evident to the public, who routinely listed fear of nuclear war as a top issue in opinion polls (68). The hostile rhetoric aimed at the Soviet Union, the loose talk of winnable and survivable nuclear war and comments about firing warning shots over Europe from within his administration, further escalated the second Cold War and fueled the rise of antinuclear weapons activism globally.

In the wake of the Soviet Union’s 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, Reagan’s belligerent militarism and strident anti-Communism played well with disaffected, neoconservative Cold War Democrats (such as Jeane Kirkpatrick, who later became Reagan’s ambassador to the UN) and hawkish Republicans. Reagan oversaw an administration filled with hardline neoconservatives from the Committee on the Present Danger (a group to which Reagan also belonged) and received wide-support from the American Security Council among other hard-right, foreign policy hawks. Despite Reagan’s own antinuclear desires, as Freeman demonstrates, his views were not shared by anyone else in the administration, with figures such as his third National Security Adviser John Poindexter seemingly scolding and warning Reagan against abolition in the wake of the Reykjavik Summit (69, 183-184). After reading *Dreams for a Decade*, I came away more convinced than ever that the Reagan administration (broadly) sought to outmaneuver the antinuclear movement (at home and abroad), as well as circumvent any of President Reagan’s own antinuclear instincts. This was an administration that was more interested in arms racing than arms control, and Reagan’s own desires for abolition (however sincere) seemingly held little sway.

Reagan’s abolitionist goals strike me as akin to journalist Peter Arnett’s famous quotation of an American officer during the Vietnam War: “We had to destroy the village in order to save it.”⁶ In the case of Reagan, the logic seems to have been that in order to de-escalate an arms race, one must first escalate it (as Reagan’s Peace through Strength strategy most certainly did). Under the false pretense that the US suffered from a window of vulnerability and could not achieve any real arms reductions unless it bargained from a position of strength, Reagan revived previously canceled programs such as the B-1 bomber and the neutron bomb, supported the placement in Europe of Pershing II and cruise intermediate-range nuclear weapons (the equivalent of Soviet missiles in Cuba), sought the creation of a fleet of Trident II submarines, and sought a new basing plan for the frequently-orphaned, 10-warhead intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) MX missile (which he dubbed, in an Orwellian-sense, the Peacekeeper”).⁷

Despite Reagan’s own antinuclear views, he was firmly committed to the strategic modernization of US nuclear forces (military Keynesianism by any other name)—a key distinction between his antinuclear views and those of say Randall Forsberg (Freeze) or Mary Kaldor (END). For these reasons, as Freeman observes, activists distrusted Reagan and, quite understandably, “did not see him as an ally” (41). When Reagan

⁶ “Major Describes Move,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1968.

⁷ See, for example, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/mx-peacekeeper-icbm.htm>.

unveiled what would become SDI, activists viewed it as retaliation against the movement.⁸ While Reagan may have genuinely believed SDI was a way toward the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, those surrounding him (such as Reagan's fourth National Security Adviser Bud McFarlane) saw the \$30 billion boondoggle as "MX Plus" (a bargaining chip for arms control talks and a tool to outflank the Freeze movement).⁹ Despite Reagan's willingness to share the technology with Soviet leaders, as Freeman aptly demonstrates again, Reagan was surrounded by advisors such as Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger who sought to convince him to "avoid making any compromises on U.S. positions," (200). Reagan may have indeed sincerely believed in a world where nuclear weapons would become "impotent and obsolete,"¹⁰ as he pronounced, but this was not a view reflected in his commitment to military Keynesianism, nor was it a view shared among the rest of his administration (or the Republican Party base moreover).

Nevertheless, there is much to agree with in *Dreams for a Decade*. Freeman depicts George H.W. Bush as a hardline Cold Warrior who did not share Reagan's antinuclear beliefs in contrast with more recent scholarship that portrays Bush as a skilled and deft statesman (244)—and this argument is right. Freeman presents strong evidence that the Bush administration was seeking Cold War victory over global peace (227-228). She's also correct that Bush did not face the same domestic opposition from the Nuclear Freeze campaign (or the larger global antinuclear movement) as Reagan did. Having won a decisive election over a nuclear freeze proponent in Michael Dukakis in 1988, Bush entered office without the same tensions of the Cold War that existed in the 1980 election (or the 1984 election for that matter). And yet, while membership declined in national peace organizations such as SANE-Freeze,¹¹ and their policy influence appeared to be waning, local and regional antinuclear organizations were still quite active. The National Campaign to Stop the MX, for example, routinely held meetings with other likeminded organizations and pressed their elected representatives to stop the rail-garrison MX during the Bush administration; likewise, activists from the Nevada Desert Experience routinely held protests and vigils at the Nevada Test Site to raise awareness for a total ban on nuclear testing (with that ban eventually coming in the way of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty). Though antinuclear activism peaked in both size and perhaps influence earlier in the decade, among the true devotees, the issue was alive and well, even as the Cold War thawed.

In the conclusion, Freeman raises the central question of her thesis again (242): what made antinuclear activists so much more successful in the 1980s than in prior decades? The history of the Cold-War arms race and arms control initiatives is one of activists pushing government authorities from below. A brief, but close examination also demonstrates that there were possibilities for, if not total nuclear abolition, then perhaps steps down the escalation ladder and towards a reversal of the arms race. In the aftermath of Soviet

⁸ See for instance, Helen Caldicott, *A Desperate Passion: An Autobiography*. (W.W. Norton, 1996) and Cortright, *Peace Works*.

⁹ Donald R. Baucom, *The Origins of SDI, 1944-1983* (University Press of Kansas, 1992), 182.

¹⁰ "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security, March 23, 1983."

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-nation-defense-and-national-security>

¹¹ SANE (The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy) merged with the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign (NWFC or sometimes just called "The Freeze") in 1987 and was later renamed Peace Action.

leader Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 and his successor Nikita Khrushchev's subsequent Secret Speech in 1956, both sides seemed to be taking (limited) steps towards a potential *détente*. That period likewise featured a strong push from test-ban activists such as SANE and CND. Yet, the opportunity for a true thaw in US-Soviet relations was set back when the American U2 spy plane was shot down over Soviet airspace in May 1960. The subsequent souring of US-Soviet relations nearly led to a catastrophic nuclear war over Cuba.

And yet, in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, there was again an opportunity to take further steps to curtail the arms race amid public pressure. In addition to signing the limited-Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, President John F. Kennedy was committed to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, be that in Israel or China (in the latter case he even considered an alliance with the Soviet Union to stop Chinese proliferation). Kennedy's tragic assassination once again changed the trajectory of the Cold War and the arms race. President Lyndon Johnson did not share Kennedy's antinuclear instincts and had no desires to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.¹² Moreover, his hawkish stance on foreign affairs, in addition to the fear of the political fallout were Vietnam to fall to Communism just like China under President Harry Truman, led Johnson to double down on the war in Vietnam—a war that would simultaneously build the largest peace movement in the nation's then-history, but would furthermore distract from and delay significant actions against nuclear proliferation until the war's aftermath. And while President Richard Nixon's administration boasted of *détente* (the lessening of tensions) with the Soviets, its series of arms control treaties actually allowed the arms race to continue unabated.¹³

Assessing Freeman's central claim that the Cold War could not have ended without both the antinuclear activists and the presence of Reagan and Gorbachev forces us to contemplate numerous historical contingencies. Like Reagan, President Jimmy Carter envisioned a world free of nuclear weapons, writing frequently in his diary about going beyond the SALT II negotiations and reaching agreement on a SALT III Treaty (and eventually abolishing nuclear weapons altogether). Carter even appeared to be heeding the burgeoning antinuclear movement of the 1970s when he met with B-1 bomber opponents and subsequently canceled the weapon. Fearing production of the Neutron Bomb would disrupt arms control progress, Carter further issued a moratorium on its production. Yet, Carter's presidency took a turn to the right as he faced pressures from the hawks within the Democratic Party and an escalating Cold War. His final years in office were beset with the compounding miseries of stagflation and a hostage crisis that dragged on through the 1980 election, dooming his political future. Contingency, however, forces us to ask whether Reagan would he have fared any better than Carter, all things being equal, had he won the Republican Primary and the subsequent presidential election of 1976. If not, how different would the 1980s have been? Could the arms race have ended sooner if Carter or Senator Ted Kennedy had been in office between 1981 and 1984?

¹² Rachel Elizabeth Whitlark, *All Options on the Table: Leaders, Preventive War, and Nuclear Proliferation* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

¹³ See my essay, "Subtraction by Addition: The Nixon Administration and the Domestic Politics of Arms Control," in *The Cold War At Home and Abroad: Domestic Politics and US Foreign Policy since 1945*, Andrew L. Johns and Mitchell B. Lerner, eds. (University of Kentucky Press, 2018).

These are historical hypothetical questions, but are well worth contemplating when we try to assess how significant, unique, and/or central Reagan was to the outcome of the Cold War.

Reagan (and Gorbachev) clearly deserve credit for departing from the hawks surrounding them, even if the argument that the Cold War could not have ended without Reagan's vision is less convincing. Indeed, as Freeman observes, Reagan and the antinuclear movement distrusted one another's approach to solving the arms race, whereas, at least for a time, Carter appears to have been far more in sync with the demands of activists. Would a second Carter term have led to the same unprecedented demonstrations and widespread demands to halt the arms race? Would any potential agreements reached in a second Carter term have gone as far as the elimination of an entire class of weapons, or, conversely, if not surrounded by neoconservatives, would a president committed to abolition have been able to go further than Reagan? If we seek consensus on credit for the end of the Cold War, the various theoretical contingencies are worth thinking about.

These disagreements aside, *Dreams for a Decade* ultimately is a significant contribution to the burgeoning historiography of the late Cold War. It continues a trend in the historiography of the antinuclear movement that takes activists and their agency seriously and (moreover) views them as important and significant players in the Cold War (thus departing from earlier more dismissive scholarship).¹⁴ The historiography of the antinuclear movement is becoming more nuanced and richer because of accounts such as Freeman's. Likewise, *Dreams for a Decade* challenges scholarship from the still-alive-and-kicking Reagan Victory School. While it may not be the final nail in that school's coffin, it is another sign of serious Cold War scholarship finding alternative explanations through rich archival research. By ending the Cold War in 1989 with the Malta Summit, Freeman's narrative distinguishes the end of the Cold War from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, thus furthering another trend in recent scholarship surrounding its periodization.¹⁵

¹⁴ Older works that were more dismissive of the efforts of antinuclear activists include Adam Garfinkle, *The Politics of the Nuclear Freeze* (Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1984); J. Michael Hogan, *The Nuclear Freeze Campaign: Rhetoric and Foreign Policy in the Telepolitical Age* (Michigan State University Press, 1994); and Christian Peterson, *Ronald Reagan and Antinuclear Movements in the United States and Western Europe, 1981–1987* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003).

¹⁵ See for instance, Ralph L. Dietl, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Ronald Reagan, NATO Europe, and the Nuclear and Space Talks, 1981–1988* (Lexington Books, 2018); Aaron Donaghy, *The Second Cold War: Carter, Reagan, and the Second Cold War* (Cambridge, 2021); Maar, *Freeze!*.

Response by Stephanie L. Freeman, US Department of State¹

I would like to thank Andrea Chiampan, Anthony Eames, Dario Fazzi, and Henry Maar for their thoughtful reviews of my book and Naomi Egel for her introduction. I am also grateful to Tom Maddux for organizing this roundtable and the rest of the H-Diplo team for editing and publishing it.

In *Dreams for a Decade*, I set out to examine nuclear abolitionists' influence on the course of the Cold War's final decade. The 1980s was a unique decade during which the radical goal of nuclear abolition enjoyed support from both grassroots movements across the globe and the leaders of the two superpowers, US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. During this period, nuclear abolitionism made for strange bedfellows. It brought together surprising coalitions of grassroots activists and government leaders who shared the goal of a nuclear-free world but disagreed on many issues, including the best strategy and timetable for eliminating nuclear weapons. In the 1980s, nuclear abolitionism was a diverse and global phenomenon.

With this in mind, I aimed to write an international history that would knit together the efforts of grassroots anti-nuclear activists and government officials who were committed to nuclear disarmament. I am gratified that all of the reviewers feel that my narrative succeeds in interweaving the actions of protesters and high-level policymakers. Each reviewer also praises the breadth and depth of my research in government and peace movement archives, which I deeply appreciate.

I argue that nuclear abolitionists played a significant yet unappreciated role in ending the Cold War. During the 1980s, grassroots and government nuclear abolitionists shifted US and Soviet nuclear arms control paradigms from arms limitation to arms reduction, which paved the way for the reversal of the superpower nuclear arms race. European peace activists also influenced Gorbachev's "common European home" initiative and support for freedom of choice in Europe, which prevented him from intervening to halt the 1989 East European revolutions. These revolutions tore the Iron Curtain, helping to end the Cold War division of Europe.

I am pleased that the reviewers are persuaded by my arguments about peace activists' influence on Gorbachev's nuclear arms control initiatives and policies toward Europe. They also praise my examination of the transnational ties among anti-nuclear movements, as well as the connections among anti-nuclear and human rights campaigns. In addition, Chiampan and Maar commend my treatment of President George H. W. Bush, whom I argue bears responsibility for the superpowers' inability to achieve more dramatic nuclear arms reduction as the Cold War came to an end in 1989.² Yet the reviewers also raise questions about my

¹ The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State or the US Government.

² My book stands in contrast to recent works that praise Bush's skillful management of the end of the Cold War. See, for example, Jeffrey A. Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017); James Graham Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's*

book, and three major issues stand out in their reviews: my definition of “nuclear abolitionism,” my characterization of Reagan’s views on nuclear weapons, and my argument about Reagan’s influence on US arms control policy.

As I explain on page 4 of *Dreams for a Decade*, I use the term “nuclear abolitionist” to refer to individuals who pursued the goal of a nuclear-free world. Chiampan calls for “more qualifications and granularity” in this definition. In my introduction, however, I make clear that in the 1980s, “nuclear abolitionism was not a single, unified vision but rather a broad spectrum of ideas, sometimes overlapping and oftentimes conflicting” (4). As I show throughout the book, activists and government officials had different timetables and strategies for eliminating nuclear weapons, which at times led to clashes among them. This can be seen in the adversarial relationship between Reagan and US and West European anti-nuclear activists, as well as in the heated debates within the transnational European peace movement over whether to link nuclear disarmament with other key issues like human rights. Yet despite their different approaches to nuclear disarmament, Reagan, Gorbachev, and the activists in my book all pursued the aim of a world without nuclear weapons. By labeling all of these actors “nuclear abolitionists,” I am emphasizing this shared end goal. Nevertheless, I do not shy away from discussing their disagreements over how best to realize this common aim.

Chiampan expresses doubt that all of the actors that I call “nuclear abolitionists” could have played critical roles in ending the Cold War. According to Chiampan, logic dictates that *either* Reagan and Gorbachev *or* anti-nuclear activists were vital to the Cold War’s endgame. I disagree with this view. While Reagan and Gorbachev both came to power with a desire for nuclear disarmament, anti-nuclear activists had a pivotal influence on the US and Soviet policies that ended the Cold War. For example, within the first six weeks of his presidency, Reagan publicly expressed support for negotiations to reduce strategic nuclear weapons (START) and intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF). Yet his initial team of advisors had little to no interest in nuclear disarmament and often actively worked against Reagan’s aim of a nuclear-free world. In 1981 and 1982, pressure from US and West European anti-nuclear activists was crucial in prompting Reagan’s advisors to support the opening of INF and START talks. Pressure from activists also accelerated Reagan’s own timetable for beginning INF and START negotiations, which opened much earlier than Reagan had intended upon taking office. These negotiations were vital in reversing the nuclear arms race and ending the Cold War.

In addition, Gorbachev’s nuclear abolitionism initially led him to try to end the Cold War by concluding sweeping nuclear disarmament agreements with the United States. Yet peace activists, for example, influenced Gorbachev’s February 1987 decision to pursue an INF treaty separately from agreements on START and strategic defenses. This removed the major obstacle blocking the INF Treaty.

Engagement, and the End of the Cold War (Cornell University Press, 2014); Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *To Build a Better World: Choices to End the Cold War and Create a Global Commonwealth* (Twelve, 2019); and Christopher Maynard, *Out of the Shadow: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War* (Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

While acknowledging that Reagan maintained anti-nuclear views as president, Chiampan, Fazzi, and Maar are skeptical of my labeling Reagan a “nuclear abolitionist.” In their reviews, they highlight Reagan’s nuclear modernization program and anti-Communist rhetoric and policies. They also note that Reagan selected advisors who spoke cavalierly about nuclear war and advocated a hardline approach toward the Soviet Union. I discuss all of these points in my book and explain how they spurred grassroots anti-nuclear activism in the United States and Western Europe. Yet I maintain that Reagan should be considered a “nuclear abolitionist” because his end goal was nuclear disarmament. Although the Reagan administration embarked on a major nuclear modernization program, the president viewed it as a necessary incentive for the Soviets to negotiate mutual nuclear arms reduction. As he explained in October 1981, Reagan hoped that his strategic modernization program would motivate Soviet officials to pursue meaningful strategic nuclear arms reduction. If this occurred, Reagan noted that weapons programs like the MX “won’t ever have to be completed” (55). Eames is right to point out that Reagan’s pursuit of nuclear modernization was “part of a strategy to attain negotiating leverage and to safeguard against the failure of diplomacy.”

In addition, Reagan was certainly a staunch anti-Communist. Yet he also seriously pursued dramatic nuclear arms reduction agreements with the Soviets, even in the first year of his presidency. An example of this is Reagan’s adoption of the zero option as the opening US proposal in the INF negotiations. Contrary to Chiampan’s claims, Reagan viewed the zero option as a sound proposal that might appeal to the Soviets. As I detail on page 65, Reagan’s statements during an NSC meeting on 12 November 1981 support this argument. Yet Reagan also recognized that the superpowers might be unable to conclude an agreement that eliminated land-based INF missiles all at once. In order to at least begin the process of reducing INF, Reagan was willing to accept an agreement that provided for equal INF ceilings above zero. During the 12 November NSC meeting, he repeatedly said that his administration needed to figure out the number of Soviet INF systems that it could accept in an INF agreement so that it would be ready to respond seriously to a Soviet counteroffer. Reagan did not enter the INF negotiations simply to undercut West European peace movements. Instead, he genuinely sought the reduction and elimination of land-based INF missiles, which he hoped would lead to reductions in other US and Soviet nuclear systems (see 65).

Chiampan and Maar also contend that Reagan’s anti-nuclear views had no influence on US policy because the president was surrounded by hardline aides who opposed and even worked against nuclear disarmament. The first eighteen months of Reagan’s presidency, in particular, were marked by disagreements between Reagan and his top advisors on nuclear arms control. Nevertheless, the president still managed to set his administration on the course of pursuing nuclear arms reduction through his public statements. Within six weeks of entering the White House, Reagan publicly endorsed strategic nuclear arms reduction and the arms control track of the NATO dual-track decision. (It is also worth noting that Reagan made these statements months before grassroots anti-nuclear movements attracted significant attention.)

As I show in the book, Reagan was also more assertive in nuclear policymaking as individuals who supported nuclear arms reduction joined the highest levels of his administration. The two most important advisors in this regard were George Shultz, who became secretary of state in July 1982 (and goes unmentioned in the reviews), and Robert “Bud” McFarlane, who served as deputy national security advisor

in 1982–1983 and national security advisor in 1983–1985. Reagan, for example, worked with McFarlane to develop the Strategic Defense Initiative, which the president viewed as the key to a nuclear-free world although it turned into a stumbling block in US-Soviet arms reduction negotiations. Knowing that he could count on Shultz and McFarlane’s support, Reagan insisted in 1984 that officials in his administration devise new START and INF proposals to try to bring the Soviets back to the negotiating table. In January 1985, Reagan enshrined nuclear abolition as the official long-term US goal in National Security Decision Directive 153.

Furthermore, a comparison of Reagan and Bush highlights the policy influence of Reagan’s nuclear abolitionism, as well as Reagan’s role in ending the Cold War. During the Reagan and Bush presidencies, Gorbachev set forth dramatic nuclear arms reduction proposals that included significant concessions. Reagan shared Gorbachev’s dream of a nuclear-free world, while Bush opposed nuclear abolition. Reagan worked with Gorbachev to conclude the 1987 INF Treaty and devise a general outline for a START agreement. By contrast, Bush rejected Gorbachev’s proposals for tactical nuclear arms reduction throughout 1989. Reagan’s nuclear abolitionism thus enabled him to be an important partner for Gorbachev, who played an essential role in the Cold War’s endgame by altering long-standing Soviet approaches to nuclear weapons and Europe.

Despite the questions that they raise, the reviewers consider my book an important contribution to the historiography on the end of the Cold War and the literature on global anti-nuclear activism. This is extremely gratifying, and all the more so given that this comes from four scholars whose work on the nuclear arms race and anti-nuclear movements is so thought-provoking.³ I thank them again for engaging with my book.

³ See, for example, Andrea Chiampan, “The Reagan Administration and the INF Controversy, 1981–83,” *Diplomatic History* 44, no. 5 (November 2020): 860–884; Anthony M. Eames, *A Voice in Their Own Destiny: Reagan, Thatcher, and Public Diplomacy in the Nuclear 1980s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023); Dario Fazzi, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Anti-Nuclear Movement: The Voice of Conscience* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Henry Richard Maar III, *Freeze! The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War* (Cornell University Press, 2022).