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THE FATE OF THE SOVIET BLOC'S MILITARY ALLIANCE

*Reform, Adaptation, and Collapse
of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991*

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Abstract: When Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, the Warsaw Pact was a robust military alliance. It was capable of waging a large-scale war in Europe and was an instrument of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, keeping orthodox Communist regimes in power. The alliance over the years had also become an effective mechanism of political coordination and consultation. In April 1985, the Warsaw Pact leaders met in Warsaw and renewed the Pact for another thirty years. Yet only six years later, the alliance was disbanded, having been rendered obsolete by the political transformation of Eastern Europe in 1989–1990. This monograph recounts what happened to the Warsaw Pact during its final years and explains why the organization ceased to exist in 1991.

This Element also has a video abstract: <http://www.cambridge.org/ESPH-Kramer>

Keywords: Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact, military alliances, Communist states, Mikhail Gorbachev, East-Central Europe

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Contents

Introduction	1
Early Signs of Continuity and Change	12
The Warsaw Pact’s New Military Doctrine	22
Restructuring and Reductions of Forces	28
Reorientation of Soviet Policy	34
The Secret Reinterpretation of Soviet Obligations under the Warsaw Pact	36
The Dissolution of East European Communism	43
Disbandment of the Warsaw Pact	46
Conclusions	53
Select Bibliography	55