

# George Bush's legacy of mismanagement in East Europe policy

by Aaron Trepav

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## **At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War**

by Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott  
Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1993  
498 pages, hardbound, \$24.95

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Soon after I finished reading this book, I learned of a welcome development involving one of its authors. Strobe Talbott, now U.S. Special Ambassador to the nations of the former Soviet Union and overall "tsar" for U.S. policy towards them, visited Ukraine on May 9 and 10 to reverse the crazy anti-Ukraine policy which the Clinton administration had inherited from George Bush's "chicken Kiev" speech of Aug. 1, 1991. Talbott retracted the earlier U.S. threats that there could be no good relations between the two countries until Ukraine first rid itself of all nuclear weapons. "It is important not to be a one-note Johnny," he said. "What we want to do is engage the Ukrainian government in a dialogue about the relationship in all of its aspects, rather than just dwelling on one subject [nuclear weapons], important as that subject may be." Talbott also said that Washington "wants to develop a relationship with Ukraine in its own right," separate from that with Russia—yet another problem inherited from Bush.

The new administration's anti-Ukraine policy had gone so far, that President Clinton had recently delivered a well-publicized snub to Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk—in effect telling him not to bother to visit the United States, because Clinton might not receive him here. Now that has all been abruptly thrown out the window, as it deserved to be.

## **The urgency for change**

What is important, and what was missing throughout the Bush period, is the courage to cast out false, failed ideas in favor of better ones—and especially so in Strobe Talbott's area. What must be grasped very quickly is that, not only with reference to Ukraine, but top to bottom, the entire Bush-Thatcher policy towards post-communist Europe has been an utter failure. If that is not understood soon, it will be too late to correct it.

Readers would wish that *At the Highest Levels* displayed that quality of Strobe Talbott which Ukrainians saw on May 9-10. Instead, 80% of the book simply rehashes, in effect, the contents of the news and analysis stories of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* during the period of the Bush presidency. And when the authors let Bush and Gorbachov, their two major subjects, get away for a moment from the reporters' notebooks, the two Presidents' private thoughts and communications most frequently revolve around the effort to get better headlines for themselves in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. Alas!

But there are some disclosures which contradict the version of history peddled by the liberal press during the four Bush years, when it was covering up for Bush and Thatcher's total mismanagement of East-West relations. The quality of Reagan's principled commitment to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and of Gorbachov's fearful obsession by it, are clarified on pages 113-118. Former secretary of state George Shultz has recently made the same points as well, in his book, *Turmoil and Triumph*. Neither book properly credits Lyndon LaRouche with originating the SDI policy which Reagan later adopted, as they should, nor do Beschloss and Talbott inform their readers that it was the Soviet attempt to match the SDI which crippled their economy and thus doomed their system, as Russian representatives recently detailed at a seminar at Princeton University.

Pages 13-14 and 240 make it clear that Henry Kissinger's 1988 proposal for negotiations with Moscow over eastern Europe, both in its original Kissinger form and in the different form in which Bush and Baker adopted it, sought to block Russian-German cooperation.

## **What Sachs has wrought**

Thus, in place of the East-West Europe economic cooperation that LaRouche detailed in his successive SDI, "Food for Peace," and European "Productive Triangle" proposals, Russia and East Europe have been encouraged to apply the formulas of the International Monetary Fund and Harvard's crazed Jeffrey Sachs. As a result, it is reliably estimated that the industrial output of the former Soviet satellites has fallen to 30% of its 1989 levels. Russia itself is in a condition which the ballerina Nataliya Makarova, for example, compares to the devastation immediately following World War II—except that that was a period of reconstruction, full of hope despite the horrible material deprivations. Not so today. It seems that Harvard's witless Jeffrey Sachs has hurt Russia more in 18 months, than Hitler, the Reichswehr, and the SS could do in four years!

It was in this way, principally, that Thatcher and Bush threw away the greatest opportunity for peace since World War II, during the period 1989-91. If they are not reversed soon, by this administration, these policy-legacies of Thatcher and Bush will have sown a long, bitter hatred of Russia towards the West, and our children will pay dearly for it.