

Friendship in world politics: Assessing the personal relationships between Kohl and Mitterrand, and Bush and Gorbachev

*Yuri van Hoef**

ABSTRACT: This article offers a theoretical approach to evaluate political friendship, and to test this approach by focusing on two well documented and supposed friendships: those of Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, and George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. In so doing the article aims to address an academic oversight where friendship is taken for granted, without pausing to define and measure its influence on political actors. Part one aims to operationalize the concept of friendship, offering a concise philosophical overview of the concept, culminating in a demarcation between a (businesslike) partnership and a character-driven friendship. Part two analyses the current state-centred approach to friendship in international relations and shows that operationalizing the concept of friendship between actors connects directly to current research on friendship, adding an additional layer of analysis on the level of political actors. Part three follows with an overview of the supposed friendships between Kohl and Mitterrand, and Bush and Gorbachev, which are then evaluated in the light of the definitions of partnership and friendship. This paper concludes by marking the similarities and inherent differences of the two friendships, particularly pausing on the thin line a politician must walk between personal affections and an opportune political agenda.

Keywords: Personal relations, Kohl, Mitterrand, G. H. W. Bush, Gorbachev

Introduction

But when you talk about friendly relations in politics, it's not the friendship of schoolmates.

Mikhail Gorbachev¹

Friendship is a subject virtually ignored in Political History. This lack of interest is in sharp contrast with contemporary people who collect hundreds, if not thousands, of so-called friends in online social networks. At the same time, journalists seem all too happy to classify

* *University of Leeds, UK* (ptyvh@leeds.ac.uk)

Author's note: This article incorporates and updates findings from my two MA theses: Yuri van Hoef, 'Friendship or Partnership? A theory to interpret the role of friendship between heads of state. With a closer look at the relationships between Churchill and Roosevelt, Kohl and Mitterrand, and Bush and Putin' (Master's thesis in Dutch: University of Groningen, 2010); and Yuri van Hoef, 'The Friendship Factor: An investigation into the potential of social network analysis and game theory to assess the influence of friendship in politics on historical actors' (University of Groningen, 2012). The two theses can be digitally accessed through the online repository of the University of Groningen at: <http://scripties.let.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/>.

amicable relations between politicians as friendship. The relationship between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy even earned the moniker *Merkozy* in the press. In contrast to this rising popularity of friendship only two recent publications, Simon Reid-Henry's *Fidel and Che: A Revolutionary Friendship* (2008) and Jon Meacham's *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* (2003) have aimed to focus solely on a well known historical political friendship. The former work functions much more as a double biography, not as a treatise on the influence and meaning of the friendship between the two revolutionaries, while historians traditionally challenge the friendship postulated in the latter. This article will focus on friendships between heads of state and government by offering a theory to evaluate a political friendship in the first part, showing how this theory connects to current International Relations (IR) research in the second part, and testing this theory in the third part by closing in on two particular case studies. This will serve both as an example to entice researchers to delve into the subject of friendship, and to illustrate that it is feasible to evaluate a political friendship and ascertain which role it has played in history.

Though the study of friendship has recently been on the rise in the fields of Politics and IR, owing to the very subject nature of the field the focus has been on friendly (i.e. peaceful) relations between countries, rather than those between actual political actors (Berenskoetter, 2007; Oelsner, 2007). Though the prevalence of the state centred approach is not surprising, Daniel Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack already challenged this approach in 2001 by advocating for a reappraisal of the role of individual politicians (Byman and Pollack, 2001). Theorizing the steps towards peace between states through bonds of friendship, Charles A. Kupchan in his work *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* pays particular attention to the role of political elites in further advancing such a relationship into one of stable peace (2010, p.14). By considering both a philosophical approach and an examination of the prevalent attitude towards friendship in IR, this article hopes to do justice to the challenge set by Byman and Pollack that 'future research would test and elaborate on these hypotheses to develop a more comprehensive set of theories regarding the role of individuals in international relations' (Byman and Pollack, 2001, p.133). Whilst on first glance friendship seems anathema to the modern political arena, there have been ample examples in modern history which prove quite the opposite.

The bonds between American Presidents and their Russian counterparts have since the end of the Cold War at various times been labelled as friendship. The same holds for the Special Relationship between the United States and Great Britain and their political leaders (Riddell, 2004), and even the heads of state of erstwhile enemies France and Germany have found friendship in each other in the last couple of decades. American Presidents such as Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, George H. W. Bush and Ronald Reagan, have made developing close relationships with their foreign counterparts an important part of their foreign politics and their rhetoric. One needs only to hear and see Margaret Thatcher's eulogy for her 'dear friend' Ronald Reagan, or imagine George H. W. Bush' tears when he finally spoke again to his friend Mikhail Gorbachev after the 1991 coup in the Soviet Union, to realize these bonds did at times transcend those of normal politics. The friendly relations between French and German heads of state are exemplified by the supposed friendships between Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder, and Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy. Indeed, the joint walks on the beach of Merkel and Sarkozy were reminiscent of the walks made on the beach by their predecessors, Kohl and Mitterrand,

who enjoyed a famous friendship. However, before examining such a supposed friendship, it is important to first look at what friendship precisely means.

Part one of this article will offer an operationalization of the concept of friendship, based upon the long standing tradition of studying the concept of friendship in philosophy. This operationalization is based upon a demarcation between the utility focused partnership and the character aimed friendship, which will allow a political relationship to be clearly defined as either a (common) partnership, or the rare gem of friendship. Part two will connect these philosophical findings to the existing state-centred approach in IR by elaborating how this demarcation between friendship and partnership connects, and adds an additional layer of analysis, to the current prevalent approach to friendship. Part three of this article will elaborate upon the relationship between Kohl and Mitterrand, and will follow up with an evaluation of the friendship between George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. These two particular relationships have been chosen because of their relative proximity in history and the plethora of source material available, including biographies and autobiographies, and many of the other works written by their immediate staff. By operationalizing the concept of friendship in the first and second part and testing them in the two case-studies in the final part of this article, it will become clear that it is possible to draw genuine and relevant conclusions for studying the influence of friendship on political actors.

1. Operationalizing the concept of friendship

To form a foundation for the study of friendship it is natural to return to the discipline of philosophy which for millennia has tried to answer the enigma of friendship. As with all philosophy, it is proper to return to the classical scholars. The concept of friendship was central to political thought in antiquity. The Greeks differentiated between a number of relationships which in our modern world would all be considered to be a form of friendship. *Philia* (friendship) was the personal bond between two people, based upon reciprocity, and the concrete benefit each party brought to the relationship. The central tenant of *philia* is the reciprocal obligation to help one's friends, and harm one's enemies. Where *philia* existed between members within the same community, *xenia* (guest-friendship) was a more formal, ritualized, relationship between two members of different communities. There is a famous example in *The Iliad* where two warriors, Diomedes and Glaucus, find each other at opposite sides in battle. Diomedes, impressed with his unfamiliar foe, asks Glaucus to introduce himself. Glaucus reveals his lineage, unfolding that their forebears enjoyed a bond of *xenia*, which still binds them in the present day. The two resolve to avoid each other on the battlefield, even exchanging their breastplates (Vander Valk, 2005, pp.28-29). The rise of the polis brought an end to the age of the Homeric heroic individual. *Proxenia* followed *xenia*, in which the political community as a whole befriended an individual person in another community to further its own interests. As a countermeasure to the growing might of the polis, the citizens within the city befriended each other in *hetaireiai*, mostly aristocratic, dinner clubs (Baltzly, 2009; Vander Valk, 2005 pp.22-36). There are clear contemporary examples that are strongly reminiscent of their Greek precursors. They include trade and diplomatic delegations (*xenia*), the use of embassies (*proxenia*), but also the elusive concept of friendship (*philia*). *Philia*, *xenia*, *proxenia* and *hetaireiai* precede the first theoretical demarcation offered by Aristotle, all emphasizing the concept of reciprocity.

For Aristotle reciprocity remains the main element of friendship. He identifies three forms of friendship. Utility-friendship is based upon a mutual advantageous exchange of commodities and goods, existing so long as each side delivers. Next is pleasure-friendship, differentiated from utility-friendship because in a pleasure-friendship both friends' pleasure stems from the same source. On the other hand a utility-friendship where the same goods are exchanged would be redundant. Utility-friendships are reminiscent of business partners, while pleasure-friendships are more akin to a group of companions socialising together. Both definitions share an inherent finiteness, and both are applicable to a political partnership. The friendship ends when the source of pleasure dries up, or the business deal is over. The highest form of friendship is virtue-friendship, in which the friends strive towards a common good, and in striving together strengthen each other. Although reciprocal, the virtue-friendship is not egoistic, and based upon good character rather than mere pleasure. Virtue-friends have an obligation to help each other strive towards the good, and to correct each other when they make mistakes. In its reciprocity virtue-friendship is altruistic (Stern-Gillet, 1995, pp.49-50), and only ends when one friend ceases to strive towards the common good, or, one might say, becomes evil.

This ambivalent nature of friendship has concerned philosophers ever since. Consider the possibility of a (virtue) friendship between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain. To what extent will the political community prevail over the friendship? Could the friendship perhaps even be harmful to the political community itself? While most philosophers from Aristotle onward have adopted his definitions of friendship, they have also undertaken the quest to resolve the tension between the political community, the friend, and the self. The philosophers considered from here onwards are those who have paid particular attention to this tension, and whose thoughts have clear practical implications for a political friendship. The first to adopt Aristotle's definitions was the Roman lawyer and philosopher Cicero (106-43 BC), who combined Aristotle's utility and pleasure-friendship, and followed his famous predecessor in setting this lesser friendship apart from the higher character-friendship, Aristotle's virtue-friendship (Cicero, 1999). Christianity heralded the Dark Ages for the philosophical debate on friendship, foremost because its maxim 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' contradicts elevating one neighbor, a friend, above all others. The friendship debate rekindled from the Renaissance onwards, with philosophers such as Michel Montaigne (1533-1592) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) championing the altruism of virtue-friendship, and the economical benefits of utility-friendship respectively. In contrast to Montaigne who trusted his friend unconditionally, Bacon outlined the concrete benefits of friendship and warned for trusting potentially non-virtuous friends who could betray their friend later on (Montaigne, c.1575; Bacon, 1672). Both Bacon and Montaigne thus warn for the negative side of friendship, which forms a potential weakness and a risk for a politician. While Bacon's warning speaks for itself, Montaigne's findings have important ramifications for a political friendship, and warrant some elaboration.

Montaigne took a standpoint in stark opposition to the other philosophers. To him self-sacrifice came naturally to friendship, and formed its apex. The other scholars centered on striving towards the common good together, and the virtue-friendship disbanded when one of the friends no longer strove towards this. The common good was often linked with the prosperity of the polis, so when one partner moved against his state the friendship was to be dissolved. Montaigne countered that a true friend would follow his friend *no matter*

the request, which could include a move against their own state. Montaigne considers friendship the highest goal attainable, and this leads to the paradox that a friend must be followed in whatever his request, because a true friend will never request anything unworthy (and if he does, then it is per definition not an unworthy request). Here we are presented with a conundrum, which Cicero earlier had touched upon: the risk that friendship can undermine the interests of the political community. In the international arena close bonds between statesmen of different countries can potentially work to the detriment of their respective states. Montaigne having shown us a dangerous aspect of friendship for the state, it is time to turn to theological concerns earlier raised, to ascertain to what extent it is possible to resolve the paradox of loving one friend above all others.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) reiterated that friendship is, by its very essence, an un-Christian concept, and also sought to prove its purely egoistic bond. Kierkegaard claimed the bond was selfish because one friend is elevated above all others. Furthermore he claimed that the bond itself was inherently selfish as well. After all, the very nature of the relationship is egoistically reciprocal in that both partners are bound to mutually admire each other for only as long as the admiration is reciprocated. Kierkegaard shares the view of the Greek philosophers that reciprocity is central to friendship, but where the Greeks view it as the bond's greatest strength, he considers it a weakness (Kierkegaard, 1995). As Graham M. Smith noted, there is an important teleological difference between Kierkegaard and the Greek philosophers: where Aristotle's goal is goodness, Kierkegaard's goal is (friendship with) God (2007, pp.186-189). Though his goal is not applicable to political friendship, the implied selfishness is, and this adds another dimension to a political bond. In the modern era Kierkegaard's proposition that friendship is by its very nature selfish might be a bit unsettling, but it is an important contribution which serves to nuance the altruistic element of friendship. It also further substantiates friendship's place in the political arena, an area which by its very nature, and the nature of the international system, tends to be selfish. Furthermore, it is because friendship also has that calculated element of selfishness that it belongs in the political arena, and can even flourish there. Actors engaged in politics will be especially aware of the finiteness, risks and benefits of a close relationship and will carefully have to balance each of these. Still, though following Montaigne and Kierkegaard helps to place friendship in politics, it leaves the unsatisfactory view that friendship is inherently selfish, dangerous to the political community, and decisively un-Christian.

C. S. Lewis' (1898-1963) concept of *Philia* functions as an important theological response to Kierkegaard's criticism. Lewis distinguished four forms of friendship: *Storge* (familial love), *Philia* (friendship), *Eros* (love), and *Agape* (charity). Of these four, Lewis' *Philia* is the next step in the philosophical evolution of the concept. Although he agrees with the egoistic part of friendship pointed out by Kierkegaard, Lewis also believes there is something higher at work in such a powerful bond between two people, with a clear spiritual side to it (1960, pp.88-89). He considers the selfish form a lower version of the true form of friendship, and clearly distinguishes between a friend and a partner. Of course, a friend can be an ally and a source of aide, both material and immaterial, but this is not what defines friendship, such gestures are:

Relevant, because you would be a false friend if you would not do them when the need arose; irrelevant, because the role of benefactor always remains accidental, even a little alien, to that of Friend. It is almost embarrassing. For

Friendship is utterly free from Affection's need to be needed. (Lewis, 1960, pp.101-102).

A partner then might feel the urge to be needed, but not a true friend.

Not unlike Kierkegaard, Lewis agrees on the difference of friendship between two people, and the love between God and humans. He also notes friendship leads to jealousy, because by its very nature it nurtures jealousy to those left out of a friendship circle, while those within are tempted by arrogance (1960, pp.119-124). Lewis thus reconciles some objections of his predecessors with the subject, but his main contribution lies in a direct response to the ancient philosophers. He points out that friends do not only raise each other up towards goodness, they can also bring each other down in evilness. In a brilliant foreshadowing of life on the Internet in the twenty-first century Lewis notes:

Alone among unsympathetic companions, I hold certain views and standards timidly, half ashamed to avow them and half doubtful if they can after all be right. Put me back among my Friends and in half an hour, in ten minutes, these same views and standards become once more indisputable. (1960, pp.112-114).

Brought full circle, this section started with exalting friendship as one of the highest virtues of humanity, to be reminded that in its excluding nature it also strengthens the lowest characters. This foreshadowing of philosophers is an important reason why their observations are still relevant today. The final scholar we turn to is the one who played the greatest role in operationalizing the concept for the twenty and twenty-first century.

Carl Schmitt's (1888-1985) theory has been taken up by a number of political scientists in the twenty-first century, after having lain dormant for quite some time. There were a number of reasons for this dormancy. First, Schmitt's Nazi past clouded his theories for scholars studying them after the Second World War (Slomp, 2007). Perhaps more importantly, only recently has history shown the relevancy of his theory. Schmitt defines politics as the distinction between friend and enemy. It is this demarcation which brings politics into existence (Schmitt, 2007a, pp.29-30). Schmitt differentiates between two kinds of friendship: utilitarian (i.e. useful) and existential. These two definitions are in essence the utility and virtue-friendships we are already familiar with, thus by invoking Schmitt this analysis is also brought full circle, back to the ancient definitions of Aristotle and Cicero. As with the Ancients, Schmitt's practical application of the concepts is what is most relevant. By analyzing the Spanish Civil War, he showed how a rebel group which received supplies from international benefactors enjoyed bond of utility with those suppliers. Simultaneously, the rebels fighting side by side enjoyed an existential bond in which they were ready to give their lives for their cause (Schmitt, 2007b, pp.77-78). Note here the synthesis between virtue-friendship and Montaigne's call for self-sacrifice. Going a step further, Schmitt also defined enmity.

Schmitt defines three different kinds of enmity: conventional, real and absolute. Conventional enmity is warfare between two states according to the international laws of

war. Real enmity are partisan wars, fought against an occupying foreign power. Real enmity is bound to a (home) land and knows a defensive nature. The aim is to expel the occupying power. Absolute enmity knows no boundaries, neither place nor time. The enemy is universal and to be fought all over the world. It is therefore absolute enmity that characterizes revolutionaries and terrorists. Schmitt's theory is directly applicable to the hard to grasp modern phenomenon of international terrorism. A total war of absolute enmity, which recognizes no boundaries, is one where in the twenty-first century international actors are bound by abstract ties to the same ultimate goal of completely destroying their enemy. It is no surprise then, that according to Schmitt the pinnacle of absolute enmity are weapons of mass destruction (2007b, pp.17, 93). Gabriella Slomp has linked Schmitt's three enmities to three versions of friendship. Game like friendship to conventional enmity, real enmity to existential friendship and absolute enmity to abstract friendship. The former is governed by rules, the second by a place and time, and the latter is abstract because combatants join in the same cause all over the world, with only the cause being the element connecting the fighters (Slomp, 2007). With Schmitt bringing us into the contemporary era, we can now operationalize the concept of friendship.

All the philosophers addressed in this section agree that friendship is a concept hard to define. Virtually all of them choose to differentiate between multiple graduations of friendship. There is a consensus that there is one elevated form that stands above all other bonds. This is a friendship based on character and virtue, with the participants striving towards a joint common good. They find this form of friendship praiseworthy and one of the highest imaginable things a human can attain to. It is in this form that Montaigne's apex - self-sacrifice - is possible, and where Schmitt's freedom fighters find themselves linked in an existential bond. The friends share a common understanding of something that is unique to each relation and is hard to scientifically pinpoint. Shared character traits, virtues, opinions and agenda's are clues that may give away a friendship. Practically speaking, it is inherently also a dangerous relationship which excludes others, and in that can potentially turn one against the state. Theologians who find friendship a selfish bond which excludes others are correct in that aspect. Lewis' warning that a close circle of friends is a place where both virtues and vices are shared, should also not be ignored. Following this, I would propose to reserve the definition of *friendship* for that relationship, that bond, which mostly resembles Aristotle's virtue-friendship and is decidedly not characterized by a *quid pro quo* attitude of the participants. Such a working definition would go as follows:

Friendship is a reciprocal bond shared by two or more individuals based upon a shared understanding of each other, consisting out of perceived shared traits, virtues, opinions, agendas, etc.

A relationship that is per definition *quid pro quo* is the utility-friendship. This is the selfish bond Kierkegaard warned against, based upon material, and/or immaterial advantages that both partners enjoy from each other. It is a relationship that, by its very nature, ends when one of the partners no longer contributes enough. Designating all of our acquaintances, allies, colleagues and schoolmates as 'friends' is flattering, but they are in truth partners who offer a specific material or immaterial advantage to us and this partnership will only persevere as long as they offer this advantage. For example, most of us lose contact with all

but a few of our schoolmates after high school, only to meet them again during reunions, or, most recently, collect them on online networks. The term *partnership* is much more applicable here. It also clears a lot of the fog surrounding the mystery of friendship which the philosophers tried to solve. By utilizing the following working definition of partnership it is possible to study relationships that have been qualified as friendship, and make a sound demarcation between friendship on the one hand, and partnership on the other:

Partnership is a reciprocal bond shared by two or more individuals that is based on mutual material or immaterial advantage and, either explicitly or inexplicitly, ruled by the thought of quid pro quo.

By utilizing this reorientation on the concept of friendship and partnership, it becomes possible to apply these definitions on supposed friendships in politics. This demarcation allows an adequate evaluation of a relationship, taking into account the special, elevated status given to friendship, both by the ancient philosophers and contemporary people. Before examining two case studies to ascertain the feasibility of the above working definitions, it is important to connect these findings to current scholarship on friendship in IR.

2. Friendship in International Relations

Rather than focusing on the bonds between individual political actors, current scholarship is state-centred. This is hardly surprising since the very subject matter in International Relations (IR) is the international realm and IR scholars have traditionally favoured a more systematic approach excluding the influence of individual actors. Daniel Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack challenged this traditional approach by first disproving three claims made by Kenneth N. Waltz that are commonly held against taking individuals into account, and then proving that individuals matter in five historical case studies. In contrast to Waltz, Byman and Pollack argued that: (1) human nature is not a constant, but a variable that should be taken into account; (2) that theories focused on individuals in international relations can be parsimonious (rather than including so many variables that the theory becomes useless); and (3) that since state intentions are a critical factor in international relations, and that those intentions are formed by individuals, individual actors must also be taken into the equation of international politics (Byman and Pollack, 2001, pp.111-114). From the case studies Byman and Pollack derived 14 hypotheses on the role of individuals in international relations. Although none of these mention friendship specifically, hypothesis eight 'states led by predictable leaders will have stronger and more enduring alliances' connects closely to our subject of analysis. Indeed, trustworthiness and consistency are mentioned as important qualities of a leader, Byman and Pollack emphasizing that 'personal relationships among leaders often overcome systemic dynamics or other factors' (2001, pp. 139-140). If individuals matter, the question remains to what extent political scientists have taken up the challenge posed by Byman and Pollack.

Although research on friendship is now growing, the current research agenda still focuses on friendship as a relationship between states. Friendship is not considered as a special bond between individuals, what the philosophers termed the character-friendship,

but as an advantageous relationship between two partner states. This paragraph focuses on three recent contributions to the friendship debate. In his 2007 article in *Millenium* Felix Berenskoetter built a case for IR research to focus more on friendship, partly by invoking a number of the same philosophers as were addressed in the previous part in this section. Applying a state centered approach necessitated that a number of definitions that originally had implications for individuals – such as reciprocity - were now converted to have significance for states (Berenskoetter, 2007, p.666). Though there is a lot to be said for an approach to the international realm that takes cooperation and reciprocity as signs of friendship rather than elements of bandwagoning, bringing Aristotle's character friendship to states is reminiscent of anthropomorphism.

Another approach is that by Andrea Oelsner (2007) who connected the concept of friendship to security studies. Again, friendship is construed as a relationship between states, here with a focus on the development of mutual trust, connecting to the scholarship on securization and desecurization in the Copenhagen School of security studies. In essence, the Copenhagen school focuses on the way in which issues become questions of security (securization), or when issues are taken out of the security debate (desecurization). Oelsner links this to a dynamic concept of peace, differentiating between negative and positive peace, the first 'defined by the absence of war', and the latter 'by the presence of confidence and trust', thus resembling friendship (2007, pp.263-264). She then focuses on a two phase process of desecurization, consisting of: phase one, a critical initiation of a new direction; and phase two, the period after this initiation, 'its development and consolidation' (Oelsner, 2007, p.268). It is not the state centered approach by Oelsner that is relevant to this research, but rather the emphasis she puts on individual actors. Even though the article is state-centred, individuals take the spotlight in both the theory building in the article and the two historical case-studies used. For instance, Oelsner shows that it is *actors* that initiate war avoidance and cooperation when they 'see more instrumental advantages in peace and cooperation' (2007, p.269). Take note of the reminiscence of this to our working definition of a partnership. In the case studies Oelsner studied, emphasis is given to the role of 'decisive actors' and the need for 'strong political will' (2007, p.270 and p.217). If individual actors play a crucial role in the process of creating peace (friendship) between their states, the story of friendship between these actors themselves is relevant, and might very well be the starting point for rapprochement. The role of these actors is not to be understated, as Oelsner notes:

Crucial actors in this process are policy-makers and other political, economic, and intellectual elites who will try to convey to the public (audience, in securization theory language) their re-interpreted perception of reality – that is, their modified cognitive structure – with the aim of producing concrete policy, broadly legitimized. (2007, p.272)

Oelsner is not alone in emphasizing the role of individual actors on the process of peace. Charles A. Kupchan in his 2010 *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* examines the road towards a stable peace through states becoming friends. Again, we can recognize the current status quo where friendship is equated with peace. Not unlike Andrea Oelsner, Kupchan identifies several stages in the ongoing progress towards stable peace: (1)

Unilateral accommodation (one state starts concessions to remove a security threat); (2) Reciprocal restraint (the trading of concessions between the two states); (3) Societal integration (interactions and transactions between actors intensify); and (4) The generation of new narratives and identities (the creation of a shared identity).

By recognizing four concrete stages, Kupchan is not only able to describe the process, but also shows where room exists for individual actors to make a difference (2010, pp.37-52). At each stage the individuals have to act and react upon the moves from the other. Whether it is exploiting the opening concession made by the initiating state or responding in kind (phase 1), or to go a step further and enter into a reciprocal relationship and exercise strategic restraint (Kupchan, 2010, p.43), individual actions matter. Political elites play the key role in the initiation and guidance of phases one and two, while in phase three the contacts between government agencies, businesses and citizens increase, and the contacts between the political elites have become routine (Kupchan, 2010, pp.46-47). Finally, the fourth phase sees the introduction and acceptance of a new narrative and identity. For example, erstwhile enemies such as France and Germany become friends, or a group of countries emphasize their common identity in joint institutions, a new history of collaboration, and even a common flag, as is the case with the European Union. Leaving phase three and four for what they are, the first two phases are the space for individual actors to make a difference, or, as Kupchan deftly notes: 'Diplomacy, not trade or investment, is the currency of peace.' (2010, p.14).

Considering the above works by Felix Berenskoetter, Andrea Oelsner and Charles A. Kupchan, gives a number of important insights concerning the role of friendship in IR. First, there is a clear trend to research friendship not as an attribute between individuals, but as a term to indicate peace between two or more countries. To an extent there is something to be said for such a personalization of states, as Berenskoetter showed that there certainly is overlap between Aristotle's definitions of friendship amid individuals and peace between two or more states. Disregarding the issue of anthropomorphism, more important to note is that peace has much more in common with what was defined in the previous section as partnership, rather than friendship. Recalling the definition of partnership, peace also functions as a reciprocal bond, shared by two or more states, is based on mutual material or immaterial advantage, and is ruled by the thought of *quid pro quo*. It is possible to apply the definition of friendship to peace though by invoking Oelsner's distinction between negative and positive peace, with positive peace resembling traits of friendship, and partnership falling between negative and positive peace. Oelsner shows much more the importance of individual actors in creating friendship (peace) between their countries, though she is not concerned with friendship between the actors themselves *per se*. Kupchan's work too is state-centred, but like Oelsner it is individuals that are at the centre, they guide and initiate the first two stages that can ultimately lead to peace. Kupchan illustrates how stable peace can culminate in three different forms (rapprochement, security community, and union) by analyzing twenty case studies that either resulted in stable peace or failed (2010). Yet, owing to the fact that the book is foremost focused on theory building, and due to the great number of case studies, individual bonds receive virtually no attention.

Considering then that individuals play an important role in international politics, that friendship between states rather than between individuals has been the focus of IR research, but that the latter leaves important room for individuals to make a difference, the following section will examine two individual relationships. The political arena seems to be an area

anathema to friendship. If the supposed friendships between Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, and between George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, prove to be more than a hollow shell to mask a political partnership, the influence of friendship in politics is a subject worth studying. The next section has the aim to demonstrate that the demarcation between friendship and partnership is a valuable one to understand friendship in politics and, by addressing two individual relationships and the role the bond played upon the relations between their countries, it will add to the analyses made by Kupchan and Oelsner by showcasing that individual friendships play an important role in the road to peace.

3. The praxis of political friendship

Because new knowledge and enriching impressions abroad help, to reduce prejudices, and establish friendships. Just what Europe needs.

Helmut Kohl (2007, p.332, my translation)

3.1 'We remained standing': Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand

On September, 22, 1984, Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand commemorated the Battle of Verdun. Many of their countrymen had lost their lives there in the First World War. Both also had an intimate, personal connection to Verdun. Kohl had been brought up with stories of how his father had fought there, while Mitterrand had been wounded in the vicinity of Verdun (Lacouture, 1998, p.102). The service of commemoration was a very important one then, filled with carefully calculated symbolism, meticulously planned and organized. The programme started with a visit to a German military cemetery, where a German band played the German and French national anthems, followed by a visit to a French military cemetery where a French band played the German anthem, and a German band played the French anthem. Silence followed this moment, Kohl and Mitterrand quietly remembering the war together. And then, all of a sudden and unexpected:

The clouds hung low, it was pouring, and an icy wind blew in our faces. We remained standing. Drums, trumpets, without it being planned, François Mitterrand took my hand and we both held each other's hand for a long time. It is hard to describe my feelings. Never before have I felt so close to our French neighbours. The spontaneous gesture of the French president had overwhelmed me. His handshake was a sign of reconciliation. (Kohl, 2005, p.310, my translation)

Mitterrand would later affirm that he had instinctively reached for Kohl's hand (Dreher, 1998, p.362). The importance, and the meaning, of the handshake was immense. It was both a signal of joined mourning and of reconciliation, not just between the two politicians, but between their countries. And while political calculations might certainly have played a role in the handshake, it is very hard to imagine that such a signal and statement could have taken place between two heads of state that did not enjoy a special bond.

At first glance, it seems improbable for a friendship to have developed between Helmut Kohl (1930) and François Mitterrand (1916-1996). Indeed, both found themselves on opposite sides during the Second World War. Mitterrand served in the French army, was wounded and captured by German soldiers, worked for the Vichy government, and was active in the French resistance (Lacouture, 1998). Kohl, a boy during the war, experienced the war as a member of the Hitler Youth, and his older brother lost his life in the German army (Dreher, 1998, pp.18, 23). Apart from the different sides in the war, both were also each other's opposite in the political arena. Mitterrand was a prominent member of the French Socialist Party, and Kohl a member of the conservative Christian Democratic Union. The first meeting between the two statesmen went well, with Kohl being especially impressed with Mitterrand's willingness to cooperate (Kohl, 2005, p.104). Both presidents shared a mutual love for nature, and even shared book lists with each other (Dreher, 1998, p.362). From the start of their interactions, both Kohl and Mitterrand showed signs of going a step further than a simple opportune political partnership. Their shared opposition to the British Prime Minister, "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, only further strengthened their bond (Kohl, 2005, p.102), most dramatically witnessed at the commemoration of the Battle of Verdun. However, while the two might have enjoyed a friendship, one important issue remained which they did not see eye to eye on, and which could prove detrimental to their relationship.

Kohl aimed for German reunification. At first he was supported in this by his friend Mitterrand, but Mitterrand soon changed sides and joined Thatcher in her opposition to reunification, both of them fearful of how the Soviet Union might respond, even though Mikhail Gorbachev had reassured Kohl that the Soviet Union would not prevent German reunification (Gorbachev, 1995, pp.712-715). Mitterrand was vocal in his opposition, going so far as warning that they were playing with a 'World War' at a meeting of the European Council in Strasbourg in December, 1989. This made Kohl realize that he could not depend upon his friend in this matter, (Kohl, 1995, pp.984-988), but it was the memory of Verdun and their friendship that prevented their close relationship from ending, Kohl fully realizing how torn his friend must be between personal affections and loyalty to his compatriots:

In Mitterrand's chest beat two hearts: one for the revolutionary uprising, as demonstrated by the people demonstrating in the GDR; the other for France, whose role and position in the event of German reunification seemed threatened. (Kohl, 1995, p.1014, my translation)

Here the interests of the states they represented were influencing the personal relationship heavily. Kohl was experiencing the loss of an important ally, on what was for the German Chancellor a fundamental issue. Mitterrand's ambivalent behavior, navigating between the interests of his country and his personal relationship with Kohl, was beginning to take its toll on the friendship. It did not help at all that Mitterrand vehemently opposed reunification in several public statements, and even made a very untimely official visit to the GDR (Dreher, 1998, pp.458-460). The friendship was in mortal peril. Kohl begrudged the loss of Mitterrand's support, but remained strengthened by his memory of Verdun, and understood all too well the predicament Mitterrand was in. Nevertheless, the fall of the Wall on November 9, 1989, was forcing Kohl's hand to act swiftly in favor of reunification.

Potentially thwarting his designs was a growing coalition headed by Thatcher that aimed to prevent reunification. Kohl needed the support of political allies, and he could not lose a political friend at such an important moment. He took a drastic step and decided to personally visit Mitterrand at his holiday residence in France at Latche in January, 1990.

Kohl was not the first politician who went on a diplomatic visit to another country. Nor was he the first head of state to visit a counterpart at his holiday residence. Kohl's aim of visiting Mitterrand was twofold. He needed to improve the relations between France and Germany, which had deteriorated under Germany's move to reunification and the stark French opposition to that goal. He also felt obliged to stop the deterioration of his personal relationship with Mitterrand. The meeting was extremely personal, with Kohl noticing that Mitterrand was uncomfortable around him for the first time. What followed was a personal conversation, at the end of which both friends had solved their personal differences. The meeting not only salvaged the friendship, but during a number of walks along the beach Kohl even succeeded in winning Mitterrand's support for reunification (Kohl, 1995, pp.1034-1037). In February, when Kohl travelled to Paris to give his friend an update on the process of reunification, he drew strength from his earlier visit, and the reassurances Mitterrand had given him. Although friction and irritation surrounding the issue would remain (Mitterrand would be untactful at times, for instance in a joint statement with his Polish counterpart that they were worried about the borders with Germany), Kohl no longer worried and noted: 'The debate came to a head one last time, and I could only shake my head about it' (Kohl, 1995, pp.44-45, my translation).

From then on, Kohl and Mitterrand would remain friends, even though they clashed on minor political issues from time to time. One of these clashes surrounded the announcement of the death of former German Chancellor Willy Brandt (October, 8, 1992). The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) took it as an affront that it was the German government which had made the announcement, while Mitterrand was not amused that he learned of the death of his fellow socialist through an official announcement, and that he was not allowed to give a speech (Kohl, 2007, p.487). The two statesmen would regularly seek out each other, not just in exchanging book lists, but also in developing joint policies and coordinating their political agenda (Kohl, 2007, pp.150,100,253,308). Among this agenda was the formation of a European Security Policy and the possible creation of a European army (Kohl, 2007, pp.460-461), a revolutionary move considering France's (and Mitterrand's) fears surrounding reunification and the potential danger posed by a German army. The extent to which the two statesmen coordinated their policies, shared opinions, offered advice to each other, and their joint striving towards a number of goals, are very reminiscent of the working definition of friendship offered in part one of this article. Although the friendship between Kohl and Mitterrand was threatened by the process of German reunification, it eventually overcame that obstacle.

The friendship between Kohl and Mitterrand was much more than a political partnership. The intensity of the personal meetings between them, the manner in which they offered advice to each other and formed a common policy, transcend the boundaries and the *quid pro quo* nature of a mere political partnership. Two great hallmarks of the friendship are the commemoration at Verdun and the very personal meeting between the two statesmen at Mitterrand's holiday residence. It is their striving towards joint goals, and the recognition of that striving within each other, that validates coining their relationship friendship. Kohl refers to this when he mentions in his autobiography that:

The fact is that the German-French friendship was not simply imposed from above, but rooted in the hearts of the people, and is the largest and best trust capital that we have built up all these years. (Kohl, 2007, p.526, my translation)

There are more hints in Kohl's autobiography of the worth he attaches to his relationship with Mitterrand. He mentions looking forward to playing a leading role together with Mitterrand in European Politics when he aims to get reelected (Kohl, 2007, p.727), which bears evidence of their joint political agendas and shared virtues. It is also telling that one of the chapters in Kohl's autobiography is titled 'Sieg und Niederlage' (victory and defeat), the defeat referring to an unfavorable election result of his party, which coincides with a great election victory for Mitterrand. It is illustrative that Kohl considers his friend's victory a triumph of equal footing to his own defeat. The fruitful cooperation between Germany and France, sprung from the friendship between Kohl and Mitterrand, would also bear its fruit on the development of the European Union. After reunification Kohl, to remove fear of a resurgent powerful Germany, became an even stronger proponent of European integration, together with Mitterrand. One of the fruits of their cooperation would be a common European currency. In 1988, as a crown on the importance of their relationship, Kohl and Mitterrand received the prestigious International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen, which was for the first time in its history - and so far the only time - awarded to two heads of state simultaneously. Such a friendship should be expected to last after politics, which indeed it did. Kohl cried openly during the memorial service for his friend Mitterrand in 1996, (Kohl, 2007, p.727) an important and candid reminder of their powerful bond.

3.2 Building Bridges: George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev

German reunification politics and the end of the Cold War dominated the last section, and will continue here. A friendship between the heads of state of France and Germany was unlikely, but not quite as unlikely as the friendship that developed between the leader of the Soviet Union, and the President of the United States of America during the final days of the Cold War. Mikhail Gorbachev (1931) had proven himself an able politician, becoming General Secretary of the Communist Party on May 1, 1985. Gorbachev outdid himself by reforming the Soviet Union through his programs of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Astutely, Gorbachev made sure he improved his image both domestically and internationally. That is why he made sure his book *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* was published simultaneously in Russia and in the United States (Gorbachev, 1995, pp.577,360). An idealist, Gorbachev witnessed the world globalizing evermore, and aimed for the Soviet Union to take its rightful place in the new world that was coming to be (Breslauer, 2002, pp.84-85). In the first years of his leadership his opponent was President Ronald Reagan (1911-2004) who proved a worthy rhetorical adversary when he challenged Gorbachev in 1987 to 'Tear down this wall!' Nevertheless, Gorbachev succeeded in disarming Reagan when they entered into the *Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces* (INF) treaty in December that year, both countries agreeing to reduce their INF-weapons. Faced with a temperate Soviet Union, Reagan diminished his heavy rhetoric, another success for Gorbachev (Breslauer, 2002, p.76; Gorbachev, 1995, p.609). With Gorbachev having positioned himself

as a leader to be reckoned with, the question was how he would cope with Reagan's successor.

George H. W. Bush (1942) was a war hero, businessman and a politician whose career had spanned from being the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and Director of the CIA, to the White House. As Vice President he met Gorbachev several times, for the first time in 1985 when he attended the funeral of Gorbachev's predecessor Konstantin Chernenko, where Gorbachev had made a lasting impression upon him:

And it was clear from Gorbachev's response, even in translation, that he was offering the same kind of man-to-man sincerity. Perhaps this would not be a leader who would simply hide behind the same old rhetoric, as had his predecessors. (Bush and Scowcroft, 1998, p.5)

The two met again at several official occasions, Bush escorting Gorbachev to the airfield at the end of the 1987 INF meeting in Washington, when he assured him he had to ignore the 'empty cannons of rhetoric' Bush would fire at the Soviet Union during his presidential campaign (Matlock, 2004, pp.309-310). When Gorbachev visited the United States in 1988 to address the United Nations in New York, Bush was already president-elect, and Gorbachev had every reason to expect to be able to work together with him quite nicely (Gorbachev, 1995, p.688). Add to that Bush's natural affinity for developing close relationships, and the ingredients for a close friendship were present.² Yet, as the relationship of Kohl and Mitterrand before them, the potential friendship between Bush and Gorbachev would also have to face the tides of their time.

When the Berlin Wall fell on the 9th November 1989, Gorbachev was faced with the impossible task of both maintaining his own power, and preventing the Soviet Union from total collapse. The last thing he needed was a gloating American President who would celebrate the United States' victory over the Soviet Union. He could consider himself lucky that it was Bush, not Reagan, who resided in the White House. Although it is hard to predict how Reagan would have reacted, his criticism of the Bush administration at that time, and his strong rhetoric before ('tear down this wall!'), gives a strong indication of his likely response. Bush, however, completely confused both his advisors and the American television audience by not celebrating the fall of the Wall. Beforehand Bush had warned one of his advisors that he did not intend to dance upon the toppled wall, but even then his response was puzzling to his fellow Americans. He appeared uninspired and distracted, prompting one of the journalists present to point out: 'you don't seem elated' (Maynard, 2008, pp.44-45). Bush was not elated because he realized quite well that celebrating would be an affront to both Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. He knew Gorbachev was under internal pressure not to lose East Germany, and that celebrating a victory would upset a precarious balance. He walked a fine balance between personal affections for Gorbachev, and cultivating him as a political ally for the days to come:

Whatever this trip is, it's *not* a victory tour, with me running around over there pounding my chest. [In my speeches] I don't want it to sound inflammatory or provocative. I don't want to complicate the lives of

Gorbachev and the others... I don't want to put a stick in Gorbachev's eye (cited in: Mervin, 1996, p.171).

There is a clear concern for Gorbachev's position, perhaps even his personal wellbeing in the statement above. Another indication of Bush's personal concern comes from a recollection by his Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater: 'And he said to me he didn't care about image. That this was not a time to be worrying about that sort of thing. And that he wanted to respond in a way that Gorbachev would understand and that would be supportive of moving ahead in the future relationship' (cited in: Maynard, 2008, p.45). From this statement, we can glance a precarious balance between Bush's earlier noted concern for Gorbachev and the political consideration to take the future relationship into account. It is clear though that Bush would not jeopardize his relationship with Gorbachev for a mere victory celebration. The delicate way in which Bush dealt with the fall of the Wall meant that negotiations between Gorbachev and the West concerning the reunification of Germany could start with no bad blood existing between both parties, and both statesmen. In December 1989, both world leaders heralded the end of the Cold War.

Bush's expert handling of the situation evolving after the collapse of the Wall paved the way for fruitful negotiations between the West and Gorbachev on German reunification. Gorbachev was faced with adamant German politicians, chiefly German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who wanted to bring about the German reunification. Gorbachev intended to trade reunification for an assurance that NATO would not expand towards the east. In the ensuing negotiations, the Germans succeeded in persuading American Secretary of State James Baker to grant Gorbachev the assurance he so valued, which Baker gave to Gorbachev, verbally, when he visited him on 9th February 1990, in Moscow. When Kohl met with Gorbachev that same day, he found Gorbachev to be in a great mood, having finally obtained the assurance he was after, and the cunning Kohl immediately acted, calling for a press conference to share the good news with the rest of the world (Kohl, 2005, pp.1062-1070). When the reunification became a fact in October, 1990, Gorbachev still presumed he had made an agreement that there would be no NATO expansion to the east. The Americans denied that such an agreement had ever been made, with Baker trying in vain for some months to obtain the assurance from his government that he had promised.³ For his part, Bush himself had never once planned to give Gorbachev such an assurance, remarking on Baker's assurance: 'To hell with that! We prevailed, they didn't. We can't let the Soviets clutch victory from the jaws of defeat' (Bush and Scowcroft, 1998, p.253).

The collapse of the Soviet Union had been imminent before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Starting November 1988, Estonia declared independence, followed quickly by Latvia and Lithuania in the first half of the following year. As the general disintegration of the Soviet Union followed, a group of disgruntled Communist Party members decided to take matters into their own hands and attempted to overthrow Gorbachev in a coup d'état in August, 1991. The coup would consolidate the rise to power of the recently elected first President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin, who had been locked in a political struggle with Gorbachev, the latter remaining in power as the President of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin took personal command of the resistance against the coup. While the perpetrators blocked all communication between Gorbachev and the world, Bush remained in touch with Yeltsin.

The American President was worried about his friend though, and when communications were finally restored, the two had an emotional conversation:

Bush: Oh my God, that's wonderful. Mikhail!

Gorbachev: My dearest George. I am so happy to hear your voice again.

Bush: My God, I'm glad to hear you. How are you doing?

Gorbachev: Mr. President, the adventurers have not succeeded.

(cited in: Maynard, 2008, p.102)

Again, aside from Bush's political considerations, there is a clear personal concern for the wellbeing of Gorbachev here. At the same time, the fact that Bush remained in contact with Yeltsin throughout the coup shows that the American President was always aware of the geopolitical situation, and must have realized the future lay with Yeltsin. On the 25th December 1991, Gorbachev resigned as President, followed by the dismantling of the Soviet Union the next day. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the relationship between Bush and Gorbachev did not end, and continues to this day. A further indication of there being more than a political partnership between the two men is the fact that a friendship did not just develop between the two men, but their wives also grew fond of each other over the years.

The first meeting between the two First Ladies had Barbara Bush and Raisa Gorbachova exchanging witty jokes and quips. Asked in an interview in 2008 what associations came to her with the name 'Mikhail Gorbachev' Barbara Bush answered: 'Mikhail Gorbachev. I like him a lot. He's visited us in Maine and in College Station and he's become a good friend. He came with his daughter and granddaughters so we know them pretty well' (American Conversations, 2008). When Raisa Gorbachova died in 1999, Barbara Bush wrote an emotional eulogy for her in *Time Magazine*, lamenting that 'George and I both shed a tear when we learned of Raisa's death. We mourned the loss of a friend; we mourned the passing of a fascinating woman who gave much to this world; mainly we mourned for Mikhail. Theirs was a great love story, and we know he'll miss her terribly.' Earlier in the eulogy, Barbara Bush mentions how the coup affected the Bush household: 'In 1991, when the Gorbachevs were virtually held prisoners in their home during a coup attempt, my heart broke for Raisa' (Bush, 1999). The way in which Barbara Bush describes Raisa in the eulogy is close to the very definition given of friendship in the first section of this article and clearly transcends a partnership in its concern for each other's wellbeing. The bond between the Bush family and Gorbachev has endured until this day, with Gorbachev having visited the family in Houston in November 2012.

As with the friendship between Kohl and Mitterrand, contemporary events and domestic politics influenced the relationship between Bush and Gorbachev. The beginning of their relationship was promising, but the question remained to what extent events would leave room for a personal bond to develop. During their terms in office their interactions would be limited to those during official meetings. The way Bush handled the fall of the Berlin Wall, or rather the way he chose not to celebrate, offers both a glimpse of his friendship with Gorbachev, as of his keen political insights. The same can be said for his attitude towards Gorbachev during the 1991 coup. Genuinely concerned for his friend on

the one hand, aware of the geopolitical reality at the other hand by recognizing both Yeltsin's advent, and the ability to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining any assurances. This double character of political friendship is reminiscent of the struggle Mitterrand faced concerning German reunification. A careful line has to be walked between personal feelings of affection and political opportunities. Taking into account the relationship between Barbara Bush and Raisa Gorbachova, and combining this with the affections shown by Gorbachev and Bush to each other and the ongoing nature of their relationship, shows the definition of friendship is certainly applicable here as well. Their friendship transcends the boundaries of the *quid pro quo* political partnership. Naturally perhaps because of the nature of friendship, the bond differs from that of Kohl and Mitterrand, with the latter relationship having a much more obvious common agenda.

Conclusion

This article set out to offer a theoretical approach to evaluate political friendship, and to test this approach by focusing on two particular political friendships. The first part set out to operationalize the concept of friendship by offering a concise philosophical history of the notion, and ending with a demarcation between partnership and friendship. Following ancient and modern philosophers, *friendship* is defined as a reciprocal bond shared by two or more individuals based upon a shared understanding of each other, consisting out of perceived shared traits, virtues, opinions and agenda's. Especially, friendship is decidedly not characteristic of the thought of *quid pro quo*. This demarcation sufficiently leaves room for the special and individual nature of friendship, while at the same time being a manageable definition. Friendship is set apart from the more common *partnership*, defined as a reciprocal bond shared by two or more individuals which is based on mutual material or immaterial advantage, and in its nature decisively *quid pro quo*.

After having formed the demarcation between friendship and partnership, the second section considered a number of recent publications on the subject of friendship in international relations. Friendship in international relations remains a state-centred approach, tending to focus on peace (friendship) between states. Certainly not an approach without merit, it remains the question to what extent this process of anthropomorphism does justice to the specific nature of friendship. Disregarding the issue of personalization of the state, the definition of partnership seems much more applicable to peace than friendship. Interestingly enough, although the works were all state-centred, they all considered individuals, especially political elites, to play a key role in the process towards peace. Building forth on the key role individuals play in that process, the third part of this article set out to test whether the definition of friendship can be applied to well known supposed political friendships, choosing two well documented and comparable relationships: the friendships between Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, and George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev.

Both relationships proved to be susceptible to contemporary events. Although coming from very different backgrounds, Kohl and Mitterrand found a kindred spirit within each other, willing to offer advice and coordinate policy together. When they held each other's hand at the commemoration at Verdun it was a pinnacle in the relationship between their countries, and each other. The issue of German reunification proved a great challenge to their friendship, and also showed the influence domestic politics has on an international

relationship between politicians. Kohl succeeded in saving the friendship, and winning his friend for reunification, with an unprecedented personal visit to Mitterrand's holiday residence. Their good relationship played a great role in the process of European integration. The manner in which Kohl and Mitterrand were devoted to each other, the extent to which they coordinated their agenda, and shared advice, goes beyond the scope of a political partnership and can only be demarcated as a friendship.

The relationship between Bush and Gorbachev was akin to that of Kohl and Mitterrand, but offers some differences of its own. The relationship had a promising start, with both Bush and Gorbachev getting along well even before Bush took office as President. The expert way in which Bush refused to openly celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall, showcased both his political cunning and his personal feelings for Gorbachev. Bush took the same approach when dealing with the 1991 coup, showing personal affection for Gorbachev while at the same time not letting those affections shape his interactions with Gorbachev's successor. Always, though, Bush was able to separate personal affections from matters of state. Being fond of Gorbachev did not prevent him from optimally profiting from the confusion surrounding German reunification, refusing the assurance Gorbachev sought, even going so far as retracting that assurance when his Secretary of State had made it. The friendship between Gorbachev and Bush was strengthened by the bond between Raisa Gorbachova and Barbara Bush, and this, combined with the fact that the relationship continues to this day, shows it too transcends the boundaries of a mere political partnership.

Comparing the two relationships shows interesting similarities and differences. Such is to be expected in friendships. Both of the studied bonds can be clearly distinguished from political partnerships. The strength of the friendship between Kohl and Mitterrand served as a forerunner to the process of European integration. Friendship and politics moved together. It is easier to distinguish personal affections from politics with Bush and Gorbachev, but those affections are, undeniably, there. Rather than taking a friendship between actors as granted, future research should devote time to tracing the influence of friendship on political actors, revealing that friendships in politics matter.

Endnotes

¹ Cited in: Heintz, 2004.

² '(...) But most important of all was the friendship with Mikhail Gorbachev. It was not just that Bush, like Thatcher, found it easy to do business with him. From the very beginning, he admits, "I liked him." Under other circumstances, Bush would no doubt have kept these feelings under close control, but in solving the problems that lay before them, a relationship of close confidence could do nothing but good' (Howard, 1998).

³ It is speculated that the misunderstanding is grounded in the different cultures, Gorbachev being used to the fact that important decisions are made by individuals, where the Americans saw Baker's assurance as part of an ongoing negotiation process (Sarotte, 2010, p.127).

About the author

Yuri van Hoef (1985) is a doctoral researcher at the School of Politics and International Studies (POLIS) at the University of Leeds. Previously he held a lectureship in International Relations at the University of Groningen. His research examines the role of friendship between political actors.

References

- American Conversations.** (2008). Barbara Bush: Family and Friends in a Public Life. *National Archives*, January 25. [online] Available at: <<http://www.archives.gov/nae/news/featured-programs/american-conversations/>> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Aristotle.** *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by H. Rackman., 1968. London, Heinemann.
- Bacon**, Francis. (1627a). Of Followers and Friends. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bartleby.com/3/1/48.html>> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Bacon**, Francis. (1627b). Of Friendship. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bartleby.com/3/1/27.html>> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Baltzly**, Dirk. (2009). The Classical Ideals of Friendship. In Caine, Barbara. (Ed.) *Friendship a History*. London, Equinox Publishing Limited.
- Berenskoetter**, Felix. (2007). Friends, There Are No Friends? An Intimate Reframing of the International. *Millennium, Journal of International Studies* 35, pp. 647-676.
- Breslauer**, George W. (2002). *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as leaders*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bush**, Barbara. (1999). Eulogy *Time Magazine*, 154(14), p.43.
- Bush**, George H. W., Brent Scowcroft. (1998). *A World Transformed*. New York, Knopf.
- Byman**, Daniel and Pollack, Kenneth M. (2001). Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bring the Statesman Back. *International Security* 25(4), pp. 107-146.
- Cicero**, Marcus Tullius. *On Friendship* in: Over ouderdom & over vriendschap. Translated by W.A.M. Peters., 1999. Amsterdam, Ambo.
- Dreher**, Klaus. (1998). *Helmut Kohl: Leben mit Macht*. Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.
- Gorbachev**, Mikhail. (1995). *Erinnerungen*. Berlin, Siedler Verlag.
- Heintz**, Jim. (2004). Gorbachev recalls a friend who 'loved life'. *Associated Press*, 7 June. [online] Available at: <http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2004/06/07/gorbachev_recalls_a_friend_who_loved_life/?camp=pm> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Houston Chronicle.** (2012). Bush and Gorbachev together again, November. [online] Available at: <www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/slideshow/Bush-and-Gorbachev-together-again-51706/photo-3676372.php> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Howard**, Michael. (1998). The Prudence Thing: George Bush's Class Act' *Foreign Affairs*, November/December. [online] Available at: <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/54609/michael-howard/the-prudence-thing-george-bush-s-class-act?page=show>> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Kierkegaard**, Søren. (1995). *Works of love*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Kohl**, Helmut. (2007). *Erinnerungen: 1990-1994*. München, Droemer.
- Kohl**, Helmut. (2005). *Erinnerungen: 1982-1990*. München, Droemer.
- Kupchan**, Charles A. (2010). *How enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Lacouture**, Jean. (1998). *Mitterrand: une histoire de Français. 1 Les risques de l'escalade*. Paris, Ed. de Seuil.

- Lewis, C.S.** (1960). *The Four Loves*. New York, Harcourt, Brace.
- Matlock, Jr. Jack F.** (2004). *Reagan and Gorbachev. How the Cold War Ended*. New York, Random House.
- Maynard, Christopher.** (2008). *Out of the Shadow: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*. College Station, Texas A&M University Press.
- Meacham, Jon.** (2003). *Franklin and Winston: an intimate portrait of an Epic Friendship*. New York, Random house.
- Mervin, David,** (1996). *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Montaigne, Michel E., de.** (c.1575) *Of Friendship*. [online] Available at <<http://www.bartleby.com/32/105.html>> [Accessed 24 October 2013].
- Oelsner, Andrea.** (2007). Friendship, Mutual Trust and the Evolution of Regional Peace in the International System. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 10(2), pp. 257-279.
- Reid-Henry, Simon.** (2008). *Fidel and Che: a revolutionary friendship*. London, Sceptre.
- Riddell, Peter.** (2013). *Hug Them Close. Blair, Clinton, Bush and the Special Relationship*. London, Politico's Publishing.
- Sarotte, Mary Elise.** (2010). Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990. *Diplomatic History*, 34(1), pp.119-140.
- Schmitt, Carl.** (2007a). *The concept of the political*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Schmitt, Carl.** (2007b). *Theory of the partisan: intermediate commentary on the concept of the political*. New York, Telos Press Publishing.
- Scott Bell, David.** (2005). *François Mitterrand: a political biography*. Cambridge, Polity.
- Slomp, Gabriella.** (2007). Carl Schmitt on Friendship: Polemics and Diagnostics *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 10(2), pp.199-213.
- Smith, Graham M.** (2007). Kierkegaard: Responsibility to the Other *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 10(2), pp.188-197.
- Stern-Gillet, Suzanne.** (1995). *Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Vander Valk, Francis.** (2005). *Political Friendship: Expeditions in a Treacherous Harbor*. PhD Dissertation, University at Albany, State University of New York.