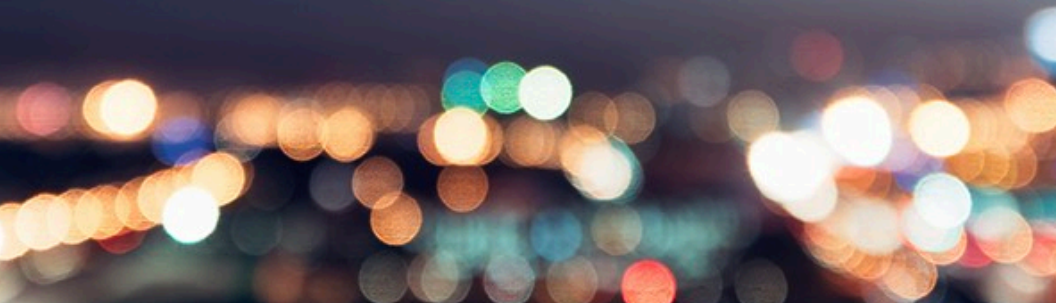


Paul White

NATO EASTWARD EXTENSION AFTER 1990!



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**Nato Eastward Extension after
1990!**

Dear Readers,

Since the end of the cold war Nato's borders and membership have increased ever more towards the East. How much this caused, at least in part, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, how much this conflicts with any agreements made with Russia is a subject still argued about but which very recent official disclosures have shown were an important issue as the cold war came to its end, the re-unification of Germany progressed and the release of Eastern European states from the Warsaw Pact unfolded.

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Only recently have documents and statements been released concerning this subject. Up until now you may have noticed in articles and particularly comments to articles in the press that it is rather en-vogue to deny that there ever was any sort of agreement between the two main powers (nobody seemed to worry about China in those days) concerning what would govern the future borders of either NATO or the Warsaw Pact.

As it turned out the Warsaw Pact later ceased to exist.

The Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), officially the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, commonly known as the Warsaw Pact (WP), was a collective defence treaty signed in Warsaw, Poland, between the Soviet Union and seven other Eastern Bloc socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe in May 1955, during the Cold War. The Warsaw Pact was the military complement to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CoMEcon), the regional economic organisation for the socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The Warsaw Pact was created in reaction to the integration of West Germany into NATO in 1955 as per the London and Paris Conferences of 1954.

On 25 February 1991, the Warsaw Pact was declared disbanded at a meeting of defence and foreign ministers from remaining Pact countries meeting in Hungary. On 1 July 1991, in Prague, the Czechoslovak President Václav Havel formally ended the 1955

Warsaw Treaty Organization of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance and so disestablished the Warsaw Treaty after 36 years of military alliance with the USSR. The USSR disestablished itself in December 1991.

As mentioned, many articles and commentators have increasingly attempted to deny that there ever was an agreement between two major powers as to any restrictions on either NATO or the WP from expanding either towards or even into what each of the powers considered to be their territory or more mildly put: zone of influence.

At least in the West and in particular in the United Kingdom the media shies away from fuelling any possible excuse for Russia to feel aggravated by the possibility of Ukraine joining the European Union (EU) or NATO.

However notable figures such as Yanis Varoufaikis, now Greek MP (previously the Greek Finance Minister), Professor John Mearsheimer of Chicago University and his friend Henry Kissinger have argued that Ukraine and the West have been as they say "poking the bear in the eye" and

therefore provoking what has now turned out to be an over-reaction.

A sovereign right to join!

I was confronted with what sounded like a reasonable argument for Ukraine joining either the EU or NATO.

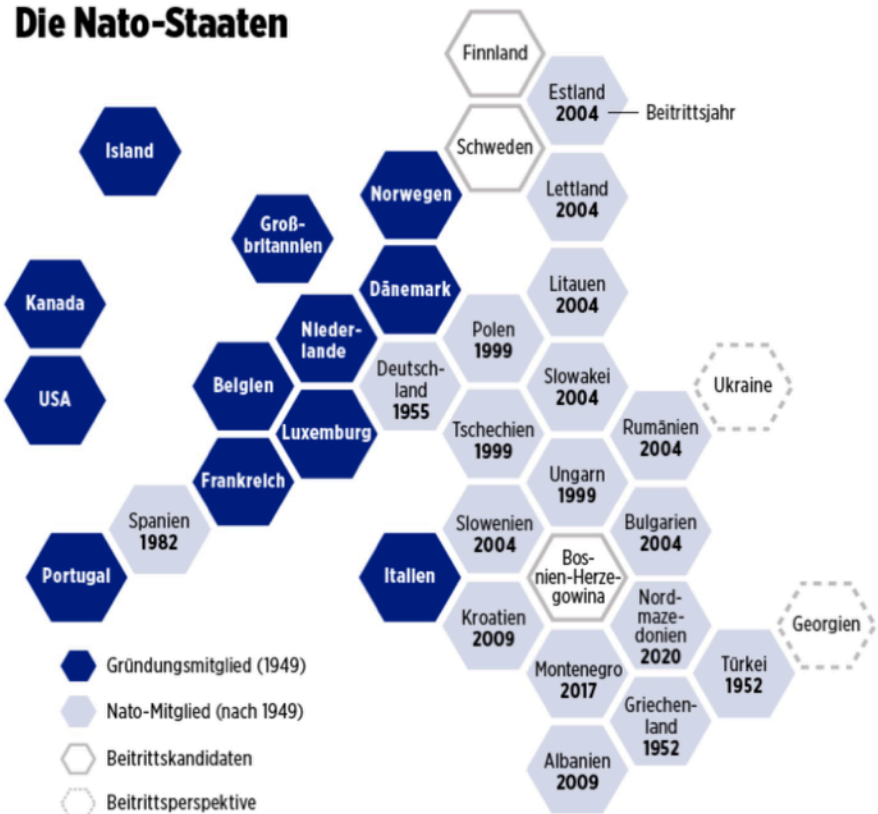
Simply put: Ukraine is supposedly a sovereign nation and has the right to join.

At least at first it would seem a valid argument. But this assumes that this country actually has the right to choose. Which of course it doesn't. Both the EU and NATO are nothing other than huge clubs/associations and looked at this way it is obvious that joining requires the approval of the organisations and not just one individual's desire to join. Now if you add the complication that it is possible for two clubs to agree amongst themselves not to poach members, not to take certain members which might be of disadvantage to the other then they also have the right to turn

down the joining request and if there had been a previous agreement to this issue then possibly the duty to turn down such requests.

So now we are back to the question: was there an agreement not to expand, in this case, NATO further towards the East.

Die Nato-Staaten



As it happens NATO has piece by piece increased its membership eastwards since the end of the cold war.

As can be seen by the diagram following Turkey joining in 1952 and the re-unification of Germany in 1955 a further 15 countries, all further eastwards, have been admitted to the NATO alliance.

It could be argued that it is surprising that Russia has not complained much stronger than now. It also shows, I believe, just how serious an encroachment a Ukraine in NATO is perceived by the Russians. I expect of those reading, many will want the word Russia with the name Putin replaced. But I am sticking to what Yanis Varoufaikis has stated: don't make the mistake of judging a country by its leaders. A wise saying. Just take the United States under Donald Trump or now under Joe Biden. So different as chalk and cheese but America (no matter what one likes or

dislikes about it) has not changed, only its leaders.

What evidence is there for the claim that the United States and Russia agreed, if only informally, that Nato would not creep towards the Russian borders?

In 1990 assurances were given by several Western leaders to Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not expand further east, as revealed by memoranda of private conversations. However, the final text of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, signed later that year, contained no mention of the issue of eastward expansion.

In February 1990 there was what is known as the Ottawa Open Skies Conference.

But there are other reliable sources.

According to Germany's "Spiegel":

Neuer Aktenfund von 1991 stützt russischen Vorwurf (New documents from 1991 harden Russian claims)

[Spiegel Link](#)

On Page 11 Spiegel state:

Russian policymakers have claimed for more than two decades that, during the 1990 negotiations on German reunification, the United States promised the Soviet Union that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe.

Commenting on NATO's preparations for its first round of expansion in the mid- 1990s, for instance, Russian President Boris Yeltsin wrote President Bill Clinton that "the treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany signed in September 1990 [. . .] excludes, by its meaning, the possibility of expansion of the NATO zone to the East."

Russian political analyst Sergei Karaganov was even more explicit in 1995, asserting:

“In 1990, we were told quite clearly by the West that the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and German unification would not lead to NATO expansion.”

In the 2000s and 2010s, Russian Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev made similar assertions. In 2009, for example, Medvedev charged that Russia had received “none of the things that we were assured, namely that NATO would not expand endlessly eastward and our interests would be continuously taken into consideration.”

And in 2014 Putin declared, “[W]e were promised that after Germany’s unification, NATO wouldn’t spread eastward.”

More authoritatively, Mikhail Gorbachev has repeatedly argued that the Soviet Union received a non-expansion pledge.

In 2008, for instance, the former Soviet leader argued: “The Americans promised that NATO wouldn’t move beyond the boundaries of Germany after the Cold War”; in 2014 he declared that although NATO expansion may not have been explicitly discussed in 1990, expansion remained

“a violation of the spirit of the statements and assurances made to us in 1990.

Bulletin by Frank Elbe

This was written and archived: The diplomatic path to German Unity, A tribute to American Friends, Hertie Lecture delivered at the GHI's German Unification Symposium, Washington DC, October 2nd, 2009. Frank Elbe: Former Ambassador, Foreign Ministry Federal Republic of Germany.

A West German foreign service officer since 1972, Frank Elbe served as Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's Director of Cabinet (Chief of Staff) from 1987 to 1992. In this capacity he participated in the “Two Plus Four” negotiations that resolved the international aspects of German unification. He later served as German Ambassador to India, Japan, Poland, and Switzerland, before retiring in 2005. His publications include "Ein runder Tisch mit scharfen Ecken: Der diplomatische Weg zur deutschen Einheit" (Baden-Baden, 1993; co-

authored with Richard Kiessler) which has been translated into English as *A round table with sharp corners: The diplomatic course to German unity* (Baden-Baden, 1994).

Baker immediately swung into action. He filled in British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd and French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and briefed journalists on his flight to Moscow on February 7.

In Moscow, he sought to convince Gorbachev and Shevardnadze that both German states and the four victorious powers should sit down to negotiations at one table.

Baker pointed out that it would be "unrealistic" to imagine that an economic power like Germany would remain neutral once it was united. In fact, he warned General Secretary Gorbachev of the danger that a united Germany might pose, if it were to make arrangements for its own security.

Would the Soviets like to see a reunited Germany outside NATO without U.S. troops, and potentially in possession of its own nuclear weapons, or would they prefer a united Germany firmly

integrated in NATO, with the guarantee that NATO would not extend its territory eastwards by even a centimeter?

Baker's persistent lobbying carried the weight and authority of the leading Western power. In a way, he took on the position of a bailsman or trustee vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, which was very important in this situation.

Baker left a three- page letter drafted by his adviser, Denis Ross, with the German ambassador in Moscow to prepare Kohl for his talks with Gorbachev. In a personal letter that Bush sent to Kohl prior to Kohl's meeting with Gorbachev, the American President also assured his West German counterpart that he could count on the support of his American allies in the German question.

But at the same time, Bush urged Kohl to insist on united Germany remaining within NATO when he met with Mikhail Gorbachev.

At a meeting in the Kremlin on February 10, 1990, Chancellor Kohl received Gorbachev's consent to go ahead with unification.

As the Soviet news agency TASS put it, "there was no difference of opinion that the Germans

themselves must resolve the question of the unity of the German nation and that they themselves decide in what time frame, at what speed, and under what conditions they wish to bring about unity.”

Hans Dietrich Genscher German Foreign Minister

In a speech at the Protestant Academy in Tutzing on January 31, 1990, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher took the initiative.

He called for NATO membership for united Germany and rejected the notion of a neutral Germany. However, he added an essential reservation to the demand for NATO membership: "Notions that the part of Germany that today constitutes the GDR should be drawn into the military structures of NATO would block attempts at getting closer." He continued: "It is NATO's task to clarify unequivocally that whatever may happen to the Warsaw Pact, **there will be no extension**

of NATO territory to the East, i.e. nearer the borders of the Soviet Union. This guarantee will be significant for the Soviet Union and its attitude."

He also spoke of the future role of both alliances. They would shift from confrontation to cooperation and should become elements of cooperative security structures in the whole of Europe.

James Baker wrote:

Moving in this direction does not require a revolution in our thinking. It just requires that we adapt to new realities and build upon our proven collective defence structure a broader notion of security. This notion must recognise that NATO cannot only prevent war but can also build peace. And that the way to build the peace is to reassure the Central and Eastern Europeans and the Soviets that they will not be left out of the new Europe.

Memoranda

Several memoranda indicating that this had been discussed and it was an important agreement on even continuing talks are linked here.

Conclusion:

There seems to be ample documentation covering this subject and showing that assurances were given to the Soviets that Nato or the West would not encroach further on its eastern borders. Those who like many commentators in the press love crying: "Germany can never be trusted in any matters even if it is in writing" are implying that we, the British can be trusted.

Can we?

Footnotes and References:

John Joseph Mearsheimer (born December 14, 1947) is an American political scientist and international relations scholar, who belongs to the realist school of thought. He is the R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago. He has been described as the most influential realist of his generation.

Mearsheimer is best known for developing the theory of offensive realism, which describes the interaction between great powers as being primarily driven by the rational desire to achieve regional hegemony in an anarchic international system. In accordance with his theory, Mearsheimer believes that China's growing power will likely bring it into conflict with the United States.

Ioannis "Yanis" Varoufakis (born 24 March 1961) is a Greek economist and politician.

A former academic, he served as the Greek Minister of Finance from January to July 2015 under Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. He has been Secretary-General of MeRA25, a left-wing political party, since he founded it in 2018. A former member of Syriza, Varoufakis was a member of the Hellenic Parliament for Athens B from January to September 2015; he regained a parliamentary seat in July 2019.

Varoufakis was born in Athens in 1961. He studied mathematics and economics at the University of Birmingham and the University of Essex, where he obtained a PhD in economics. He then taught economics in the United Kingdom and then at the University of Sydney, before returning to Greece in 2000 to teach at the University of Athens.

In January 2015, Varoufakis was appointed Greek Minister of Finance. He led negotiations with Greece's creditors during the government-debt crisis.

Henry Alfred Kissinger KCMG (born Heinz Alfred Kissinger; May 27, 1923) is a German-born American politician, diplomat, and geopolitical consultant who served as United States Secretary of State and National Security Advisor under the presidential administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. A Jewish refugee who fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1938, he became National Security Advisor in 1969 and U.S. Secretary of State in 1973. For his actions negotiating a ceasefire in Vietnam, Kissinger received the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize.

A practitioner of Realpolitik, Kissinger played a prominent role in United States foreign policy between 1969 and 1977. During this period, he pioneered the policy of détente with the Soviet Union, orchestrated the opening of relations with China, engaged in what became known as shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East to end the Yom Kippur War, and negotiated the Paris Peace Accords, ending American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Kissinger has written over a dozen books on diplomatic history and international relations.

Kissinger remains a controversial and polarising figure in U.S. politics, both condemned as an alleged war criminal by many journalists, political activists, and human rights lawyers, and venerated as a highly effective U.S. Secretary of State by many prominent international relations scholars. With the death of centenarian George Shultz in February 2021, Kissinger is the oldest living former U.S. Cabinet member and the last surviving member of Nixon's Cabinet.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paul White is a nutcase turned author with little to no talent. The **New York Times** wrote about him: **Nothing**. They had never heard of the man.