Gorbachev, Reagan, Bush I, and the End of the Cold War

How the leader of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War and Destroyed his Nation in the Process and what the American Leaders did to help
Please turn off your cell phones

Former Congressman Charlie Wilson says, “You better believe we kicked those Russian communist bastard’s asses and won the Cold War, so turn off your phones or you may be next!”
Themes and Topics

- **Empire**
  - Presidential Leadership methods for conducting foreign policy: Ronald Reagan
  - Reagan's Cold War and Detente foreign policies
  - Presidential Leadership methods for conducting foreign policy: George H. W. Bush
  - Post-Cold War Decline in Military Spending

- **Role of Government**
  - Debate over U.S. military vulnerability, 1976-1983
  - Modernization of U.S. strategic nuclear forces, 1976-1983
  - Debate over Arms Control versus Military Superiority
  - Shift from offensive nuclear weapons competition to strategic defense

- **Cultural Change**
  - Renewed interest in conservative ideas, 1980 to 2006
  - Rise of the Neo-Conservatives
  - Nuclear Freeze Movement
Central Analytical Questions

• What was Détente with the USSR?
• Why did the Cold War Revive after 1979?
• What policies did Mr. Reagan adopt to defeat the USSR?
• How did the USSR respond to the revival of the Cold War?
• Why did the USSR disintegrate?
• Who Won the Cold War?
The Détente Regime

- Relaxation of tensions with USSR, 1968 to 1979 signals break with cold war orthodoxy
  - Bipartisan Support over four administrations
  - Recognition of Communist China
  - Trade Agreements
  - Arms Control Agreements
    - SALT I Treaty
    - ABM Treaty
    - SALT II Treaty

- Critics of Detente
What Revived the Cold War?

- USSR invaded Afghanistan December 1979
  - To protect a client government on its border
  - President Carter denounced the action
  - Subsequent evidence revealed the US had intentionally provoked the intervention
What Revived the Cold War II?

- Role of the Committee on the Present Danger
- Origins of Neo-conservatism

Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, member of the Committee on the Present Danger, future UN Ambassador Under President Reagan
Reagan’s Cold War Gambit

- Ended SALT negotiations
- Massive Military Buildup
- Revived language of Cold War Orthodoxy
- Staffed the administration with CPD members
- Accelerated Nuclear Weapons Development
- Deployed Cruise Missiles and Pershing Missiles in Europe

President Ronald Reagan
Strategic Defense Initiative

- Nuclear Freeze
- SALT to START
- Strategic Defense Initiative or "Star Wars"

Model of Strategic Defense
Mikhail Gorbachev

• Turmoil at the top of Soviet Leadership
  ▪ Leonid Brezhnev, 1982
  ▪ Yuri Andropov, 1984
  ▪ Konstantin Chernenko, 1985
  ▪ Mikhail Gorbachev, Mar 1985–Aug 1991

• Glasnost
• Perestroika
• Détente with the West
Retreat from Empire

- End to Cold War Orthodoxy
- START Agreement
- Reduction in Conventional Forces
- Disintegration of the USSR
U.S. Responses to Soviet Reform and Collapse I

- CIA failure to predict events
- Pentagon failure to predict events
- Neoconservatives failure to predict event
U.S. Responses to Soviet Reform and Collapse II

- **Peace Dividend**
  - SDI reduced
  - Pentagon Spending slowed
- **National Security State mission?**
Major Reductions in Arms

- START I Treaty, July 1991
- Complications of dismemberment of USSR
- Reductions in weapons
- START II Treaty

Gorbachev and Bush sign START I
Further Recent Reductions

- Arms Reductions under President Obama

New START arms treaty

The U.S. Senate has ratified the new START treaty to reduce deployed strategic warheads by about 30 percent. The treaty must now be ratified by the Russian Duma; current stockpiles and reductions under the treaty:

**What's affected**

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<th></th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>1,968</td>
<td>2,600+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic (long-range) Reduction</td>
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**Not affected by treaty**

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<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>3,500+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting dismantlement</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>4,670*</td>
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</table>

**Treaty would also**

- Revive on-the-ground arsenal inspections
- Limit missiles, bombers, launchers capable of carrying nuclear warheads

Source: Arms Control Association, AP
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Did Reagan Win the Cold War?

- Conservative Thesis
  - Toughness won the war
- Counter narratives
  - Toughness won nothing
  - Look to Gorbachev
  - Reagan’s real role
- What is your take?

An iconic image of President Ronald Reagan
Memorializing the Cold War

- The Cold War as History
- Was the Cold War the Good War?

Charlie Wilson and Tom Hanks
Conclusions: An Ambiguous Legacy

- End of the Cold War
  - led to unanticipated ethnic conflicts in 1990s
  - Unleashed religious energies in the Middle East
  - failed to halt nuclear proliferation
  - It left significant legacies of pollution/debt
  - Freed capitalists to degrade working class in US
  - directed scientists and mathematicians into Wall Street speculation through trading algorithms
  - failed to remove sources of tension between Russia and West