PREFACE

This book has been long in the making. Its constituent parts were scattered over twenty-five years of specialization in Soviet, Russian and German affairs in the form of articles, research papers, conference protocols and interviews. The many fragments were integrated into one single entity and published by Nomos in 1998. Since then, the book has sold out but demand has remained constant so that the publisher decided to republish it, suggesting that, if necessary, I would revise and update it. Major revisions, however, turned out to be unnecessary – not least because of the fact that not a single of the many reviews pointed to major or even minor mistakes or omissions. There are, however, several aspects that I thought needed elaboration and clarification.

Persisting Myths

The first concerns the question as to whether 'the West', NATO, or specific Western leaders gave the Soviet Union 'firm guarantees' or 'assurances' that, if Moscow consented to unified Germany's membership in the Atlantic alliance, NATO would not expand eastward beyond the borders of East Germany. This portrayal of the outcome of the negotiations in 1990 about the external aspects of German unification is, of course, part of the Kremlin's current narrative that the West 'reneged' on its commitments. NATO's 'betrayal' had a deplorable moral quality to it but also an important military-security dimension, as the expansion of the Western alliance 'closer and closer to Russia's borders' threatened the country's security interests. Russian president Vladimir Putin used this argument among others to justify the 'return' of the Crimea to Russia, saying in his speech of 18 March 2014 that this step was necessary because of 'Kiev's declarations of intent for the soonest possible membership of Ukraine in NATO', the 'perspective that the fleet of NATO would have appeared in [Sevastopol], the city of Russian glory' and that such a development would have constituted 'a danger for the whole of Russia's south'. More space than in the previous edition, therefore, has been devoted to the description and analysis of Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev's consent to unified Germany's mem-

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bership in NATO and to proving that the West's 'firm guarantees' and 'solid assurances' are, indeed, what they are: myth rather than fact.

A second myth concerns the idea that Gorbachev, as he was transforming the Soviet Union through *perestroika*, *glasnost'* and *demokratizatsiia*, exerted pressure on East German communist party leader Erich Honecker to fall in line and embark on corresponding reforms. The culmination of such attempts, so the argument continues, came on 7 October 1989 during Gorbachev's visit to East Berlin, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the GDR, when the Soviet leader allegedly said: 'Those who are late will be punished by history.' The fact, however, is that Gorbachev never literally used that aphorism and, even more importantly, with the exception of some cryptic statements on the above occasion, in private conversations with Honecker was complimentary about the GDR's economic and technological achievements, praised its social policies and even lauded its internal *political* development, comparing it favourably with the (reformist) course pursued by Hungary and Poland.

'Imperial Overstretch' under Putin

There is a third consideration that persuaded me to embark on revision and extension of the book. This is the return of the Soviet leaders' 'imperial overstretch' syndrome under Vladimir Putin. This is indicated not only by the increasing structural similarities between communist party general secretary Leonid Brezhnev's USSR and Putin's Russia – as, indeed, encapsulated in the latter's statement that 'The Soviet Union, too, is Russia, only under another name.' The problem of overextension looms large also because of Putin's Eurasian Union project that, despite all of his assurances to the contrary, is to be considered as an attempt at restoration of the Soviet Union's 'internal empire', that is, the restoration not of the constitutional Union but in the form of Moscow's *de facto* control over the Eurasian geopolitical space from the Baltic to the Pacific, including the countries of the southern Caucasus and Central Asia. The danger of overextension, finally, is also coming into sharp focus because of Russia's excessive expenditures for internal and external security and low oil prices. The causes for the collapse of the Soviet Union's external and internal empire, therefore, provide the analyst with a potentially useful case study for considering and comparing them with the path Russia under Putin is taking.

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'Eastern Europe'

Reviewing the history of the Cold War and reading contemporary documents, the term 'Eastern Europe' is like a grain of sand that perennially scrapes inside some machinery. Set against previous centuries of European history, the term as used from 1945 until 1990 as encompassing the Soviet Union's European satellites and member countries of the Warsaw pact – Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania – is utterly ahistorical. Never in European history did anyone consider Berlin, Danzig, Dresden or Königsberg in Germany or Prague (Praha), Pressburg (Bratislava), Brünn (Brno) and Pilsen (Plzeň) in Czechoslovakia to be part of 'Eastern Europe'. The absurdity of the Cold War mental map is clearly revealed by a cursory look at the geographical map: Vienna, a central European city, is located *east* of East Berlin and Prague. On the other side of the East-West divide, Germany and Berlin were never considered to be part of 'Western Europe'. Nevertheless, in the Cold War documents, the world is divided between 'The United States and Western Europe' and 'The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe'. In the 1980s, as will be shown in Chapter 6, (ultimately successful) attempts were made to change the Cold War mental map and resurrect the term *Mitteleuropa*, or Central Europe. For the present purposes, however, in keeping with the contemporary understanding of the term, 'Eastern Europe' will refer to the six countries of the Warsaw Pact.

The location of 'East Germany' on mental maps is less of a problem – but only for people who are not assimilated or socialized in any part of the German-speaking world, including in Austria and parts of Switzerland. As far as this writer is aware, in none of the documents on the German problem in German, neither those relating to the division nor to reunification, does the term *Ostdeutschland*, the literal re-translation of East Germany, ever appear. On the German mental map it was simply inconceivable to place Berlin, Dresden, Halle, Leipzig and Magdeburg, or Rostock, Stralsund and Greifswald, anywhere else than in *Mitteldeutschland*, literally Central Germany. Politically, *Ostdeutschland* did not exist, initially only the *'sowjetische Besatzungszone'* (Soviet zone of occupation), with SBZ as its acronym, later, after its foundation, the DDR, the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*' (GDR and German Democratic Republic).

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Personal Background and Thanks

Despite its quest for objectivity, the book is likely to reveal bias and personal commitment. If so, this may be due in part to my personal background. I was born in 1942 in Memel, then a German city in East Prussia, incorporated into the Soviet Union in the Second World War under the name of Klaipeda and now the main sea port of independent Lithuania. I developed a personal interest in Soviet and post-Soviet affairs, as well as in divided Germany and Europe, not only because of my place of birth but also because my father had fought at the eastern front during the war and my mother and grandmother, with my two brothers and me, had been forced to leave our homeland of East Prussia. The extended family was separated during the war, some members ending up in North-Rhine Westphalia and Bavaria in West Germany, others in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in East Germany.

Personal involvement with the subject matter of the division of Germany was deepened also by my experience as a student at the Freie Universität Berlin in the western part of the divided city; the direct exposure to artificiality the and absurdity of the division of the city; and the arrogance and petty chicaneries of East German border guards on the check points and access routes.

The academic part of interest and involvement in the subject matter was enhanced in my many years of work at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), first in Ebenhausen near Munich and then, after German unification, in Berlin. The research institute, also known as the German Institute on International Politics and Security, made it possible to publish the precursor of this book with Nomos. Albrecht Zunker, then one of the deputy directors of SWP and chief editor of the publication series on international politics and security, had a central role in the book's appearance from beginning to end. SWP also gave me the opportunity to establish lasting contacts with other research institutes in Germany and abroad; academic specialists and policy makers in Moscow; and officials at the Auswärtige Amt and the Chancellor's Office in Bonn and Berlin.

Concerning the latter, I would like to offer special thanks to all three German ambassadors to Moscow during the Gorbachev era, Jörg Kastl, Andreas Meyer-Landrut and Klaus Blech. They contributed significantly to my understanding of the course of events by providing me with their perspectives on official negotiations and more informal talks with Soviet party and government officials.

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The book also profited from conversations with other Western officials who participated, conceptually or at the operational level, in managing the relations between the Soviet Union and the West on the German problem. These include Rudolf Adam, Bob Blackwill, Sir Roderic Braithwaite, Ulrich Brandenburg, Frank Elbe, Wolfgang Ischinger, Klaus Neubert, Horst Teltschik, Malcolm Toon, Jack Matlock, Dennis Ross, Gebhardt Weiß, Phil Zelikow and Robert Zoellick.

Especially important were the interviews with former Soviet and East German officials, including Vladimir Bykov, Anatoli Chernyaev, Gennadi Gerasimov, Andrei Grachev, Sergei Grigoriev, Egon Krenz, Hans Misselwitz, Yuli Kvitsinsky, Igor Maksimychev, Viktor Rykin, Georgi Shakhnazarov, Thilo Steinbach, Sergei Tarasenko and Vadim Zagladin.

The specialists on international affairs at the various research institutes in Moscow who were most helpful over the years in clarifying the context and the course of events are Volodya Benevolensky, Vyacheslav Dashichev, Andrei Kortunov, Viktor Kremenyuk, Sergei Karaganov, and Vitaly Zhurkin. At the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, valuable insights were provided by its director, Michael Stürmer, and current or previous colleagues Falk Bomsdorf, Peer Lange, Friedemann Müller, Uwe Nerlich, Christoph Royen, Reinhardt Rummel, Klaus Schröder, Gebhard Schweigler, Klaus Segbers, Peter Stratmann and Bernhard von Plate. The researchers at the then Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien in Cologne who were most helpful and influential in shaping my views on the topic were its director, Heinrich Vogel, and Fred Oldenburg, Gerhard Wettig and Heinz Timmermann.

Much of the writing for this book was done while I was Associate Professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and Director of its Program on Russia and East-Central Europe. Thanks are due in particular to its then Dean, Jack Galvin, and Professor Alan Henrikson. I also would like to convey my very personal gratitude to Professor Tim Colton and Lis Tarlow, Director and Associate Director respectively, at the Kathryn W. and Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard University, for their encouragement and support.

Two projects were most valuable in advancing my understanding of the subject. One is the Cold War International History Project at Harvard University directed by Mark Kramer, the other the Project on Cold War Studies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, with Jim Hershberg as its director. Several of the results of the projects' conferences and papers have been integrated here.

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Many thanks, finally, are due to the Ford Foundation and the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. The two foundations made it possible for me to carry out research in the party archives in Moscow and Berlin and conduct interviews with former Soviet and East German officials.

Transliteration of Russian Terms

The transliteration of Russian terms follows the style used by United States Library of Congress. To enhance readability and avoid pedantry, however, some modifications have been made. The soft sign, indicated by an apostrophe in standard style, has been deleted in political household words. In such words, the italics have also been dispensed with. Hence, the stylistically correct *glasnost'* and *oblast'* according to the Library of Congress system have been rendered here simply as glasnost and oblast. The scientific transliteration was also abandoned in many proper nouns and names. For instance, the text features Yuri Andropov, Alexander Yakovlev, Alexei Arbatov, Vladimir Petrovsky, Lavrenti Beria, and Boris Yeltsin rather than Iurii Andropov, Aleksandr Iakovlev, Aleksei Arbatov, Vladimir Petrovskii, Lavrentii Beriia, and Boris El'tsin. Accordingly, the book refers to Yekaterinburg and Yaroslavl instead of Ekaterinburg and Iaroslavl'. Perhaps at the risk of offending Ukrainian sentiments, Kiev has not been altered to Kiyev, Kiyiv, or Kyyiv. Moscow, too, at least its spelling, has remained unaltered.

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