

2018

H-Diplo

 [@HDiplo](https://twitter.com/HDiplo)

Roundtable Review
Volume XIX, No. 23 (2018)
19 February 2018

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse
Roundtable and Web Production Editor: George Fujii

Introduction by Vojtech Mastny

Kristina Spohr. *The Global Chancellor: Helmut Schmidt and the Reshaping of the International Order.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN: 9780198747796 (hardcover, \$60.00).

URL: <http://www.tiny.cc/Roundtable-XIX-23>

Contents

Introduction by Vojtech Mastny, Washington, D.C.....	2
Review by Martin Albers, Hamburg.....	5
Review by Daniel J. Sargent, University of California, Berkeley	10
Review by Thomas A. Schwartz, Vanderbilt University.....	14
Review by Kristina Spohr, London School of Economics and Political Science.....	18

© 2018 The Authors.

[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

Introduction by Vojtech Mastny, Washington, D.C.

Post-World War II Germany has produced an impressive number of national leaders who served their country well by making the right decisions at crucial times. Kristina Spohr's book on Chancellor Helmut Schmidt adds to the gallery a chancellor she considers as a statesman of not only national but also global significance. The three reviewers, all of whom perceive the importance of the nineteen seventies as the formative period of globalization, agree in praising the book, even while they disagree with some of its conclusions on its subject's particular policies. In the longer term, how did Schmidt's legacy as chancellor prefigure Germany's eventual emergence as 'reluctant hegemon' in the globalizing world?

Schmidt's most indisputable accomplishments lay in the realm of security policy at a time when East-West détente threatened to turn into a 'second Cold War,' if not nuclear holocaust. Even Daniel Sargent, who claims that in the nineteen-seventies "the Cold War ceased to define world politics,"¹ tends to agree. In his review, he highlights Schmidt's competence as a "defense intellectual," comparable to his friend Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, though superior to Kissinger in better comprehending not only military but also economic dimensions of security. Both of them shared deference to the dogma of balance of power, based on their firm, if erroneous, belief that the Soviet Union was an ascendant superpower, bound to remain there for the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding that faulty assumption, Schmidt helped fashion NATO's dual track policy that called the bluff of Moscow's military superiority, preparing the ground for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's later reassessment of its security policy, which would lead to the Cold War's end and the demise of the Soviet Union as well. However, Martin Albers's claim that "without Schmidt's successful management of the various challenges of the 1970s, the peaceful end of the Cold War would have been much more difficult" does not stand without substantiating evidence. In any case, whatever the effect of Schmidt's policies in an environment defined by the competition of two nuclear armed superpowers, they are of scant relevance in the global setting of the post-Cold War era.

Schmidt understood the importance of personal diplomacy, although—as shown by his disastrous relationship with President Jimmy Carter—he was hardly its star practitioner. He was farsighted in his conviction that Germany could and should play an active international role, which he envisaged as that of a "double interpreter" between great powers. Thomas Schwarz suggests in his review a link with "Angela Merkel's dealings with President Vladimir Putin's Russia," but cautions that the similarity might be more with "the more controversial—and less balanced— approach" of her predecessor, the "Putin apologist" Gerhard Schroeder. Indeed, Schmidt's exaltation of balance of power and rejection of grass root movements threatening to disrupt—such as when he welcomed the 1981 imposition of martial law in Poland—invite the question of how he would have responded to the popular forces that drove the German unification in 1989-90. It may well have been fortunate for Germany, as well as for his own legacy as statesman, that Schmidt had by then lost his chancellorship.

The adjective 'global' fits best Schmidt's ability to grasp early the long-term implications of globalization, particularly the need for institutions of international economic cooperation and the benefits of closer

¹ Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9.

European integration. His role in the creation of the G-7 group of advanced industrial nations stands out as his lasting accomplishment, as does his support of the European Monetary System. The G-7, far from having degenerated “into bureaucratic routine and media spectacle” as Spohr suggests (134), played a vital role in ensuring—propelled by Germany—the imposition of sanctions on Russia and its expulsion from the group after Russian leader Vladimir Putin’s annexation of the Crimea in 2014.

Schmidt perceptively foresaw the rise of China as a global power. By building both economic and personal relations with Beijing, he paved the way toward it becoming Germany’s largest trading partner outside Europe. Yet his China policy gets little attention in the abbreviated English edition of Spohr’s book, though somewhat more in its German version,² but inexplicably none at all in the review by Albers, an authority on the subject. The question remains of how much Schmidt’s promotion of the relationship actually prepared Germany for its leading role in shaping the European Union’s interaction with China.

Schmidt’s ongoing public commentary on world affairs for thirty-three years after his leaving office casts further, though not necessarily favorable, light on his legacy. He was a vocal critic of the American intervention in Iraq, but an apologist of Putin, an “enlightened potentate,” whose Crimean aggression he deemed “understandable” and the sanctions against it “stupid.”³ He became an ardent admirer of Chinese leader Xi Jinping, endorsing wholeheartedly Beijing’s rejection of human rights as a “Western invention.” Taking exception to Merkel’s “value based” foreign policy, he advised Germans—not only those entrusted with foreign policy—to abstain from criticizing China’s record on human rights and giving support to its dissidents.⁴ Merkel did not take that advice, yet earned the respect of China’s rulers as their most valuable Western interlocutor. Her reputation as a global chancellor would seem assured.

Upon Schmidt’s death in November 2016, Merkel praised him for having done what he thought was right regardless of consequences.⁵ A year later, U.S. elections brought to power a president similarly outspoken in his views and indifferent to the consequences of his actions, an enemy of globalization to be sure, but also of a value-based foreign policy and a fellow admirer of autocratic leaders. What would have been Schmidt’s reaction to President Donald Trump’s rise to power? Mercifully, the question is moot.

Participants:

Kristina Spohr is Associate Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is author or editor of 5 books, most recently *The Global Chancellor: Helmut Schmidt and the Reshaping of the International Order* (Oxford University Press, 2016) and its extended German edition

² Kristina Spohr, *Helmut Schmidt: Der Weltkanzler* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2016), 109-113.

³ Gabor Steingart, “How Dangerous is America?” Spiegel Online, 20 November 2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/west-wing-how-dangerous-is-america-a-518399.html>.

⁴ “Fragen an den Altkanzler: Verstehen Sie das, Herr Schmidt?” interview with Giovanni di Lorenzo, 11 January 2014, Zeit Online, <http://www.zeit.de/2014/03/helmut-schmidt-deutsche-aussenpolitik>.

⁵ “Germany Holds State Funeral for Ex-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt,” Daily Mail Wires, 20 November 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3330293/Germany-holds-state-funeral-ex-chancellor-Helmut-Schmidt.html#ixzz4y9ifOgan>.

Helmut Schmidt: Der Weltkanzler (Theiss, 2016) as well as a co-edited volume with David Reynolds, *Transcending the Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, and the Dissolution of Bipolarity in Europe, 1970-1990* (Oxford University Press, 2016). She is currently researching and writing on the global exit from the Cold War 1989-1992—with the financial support of The Leverhulme Trust.

Vojtech Mastny, mst3696@gmail.com, has been professor of history and international relations at Columbia University, University of Illinois, Boston University, and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, as well as professor of strategy at U.S. Naval War College. As a Senior Fellow at the National Security Archive, he has coordinated the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, an international research network based at the Center for Security Studies of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. His books include *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity; Helsinki, Human Rights, and European Security; The Helsinki Process and the Reintegration of Europe*; the edited *War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West*, and *The Legacy of the Cold War: Perspectives on Security, Cooperation, and Conflict*. He lives in Washington, D.C.

Martin Albers works for the Administration of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Germany. Previously he worked for the German think-tank Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). He holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University and his recent publications include *Britain, France, West Germany and the People's Republic of China, 1969-1982* (Palgrave Macmillan 2016). Together with Zhong Zhong Chen he has also co-edited a special issue of *Cold War History* on Sino-European Relations since the 1970s (2017).

Daniel J. Sargent is Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and BA from Cambridge University. His books include *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) and Co-editor of *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s In Perspective*, with Niall Ferguson, Charles Maier, Erez Manela (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); and forthcoming co-author with Akira Iriye of Co-author, *Global America* (New York: W.W. Norton, In Progress).

Thomas Alan Schwartz is a Professor of History and Political Science at Vanderbilt University. Most recently, he is the co-editor with Matthias Schulz, *The Strained Alliance: US-European Relations in the 1970s* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). He is currently working on a study of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger entitled *Henry Kissinger and the Dilemmas of American Power*.

Review by Martin Albers, Hamburg

The former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is rarely perceived as a leader who left a major political legacy. Rather, Schmidt is seen as an able crisis manager whose chancellorship from 1974 to 1982 succeeded in steering the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) through stormy waters but who preferred pragmatism over visions and grand schemes. Whereas his predecessor Willy Brandt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his *Ostpolitik*, and Schmidt's successor Helmut Kohl led the country to the unexpected reunification of 1990, the general narrative goes, Helmut Schmidt did a fair but in no way spectacular job as the head of state.

It is this narrative that Kristina Spohr challenges in her study of Helmut Schmidt's foreign policy. Using sources from numerous archives, including many documents from Schmidt's private papers, she draws a detailed and yet concise picture of what she argues were the key areas of Schmidt's international activities and his impact on global affairs. Spohr's main argument regarding Schmidt's particular legacy is that, unlike his main contemporaries, he was an expert on both economic and security matters. This, she posits, gave Schmidt unrivalled qualifications to help defuse some of the main international crises of the time – namely the multiple crises of democratic capitalism after the end of the Bretton Woods System in 1971 and the crisis of East-West détente from 1977 onwards.

One of the strongest points of Spohr's book is to reveal the intimate connection of economic and military conceptions of security in Schmidt's political thought. Schmidt's grasp of the challenges that arose for the West after the end of cheap fuel and stable exchange rates sets him apart from other leaders, including his lifelong friend foreign policy expert and US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. For Schmidt the double challenges of the first oil crisis in 1973 and the end of the post-war Bretton Woods economic order posed a threat to the industrialised democracies similar to the world economic crisis of the 1930s. The most lasting achievement of Schmidt's attempts to create a new, informal system of international economic governance was the institutionalisation of summitry in the form of the G7-meetings. Spohr skilfully traces why and how the German Chancellor contributed to the establishment of the first summits and the successful conclusion of multilateral agreements on crisis-response measures. This adds a welcome German perspective to the growing literature on international summits.¹

Moving from economic to political stability, the rest of the book focuses on how Schmidt's strategic thinking evolved over the years before he became chancellor and how he put his concepts into practice. Here Spohr traces his career from his time as a young MP and state minister in Hamburg until joining the Brandt Cabinet in charge of defence. Spohr very convincingly argues that, despite his image as a purely pragmatic 'doer,' Schmidt was highly familiar with the details and theories of military strategy in Europe and developed his own approach towards détente and security. Influenced by his personal experiences in the Second World War, Schmidt's top priorities remained throughout his life the preservation of peace and international stability. For

¹ See for example Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol and Federico Romero, eds., *International Summitry and Global Governance: the Rise of the G7 and the European Council, 1974-1991* (London: Routledge, 2014); Gordon Mace, Jean-Philippe Thérien, Diana Tussie and Olivier Dabène, eds., *Summits and Regional Governance: the Americas in Comparative Perspective* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); Kristina Spohr and David Reynolds, eds., *Transcending the Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, and the Dissolution of Bipolarity in Europe, 1970–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

this he deemed negotiations and cooperation with the Soviet bloc a necessity, putting him at odds with the right-wing Cold Warriors who dominated German foreign and defence policy in the 1950s and 1960s. But, unlike the more idealist members of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), Schmidt was also convinced that meaningful dialogue with Moscow could only take place if the West maintained a balance of power with regard to conventional and nuclear forces. Spohr's argument here not only presents Schmidt's political thinking in a more coherent light, it also underpins the rest of the book in a compelling way, as she traces how Schmidt tried to apply his approach as Chancellor.

This becomes particularly clear in the chapter on Schmidt's role in the transatlantic debate about developing Enhanced Radiation Warheads (ERW). Apart from shedding light on a crucial episode of the Cold War at the transition from détente to renewed tensions, this chapter successfully demonstrates the value of a biographical approach in contemporary history. Spohr highlights the considerable intellectual skill of Schmidt as a leader as well as the structural restraints that he faced and that ultimately caused his preferred solution to fail. She furthermore uses the ERW-chapter to illustrate the importance of personal relations in global politics. Schmidt entertained a number of what he called 'political friendships' with foreign leaders, including British Prime Minister James Callaghan and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, which often facilitated finding pragmatic solutions to international problems. Yet, Spohr also demonstrates that despite this crucial personal dimension, structural constraints and national interests eventually mattered more when it came to making political choices. She highlights this in the fourth chapter on Schmidt's efforts to restore the balance of power in Europe in the late 1970s. Concerned by the increasing Soviet superiority in Theatre Nuclear Weapons (TNF) in Europe, an informal summit was organised in Guadeloupe in January 1979 where the four leaders of France, the FRG, the U.S., and the UK developed what would later become NATO's dual-track decision. As Spohr suggests, Schmidt himself was instrumental in crafting this compromise and it underlined his reputation as one of the West's main experts on security policy who would not give in to Soviet pressure. At the same time, however, the author shows in the fifth and final chapter how Schmidt refused to be exclusively associated with the armament track of the decision, but instead went at great lengths to maintain détente with Moscow and acted as a 'double interpreter' between the two superpowers at a time of renewed Cold War tensions. As Spohr argues in her conclusion, the results of this kind of diplomacy were far less visible than Brandt's Eastern Treaties or Kohl's bold push for reunification. But without Schmidt's successful management of the various challenges of the 1970s, the peaceful end of the Cold War would have been much more difficult.

Spohr's book provides many new insights and is written in a style that is both precise and highly accessible. A particular strength is the clear focus on Schmidt's thinking and policies on security matters and the links to his intellectual origins as an economist. Here emerges the image of a politician who tried to preserve stability and prosperity while being well aware of the risks and demands posed by a changing global environment. We furthermore learn much about the role of Germany at the end of the 'Golden Age' and the book can be considered a substantial contribution to the historiography on a crucial period of the Cold War and on globalisation.

There is also an actual political relevance for today, if one looks at Schmidt's understanding of interdependence as Spohr presents it. We get the impression that the German Chancellor had a particular grasp of the fact that, in order to maintain peace and economic growth, states had to rely on each other and find ways of cooperating. But this cooperation had to take place under the constraints of nationally minded electorates and the constant threat of total warfare. Against the multidimensional crisis that the West and Europe in particular face today, the reflex of withdrawing into the conceptual framework of the nation state

and trying to go it alone in matters of economics and security is at least as prevalent as it was in the 1970s. Spohr's book therefore also serves as an inspiration for those who look for viable alternatives to populist nationalism.

Despite these achievements there are also a few points that are puzzling. In particular, the focus of the book seems slightly unbalanced when key issues and episodes of Schmidt's Chancellorship are largely or entirely left out without a clear explanation. This concerns, first and foremost, the almost complete omission of the dimension of European politics in general and Franco-German relations in particular. For Schmidt, the European dimension certainly was almost as important as superpower relations. Replacing the Bretton Woods System with a viable alternative on the European scale became one of his main goals, eventually leading to the European Monetary System.² Likewise, Spohr mentions the remarkable political friendship between Giscard d'Estaing and Schmidt but bilateral relations hardly appear in the book at all. While the book greatly benefits from Spohr's use of sources from Britain, Norway and six different American archives, it would have been interesting to learn something about the French perspective as well. Even on the subjects the author treats in detail, such as G6 and the Guadeloupe summit, French archives might have included some very valuable material, not to mention Franco-German relations and Paris' perception of Schmidt's leadership style.

There are, furthermore, crucial aspects of Schmidt's career that are hardly touched upon or not mentioned. The events of his becoming chancellor, for instance, are depicted in the briefest possible fashion, leaving out the complex personal relationship between Brandt, Schmidt and the leader of the SPD parliamentary group, Herbert Wehner. Spohr's take on Schmidt's downfall as Chancellor also seems somewhat contradictory. Though she correctly points out that the SPD never failed to back Schmidt while in office, even on the dual-track decision that caused much controversy within the party, she also claims that "in the end the persistent challenges to Schmidt from pacifists and anti-Americanists in the SPD wore down the coalition and eventually forced him from power in 1982" (137). Unlike what many conservative commentators and historians claim, the existing evidence indicates that the reasons for the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) to switch support to the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and elect Kohl as Chancellor had very little to do with foreign policy. Instead, it was above all the rising influence of neoliberal ideas within the FDP that led to an estrangement of the coalition partners.³

The ambivalent friendship with Willy Brandt, similarly, plays next to no role in the book, even though this was arguably one of the main reasons for the success of the Social Democrats in Germany in the 1970s.⁴ While Schmidt later argued that it had been one of his main mistakes to leave the party chairmanship to

² Mathias Haeussler, 'A "Cold War European"? Helmut Schmidt and European Integration, c. 1945-1982', *Cold War History* 15:4 (2015): 427-447.

³ For a good overview of current scholarship on the end of the SPD-FDP coalition see Joachim Scholtyseck, 'Die FDP in der Wende', *Historisch-Politische Mitteilungen* 19:1 (2013): 197-220.

⁴ See for example Gunter Hofmann, *Willy Brandt und Helmut Schmidt: Geschichte einer schwierigen Freundschaft* (München: C.H. Beck, 2012).

Brandt, the two of them managed the remarkable feat of holding the SPD together and in power by catering to a broad range of constituencies. Schmidt alone would certainly have had difficulties to do so.⁵

But Brandt was not only instrumental in addressing many students and voters with more left-leaning sympathies, but was also much keener than Schmidt to address a number of issues that appeared on the international agenda during the 1970s, including sustainable development and the North-South conflict. According to the conventional reading, the “global chancellor” proved not very global at all in dealing with these challenges. He is instead often seen to have been unable to take a real interest in subjects that surpassed his conceptual framework of economic and military security that had emerged during the 1950s and 1960s as Spohr so ably demonstrates. Given the author’s evident skills as a scholar, one would have loved to know her perspective on these aspects, particularly since there is some evidence to challenge the notion that Schmidt cared little about North-South relations.⁶

Above all, one would have wished for a bit more critical reflection about the role of individual politicians in general and Schmidt’s legacy in particular. One of Spohr’s main points is that Schmidt deserves more credit for historical achievements than he normally gets in the non-German speaking world. But at times that biography almost becomes hagiography, undermining the credibility of the book’s otherwise convincing arguments (2, 5). When Spohr argues that “as chancellor he developed diplomatic mechanisms, notably informal summitry, and created institutions such as the G7 (Group of Seven) that were needed to facilitate cooperation in an ever more interdependent world” (2) one cannot help wondering if this overestimates his historical impact as an individual. In the very rare instances where the author admits that Schmidt had weaknesses, the sentences read like this: “It is striking that this accomplished theoretician and practitioner of personal diplomacy could sometimes lose control of his own personality, endangering the goals he was trying to achieve.” (5)

Spohr also almost always seems to accept Schmidt’s own interpretation of his policies and actions. If positions of his critics are mentioned, these are described as “opportunistic” (65) and “utopian” (56), whereas Schmidt, the “defence intellectual” and “world statesman,” is presented as always having it right. An example is the portrayal of the ERW-debate between the FRG and the Carter administration. We learn much about how betrayed Schmidt felt by the American President’s sudden and unexpected cancellation of the project. But from the evidence that Spohr so skilfully presents, one also gets the impression that Schmidt himself was highly ambivalent about the prospects of the weapons, expressing his support for security reasons but refusing to make a clear commitment in public. Though the core argument that Carter was to blame for the diplomatic disaster of ERW is still convincing, a bit more nuance and more information on how the Carter administration regarded the FRG’s role in this matter would have been welcome

It is possible that some of these shortcomings are not so much the author’s fault as the results of historical coincidence. Despite his age of 96, Schmidt’s death in November 2015 came relatively suddenly and raised international attention to a person largely forgotten outside of Germany. This perhaps created pressure for immediate publication. While one would have wished for more information on the aspects mentioned above,

⁵ See for example Meik Woyke, ed., Willy Brandt–Helmut Schmidt: Partner und Rivalen – Der Briefwechsel (1958-1992) (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., 2015), Document No. 651.

⁶ Woyke, ed., Willy Brandt–Helmut Schmidt, Document No. 644.

this does not diminish the value of the book's main arguments and many new insights. With its eloquent and lucid prose, this highly readable book therefore will be of great benefit to anyone interested in Cold-War history or the history of globalisation, and succeeds in changing our perception of Schmidt as among the most crucial political figures of the 1970s. But, given the relatively narrow focus of the study, it is unlikely to remain the definite verdict on Schmidt's foreign policy.

Review by Daniel J. Sargent, University of California, Berkeley

The specter of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stalks *The Global Chancellor*, Kristina Spohr's impressive new political life of Helmut Schmidt. Kissinger may be a peripheral player in the book's five substantive chapters, but Spohr bookends her interpretation of Schmidt's political life with the refugee from Fürth. Why?

Kissinger's looming presence might evoke his personal report with Helmut Schmidt. The two men were close, so much so that Kissinger once proclaimed his hope that Schmidt would outlive him, "because a world without Helmut would be an empty one."¹ Kissinger reprised the role of eulogist in November 2015 at Schmidt's funeral, at which he expounded on Schmidt's achievements and their long, if formal, friendship.

What Spohr has written is a history of statecraft, however, not a personal life. Kissinger appears in the policy history, but he is not a first-rank protagonist. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, President Jimmy Carter, and French President Giscard d'Estaing are all more central. Even President Ronald Reagan, who appears late, may be a more consequential figure in the arc of Spohr's argument. (It is Reagan who concluded the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, culminating Schmidt's "dual track" approach to arms control and force deployments.)

Kissinger's prominence, it would appear, owes less to his participation in the events Spohr's book charts than it does to the weight of his historical reputation. Spohr dwells upon Kissinger in her introduction and her conclusion because it is Kissinger who still personifies, for many readers, the man who comprehended and managed the distinctive international challenges of the 1970s. Spohr does not presume to diminish Kissinger's place in history but she does, through her elevation of Schmidt's role, take aim at his singularity.

By elevating Schmidt as Kissinger's peer, Spohr makes significant contributions to scholarship on international relations and, in particular, the internal politics of the Western Alliance in the 1970s. What she achieves, as a result, is a historical vantage that is novel, revealing, and important—especially so when comparison is made to scholarship on U.S. foreign relations in the 1970s.

If Kissinger studies are flourishing, Anglophone studies of Helmut Schmidt—and Cold War-era German foreign policy more broadly—are moribund. Spohr's is the first book-length take on Schmidt to appear in English since Jonathan Carr's breezy 1985 biography.² (Far weightier accounts have appeared in German, notably Helmut Soell's two-volume magnum opus, published in 2008.)³ Schmidt's standing makes this inattention striking. One of his era's most accomplished politicians, Schmidt led West Germany for the equivalent of two U.S. presidential terms, navigated the Cold War's re-escalation in the late 1970s, and made

¹ Henry Kissinger, "Eulogy for Helmut Schmidt," Hamburg, 23 November 2015, <http://www.henrykissinger.com/eulogies/112315.html>.

² Jonathan Carr, *Helmut Schmidt: Helmsman of Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985).

³ Hartmut Soell, *Helmut Schmidt*, 2 vols (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003, 2008).

the G-7 summits a feature of the international landscape. Spohr's mission, then, is to rehabilitate Schmidt's reputation as one of the paramount leaders of the 1970s.

Kissinger, for Spohr, is the yardstick against which Schmidt should be measured, and she is emphatic in her conclusions. "No less than Kissinger," Spohr writes, Schmidt was "a thinker as well as a doer" of the first order (135). His achievements, in her account, in some ways eclipse the Secretary of State's. Unlike Kissinger, Spohr notes, Schmidt was no mere counselor, serving at the pleasure of a president. He alone possessed "the crucial attribute of political power" (136) Schmidt's talents, Spohr argues, were also more diverse than Kissinger's. Like Kissinger, Schmidt achieved renown as a defense intellectual, but Schmidt was also trained in economics—a background that prepared him to engage the distinctive challenges of the 1970s.

Spohr's case for Schmidt begins with a substantive, probing chapter on the global economic crisis of the mid-1970s. As Finance Minister under Chancellor Willy Brandt (1969-1974) and then Chancellor of the Federal Republic from May 1974 through October 1982, Schmidt was well-positioned to lead Germany and the West through the turmoil that followed the oil crisis. And lead he did. Schmidt exerted himself to make economic collaboration an integral purpose of the Western Alliance, an agenda that aligned nicely with Kissinger's evolving priorities. With President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France, Schmidt played the key role in orchestrating the meetings among heads of state and government that became the annual G-6 and (from 1976) the G-7 summits. These exertions reflected Schmidt's belief in the necessity for collaborative international economic governance and earned him well-deserved a reputation as a world economist or *Weltökonom*.

Still, defense was Schmidt's first preoccupation as statesman, and Spohr devotes four of her five substantive chapters to his management of the Cold-War balance. Schmidt, she argues, articulated in his early career as a defense intellectual the precepts he would follow as Chancellor: that the West should engage with the East to reduce armaments and the risk of war but that the West should negotiate from strength—and maintain an effective deterrent across all categories of military strength. The prospect of limited nuclear war was a particular horror for Schmidt, who strived constantly in opposition to doctrines that countenanced, and weapons that threatened, the irradiation of *Mittleuropa*.

The Enhanced Radiation Warhead (ERW) was one such device, and Spohr devotes a chapter to its sorry saga. The so-called 'neutron bomb' became contentious in Germany after Egon Bahr, an influential rival within Schmidt's Social Democratic Party (SPD), denounced it as an ethical abomination: a bomb intended to kill people while leaving buildings intact. Schmidt harbored reservations about the weapon, but he recognized the neutron bomb's utility as a bargaining chip or, failing that, a defensive weapon against Soviet tanks. A convoluted diplomatic process within NATO did not, however, result in the warhead's deployment. After insisting that frontline allies—namely West Germany—request the ERW, Carter made the idiosyncratic choice not to proceed with the weapon's development. Carter's about-face left Schmidt in the lurch and poisoned relations between the President and the Chancellor. While Spohr acknowledges the debacle's tragic dimensions—Carter and Schmidt shared reservations about the ERW, which they failed to communicate—she, like Schmidt, holds the American president largely responsible.

After the neutron bomb debacle, Schmidt mobilized NATO to counter Soviet intermediate-range missiles in Europe. Schmidt worried that 'gray area' systems—falling outside the remit of disarmament talks focused on strategic and conventional systems—would destabilize the military balance in Europe, with consequences detrimental for the Federal Republic's military security. Schmidt, as Spohr explains, became the key mover

behind the ‘dual-track’ proposal that NATO adopted in December 1979. This initiative committed NATO to deploy upgraded intermediate nuclear forces (in the form of Pershing II and cruise missiles) while, at the exact same time, recommitted the alliance to pursue mutual reductions in intermediate-range nuclear forces with the Soviet Union. Reflecting his longstanding priorities, Schmidt’s approach sought to consolidate the West’s military strengths in order to engage the East in constructive dialogue.

The dual-track breakthrough coincided, more or less, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Cold War’s sharp re-escalation hereafter thrust Schmidt into a new role. In the final phase of his chancellorship, Schmidt became a ‘double interpreter’ between the superpowers. In Spohr’s assessment, Schmidt played a crucial role ensuring that the post-Afghanistan estrangement between Washington and Moscow did not result in a full and formal breakdown in dialogue. Even Jimmy Carter, whose own relations with Schmidt were difficult, conceded that the Chancellor had a vital role to play as the West’s interlocutor with Moscow. Schmidt had in effect become the West’s senior statesman.

And yet Schmidt had still to deal, Spohr explains, with rancor and dissension within his governing coalition. Being a politician as well as a strategist afforded Schmidt stature, but the dual status of the politician-statesman also entailed vulnerabilities on the domestic front, as Spohr sagely notes. In the Cold-War chill that followed the dual-track breakthrough and the Afghanistan invasion, German politics became increasingly skeptical of robust defense efforts. Hostile to nuclear weapons and Ronald Reagan, the newly-elected U.S. President, the SPD’s left wing expressed its opposition to Schmidt’s Atlanticism and his dual track compromise. The resurgence of the SPD left hastened the alienation of Schmidt’s centrist Free Democratic Party (FDP) coalition partners, eroding the Chancellor’s political position. In October 1982, the FDP combined with the opposition Christian Democratic Party (CDP) to stage a vote of no confidence in Schmidt’s leadership.

Schmidt’s downfall was, in some ways, an ironic result of global historical forces the Chancellor had failed to control—and perhaps even exacerbated through his vigorous pursuit of his own moderate and priorities. “Schmidt the world statesman,” Spohr writes, “could never fully rise above the problems of Schmidt the party politician” (137).

Committed to a robust defense, Schmidt had maneuvered NATO towards the deployment of intermediate nuclear forces while maintaining an open door for East-West dialogue. This statesmanlike achievement culminated strategic priorities Schmidt had first articulated two decades earlier as a rising defense intellectual: that the West be strong in order to make peace. Yet Schmidt, for all his achievements, was unable to placate the anti-nuclear pacifism that afflicted the European left in the early 1980s. Estranged from Egon Bahr, one of the SPD’s leading critics of tough defense policies, Schmidt failed to offer for his defense policies the kind of unifying, ethical rationale that Brandt had devised a decade earlier for *Ostpolitik*. As a result, the SPD’s internal schisms widened.

Committed to international economic governance, Schmidt collaborated with colleague heads of state and government in the 1970s to build new institutional frameworks, including the G-7. These institutions aimed to support the collaborative management of globalization but failed to stem the global recession of 1981-1982, as soaring interest rates in the United States clipped growth and set destabilizing capital flows in motion. Unemployment in the Federal Republic in the fall of 1982 reached levels unseen since the 1950s, exacerbating Schmidt’s political predicament.

The timing of the 1981-1982 recession was unfortunate for Schmidt, but it was the German Chancellor, among the G-7s founders, who had been the most dogged in his commitment to fiscal austerity and tight money—commitments that stood in the way of the Keynesian solutions the Carter administration sought to devise and, recast in a more aggressive guise, that precipitated the economic crisis of 1981-1982. The global economy turned out to be Schmidt's fate as well as Germany's, an outcome that put an ironic twist on his dictum: 'Weltwirtschaft is unser Schicksal' ("world economy is our fate").

What, then, of legacies? Spohr makes a strong case for Schmidt's creativity, and her conclusions are, in general, persuasive. Spohr is most compelling in the arena of defense policy, where causal lines can credibly be drawn between the 1979 dual-track proposal and Reagan and Gorbachev's INF Treaty in December 1987. Schmidt's advocacy of a robust NATO defense and East-West disarmament, it might be argued, anticipated the Reagan administration's creative efforts on behalf of disarmament far more closely than did President Richard Nixon and Kissinger's exertions on behalf of arms control in the 1970s.

In the arena of economics, the picture is murkier, as Spohr concedes. Yes, Schmidt possessed a clear vision of the Federal Republic's place "in an increasingly interconnected world" (136) and a strong sense of the necessity for *Weltwirtschaftsregierung*, or global economic governance. How Schmidt's accomplishments should be measured against this standard is not altogether clear. The G-7 has endured as a framework for collaborative action, even if the G-20, with its separate and distinct institutional genealogy, has in recent years eclipsed the seven-power summit. It is not so obvious what kind of governance international summitry has in practice managed to achieve. Spohr conveys her own doubts when she describes the G-7 degenerating "into bureaucratic routine and media spectacle" (134), and this reader, for one, shares the skepticism. Situated in broad perspective and assessed for long-range impact, Schmidt's exertions on behalf of policy coordination in the 1970s may distinguish him as a seer more than a doer who built truly durable solutions.

Overall, Spohr makes a strong case for Schmidt as a statesman who comprehended better than most of his contemporaries the transformative dimensions of the 1970s. What Spohr achieves, through her bold reimagining of Schmidt's political life, is a new vantage on the international history of the transformative, tumultuous 1970s. Other historians have engaged the international relations of the 1970s from other historical vantages, most often that of the United States and, in particular, of the U.S. political elite. *The Global Chancellor* marks a diffusion of the historiography's Washington-centrism.

Offering novel perspective on the international turmoil of the 1970s, Spohr helps us to understand not only how Germany reemerged during the 1970s as a front-rank power but also how the international history of the 1970s might be engaged from diverse vantages. West Germany's experience was unique, of course, and to the extent that it weathered the 1970s with comparative ease, Germany's experience bears out Spohr's arguments for Schmidt's breadth of historical vision and consummate political skill.

In the end, Spohr amply proves her case: Schmidt stands as Kissinger's peer. To grasp the implications of this point, it must be remembered that the United States and West Germany in the 1970s faced dilemmas that were at the same time common and distinct. Grappling with global dilemmas from a German standpoint, Helmut Schmidt, as much as Henry Kissinger, grasped the distinctive characteristics of the times in which he lived and led and, as a result, left the imprint of his influence upon his era.

Review by Thomas A. Schwartz, Vanderbilt University

In her succinct, well-written, and well-researched monograph, Kristina Spohr quotes from one of German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's Social Democratic Party (SPD) colleagues who said of him in September 1980, "[Schmidt] is convinced most of the time that he's the only real leader in the western world. He is also probably right. The problem is he's German" (140). This truly resonated with me, in part for personal reasons. I started graduate school in the late 1970s, and Helmut Schmidt spoke at the Harvard Commencement in 1979. To say that most of my professors revered Schmidt would be something of an understatement. This was the low point of Jimmy Carter's presidency, not long before his infamous 'malaise' speech, and Carter's erratic leadership style placed him in unfavorable contrast with the formidably intelligent German leader. *Time* magazine featured Schmidt on its cover with the headline, "West Germany—Pride and Prosperity," and it was clear that if America's Eastern Establishment could have voted, Schmidt would have been their choice of leader.¹ After all, as one of my teachers put it, Schmidt's perfect spoken English was far superior to Carter's. (Harvard professors really did have quite a bias against Southern accents.)

But Helmut Schmidt was indeed born in Germany, and Germany's tortured history placed real limitations on the role he could play as an international leader. After his loss of power in October 1982—the only German leader ever replaced by a positive 'no-confidence' vote of the Bundestag—Schmidt's historical reputation suffered. In comparison with the other great German chancellors of the postwar era—Konrad Adenauer, the 'Westbindung' leader who tied Germany to the Western alliance, Willy Brandt, the 'Ostpolitik' chancellor who opened Germany to better relations with the Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and Helmut Kohl, the 'Wiedervereinigung' chancellor who reunited the country, Schmidt seemed, in the words of Henry Kissinger, a "transitional figure," (132) a leader who steered Germany well but who lacked any larger vision for Germany's future.² Schmidt was seen as a "sober pragmatist" and "competent manager" for the crises he faced, but he was distinctly secondary compared to his predecessors and successors in the pantheon of the Federal Republic's chancellors (1).

Kristina Spohr's 'Schmidt revisionism' is long overdue, and along with the work of Cambridge University's Matthias Haeussler, it is a welcome reassessment of Schmidt's leadership and his role in German history.³ At the time of Schmidt's chancellorship, I shared much of the American enthusiasm for him, even buying a fisherman's cap that was his trademark. (Thankfully no pictures of me wearing this cap survive. I hope.) For many Americans, Schmidt seemed to embody the intellectual as politician, a Renaissance man who could discuss military and economic questions with facility but was also a talented concert pianist. His handling of the 1977 Lufthansa hijacking incident in Somalia, where German commandos successfully stormed the plane and freed the hostages, demonstrated both a toughness and grace under pressure which we had not seen

¹ *Time*, 11 June 1979 cover.

² In his eulogy given almost 16 years later, Kissinger softened this, commenting that Schmidt "lived in an age of transition." <http://www.henryakissinger.com/eulogies/112315.html>.

³ Matthias Haeussler, "A 'Cold War European'? Helmut Schmidt and European Integration, c. 1945-1982", *Cold War History* 15:4 (November 2015): 427-447. Haeussler is writing his own book with a focus on Schmidt's role in advancing European integration, and delivered a paper at the most recent SHAFR Conference in Washington in June 2017 entitled, "The Stable Chancellor: Helmut Schmidt's Lasting Legacy," on a panel where I was a commentator.

since President John Kennedy. His West Germany seemed to weather the economic problems of the 1970s considerably better than the United States, and his approach to the Soviet Union seemed both balanced and without illusions. In the late 1970s, Schmidt did seem to be the commanding Western leader. (And comparing today's twenty-first century Western leaders with Schmidt would convince most observers that Darwin was wrong.)

Spohr is not seeking to write a comprehensive reassessment of Schmidt as Chancellor, and she deliberately avoids dealing with such subjects as Schmidt's response to terrorism, his policies toward European integration, and his approach to the North-South divide. Her focus is on his role in creating and furthering some of the architecture of international economic governance, like the G-7 summits and the European Monetary System, helping to restore a military balance in Europe through the double-track decision of 1979, and Schmidt's role as an 'double interpreter' between the Superpowers as the Cold War heated up again between 1979 and 1982. She is not an uncritical revisionist, and is particularly tough on Schmidt for his clumsy handling of his personal relationship with Jimmy Carter, probably one of the worst of his unforced errors. Nevertheless, Spohr is determined to revise the historical estimate of Schmidt, and to recognize "Helmut Schmidt's rich legacy as the global chancellor" (141).

Spohr's strongest argument for Schmidt rests with his role in handling the world economic crisis of the 1970s. The cover of the book shows the studious Schmidt on the way to the 1976 G-7 summit in Puerto Rico, reading the book, *Die Neuordnung der Weltwirtschaft* (The Reorganization of the World Economy) by Rainer Jonas and Manfred Tietzel.⁴ Hailed by many at the time as "The World Economist," Schmidt promoted both the image and reality of himself as a statesman concerned with international economic questions above all else. Spohr rightly notes that to Schmidt and most other Germans of his generation, there was a recognition that economic crises and turmoil could lead to political extremism and the undermining of the democratic order. Schmidt's historical understanding was that the failure of the Western countries to cooperate economically in the wake of Great Depression helped lead to the twin disasters of fascism and world war. In the wake of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the oil crisis, Schmidt saw a similar crisis threatening the West, especially his Federal Republic, which was dealing with a serious terrorist challenge. Schmidt's recognition of the importance of this issue was much more incisive and profound than his 'professional friend' Henry Kissinger, who still thought largely in terms of geopolitics and frequently disparaged the importance of economic questions. Both Presidents Ford and Kissinger respected Schmidt's views on economic questions and shared his skepticism about Keynesian remedies for the economic crisis. Although ideologically more conservative, their economic policies were more in tune with Schmidt's preferences than with Democratic President Jimmy Carter.

The German economic model which Schmidt promoted and preached to other countries—conservative monetary policies, a strong currency, stimulating international trade and seeking to maximize surpluses, an emphasis on training and educating a skilled labor force, and a generous social safety net—has been one of the most successful at coping with challenges of globalization. Indeed, as Americans have been forced to weigh the costs and benefits of globalization in the reaction to Donald Trump's election, it is worth recognizing that Germany has been one of the countries which has benefited most from globalization, making Spohr's title for Schmidt, "The Global Chancellor," all the more appropriate, and much more significant as Schmidt's legacy.

⁴ Rainer Jonas and Manfred Tietzel, *Die Neuordnung der Weltwirtschaft* (Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1976).

Spohr highlights Schmidt's successful handling of relations with his fellow Western leaders in the first years of his chancellorship, particularly his close ties with President Gerald Ford and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Schmidt strongly valued personal diplomacy with other leaders, believing that it set the stage for reconciling national interests and pursuing cooperative solutions.⁵ His instinct for such diplomacy truly failed him in dealing with Carter, and Spohr recounts their clashes over economic questions as well as the fiasco surrounding the deployment of the neutron bomb. "Neither man appreciated that, domestic politics aside, the other was genuinely ambivalent about the whole idea of ERWs [Enhanced Radiation Warheads]" (71). Spohr is critical of Schmidt's patronizing and dismissive attitude toward Carter, although she also contends that their terrible personal relationship did not prevent most alliance agreements.

Although Spohr devotes most of the book to Schmidt's contribution on military and security issues, the argument for his lasting legacy here is less persuasive. Schmidt was something of a rarity in the German political context of the time—a defense intellectual who thought seriously about the problems of the military balance in Europe and the dilemmas of nuclear deterrence. However, he led a political party with a history of anti-militarism and skepticism toward nuclear weapons. Schmidt's role in fashioning the famous dual-track decision of NATO in 1979 was truly significant. In that policy decision, the alliance committed itself to pursue negotiations to eliminate the medium range nuclear weapons from the European theatre while at the same time planning to modernize and deploy new weapons if the negotiations failed. Theoretically, this was a brilliant political compromise. However, the problem for Schmidt was that he was not the one leading the negotiations, and when the American administration shifted from being led by Jimmy Carter to President Ronald Reagan, many Germans, especially those in Schmidt's own SPD, did not trust the sincerity of an American interest in arms control. Schmidt himself would probably have accepted something much less than the 'zero-option' which the Reagan Administration ultimately achieved in 1987 when Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev finally brought new thinking into the Kremlin. But in 1982, as the Cold War was still intensifying, Schmidt could not successfully navigate the domestic politics of the dual-track position within his own political party, and it was one of the factors in leading to his ouster. Making a direct connection between a compromise fashioned in the exigencies of politics in 1979, and the final agreement of 1987, strikes me as something of a stretch, especially given the degree to which Schmidt's SPD came to oppose the actual stationing of nuclear weapons in 1983.

Schmidt's role as a 'double interpreter' between Washington and Moscow as the Cold War grew hotter is the third area where Spohr sees Schmidt's legacy. The great fear of American leaders in the 1980s was that such a role would loosen Germany's ties to NATO and lead it to play a more independent and destabilizing role in European politics. Schmidt was aware of this fear, and insisted that West Germany was loyal to the West, and he was simply trying to help reduce tensions. In many ways, his role in this does prefigure Chancellor Angela Merkel's dealings with President Vladimir Putin's Russia, although some might see a link between the more controversial—and less balanced—approach of Social Democrat Gerhard Schroeder and Russia.

Schmidt's determination to preserve détente, and particularly its inner German dimensions, could lead him to a certain tone-deafness toward issues of human rights and the political repression of Eastern Europe. Spohr

⁵ Schmidt's belief in the value of personal diplomacy certainly parallels the thinking of American presidents of this era, though strangely enough it is at odds with that of Kissinger, who always contended that national interests, far more than personal relationships, shaped a leader's behavior. Tizoc Chavez, "Presidential Parlay: Personal Diplomacy and the Modern Presidency," Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University 2016.

notes that Schmidt was particularly critical toward Jimmy Carter's human rights campaign, regarding the President as an "unpredictable dilettante who tries to convert his private morality into world politics but is in reality incapable of fulfilling the role of the leader of the West." (31) Schmidt may well have been fortified in those sentiments by his friend Kissinger, who was equally dismissive of Carter's policies. Although historians might still debate the subject, general public sentiment has not been particularly kind to this *realpolitik* approach to human rights, and Angela Merkel's chancellorship, with its idealistic welcoming of Syrian refugees, demonstrates that the pendulum in German politics has certainly shifted. Even after Carter's departure, Schmidt remained less than enthusiastic about emphasizing human rights questions in East-West diplomacy, especially if it endangered détente and Germany's economic interests in the East. Schmidt was at a summit with East German leader Erich Honecker when martial law was declared in Poland in December 1981. Rather than protest the rounding up of Solidarity leaders across the border, "the two German leaders threw snowballs together in the small town of Güstrow, surrounded by solicitous Stasi men keeping the people at bay."⁶ It is hard to imagine a German chancellor behaving as cavalierly as that today.

These minor criticisms aside, Kristina Spohr has written an impressive book about an outstanding German political leader whose reputation deserves serious reconsideration.

⁶ Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Random House, 1993), 167.

Review by Kristina Spohr, London School of Economics and Political Science

Let me begin by warmly thanking the three commentators for their thoughtful and stimulating assessments of *The Global Chancellor*. I particularly appreciate their recognition of its central argument, namely that German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt should be seen as a world statesman and an early pioneer of globalization. As Thomas Schwartz observes, “the German economic model which Schmidt promoted and preached to other countries . . . has been one of the most successful at coping with the challenges of globalization.” Martin Albers notes that Schmidt had “a particular grasp of the fact that, in order to maintain peace and economic growth, states had to rely on each other and find ways of cooperating”—a theme, he adds, which is of “actual political relevance today” in an era of “populist nationalism.” And Daniel Sargent approves of the book’s elevation of Schmidt to the status of Kissinger’s “peer” in global statecraft—describing him as a man who “grasped the distinctive characteristics of the times in which he lived and led and, as a result, left the imprint of his influence upon his era.”

These comments are gratifying because when I wrote this book, I was swimming against the current of much recent historiography. In Germany there have been several recent books about Schmidt but these are narrowly biographical and also heavily domestic, focusing on issues such as terrorism, coalition politics and social policy.¹ Germans still tend to see Schmidt, the Chancellor, as a parochial figure who was mired in the turbulent politics of the Federal Republic. The cutting-edge new work by doctoral students in international history has mostly examined the Chancellor within a European, economic, or military-strategic context.²

¹ On biographies, see for example, the officially commissioned magnum opus by Hartmut Soell, Helmut Schmidt, 1918-1969: Vernunft und Leidenschaft, vol. 1 (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003); Soell, Helmut Schmidt, 1969 bis Heute: Macht und Verantwortung, vol. 2 (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2008); cf. Gunter Hofmann, Helmut Schmidt: Soldat, Kanzler, Ikone (München: C.H. Beck, 2015); Theo Sommer, Unser Schmidt: Der Staatsmann und der Publizist (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2011); Hans-Joachim Noack, Helmut Schmidt: Die Biographie (Berlin: Rowohlt Berlin, 2010); Martin Rupps, Helmut Schmidt: Eine politische Biographie (Stuttgart: Hohenheim, 2002); Michael Schwelien, Helmut Schmidt: Ein Leben für den Frieden (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2003). On terrorism, see for example, Bernhard Blumenau, The United Nations and Terrorism: Germany, Multilateralism, and Antiterrorism Efforts in the 1970s (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Matthias Dahlke, Demokratischer Staat und transnationaler Terrorismus: Drei Wege zur Unnachgiebigkeit in Westeuropa, 1972-1975 (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011); Tim Geiger, “Die ‘Landshut’ in Mogadischu: Das außenpolitische Krisenmanagement der Bundesregierung angesichts der terroristischen Herausforderung 1977,” Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 57:3 (2009): 413–56. Bernd Faulenbach, Das sozialdemokratische Jahrzehnt: Von der Reformeuphorie zur Neuen Unübersichtlichkeit. Die SPD 1969-1982 (Bonn: Dietz, 2011); Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, Partner and Rivalen: Der Briefwechsel (1958-1992), edited and introduced by Meik Woyke, (Bonn: Dietz, 2015).

² Martin Albers, “The Policies of Britain, France and West Germany towards the People’s Republic of China, 1969-1982,” Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 2014 (published in 2016 by Palgrave Macmillan UK); Matthias Häussler, “Helmut Schmidt and Anglo-German Relations, 1974–1982,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 2015; Elizabeth J. Benning, “Economic Power and Political Leadership: The Federal Republic, the West and the Re-Shaping of the International Economic System, 1972–1976,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2011; Andreas Lutsch, “Westbindung oder Gleichgewicht? Die nukleare Sicherheitspolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen Atomwaffensperrvertrag und NATO Doppelbeschluss (1961–1979),” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz, 2015; Ilaria Parisi, “La France

Globalization in the 1970s has, of course, recently received attention from U.S. scholars, but they have explored it mainly from an American vantage point.³ And, as Sargent points out, most studies of Kissinger largely treat him on his own terms, as a singular phenomenon, rather than making comparisons with other policy intellectuals at the centre of power.⁴

Albers is of course right when he comments that my book is “unlikely to remain the definite verdict on Schmidt’s foreign policy.” But it was never my intention to produce a final account, obviating the need for further debate. It is in the nature of our profession that no interpretation is ever ‘definitive.’ The conversation always continues. My aim in *The Global Chancellor* was simply to free Schmidt from the narrowly German/European framework in which he has usually been situated. I state in the introduction that “this is not an exhaustive account of Schmidt’s chancellorship” and make clear that

I do not seek to cover every single aspect of his foreign policy. Some issues are not addressed in detail, for instance the specifics of Franco-German relations or development in European integration. Nor do I dwell on terrorism . . . or on the North-South divide. My focus is on peace and security at a higher level, namely what Schmidt saw as two truly existential threats to West Germany and the West as a whole: the potential collapse of capitalism and the possible outbreak of a third world war that would bring with it nuclear Armageddon (5).

This explains, for instance, why I do not go into as much detail on the internal politics of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) as Albers would have wished, whereas I *do* discuss at length Schmidt’s political, policy and personal differences with Chancellor Willy Brandt’s adviser Egon Bahr, because these were central to the existential issues of Cold-War nuclear politics, especially the neutron bomb and the dual track decision.

NATO’s dual track decision of 1979 is a theme that pre-occupies all three commentators. Let me say that this remains a highly contested issue, especially in Germany, for the public as well as politicians, not least because today’s renewal of the nuclear arms race, most notably Russian Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) deployments in 2017, raises many of the same concerns that were so emotive in the 1970s and 1980s. Schwartz and I part company on the motives and intentions behind Schmidt’s advocacy of the dual track. He stresses the domestic political morass from which Schmidt could not escape, namely the ardent pacifism and

et la crise des euromissiles, 1977-1987,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, Paris, 2017.

³ See for example, Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent, eds, *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger. Volume I. 1923-1968: The Idealist* (New York: Penguin, 2015); Mario Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005); Harvey Starr, *Henry Kissinger: Perceptions of International Politics* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984). See also H-Diplo Roundtable XVIII, 3 on Kissinger. Volume I. 1923-1968: The Idealist [16 September 2016], https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/contributed-files/roundtable-xviii-3_1.pdf.

anti-nuclearism of his party's left wing, which made it hard for him to advocate any new missile deployments without offering, at least as a fig-leaf, the prospect of some kind of arms control negotiations. My interpretation, by contrast, starts with Schmidt's assessment of international relations: that the USSR had upset the balance by stationing new intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe – the SS-20s – and that, in purely military terms, these could only be confronted by a comparable deployment of NATO weaponry, which could only be provided by the United States. Yet Schmidt's international vision from the outset also encompassed a more radical option: he genuinely sought a resolution of the problem through arms reduction. That's why he truly believed in the negotiation track: if the Soviets could be persuaded, through the threat that the U.S. would deploy Cruise and Pershing II missiles in the future, to eliminate their SS-20s, then a balance could be established at a lower level. Schmidt hoped, in my view, that it would ultimately be possible to negotiate a 'zero-option.' As Schwartz notes, Schmidt would have settled for less if it had been possible in early 1980s—so would everyone else in NATO—but of course East-West negotiations were completely frozen in the 'New Cold War,' in which the superpowers were not on talking terms. That is why Schmidt, always with an eye on the German question and Germany's Cold War vulnerabilities, was so keen to assume the role of 'double interpreter' between the White House and the Kremlin so that dialogue would not die entirely. But the 'zero option' remained his ideal.

In the dual track decision of December 1979, NATO deliberately set a three-year deadline for negotiations (track two). That is how long it would take for the United States to have cruise missiles and Pershing IIs in production. Once the time was up, U.S. deployments would automatically begin. Schmidt was entirely in favour of this—he had been the architect of the dual track—but his divided party now revolted against the policy and against him. In this sense, the dual track was one of the crucial triggers for his fall from power. It was Helmut Kohl, his Christian-Democrat successor, who implemented the deployment (track one) and took the credit for it. Yet it was Schmidt's rooted conviction that *both* tracks were essential and interdependent.

The superpower INF agreement of 1987—a global double-zero (encompassing both Europe and Asia)—was a direct Soviet response to the cruise and Pershing II deployment. As Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev later admitted, the Soviets came back to the negotiating table in order to “prevent full implementation of the American Euromissile programme.”⁵ So Schmidt's goal of a zero-option was eventually realized: getting to the end of track two via a detour along track one. That's why in *The Global Chancellor*, I echoed the view of U.S. journalist Jim Hoagland, who, in 1990, observed that Schmidt was the “father of the INF deployment and godfather of the INF treaty.”⁶

Of course, the tracing of legacies across the discontinuities of political history is always a matter of interpretation, on which individual historians will differ. But it may well be worth reflecting on what the decision-makers of our own time can learn from Helmut Schmidt. In the crisis-ridden 1970s, Schmidt thought deeply about the importance of communication in an increasingly interdependent world. He always sought contact through one-on-one discussions but he was adept in small groups which facilitated 'direct dialogue' and 'frank exchanges'—key phrases in his diplomatic lexicon. Summits, he believed, should not just allow leaders to articulate their national positions; they should also facilitate the identification of shared interests, the forging of compromises and the development of future common actions, especially where

⁵ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (London: Doubleday, 1996), 444.

⁶ Jim Hoagland, “Helmut Schmidt, Germany and the World,” *The Washington Post*, 18 February 1990.

personal relations between leaders were fraught. His ideal was ‘political friendships’ of the sort he cultivated with French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and U.S. President Gerald Ford. But building ‘trust’ was particularly important with adversaries. He tried to maintain good relations with Erich Honecker in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and he was one of the earliest Western leaders to visit China after the Cultural Revolution. In the process, as Schwartz rightly observes about Poland, human rights issues did take second place. Yet, Schmidt’s *Realpolitik* had its own morality: to keep the peace. Schmidt arrogated to himself the role of “double interpreter” between the two superpowers in order to maintain predictability and to hold open channels of communication when Soviet-American relations broke down.

Ambition exceeded achievement, of course. But Schmidt’s theory and practice remain worthy of note. He was never universally admired by his contemporaries. Yet in the scope of his thinking and writing and in the sweep of his political intervention, Schmidt changed the whole German game. He truly was his country’s ‘global chancellor.’