

Transcending the cold war: summits, statecraft, and the dissolution of bipolarity in Europe, 1970-1990

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Abstrak

In 1989-90 the map of Europe was transformed peacefully-without a war, unlike other great ruptures of the international order such as 1815, 1870, 1918, and 1945. What role did international summitry play in the dénouement of the cold war? So far scholars have focused on long-term systemic factors, Gorbachevs reform agenda, or the impact in 1989 of people power. This major multinational study, based on archives from both sides of the Iron Curtain, adopts a novel perspective by exploring the contribution of international statecraft to the dissolution of Europes bipolar order. This is done through the examination of key summit meetings from 1970 to 1990 across three phases Thawing the cold war, living with the cold war, and transcending the cold war and in three main strands: the superpowers and arms control, their triangular relationship with China, and the German question. The threads are drawn together in a sweeping analytical conclusion. The book includes fascinating insights into key statesman such as Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev, Willy Brandt and Helmut Kohl, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, both as thinkers about the international system and also practitioners of summit bargaining. Particular attention is devoted to the cultural dimensions of summitry, as performative acts for the media and as engagement with the other across ideological divides. Written in lively prose, this book is essential reading for those interested in modern history, contemporary politics, and international relations addressing issues that still shape the world today.