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*Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the
Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest: Central
European University Press, 2010, \ \$75.00/€55.00/
£50.00). Pp. 730. isbn 978 963 9776 77 7.**

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Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton and Vladislav Zubok (eds.), *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010, \$75.00/€55.00/£50.00). Pp. 730. ISBN 978 963 9776 77 7.

Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989 is an incredibly important resource for those interested in the end of the Cold War, certainly warranting the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations's 2011 Link-Kuehl Prize for Documentary Editing and other accolades. At 730 pages, it is weighty, but its utility to students and scholars, especially those located at some distance from the National Security Archive in Washington, DC, will be considerable. The book is divided into three principal parts, each of which would attract considerable attention on its own.

First, director of Russia/Eurasia programs at the National Security Archive Svetlana Savranskaya and National Security Archive executive director Thomas Blanton utilize the collected documents to examine how 1989 looked from Moscow and Washington respectively. Savranskaya seeks to explain shifting Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s, arguing that the Soviet withdrawal was "probably the most rational and reasonable policy to pursue at the time, following logically from Gorbachev's own thinking, his domestic and foreign policy priorities, the advice he received, and the course of events unfolding in Eastern Europe in 1989" (1). Savranskaya concludes, "Using force in Eastern Europe in 1989 would have been senseless, ineffective and probably political suicide for Gorbachev" (1). Savranskaya shows that Gorbachev began to shift Soviet policy toward its satellites almost as soon as he became general secretary. Furthermore, in Savranskaya's view, the documents collected here demonstrate that, by 1989, Moscow was devoting very little attention to Eastern Europe as the repeated challenges it faced to its authority in the republics consumed Gorbachev's attention. Blanton's piece demonstrates how little influence the United States had on events in Eastern Europe. Continuing revisions of George H. W. Bush's foreign-policy record, Blanton outlines the administration's "passivity" in this period and highlights how, of the two leaders, it was Gorbachev, not Bush, who had "the vision thing" (52, 59, 73).

Second, the volume offers a transcript of important discussions among former Soviet and American officials as well as academic observers. The stature and access of the historical actors present, including former United States ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock and Gorbachev's chief foreign-policy aide Anatoly Chernyaev, make the 115-page record an excellent resource. Participants in the 1998 conference recounted here explored explanations for Gorbachev's "new political thinking," when Soviet leaders decided force would not be used in Eastern Europe, the inevitability of events in the region, Gorbachev's decision-making process, the extent to which the Soviet leadership could influence Communist officials elsewhere in the Warsaw Pact, the significance of the crackdown in Tiananmen Square to Soviet policymakers, and how Moscow perceived Bush's strategic pause.

The final section, 122 internationally sourced documents, is the principal reason publication of *Masterpieces of History* was eagerly awaited by scholars of the Cold War. Specialists who had read earlier National Security Archive electronic briefing books with keen curiosity recognized that they signaled only the beginning of the breadth

and depth of the National Security Archive's records. The editors have selected English translations of important Soviet documents from the Gorbachev Foundation, the State Archive of the Russian Federation, and the Volkogonov Collection and compiled them in one volume. The balance, perhaps given the interests and relationships of the editors of the volume, is toward Soviet documentation. Given the challenges to doing archival research in Soviet records of this period, it is a welcome decision. In addition, the volume's editors have included State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, and White House records from Ronald Reagan and Bush's presidencies, the release of which was sought through the Freedom of Information Act. The documents recount high-level diplomatic exchanges, largely from Washington and Moscow. But the collection tells more than a Soviet–American story, with the inclusion of key documents from Poland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, and Hungary. Of the documents collected, eighty-one are from 1989, with the remainder originating immediately before or after that pivotal year. In addition, the volume includes a bibliography, list of personnel, and very useful chronology.

Before the publication of *Masterpieces of History*, at best scholars could visit the National Security Archive in Washington, DC to utilize their collections of declassified documents. Now, they and their students will be able to draw upon these records without the strain and cost of such travel.

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