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Introduction by Mary Elise Sarotte, University of Southern California

**Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, eds.** ***Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989***. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010. 774 pp. ISBN 978-963-9776-77-7 (cloth, $75.00/€55.00/£50.00).

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## Introduction by Mary Elise Sarotte, University of Southern California

The National Security Archive in Washington DC has long served as a fantastic resource for scholars of the Cold War. Its leaders and staff members, past and present – including the three editors of the volume under review – have worked hard to collect documents at home and abroad and to make them available to scholars, often in English translation. The Archive has had to do so in the face of great reluctance, to put it mildly, by gatekeepers both American and foreign.

*Masterpieces of History* is the latest result of their efforts and it is most welcome. It provides a fascinating array of sources from the late 1980s and early 1990, largely from Russian-language originals. Experts who have seen these documents already at conferences or the archive itself, as I did in the course of writing my book *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe,* already know how valuable they are.[1] Now publication will make them both easier to use and available to significantly more scholars and students.

*Masterpieces* also contains more than documents. Two of the three editors, Thomas Blanton and Svetlana Savranskaya, contribute interpretive essays on American and Soviet foreign policy respectively (Vladislav Zubok had already published a similar interpretive piece and so decided to avoid duplication of effort in this volume). Additionally, the editors include the transcript of a significant conference held in 1998, at which many participants in events provided an oral history of crucial developments and their legacy. These additions to the collection of documents help to set the sources in context. They illuminate both the editors' interpretations and those of participants in events.

All four of the reviewers express praise for the volume and gratitude to its editors and the National Security Archive more generally. Frédéric Bozo of the Sorbonne finds that "the volume, no doubt, will rank among the must-reads of published archival material on the period." Indeed, Bozo agrees with the editors in their view that "the political and archival situation in Russia is such that it is already a blessing that such a volume should exist at all." Bozo only regrets that there are not more documents. He notes that *Masterpieces* ends in April 1990 and wishes that it could have continued until at least German unification or even the collapse of the Soviet Union. Similarly, he wishes that more American sources were available to the editors, who have put great effort into trying to get such documents released. As Bozo concludes his review: "It is ample time to move beyond the Americano-centric reading of 1989-1990 – but for this, we need more American sources."

Constantine Pleshakov of Mount Holyoke College believes that *Masterpieces* could have been a three-volume set, if enough money had been available to publish it in that format. One volume could have focused on the minutes of the 1998 conference, a second could have contained what he finds to be "a very fine collection of Soviet archival documents of

[1] Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

the Gorbachev era, covering the seminal years of 1985-1990," and a third could have had interpretive essays. While admitting that he "personally couldn't agree more" with Blanton's analysis, Pleshakov believes that it would have been better to separate the documents and the essays into separate books.

Marie-Pierre Rey, also of the Sorbonne, agrees with all of the other reviewers that the publication of these documents "makes this book a precious working tool for any research studying the end of the Cold War." She also notes that a useful chronology and index "further enrich the volume." While she personally would have liked to know more about the context in which the sources reprinted here arose, she concludes that these "published documents are of incomparable value to the historian of the Cold War."

The final reviewer, William Wohlforth of Dartmouth, begins his review by saying that "my main response to *Masterpieces of History* is gratitude." He thanks the editors not only for this volume but for their years of work at the Archive and for "making available a treasure trove of documents on the peaceful end of the Cold War." Wohlforth does wish to debate the Blanton essay, however. According to Wohlforth, Blanton's essay argues that "the U.S. missed a major opportunity by fumbling the chance to negotiate deeper arms control and other agreements with Gorbachev while he was still at the peak of his power in 1988 and early 1989." In this view, the Wohlforth essay shows a similarity to the Pleshakov review, which debates the interpretation of Soviet foreign policy offered by Savranskaya.

Each of the three editors decided to contribute an individual response to the reviews. In his response, Blanton seconds Bozo's lament about the "relative paucity of U.S. sources on 1989." He also agrees with Pleshakov that publishing at greater length would have been useful, but that the resources for such a publication were not available. Finally, he reasserts his interpretive analysis in response to Wohlforth's critique, concluding that "the world would be a much safer place today, with far fewer nuclear weapons and far less fissile material, had Bush acted on his instincts rather than his insecurities."

Savarnaskaya explains the origins of the volume in detail in her own response, thereby providing answers to some of the questions asked in the reviews. She points out that space constraints forced her and the other editors "to make excisions and often publish just excerpts of documents" and that they tried in doing so to preserve the most interesting and relevant material. "Until the political situation in Russia changes, we have to work within the limits of shrinking archival space and do our best under those limitations," she argues. Like Blanton, she also reasserts her interpretive views about the significance of Gorbachev in response to the critique offered by Pleshakov.

Finally, Zubok suggests thinking of this volume as "the observable side of the moon," pointing out that the editors unfortunately did not have access to a number of desirable collections. "Unfortunately, the huge side of the same moon remains still 'dark' and unobserved: discussion at the Defense Council…memos from intelligence…government ministries and agencies on the economic and financial relations with Eastern Europe" and so forth.

The fact that scholars can now study the observable side of the moon in such detail is largely thanks to the efforts of these three editors and the National Security Archive generally. I can only second Blanton's call for a reduction in the closure period for government documents, which would enable serious scholarship to begin much sooner. He suggests a ten, rather than a thirty, year wait as "the new normal for access to primary sources." Until such a policy is implemented, scholars will rely heavily on edited volumes such as *Masterpieces.*

**Participants**:

**Thomas Blanton** is the director (since 1992) of the National Security Archive at George Washington University (www.nsarchive.org), winner of the George Polk Award in April 2000 for "piercing self-serving veils of government secrecy, guiding journalists in search for the truth, and informing us all." He is series editor of the Archive's Web, CD-DVD, fiche and book publications of over a million pages of previously secret U.S. government documents obtained through the Archive's more than 40,000 Freedom of Information Act requests. He won the 1979 Newcomen Prize in History at Harvard University, and the 2005 Emmy Award for news and documentary research. His books include *The Chronology (*1987) on the Iran-contra scandal, *White House E-Ma*il (1995) on the 6-year lawsuit that saved over 30 million records, and (forthcoming) *The Last Superpower Summits* (with Svetlana Savranskaya).

**Svetlana Savranskaya** serves as the National Security Archive's director for its cooperative projects with Russian archives and institutes and editor of the Russian and East Bloc Archival Documents Database. She did her undergraduate work in history at Moscow State University and earned her Ph.D. in political science and international affairs in 1998 from Emory University. While completing her Ph.D., she served as a research associate and interpreter for several Archive-Cold War International History Project efforts, including most prominently the Carter-Brezhnev Project of Brown University's Watson Institute, as well as the End of the Cold War Project. She has edited or co-edited a number of National Security Archive publications such as the National Security Archive Electronic Briefing books including *Fall of the Berlin Wall Caused Anxiety More than Joy at Highest Levels* and *Reagan, Gorbachev and Bush at Governor's Island.*

**Vladislav Zubok** is Associate Professor of History at Temple University and a Research Fellow and Director of the Advanced Training Program of the Carnegie Corporation on Russia. He is co-author of *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War. From Stalin to Khrushchev* (with Constantin Pleshakov), (1996), which won the Lionel Gelber Prize as a best English-language book on international relations in 1996; *Russian Anti-Americanism: From Stalin to Putin* (with Eric Shiraev), (2000); *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (2007)/ and *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Belknap Press. Harvard University Press, 2009).

**Mary Elise Sarotte** is the author, most recently of *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe.* The _Financial Times_ selected *1989* as one of its books of the year and *Foreign Affairs* called it a new "classic." *1989* won the 2009 DAAD Prize for Distinguished

Scholarship on German and European Studies from the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS), the 2010 Ferrell Prize from the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), and the 2010 Shulman Prize from the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS, recently renamed ASEEES, co-winner). Sarotte, who received her AB from Harvard University and her PhD in History from Yale University, holds a joint appointment as Professor of History and Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California. She has been a White House Fellow and a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Sarotte is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and currently a Visiting Scholar at Harvard's Center for European Studies.

**Frédéric Bozo** is professor at the Sorbonne (University of Paris III, Department of European Studies). Frédéric Bozo was educated at the Ecole normale supérieure, at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris and at Harvard University. He received his doctorate from the University of Paris X - Nanterre (1993) and his *Habilitation* from the Sorbonne - Paris III (1997). His focus is on French foreign and security policy, transatlantic relations and Cold War history. His book publications include: *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, first published in French by Odile Jacob, 2005); *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, first published in French by Plon, 1996). He has also co-edited *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008, with M.-P. Rey, N. Piers Ludlow & L. Nuti) and published a book of interviews with Stanley Hoffmann, *Gulliver Unbound: America's Imperial Temptation and the War in Iraq* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004). His other books (in French) include: *La Politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945* (Paris : La Découverte, 1997); and *La France et l'OTAN. De la guerre froide au nouvel ordre européen* (Paris : Masson, 1991). He has published articles in *Cold War History*, *Contemporary European History*, *Diplomatic History, Politique étrangère*, and *Survival*. He also has a chapter in the recently published *Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds).

**Constantine Pleshakov** is a Russian-born American historian. Since 1998, he has been teaching at Mount Holyoke College. His most recent book was *There Is No Freedom Without Bread! 1989 and the Civil War That Brought Down Communism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

**Marie-Pierre Rey** is Professor of Russian and Soviet History and Director of the Centre of Slavic Studies at the University Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne. She has several books and many articles devoted to Russian and Soviet history including *Le dilemme russe : la Russie et l'Europe occidentale d'Ivan le Terrible à Boris Eltsine* (Flammarion : Paris) 2002 ; *La Tentation du Rapprochement, France et URSS à l'heure de la détente, 1964-1974* (Publications de la Sorbonne : Paris) 1991 ; Le retour à l'Europe ? Les décideurs soviétiques face à l'intégration ouest-européenne, 1957-1991 in *Journal of European Integration History,* 2005, vo.11 :1, pp.7-27 ; "Gorbachev's New Thinking and Europe, 1985-1989" in *Europe and the end of the Cold War, a reappraisal,* edited by Frédéric Bozo, MP Rey, N.Piers Ludlow and Leopoldo Nuti, (Routledge : London and New York, 2008); "The Mejdunarodniki in the 1960s and first half of the 1970s : backgrounds, connections and the

agenda of Soviet international elites" in *The Making of Détente, Eastern and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965-1975*, edited by Wilfried Loth and G-Henri Soutou, (Routledge: London and New York, 2008); "The USSR and the Helsinki process, 1969-1975: optimism, doubt or defiance?" in *Origins of the European Security System, the Helsinki process revisited, 1965-1975"* edited by Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny and Christian Nuenlist, (Routledge: London and New York, 2008) « Europe is our Common Home, A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept" in *The Cold War History Journal*, January 2004. She also edited *Les Russes de Gorbatchev à Poutine* (Armand Colin: Paris), 2005 and published a biography of Tsar *Alexander I* (Flammarion: Paris) 2009 based on new sources and new archival materials. She is currently writing a new book on the 1812 campaign and preparing a collective research program on Soviet-French relations and the end of the Cold War.

**William C. Wohlforth** is the Daniel Webster Professor at Dartmouth College, where he teaches in the Department of Government. Previously, he held positions at Georgetown and Princeton. He is the editor-in-chief of the journal *Security Studies.* His most recent books are *World Out of Balance: International Relations Theory and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, 2008, co-authored with Stephen Brooks) and *The Balance of Power in World History* (co-edited with Stuart Kaufman and Richard Little). Wohlforth received his BA from Beloit College and his MA (international relations) and Ph.D. (Political Science) from Yale University. His current project concerns the competition for status in international politics.

**Review by Frédéric Bozo, Sorbonne, University of Paris III, Department of European Studies**

Cold War historians who have been active in the field over the past twenty years or so know their debt to the National Security Archive (NSA), of which this volume is an emanation. Ever since the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the Archive and its staff have been busy collecting and making accessible to fellow historians and the wider public archival documents of key significance for the history of the end of the East-West conflict, mostly from Soviet and former "satellite" countries. Samplings of these documents—translated into English, the *lingua franca* of international historians—have been made available to the research community through the Archive's Electronic Briefing Books and through other publications.

After almost two decades of this pioneering endeavour, it was only natural on the part of the Archive and its staff to want to take stock. The volume under consideration does so in three ways. First, by making available in print a large number of key original documents from Soviet and Eastern European archives that have been unearthed by the NSA, augmented by some documents of Western origin, e.g. documents obtained from U.S. archives through FOIA requests filed by the Archive or documents from the German federal chancellery that were originally published in German in the 1998 volume of document on German unity.[1] Second, by providing the transcript of the Musgrove Conference of May 1-3, 1998, during which members of the National Security Archive and other fellow historians interviewed former Soviet and U.S. witnesses who played a key role at the Cold War's end, including Mikhail Gorbachev's foremost international advisor, Anatoly Chernyaev (arguably the most influential witness on the Soviet side and the author of a diary that became a major source on Gorbachev's policies[2]) and Jack Matlock, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow during those years (himself the author of an important memoir on U.S. policy in that period[3]). Finally, Svetlana Savranskaya, the Director of the Archive's Russia/Eurasia Program, and Thomas Blanton, the Executive Director of the National Security Archive, give us their bottom lines in two separate essays, respectively on Soviet policy under Gorbachev from 1985-90 and on U.S. policy in 1989-90.

Although the title is somewhat sensationalist, the reader will not find he or she was misled by it, for the volume does contain some "hits," to use the editors' own words. Take for example the conversation between Gorbachev and French President François Mitterrand on July 5, 1989, in which the two men jokingly compare notes on aging East European leaders: when Mitterrand speaks about Romania's Nicolae Ceauşescu, he quotes Tacitus

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[1] Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hofmann, eds, *Deutsche Einheit. Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90*(Munich, R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1998).

[2] Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*(University Park, Pennsylvania University Press, 2000).

[3] Jack Matlock, *Autopsy of an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*9New York: Random House, 1995).

("every man reaches the limits of his own power"—a quote which, by the way, retrospectively applies to Gorbachev almost as well as to Ceauşescu); and Gorbachev, speaking on Bulgaria's Todor Zhivkov: "He is not in complete control of his legs and facial muscles. When I see him, I remember Brezhnev."[4] Who would have imagined barely a few months before that such a laid-back atmosphere could prevail between the Soviet leader and one of his Western counterparts? (Some documents, by contrast, are extraordinary because of their *langue de bois*, such as the transcript of a meeting of Warsaw Treaty leaders during which—shortly after his conversation with Mitterrand—Gorbachev sententiously tells his counterparts that "of course, we must sensibly evaluate socialism's services to humanity."[5])

It would be impossible to comment on all the many aspects of the volume. I will therefore limit myself to two series of remarks, respectively on the documents and on the editors' introductory essays. (I won't comment on the Musgrove conference other than to emphasize that the editors were right to include its transcript in the volume. It may be a less vital source than the archival documents proper, but it has a real historiographical value since so much of our understanding of Gorbachev's policies at Cold War's end stems from this particular round of "memory jogging" and from other similar exercises in oral history involving by and large the same group of former Gorbachev associates. The gist of these exchanges was perhaps best captured by one of the participants in the conference—and the author of what remains to this day one of the most authoritative analysis of Soviet policy[6]—, Professor Jacques Lévesque, who commented that "[while] everyone was convinced that there would be a limit to change" when perestroika was launched, "finally we all discovered that there was no limit at all."[7])

First, some remarks on the documents proper, which constitute the bulk of the book. The volume, no doubt, will rank among the must-reads of published archival material on the period: although—in contrast with comparable volumes from other countries—it is not an "official" or an "authorized" publication, *Masterpieces of History* represents a welcome "Soviet" addition to the already existing collections of (in the chronological order of publication) German, British and French published documents relating to these events.[8]

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[4] *Masterpieces of History*, 490-1.

[5] *Masterpieces*, 500.

[6] See Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*(Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997) (Levesque's book first appeared in French in 1995 as *1989, la fin d'un empire: L'URSS et la libération de l'Europe de l'Est,* (Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1995, ).

[7] *Masterpieces*, 117-8.

[8] See Küsters and Hofmann, eds, *Deutsche Einheit*; and Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, and Stephen Robert Twigge, eds, *German Unification 1989-1990* and *Berlin in the Cold War 1948-1990*, Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Volumes VII & VI(London, Routledge, 2009). In the fall of 2009, following the foregoing British publication, the French ministry of foreign affairs published on line a selection of over 70 key documents: see http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/archives-patrimoine_3512/chute-

For in addition to curiosities such as those highlighted above, it contains truly decisive pieces, such as the very exhaustive Soviet transcript of the Bush-Gorbachev conversations at Malta on 2-3 December 1989, which tends to confirm the perception, which was certainly dominant at the time, that the two superpowers were equally ill at ease with the rapidity and scope of the European upheavals of the previous months and looking for ways to jointly impose stability on these events, even at the risk of "Malta" being caricatured into a new "Yalta"[9]; or the Soviet transcript of the conversation between Gorbachev and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker of February 9, 1990, which constitutes a very important piece of evidence in light of the controversy on the subsequent Eastern expansion of NATO.[10] *Masterpieces of History* will, therefore, become an obligatory passage for scholars researching the end of the Cold War in general and the role of the Soviet Union and its allies in particular.

Yet there are also limits, of which the reader should be aware. These limits, one suspects, are to some extent the consequence of the unofficial or unauthorized character of the collection, at least when it comes to Soviet documents. As the editors underline, the political and archival situation in Russia is such that it is already a blessing that such a volume should exist at all. Still, this does not explain everything. Somewhat frustratingly, the documents usually lack a complete identification of the kind one could expect to find in such a publication (e.g., in the case of transcripts of conversations, the complete list of participants or the name of the note-taker). More problematic, the documents have excisions. While this is not an exceptional phenomenon for published documents, editors of such volumes usually provide indications of why and how the cuts were made. But here, the reader must decide for himself whether they were made for editorial reasons (to delete sections with little added value) or for other—perhaps political—reasons. The result is sometimes frustrating. Take for example the transcript of the Mitterrand-Gorbachev meeting in Kiev on December 6, 1989 (incidentally, the venue of the meeting, strangely, does not appear on the document). This is a very important piece of evidence from a French point of view, for the Kiev meeting is often used by critics of Mitterrand (quite incorrectly in my view) in order to demonstrate the French President's purported eagerness to gang up with his Soviet opposite number against German unification (in addition, the corresponding French transcript, so far, has not been retrieved in French archives).[11] It is also of some significance from a Soviet perspective since Gorbachev was

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du-mur-berlin-ouverture-anticipee-archives-diplomatiques_19850/9-novembre-1989-chute-du-mur-berlin_78969.html. A special volume of the *Documents diplomatiques français* on German unification should appear shortly in print.

[9] *Masterpieces*, 619-46.

[10] On this controversial issue, see Mary Elise Sarotte, "Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to 'Bribe the Soviets Out' and Move NATO In", *International Security*, Vol. 35, N° 1 (Summer 2010), pp. 110-137.

[11] For details on the Kiev meeting and more generally on Mitterrand's policy (and a refutation of these allegations), see Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*(New-York, Berghahn Books, 2009), 134ff.

clearly hoping that Mitterrand, who previously had been the Western leader most receptive to his idea of a "Common European Home," shared at least some of his concerns with regard to the ongoing European and German evolutions. In short, the Kiev meeting may have been less consequential in policy terms than the Malta meeting a few days before, but it was probably no less interesting in terms of Gorbachev's (as well as Mitterrand's) conceptions. So why was the document trimmed down to quasi insignificance (it barely fills two pages of the book) when clearly the complete transcript is much longer?

Finally, another source of frustration is the fact that the editors have included documents up to April 1990 only, a date that does not seem to carry any particular historical or political relevance. It would have made more sense to continue the collection through to the date of German unification in October 1990 or the breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

While they do not diminish the intrinsic value of the volume, these limitations do confirm, as the editors themselves recognize, that the publication of Soviet documents very much remains a work in progress. And of course, one should never forget that documents are not ends in themselves, but are part of a much wider investigative process. All in all, the history that historians produce is a function both of the quality of the documents which are accessible to them and of the relevance of the questions they ask of these documents. The latter, in sum, can hardly be considered to be, in and of themselves, "masterpieces of history".

The two introductory essays also deserve comment. Svetlana Savranskaya's essay on "The Logic of 1989," which sets out to explain the reasons for the Soviet peaceful withdrawal from Eastern Europe, will not come as a surprise to readers already familiar with her work. Over the years, Savranskaya has produced numerous contributions on that theme, stressing the importance of Gorbachevian ideas and experiences in order to understand the Soviet attitude towards the liberation of Eastern Europe and German unification.[12] She convincingly underlines the significance of the Gorbachevian aspiration of a Soviet "return to Europe," best expressed in the Common European Home concept, in order to explain Gorbachev's policies. In so doing, she finds herself in the good company of prominent Soviet scholars who have covered the same ground, like Professor Lévesque or Professor Marie-Pierre Rey.[13]

Thomas Blanton's essay on "U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989" is more intriguing because it is more revisionist. Paradoxically, Blanton has relatively little U.S. archival material to base his essay on. While during the Musgrove conference, more than ten years

[12] See for example Svetlana Savranskaya, "In the Name of Europe: Soviet Withdrawal from Eastern Europe", in F. Bozo, M.-P. Rey, N.P. Ludlow and L. Nuti, eds, *Europe and the end of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*(London, Rouledge, 2008).

[13] See Lévesque, *Enigma* ; and Marie-Pierre Rey, "Perestroika and its Effects Revisited: Gorbachev's New Thinking and Europe, 1985–1989," in Bozo, Rey, Ludlow and Nuti, eds, *Europe.*

ago, he said he hoped to use the already very abundant Soviet material as a "crowbar to help wedge open the American file,"[14] Blanton recognizes in the introduction to the volume what scholars who have visited the relevant presidential libraries—not least the George H. W. Bush Library in College Station, Texas—already know: the result of "the hundreds if not thousands of FOIA and declassification requests" that have been filed by the NSA and other groups or individuals have, so far, given disappointing results in spite of some useful releases which appear in the volume.[15] The sheer fact is that only a handful of the innumerable documents on which Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice were able to base their standard 1995 book on U.S. policy and German unification[16] have become, as of yet, available to other scholars.

Yet Blanton thinks he can offer a different narrative from the so far dominant one which, he says, is based on excessive claims for the U.S. role in these events. The available American documentation, he emphasizes, suggests otherwise, as "it is not particularly explanatory for what happened in Eastern Europe in 1989".[17] For him, U.S. policy was static (as demonstrated by the "pause" in relations with the Soviet Union that President George H. W. Bush decreed upon entering office, in contrast with the much more forthcoming outgoing Reagan administration) and reactive (especially to German policy).[18] In sum, Blanton writes, "Bush's reticence…reflected not only the President's constant worry about the pace of change in Eastern Europe, but also the limited role that U.S. policy played, or could play, in the collapse of the Wall."[19] He concludes that "American policy making might qualify at best for a supporting actor award in the extraordinary drama that was the end of the Cold War."[20]

These are harsh words, especially in light of the "triumphalism" that has so far characterized the literature on the U.S. role in the end of the Cold War, and they are sure to antagonize many. In truth, Blanton's revisionist narrative would certainly need to be backed by a much more substantial body of evidence than the one on which he was (for the reasons he gives) able to base his essay. In addition, his conclusions would deserve to be nuanced, if only chronologically: isn't there a major distinction to be made between the events of 1989 (the liberation of Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall) where the U.S.

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[14] *Masterpieces*, 100.

[15] *Masterpeices*, xix.

[16] Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995).

[17] *Masterpieces*, 50.

[18] *Masterprices*, 71ff.

[19] *Masterpieces*, 83.

[20] *Masterpieces*, 96.

role was indeed arguably limited, and those of 1990 (the international management of the process of German unification), in which that role was indisputable? And yet there is a sobering value in Blanton's demonstration, which is a welcome invitation to reconsider a narrative which, for almost two decades, has been exceedingly centred on the U.S. role, at the expense of other decisive factors or actors, the European ones to begin with, not least those associated with European integration (ironically, Blanton himself overlooks them almost entirely, with the exception of the towering figure of Helmut Kohl).[21] It is ample time to move beyond the Americano-centric reading of 1989-1990—but for this, we need more American sources.

[21] For an attempt to highlight the role of Europe in its various dimensions, see Bozo, Rey, Ludlow and Nuti, eds, *Europe*.

**Review by Constantine Pleshakov, Mount Holyoke College**

There are three competing book ideas struggling in *Masterpieces of History*, and because each strongly asks for a book of its own, the seven-hundred-page volume is not long enough to accommodate them all and, sadly, the reader does not get three books for the price of one.

First, there are the minutes of the 1998 Musgrove Conference, a Cold War studies milestone event, and in that section reminiscences of former government officials mingle with historians' interpretations and inquiries. Second, *Masterpieces of History* contains a very fine collection of Soviet archival documents of the Gorbachev era, covering the seminal years of 1985-90, their subject meandering through the economic plight of the Eastern bloc, Soviet foreign policy, and Gorbachev's personal fight for political survival. Third, there are two long essays by Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton, each suggesting a laudably opinionated interpretation of Soviet (Savranskaya) and American (Blanton) policy in Eastern Europe.

For historians, publishing isn't getting any easier in the twenty-first century plagued by the read-it-online craze *and* the global recession, and one empathizes with authors who decide to put in as much material as they can into a book, uncertain about when the next publishing opportunity will arrive; they need to share their research and writing now, not when the economy will "improve." Here is when the publisher steps in, at least hypothetically, advising the authors on structure, sequence, transitions, and the overall tone of the volume. It does not look like the authors of *Masterpieces of History* have got much editorial support from the publisher (Central European University Press), and it's a shame because the ideas and the information they have to share definitely deserve a better shape. In its present form, *Masterpieces of History* reads like an ad hoc journal – definitely worth keeping but hard to navigate or recommend to others.

I suspect the most read section of the volume will be "Documents" largely coming from the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow and Gorbachev's aides Anatoly Chernyaev and Georgy Shakhnazarov. As their origins suggest, these documents have a strong pro-Gorbachev bias, and, ironically, this is the strength of the collection: it has a focus and a distinct face.

Another primary source included in the volume, the minutes of the Musgrove Conference, is problematic. The transcript is presented verbatim, and that makes it awkward: theoretically, a conversation between historians and retired politicians falls into the category of oral history, and as such can be published for others to use, but it probably does not make sense to preserve every word of it. Historians' interpretations of the Cold War belong in articles, unless that section of *Masterpieces of History* is intended as a source on Cold War history studies. Furthermore, the evidence provided at the conference by Gorbachev's ex advisers is convoluted and often of little or no value: Gorbachev's loyalists used most of their time not telling the story but defending their version of it. A good example of that is Shakhnazarov's response to a question regarding Gorbachev's harsh reaction to the national liberation movement in the Baltic republics. Instead of sharing facts

as a witness of history, Shakhnazarov spoke as the Soviet Union's defense attorney, bringing up the article in *The Washington Post* he had read the day before – a piece about a small group of secessionists in Texas. Drawing some very farfetched parallels between Texas and the Baltics, he then continued with a rhetorical question, "Now what is the U.S. president supposed to do – just let that develop?" (169) Countless retorts like that in the minutes are not relevant or interesting any longer because Soviet leaders have left a rich legacy of demagoguery and there is no need to record its echo coming from their retired advisors. In the meanwhile, the flow of rhetoric in the minutes blurs the rare moments when factual evidence is being provided. If the Musgrove minutes are to be published at all, then a much shorter and, perhaps, thematically organized version, would be preferable.

The two essays opening the volume – "The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe" by Svetlana Savranskaya and "U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989" by Thomas Blanton – add to the overall structural and conceptual confusion. I personally couldn't agree more with Blanton's concept detailing the reactive nature of American policy in Eastern Europe in and around 1989, but I am sure it is a bad idea to preface a collection of primary sources with an opinionated piece, no matter how convincingly written. Savranskaya's essay is no less conceptually blinkered, and its bias is uncritically pro-Gorbachev. Some passages read very strangely, for example the one interpreting Gorbachev's "common European home" foreign policy initiative: "What did this new concept mean for Gorbachev? A common European home would be based on universal human values, collective security and economic integration. It incorporated a vision of a continent without borders, where people and ideas would move freely without fear of war and hunger." (19) None of these claims can be substantiated, and sweeping generalizations in a hagiography (and this is what the essay is) do not make it stronger.

**Review by Marie-Pierre Rey, University Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne**

*Masterpieces in History: The Peaceful end of the Cold War in Europe*, belongs to the "National Security Archive's Cold War Readers" series and was published in 2010, under the editorship of Svetlana Savranskaya, the Director of the Security Archive's Russia/Eurasia Program, Thomas Blanton, the Archive's Executive Director and Vladislav Zubok, Associate Professor at Temple University. The project is ambitious: to use first hand documents and the analyses of witnesses and historians from every horizon to try to understand and explain why the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War in Europe unfolded (with the exception of Romania) in a peaceful way, thereby constituting (in the phrase of Professor Jacques Lévesque) a "masterpiece in history," as admirable as it was unforeseen, given the mutual fear and distrust as well as the prejudices at work in Soviet relations with both Eastern Europe and with the West. The books thus belongs to the historiographical revival based on archive materials that for the last fifteen years has been replacing the political – if not purely partisan - reading of the end of the Cold War that emerged after the disappearance of the USSR, and has been more objective, more profound, and more distanced.

To achieve this goal, the editors have structured the book into three distinct parts.

The first and introductory part is composed of two articles that put into perspective the documents contained in the book and offer innovative analyses and conclusions. The second contains the transcript of a three-day symposium that took place at Musgrove on St. Simons Island, Georgia in May 1998, with (on one side) five former actors and witnesses to the end of the Cold War (foremost among them Anatoly Chernyaev, the key figure in the New Thinking and principal diplomatic advisor to President Mikhail Gorbachev, and Jack Matlock, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow during this period and author of an important book about it) and (on the other side) eighteen historians and political scientists. Finally, the third and denser part presents documents coming out of Soviet and East-European archives, augmented by documents of Western origin, as the Security Archive has unearthed them. Many of them are presented here for the first time; moreover, these documents are published in English, which ensures them greater readership and makes this book a precious working tool for any researcher studying the end of the Cold War. In addition, a bibliography (although too brief and spotty), a chronology, and an index of names further enrich the volume.

Let's examine the content of these three parts. The first article in Part One is called "The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe," and by this very title, Svetlana Savranskaya, underlines the key role that the Soviet Union played in deciding to withdraw peacefully from Eastern Europe, thereby giving a peaceful dénouement to the Cold War in Europe. From this standpoint, this introductory article is important, attesting in unison with work previously done on Gorbachev's foreign policy by other researchers (myself included) that Soviet power, specifically Gorbachev's, was far from just a passive actor in the end of the Cold War in Europe. In fact his keenness to promote a new vision and to apply new rules of conduct known as "New Thinking" contributed to an active and

dynamic diplomacy that was propitious for making fundamental changes. Savranskaya also maintains that Gorbachev's choices were expressed very early on; as of March 1985, she says, he had a plan to "reject the Brezhnev doctrine" and to renounce any interference in domestic affairs in Eastern Europe, rethinking overall relations with the European satellites. This assertion is interesting but unfortunately the documents cited to support it do not succeed in doing so: the sole written contemporaneous source (text #1) that is quoted attests instead to the weight of traditional jargon ("the meeting was conducted in a spirit of great unity and mutual understanding") and brings no new concrete element to demonstrate the idea. On this essential issue, therefore, we must trust the book by Gorbachev, *Zhizn i reformy*, as well as Chernyaev's testimony delivered at Musgrove; but both these texts are subjective, and the historian cannot be certain that they are not promoting teleological illusions. Only documents #4 and #7 really lend support to her idea, but they date from 28 May and 3 July 1986, i.e. later than the "official" launch of the New Thinking in February 1986.

Whatever the case, Svetlana Savranskaya also underlines the capital point that if Soviet power early on desired to radically change its relations with Eastern Europe, it was not able to express this publicly and clearly, which provoked various reactions in the satellites, oscillating between distrust and prudent adherence, and in the West, where there was a clear wait-and-see attitude that would not assist the European "common home."

Thomas Blanton titles his contribution "U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989." After having usefully recalled the triumphalist mythology to which American diplomacy gave rise in the press and general American audience, it then sheds light on the way in which President Reagan was capable of interacting with Gorbachev to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament, and by contrast the hesitations, doubts and distrust of President George H.W. Bush's team in the face of the USSR. Blanton's study shows how a basic hostility to the idea of a common European home that the U.S. saw as a factor likely to work to its detriment by integrating the USSR into Europe, made the Bush team persistently favorable to maintaining the status quo, incapable of thinking outside the box, and waiting to see about European issues, which in turn gave Europeans, particularly Eastern Europeans and Chancellor Kohl, more margin of maneuver. This analysis is interesting and fresh. However, the text and the (many) sources Blanton uses and cites in the notes give the reader the feeling that the United States tackled in the years 1985-1990 the question of relations with the Eastern Europe, without taking into account the views of its allies (with the exception of West Germany as soon as reunification entered the equation). Yet the available sources attest that the contacts between the United States and its allies within the NATO framework, as in their bilateral relations, were regular and they gave rise to constant exchanges on these sensitive issues. The contribution of Thomas Blanton would have gained by taking these into account.

The second part of the volume (about a hundred pages) is the verbatim transcript of the conference in Musgrove that gathered in May 1998 five "veterans" of the end of the Cold War (Anatoly Chernyaev, Georgi Shakhnazarov, Sergei Tarasenko, Douglas MacEachin, and Jack Matlock) and eighteen scholars, both historians and political scientists. Apart from the fact that it allowed confronting the viewpoints and reflections of the five former Cold

War actors with the analyses of the scholars, the conference also enabled the gathering of new documents that were commentated upon at Musgrove. The symposium was organized around themes that channeled debates and resulted in fruitful exchanges. I note in particular under the theme of "The Emergence of Soviet 'New Thinking' and Eastern Europe" a particularly passionate discussion devoted to the intellectual and political origins of Perestroika, and in the theme called "The Weight of the Domestic Factor," just as interesting discussions on the role of economic concerns in Gorbachev's decision-making process.

Finally, the last part (almost 500 pages) gathers 122 documents presented in chronological order, from 15 March 1985 through 13 April 1990. There is breadth in this corpus; each text is preceded by a short introduction presenting its context, and it ends with a reference to the archive from which it came; most of the documents come from the Gorbachev Foundation, the first collection, and the second, which is Chernayev's, plus various centers of the Soviet archives (GARF, RGANI), or the collections of the National Security Archive, including the Volkogonov collection. The texts are very diverse in nature: internal memoranda to the Central Committee of the CPSU, verbatim accounts of conversations between Gorbachev and his homologues from Eastern Europe, speeches by the secretary general, notes taken by Chernyaev during Politburo sessions, extracts from Chernyaev's diary, etc.

The published documents illuminate sensitive and long-debated questions on the historical and historiographic level. They enable taking better account of the ambiguous nature of relations between the USSR and Eastern Europe, their evolution over this period, and the role of the human factor in the same relations; they aid a better appraisal of the nature of the decision making process in the USSR under Gorbachev; they attest to the degree of freedom of thought and expression (unknown until then) in the Soviet system that the Secretary General conceded to his diplomatic advisors; they shed light on the evolution of ideas and perceptions between 1985 and the spring of 1990, the obsessive weight of economic matters. Moreover, this documentary mass gives us a more detailed chronology of the inflexions of Gorbachev's diplomacy; the turning point of June 1988 is thus detectable in several texts cited. For all these reasons, the published documents are of incomparable value to the historian of the Cold War.

However, on a methodological level, the texts do pose some problems. Short introductory notes do remind us of the context in which the texts occurred, but the documents are published in isolation and quite often we do not know for what purpose they were written, for what audience, with what official and tacit goals, and we know nothing of the reactions (or absence of reactions) to them. I will take only one example from many. In March 1987, Shakhnazarov wrote a memorandum (text 10) calling for a Partial Soviet Troop Withdrawal from the Czech Republic. The text is called "provocative" by the editors, and it does seem surprising in its iconoclastic dimension, but it was followed by no concrete effect, which considerably limits its impact! And we do not know how the apparatus received it, the internal discussions to which it might have given rise and the criticism (manifestly real) that it encountered.

Another problem relates to the origin of documents. Most of them come from private sources and were brought to the editors thanks to contacts and private exchanges. But who chose the published documents? Did the editors have access to entire collections from which they made a selection? Or were they the tributaries of choices made by those who supplied these documents? And in that case, how were these collections of documents (particularly the Volkogonov collection) constituted and according to what parameters? We do not know, even when these choices pose the major question of the degree of trustworthiness and representativeness of the documents published. Similarly, many texts containsubstantial cuts and are more like extracts rather than entire texts. Again, we do not know whether the editors who made these cuts or whether they were given texts that were already truncated, which once again raises the same issues of trustworthiness and representativeness. Finally, as concerns the material furnished by Chernyaev (his notes, his journal), although nobody could doubt that they are an extraordinary source for knowledge of the Soviet system (I myself have exploited them in my own research), these are private documents that bear all the marks of Chernyaev's liberal if not radical ideas and they should be used by historians with circumspection since they pose a methodological problem, too. Emanating from a man who was distinguished by his radical ideas but who was also a part of the Gorbachev experiment, these are subjective and "engaged" documents that offer an individual viewpoint, of which the historian must again measure the representativeness and reliability.

On all these matters linked to the composition of the text collection, I would have liked more information; and to adopt an expression dear to Mikhail Gorbachev, a greater transparency, *glasnost*, would have been desirable, in the form of a methodological introduction, for example. But this regret takes nothing away from the great interest I took in reading a book that will be important to the history of the end of the Cold War.

## Review by William C. Wohlforth, Dartmouth College

My main response to *Masterpieces of History* is gratitude. Scholars are indebted to Svetlana Savranskaya, Tom Blanton and Vlad Zubok for editing this fine collection, for their work with the National Security Archive obtaining and making available a treasure trove of documents on the peaceful end of the Cold War, for organizing the Musgrove Conference, a fascinating oral history workshop, the transcript of which—itself an important source for historians—is included in the volume. We all owe perhaps the greatest thanks to the statesmen who agreed to participate in the conference. Reading the comments of the likes of Anatoly Chernyaev, Georgiy Shakhnazarov, Jack Matlock and Doug MacEachin, it's hard not to be thankful that public servants of such intellectual caliber were on the scene as the foundations of the Cold War came apart in 1989-90.

It seems churlish to quibble with folks to whom one owes so much, but such is the reviewer's lot. In addition to the documents and the transcript, *Masterpieces* features two introductory essays by Savranskaya and Blanton. These provide a splendidly informative walk through the new documents and their implications for longstanding debates about policy choices during the Cold War's end. They also provide arguments a reviewer can sink his teeth into. Savranskaya contends that the new evidence shows that Gorbachev "made the crucial choices about Eastern Europe much earlier than historians previously understood, that Gorbachev's vision for Europe—the 'Common European Home'—drove his decisions and tactics for Eastern Europe, and that the use of force was never an option for Soviet reformers (xix)." Blanton's essay on the U.S. side of the story presents one of the strongest critiques of George H.W. Bush's policy I've read. He portrays it as reactive, misinformed, generally behind the curve, usually ineffectual. While praising Bush's prudence and caution (not "dancing on the Berlin Wall"), Blanton ultimately concludes that the U.S. missed a major opportunity by fumbling the chance to negotiate deeper arms control and other agreements with Gorbachev when he was still at the peak of his power in 1988 and early 1989. So much for claims by former Bush officials—notably Phillip Zelikow and Condoleeza Rice—of having helped engineer a triumph of statecraft in 1989-90.

These are reasonable arguments for which Savranskaya and Blanton marshal copious evidence. With due regard for the complexity of these essays, which treat a large range of issues and are sensitive to history's contingency, they do reinforce a popular view of the visionary Gorbachev and the bumbling Bush. The evidence in the book, however, also shows no shortage of bumbling on Gorbachev's part, and his vision often seems too elusive and reactive to be seen as an independent driver of events. And that casts a somewhat different light on the Bush team, rendering the case against its strategic acumen harder to make than Blanton suggests.

The contention that Gorbachev "made the crucial choices" about Eastern Europe earlier than commonly thought is overstated. Making a choice means facing and accepting trade offs. It means unambiguously opting for a course of action. When you make a choice, really make it, your allies and opponents know it. Until a choice is made clearly and unambiguously, it's an idea, an intention, a completely reversible possibility. The evidence

in *Masterpieces* and elsewhere shows Gorbachev doing this only when he was compelled to by events late in the game. It reveals talk, most of it private, some of it indicating reluctance to use force to hold the alliance together, some indicating a preference for letting allies run their own affairs, some indicating a desire to make the alliance less of a financial and geopolitical burden, but precious little of it indicating an unambiguous choice.

Consider first the use of force. Post hoc claims to the contrary, Gorbachev did not entirely eschew the use of force in Eastern Europe until quite late in the proceedings. In fact, he used force indirectly, and he knew it. Of course, he did not want to actually unleash violence. But he willingly exploited the fact that actors in Eastern Europe and the west were uncertain about Moscow's resolve to use force to uphold the socialist system. Chernyaev and Shakhnazarov acknowledged as much at the Musgrove conference. Gorbachev appears to have concluded that he could not signal credibly and unambiguously that force was off the table without unleashing all sorts of undesirable behavior—by the west, by oppositionists in Eastern Europe, and by the fraternal party leaderships themselves. Even though he sent signals that suggested a lower and lower probability of Soviet use of force, he profited politically by maintaining ambiguity on the issue until very late in the game. As much as he loathed the idea of having to order troops to shoot, Gorbachev was cashing in on the investments in Soviet credibility made by his predecessors when they moved troops and spilled blood in 1953, 1956, and 1968.

Questions like "when was the Brezhnev Doctrine revoked?" cannot be answered by formerly classified documents alone. Old fashioned Kremlinology is still needed. Like the one named after Monroe, the Brezhnev Doctrine was public. After the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia to halt the Prague Spring, it was spelled out in a *Pravda* editorial and other public high level pronouncements. Party officials and Sovietologists of the old school studied these things intensely and knew them practically by heart. There is no need to go into the elaborate ideological rationale here; the point is that special phrases and key terms were used, and infused with meaning. The relevant actors understood these key phrases and terms. Gorbachev knew precisely what words he could utter, and in what context, in order to revoke the Brezhnev Doctrine. He did not truly begin to do so until his December 1988 Speech to the UN General Assembly. Indeed, even in classified contexts, he continued to use key phrases that suggested continuity with the old Soviet commitment to sustain the socialist order.

The larger point is that the kind of evidence that abounds in *Masterpieces*—and often tends to dominate the debates about Gorbachev and the end of the Cold War—does not always allow one to determine when "crucial choices" are made. Private information contained in classified documents provides crucial context for explaining choice. But the choices occur when tough trade offs—in this case, the trade off between new thinking and the survivability of the Soviet alliance system— are unambiguously accepted. And that occurred when most people think it did, in 1989-90.

None of this is to take anything away from the historical importance of the way Gorbachev did finally make the crucial choices. He made those tough decisions in ways consistent

with his aversion to the use of force. Other choices taken that late in the game may have had nasty consequences. That is why Matlock stresses in his preface that Moscow did not lose the Cold War, for, he asserts, Gorbachev "made no agreements that were not in his country's interests (xxv)." This is a brilliantly diplomatic statement. It is hard to argue with, given the tough constraints Moscow was operating under in 1989-90. (Matlock does revise it somewhat later when he allows that, in his haste to settle the German issue, Gorbachev relied too much on personal trust rather than insisting on written assurances limiting NATO's expansion.) And it defuses potential "stab in the back" myths among Russian nationalists. But the fact that Gorbachev arguably made the best of a tough situation in 1989-90 does not mean that it was a victory, nor certainly that the outcome was something Gorbachev sought. It was clearly a failure of Gorbachev's vision of Europe as a common home with major roles for Moscow and its socialist allies. And one reads in vain in these pages for evidence of a coherent strategy for realizing that vision.

Far from having a visionary grand strategy, Gorbachev comes through these pages as having a constantly shifting vision but no strategy regarding Moscow's most important alliance. As Savransakaya notes, there is little evidence of any deep rethinking about the allied socialist regimes before 1988. The first impulse was centralization, not the "Sinatra Doctrine." The "crucial choice" to let allied regimes go their own way occurred after Gorbachev's initial program of acceleration, and its associated attempt to get COMECON to work better failed dramatically and exposed the economic costs of empire. There is little reason to conclude that, had the initial program succeeded, Gorbachev would have come to see loosening ties with Eastern European allies as a good thing. The evidence suggests that he, not surprisingly, preferred unity to disunity, and only came to accept disunity when unity's punishing costs became evident. Again, crucial choices occur under pressure, not as a result of proactive strategy.

The first question to raise about Blanton's take down of G.H.W. Bush is "compared to whom?" Who did better? Certainly not Gorbachev, who comes out in hindsight as at least as clueless as Bush, Scowcroft, or Gates. Savranskaya's reading of the new evidence reinforces the puzzle of Gorbachev's Eastern European non-policy, for she notes how well informed he was about the allied regimes' political and economic weaknesses. Given the supreme importance of this alliance to Moscow's global and domestic fortunes, Gorbachev's lack of strategic vision here is telling. In the grand scheme of things, which is the bigger strategic miscalculation, the Americans' failure to see that Gorbachev was a real reformer who wanted to end the Cold War, or Gorbachev's failure to make more proactive choices regarding Eastern Europe earlier in the game, as his advisers urged? Or his confidence that western leaders would do nothing to destabilize East Germany? Or, indeed, his failure to see that his attempts to reform socialism would destroy it?

To evaluate strategy, you need to assess what an actor wants to get out of a strategic interaction, how closely the outcome corresponds to initial preferences, and what role strategy, as opposed to blind luck, played in connecting preferences to outcome. To find the best cases of strategic acumen in 1989, one probably needs to look at those closest to the action, the likes of Helmut Kohl and Lech Walesa. In the case of Bush, Blanton shows that the favorable outcome was largely due to luck. In the case of Gorbachev, by contrast, the

outcome was catastrophic: the loss of much of what he stood for and sought to achieve. And the role of strategy is not orthogonal, as in the Bush case, but causally linked to the unfavorable outcome. The strategy he thought would revivify the system destroyed it. The "new thinking" he wanted to become the new global normal ended up as a curious historical artifact, mood music he played on the deck of the sinking Soviet Titanic.

Of course, this ignores the context: Bush was dealt a strong hand, Gorbachev a weak one. Whether there were better strategies available to Gorbachev that would have been consistent with his professed aversion to the use of force will forever remain debatable. But this context also helps to evaluate Bush. Prospect theory shows that people tend to be risk averse in the domain of gains. That is, people generally are reluctant to take big risks on the upside, when things are going well. Bush's prudence and conservatism make sense in this context. It would have taken a highly unusual leader, facing a situation of expected big gains, to take big risks for uncertain additional gains.

And that is the essence of Blanton's case: that Bush should have gambled on a bolder deal with Gorbachev earlier in the game. But what would have been the big gains to justify such a move? One gain that many consider was the common European home: integrating Russia into Europe. Blanton notes that Bush had no interest in trading NATO for some new order that included Moscow as an equal partner, and so rightly refuses to excoriate Bush for not pursuing something he did not want. Blanton focuses on a more realistic counterfactual gain from an earlier full accommodation with Gorbachev: more arms control. That is a stronger case, but it is not at all clear that American governments really want much arms control, much as we may want them to. Again, it is hardly a strategic failure not to take risks to pursue aims you do not have.

So perhaps Bush's reputation for prudent statecraft ought to emerge intact. For he did choose unambiguously to back Kohl's unification drive at a time when there were other options. In light of the public discourse of the time, Bush's decision to back Kohl looks like a bold strategic choice. Academic and many other outside experts at the time were insistently calling for efforts to prop up East Germany and the whole Cold War order. Once the decision was made, the subsequent policies to secure the final agreements that ended the Cold War have all the hallmarks of coherent, purposive strategy. To call this a triumph of statecraft may be an exaggeration, but, in the realm of real diplomacy, it was pretty darn good.

*Masterpieces* does not end the debate on contentious issues surrounding these events. But the evidence and analysis it presents will be important in advancing it.

## Response by Tom Blanton, National Security Archive

I very much appreciate the expert commentary of the four reviewers, and I thank them for their insights, praise and criticism. My co-authors/editors Svetlana Savranskaya and Vladislav Zubok are addressing the documentary issues raised in this roundtable, from sources to excisions, so my response will focus primarily on the discussion of my interpretive essay at the beginning of the book. Professor Pleshakov questions whether such an "opinionated piece" belongs with a collection of primary sources, and I would answer simply that the reader deserves not only as much context as the editors can provide, but also to have a sense of the editors' own biases and perspectives. I am gratified that Professor Pleshakov agrees with the analysis in the essay, and I would nominate him for global head of academic publishing, in order to liberate the three or more books he sees struggling to emerge from "Masterpieces" in the face of printing and space limitations – in fact, all such books yearning to breathe free.

Professors Bozo and Rey make a profound point in their separate critiques of my essay, writing that the argument suffers from lack of attention to the European sources and actors during 1989. I completely agree with Professor Rey that we need much more work on the U.S.-NATO relationships and exchanges, and I note with dismay that NATO's secrecy policies have partially overridden the access to information laws in the new NATO countries of East and Central Europe. It is no coincidence, as they used to say during the Cold War, that the NATO codeword for its highest security classification is COSMIC, and that the NATO archives for 1989 are not yet open, while scholars have the run of the Warsaw Pact files in Germany and in Eastern Europe.

I share Professor Bozo's frustration with the relative paucity of U.S. sources on 1989, although I would note that for the Reagan period, our archival resources are rich indeed, ranging from the Presidential diaries to the CIA estimates to the file series of key aides such as Jack Matlock. For 1989, I found the Helmut Kohl publication of memcons and telcons, referenced by Professor Bozo, to be particularly useful, especially in combination with the remarkably revealing memoir-diary volume *A World Transformed*, authored by George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, including extensive excerpts from contemporaneous documents. I hope that the Kohl model of full publication of diplomatic and head-of-state exchanges only 10 years after they happened, becomes the new normal for access to primary sources, in place of the more traditional thirty- or fifty-year rules that only ensure that the authors and recipients of the documents are no longer with us to give us context (or interfere with our interpretations).

I appreciate Professor Wohlforth's ringing defense of George H.W. Bush as a bold strategist, but I would caution the reader to consult Bush's own words instead. For example, Professor Wohlforth writes, "Bush's decision to back Kohl [on unification] looks like a bold strategic choice." Bush's own memoir is far more tentative, "I probably conveyed to Kohl that I had no objection to reunification, and in a sense gave him a green light" (*A World Transformed*, p. 199). The actual text of the key Bush-Kohl conversation may be found in *Masterpieces of History* on pp. 647-650, and neither leader expected unification in the next

two years, much less by October 1990. Bush's support for Kohl looks much more like catching the last car as the train leaves the station. The deciding factor in German unification was not American diplomacy, nor even Kohl's leadership, but public opinion in the former East Germany, most fulsomely expressed in the March 1990 elections (though it must be said, with much help from Kohl's adroit electioneering and the strength of the deutschmark).

Professor Wohlforth argues against the "essence of Blanton's case: that Bush should have gambled on a bolder deal with Gorbachev earlier in the game"; because "it is not at all clear that American governments really want much arms control" and it is "hardly a strategic failure not to take risks to pursue aims you do not have." Yet Bush did have such aims, from the very beginning of his administration, but according to the Bush-Scowcroft volume (see pp. 43-44 and the President's desire for "deep slashes" on p. 73), was thwarted by his own right-wing in the form of his Vice President (Dan Quayle), Defense Secretary (Richard Cheney), and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Bush's own characteristic insecurity combined with the hawkishness around him to forestall any chance for a bolder deal. When Bush finally acted on his aims with the tactical nuclear withdrawal in September 1991, it was too late (after the August coup) for much resonance on Gorbachev's side, yet Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had proposed just such a mutual withdrawal back in January 1989. The Bush action produced the single largest move away from midnight on the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' Doomsday Clock in the entire history of the arms race.

This is why the Bush administration's misdiagnosis of Gorbachev in 1989 is so striking. Professor Wohlforth concedes that the Bush analysis was wrong, but so many at the time also saw it, including Helmut Kohl, and strikingly, Ronald Reagan himself, who criticized Bush's "pause" in May 1989 and urged arms reductions and summit talks. Those two leaders answer the question Professor Wohlforth poses, "compared to whom?" Compared to Ronald Reagan, whose inner abolitionist ideas dramatically reduced the sense of threat in Moscow and helped end the Cold War, or compared to Helmut Kohl, who successfully got himself out in front of the parade to unification, George H.W. Bush suffers. We can applaud his prudence and his caution, his lack of grandstanding, and his luck in 1989 especially; but the documents in "Masterpieces" suggest the world would be a much safer place today, with far fewer nuclear weapons and far less fissile material, had Bush acted on his instincts rather than his insecurities.

## Response by Svetlana Savranskaya, National Security Archive

First of all, let me thank the reviewers for their thoughtful and detailed responses to our book. It is an honor to be reviewed by such an international panel of renowned experts. I found the reviews to be stimulating and very helpful. They raise several issues that I hope to address in this response, which generally fall into two categories: questions dealing with the sources—origin, selection and excision of documents—and questions relating to the argument developed in the two essays.

I will start with the sources. Marie-Pierre Rey and Frédéric Bozo especially raised valid questions about the need for a better explanation of our editorial choices and for more information on the origins of the documents. Most of the Soviet documents came from the Gorbachev Foundation, which was and remains the most open of the Russian archives even though in the last five years access to documents has become more problematic even there. The most difficult issue there is getting copies of the documents, for which we had to rely on individuals who partnered with us for the original conference at Musgrove in 1998 and who stayed our allies throughout all the years—Anatoly Sergeevich Chernyaev and the late Georgy Khosroevich Shakhnazarov. Our endless gratitude is due to these people, without whom the book would not be possible. I began working at the Gorbachev Foundation in 1994, when I started to write my dissertation, and have worked there practically every summer since. The Gorbachev Foundation opened their collections to hundreds of Cold War scholars, and we all benefitted greatly from their materials. In the 1990s I, along with Vlad Zubok, and many other researchers, had practically unlimited access to all the materials we requested. However, even after access became more restrictive, I was able to see in full every single document that was eventually included in *Masterpieces*. Because of the new materials that became available after the original Musgrove conference in 1998, the number and volume of documents included in the published version of the book more than doubled compared to the original Musgrove briefing book of documents. The sheer volume of the available documentation necessitated some tough editorial choices.

The Central European University Press was extremely accommodating and supportive, but as our manuscript mounted into thousands of pages, they asked us for some restraint—as it is, *Masterpieces* is the longest book in the series of the National Security Archive Cold War Readers. To be able to include the biggest number of documents that we saw as indispensable, we had to make excisions and often publish just excerpts of documents, like the memorandum of conversation between Mihail Gorbachev and Francois Mitterrand in Kiev on December 6, 1989 or Gorbachev's groundbreaking speech to the Foreign Ministry officials on May 26, 1986. These documents are quite long in their original form, and so we had to select only the portions of them which dealt directly with Eastern Europe and the road to 1989. Because I had the benefit of seeing all the full-length originals, and in most cases we had a copy of the original at the National Security Archive, I can say that in no case did we simply follow the excisions made by the Gorbachev Foundation staff in their published versions—the selections that we chose to reproduce in the book are the result of our own editorial choices made on the basis of their relevance to the subject and not any political grounds. Examples of such decisions are: Document 1, the transcript of March 15,

1985 Gorbachev's conference with CC CPSU Secretaries from the Volkogonov Collection, which we previously published in full in Electronic Briefing Book no. 172 on November 22, 2005, from which we only included the section dealing with Gorbachev's conversations with East European leaders; Document 65, Transcript of the Opening Full Session of Hungarian National Round Table Negotiations, June 13, 1989; and Document 83, CIA Intelligence Assessment, "Gorbachev's Domestic Gambles and Instability in the USSR," September 1989. As the reader will see, we had to limit ourselves to excerpts not only in cases of documents from the Gorbachev Foundation, but U.S. and East European documents too. On the other hand, some key documents, like Gorbachev's personal memorandum to the Politburo on Eastern Europe of June 26, 1986, and Shakhnazarov's proposal for the withdrawal of troops from Czechoslovakia, we presented in full. It is only natural that all Politburo entries represent excerpts—because the Politburo meetings always covered a large number of issues and could not be reproduced in full even when we have a full version on file at the Archive.

That said, unfortunately, I have to admit that because we did not have the full universe of documents at our disposal, our coverage is not comprehensive——neither on the Soviet side, nor on the American side. In fact, our coverage on the Soviet side is fuller and more representative than on the U.S. due the state of declassification in the United States presidential libraries. That especially concerns the Bush Library, which only now, long after the book has been published, has declassified many of the materials we requested as far back as 2000. These are memoranda of conversations, analytical memos and assessments that are missing from the book. On the Soviet side, as Professor Rey notes, I would like to see the documents that would show us the response to the Shakhnazarov draft Politburo resolution and memo written on the eve of Gorbachev's visit to Prague in April 1987 that we were not able to locate.. According to the best of my knowledge, the resolution was never formally discussed at the Politburo. However, the fact that Shakhnazarov prepared it as a resolution means that Gorbachev was open to discuss and adopt it, and most likely had requested it. Had it been discussed and adopted, the trip to Prague would have included a statement on 1968, and a pledge that Soviet troops were to be withdrawn from Czechoslovakia. It never happened. It was seen as a major missed opportunity by the Soviet leadership themselves. We leave it for other historians to find out what happened.

The limitations and frustrations described above should be very familiar to scholars who study the end of the Cold War, and especially all historians of the Soviet Union and Russia. Until the political situation in Russia changes, we have to work within the limits of shrinking archival space and do our best under those limitations. And yet, one can say that at this point there are probably more sources on the end of the Cold War than on its beginning. The official record of the Politburo minutes remains closed at RGANI and foreign policy memcons and memos remain closed at AVP RF, therefore we rely on the notes taken by Chernyaev, Shakhnazarov and Medvedev and make best use of the Gorbachev Foundation materials, the Yakovlev Collection at GARF and the Volkogonov Collection at the Library of Congress.

Another issue related to the sources, which was raised by Frédéric Bozo, is the choice to end the collection in April 1990. We had a long discussion on where to start and end the collection. We contend that the Cold War in Europe ended in 1989, and my essay argues that the change began earlier that we usually think. That is what determined our time frame. We wanted to find the earliest traces of the changing Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe, starting with March 1985, and we wanted to end with documents showing how the Soviets accepted the new status quo that emerged as a result of the revolutions of 1989. We end with the Gorbachev-Wojciech Jaruzelski conversation because we think it is representative of the new relations that emerged between the Soviet Union and its allies, and because it contains a sort of *tour d'horizon* of the changes and the two leaders' reflections on them. German unification is certainly an important part of the changes in Europe, but it is not a focus of this book. Extending our time frame to the moment of German unification and the Paris summit in November 1990 would have added an additional two hundred pages to the book. Plus, those later events were not part of the original Musgrove discussion.

Now let me address specific issues relating to my essay on Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe. One criticism that was expressed by Marie-Pierre Rey and William Wohlforth and implied in many responses to the book we received from our colleagues is my assertion that Gorbachev made the main choices about Eastern Europe much earlier than is usually accepted in the literature. Based on the Musgrove dialogue, my interviews and memoirs, I date the important choices to the very beginning of Gorbachev's tenure as general secretary. Gorbachev himself and his advisers point to the very first meeting with socialist leaders during Konstanin Chernenko's funeral in March 1985 as the crucial meeting. Rey is right—our documents do not explicitly support this claim, since as the notes show, the conversation contained very standard phrases. But the document in case is Gorbachev's oral report to the Politburo about that conversation, not the memorandum of conversation, which should be located at AVP RF. We do not have that document, so we rely on the next best evidence—the testimony of veterans. So when was the choice made?

The answer to this question must deal with two distinct aspects of it—what was the choice precisely, and how was it made. In his essay, William Wolhforth seems to imply that the choice we are talking about is "to let Eastern Europe go." I don't think that was the choice that Gorbachev had ever made or would have consciously made. The choice I am talking about in this essay was two-fold: not to use forceful methods in relations with allies, and to reform the relationship within the alliance to make it more collaborative and not dictated by the big brother (this is how Gorbachev describes it in his Foreign Ministry Speech—"not to lead them by hand as in kindergarten"). Gorbachev wanted socialist leaders to take more responsibility for what was happening in their countries, to be able to make their own decisions without looking over their shoulder. He stated and most of the time adhered to the principle of non-interference in their decision-making. He was not able to do it all the time, his own habits of a Soviet apparatchik sometimes hindered his best intentions, and he was often ambivalent about how much pressure he could put on socialist allies in any given situation, even if he felt, as in the situation with Erich Honecker in 1989, that he had to step down. It is understandable that the new general secretary would not come to the office proclaiming that he had decided to let Eastern Europe go; moreover, that was not his

intention. His intention was to revamp cooperation in the CMEA and to jumpstart real integration within the Eastern bloc, which in his view then would eventually lead to integration of the entire Eastern bloc into Europe, into the common European home. He ruled out the use of force, but he did believe that given completely free choice the East European countries would choose socialism with a human face and a more equal alliance with the Soviet Union. With the benefit of hindsight, we now know that they made very different choices, but was he completely naïve to believe it at the time? I would argue thathe was not. Evidence of that is the reception he got in every East European country he visited, especially in Czechoslovakia in 1987, Romania in 1988, and even East Germany in October 1989. We seem to forget about the Gorbymania in Eastern Europe during those years when dissidents and the opposition used Gorbachev's name and the model of his reforms to put pressure on their own conservative leadership. The future was contingent, nobody in 1987 could foresee the dissolution of the Warsaw pact in just four years.

On the timing of when the choices were domestically made and expressed, I would contend no later than May-June 1986, evidenced by Gorbachev's speech to the Foreign Ministry and especially by Gorbachev's personal memorandum to the Politburo on Eastern Europe in June 1986. From that time on, the general secretary's position on no-use-of-force and reforming the relations with the allies was clear to the entire leadership—allies and foes alike. Internationally, the choice was expressed unambiguously in Gorbachev's UN speech in December 1988. These dates are supported by the documents that we published. However, from memoirs and interviews, the Vladimirov affair in June 1985, [1] and the changing style of Gorbachev's interaction with allies in Sofia in the fall of 1985, I see that the change started much earlier. I agree with Professor Rey that the earliest documents we have, like the meeting with socialist leaders on March 15, 1985, do not unambiguously show that Gorbachev expressed his new vision or that it was understood as a change. We do not even have a transcript of that actual meeting with East European leaders, only what Gorbachev reported to the Politburo about it. In fact, not very many documents are available for 1985 because until Chernyaev became Gorbachev's aide, there are very few notes of Politburo meetings at the Gorbachev Foundation (and the official notes are still closed at RGANI), and most memos, with exception of Yakovlev's still have a formal character.

The next issue is how the choice was made and expressed domestically and internationally. Wohlforth suggests that there might have been a clearly defined point in time at which choice—"unambiguously opting for a course of action"—was made and expressed in such clear terms that both allies and opponents would know it. I would argue that such unambiguously made and expressed choices are a rarity in politics. Much more often choices are made at first tentatively in one's mind, then they mature gradually in conversations with allies before being presented and implemented publicly. It especially concerns the groundbreaking, unprecedented choices that the Gorbachev leadership was making. In my essay I was trying to show the evolution of Gorbachev's policy, which by

[1] See *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 5-6 for an article in *Pravada* signed by Vladimirov that criticized nationalist models of socialism in Eastern Europe.

1990 was closer to the positions of European social-democrats that the traditional communist parties. He also had to be very careful in terms of expressing it—in 1985-1987 he was busy trying to promote his supporters, new thinkers, to the positions of power and getting rid of conservatives in the Politburo and the Central Committee. On many issues, not just Eastern Europe, he was very aware of the balance of forces in the Politburo and that partially explains the difference of language he was using in his conversations with Western leaders on the one hand and both his Politburo colleagues and socialist leaders on the other, as noted by Professor Bozo in his review. Gorbachev did not have a fully thought-through unambiguous strategy on Eastern Europe, he kept asking the Central Committee to prepare one, and it was not done until at least the beginning of 1989, when the events started to overtake any prognoses or analyses, in the East or the West. Gorbachev was often ambiguous and uncertain, and he muddled through—as we know most leaders do—responding to events, burdened by the sheer number and complexity of issues of domestic economic reform, political reform, arms control, Afghanistan and other third world conflicts—he had no luxury to address each of these in isolation. His early choices were gradual and cautious, later becoming more and more radical, on Eastern Europe as well as on other issues. And he fumbled, and missed serious opportunities—like the one mentioned above to renounce the Brezhnev Doctrine in Prague—and regretted missing them.

When was the Brezhnev Doctrine revoked? Some would argue that it was already dead in 1981 when the Politburo discussed the situation in Poland and not one member called for a "fraternal assistance," and even Andropov is on record as stating that sending troops was not an option any longer. However, the point here is really my contention that the Soviet leadership completely eschewed the use of force. Professor Wohlforth suggests that Gorbachev "used force indirectly and he knew it," meaning really that he maintained ambiguity about whether the Soviets would use force and thus relied on the previously accumulated Soviet credibility in this respect stemming from 1956 and 1968. Here I would say that the choice not to use force was probably the most clear-cut and unambiguous one that Gorbachev made, determined partly by his personal aversion to violence and bloodshed, partly by his understanding of problems in the alliance, and imprinted on him even more by his conversations with Western leaders such as Margaret Thatcher who explained to him how Europeans felt threatened by the Soviets. The choice was made early, but the tests came later—in 1989. The proof here is that when the tests came in the form of upheaval in Eastern Europe, free elections, the first non-communist government in Poland, and the fall of the Berlin wall, Gorbachev stood by his choices, and looking at all the available evidence we have now, he never considered using force or even threatening to use it.

But did they know about it? Could it be that just being ambiguous on the part of Gorbachev meant keeping East Europeans in line with a vision of a possibility of the use of force. I address this question in my essay when I talk about "floating the Brezhnev doctrine." I suggest that at some point, it could be that not the Soviet leaders, but East European leaders would be interested in floating the doctrine to keep their own people in suspense, controlling the appeal of Gorbachev's reforms lest they undermined their own regimes. What we know from evidence is that by the summer of 1988, the Polish leadership was

confident that force would not be used and that the Soviets would accept free elections in Poland. The key decisions on involving Solidarity in the political process and starting the roundtable were made in August and September 1988 without consultation with the Soviets. We have Polish internal documents of those discussions. What is striking is that not a single person raised the concern of a possible Soviet use of force. In fact, it is stupefying for a Cold War historian that Soviet Union is never even mentioned as a factor at all in the Polish Communists discussions. So in August 1988 the Poles obviously were not concerned about the Soviet use of force. It is only after the decisions were made and all regional Polish organizations were informed about them, that Joseph Czyrek went to Moscow to inform Gorbachev about those decisions (Document 28). A more interesting issue to focus on is the possibility or consideration of use of force by East European leaders themselves—Honecker and Ceausescu did in fact propose just that during the meeting of the Warsaw Pact leaders in July 1989.

And the last important issue that I feel needs to be addressed is the "puzzle of Gorbachev's East European non-policy." It was addressed originally by Jacques Levesque in his state of the art book *The Enigma of 1989*, to which we all are indebted for so many insights and inspiration. Wohlforth stresses especially the "supreme importance of this alliance to Moscow's global and domestic fortunes." I devoted a large part of my essay precisely to the issue of how the value of the alliance went through a quite radical reassessment—partly for political and partly for economic reasons—but the importance ceased to be "supreme"—indeed it ceased to be important at all. The point I was making was that the alliance lost that significance in the eyes of the Soviet leadership as the nature of the perceived threat changed over time. Economically, especially with the collapse of oil prices, Eastern Europe was becoming a burden that the Soviets could not afford to carry any longer. Strategically, with nuclear weapons, the value of the buffer land on the Western border of the Soviet Union was already less important. In addition, after Geneva and Reykjavik, the Soviet new thinkers did not believe that the West would attack them, or ever seriously intended to (see Chernyaev—"nobody would attack us even if we disarmed totally"—even though, yes, he probably was the most radical new thinker). At Reykjavik Gorbachev and Reagan came close to agreeing to eliminate all nuclear weapons; in 1987, the INF treaty was signed, which eliminated an entire class of the most destabilizing nuclear weapons in Europe, by 1988 the Soviets and the Americans were consulting on most regional conflicts and trying to mediate them together. For Gorbachev and his allies, the most important things were happening in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Gorbachev's most important interlocutors were in the West, not East. His driving and most ambitious hope was integration into Europe—the common European home, as shown by Rey in her masterful 2004 article. And meanwhile, nothing much was happening in Eastern Europe that would require Gorbachev's urgent attention. Even in late 1988 the region appeared relatively stable. It was not of supreme importance to the Soviet leaders by that time. Western Europe, arms control and Afghanistan were, not even mentioning the developing domestic crisis and rising nationalism in the Soviet Union itself. As Tom Blanton shows in his essay, Gorbachev kept pressing the American leaders for more progress on arms control, and general removal of international tensions, which would allow him to devote more resources to his domestic reforms. He cherished and greatly benefitted from the interactivity that emerged in his contacts with Reagan and much later Bush. In this, which was most important for the

Soviet Union sphere, he was very proactive and practically always one step ahead of the U.S. administrations.

William Wohlforth is absolutely right when he says that Gorbachev's vision did not bring the results he was hoping for, and instead it brought some "catastrophic" outcomes. But I would not use the word "catastrophic" here—because the record is very mixed. The outcome was not "catastrophic" because blood was not shed and all the revolutions in Eastern Europe except for Romania were peaceful; even the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself took place without violence. The outcomes not foreseen by Gorbachev were the breakup of the alliance, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and an emergence of a common European home for Western and Eastern Europe (in the form of the European Union) in which there was no place for the Soviet Union. New thinking did not become the norm of international politics, and American triumphalism probably contributed to more uses of force internationally in the early 2000s in Afghanistan and Iraq. But in an important way, Gorbachev's vision did work out—Russia established new democratic institutions, East Europeans made their independent decisions without fear of violence and became part of prosperous and democratic Europe, nuclear arms control progressed in leaps in bounds culminating in the signing of the START treaty in July 1991, the war in Afghanistan was over, and many third world conflicts were successfully mediated in collaboration with the United States. Gorbachev indeed was a highly unusual leader who accepted even undesired outcomes gracefully and abided by the principles of new thinking in all the important tests that the events forced on him.

I would like to note again how much I appreciate all the very constructive criticisms and suggestions. Yes, our book does not provide any final answers, it poses more questions for many future historians who will come to look at the puzzle of 1989 again, hopefully with many more documents. It was enormous fun working on this book with support of so many wonderful generous people.

## Response by Vladislav Zubok, Temple University

I would like to thank all reviewers who found time to read this voluminous collection and express their expert opinions about it. A number of arguments raised by the reviewers concern the introductory essays by Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton. My interpretation of 1989 events did not appear in the volume – while my name is on the cover of the book. To avoid any misunderstandings, I would like to say: my own introduction to the volume, in addition to the essays of Savranskaya and Blanton, was planned. It did not appear for various reasons of an accidental nature. Using the opportunity provided by H-Diplo, I would like to clarify my role in the project and also add a few ideas to the discussion between the reviewers and the book's editors.

The book is the product of long and arduous efforts that lasted for almost fourteen years. In 1997-2001, I was one of principal authors of the volume, and helped to collect documents for the book. In 2001 I left the National Security Archive for my teaching position at Temple University and remained involved in the project in a more peripheral way. Savranskaya together with Blanton made considerable contributions to improving and expanding the collection of documents. They also guided it through all editorial stages. The original idea was to publish the documents together with the transcripts of the Musgrove conference by the 10th anniversary of the 1989 revolutions. I wrote an introductory essay. Unfortunately, the book was not ready for publication in 1998 – it appeared only twelve years later. What was my introduction appeared as an article in the issue # 12-13 of the Cold War International History Bulletin (2001)[1] and eventually its updated version was integrated into my book "A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 2009).

Svetlana Savranskaya is the best person to comment on the methodology of selecting and excising documents in the volume: most of final editorial decisions are hers. I would like to comment on my own experience of selecting the documents before 2001. From the initial stages, the project greatly benefitted from the generosity of the Gorbachev Foundation, particularly that of Anatoly Chernyaev. When I began to work in the Foundation's archive, it was one of the most open political archives in Russia – and certainly the most important one for historians of Gorbachev's era. I worked there without any restrictions. At that time many documents were still unfiled and uncatalogued. Yet, I had every means to check their authenticity. I worked with originals that contained the penciled markings and signatures of Gorbachev's advisers. Doing research in the Foundation's archive was one of the most memorable and pleasant experiences in my scholarly career. Anatoly Chernyaev, Georgy Shakhnazarov, and Vladlen Loginov provided guidance, assistance, and clarified documentary evidence in a series of "oral history" interviews and conversations. At that time, the Foundation's staff transcribed the Politburo minutes and the conversations between Gorbachev and foreign leaders. Those documents became catalogued and stored electronically in the "database" accessible only through computer terminals. Still,

[1] http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=topics.publications&group_id=13421

researchers could read those transcribed versions in their entirety and make notes from the computer.

Unfortunately, access at the Foundation became more restricted after 2001. Some comments by Frederic Bozo and Marie-Pierre Rey are probably inspired by frustration that researchers felt during that time. The Gorbachev Foundation could have provided answers to some nagging questions – among them Francois Mitterand's dialogues with Mikhail Gorbachev – by publishing full records of conversations. Yet, the Foundation's leadership did not do it. The Foundation published books that contained abridged and excised versions of its archival documents. Most researchers, without privileged access, could not consult full versions of Gorbachev's conversations with foreign leaders – they could only guess on the rest of the content. This raised doubts as to the reasons for excisions. This was the issue, in particular, with the two documentary collections published in 2006: the collection of Politburo minutes (based on personal notes of Chernyaev, Shakhnazarov, and Vadim Medvedev) and the documentary collection on the reunification of Germany. Both publications introduced an enormous amount of new information. At the same time their selective and abridged nature created problems for scholars. [2]

Thank to the help from our friends at the Foundation, "Masterpieces of History" was able to overcome most problems of partial and controlled access. The documentary selection in the volume includes a number of sources that are conspicuously absent from the Foundation's publications – for instance, one of the crucial Politburo discussions on the economic and financial crisis in the Soviet Union that took place on March 10, 1988. Yet, this willy-nilly privileged access may lead to doubts and questioning of our motives. Here, together with my co-editors, I firmly state that our only intention was to make available all primary sources that have been available to us for the scrutiny of scholars. And we feel in debt to Anatoly Chernyaev for supporting "Masterpieces" unfailingly.

Still, the critics are right: there is an unintended bias in sources, because of inaccessibility to the KGB, military and other state archives. Thanks to the collaboration with Gorbachev's assistants, his loyalists and "new thinkers," we were given access to their notes of the politburo, their memos to Gorbachev, transcripts of their conversations with foreign interlocutors. This is now the observable side of the moon. Unfortunately, the other side of the same moon remains still "dark" and unobserved: discussions at the Defense Council where Gorbachev spoke as commander-in-chief, memos from intelligence, the documentation of COMECON, government ministries and agencies on the economic and financial relations with Eastern Europe. Gorbachev's decision-making in 1988-89 took place in a narrow circle, sometimes after a few unrecorded conversations, in an informal way before the Politburo. This list of unintended omissions can go on and on. We were aware of the effect of "searching for the key where the light is." Nevertheless, the

[2] A. Chenyaev, A. Veber, V. Medvedev (eds), *V Politbiuro TsK KPSS….Po zapisiam Anatoliia Cherniiaeva, Vadima Medvedeva, Georgiia Shakhnazarova (1985-1991)* (Moscow: Alpina Biznes Buk, 2006); A.Galkin, A.Cherniaev, *Mikhail Gorbachev I germanskii vopros: Sbornik dokumentov 1986-1991 gg* (Moscow: Ves mir, 2006).

circumstances have not allowed us to eliminate this effect entirely. And any researcher who uses "Masterpieces" must be aware of this effect.

For those readers of H-Diplo who have not read my publications, especially "A Failed Empire" I have to add that my views on Gorbachev's policies in 1985-89 differ somewhat from Svetlana's interpretation in her introductory essay. Some colleagues categorized my views as "harshly critical" of Gorbachev, but I disagree. I have no personal and ideological reasons to criticize Mikhail Sergeevich. I am deeply grateful to him for destroying the Iron Curtain and ending the cold war. Moreover, emotionally, I have the strong urge to defend Gorbachev from unjustifed attacks from those who believe that he deliberately destroyed the Soviet Union, "sold out" too the West, etc. Yet, as a historian, I would like to problematize Gorbachev's motives and explore Gorbachev's choices. I consider Gorbachev's personality to be as crucial at the end of the Soviet Union as the personality of Joseph Stalin was crucial at its beginnings.

In a really succinct way, my attitude is as follows. Should Mikhail Sergeevich be judged harshly, in the way his hardline critics in Russia often do? Certainly not. Was Gorbachev's leadership a crucial factor in 1985-89? Absolutely. Did Gorbachev have consistent and realistic strategies for the East European part of the Soviet empire before and during 1989? Very hard to find them. When Savranskaya writes that Gorbachev "muddled through – as we know most leaders do," I agree. Gorbachev muddled through on Eastern Europe, - but also on price reform, financial and economic reforms in general.

Gorbachev's extraordinary political idealism and his unusual personality were, in my view, two crucial factors that contributed to the quick and relatively peaceful collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. At least as early as 1987, Gorbachev began to react to the grave problems posed by the deepening Soviet crisis and overextension of Soviet empire not as a realist, but as a radical idealist. By that time the vague ideas enunciated as "new thinking" began to be fleshed out. Yet, Gorbachev did not begin to apply his idealistic course in international politics before December 1988. Bill Wohlforth has a point when he questions Gorbachev's intentions. Intentions of political leaders matter when they become state policies. Gorbachev's intentions began to become state policies from 1988 on. At the same time, his intentions, when stated, were so unusual and anti-status quo, that it took months before Western politicians began to take them seriously.

It is hard to discern a consistent strategy in Gorbachev's foreign policy before 1988. I argue that it was not only the expression of his circumstances, but also the extension of his personality: self-confident and optimistic, yet surprisingly fluid, ad-hoc and not prone to calculated analysis. Instead of developing goals, setting priorities, and pursuing them consistently, Gorbachev seemed to live in the bubble of his rhetoric. His views and convictions fluctuated, in ill-defined and ever-changing shape, with the current of his own discourse. He did react to changing circumstances. But even more he was influenced by conversations – above all with Western foreign leaders and intellectual advisers – and by his own idealistic words and formulas.

Gorbachev tended to substitute a vision for a strategy and specific policy priorities. His most articulated vision was to create a "common European home." Marie-Pierre Rey reconstructs well the evolution of this concept. It became after 1988 the cornerstone of Gorbachev's foreign policy course. But was there a strategy behind the concept? Western cold war realists, from Henry Kissinger to Brent Scowcroft, feared that such a strategy existed, and it was to undermine NATO. We know now that Gorbachev's intentions were completely different. He wanted to cut the Gordian knot of Soviet problems –the cold war with the West, the burden of Soviet commitments in Eastern Europe, and the domestic Soviet transformation and modernization – by creating a new community from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

If one searches for strategic foundations for such a daring project, several things come to the fore. First is Gorbachev's reliance on the achievements of Leonid Brezhnev's détente diplomacy during the 1970s: the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Helsinki Final Act, and other developments of the all-European diplomatic framework were the only available foundations for the "Common European home." I agree with Marie-Pierre Rey and Frederic Bozo that we should have included at least some documents from Western European archives, as well as Russian archives, reflecting this important aspect.

Second is Gorbachev's unique personal relationship with the key Western leaders: Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, and Mitterand. These relations became his leverage to bring his vision to fruition. Indeed, only Western politicians – supported by the enthusiastic Western public – could agree to dismantle cold war polarity and help to transform Soviet-style communism into an open version of "socialism with the human face" – through investments, assistance, and trade. This choice of leaning on the West was undeniably strategic. This new foundation for implementing Gorbachev's vision appeared in 1987-88 and began to produce tangible results. Even skeptical Henry Kissinger admitted later: "Until well into 1991, Gorbachev was considered in Washington to be an indispensable partner in the building of a new world order…Keeping Gorbachev in office turned into a principal objective of Western policymakers." [3]

Western support for Gorbachev was indeed an extraordinary development. And Gorbachev's reliance on the good will of a few Western politicians, his assumption of good faith, honesty and integrity in international affairs may be praised by liberal internationalists. But as a strategic design, this reliance was an extraordinarily risky affair. Gorbachev's partners could, after all, leave him in a lurch, or just leave the political scene. This already happened in early 1989, when Reagan left the White House. Gorbachev saw, to his surprise and frustration, how hard it was to convince George Bush to become an international partner. To base one's political future not on the success of domestic reforms, but on the vision of "common European home" was a huge gamble. Even Gorbachev's sympathetic biographer Andrei Grachev acknowledges this. Eventually, not only

[3] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 786.

Gorbachev's vision, but his power base became tethered to the good will and assistance of the West: above all, the United States and Germany.

Gorbachev's gamble was based on many other contingencies – so many that it was hard to look at his policies as a strategy. Carl von Clausewitz in his famous "On War" writes about Napoleon's gamble in his Russian campaign of 1812: "if Bonaparte did not obtain a peace at Moscow, there was no alternative but to return – that is, there was nothing for him but a strategic defeat." [4] In Gorbachev's case, the biggest contingency turned out to be Eastern Europe. As Jacques Levesque brilliantly demonstrated, the surprising fall of the Berlin Wall ruined Gorbachev's grand design. After that, there was nothing for him but a strategic defeat.

Savranskaya's analysis of Gorbachev's intentions towards Eastern Europe can be boiled down to one word: noninvolvement. In other words, it was a hands-off stance. In 1985-87, it favored status quo. One can only repeat the estimate of Andrei Grachev cited in "Masterpieces": "The apparent tranquility of the Eastern European scene suggested that, at least in the near future, there would be no unpleasant surprises for the new Soviet leader." [5] The unwillingness to rock the boat apparently explains Gorbachev's decision not to revise the legacy of 1968 during his official visit to Czechoslovakia in April 1987. However, already in March 1988 the Soviet leadership, including many Politburo members, realized that the hands-off stance had become obsolete and impossible to continue. First, it happened because of radical glasnost inside the Soviet Union. Historical revisionism, criticism of Stalin's and Brezhnev's policies, including Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe became a transnational phenomenon. It rocked the boats in Eastern Europe, whether Gorbachev admitted it or not. (See Document No. 21 in "Masterpieces.") Second, in March 1988 the Soviet leadership came to a consensus that the growing financial crisis, caused by falling oil prices and their causes, necessitated the radical reform of CMEA. Gorbachev acknowledged this: "A number of socialist countries have gone into debt: they live off loans at the expense of our oil."

One of the strength of "Masterpieces" is that it brings to light new documents that reveal these new factors. The documentation also demonstrates how Soviet policies began to shift in the summer of 1988 from the pro-status quo stance to pro-change attitudes. Particularly striking is Gorbachev's conversation with Polish Politburo member Jozef Czyrek in September 1988. Gorbachev sanctioned the Polish leadership's course to start controlled democratization, including legalization and dialogue with Solidarity (Document No. 28 in "Masterpieces").

At the same time, the collected documents have big gaps in the Kremlin decision-making that can be attributed the ad-hoc, overconfident, and calculation-averse personality of

[4] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Translation by J.J. Graham) (London: Wordsworth, 1997), 125.

[5] Andrei Grachev, *Gorbachev's gamble. Soviet foreign policy and the end of the cold war* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 114.

Gorbachev. At the end of 1988, the Soviet leader activated his vision of the "common European home," and began to prepare for controlled liberalization in the Soviet Union itself. Eastern Europe, however, fell through the cracks. Gorbachev's rhetoric reflected conflicting impulses. At the Politburo session on March 10, 1988, he appeared to be torn between traditional assumptions and new realities. "We cannot isolate ourselves from CMEA. But what is to be done?" Gorbachev grabbed a magic wand of the "scientific technical revolution": he hoped that retooling of the CMEA technological base would "liberate [the socialist camp] from the need to purchase technology from the West. Consequently, [since] this will free up hard currency." (Document No. 19 in "Masterpieces"). This utopian recipe did not remain entirely on paper. The Soviet Union pumped billions of rubles into technological modernization. There were costly attempts to create a computer industry in the GDR, and to create software specialists in Bulgaria.

While this episode still waits for a good historian, my point here is Gorbachev's ability to entertain contradicting options without pursuing any of them consistently. At the same session, the Soviet leader concluded: "Regarding CMEA: we need to finally clarify the issue of whether we want integration or not." In fact, Moscow never found the time and political will to clarify this issue.

1989 was meant to be a pivotal year for the implementation of Gorbachev's vision. Yet instead, as we know, history outpaced him and left his design in ruins. In foreign policy, the Bush Administration waited for many months, until December, to cement the strategic partnership with Gorbachev. Domestically, the Soviet Union was rocked by multi-faceted crises, including ethnic violence in the Caucasus, miners' strikes in Russia, the separatism of the Baltic States and Georgia, and the rise of political opposition to Gorbachev led by radical democrats. Suddenly, everything Gorbachev did appeared to be too late. In Kissinger's remark echoing Machiavelli, "statesmen need luck as much as they need good judgment. And fortune simply would not smile on Mikhail Gorbachev." [6] The fall of the Berlin Wall was just one of many strokes of bad luck for his grand vision.

Mark Kramer in his well-documented publications argues about "Moscow's active role" in encouraging peaceful political change in Eastern Europe. He writes that Gorbachev at every point consistently supported this change, even when he realized that all communists, including reform communists, were losing power. [7] A number of documents in "Masterpieces" speak to this argument. I believe, however, that Kramer stretches the notion of "active role" a bit too far. The Soviet leadership, more specifically, Gorbachev and the narrow circle of his advisers and associates, did give consent to the Polish "roundtable." This may be considered as part of strategic gamble to start preparing Eastern Europe for the "common European home." Yet, Gorbachev's consent to the opening of the Hungarian-

[6] Kissinger, Op. cit., 792.

[7] Mark Kramer "Gorbachev and the demise of east European communism," in: Silvio Pons and Federico Romero, eds., *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War. Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 187-192.

Austrian border is a more remarkable event, which raises questions about Moscow's policy, proactive or not.

On March 3, 1989 the Hungarian leader Miklos Nemeth met with Gorbachev in Moscow and broached the idea of dismantling the barbed wire on the Hungarian-Rumanian border. He clearly realized that this was the issue of stability for the entire socialist camp, above all for the East German regime. He said: "Of course, we will have to talk to the comrades from the GDR." Gorbachev simply did not react to this. We do not have other documents on this crucial episode. Many documents, including the KGB reports, are missing. But it is equally probable to conclude that Gorbachev's nodding was a bad oversight, not the result of principled active stand. At that time, Gorbachev and his political adviser Georgy Shakhnazarov, who was "in charge" of Eastern Europe, were distracted by political developments at home.

There is no room to discuss other similar episodes, including the bizarre breaching of the Berlin Wall itself or the lack of the road-map for the withdrawal of Soviet military forces from Eastern Europe. What is said, I believe, is enough to suggest that the available evidence on the Soviet role in the revolutions of 1989 is still the glass half empty and can be subject to more than one interpretation.

In conclusion, I would like again to thank the reviewers for their observations and criticism that produced this fruitful exchange.

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