The close association between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany was a key element in the international order of the Cold War era. No country had as wide-reaching or as profound an impact on the western portion of divided Germany as the United States. No country better exemplified the East-West conflict in American thinking than Germany. The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War examines all facets of German-American relations and interaction in the decades from the defeat of the Third Reich to Germany’s reunification in 1990. In addition to its comprehensive treatment of U.S.–West German political, economic, social, and cultural ties, The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War provides an overview of the more limited dealings between the United States and the communist German Democratic Republic.

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The German Historical Institute is a center for advanced study and research whose purpose is to provide a permanent basis for scholarly cooperation among historians from the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States. The Institute conducts, promotes, and supports research into both American and German political, social, economic, and cultural history; into transatlantic migration, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and into the history of international relations, with special emphasis on the roles played by the United States and Germany.

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The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990

A HANDBOOK

Volume I: 1945–1968

Edited by

DETLEF JUNKER
University of Heidelberg

Associate Editors
Philipp Gassert, Wilfried Mausbach, and David B. Morris

GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE
Washington, D.C.

and

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Preface

The idea for this history, *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990*, was conceived in the revolutionary period between 1989 and 1991. With the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet empire, the reorganization of Central and Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the unification of Germany, and the end of the Soviet Union in those years, it quickly became obvious that an epoch in U.S.-German relations had drawn to a close. Inspired by the Hegelian dictum that the owl of Minerva, a symbol of wisdom, first takes to flight when night is falling, the editor of this collection decided to document American–German relations between 1945 and 1990 in all their complexity.

The success of this undertaking was made possible through the resources of the German Historical Institute (GHI) in Washington, D.C., whose primary mission is to promote scholarly collaboration between German and American historians, and thus contribute to a better understanding between their respective countries. Since its founding in 1987, the Institute has devoted its scholarly energy to three areas in particular: research into the political, economic, social, and cultural interactions between the United States and Germany since the eighteenth century; comparative studies of the political, economic, social, and cultural developments in these countries in the modern era; and studies focusing on individual themes important to German and American history. Each of these three areas has claimed a place in the present volumes. It seemed fitting that the GHI invite a total of 132 scholars from both sides of the Atlantic to contribute their work – 146 essays in all – to this project.

In many ways these two volumes have no precedent. Never has a work attempted to describe and explain the relations between two states, two societies, and two cultures in such detail for one historical epoch. No comparable analytical study exists for U.S.-Soviet relations, nor for U.S.-British, U.S.-Japanese, and American–German relations between 1945 and 1990 in all their complexity.

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or German-French relations. Similarly, no previous study has fully met the oft-invoked challenge of examining the reciprocal ties that run between two nations; no study has done this for the realm of politics, security, and economic policy, while also scrutinizing society, culture, and the role of nonstate actors. Finally, using the concrete example of U.S.-German relations, this history can demonstrate how the character of the international system and thus also bilateral relations were transformed after 1945. The second volume in particular makes clear the extent to which a growing multilateralization of international relations and economic globalization, as well as the globalization of popular culture, which was greatly influenced by the United States, affected the bilateral American-German relationship.

The editor and his associate editors chose the title *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990*, deliberately. On the one hand, by focusing on the distinctive characteristics of the Cold War, the title distinguishes this particular time period from both an earlier epoch and a later epoch whose contours remain as yet undefined. On the other hand, the title indicates that these relationships as a whole were more than just dependent variables of the Cold War. For nearly half a century, that war shaped the U.S.-German relationship in a decisive way. The global tension between the two superpowers was the starting point and basis for close political and military cooperation between the United States and the Federal Republic; this in turn contributed to increased economic, cultural, and societal interactions between the two countries. Yet, as the essays in these two volumes make clear, developments and factors that originally had nothing to do with the Cold War also influenced German-American relations in this period. This was particularly true for the presence of the past, the lessons that were drawn from the memory of National Socialist Germany on both sides of the Atlantic. It was also true of global economic developments and tendencies toward modernization that arose in both places.

The end of the division of Germany and Europe in 1990 clearly signaled a new era in German-American relations. Taking 1945 as our starting date may seem more problematic, however. Anyone familiar with the extensive literature on the emergence of the Cold War can cite the arguments for instead choosing 1943 or 1947, or even 1917. Depictions of the interwoven actions, events, and intentions contributing to the origins of the Cold War typically begin prior to 1945. Still, it makes sense to begin with this particular date because the new global political conflict gradually became visible for contemporaries between 1945 and 1947. In this short time span, the world was forced to recognize that the Allies’ hopes for continued cooperation – beyond the moment when the German Reich capitulated – had come apart with astonishing speed. The future of Germany doubtlessly belonged very centrally to the many arenas of conflict. Even the outcome and contradictions of the Potsdam Conference cannot be explained without reference to the emerging conflict of two world powers that embodied antagonistic values, as well as antagonistic societal and state systems.

Objections to use of the term Germany may also arise. It will become apparent that our focus is to a great extent the relations between the superpower of the
West and the Federal Republic, which was gradually integrated into the West. By contrast, relations between the United States and the other German state, the communist German Democratic Republic, are a secondary concern here. Yet, because this volume also scrutinizes those relations to the extent that they did exist, it seemed legitimate to speak of “Germany” here. Finally, by referring to “The United States and Germany” in that order, we wish to indicate that the dominant influence — mutual interactions and connections notwithstanding — flowed from West to East, from superpower to dependent ally.

Dividing the articles into two volumes stems from more than practical considerations. The division also reflects the recognition that 1968 represents a significant turning point for historians, and not only in domestic policy; across the globe, that date also marked a major break with the past in Cold War-era international relations. At the same time, the second volume is considerably shorter because the historical exploration of German-American relations in the 1970s and 1980s remains in its early stages, and can as yet not draw on a substantial body of primary sources. One exception to this is the analysis of German reunification and the decisive role that the United States played in that event.

The authors of these essays live on both sides of the Atlantic and grew up in different cultures. Their contributions are thus often marked by a distinctly American or German perspective. This transatlantic variety does more than substantiate a kind of epistemological relativism along the lines of “where you stand depends on where you sit.” It makes a rich and fruitful exchange of perspectives possible, one that is essential for moving forward intellectually.

The general editor and the GHI in Washington have greatly benefited from the help and generous cooperation of many institutions and individuals. My first expression of gratitude must go to the German taxpayer, for the vast majority of the resources that made this project possible came from public funds provided by the Federal Republic of Germany. This is true for the monies that supported the scholarly and administrative staff members of the GHI who were involved with the project but also for the crucial sponsorship provided through the German Economics Ministry; the latter offered financial support through special funds – its ERP-Sondervermögen, the Transatlantic Program – on the recommendation of an interministerial committee. Financing of a study of German-American relations through these special funds seems particularly appropriate to us because they give evidence of the ongoing legacy of the Marshall Plan. In connection with these funds, special thanks are due to Wolfgang Rieck, former section head at the Economics Ministry; Michael Mertes, former director in the Chancellor’s Office; and Werner Weidenfeld, former coordinator for German-American cooperation at the Foreign Office. His successor in that position, Karsten Voigt, also lent his support during the completion of the project. We are likewise indebted to the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, as well as to members of the GHI’s Board of Trustees and Academic Advisory Council under the chairmanship of Klaus Hildebrand (Bonn), whose astute advice was always helpful.

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It is, unfortunately, not possible to thank all the contributors individually. The editors are deeply in their debt. Not only did we rely on established scholars who had long devoted themselves to the study of German-American relations but also on a number of younger scholars who, in many instances, are presenting the results of their first major research in condensed form.

Because approximately half of the original manuscripts were in German and half were in English, translation proved to be a formidable task. Sally E. Robertson, who coordinated a team of translators for the project, provided crucial support. We extend our warmest gratitude to her and her team.

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Responsibility for the final editorial work on the present volumes lay primarily in the hands of Jan Ruth Lambertz and Daniel S. Mattern. David Lazar provided the final elegant touch. Frank Smith, publishing director for Social Sciences at Cambridge University Press, took great interest in this project from the beginning, patiently waited to get hold of the completed manuscript, then guided it to publication with his usual professionalism.

My greatest debt as general editor is to my collaborators, Philipp Gassert, Wilfried Mausbach, and David B. Morris. Dr. Gassert and Dr. Mausbach were research Fellows at the Institute in Washington, D.C., while these volumes were assembled, and they devoted a considerable portion of their time to this project. Dr. Morris’s main responsibility at the Institute was to oversee the editorial work for the book’s publication in English and German. The Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt published a German-language edition in 2001. I am grateful for their expertise, engagement, and skillful command of two languages. Without the team spirit of our Washington
four-leaf clover, it would not have been possible to maintain such a fruitful collaboration with more than 130 authors of varied temperament.

Last, but not least, I thank my Dutch wife, Anja van der Schrieck-Junker, for the rich conversation that we carried on during our five years in Washington, D.C., from 1994 to 1999.

Detlef Junker
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