FOREWORD

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This book is based on the materials of a conference that took place in a picturesque spot on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean off the state of Georgia—the Musgrove Plantation—in May 1998. That conference was probably one of the most significant ever held by the National Security Archive. It was organized by Tom Blanton, director of the Archive, and his colleagues. They courageously entered a subject, which allowed them to discover the origins, the motives and the circumstances of a turning point in world history—the cessation of the Cold War and of an ideological confrontation that had been suicidal for mankind.

The Archive exhibited an enviable persistence and piercing energy, which deserves the highest praise for its dedication to work and truth, and for overcoming numerous obstacles created by bureaucrats and other excessively cowardly and greedy custodians of the truth about the past. The documents for this book were compiled in a painstaking process from the archives of several countries by the scholars participating in the project, through Freedom of Information Act requests by the National Security Archive, and through donations by the conference participants.

The proceedings of the conference and the documents—Soviet, American, and East European—together create a rare volume and significant pool of evidence about that time. They provide an opportunity for an unbiased reader and scholar to build an adequate understanding of Gorbachev's policy toward those countries, and about his "new thinking" in general. They show that the principle of freedom of choice announced by Gorbachev—which was used primarily by those countries—was his sincere conviction. In addition to the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and perhaps no less so, this opened the road to *understanding* in the West, and therefore, to *trust*, which became the decisive factor in the movement toward crucial change throughout the international arena, and toward the cessation of the political and ideological Cold War. This was because that principle essentially contradicted the central Soviet doctrine, which interpreted world politics as a function of the international class struggle, and repealed the principle that was in effect at the time—that what is good for you should be bad for the opposite side.

Gorbachev, during his first meeting with the leaders of the alliance after the funeral of his predecessor, Konstantin Chernenko, announced to them that from now on they should proceed from the assumption that there would be no control from Moscow, and that they would not be getting any directives from there either. Let them be responsible for their actions to their parties and to their peoples, and that was all. It was then that he put an end to the "Brezhnev Doctrine," then

confirmed that position at the October 1985 conference of the Warsaw Treaty Organization's Political Consultative Committee in Sofia. And he never, throughout all the years of *perestroika*, retreated from that position, even though his colleagues from the socialist countries, having felt the dangerous nature of that freedom, repeatedly tried to pull Moscow into their own affairs.

Another extremely important point, even though it derived from the "freedom of choice" principle, was the rejection of the use of force in international relations and the ban on utilizing Soviet armed forces on foreign territories. Many people did not believe this at first, and those in the leadership of our allied countries simply did not want to believe it. However, when Moscow did not react to the mass exodus of East Germans across the borders of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and when later it did not allow the troops stationed in the GDR "out of the barracks" against the powerful popular movement for German reunification, which brought down the Berlin Wall, everyone became convinced that Gorbachev's deeds did not diverge from his words. And then the so-called "velvet revolutions" unfolded, and independent states emerged very quickly.

Gorbachev was not very interested in the changes that began in Eastern Europe. He used to say, "They are sick and tired of us, and we are no less so of them; let them live on their own, then everything will come out right." However, it did not turn out the way he hoped. We received no appreciation from the "fraternal countries." They turned away from us and turned their faces to the West. This was where one of Gorbachev's mistakes caught up with him: he continued to believe in the appeal and the "gravitational force" of the idea of socialism, as such. However, our allies were no less sick and tired of socialism than they were of Soviet paternalism, especially because that socialism was in reality the Stalinist–Brezhnevist model that had been imposed on them, and that was alien to them both historically and ethnically.

Nonetheless, Gorbachev naturally imagined those new states as an integral part of the "common European home." He announced that idea for the first time in Prague—not just in any location—in the spring of 1987. And from then on he tried to convince each of his interlocutors—whether it was François Mitterrand, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Johannes Rau, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Felipe Gonzalez, Giulio Andreotti or those of a lower rank—of its promise. He could not imagine how to overcome the division of Europe, or the European future, in any other way. President George Bush eventually came to share this idea, otherwise the European CSCE Paris summit of November 1990 would not have taken place, and the famous Declaration for Europe would not have been signed by 34 states, including the United States and Canada.

For Gorbachev, that was the pinnacle of his European policy, which he always saw as the most important and perhaps the decisive (always together with the United States) part of the transition to a peaceful period in world history.

One can only guess how his design for a common European home would have turned out had the Soviet Union survived as a great peace-loving democratic power. However, history has demonstrated that Europe, and even the world,

were not yet ready to accept the "new thinking"—even individual elements of it, let alone in its entirety. The process of integration in the western part of Europe turned out to be more complex, difficult and contradictory than it appeared in the late 1980s. And yet, Gorbachev acted "ahead of his time," believing in his idea of the common European home, which perhaps did not go to waste.

The materials in this book show that Western leaders, especially the Americans, did not trust Gorbachev for a long time: at first they believed that his "new policy" was nothing more than another Kremlin trick and the ambitions of a young leader. Later, when they came to trust his sincerity, they did not believe that he would be able to do what he wanted, the way he wanted. That circumstance—in which the West only with great delay recognized the "usefulness" for its own purposes of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and then only very timidly demonstrated its willingness to support it or even to provide help—contributed to his inability to cope with the crisis and to solve the historic task of preserving the Soviet Union in its new, democratic form.

The book is valuable also because the documents collected in it can be viewed through the prism of the discussion and polemics at the conference, where many things were clarified, developed, and even refuted.

The organizers of the conference chose—precisely for this purpose—the most appropriate and persuasive method. They brought together at one table, face-to-face, scholars from different countries, as well as experts and people who participated directly in the events of that time that were marked with the name of Gorbachev and *perestroika* in the USSR, and those who were connected with the work of presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush (the elder) in the United States. At Musgrove, among other similar conferences and meetings, this combination turned out to be especially expressive and fruitful.

On the one side were the Americans led by the conference mediator, Tom Blanton, who, in addition to his own brilliant interventions, posed very sharp and professionally irreproachable questions. (In any serious conversation that is a great feat in itself!) The former U.S. officials comprised the wise and knowledgeable professor Jack Matlock, former State Department official and U.S. ambassador to Moscow, and the respected intelligence officer and author, Doug MacEachin, in 1989 the CIA's leading Soviet expert. On the other side were two former assistants of the CC CPSU general secretary and president of the USSR—Anatoly Chernyaev and Georgy Shakhnazarov (now deceased)—the former assistant to Eduard Shevardnadze, Sergey Tarasenko, and two historians from the Russian Academy of Sciences. On the third side were prominent Western scholars, especially the well-known expert on the subject, Jacques Levesque, and scholars from the countries of Eastern Europe, especially Andrzej Paczkowski, Vílem Prečan, and Csaba Békés, whose contributions made it possible to see the problems from a somewhat different perspective than they appeared to the "main protagonists." The clash of opinions was made more pronounced and even somewhat bitter by the scholars of Soviet origin but who already possessed an American mentality.

The polemics were further enlivened by sharp confrontations among … the Russians themselves, among whom were some who had hidden as well as explicit ill feelings towards Gorbachev's policy.

Thanks to the art of "managing" the discussion, the sensitivity and the good sense of humor exhibited by Tom Blanton as chairman, the comparison of facts, opinions and positions assumed an extremely sincere, lively, often sharp, but always correct character. The hosts succeeded in creating an atmosphere of tolerance for every opinion, an honest approach to any detail of a problem in any of its twists and turns, which provoked the kinds of spontaneous thoughts, reminiscences, and discourses that the participants themselves probably could never have "planned" beforehand. This circumstance enriched the main theme with often unexpected details, which gave the discussion the unique and colorful feel of "being there" and, I would also add, a certain "cheerfulness." It is not without reason that laughter was heard often at that table.

The conference uncovered a lot that was new not only in terms of factual material, but also in terms of arguments substantiating the policy of "new thinking" and the reactions to it in other countries. It also raised doubts—if not about its goals then about the methods of its implementation at particular stages and in certain cases.

In short, this book, based on the Musgrove conference together with the documents included in it as an integral part, represents rare historical evidence of how and why the ideas and decisions that led to the ending of the Cold War were born, and which concrete consequences of the accomplishments of that period were especially significant for different countries, and for the entire world.

Thinking about Musgrove today, I would like once again to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Smith Bagley, who made his beautiful, picturesque estate available for convening that conference.

And once again, my deepest bow to the main organizers, who also prepared this volume. All that is left for me to do is to express my regret that publication of such a unique book was delayed for ten years.