6 Explaining the Cold War's end
Process tracing all the way down?

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The fall of the Berlin Wall. The Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. The introduction of *glasnost* and competitive elections in the USSR. The withdrawal of Soviet armed forces from Central Europe. Such events have come to represent the end of the Cold War. Historians might not agree on precisely when the military–political–economic rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies – and the attendant risk of global nuclear war – ended. They are left, instead, to explain the *events* that culminated in the undisputed demise of that rivalry. Political scientists' explanations for the end of the Cold War – a shift in the balance of power, the impact of economic globalization and relative Soviet decline, the normative appeal of democracy and capitalism – are, however, not well suited to explain events. Process tracing provides a way to evaluate explanations for the end of the Cold War by linking broad theories to specific events. The method depends on identifying evidence on the mechanisms behind the decisions of political leaders – something that the available archival record in many cases allows.

As the volume's editors point out in Chapter 1, this chapter differs from the others in that it does not seek to demonstrate the usefulness of process tracing for a particular domain of political science or how process tracing in one case can help evaluate the merits of a given theory more broadly. Scholars have used the case of the Cold War's end in this way – for example, to illustrate the impact of economic globalization on security (Brooks 2005), the factors influencing states' grand strategies (Evangelista 1993), and the conditions under which states pursue conflictual or cooperative security policies (Evangelista 1991). Indeed, process tracing has proved an effective method for evaluating competing theories of international relations applied to particular developments during the Cold War – from military intervention to arms control to the basic ideas underpinning foreign policy

(for example, Bennett 1999; Checkel 1997; English 2000; Evangelista 1999; Mendelson 1998).[1]

This chapter's purpose is different. It focuses entirely on the Cold War's end, but it ranges broadly over the various explanations put forward by scholars. The goal is to link the main theoretical accounts to specific political, social, and psychological mechanisms that must come into play for these accounts to serve as explanations for the key events that constitute the end of the Cold War. The chapter offers a tentative assessment of the explanations on the basis of existing evidence. Its main intent, however, is to show how one would evaluate the mechanisms that each theoretical approach implies through examination of a single event – yet one intricately connected to many of the other most significant ones: Mikhail Gorbachev's December 1988 proclamation of "freedom of choice" for Eastern Europe and the unilateral defensive restructuring and reduction in the Soviet Army of half a million troops. Gorbachev's speech at the United Nations marked the most public articulation of the Soviet renunciation of the "Brezhnev Doctrine" (which had previously justified Soviet interventions) and helped to set in train the rejection of communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe and the peaceful reunification of Germany.

The justification for choosing the end of the Cold War for this exercise is twofold: (i) there is a remarkably rich array of contending theories whose underlying mechanisms are worth elucidating for potential application to other questions; and (ii) for many students of international relations, the end of the Cold War called into question some of the leading paradigms in the field, and thus enlivened the debate between the critics and defenders of those paradigms and offered the possibility of theoretical innovation and progress.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I review the range of possible events that could constitute the end of the Cold War and make my case for why Gorbachev's December 1988 initiative provides the most useful basis for this exercise. Throughout, I seek to fulfill the main criteria offered by the editors for "best practices" of process tracing, calling attention to the ones most relevant to my case. In the spirit of criterion 1, I "cast the net widely for alternative explanations," summarizing the main theoretical approaches to the end of the Cold War and the explanatory mechanisms associated with

[1] The theoretical and empirical work on the end of the Cold War is enormous and still growing. This chapter draws on important recent contributions to this literature in a special issue of the British journal *International Politics*; the special issue represents the main schools of thought on the topic and is based on papers presented at a March 2010 conference at Princeton University marking the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Cold War (Deudney and Ikenberry 2011a).

them. Then I examine a comparative case – Nikita Khrushchev's major reduction of conventional forces starting in the mid-1950s – of the sort that Bennett and Checkel recommend combining with process tracing to yield theoretical leverage and insight (criterion 7). The sections following take up competing explanations in the context of Stephen Van Evera's "hoop" and "smoking-gun" tests (Bennett and Checkel, this volume, Chapter 1; and Bennett, this volume, Appendix). I then pursue the question of whether "absence of evidence" constitutes "evidence of absence," and I suggest ways of uncovering observable evidence drawn from deductive hypotheses.

Next, I turn to a basic process tracing exercise – what I dub "process-tracing lite" – to ponder the question, also raised by the editors, of "how far 'down' to go in gathering detailed evidence." My answer is: "the further the better." Thus, I agree with Alan Jacobs, who, in his chapter on ideational theories, advocates an expansive "analytic field," both in terms of *temporal range* and *level of analysis* (Jacobs, this volume, Chapter 2). By tracing a process further back in history (expanding temporal range), I argue, we can bring to light explanatory factors (at different levels of analysis) that were missing in the more delimited process-tracing exercise. More history saves us from creating "just so" stories and neglecting policy windows that were opened before the time of the specific event we sought to explain through process tracing. The same is so for going further into the future.

The exercise compels us to call into question the plausibility of a unitary-actor assumption founded on the apparent lack of resistance to Gorbachev's initiatives (in this case the December 1988 speech) at the time he made them. Resistance emerged later, in the implementation phase, and went to the extreme of inducing the resignation of Gorbachev's foreign minister and an attempted coup against Gorbachev himself. Finally, going further into the future – as Gorbachev became increasingly preoccupied with the situation in Eastern Europe – helps to uncover the "revealed preferences" motivating his policies there. Employing a counterfactual thought experiment – would Gorbachev have responded with force to political changes in Eastern Europe if the Soviet economy were not in crisis? – highlights the conflict between materialist explanations and ones favoring ideas, learning, and personality traits.

The end of the Cold War as a series of events

If the "dependent variable" to be explained in this exercise is an event or series of events representing the end of the Cold War, then we need to start by asking

when that happened. Most accounts of the Cold War's end focus on events that include: the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989); the Malta summit meeting between George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev (December 2 to 3, 1989); Gorbachev's inauguration as the first president (albeit not popularly elected) of the Soviet Union (March 15, 1990), based on a new system that eliminated the political monopoly of the Communist Party (formally renounced at its 28th Congress on 13 July 1990); the successful military effort to reverse Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which entailed unprecedented cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union under the auspices of the UN Security Council (August 1990 to February 1991); negotiation and official reunification of Germany (September to October 1990); the signing of the Paris Charter for a New Europe and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which led to major reductions in the armed stand-off in Central Europe and promised a new European security order (November 19 to 21, 1990); the election of Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa as president of Poland (December 22, 1990) signaling the end of Soviet-style communism in Eastern Europe; the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (July 1, 1991); and the failed coup d'état against Gorbachev (August 19 to 21, 1991), which provoked a series of further events leading ultimately to the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991.

What this long, yet still selective, list excludes is any event that happened *earlier*, which some observers might consider to have marked – or at least foreshadowed – the end of the Cold War: the start of Ronald Reagan's first term as president of the United States (January 20, 1981); Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to the top leadership of the Soviet Union (March 11, 1985); Ronald Reagan's visit to Moscow, where he characterized his statement calling the Soviet Union an "evil empire" as referring to "another time, another era" (May 31, 1988); or – my preferred choice for the purposes of this chapter – Gorbachev's speech at the United Nations where he declared that the countries of Eastern Europe should have "freedom of choice" about their political systems and announced a unilateral reduction of some 500,000 troops and withdrawal of offensively oriented military equipment from Europe (December 7, 1988).

Ronald Reagan and his Secretary of State George Shultz left office in January 1989 believing that they had overseen the end of the Cold War. But their successors George H. W. Bush and James Baker thought otherwise. They undertook a "strategic review" of US–Soviet relations that delayed for nearly a year the improvement of relations that had followed such initiatives as the Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF Treaty – 1987),

eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons for the first time ever, and Gorbachev's UN speech and subsequent unilateral Soviet reductions of conventional armed forces.

Indeed, rather than welcome the INF Treaty, Bush and Baker seemed more concerned that it not prevent modernization of shorter-range US nuclear weapons, left uncovered by the treaty, and their deployment to West Germany (comments of Brent Scowcroft and James Baker in Wohlforth 2003: 31–32). George Bush was not convinced that the Cold War had ended until he developed a personal relationship with Mikhail Gorbachev at a summit meeting in Malta in December 1989, and Gorbachev revealed to him that "we don't consider you an enemy anymore" (Wohlforth 2003: 15). Some members of Bush's administration identified a later end – only with the reunification of Germany or Soviet cooperation in the war against Iraq were they convinced that the Cold War was history. At a retrospective conference of former US and Soviet officials, one of the Soviet participants responded that "unless the Cold War had ended at Malta, how could we have achieved the kind of German unification that was accomplished, [and cooperation in] the war in the Persian Gulf?" (Anatolii Cherniaev in Wohlforth 2003: 46). Another claimed that the Malta summit itself "proved that the Cold War had ended somewhat earlier" (Aleksandr Bessmertnykh in Wohlforth 2003: 22).

In trying to date the end of the Cold War, we might note that many people thought that it had already ended several times before the late 1980s. These include "The Thaw" period of the mid-1950s, when the successors of Josef Stalin drastically reduced Soviet ground forces and made efforts to improve relations with the United States, the "Spirit of Geneva" and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Austria in 1955, and the 1963 "Moscow Treaty" banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater. Moreover, the fact that observers could speak of a "Second Cold War" or a "New Cold War" breaking out in late 1979 – with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and plans for US deployment of new missiles in Europe – implies that the first Cold War had ended with the onset of the détente policies of the 1970s (Halliday 1983; Cox 1990). It is only because events of the 1980s and early 1990s went so much further than anyone anticipated that we do not feel obliged to explain those earlier "ends" of the Cold War (but see Evangelista 1991 for an attempt). Finally, a vocal minority, particularly in Russia, claims that the Cold War never really ended: one of its earliest institutions, the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, is still going strong; it has expanded territorially to include parts of the former Soviet Union,

along with contingency plans to defend them; and it has extended its military missions worldwide.[2]

A thicket of theories (and mechanisms)

The literature on the end of the Cold War is blessed (or cursed?) with what James Kurth (1971) in another context called a "thicket of theories" – many plausible contenders and no easy way to adjudicate between them. The theories I bring to bear can be grouped into four broad categories.

(1) *Realist approaches* emphasize a combination of the relative East–West balance of military and economic power. Scholars such as Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth (2003) and Kenneth Oye (1995) explain the end of the Cold War in part as a response by the USSR to its relative decline vis-à-vis the United States. To the extent that mechanisms below the level of the international system (distribution of power) come into play, they entail rational adaptation to new information or so-called Bayesian updating (Bennett, this volume, Appendix) on the part of leaders who were slower than Gorbachev in grasping the implications of the long-term Soviet economic crisis.

(2) *Ideational approaches* represent the impact of new ways of understanding the Soviet security predicament and the relationship between foreign policy and the goals of domestic political reform. The main advocates of this approach do not neglect the impact of economic conditions and the East–West military rivalry, but consider these factors as indeterminate. Scholars such as Jeffrey Checkel (1997), Robert English (2000), and Sarah Mendelson (1998) tend to see economic and military conditions as factors that can be manipulated by *norm entrepreneurs* who favor "new thinking" in foreign policy and reform at home. Thus, their explanations often overlap with those that highlight institutions, coalition politics, and individual cognitive change.

(3) *Coalition-politics approaches* stress the interests of particular sectors of Soviet society and the concomitant foreign policies that would best serve them. The main locus of competition, as developed in the work of Jack Snyder (1987) most notably, pits Communist Party ideologues and stalwarts of the military-industrial sector against party reformers, the *intelligentsia*, and representatives of light and consumer industry and economic interests that would benefit from integration into the global economy. The principle mechanisms for this theoretical approach include political strategies such as log-rolling and agenda-setting.

[2] Oleg Baklanov *et al.*, letter to Thomas Biersteker, April 28, 1998.

(4) *Cognitive psychological and personality-based approaches*, applied to the end of the Cold War, seek to explain changes in Soviet security policy from confrontation to cooperation. They can work at both the group and individual level. Andrew Bennett (1999), for example, has studied the views and policy prescriptions of Soviet military officers regarding armed intervention based on their experience in previous conflicts (particularly the war in Afghanistan). His explanation employs mechanisms that stress the learning of lessons on a number of dimensions at the individual and group levels (cohorts of officers with similar histories of deployment). Janice Stein (1994) has also used a learning mechanism to explain the views of one particular individual – Mikhail Gorbachev – whose personality type ("uncommitted thinker and motivated learner") she finds particularly suitable to learning.

As these descriptions already reveal, there is considerable overlap among all of the explanations. Few observers would deny that economic decline played a role in Soviet policy changes of the 1980s. Ideas also play a role in many theories – either as long-standing views associated with particular individuals and groups; as products of individual, group, or organizational cognitive change ("learning"); or instrumentally to justify the self-interested policies of political coalitions. Thus, many of the difficulties identified by Jacobs (this volume, Chapter 2) for students of ideational theories, and the strategies he proposed for overcoming them, apply here.

This chapter will resolve neither when the Cold War ended nor which theories best explain that end. Presumably, some theories are better than others for explaining different dimensions of what we might consider the end of the Cold War – especially if we consider a range of topics from military intervention to arms control to democratization to economic reform and liberalization. The point is that different end points implicate different theories and perhaps entail different methods for resolving theoretical disputes. My claim, though, is that process tracing is probably the most powerful method for doing so, regardless of when precisely one dates the "dependent variable." My goal here is to illustrate the method not by a systematic evaluation of all of the rival theories – that exercise has already consumed volumes (for example, Brooks and Wohlforth 2000; 2002; English 2002; Kramer 2001; Lebow and Risse-Kappen 1995; Wohlforth 2003) – but by focusing on one plausible candidate event and considering the theories most associated with it. I use this event to suggest how process tracing sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant contending theories and their attendant mechanisms.

In what follows, I seek to identify at what points in tracing the process that produced Gorbachev's UN speech we are able to adjudicate between particular

explanations. While this bears some resemblance to Schimmelfennig's "efficient process tracing" (this volume, Chapter 4) as it analyzes those process links that are crucial for an explanation and for discriminating between alternative explanations, the exercise is primarily grounded in the concepts and "best practices" advanced by Bennett and Checkel (this volume, Chapter 1). Before proceeding, however, I justify my focus on this particular event.

Gorbachev's December 1988 speech as a key event

My choice is inspired by US journalist Walter Lippmann's series of articles, later published as *The Cold War*, which responded to George Kennan's famous 1947 article, penned under the pseudonym, *X*. According to Lippmann, "until a settlement which results in withdrawal is reached, the Red Army at the center of Europe will control eastern Europe and will threaten western Europe" (quoted in Wagner 1993: 80).[3] Harrison Wagner (ibid.) cites Lippmann's identification of the key cause of the Cold War to give his definition of when it ended: "when Soviet control over Eastern Europe collapsed and the Soviet military threat to Western Europe ceased to be such a pressing concern." William Wohlforth (2011: 445) elaborates on the point and extends the end date a little: "The negotiated settlement of the German Question and the framework agreement on withdrawal of the Red Army from forward positions in Central Europe in 1990 constitute the end of the Cold War." Later, he reiterates the point: "the Cold War did not end at Reykjavik, it did not end with the INF agreement, it did not end because Ronald Reagan or George Bush conceded some fundamental position that had underlay the superpower rivalry. It ended when the Soviet Union credibly agreed to relinquish its military position in the center of Europe" (Wohlforth 2011: 450).

In my view, the December 1988 UN speech marked that end, but for Wohlforth it was the agreement on a unified Germany within NATO (see also Drozdiak 1990). Since Wohlforth and his critics have extensively ploughed the theoretical ground concerning the reunification of Germany and the end of communism in Eastern Europe, I focus on the earlier and closely related event that helped pave the way for the ultimate settlement (Wohlforth 2003; Savranskaya *et al.* 2010).

The event I examine actually constitutes a longer-term process. Well before his December 1988 speech, Gorbachev made his intentions explicit when he

[3] My attention was drawn to Lippmann's article by Wohlforth (2011: 445), who in turn credits Wagner.

told his Politburo colleagues in July 1986: "The methods that were used in Czechoslovakia and Hungary now are no good, they will not work!" At a November 1986 meeting in Moscow with East European leaders, Gorbachev warned them that they could no longer rely on Soviet military intervention to maintain power (Savranskaya 2010: 39). The Berlin Wall fell exactly a year to the day after Gorbachev had ordered his defense ministry to draw up plans for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe in anticipation of his UN speech. Gorbachev knew that the speech would be taken as a renunciation of the "Brezhnev Doctrine" that had arrogated to the Soviet Union the right to intervene militarily to prevent any threats to its understanding of "socialism" on the territory of its Warsaw Pact allies. Half a year before the speech, Gorbachev explained his intentions to Polish leader Wojciech Jaruzelski, whom he later encouraged to hold "roundtable" discussions with the Solidarity movement's Lech Wałęsa and to allow him to come to power when free elections gave his party 99 out of 100 of the seats in a new Polish parliament (*Sejm*). Svetlana Savranskaya reports that at a dinner with Jaruzelski in July 1988 and in a speech to the (unreformed) Sejm that same month "Gorbachev was already speaking explicitly about freedom of choice and non-interference, and how these fit into his grand design for the common European home – almost as if he were rehearsing his forthcoming UN speech" (Savranskaya 2010: 41–42).

Indeed, Gorbachev intended his December 1988 speech to mark the end of the Cold War. As Thomas Blanton (2010: 58) explains, he "sought to create a bookend for the Cold War that had been declared by Winston Churchill in Fulton, Missouri with his 'Iron Curtain' speech" of 1946. He told his advisors he wanted the UN speech to be "an anti-Fulton, Fulton in reverse." Many observers got the message. General Andrew Goodpaster, a former NATO supreme commander and military aide to President Dwight Eisenhower, called the announced reductions "the most significant step since NATO was founded" (Oberdorfer 1992: 319).

"Freedom of choice" and defensive restructuring

There was a precedent for the Soviet unilateral reduction of half a million troops, and it was the military reform carried out by Nikita Khrushchev in the second half of the 1950s. Soviet proponents of the December 1988 reductions had cited the Khrushchev example as inspiration for the Gorbachev initiative. In that respect, tracing the process leading to the 1988 event benefits from

using the earlier events in a cross-case comparison, as Bennett and Checkel advocate in their criterion 7 (this volume, Chapter 1).

A plausible cross-case comparison

Khrushchev's initiative was driven in part by economic concerns, particularly a slowdown in the growth of the workforce and in labor productivity that could be addressed by an influx of demobilized soldiers into the economy (Tiedtke 1985; Tsentral′noe statisticheskoe upravlenie SSSR 1968). By analogy, one could imagine Gorbachev's initiative as stimulated by similar economic concerns – but a process tracing effort would require evidence of the extent to which the concern to cope with economic decline, rather than specific foreign-policy goals, led to the troop-reduction proposal (something not clearly established for the Khrushchev initiatives either). In any event, the Khrushchev–Gorbachev comparison approximates Mill's most-similar design.

A key difference emerges from the comparison. Khrushchev combined his conventional-force reductions with development of the Soviet nuclear and missile arsenals (much as the Eisenhower administration was doing with its "New Look" and nuclearization of NATO) and a policy of bluster and threat intended to deter Western military action and achieve Soviet foreign-policy goals (regarding Berlin, for example). Gorbachev, by contrast, sought to reduce the level of nuclear threat overall and saw the conventional reductions as complementary and contributing to that end. Gorbachev's decision to focus on reducing the most offensively oriented components of his forward-deployed troops (tanks and self-propelled artillery) was deliberately designed to lessen the chances that an outbreak of war would trigger a nuclear response from NATO. It marked a reversal of the Soviet military strategy that stressed a quick offensive to suppress NATO's nuclear forces before they could be launched (Lebow 1985). If a careful study of this comparative case found enough similarities among the "independent variables" – for example, economic conditions, relative military balance, East–West political climate – then one might use Mill's method of difference to account for their different outcomes. The "dependent variable" would be the troop reductions' contribution to ending the Cold War – in this interpretation explained by the different attitudes and policies of the two leaders toward nuclear weapons.[4]

[4] For a more detailed process-tracing exercise comparing these cases, see Evangelista 1999.

Economic decline and the "hoop test"

Given that the main realist accounts stress economic constraints as prompting Soviet military retrenchment, and that ideational and coalition-politics approaches also acknowledge the role of economic concerns, we might say that economic decline easily passes the "hoop test." If there were no evidence that Soviet leaders were concerned about economic conditions, we would exclude that factor from our explanations for the end of the Cold War. But, of course, there is plenty of evidence. The problem is quite the opposite. Dissatisfaction with the state of the Soviet economy and the system of central planning is evident throughout the history of the Soviet Union, reflected in the frequent attempts to reform economic management associated with names such as Evsei Liberman and Nikolai Kosygin during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years. In that regard, to invoke the individual level of analysis, we might say that the person most responsible for the end of the Cold War was Stalin – the one who created the economic system that gave priority to military production through "extensive" mobilization of raw materials and labor, while sowing the seeds of agriculture's ruin through collectivization and allowing light industry and consumer welfare to languish (Kennan 1947: 577–578). Over time, as Jack Snyder's analysis explains, the policies of Stalin's coalition of heavy industrialists, party ideologues, and the military sector gave rise to the counter-coalition that backed Gorbachev, and before him, Georgii Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Kosygin (Snyder 1987).

Without further specificity, the economic explanation takes itself out of the competition for being the best account of the Cold War's end because it passes the hoop test so easily. To adjudicate between economic factors and other explanations, we need to "disaggregate" the economic explanation, by identifying more specific variants that we can evaluate against the existing evidence. William Wohlforth and his co-authors, for example, have stressed the influence of economic "burdens of empire," particularly energy subsidies to the East European allies and the opportunity costs to the USSR of selling its vast supply at below world-market prices. This analysis leads them to conclude that "the Soviet Union's economic crisis was to a significant degree endogenous to the international environment" (Brooks and Wohlforth 2003: 296).[5] Other analysts – by disaggregating the variable of economic burden – disagree

[5] The cost of oil hit a historic low during the Gorbachev years, so the opportunity costs were not as great as they were during the period 1973 to 1985. Thanks to Andrew Bennett for this point.

with Wohlforth's emphasis. Andrew Bennett (2003: 184), for example, argues that "the greatest drag on the Soviet economy was the inefficiency of central planning, the defense burden (even at 20 percent or more of GNP) was a distant second, and the costs of subsidies to the empire were a distant third."

"Breathing spaces" and "smoking guns"

One disaggregated variant of the economic-decline argument, quite popular in the late 1980s, related directly to the motivations for Gorbachev's December 1988 initiative. It suggested that Soviet political and military leaders were united in seeking to improve the Soviet military posture by short-term restraint in the interest of a longer-term competitive advantage. This explanation typically went by the name "breathing space" or "breathing spell." As late as October 1988, Robert Gates, then deputy director of Central Intelligence, was publicly and privately articulating this view (although not using it to explain the end of the Cold War, which he still considered an impossibility). Referring to the Soviet Union, which he had never visited, Gates offered his professional assessment: "The dictatorship of the Communist party remains untouched and untouchable."[6] He claimed that Gorbachev's goal was to use the improved international climate to obtain Western technology for the sake of Soviet military modernization (Beschloss and Talbott 1993: 48). As he wrote in an intelligence assessment a year earlier, "a major purpose of economic modernization – as in Russia in those days of Peter the Great – remains the further increase in Soviet military power and political influence," but for now it needs "a prolonged breathing space" (Gates 2010).

Some studies do suggest that an unfavorable shift in the East–West military–technological balance underlay Gorbachev's reformist policies (Brooks 2005: 102–105). The implication is either that: Gorbachev lost control of the situation after opening his country to the West in the interest of narrow, instrumental military goals; or that he continued seeking Western integration for the sake of Soviet military objectives even at the expense of allowing a reunited Germany to remain in the US-led military alliance.

One could imagine a "smoking gun" test to demonstrate Soviet military support for short-term retrenchment, including quantitative reductions and

[6] In fact, that summer, the 19th Party Conference had agreed to competitive elections with non-party candidates for the new Congress of People's Deputies (Savranskaya 2010: 61). For an ambitious effort to get Gates to visit Moscow, see Stone 1999, ch. 22.

budget cuts in the interest of longer-term qualitative advances to compete better with Western forces. The support would consist of public statements or internal documents where Soviet military officials would make their case to the civilian leadership. This would be an example of what Bennett and Checkel describe in their ninth criterion as a deductive "observable implication" of a claim that Soviet military officers were seeking a breathing space. We would expect to find some combination of cognitive and political causal mechanisms at work – persuasion and lobbying, for instance.

During the 1980s, a number of Western analysts thought this was precisely what was going on. They attributed a position in favor of near-term restraint in the interest of long-term competition to Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, chief of the Soviet general staff (Herspring 1990). As some critics recognized at the time, however, this view was based on a serious misreading of Ogarkov's writings (Parrott 1985; 1988; Phillips and Sands 1988; Snyder 1991; Ogarkov 1985). It was decisively refuted with the appearance of the memoir literature and internal documents recounting how Ogarkov lost his job. He was demoted for clashing with the civilian defense minister Dmitrii Ustinov and insisting on immediate increases in spending for research, development, and production of advanced conventional weapons in the service of a highly offensive strategy for war in Europe (Vorotnikov 1995: 45–48; Taylor 2003: 194–195). No one has yet found a smoking gun of advocacy by Soviet military officials for drastically reducing the military budget, much less thorough-going, market-oriented reforms and an opening to international trade and investment for the sake of rebuilding a high-tech Soviet military machine.

It is not so surprising that evidence of Soviet military support for retrenchment is so scarce. Before Gorbachev began undertaking his reforms, few in the West believed that retrenchment was on the agenda. The argument was widespread that the United States was in decline and that the Soviet Union had caught up and surpassed US military programs in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In 1983, President Reagan argued that:

> For 20 years the Soviet Union has been accumulating enormous military might. They didn't stop when their forces exceeded all requirements of a legitimate defensive capability. And they haven't stopped now . . . There was a time when we were able to offset superior Soviet numbers with higher quality, but today they are building weapons as sophisticated and modern as our own . . . With their present margin of superiority, why should they agree to arms reductions knowing that we were prohibited from catching up? (Reagan 1983)

Two prominent contributors to debates on the end of the Cold War have argued that the fact that people "were not aware of how close the Soviet-type economies were to utter collapse is not evidence that the collapse was not of central importance." They draw an analogy to predicting asteroids. "If, owing to limits on our powers of observation, we fail to foresee an asteroid impact on Earth, this predictive failure would indicate neither that the asteroid did not have an important impact, nor that our theories of astrophysics are flawed" (Brooks and Wohlforth 2003: 281). Thus, they seem to disagree with the editors of this volume who suggest that "theories that emphasize material power and structure require that actors be aware of power differentials and that they circumscribe their behavior when faced with more powerful opponents." In their view, "it is possible to use process tracing to assess power explanations by paying careful attention to sequencing and to what information actors had and when they had it" (Bennett and Checkel, this volume, Chapter 3, pp. XX–XX).

As it turns out, some analysts do argue that the Soviet military saw the asteroid coming and tried to do something about it. Following Bennett and Checkel, we can evaluate their explanations using process tracing. Proponents of the argument that military motives underlay Gorbachev's reforms claim to have found relevant evidence, but it does not come close to passing any reasonable process-tracing standard. William Odom, for example, argues that in the early 1980s: "Party officials throughout the country knew that the economy was in serious trouble, that social problems were acute, and that dramatic action, *particularly reductions in military spending*, was imperative to deal with the impending crises. The officer corps shared this view with party conservatives and reformers alike" (Odom 1998: 91 [emphasis added]).

Such an account, if true, would seriously undermine an explanation for the Gorbachev reforms that saw them stemming from "the natural constituency for reform, the well-educated urban middle class," intent on "breaking the fetters of the old mode of production," and seeking "to justify a shift in domestic arrangements away from the military industrial complex, central planning and obsessive secrecy," yet facing "resistance from the old-school military-industrial and ideological elites" (Snyder 2011: 563–564). In Odom's account, there is no such struggle between competing coalitions. Everyone is on the same page, in favor of retrenchment and reductions in military spending. And here is Odom's evidence: "Nine former Soviet officers, ranging from Marshal Yevgenii Shaposhnikov to a dissident lieutenant colonel, Aleksandr Rodin, said in retrospect that they believed at the time that the economy was in serious trouble and something had to be done about it, including significant

cuts in military spending" (Odom 1998: 91, citing interviews from June and July 1995).

Absence of evidence as evidence of absence

From evidence of this quality, Odom (1998: 392) draws the conclusion that the military competition and pressure from the United States "contributed enormously to the economic and political climate that allowed Gorbachev to follow the new course he did." The mechanism associated with this explanation appears to mix cognitive and political elements. US policies put pressure on the Soviet economy. Military officers recognized that the struggling economy would provide a poor basis for defense, and therefore advocated reform and reductions in the military budget. They prevailed upon the party and government leaders to undertake the reforms. For such an argument, Odom's claim that the "officer corps shared this view with party conservatives and reformers alike" seems important. One wonders, though, whether the "absence of evidence" beyond nine retrospective interviews constitutes "evidence of absence" of genuine military support for the liberalizing reforms that entailed reducing the priority accorded to the military sector in the Soviet economy. If so, the economic-decline/breathing-space argument would be weakened vis-à-vis, for example, the political-coalition explanation for the end of the Cold War. The latter explanation makes a deductive assumption that the liberal supporters of Gorbachev's "new thinking" reforms would face opposition from old-thinking hardliners who populated the military-industrial sector and the party apparatus. That explanation would benefit from evidence of such opposition to reform – but it would also benefit from evidence of *absence* of support from the presumed opponents of reform.

I also interviewed Marshal Shaposhnikov (and others) in the mid-1990s, some months before Odom did. Shaposhnikov had served as head of the Soviet Air Forces and then Minister of Defense in 1991. I explicitly asked him whether US military-technological advances had induced the Soviet military to support *perestroika* and Gorbachev in the interest of a breathing space. He replied with a joke: "What do militarists and generals' wives have in common? A common enemy: disarmament and détente."[7] In other words, Soviet military officers were more concerned about the negative effects of Gorbachev's

[7] I posed the question in the context of an informal, small-group discussion at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, October 18, 1994.

policies on their own careers and families – lower military budgets leading to the loss of their jobs – than to any long-term benefits to Soviet military technology some time in the distant future.

At this point on the evidentiary level, we would seem to be left with dueling interviews that fail to resolve a matter of equifinality, or the possibility that alternative causal pathways may lead to the same outcome (Bennett and Checkel, this volume, Chapter 3, p. X). Both the claim that the reformers and the officer corps saw eye to eye on the need for retrenchment and the counter-claim that the reformers carried out retrenchment in the face of stiff opposition yield the same "dependent variable" – retrenchment. As our editors remind us, the absence of evidence does not necessarily mean the evidence of absence. Yet, with the advent to power of Mikhail Gorbachev, surely reform-oriented military officers would have had an incentive to make their views known – especially if those views constituted the most sensible response to external pressures. As Jacobs argues elsewhere in this volume, processes of political competition tend to select for actors who hold ideas that dovetail with the other exogenous, material influences on choice (Jacobs, this volume, Chapter 2, pp. XX–XX). In May 1987, after an amateur West German pilot managed to fly unhindered all the way to Red Square, Gorbachev reached down into the ranks to choose Dmitrii Iazov to replace Sergei Sokolov as his defense minister. We now know that Gorbachev misjudged Iazov's reformist sympathies, given the latter's subsequent opposition to Soviet disarmament initiatives.[8] The absence of evidence of other high-level military officers ready to cut the military budget to win Gorbachev's favor or provide a breathing space strongly suggests that there were none. Otherwise, the processes of political competition – even in an authoritarian polity – should have revealed them.

Observable implications of deductive hypotheses

Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth (2003: 298) have suggested that identifying disagreements on policy of the sort associated with domestic-coalition theories is beside the point. Highlighting a "lack of consensus," they write, "reflects a preoccupation with a different explanatory problem" from trying to account for the end of the Cold War – "namely, accounting for the specific

[8] A contemporaneous assessment of Soviet civilian and military views found military leaders publicly endorsing Gorbachev's call for reductions, but only in a multilateral, negotiated framework – whereas civilians were open to unilateral cuts. Most military officials – including Iazov – opposed a predominantly defense-oriented force structure; Phillips and Sands 1988.

details of individual decisions." "We do not claim," they write, "to account for each microanalytical decision or bargaining position adopted during the Cold War endgame." Moreover, they claim there are no "theoretical reasons to expect a consensus over the reorientation of Soviet foreign policy" (ibid.: 297).

For our purposes, however, seeking to explain "microanalytical" decisions is precisely how process tracing examines the deductive observable implications of hypothesized mechanisms (Bennett and Checkel, this volume, Chapter 3, p. XX). And there are indeed "theoretical reasons to expect a consensus" in the making of foreign policy – or, at least, that would seem an implication flowing from the deductive assumption of one particular school of thought: realism. One of realism's core assumptions is that states can be modeled as unitary, rational actors (Grieco 1997: 164–166). Even authors who identify disagreements between two particular forms of realism – "neorealism" and "post-classical realism" – find little disagreement on this score: "both have a systemic focus; both are state-centric; both view international politics as inherently competitive; both emphasize material factors, rather than nonmaterial factors, such as ideas and institutions; and both assume states are egoistic actors that pursue self-help" (Brooks 1997: 446). On matters of national security, most realists posit that there are no meaningful differences at the domestic political level, arguing, with Stephen Krasner, that "it could be assumed that all groups in society would support the preservation of territorial and political integrity." In the "strategic arena," the state's "preferences are not likely to diverge from those of individual societal groups" (Krasner 1978: 70, 329).

So it does serve our explanatory purpose – especially adjudicating between realist and domestic-coalition accounts – to inquire into the relative degrees of support for Gorbachev's initiatives, and to ask which institutional actors favored which policy alternatives, as the competing theories make different predictions on these issues. An important distinction between the military reforms and the reductions announced in December 1988 and the earlier Khrushchev case is Gorbachev's focus on *defensive restructuring* of the Soviet armed forces to reduce their offensive capability. This was the military manifestation of the political decision to allow "freedom of choice" for the Eastern bloc countries. This political dimension was not always apparent to observers at the time, leading to explanations that favored material factors associated with realism. Some analysts maintained, for example, that the specifics of the force reductions and restructuring announced by Gorbachev at the United Nations were dictated by military needs and a heightened appreciation of defensive operations over offense. As one specialist put it, "few Westerners realize that new military technologies – first nuclear and then

conventional – compelled Soviet force planners to reevaluate the role of the defense long before the arrival of Gorbachev" (FitzGerald 1989: 15; Sapir and Malleret 1990). If this is so, we would expect the domestic-coalition explanation to suffer: it does not deductively anticipate "Soviet force planners" to be members of the reformist coalition.

Evidence supporting such an interpretation of army-inspired reform would include Soviet military analyses – predating the December 1988 speech – that criticized overemphasis on offense and proposed the sorts of restructuring announced by Gorbachev. "Smoking gun" evidence would include an actual plan from the Ministry of Defense upon which the UN speech was based.

When there is enough data: process-tracing lite

There is no such plan and no smoking gun affirming the Soviet military's role in initiating this reform. On the contrary, enough of the paper trail is available to show that the initiative came from the civilian side of Gorbachev's administration (and outside of it) and the military was tasked only with implementation of the reforms. This particular issue is well suited for addressing the questions raised in the introduction by Bennett and Checkel on how far down to go in gathering detailed evidence (this volume, pp. XX–XX). We know, for example, from his own admission, that Sergei Akhromeev, Ogarkov's deputy and then successor as chief of the General Staff, defended the marshal's views on warfare in Europe to Gorbachev, including their offensive orientation (Akhromeev and Kornienko 1992: 65–67). In April 1988, the Soviet Foreign Ministry commissioned an academic institution, the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (known by its Russian acronym, IMEMO), to formulate a proposal for conventional-force reductions. The IMEMO team invited the Defense Ministry to send representatives, but it declined.[9]

In July 1988, Gorbachev instructed the General Staff to draw up a plan for a major cut in conventional forces. The study examined the possibility of reductions in the range of 300,000 to 700,000 troops in the context of multilateral negotiations, whereas the civilians favored unilateral cuts on the order of a million troops and a thorough-going defensive restructuring (Oberdorfer 1992: 319; Akhromeev and Kornienko 1992: 212).[10] On November 9, 1988,

[9] Author's interview with Gennadii Koloskov, IMEMO staff member, Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 19, 1990. IMEMO is a major focus of Checkel 1997.

[10] Aleksei Arbatov, interview with author, Washington, DC, June 10, 1991.

the Soviet defense council, chaired by Gorbachev, ordered the Defense Ministry to prepare a plan for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe.[11] Armed with the IMEMO/Foreign Ministry proposal for unilateral reductions and defensive restructuring and the General Staff's implementation plan, Gorbachev presented the initiative to his colleagues in the leadership, pretty much at the last minute according to long-time Soviet ambassador to the United States and then Central Committee secretary for international affairs Anatolii Dobrynin (1995: 626).

For our purposes, two components of Gorbachev's resulting December 7 UN speech demand the most attention. The political component announced a rejection of class struggle as the basis of international relations in favor of an appreciation for diversity of political forms captured in the term "freedom of choice" – applied explicitly to the socialist bloc as "a universal principle to which there should be no exceptions." The military component announced the unilateral reduction of half a million troops and a restructuring of the remaining forces to remove the elements most suited to a rapid offensive invasion (Gorbachev 1988b). The combination of the two components implied that the countries of Eastern Europe could pursue their own political destiny without fear of Soviet invasion.

As presented here, the process tracing exercise leading to Gorbachev's speech followed a simple chronological approach, one attentive to which actors – identified as theoretically relevant – were doing what and when. The civilian reformers took the initiative to put forward proposals. The top leader accepted the proposals and issued orders to the military to implement them. He then secured a pro forma approval from his fellow leaders at the last minute and made the public announcement of his initiative.

Maybe that would be enough "data" to satisfy political-science requirements of process tracing. The exercise seems to demonstrate that the military were not behind the initiative, even though "objectively" there was no need for so many troops in Europe, given the prospect that nuclear deterrence could maintain Soviet security, and a breathing space could provide the possibility of stronger, more technically advanced Soviet forces in the future. That "new thinkers" in the Foreign Ministry and civilian academics (representatives of the intelligentsia) promoted the initiative, and Gorbachev kept it secret from his more conservative Politburo colleagues (representatives of the KGB, the military-industrial sector, and other traditional constituencies), lends support to an explanation focused on divergent political coalitions.

[11] Politburo meeting, minutes, December 27, 1988, published in *Istochnik* 1993.

Process tracing further back: avoiding "just so" stories

Nevertheless expanding the investigation temporally – and remaining "open to inductive insights," as our editors recommend in their eighth criterion – allow for the accumulation of more evidence that might help to evaluate these explanations further, together with others that have received less attention so far (see also Jacobs, this volume, Chapter 2). For example, examining the intellectual provenance of "freedom of choice" has taken Robert English (2000) back to the 1950s and 1960s, when many of the people who became Gorbachev's advisors were influenced by their interactions with socialists from Eastern Europe and elsewhere and the intellectual currents associated with concepts such as interdependence and globalization. English's book-length process-tracing exercise brings to the fore ideational factors that tend to line up with the more instrumental use of ideas in Snyder's political-coalition approach. Criticizing realists for their economic determinism, English downplays what he calls "arguments from hindsight – reading a near-desperate 'necessity' back into 1985 from the disintegration that came in 1991." On the contrary, "the anti-isolationist, globalist, social democratic-leaning intellectual current that provided the crucial soil for particular reformist policies was fertilized in the optimistic late 1950s and 1960s, not the crisis-ridden late 1970s" (English 2003: 245, 269).

Realists might find such an intellectual excursion superfluous. For them, key concepts, such as the "security dilemma" – developed by Robert Jervis – could have predicted the Soviet behavior announced on December 7, 1988 (Wohlforth 2011: 445). In fact, Gorbachev and his advisors read quite a lot and listened to people who espoused concepts similar to the insights provided by Jervis. But the provenance was different. Tracing the military component of the December 1988 announcement back in time reveals roots in a transnational community of US arms control activists and European peace researchers who introduced the concept of defensive restructuring into the Soviet debate. They made common cause with Soviet civilian analysts and a few retired military officers – mainly working at academic institutions – interested in uncovering a Soviet military tradition of defense and inspired by Khrushchev's example of unilateral reductions.[12] Important

[12] For the pre-Gorbachev period, see three articles by Shenfield (1984a; 1984b; 1985). For the reconstruction of a Soviet defensive tradition, see Kokoshin (1988), Kokoshin and Larionov (1987), and Kokoshin and Lobov (1990).

foreign influences included Anders Boserup, the Danish physicist and theoretician of "non-offensive defense," and a number of German specialists working on detailed technical proposals for what they called *strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit* – structural inability to attack (Ströber-Fassbender 1988). Particularly influential were ideas promoted mainly in social-democratic circles in West Germany and Scandinavia and reflected in the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, directed by former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. The Palme Commission, on which a couple of reform-oriented Soviet academic and retired military figures served, produced a report called "Common Security," which helped to introduce that concept into the Soviet political discourse (Risse-Kappen 1994; Risse 2011).

Calling attention to the role of the Palme Commission helps to address another popular explanation for the Soviet peaceful withdrawal from Eastern Europe, foreshadowed by Gorbachev's 1988 speech. Scholars representing many otherwise conflicting theoretical orientations typically agree that *nuclear weapons* played an important role. Once the Soviet Union achieved nuclear parity with the United States, the argument goes, the importance of Eastern Europe as a buffer zone lost its significance. Soviet security was assured by the threat of nuclear retaliation against any attack (Oye 1995; Deudney and Ikenberry 2011b). Process tracing the December 1988 initiative renders this explanation problematic. Multiple sources confirm that what Gorbachev found attractive about defensive restructuring was the prospect that it would *diminish* the nuclear threat for both sides ("common security") and enhance the prospects for nuclear *disarmament*. His allergy to nuclear weapons is one of his best-known characteristics – one that, significantly, he shared with Ronald Reagan. The Palme Commission and like-minded US and European researchers stressed the need to reduce conventional forces – and particularly to make disproportionate cuts in the offensively oriented Soviet army – as a prerequisite for the nuclear initiatives they favored, including a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe (Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues 1982; Forsberg 1985).

Soviet researchers picked up on these ideas, developed them in their own studies, and arranged for their Western colleagues to travel to Moscow and meet high-level reformers, including Gorbachev himself, to promote specific initiatives (Institut mirovoi ekonomiki i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii 1987: 190–191, 202–206, 218–224; Forsberg 1981a; 1981b; 1987; 1989; Gorbachev 1988a). If Gorbachev had been reading Jervis rather than listening to the peace researchers, he would have been more sympathetic to the importance of a secure, "second-strike" retaliatory posture as Jervis's preferred way of dealing

with the implications of nuclear weapons for the security dilemma. Instead, Gorbachev favored disarmament.

Gorbachev had already set himself the goal of nuclear disarmament long before the December 1988 speech. His first major foreign-policy initiative upon becoming Soviet leader in March 1985 was to impose a unilateral moratorium on Soviet nuclear testing, one that he extended multiple times during more than a year-and-a-half, even as the United States refused to join it. In January 1986, Gorbachev launched a plan to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Few took it seriously at the time, but, as Robert English (2003: 256) points out, Gorbachev's plan "pointed the way toward precisely the agreements later reached" – including the complete elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles, a 50 percent reduction in strategic forces, and major cuts in conventional forces.[13]

Gorbachev was not a big believer in nuclear deterrence. At least he did not value it enough to prefer it over nuclear disarmament. That is why the Reykjavik summit meeting with Ronald Reagan made such an impression on him. A story from Reagan's Secretary of State George Shultz makes the point:

> I recall meeting with Gorbachev after we both had left office. He came to my house on the Stanford campus and we sat in the backyard talking over what had taken place and where the world was going. I said to him, "When you and I entered office, the cold war was about as cold as it could get, and when we left, it was basically over. What do you think was the turning point?" He did not hesitate. "Reykjavik," he said. (Shultz 2007: xxiii–xxiv)

The Reykjavik summit of October 1986 was the occasion when both Gorbachev and Reagan publicly expressed support for a nuclear-free world and came close to negotiating the complete elimination of nuclear-armed missiles. Reagan recognized the effect that their mutual antipathy toward nuclear weapons had on Gorbachev. "I might have helped him see that the Soviet Union had less to fear from the West than he thought, and that the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe wasn't needed for the security of the Soviet Union" (Reagan 1992: 708). Anatolii Cherniaev, Gorbachev's main foreign policy aide, took Reagan's profession of the West's goodwill to heart more than anyone. In May 1990, he reassured Gorbachev that it would be safe to withdraw Soviet forces from Europe, for "no one will attack us even if we disarm totally."[14]

[13] For an analysis that did recognize the seriousness of Gorbachev's proposal, see Evangelista (1986).
[14] Anatolii Cherniaev, memorandum to Gorbachev, May 4, 1990, quoted in Savranskaya 2010: 17.

Process tracing further back still: policy windows remain open

Thus, process tracing back several years before the December 1988 speech and the later decisions to withdraw Soviet armed forces from Eastern Europe highlights other variables – such as the level of trust between the leaders and the importance of their shared commitment to nuclear disarmament – that might otherwise be missed.[15] Much of Gorbachev's foreign-policy orientation – including his nuclear allergy and his commitment to *glasnost* and transparency – comes into clearer focus if we consider the catastrophic nuclear explosion and fire at the Chernobyl plant in April 1986 in Ukraine, which "cost thousands of lives and billions of rubles," thus contributing to Soviet economic woes that only worsened over time. Yet, as Robert English (2003: 260) suggests, "its cognitive impact was still greater. Chernobyl absolutely consumed the Politburo for three months."

For the purposes of a process-tracing exercise, Chernobyl provided a "policy window" of the sort that explanations blending ideas and political coalitions would recognize (Checkel 1997). Gorbachev and his supporters used the tragedy to prolong the unilateral Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing against plainly evident domestic opposition in August 1986, for example, and to push through an agreement in September at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe to allow on-site "challenge" inspections – an unprecedented concession in the history of East–West arms control (Evangelista 1999).

Chernobyl also sheds light on the relevance of theories that link cognitive change to new ideas. Marshal Sergei Akhromeev, somewhat of a skeptic on Gorbachev's ambitious anti-nuclear initiatives, recalled the impact the nuclear explosion had on him personally – "imprinted in my memory like the start of the war with fascist Germany on 22 June 1941." He considered the event a turning point: "After Chernobyl . . . people began to regard all problems connected with nuclear weapons much differently" (Akhromeev and Kornienko 1992: 98–99). Responding to Akhromeev's remark, Robert English points out that "unlike Hitler's sudden and devastating strike of 1941, whose enduring lesson was to build up forces and heighten vigilance, Chernobyl's message was the opposite; traditional military principles such as surprise, superiority, and

[15] On the issue of trust, see Bennett (2003), whose attention to process tracing and competing explanations could merit the chapter a place in this volume.

even parity lost meaning when even a small reactor accident could wreak such havoc" (English 2000: 216).

As late as May 1988 – over two years after the accident – US Secretary of State George Shultz reported that he was "struck by how deeply affected Gorbachev appeared to be by the Chernobyl accident," when he and Reagan and their spouses spent an evening at the Gorbachev's dacha at the conclusion of a summit meeting in Moscow: "It was obvious from that evening that Chernobyl has left a strong anti-nuclear streak in Gorbachev's thinking" (quoted in Reagan 1992: 710–711). This was precisely the time when Gorbachev was drawing on the Foreign Ministry's proposal for unilateral conventional cuts, justifying it in part as a means to reduce the nuclear danger.

Process tracing forward: unitary actors exit the stage

Going back some years before the event one seeks to explain through process tracing reveals evident benefits in identifying important explanatory factors that might otherwise be missed. The same goes for looking into the future beyond the immediate event. Explanations founded on a unitary-actor assumption of state behavior would not expect problems of implementation of a decision once it is made. Explanations that describe the dependent variable as "why the Cold War ended peacefully on largely Western terms" (Brooks and Wohlforth 2003: 298) neglect Soviet initiatives that differed from or were orthogonal to what the United States and its NATO allies preferred. Yet, the period after December 1988 witnessed both developments, and they shed light on explanations for the end of the Cold War.

Opposition to Gorbachev's initiative emerged immediately in the wake of the UN speech. A senior aide to Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze complained that "the unilateral cutbacks were the most difficult issue the diplomats had ever faced with the military, even more touchy than the problems of nuclear arms reductions" (Oberdorfer 1992: 319). On December 27, Gorbachev convened the Politburo to get its formal endorsement of his disarmament plan. Shevardnadze took the occasion to accuse Dmitrii Iazov, the defense minister, of conspiring to thwart Gorbachev's objectives. The military's position, he argued, "directly contradicts what was said from the tribune" by Gorbachev at the United Nations. "I have in mind the formulation of the defense ministry that the troops remaining on the territory of the socialist countries after the reductions will be given a 'large' – and, I stress – 'large' defensive 'orientation' [*napravelenie*]. These are only

words, but they have principled significance. Comrade Gorbachev spoke of giving these forces a different, exclusively [*odnoznachno*] defensive structure."

The difference between the two formulations, argued Shevardnadze, was "large and important," especially given that the West would be following every subsequent move taken by the Soviets. Now the Defense Ministry "is proposing to speak not about structure but about some abstract orientation." Shevardnadze insisted that the reductions be carried out exactly in the spirit intended by Gorbachev, with maximum openness and publicity (*glasnost*), both toward the West and toward the new Soviet Congress of People's Deputies that was intended for the first time to submit the Soviet military budget to democratic scrutiny.[16]

Shevardnadze had good reason to be concerned. In his response to the foreign minister's accusations, Defense Minister Iazov explained that the army planned to bring about the "defensive orientation" simply by withdrawing tanks, as Gorbachev announced at the United Nations. Tank regiments would be removed from the larger tank divisions deployed with the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, but within those divisions the motorized rifle regiments – with considerable offensive potential themselves – would remain. This was an augur of worse to come.

Gorbachev charged ahead with his attempt to create the "common European home" that he envisioned, demilitarized and denuclearized, and working toward what his foreign minister hoped would become "a unified economic, legal, humanitarian, cultural, and ecological space" (Savranskaya 2010: 45). His initiatives in this respect reveal the normative, ideational, and personal factors that a calculating instrumental approach hides. That approach holds that systemic constraints obliged Gorbachev to "acquiesce to western terms for the post-war settlement" (Wohlforth 2011: 445) in order to reduce the burden of supporting allies, to obtain financial credits, and to reap the supposed benefits of integration with the international economy (which in the event led post-Soviet Russia to suffer a 50 percent decline in its gross national product).

If acquiescing to Western terms was key to achieving Gorbachev's goals, why did he insist on doing things such as announcing the unilateral withdrawal of 500 tactical nuclear weapons from Eastern Europe at his first meeting with US Secretary of State James Baker in May 1989? President Bush and his national security advisor Brent Scowcroft "saw the event almost purely in terms of upstaging Baker and blindsiding him" (Blanton 2010: 69).

[16] Politburo meeting, minutes, December 27, 1988 (note 9), 137–138.

But Gorbachev was fixated on his normative goal of a nuclear-free world. This is a case that seems to fit Bennett and Checkel's requirement that "theories about norms – a form of social structure – need to show that norms prevented actors from doing things they otherwise would have done" (this volume, p. X). A materialist theory would have Gorbachev do the minimum necessary to cash in on his surrender to the West. Gorbachev's normative concerns outweighed a more practical approach.

The cautious Bush administration would have been pleased had Gorbachev acquiesced to business as usual in European security – allowing the United States to upgrade its Lance missiles in West Germany, agreeing on token reductions under the auspices of the negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. But the Soviet leader had grander ambitions. He proposed a new forum that would entail serious reductions in military forces on both sides. Shevardnadze, at the opening session of the talks on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), claimed that the progress in disarmament had already "shaken the iron curtain, weakened its rusting foundations, pierced new openings, accelerated its corrosion." He proposed the withdrawal of all tactical nuclear weapons from Europe – something the United States eventually did on a unilateral basis in 1991, leaving only a couple of hundred out of what had amounted to some 7,000 at their peak (Blanton 2010: 63).

The opponents of Shevardnadze and Gorbachev were unenthusiastic about the CFE treaty for the same reason the foreign minister and his boss liked it (Baklanov 1991a; 1991b). In early 1990, a journalist close to the communist old guard and military hardliners wrote that "the sentimental theory of 'our common European home' has brought about the collapse of Eastern Europe's communist parties, a change in the state structures, and imminent reunification of the two Germanys" (Prokhanov 1990). The growing democratization of Soviet society and the open debates in the Congress of People's Deputies sharpened the division between liberal anti-militarists and the stalwarts of the traditional military-industrial sector highlighted in Jack Snyder's (2011) analysis. The situation became increasingly polarized, with military officers explicitly challenging the interference and competence of civilian reformers (Volkov 1989; Kirilenko 1990; Liubimov 1989; Moiseev 1989). The military diatribes in turn provoked Georgii Arbatov (1990), a usually cautious senior foreign policy analyst, to launch a direct attack against the military's priorities in a popular-magazine article he entitled "The Army for the Country, or the Country for the Army?" Evidence of the extent to which the political coalitions Snyder had identified were clearly aligned against each other was apparent in another widely circulated article; it expressed concern that too-

rapid attempts to impose civilian control on the erstwhile privileged military sector of Soviet society might provoke a dangerous backlash (Snyder and Kortunov 1989).[17]

Military officials' unhappiness with Gorbachev's arms control agreements resulted in an attempt to undermine the CFE Treaty or at least reinterpret it in their favor. First, in the weeks prior to the signing of the Treaty in November 1990, the Soviet military moved enormous stocks of weapons and equipment out of the "Atlantic-to-the-Urals" area covered by the Treaty, thereby reducing the amount liable for reduction. Second, Soviet negotiators, relying on data supplied by their military representatives, provided figures for the amount of equipment subject to reduction that were much lower than Western assessments. Third, and most serious, the Soviet military reassigned three ground-forces divisions from the army to the navy in order to escape treaty limitations and claimed that four "naval infantry" or marine regiments were also exempt (*Sovetskaia Rossiia*, January 9, 1991, cited in Gelman 1992: 39). As one analyst has described, these actions threatened to open "a massive loophole in the treaty's numerical limits: the Soviets claimed, in essence, that a unit could be exempted from CFE limitation simply by giving the navy titular authority over it" (Falkenrath 1995: 132).

It seems certain that these initiatives were taken by the Soviet military without the knowledge of the civilian authorities. Soviet negotiators apparently learned for the first time of the magnitude of the withdrawal of equipment from Europe from their Western counterparts in September 1990. Shevardnadze (1991) described his position in an interview: "The transfer of huge quantities of equipment to areas beyond the Urals created an awkward situation in our relations with partners . . . I as Foreign Minister was presented with a fait accompli." As one observer has pointed out, "there is some reason to believe that this embarrassing revelation – or, more precisely, his indignation at having been lied to by his own military – contributed to Shevardnadze's decision to resign two weeks later" (Falkenrath 1995: 130).

On the other side of the barricades, Marshal Akhromeev was going through similar turmoil. Contrary to the breathing-space or unitary-actor approaches, Akhromeev was not a key figure in promoting Soviet disarmament initiatives. Much of the time, he was frozen out of discussions related to military reform. "Not once in my memory," wrote Akhromeev in his memoirs, "did M. S. Gorbachev thoroughly discuss with the military leadership the military-political situation in Europe and perspectives on its development

[17] This evidence might be slightly contaminated by Snyder's co-authorship, however.

during 1986–1988." Only "in relation to concrete decisions already taken did the military introduce proposals concerning the armed forces" (Akhromeev and Kornienko 1992: 70–72). In his own memoirs, Gorbachev (1995b: 13) flatly states that the Ministry of Defense never once proposed reductions in forces or the production of weapons. Akhromeev reports that Gorbachev repeatedly insisted that the military give up its monopoly on analysis of security affairs: "We value your opinion as professionals, as theoreticians and practitioners of military affairs," argued Gorbachev, "But you, as the interested parties, try to arrange things so that the problem gets resolved the way you propose. Let's listen to the opinions of others, including politicians and scholars." Akhromeev agreed "in principle," but he sincerely believed that the military "as the people responsible for the country's defense, were the most competent in these matters" (Akhromeev and Kornienko 1992: 70–72).

Akhromeev suggests that Gorbachev knew what kind of reaction he would receive from the military if he forthrightly revealed his proposals for reductions, retrenchment, and restructuring. Gorbachev's policy would have been recognized as a radical break with "the entire understanding by the military leadership of the essence of the country's defense capability in Europe." Withdrawal from Eastern Europe meant giving up "that which had been won at a cost of enormous amounts of blood and millions of lives" (Akhromeev and Kornienko 1992: 72). In an interview conducted four years after the marshal's death, his wife Tamara Vasil'evna summarized the sources of her husband's resistance to Gorbachev's reforms: "Sergei Fedorovich [Akhromeev] understood that Gorbachev's policy would lead to the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, the whole system of security in Europe. He considered his participation in the creation [of that system] his life's work . . . Having left the General Staff, he couldn't work as Gorbachev's adviser for very long. He wrote several letters of resignation" (Akhromeeva 1995: 16–17).

Akhromeev carried out the ultimate act of insubordination when he involved himself with other key national security figures – including Defense Minister Dmitrii Iazov and KGB chief Vladimir Kriuchkov – in the unsuccessful coup against Gorbachev in August 1991. When it failed in the face of resistance from Russian President Boris Yeltsin and thousands of mobilized citizens, the other plotters went to jail. Akhromeev committed suicide.

Realist accounts insist that there was simply no alternative to the policies pursued by Gorbachev. If his opponents were unhappy enough to kill themselves, that only reinforced the fact that there was no way out. But, as Savranskaya (2010: 45) reminds us, "during the second half of the 1980s the USSR still had the capability to dominate its allies militarily; even in 1990

several hundred thousand troops remained in Eastern Europe." Robert Zoellick, a top State Department aide to James Baker, explained at the time that "the presence of 380,000 Soviet troops in the GDR was means enough for obstruction" (quoted in Sarotte 2009: 125). The would-be putschists were certainly obstruction-minded when it came to Gorbachev's policy on Germany. If they had been able to convince Gorbachev to implement their own preferences – say, simply by leaving Soviet troops in East Germany – they would have undermined Gorbachev's hopes for integrating the Soviet economy into the global market system and reaping whatever benefits it had to offer. But a successful coup would have yielded the same result even quicker. Clearly, the opponents of *perestroika* and "new thinking" had different priorities from its supporters – a conclusion that supports both the "ideas" approach associated with English (2000) and Checkel (1997) and the domestic-coalition approach favored by Snyder (2011).

Process tracing further forward: uncovering revealed preferences

Brooks and Wohlforth (2003: 299) acknowledge reluctance among some of the more conservative members of the Politburo, such as Yegor Ligachev, to weaken Soviet military might in the interest of retrenchment, but they deem such preferences quixotic under the circumstances. The way in which they make their point is revealing: "Ligachev wanted to slash defense outlays without reducing military capabilities. Doubtless Gorbachev would have loved to have been able to do this. What leader wouldn't?" This assumption about Gorbachev's own preferences points up the limits of the realist approach. Every serious account of Gorbachev's personality and background stresses that he was not an enthusiast of Soviet military power. From his 1969 visit to Czechoslovakia in the wake of the Soviet invasion, if not earlier (given how his family and hometown suffered during World War II), Gorbachev harbored clear anti-militarist tendencies that he managed to hide just long enough to get elected General Secretary (Bennett 2003; Brown 1996; 2007; English 2000; Zubok 2003). They provided a key impetus to his foreign policy and explain many initiatives that are hard to understand from the standpoint of a rational cost-benefit calculus (such as nuclear test moratoria or unilateral withdrawals of missiles that put Soviet "partners" in a difficult position, but saved little money).

A useful counterfactual experiment would be to wonder what Gorbachev would have done had the Soviet Union during his tenure as leader benefited

from the high oil prices that Vladimir Putin's Russia subsequently enjoyed, or (less plausibly) if his domestic reforms had brought economic growth and prosperity. He probably would have been in less of a hurry to "off-load" the burden of the East European subsidies, but would he have been satisfied with a status quo that kept the likes of Erich Honecker and Gustáv Husák in power and maintained history's highest concentration of conventional and nuclear weaponry on the Soviet doorstep in Central Europe? If the East Europeans had sought to leave the Warsaw Pact, would a Gorbachev-led USSR, rich in oil money and/or with a vigorous reformed economy, have used military force to prevent them? The economic costs that the realists cite for Soviet non-use of force in 1989 to 1990 – Western refusal to allow Soviet integration into the global market in the wake of an invasion – would not have served as a deterrent. Still, it would be hard to imagine Gorbachev wielding the military instrument under such circumstances. A counterfactual thought experiment of this type highlights the elements of an explanation that stress Gorbachev's ideational commitments and personality.

Another element of Gorbachev's personality which is hard for realists to understand is how much he was concerned for the well-being of ordinary Soviet citizens. His preoccupation about the relative economic performance of the Soviet Union and the West was not founded primarily on worries about the security implications, as the "breathing space" arguments hold. Gorbachev traveled widely in Western Europe, not only in his professional capacity, but also on vacations with his wife, Raisa Maksimovna. He admired the reform communists of Italy and the social democrats of West Germany, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries, and was impressed by their societies' ability to provide a high level of material welfare. "Why do we live worse than other developed countries?" he asked himself during his foreign trips (Gorbachev 1995a: 165; Lévesque 1997; Rubbi 1990).

Many observers still believe that Gorbachev was mainly motivated by an interest in maintaining the Soviet Union's international status as a superpower under the terms established by the Cold War. Retrenchment was the necessary approach in order for the Soviet Union to re-emerge as the worthy rival of the United States in a bipolar world. Retrenchment dictated "freedom of choice" in Eastern Europe and the withdrawal of Soviet armed forces. Missing from this interpretation is Gorbachev's antipathy to things military and his concern for popular welfare as motives for his reforms. Our editors make good suggestions for how to uncover "revealed preferences" – by comparing public statements to private ones and giving "spontaneous and unplanned statements more weight than planned statements as

indicators of genuine beliefs" (Bennett and Checkel, this volume, Chapter 3, p. XX; see also Jacobs, this volume, Chapter 2). This technique works rather well in surfacing Gorbachev's concerns in the face of the deteriorating economic situation in Eastern Europe. In March 1989, for example, Gorbachev met with the Soviet ambassadors to the Eastern European allies, nearly all in an advanced state of turmoil. This group of officials "traditionally consisted of party functionaries picked for their ideological correctness rather than their diplomatic skills," and many were outspoken critics of Gorbachev's conciliatory approach.

This would have been an audience potentially receptive to a case for retrenchment in the interest of long-term Soviet military power. Yet, in evidently impromptu remarks, Gorbachev did not mention this factor at all. Certainly, he complained about the burden of the subsidies to the ungrateful allies – but mainly out of a sense of injustice and resentment: "There is 100 kilograms of meat per capita in the GDR. And they continue to demand raw materials for special prices. This is solidarity! They could not care less about our problems and difficulties . . . They resell the specially priced resources they get from us to the West for hard currency. Such is their reciprocity!" The ambassadors might also have welcomed some indication of Soviet willingness to use force to intimidate the proponents of democratic change. Yet, Gorbachev insisted: "We are excluding the possibility of bloody methods." His bottom line was the importance of *perestroika* at home. "We, the Soviet Union need *perestroika*. We must find a new kind of society with it. We can no longer tolerate the situation our people find themselves in now. *Perestroika* is vitally important to us . . . We need *perestroika*. The people deserve it."[18]

Conclusion: process tracing all the way down

The extensive range of theories brought to bear to explain the end of the Cold War, and the fact that the topic has continued to engage scholars for more than twenty years, belie early claims that the event constitutes "a mere data point" that could not serve to test or develop theories of international politics.[19] The first claim made by this chapter is that the "event" of the Cold War

[18] Notes of Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Soviet ambassadors to socialist countries, March 3, 1989, in Savranskaya *et al.* 2010: 414–417. The characterization of the ambassadors is Savranskaya's.

[19] Robert Keohane, quoted anonymously in Lebow 1994.

is made up of many events, and therefore many possible data points. The second claim is that process tracing is a useful method for evaluating the competing theoretical explanations. The third claim, consistent with the volume editors' expectations, is that evaluating explanations entails identifying their underlying mechanisms and their observable implications. This effort reveals, again as the editors expected, that several mechanisms can account for the same events – the problem of equifinality.

A close examination of one particular key event in the end of the Cold War – Mikhail Gorbachev's 1988 declaration of "freedom of choice" for the states of Eastern Europe and the substantial unilateral reduction and restructuring of Soviet armed forces that made the declaration credible – yields no definitive victor in the "paradigm wars" that have often consumed the field of international relations. Instead, I argued that moving forward or backward in history from a limited process-tracing exercise not only sheds more light on the event in question, but also serves to identify other types of explanations and mechanisms that a narrow focus on the event itself kept hidden.

William Wohlforth concludes what by his count was roughly his twenty-fifth publication relating to the end of the Cold War with a wise comment about the relationship between the broad theoretical approaches favored by scholars and the events that make up the phenomena they seek to explain. He and his co-authors had endeavored over a period of some twenty years to account for the end of the Cold War by appealing to some of the fundamental tenets of realist theory. He was relatively satisfied with the results, whereas his critics typically continued to favor their own alternative approaches.[20] Wohlforth's concession to those approaches is that they may be necessary to account for the fact that even if realism tells us how states *should* behave in a given international environment, particular leaders might not follow its prescriptions.

Gorbachev, in Wohlforth's view, followed the dictates of realism only to a point because he failed to steer the Soviet ship of state to safer harbors, wrecking it on the shoals of nationalism and economic chaos instead. "In this case as in all cases," Wohlforth argued, "the confrontation between general theories and unique events yields puzzles. To answer the puzzle of why Gorbachev did not adopt a more realist grand strategy, one clearly must consider personality, ideas, domestic politics, contingency, and, in a word, history" (Wohlforth 2011: 456). Process tracing is the method of choice for

[20] This point is amply evident in the special issue of *International Politics* that I have frequently cited here.

explaining rich historical events such as the end of the Cold War, but unlike the Cold War itself – at least as realists understand it – we should not expect that process tracing will lead to any definitive victory of one side over the other. As Bennett and Checkel wisely counsel, analysts need to "remember that conclusive process tracing is good, but not all good process tracing is conclusive" (this volume, pp. XX–XX).

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Process Tracing

Advances in qualitative methods and recent developments in the philosophy of science have led to an emphasis on explanation via reference to causal mechanisms. This book argues that the method known as process tracing is particularly well suited to developing and assessing theories about such mechanisms. The editors begin by establishing a philosophical basis for process tracing – one that captures mainstream uses while simultaneously being open to applications by interpretive scholars. Equally important, they go on to establish best practices for individual process-tracing accounts – how micro to go, when to start (and stop), and how to deal with the problem of equifinality. The contributors then explore the application of process tracing across a range of subfields and theories in political science. This is an applied methods book which seeks to shrink the gap between the broad assertion that "process tracing is good" and the precise claim that "this is an instance of good process tracing."

Andrew Bennett is Professor of Government at Georgetown University. He is also President of the Consortium on Qualitative Research Methods, which sponsors the annual Institute on Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University. He is the co-author, with Alexander L. George, of *Case Studies and Theory Development* (2005), which won the Giovanni Sartori Prize in 2005 for the best book on qualitative methods.

Jeffrey T. Checkel is Professor of International Studies and Simons Chair in International Law and Human Security at Simon Fraser University. He is also a Global Research Fellow at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo. He has published extensively in leading European and North American journals, and is the author of *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (1997), editor of *International Institutions and Socialization in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), co-editor (with Peter J. Katzenstein) of *European Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and editor of *Transnational Dynamics of Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

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Process Tracing

From Metaphor to Analytic Tool

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107686373

First published 2015

Printed in XXX by XXX

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Process tracing : from metaphor to analytic tool / edited by Andrew Bennett, Georgetown University, Jeffrey T. Checkel, Simon Fraser University.
pages cm. – (Strategies for social inquiry)
ISBN 978-1-107-04452-4 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-68637-3 (paperback)
1. Political science – Methodology. 2. Causation. 3. Case method. 4. Qualitative research. 5. Social sciences – Methodology. I. Bennett, Andrew, 1960– editor. II. Checkel, Jeffrey T., 1959– editor.
JA71.P756 2015
320.01–dc23

2014021292

ISBN 978-1-107-04452-4 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-107-68637-3 Paperback

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Preface

When the editors of the Strategies for Social Inquiry Series at Cambridge University Press first approached us to write a book on process tracing, our response was "yes, but . . ." That is, we absolutely agreed there was a need for such a book, but, at the same time, we were leery – hence that "but" – of writing a standard methods text. Of course, process tracing is a method, so there was no getting around writing a methodology book.

Yet, from our own experience – be it working with Ph.D. students, reviewing manuscripts and journal articles, or giving seminars – we sensed a need, indeed a hunger, for a slightly different book, one that showed, in a grounded, operational way, how to do process tracing well. After discussions (and negotiations!) with the series editors, the result is the volume before you. We view it as an applied methods book, where the aim is to show how process tracing works in practice, using and critiquing prominent research examples from several subfields and research programs within political science. If the last fifteen years have seen the publication of key texts setting the state of the art for case studies, then our volume is a logical follow-on, providing clear guidance for what is perhaps the central within-case method – process tracing.

All chapters have been through numerous rounds of revision. The broad outlines of Chapter 1 were first presented to the Research Group on Qualitative and Multi-Method Analysis, Syracuse University, in June 2010, where we received critical but constructive feedback from some of the sharpest methodological minds in the business. A fully revised version of the first chapter together with drafts of most of the others were then critiqued at a workshop held at Georgetown University in March 2012. During this meeting, Peter Hall and Jack Snyder – in their role as "über-discussants" – gave indispensable help, assessing the project as a whole, but also providing trenchant criticisms and constructive suggestions on individual chapters. At this same workshop, we also received valuable feedback from Colin Elman and the Georgetown scholarly community, especially Kate McNamara and

Dan Nexon. In the summer of 2012, three anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press evaluated key parts of the manuscript. Their comments were invaluable in helping us (re)frame the project, but also – and more specifically – in pushing us to rethink and justify key arguments we lay out in the opening chapter.

We owe thanks to many people and institutions, with the most important intellectual debt to our authors. Throughout, they rose to our challenge – "to make process tracing real!" – while diligently responding to multiple rounds of requests for changes and improvements in their chapters and providing insightful feedback on our own. For helpful comments on various parts of the manuscript, we thank – in addition to those already named – Derek Beach, Aaron Boesenecker, Jim Caporaso, Marty Finnemore, Lise Howard, Macartan Humphreys, and Ingo Rohlfing, as well as seminar audiences at the Freie Universität Berlin, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In addition, we received excellent feedback from what is perhaps our main target audience – Ph.D. students – in courses and workshops at Georgetown University, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, Syracuse University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Research School on Peace and Conflict, Peace Research Institute Oslo, and the Oslo Summer School in Comparative Social Science Studies.

The academic editors of the series – Colin Elman, John Gerring, and Jim Mahoney – are owed a special thank you. From the beginning, they pushed us to produce the best possible book. We often agreed with their criticisms; when we did not, their help made us more aware about our central aim.

Checkel also thanks the Kolleg-Forschergruppe "The Transformative Power of Europe," Freie Universität Berlin and its directors – Tanja Boerzel and Thomas Risse – for providing a stimulating and collegial setting during the book's final write-up.

Last and certainly not least, we owe a debt of gratitude to Damian Penfold, who carefully – and cheerfully – copy-edited and formatted the entire initial manuscript, and to Barbara Salmon for preparation of the index. At Cambridge University Press, we thank John Haslam for organizing an efficient and rigorous review process, and Carrie Parkinson for overseeing the production of the book.

For administrative and logistical assistance, we thank Ellen Yap at the School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, and Eva Zamarripa of the Mortara Center at Georgetown University. Financial support was provided by the Simons International Endowment at Simon Fraser

University, and by the School of Foreign Service and Mortara Center, both at Georgetown University.

One issue that can arise for readers who seek to interpret any co-authored text is the division of labor among the authors or editors. This book was a joint effort from the start, with equal contributions from the two editors. Bennett wrote the first draft of Chapter 1, while Checkel did the same for Chapter 10, and we each revised the other's draft, so the results are truly collaborative. In addition, both editors provided feedback to each of the contributing authors. It is thus not fair to list one editor's name first, but we have followed alphabetical convention in doing so to avoid any impression that our partnership was unequal, and we have listed the authorship of our co-authored chapters to reflect which of us wrote the first draft of each.

The two of us each have a special relation to rock. If one – Bennett – relishes the challenge of climbing straight up cliffs and rock faces around North America, the other – Checkel – enjoys the thrill of climbing iced-up rock ridges at 4,200 meters in the Swiss Alps. For all their differences, these passions are united by a common thread. It is called a rope – or, for Checkel, a Seil – and, without it, we are in grave peril. After four intense years working on this project, we are happy to report that neither of us dreams of secretly cutting the other's rope. In fact, it is the opposite. We now better appreciate the intellectual core of that rope we have never shared when climbing – a joint commitment to empirically rich, rigorous, but pluralistic knowledge production. It is our hope that this book contributes to that goal.

AB and JTC
Washington, DC and Vancouver