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1143rd Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation
22 July 2026

Delegation of the Russian Federation to the Vienna
Negotiations on Military Security and Arms Control



NATO Expansion: Architecture of Confrontation

Forum for Security Co-Operation
July 22, 2026



In return for to the German reunification

(video: ARD, Spiegel)

DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS SHOW SECURITY ASSURANCES AGAINST NATO EXPANSION TO SOVIET LEADERS FROM BAKER, BUSH, GENSCHER, KOHL, GATES, MITTERRAND, THATCHER, HURD, MAJOR, AND WOERNER



Michail Gorbachev discussing German unification with Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Helmut Kohl in Russia, July 15, 1990. Photo: Bundesbildstelle / Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung.

- Following negotiations in Washington on February 2, 1990, German Foreign Minister and Vice-Chancellor Heinrich-Daniel Genscher and US Secretary of State James Baker stated (quote):

"We agreed that there is NO intention to expand NATO's defense zone to the east. This applies not only to the GDR, which we do not want to include, but in general"

“NOT ONE INCH EASTWARD”



U.S. Secretary of State James Baker’s famous “not one inch eastward” assurance about NATO expansion in his meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on February 9, 1990, was part of a cascade of assurances about Soviet security given by Western leaders to Gorbachev and other Soviet officials throughout the process of German unification in 1990 and on into 1991, according to declassified U.S., Soviet, German, British and French documents posted by the National Security Archive at George Washington University.

**NATIONAL
SECURITY
ARCHIVE**

<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>



WORDS BELIED BY ACTIONS

“We understand the need for assurances to the countries in the East. If we maintain a presence in a Germany that is a part of NATO, there would be no extension of NATO’s jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east.”

Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker in Moscow

Feb 9, 1990

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I have got one or two other points. We don't favorably view a neutral Germany. The FRG says that this is not a satisfactory approach. A neutral Germany in our view is not necessarily going to be a non-militaristic Germany. It could well decide that it needed its own independent nuclear capability as opposed to depending on the deterrent of the United States. All our allies and East Europeans we have spoken to have told us that they want us to maintain a presence in Europe. I am not sure whether you favor that or not. But let me say that if our allies want us to go, we will be gone in a minute. Indeed, if they want us to leave we'll go and I can assure you that the sentiment of the American people is such that they will want us to leave immediately. The mechanism by which we have a US military presence in Europe is NATO. If you abolish NATO, there will be no more US presence.

We understand the need for assurances to the countries in the East. If we maintain a presence in a Germany that is a part of NATO, there would be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east. At the end of the day, if it is acceptable to everyone, we could have discussions in a two plus four context that might achieve this kind of an outcome. Maybe there is a better way to deal with the external consequences of German unification. And if there is I am not aware of it. We don't have German agreement but we have mentioned it to Genscher and he said he wants to think about it. Dumas liked it and now I have mentioned it to you.



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“...However, a Germany that is firmly anchored in a changed NATO, by that I mean a NATO that is far less of [a] military organization, much more of a political one, would have no need for independent capability. There would, of course, have to be iron-clad guarantees that NATO's jurisdiction or forces would not move eastward. And this would have to be done in a manner that would satisfy Germany's neighbors to the east.”

On the question of neutrality that was surfaced by Modrow, we think that would be a mistake. I think that if you just look at the history you can see that would be a mistake. A neutral Germany would undoubtedly acquire its own independent nuclear capability. However, a Germany that is firmly anchored in a changed NATO, by that I mean a NATO that is far less of military organization, much more of a political one, would have no need for independent capability. There would, of course, have to be iron-clad guarantees that NATO's jurisdiction or forces would not move eastward. And this would have to be done in a manner that would satisfy Germany's neighbors to the east.

Two final points. We have been told by East and West Europeans alike, that -- and this is something by the Gorbachev has alluded to -- that the continued presence of forces in Europe is a force for stability. We do not



Memorandum of Conversation between James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow

Feb 9, 1990

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The British memorandum specifically quotes Genscher as saying “*that when he talked about not wanting to extend NATO that applied to other states beside the GDR. The Russians must have some assurance that if, for example, the Polish Government left the Warsaw Pact one day, they would not join NATO the next.*” Genscher and Hurd were saying the same to their Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze, and to James Baker.

enormous importance the CSCE process was both substantial and to help save the face of the Soviet Union. The CSCE summit, devoted to the future of Europe, would be an important vehicle for helping the Soviet Union to come to terms with the erosion of the Warsaw Pact. Genscher added that when he talked about not wanting to extend NATO that applied to other states beside the GDR. The Russians must have some assurance that if, for example, the Polish Government left the Warsaw Pact one day, they would not join NATO the next.

5. The Secretary of State said that clearly there would need to be a NATO discussion about doctrine and posture but Genscher seemed to be saying that the discussion could not usefully begin yet. On the other hand, military commanders hated uncertainty. Genscher said he saw no reason why the military consequences of the reduced threat in Europe should not be discussed straight away. But the

Mr. Hurd to Sir C. Mallaby (Bonn). Telegraphic N. 85: Secretary of State's Call on Herr Genscher: German Unification

Feb 6, 1990



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“We believe that NATO should not expand the sphere of its activity. We have to find a reasonable resolution. I correctly understand the security interests of the Soviet Union, and I realize that you, Mr. General Secretary, and the Soviet leadership will have to clearly explain what is happening to the Soviet people.”

[....]

We believe that NATO should not expand its scope. We have to find a reasonable resolution. I correctly understand the security interests of the Soviet Union, and I realize that you, Mr. General Secretary, and the Soviet leadership will have to clearly explain what is happening to the Soviet people.

It is one thing when we are talking, but it is different when ordinary people talk. They remember the fate of their fathers and brothers. This is quite a normal phenomenon. However, if we do not act, the situation will become critical. We have to avoid this. We are ready to take

**Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and
Helmut Kohl**

Feb 10, 1990



WORDS BELIED BY ACTIONS

Notes from the first days of the conference are very brief, but they contain one important line that shows that Baker offered the same assurance formula in Ottawa as he did in Moscow: “And if U[nited] G[ermany] stays in NATO, we should take care about nonexpansion of its jurisdiction to the East.”

B[aker] Thank you. But I do not think that this will be a process of simple ratification.

And if U[nited] G[ermany] stays in NATO, we should take care about non-expansion of its jurisdiction to the East.

And also obligate UG about nuc[lear], chem[ical], bacter[iological] weapons.

E.A. This is very complicated. Now two Germanies are agreeing, and then one will emerge—will it want to include these obligations? Who knows who leader of Germany?

I wished Genscher to become Chancellor of the UG, he said he was n

B[aker] Danger of revanchism is not likely.



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- Page from Stepanov-Mamaladze's notes from February 12, 1990, reflecting Baker's assurance to Shevardnadze during the Ottawa Open Skies conference:

"And if U[nited]
G[ermany] stays in
NATO, we should take
care about non-
expansion of its
jurisdiction to the east."

WORDS BELIED BY ACTIONS

DECISION (NUCLEAR FORCES: SNF NEGOTIATIONS;
BUNDESWEHR LIMITS: CFE).

5. I ALSO USED YOUR SPEECH AND OUR RECOGNITION OF
THE NEED TO ADAPT NATO, POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY,
AND TO DEVELOP CSCE TO REASSURE SHEVARDNADZE THAT THE
PROCESS WOULD NOT YIELD WINNERS AND LOSERS. INSTEAD,
IT WOULD PRODUCE A NEW LEGITIMATE EUROPEAN STRUCTURE
-- ONE THAT WOULD BE INCLUSIVE, NOT EXCLUSIVE.

6. SHEVARDNADZE RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THE S
WELCOMED YOUR SPEECH AND MY COMMENTS AT NATO:
INDEED, THAT OUR DISCUSSION OF THE NEW EUROPEAN
ARCHITECTURE WAS COMPATIBLE WITH MUCH OF THEIR
THINKING, THOUGH THEIR THINKING WAS STILL BEING
DEVELOPED. HE SAID THEY AGREED THERE SHOULD BE



“I also used your speech and our recognition of the need to adapt NATO, politically and militarily, and to develop CSCE to reassure Shevardnadze that the process would not yield winners and losers. Instead, it would produce a new legitimate European structure - one that would be inclusive, not exclusive.”

James A. Baker III, Memorandum for the President, “My meeting with Shevardnadze”

May 4, 1990

How NATO Expanded After the Collapse of the USSR

