Today’s lecture caters to the last rubric of the last unit of the syllabus (6E) and aims to introduce to the students, in the form of short notes, the major contexts and premises of Détente, SALT Treaties 1 and 2, the Reagan Doctrine and Mikhail Gorbachev’s Glasnost and Perestroika. The recommended readings and articles would be outlined in a separate email.

A. Glasnost and Perestroika: Did Gorbachev Break the USSR?

Introduction

The fall of the Soviet Union is perhaps the most talked about and exciting event of the 20th century. There are various theories and opinions about the reasons that ultimately led to the collapse of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The USSR existed from 1922 to 1991 and emerged as a superpower post the Second World War. It remained one of the two superpowers for over four decades. During the Cold War, the USSR rebuilt and expanded its economy and also assisted in the reconstruction of the war-crippled European countries by turning them into satellite states.

The Era of Stagnation which marked the period of economic, social and political stagnation. The Economic Stagnation is estimated to have begun in the early 1970s. Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union, came to power in 1985. His primary goal as the Secretary-General naturally became the revival of the Soviet economy. He linked this revival to social and political reforms and declared that such reforms are indispensable to fix the economy. He advocated the Socialist economy and wished against the transit to market socialism.

This research paper focuses on the role played by Gorbachev, the last leader of the USSR, and his policies that are infamous for the collapse of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev is revered all over the world today as the leader who brought about changes that characterize important parts of the international community. As the leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was an ambassador of peace and openness. It was in this spirit that he introduced the policies of Glasnost and Perestroika. His policy was resumed in two Russian words that soon passed into
all languages: glasnost, meaning “publicity” but mistranslated as “openness,” and perestroika, meaning “restructuring.” Given the place that the people were coming from (Stalinism), this was a huge leap. With the two policies, Gorbachev wished to bring the economy of the Soviet Union at par with that of the Western Countries. Although in hindsight, these policies seem to be well thought out and appropriate to bring about the desired changes, the major reason why they did not work was the sudden change and the powers given to the people after decades of being repressed.

The Effects of Glasnost and Perestroika
This chapter shall focus on Glasnost and Perestroika – as on paper and in practice. The mindset with which they were devised and what they ultimately led to. Further, I shall try to answer whether Glasnost and Perestroika helped in the revival of the Soviet economy or achieved any of the aims that were hoped to be achieved through them?

Glasnost
Mikhail Gorbachev introduced glasnost in the 1980s intending to control corruption at the political level. This policy can be loosely translated into what we call “freedom of speech”. It allowed for greater freedom in the press and a better flow of ideas in and out of the Iron Curtain. Gorbachev believed that glasnost and Perestroika went hand in hand. He argued, “glasnost awakened people from their social slumber, helped them overcome indifference and passivity and become aware of the stake they had in change and of its important implications for their lives.”

Background and Goals
Glasnost was aimed at achieving a more transparent government. Gorbachev’s idea was to increase the competence of the economy and the government. He wished to bring about a government that was open to debate new ideas, to reform. Also, Gorbachev aimed to establish a government that was willing to loosen its control over the economic situation. To understand this, it is pertinent to understand the background in which glasnost was introduced. “Command from the centre” and accumulation of power in the hands of one man dominated the Soviet political life since 1917. Throughout the history of USSR, one group grew in importance and power i.e. the bureaucracy. The one constant factor throughout all the many changes of leadership in the USSR had been the bureaucracy. Thus, it isn’t surprising that

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1 Brian Crozier, The Other Side of Perestroika and The Hidden Dimension of the Gorbachev Era, available online at https://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/04-1_Crozier.PDF
2 Laura Cummings, Gorbachev’s Perestroika and the Collapse of the Soviet Union, available online at http://www.lagrange.edu/resources/pdf/citations/2012/08_Cummings_History.pdf
3 Gorbachev, On my Country and the World, New York Columbia Press 2000, pg. 61
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Gorbachev believed bureaucracy to be the major obstacle that hindered the success of his reforms.

It is often argued that the entire idea of glasnost is a Leninist idea since glasnost permitted the discussion of any immoral phenomena—past or present. Such discussions are a prerequisite for the promotion of Leninist spiritualism. The introduction Freedom of speech at such a juncture had huge risks because if the policies proved to be effective, the opinion would be positive. However, if the conditions in the Soviet Union were to decline and deteriorate, then the people could take benefit of Glasnost to express their dissatisfaction and oppose the Communist Party.

**Perestroika**

Neither of Gorbachev’s policies can be understood in isolation. The man behind these policies himself observed, “Without glasnost, there would have been no perestroika.”

Thus, before examining the implications and effects of glasnost, it is necessary to have an understanding of the much wider policy i.e. perestroika and how was it implemented (or at least, sough to be implemented).

Perestroika translates to “restructuring” and in the context of USSR; it meant the restructuring of the Soviet Union’s economic and political system. It was introduced at a time when the economy needed to be revived by restructuring it and thereby curbing its decline. The objectives of perestroika are best explained in the word of historian Robert Grogin,

“Perestroika was designed to cure the economic inertia, overhaul the bureaucracy, the Communist Party, and even the military, and so make the country more competitive. The restructuring of the Soviet economy came to include a partial reduction of the central planning system, the introduction of market mechanisms, an emphasis on quality, the more efficient employment of labour, and the infusion of new investment and technologies into industry.”

**Background (The Era of Stagnation)**

The background in which Perestroika was introduced is very crucial to understanding the policy. What went so wrong that there was a need for a complete restructuring of the Soviet economy? The era of stagnation of the Soviet Union began during the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev and to tackle this situation, Gorbachev introduced his policies. The Soviet Union grew to become a superpower rivalled only by the United States and this was possible because of

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6 Supra Note 3.

the economy, which had always been the driving force of the Soviet’s power. However, it faced demands for modernisation and a radical change from expansionism to intensification.\(^8\) Under Brezhnev, the GNP grew at a rate of around 5.3% per year which later declined to an average of 3.7 per cent per year (1971-1975). Post-1975, it fell to 2.6 per cent per year. During this time, the average annual rate for the world grew to 6.2 per cent because of increased production.\(^9\) In the 1980s, the Soviet Union was producing more iron, steel, cement and oil than the United States.\(^10\) However, it was not keeping up with the world in terms of emerging technologies and production of computers, automobiles etc. The Soviet Union had always sought for its economy to be at par with the economies of the Western Countries and in pursuance of this Brezhnev invited innovations from the West too. The major challenges faced by the Soviet Union in this attempt were:

1. The biggest consumer for the Soviet Union’s manufactured goods was the military. Thus, the most skilled human capital of the Soviet was used up by this sector. This proved to be detrimental to the production for the civilians.
2. The Stalin regime had created a rigid command economy which did not allow rapid changes in technology.
3. The Central Government did all the funding and investing. Thus the funds to modernize and improve manufacturing was lacking.
4. The production in the Soviet Union was not driven by consumer demands. The bureaucrats mostly decided what was to be manufactured and the producers rarely paid heed to what was in demand. This led to poor economic coordination as the bureaucrats often overlooked the changing needs.\(^12\)
5. There were problems at the level of the workforce. The people were dissatisfied, they were living in poor conditions, the workers felt demotivated because of abstract goals given to them.
6. The agriculture sector also faced problems. Further, there was a scarcity of oil and natural gas which led to the increased cost of production.

Beyond economic stagnation, there were issues in the political sphere that the Soviet Union faced as well. Stalin’s name had become synonymous with harsh and oppressive measures. During this period, the government was often found to harshly oppress the people and to refuse to enact policies that would benefit them.\(^11\) As Ben Fowkes wrote, “Brezhnev’s general

\(^8\) Ross John Campbell, Why did the Soviet Union Suffer from Stagnation?

\(^9\) D. J. Daly, International Comparisons of Prices and Output, 1972

\(^10\) Manuel Castells, End of Millenium, Volume III, Second Edition, p 26. \(^12\)

\(^11\) Supra Note 2.
attitude was to let sleeping dogs lie.” It was under these circumstances that Gorbachev came to power. In his own words, he recognized the urgent need for reforms in the Soviet economy, "The facts that Gorbachev was the youngest Secretary-General since Stalin and that he was in no way affiliated with Stalin put him in a position where he had a different perspective about the problems faced by the Soviet Union and also allowed him to work in a new direction and adapt Leninist approach. One of Gorbachev’s ministers, Yegor Ligachev, rightly observed “socialist renewal, a deliverance from the Stalinist and post-Stalinist entanglements that bound society.”

It can be briefly concluded that Perestroika was introduced at a time when the economy of the Soviet Union was crumbling and the reasons for its complexity were - the complexity of the circumstances and the fact that the need was to permanently break away from Stalinist ideology.

**Implications**

Glasnost and Perestroika led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Whether it was the ideas themselves or the situation that resulted in the fall is a question I shall try to answer later through this paper. Another aspect that needs to be examined is whether the policies managed to achieve the goals that they were aimed to achieve at all or were their frameworks per se so faulty that they did not and could not have succeeded regardless of the methods employed. In case, glasnost and perestroika are found to have failed per se, this part shall focus on the reasons why they did not work.

Perestroika was initially received well by the public. It gave people hope and they had faith in the future even though the present situation was far from fulfilling all their needs. It was the kind of policy that promised to be effective once it is put in practice. Gorbachev believed that the people believed in the potential of the country and thus supported Perestroika. However, there was some hesitation regarding how Perestroika would affect social and economic issues. By 1987, the hesitation grew into overwhelming tension and concern among the people because Perestroika hadn’t proved to be as effective as it had promised to be. Gorbachev was aware of these tensions and he mentioned the same in his book “memoirs”. He felt that there was a growing sense of “confusion caused by the haphazard transition of the industry to a system of cost accounting, self-financing and self-management. Those who feared change began to capitalize on troubles.”

Perestroika wasn’t working was the

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14 Supra Note 2.
15 Gorbachev, Memoirs, 218.
16 Ibid.
constant changes being brought about in its framework and the exact parameters had not been exactly articulated or implemented. Naturally, this increased the confusion among the people and only made them distrust the policies more. It is often argued that Perestroika at best represented a supposed improvement of the bureaucratic system of economic management and the major obstacle in implementing this as put forth by Selyunin was that bureaucracy could only be done away with and not “restructured”. He argued that gradualism would not serve any purpose and Gorbachev faced the dilemma of having to decide what to do with the bureaucracies. The cultural legacy of the Soviet Union where bureaucrats provided for themselves was another one of the major obstacles that came in the way restructuring. These were some of the abstract problems that Perestroika faced while being implemented. Discussed hereunder are some of the specific issues and circumstances under which Perestroika failed.

Perestroika included the law on state enterprise (1987), the law on individual economic activity (1986), and the law on cooperatives (1988). Although these laws seemed very promising, they did not meet the objectives of the desired economic reforms. The laws were ambiguous and contradictory in themselves, which hindered their implementation. Furthermore, they failed to convey any binding commitment on the part of the Gorbachev regime to real market reform. From 1985 to 1991 Gorbachev introduced at least ten major policy packages for economic reform under the banner of perestroika; not a single one was implemented fully.

To give a complete picture of how exactly the laws came in the way of their implementation, the example of the law on State Enterprise can be examined. It was supposed to introduce self-financing, self-management and self-accounting. However, the State was unwilling to move too quickly with the reforms and thus the government decided to stagger conformity to the law. Some enterprises would operate under the new guidelines as of 1 January 1988, others would do so the following year, January 1989. Such a staggering reform was similar (in both content and effect) to announcing that to improve traffic conditions the British system of driving on the left will be followed. But, in order not to disturb infrequent drivers (who may need time to adjust to the new rules of the road) it is decided that taxis and buses will drive on the left while ordinary drivers should continue to drive on the right until they have had time to prepare for the change to the new system. Also, the regime was committed to full

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17 Peter J. Boettke, Why Perestroika Failed: The Politics and Economics of Socialist Transformation, pp. 35, 75–78
18 Selyunin, ‘Sources,’ p. 17
19 Supra Note 19.
20 Ibid.
21 Goldman, What Went Wrong With Perestroika, p 140.
employment and therefore there were practical problems in bringing about self-financing. People were aware of this and knew that any promises regarding such a reform would only be a promise on paper. Several other technical challenges came with the introduction of such a law, which not only hindered their implementation but also added to the already existent economic problems. The other laws introduced as part of Perestroika faced similar problems.

What can be concluded about the introduction of Perestroika is that Gorbachev moved too fast and was too absorbed with his humanitarian ideals and he pushed reforms into a system that wasn’t yet ready to adapt to sudden changes. At times, it turned out to be like fitting a square in a circle. Gorbachev was too focused on bringing the Soviet economy at par with that of the West and this took his mind away from actual restructuring.

The reactions and results to Glasnost were almost the same, except that the consequences of “openness” ended up being too severe and ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Glasnost gave people the freedom to dissent and express their opinions. It thereby eliminated the possibility of attributing any failure to the backwardness of the country. However, glasnost was not a complete fail and Gorbachev did manage to bring about some changes in the economic and political life of the Soviet Union. However, as most scholars argue, the problem lay in the very regimes. It was simply not reformable.

How it comes across to me is that people were subject to really rigid and strict rules under Stalin and the succeeding leaders. They were not used to autonomy and freedom. Even though there was growing resistance among the people from an indeterminate time, it was somewhat contained due to the oppressive and harsh rules. But with the advent of Gorbachev and Glasnost, the power and freedoms were handed over to them easily. Gorbachev allowed for dissension and was then destroyed by it.

Perhaps Gorbachev was correct in saying that without Glasnost, there would be no Perestroika. Later on, however, Perestroika was criticized so much using Glasnost that it can be said that even with glasnost, there could be no Perestroika.

\(^{23}\) Supra Note 19.
\(^{24}\) Supra Note 2.
An Alternate End?
This chapter will try to determine whether Gorbachev could have avoided the collapse of the Soviet Union by employing certain measures or by implementing his policies differently. Before drawing any conclusions about this, the kind of protests that resulted after the implementation of Glasnost and Perestroika are examined.

Whether the USSR was a ticking bomb waiting to explode with Glasnost and Perestroika only expediting the process or whether Gorbachev’s policies triggered something new that led to the fall of the Soviet Union?

Protests- What the People Wanted
Soon after the introduction of Glasnost and Perestroika, the protests began. It started with the Baltic nations seeking independence. Their struggle for freedom is referred to as the Singing revolution. Following this, many other states started demanding independence.

Estonia, which was the first to demand independence, already had internal resistance and troubles. Once Perestroika was introduced, people did not resist it. Most of them were pro-perestroika and used it to their advantage. Their first goal was to attain greater independence for the republics. In envisioning perestroika, Gorbachev never entertained the notion that anyone would seriously suggest a total restructuring of the system.25

The case of Latvia was different. Protests started with the proposal of building a new hydroelectric power plant in Latvia (by Moscow), which would have destroyed the landscape and cultural heritage. Taking advantage of the freedoms extended to the people via glasnost, journalists started urging the public to protest against this. This was the first spark that initiated the protest and demand for independence in Latvia.

Various scholars have observed that such instigation by journalists was no uncommon. Specifically, democratic broadcasters like Radio Free Europe fostered the sentiment of rebellion in people and urged them to protest against communism.27

If the case of every country is examined separately, it is observed that in some way or the other, glasnost and perestroika aided and encouraged protests. So, what the people wanted to be ultimately independence and this craving was enhanced by Gorbachev’s Glasnost, which allowed the Soviet people to finally see what life was like in democratic countries. This cultural exchange fostered unrest in the people because the contrast between conditions in the Soviet Union and western countries was exposed; they were able to see how far behind their country was.26

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Whose Fault?
So, it becomes abundantly clear that it was not the policies that gave the people a feeling of resistance which they were alien to. The people were already resistant but with the loosening up of the rules and laws and the introduction of Glasnost, the people got the means with which they could materialize their sentiments.

It can be said with certainty that the USSR was in itself a very weak regime that was crumbling for a long time. Gorbachev, in his idealistic attempt of reviving the Soviet Union, ended up providing the means for it to fall. There were internal as well as external pressures which Perestroika could not contain and to which the Soviet Union ultimately succumbed. Some argue that Perestroika was introduced when it was too late while others believe that Gorbachev did not implement the policies entirely and if either of these situations were altered, the fate of the Soviet Union could have been altered. I, for one, disagree with such a contention. Implementing Perestroika at an earlier time could have had better effects on the economy but the build-up of the crumbling economy was so discrete that it was hard to foresee it before it was too late. Also, Gorbachev did not implement any of the laws under Perestroika because the system itself did not allow him to do so. The regime was so complex and had such a cultural and social legacy that could not have been circumvented easily.

Therefore, the USSR was dying a slow death before Gorbachev even came to power. His policies only expedited the process.

Conclusion
The fall of the Soviet Union was a complicated phenomenon that was aided by various factors. The economy was weak and the measures are taken to revive it was not enough. The situation only got worse when people were legally allowed to dissent and call for a complete overhaul of the system.

Gorbachev allowed for dissension and was ultimately consumed by it because his regime was unable to deliver the prosperity and success it promised.27

Gorbachev intended to fix and restructure the system from within but he failed to do so. Beyond the fact that Perestroika failed to deliver what it had promised, the internal and external pressured aided majorly to the fall of the Soviet Union. The internal pressures (which were intensified with glasnost) have already been discussed. There were increasing pressures from the West too regarding participating in the arms race. The Soviet Union claimed to not be ready for it and Gorbachev endorsed peace and amicable measures. Also, Perestroika

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27 Supra Note 2.
was articulated too late and the reforms it brought about were too little to tackle the problems that it desired to fix.

Another factor that abetted the collapse was Gorbachev’s humanitarian sentiment. It was this nature of Gorbachev that impelled him to bring about certain kinds of reforms and laws that his regime was not quite prepared for. His vision often became too idealistic and therefore failed to be applicable on a practical level.

The weak economy, declining growth rates and stagnation of technology incited hatred in the minds of the people against communism. This hatred was perpetuated by the means provided by the policy of glasnost. And at such a crucial time, the policy introduced to tackle the situation (Perestroika) did not work which further dissatisfied the people. Thus, although there were quite a few factors that led the Soviet Union to collapse, Perestroika can be called the last straw that sealed the fate of Gorbachev and his Government.

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B. The Reagan Doctrine: To Wipe Out Communism

The Reagan Doctrine was a strategy implemented by U.S. President Ronald Reagan intended to eradicate communism and end the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Throughout Reagan’s two terms in office from 1981 to 1989, and extending to the end of the Cold War in 1991, the Reagan Doctrine was the focal point of U.S. foreign policy. By reversing several aspects of the policy of détente with the Soviet Union developed during the Jimmy Carter Administration, the Reagan Doctrine represented an escalation of the Cold War.

Key Takeaways: The Reagan Doctrine

- The Reagan Doctrine was the element of U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s foreign policy dedicated to ending the Cold War by eradicating communism.
- The Reagan Doctrine represented a reversal of the Carter Administration’s less proactive policy of détente with the Soviet Union.
- The Reagan Doctrine combined diplomacy with direct U.S. assistance to armed anti-communist movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- Many world leaders and historians credit the Reagan Doctrine as having been the key to the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Functionally, the Reagan Doctrine combined the tense brand of Cold War atomic diplomacy as practised by the United States since the end of World War II, with the addition of overt and covert assistance to anti-communist guerrilla “freedom fighters.” By assisting armed resistance movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Reagan sought to “roll back” the influence of communism on the governments in those regions.

Prominent examples of implementation of the Reagan Doctrine included Nicaragua, where the United States covertly assisted the Contra rebels fighting to oust the Cuban-backed Sandinista government, and Afghanistan, where the U.S. provided material support to the Mujahideen rebels fighting to end the Soviet occupation of their country.
In 1986, Congress learned that the Reagan administration had acted illegally in secretly selling arms to the Nicaraguan rebels. The resulting infamous Iran-Contra affair, while a personal embarrassment and political setback to Reagan, failed to slow the continued implementation of his anti-communist policy during the presidency of George H.W. Bush.

**History of the Reagan Doctrine**

During the late 1940s, President Harry S. Truman had established doctrine of “containment” concerning communism intended only to limit the ideology from spreading beyond the Soviet bloc nations in Europe. In contrast, Reagan based his foreign policy on the “roll-back” strategy developed by John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower committing the United States to actively attempt to reverse the political influence of the Soviet Union. Reagan’s policy differed from Dulles’ largely diplomatic approach in that it relied on the overt active military support of those fighting against communist dominance.

As Reagan first took office, Cold War tensions had reached their highest point since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Grownly suspicious of the country’s expansionist motives, Reagan publicly described the Soviet Union as “an evil empire” and call for the development of space-based missile defence system so fantastically high-tech that Regan’s critics would dub it “Star Wars.”

On January 17, 1983, Reagan approved National Security Decision Directive 75, officially declaring U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union to be “to contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism,” and to “support effectively those Third World states that are willing to resist Soviet pressures or oppose Soviet initiatives hostile to the United States, or are special targets of Soviet policy.”

**The Strategy of “The Great Communicator”**

Nicknamed “The Great Communicator,” Reagan made giving the perfect speech at the perfect time a key strategy of his Reagan Doctrine.

**The ‘Evil Empire’ Speech**

President Reagan first expressed his belief in the need for a specific policy to deal proactively with the spread of communism in a speech on March 8, 1983, during which he referred to the Soviet Union and its allies as the “evil empire” in a growingly dangerous “struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.” In the same speech, Reagan urged NATO to deploy nuclear missiles in Western Europe to counter the threat posed by Soviet missiles then being installed in Eastern Europe.

**The ‘Star Wars’ Speech**

In a nationally-televised speech on March 23, 1983, Reagan sought to defuse Cold War tensions by proposing an ultimate missile defence system he claimed could “achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles.” The system, officially called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) by the Department of Defense and “Star Wars” by pundits and critics, was to employ advanced space-based weapons like lasers and subatomic particle guns, along with mobile ground-based missiles, all controlled by a dedicated system of super-computers. While acknowledging that many, if not all of the necessary technologies were still theoretical at best, Reagan claimed the SDI system could make nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete.”
1985 State of the Union Address

In January 1985, Reagan began his second term by using his State of the Union address to urge the American people to stand up to the Communist-ruled Soviet Union and its allies he had called the “Evil Empire” two years earlier.

In his opening remarks on foreign policy, he dramatically declared. “Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few; it is the universal right of all God’s children,” adding that the “mission” of America and all Americans must be to “nourish and defend freedom and democracy.”

“We must stand by all our democratic allies,” Reagan told Congress. “And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.” He memorably concluded, “Support for freedom fighters is self-defence.”

With those words, Reagan seemed to be justifying his programs of military assistance for the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, whom he had once called the “moral equal of the Founding Fathers;” the mujahideen rebels in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet occupation, and anti-communist Angolan forces embroiled in that nation’s civil war.

Reagan Tells the Soviets to ‘Tear Down This Wall’

On June 12, 1987, President Reagan, standing under a larger-than-life white marble bust of Vladimir Lenin at Moscow State University in West Berlin, publicly challenged the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, to dismantle the infamous Berlin Wall that had separated democratic West and communist East Berlin since 1961. In a characteristically eloquent speech, Reagan told the crowd of mostly young Russians that “freedom is the right to question and change the established way of doing things.”

Then, directly addressing the Soviet Premier, Reagan declared, “General Secretary Gorbachev if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

Surprisingly, the speech received little notice from the media until 1989, after Mr Gorbachev had indeed “torn down that wall.”

The Grenada War

In October 1983, the tiny Caribbean island nation of Grenada was rocked by the assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and the overthrow of his government by a radical Marxist regime. When Soviet money and Cuban troops began flowing into Grenada, the Reagan administration acted to remove the Communists and restore a democratic pro-American government.

On October 25, 1983, nearly 8,000 U.S. ground troops supported by airstrikes invaded Grenada, killing or capturing 750 Cuban soldiers and setting up a new government. Though it had some negative political fallout in the United States, the invasion signalled that the Reagan administration would aggressively oppose communism anywhere in the Western Hemisphere.
The End of the Cold War

Reagan’s supporters pointed to his administration’s successes in aiding the Contras in Nicaragua and the mujahideen in Afghanistan as evidence that the Reagan Doctrine was making headway in reversing the spread of Soviet influence. In the 1990 Nicaraguan elections, the Marxist Sandinista government of Daniel Ortega was ousted by the more American-friendly National Opposition Union. In Afghanistan, the Mujahideen, with the support of the U.S., succeeded in forcing the Soviet military to withdraw. Reagan Doctrine advocates contend that such successes laid the foundation for the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Many historians and world leaders praised the Reagan Doctrine. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990, credited it with helping to end the Cold War. In 1997, Thatcher said that the doctrine had “proclaimed that the truce with communism was over,” adding that, “The West would henceforth regard no area of the world as destined to forego its liberty simply because the Soviets claimed it to be within their sphere of influence.”

Sources and Further Reference

- “25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.
- Useful link - http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,141478,00.html

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C. Successes and Failures of Détente in the Cold War

From the late 1960s to the late 1970s, the Cold War was highlighted by a period known as “détente” – a welcome easing of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. While the period of détente resulted in productive negotiations and treaties on nuclear arms control and improved diplomatic relations, events at the end of the decade would bring the superpowers back to the brink of war.

Use of the term “detent”— French for “relaxation”— about an easing of strained geopolitical relations dates back to the 1904 Entente Cordiale, an agreement between Great Britain and France that ended centuries of off-and-on war and left the nations strong allies in World War I and thereafter.

In the context of the Cold War, U.S. presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford called détente a “thawing out” of U.S.-Soviet nuclear diplomacy essential to avoiding a nuclear confrontation.

Détente, Cold War-Style

While U.S.-Soviet relations had been strained since the end of World War II, fears of war between the two nuclear superpowers peaked with the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Coming so close to Armageddon motivated leaders of both nations to undertake some of the world’s first nuclear arms control pacts, including the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963.
In reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis, a direct telephone line – the so-called red telephone – was installed between the U.S. White House and the Soviet Kremlin in Moscow allowing leaders of both nations to communicate instantly to reduce the risks nuclear war.

Despite the peaceful precedents set by this early act of détente, rapid escalation of the Vietnam War during the mid-1960s increased Soviet-American tensions and made further nuclear arms talks all but impossible.

By the late 1960s, however, both the Soviet and U.S. governments realized one big and unavoidable fact about the nuclear arms race: it was hugely expensive. The costs of diverting ever-larger portions of their budgets to military research left both nations facing domestic economic hardships.

At the same time, the Sino-Soviet split – the rapid deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China – made becoming friendly with the United States look like a better idea to the USSR.

In the United States, the soaring costs and political fallout of the Vietnam War caused policymakers to see improved relations with the Soviet Union as a helpful step in avoiding similar wars in the future.

With both sides willing to at least explore the idea of arms control, the late 1960s and early 1970s would see the most productive period of détente.

The First Treaties of Détente

The first evidence of détente-era cooperation came in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, a pact signed by several of the major nuclear and non-nuclear power nations pledging their cooperation in stemming the spread of nuclear technology.

While the NPT did not ultimately prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms, it paved the way for the first round of Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT I) from November 1969 to May 1972. The SALT I talks yielded the Antiballistic Missile Treaty along with an interim agreement capping the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) each side could possess.

In 1975, two years of negotiations by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe resulted in the Helsinki Final Act. Signed by 35 nations, the Act addressed a range of global issues with Cold War implications, including new opportunities for trade and cultural exchange, and policies promoting the universal protection of human rights.

The Death and Re-Birth of Détente

Unfortunately, not all, but most good things must end. By the end of the 1970s, the warm glow of U.S.-Soviet détente began to fade away. While diplomats of both nations agreed on a second SALT agreement (SALT II), neither government ratified it. Instead, both nations agreed to continue to adhere to the arms reduction provisions of the old SALT I pact pending future negotiations.

As détente broke down, progress on nuclear arms control stalled completely. As their relationship continued to erode, it became clear that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union had overestimated the extent to which détente would contribute to an agreeable and peaceful end of the Cold War.
Détente all but ended when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. President Jimmy Carter angered the Soviets by increasing U.S. defence spending and subsidizing the efforts of anti-Soviet Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Afghanistan invasion also led the United States to boycott the 1980 Olympics held in Moscow. Later the same year, Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States after running on an anti-détente platform. In his first press conference as president, Reagan called détente a "one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its aims."

With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Reagan’s election, the reversal of the détente policy that began during the Carter Administration took the fast track. Under what became known as the “Reagan Doctrine,” the United States undertook the largest military buildup since World War II and implemented new policies directly opposed to the Soviet Union. Reagan revived the B-1 Lancer long-range nuclear bomber program that had been cut by the Carter administration and ordered increased production of the highly mobile mobile MX missile system. After the Soviets began to deploy their RSD-10 Pioneer medium-range ICBMs, Reagan convinced NATO to deploy nuclear missiles in West Germany. Finally, Reagan abandoned all attempts to implement provisions of the SALT II nuclear arms agreement. Arms control talks would not resume until Mikhail Gorbachev, being the only candidate on the ballot, was elected president of the Soviet Union in 1990.

With the United States developing President Reagan’s so-called “Star Wars” Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) ant-ballistic missile system, Gorbachev realized that the costs of countering U.S. advances in nuclear weapons systems, while still fighting a war in Afghanistan would eventually bankrupt his government.

In the face of the mounting costs, Gorbachev agreed to new arms control talks with President Reagan. Their negotiation resulted in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties of 1991 and 1993. Under the two pacts known as START I and START II, both nations not only agreed to stop making new nuclear weapons but also to systematically reduce their existing weapons stockpiles.

Since the enactment of the START treaties, the number of nuclear weapons controlled by the two Cold War superpowers has been significantly reduced. In the United States, the number of nuclear devices dropped from a high of over 31,100 in 1965 to about 7,200 in 2014. The nuclear stockpile in Russia/the Soviet Union fell from about 37,000 in 1990 to 7,500 in 2014.

The START treaties call for continued nuclear arms reductions through the year 2022, when stockpiles are to be cut to 3,620 in the United States and 3,350 in Russia.

**Détente vs. Appeasement**

While they both seek to maintain peace, détente and appeasement are very different expressions of foreign policy. The success of détente, in its most commonly used context of the Cold War, depended largely on “mutually assured destruction” (MAD), the horrifying theory that the use of nuclear weapons would result in the total annihilation of both the attacker and the defender. To prevent this nuclear Armageddon, détente required both the United States and the Soviet Union to make concessions to each other in the form of arms-control pacts that continue to be negotiated today. In other words, détente was a two-way-street.

Appeasement, on the other hand, tends to be far more one-sided in making concessions in negotiations to prevent war. Perhaps the best example of such one-sided appeasement was Great Britain’s pre-World War II policy toward Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the 1930s. At the direction of then Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Britain accommodated Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 and did nothing to stop Germany from annexing Austria in 1938. When Adolf Hitler threatened to absorb ethnically German portions of Czechoslovakia,
Chamberlain—even in the face of the Nazi march across Europe—negotiated the infamous Munich Agreement, which allowed Germany to annex the Sudetenland, in western Czechoslovakia.

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D. Strategic Arms Limitations Talks/Treaty (SALT) I and II (Short note)

SALT I

During the late 1960s, the United States learned that the Soviet Union had embarked upon a massive Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) buildup designed to reach parity with the United States. In January 1967, President Lyndon Johnson announced that the Soviet Union had begun to construct a limited Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) defence system around Moscow. The development of an ABM system could allow one side to launch the first strike and then prevent the other from retaliating by shooting down incoming missiles.

Johnson, therefore, called for strategic arms limitations talks (SALT), and in 1967, he and Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin met at Glassboro State College in New Jersey. Johnson said they must gain “control of the ABM race,” and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara argued that the more each reacted to the other’s escalation, the more they had chosen “an insane road to follow.” While the abolition of nuclear weapons would be impossible, limiting the development of both offensive and defensive strategic systems would stabilize U.S.-Soviet relations.

Johnson’s successor, Richard Nixon, also believed in SALT, and on November 17, 1969, the formal SALT talks began in Helsinki, Finland. Over the next two and a half years, the two sides haggled over whether or not each nation should complete their plans for ABMs; verification of a treaty; and U.S. concern that the Soviets continued to build more Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs). Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev signed the ABM Treaty and interim SALT agreement on May 26, 1972, in Moscow.

For the first time during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed to limit the number of nuclear missiles in their arsenals. SALT I is considered the crowning achievement of the Nixon-Kissinger strategy of détente. The ABM Treaty limited strategic missile defences to 200 interceptors each and allowed each side to construct two missile defence sites, one to protect the national capital, the other to protect one ICBM field. (For financial and strategic reasons, the United States stopped construction of each by the end of the decade.)

SALT II

Negotiations for the second round of SALT began in late 1972. Since SALT I did not prevent each side from enlarging their forces through the deployment of Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs) onto their ICBMs and SLBMs, SALT II initially focused on limiting, and then ultimately reducing, the number of MIRVs. Negotiations also sought to prevent both sides from making qualitative breakthroughs that would again destabilize the strategic relationship. The negotiations spanned the Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter administrations.

At the November 1974 Vladivostok Summit, Ford and Brezhnev agreed on the basic framework of a SALT II agreement. This included a 2,400 limit on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers) for each side; a 1,320 limit on MIRV systems; a ban on new land-based ICBM launchers; and limits on the deployment of new types of strategic offensive arms.
Even after the Vladivostok agreements, the two nations could not resolve the two other outstanding issues from SALT I: the number of strategic bombers and the total number of warheads in each nation’s arsenal. The first was complicated by the Soviet Backfire bomber, which U.S. negotiators believed could reach the United States but which the Soviets refused to include in the SALT negotiations. Meanwhile, the Soviets attempted unsuccessfully to limit American deployment of Air-Launched Cruise Missiles (ALCMs). Verification also divided the two nations, but eventually, they agreed on using National Technical Means (NTM), including the collection of electronic signals known as telemetry and the use of photo-reconnaissance satellites. On June 17, 1979, Carter and Brezhnev signed the SALT II Treaty in Vienna. SALT II limited the total of both nations’ nuclear forces to 2,250 delivery vehicles and placed a variety of other restrictions on deployed strategic nuclear forces, including MIRVs.

However, a broad coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats grew increasingly sceptical of the Soviet Union’s crackdown on internal dissent, its increasingly interventionist foreign policies, and the verification process delineated in the Treaty. On December 17, 1979, 19 Senators wrote Carter that “Ratification of a SALT II Treaty will not reverse trends in the military balance adverse to the United States.” On December 25, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, and on January 3, 1980, Carter asked the Senate not to consider SALT II for its advice and consent, and it was never ratified. Both Washington and Moscow subsequently pledged to adhere to the agreement’s terms despite its failure to enter into force. Carter’s successor Ronald Reagan, a vehement critic of SALT II during the 1980 presidential campaign, agreed to abide by SALT II until its expiration on December 31, 1985, while he pursued the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and argued that research into the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) adhered to the 1972 ABM Treaty.