



**NOTES BY STUDYGUIDE.PK ON WHY DID THE COLD WAR END?
THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN (1979) TO THE COLLAPSE OF
THE SOVIET UNION (1991)**

FOR MORE NOTES VISIT

The collapse of détente – the effects of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

Background to detente

- In 1963 the **Hot-Line** was set up. This was a direct tele-printer between the Kremlin and the White House. It was eventually replaced by a direct telephone link.
- In 1963 the **Test Ban Treaty** was signed. This stopped nuclear tests above ground.
- In 1964, the Soviet leader, Khrushchev, was forced to resign and was replaced by Brezhnev. At first Brezhnev built up the Soviet Union's long range weapons. But this led to a severe budget deficit in the Soviet Union.
- Brezhnev also began to use the KGB to crush opposition in the Soviet Union.
- In 1965 US combat troops landed in Vietnam and the USA became involved in the war.
- In 1968 Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia to put an end to the Prague Spring. _____

The Brezhnev Doctrine

- The Brezhnev Doctrine declared that the Soviet Union had the right to intervene in any neighbouring country where socialism was threatened.
- Brezhnev used this as the reason behind the invasion of Czechoslovakia. This was to be the basis for the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Moves to détente after 1968

- In 1968 the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** was signed. The Superpowers guaranteed not to supply nuclear technology to other countries.
- There was even more progress when Richard Nixon became President of the USA in 1969. Brezhnev also wanted to reduce Soviet military spending so that he could sort out the problems facing the Soviet economy.



- The result of Soviet spending on arms was that by the early 1970s the USSR had a distinct advantage in ICBMs.

		1964	1974
USA	ICBMs	834	1054
	SLBMs	416	656
Soviet Union	ICBMs	200	1575
	SLBMs	120	720

(SLBMs were Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles)

- Brezhnev now wanted to reduce Soviet military spending so that he could sort out the problems facing the Soviet economy. The most obvious way was by cutting expenditure on arms.
- So in 1970 Brezhnev agreed to begin Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the USA. The talks soon became known as **SALT**, and later **SALT I** following the second agreements in the late 1970s.

Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty 1972 (SALT I)

- The SALT talks led to the signing of the SALT I treaty in 1972. This limited the increase in numbers of nuclear missiles. _____
- There would be a five year delay on the building of more missiles. At the end of the five year period a further agreement would be necessary.

The figures agreed were,

	USA	Soviet Union
ICBMs	1000	1600
SLBMs	650	700

- A separate treaty restricted the number of ABMs, Anti-Ballistic Missiles. These were missiles that could be used to shoot down ICBMs
- At the same time the two sides agreed to begin Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks (MBFR). These continued until the 1980s, when there had been more than 300 meeting with almost no agreements.
- Both sides also agreed to allow each other to use spy satellites to make sure that the numbers were being kept to.
- The USA also signed a trade deal to export wheat to the Soviet Union and both sides agreed to develop artistic and sporting links. In 1975 Soviet and US astronauts linked up in Space for the first time.



- SALT I was the first time that the Superpowers had reached an agreement on arms limitation, but the talks only dealt with strategic weapons, long-range nuclear weapons.
- They did not cover multiple warhead missiles or battlefield weapons (tactical nuclear weapons). In fact the USA continued to produce multiple warheads, at the rate of three a day, throughout the 1970s.
- Nixon visited Brezhnev in Moscow in July 1974 and as well as agreeing to relax tensions throughout the world; they said they would try to promote increased understanding between their two countries.
- Détente soon covered other areas, however, when in 1975 the USA and the Soviet Union, along with 33 other countries signed the Helsinki Agreements.

The Helsinki Agreement on Human Rights

- The signatories guaranteed that they would:
 - respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.
- However, President Carter complained about Soviet violations of the 1975 Helsinki agreements. Carter criticised the Soviet Union's poor record on free speech and freedom of movement. _____

SALT II

- **SALT II** began in 1974 and continued until 1979. Agreement was reached on further reductions in strategic weapons, which were to last until 1985.

Weapons allowed	USA	Soviet Union
ICBMs	1054	1398
SLBMs	656	950

- But even before agreement was reached on SALT II, relations between the Superpowers began to break down.

Why did relations between the Superpowers grow worse in the late 1970s?

- In 1977 President Carter of the USA criticised the Soviet Union's human rights' record at the Belgrade conference. He wanted to link the issue of human rights to arms reduction. The Soviet Union was not prepared to do this.



- In 1979 **SALT II** was signed by Carter and Brezhnev, but before it could be ratified relations between East and West broke down.
- The real crisis in Superpower relations, however, came in 1979.

The impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

Why did relations break down between the USA and the Soviet Union in 1979?

- There were revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua. In Iran the Shah, who was pro-western, was overthrown and an Islamic republic was set up.
- The US embassy was attacked and hostages seized. In Nicaragua Communist guerrillas seized power.
- Cuba sent armed forces to Africa to help rebels in Angola.
- New Soviet SS-20 missiles were sent to Eastern Europe, and there was a build up of conventional forces in the Warsaw Pact.
- In December, NATO announced that Cruise and Pershing missiles would be deployed in Europe.
- On Christmas Day 1979, Soviet forces entered Afghanistan. The president Hafizullah Amin was arrested and executed, and a pro-communist government was set up.
- President Brezhnev announced that the Soviet Union 'had responded to an urgent request from the Kabul government for help'. Barbrak Kamal became the new president.

Why did Soviet forces invade Afghanistan?

- In 1978 a Marxist government had come to power in Afghanistan and a twenty year treaty of friendship had been signed with the Soviet Union.
- In September 1979, Nur Mohammed Taraki, the Marxist president of Afghanistan, was deposed and murdered. The post of president was taken by the prime minister Hafizullah Amin.
- The Soviet Union feared that this would lead to a collapse of the Marxist government and intervened following the Brezhnev Doctrine. This stated that the Soviet Union was entitled to use force to protect Socialism in any country where it was under attack.
- But the situation in Afghanistan was more complex than the Soviet Union realised. In the summer of 1979, Muslim resistance groups had been set up to oppose land reforms and educational changes.



- When the Soviet forces invaded, the Mujaheddin, as they became known, continued their resistance.

Reagan and the US reaction

- Since the late 1960s, relations between the Superpowers had been improving. However, almost immediately after the invasion, the good relations between the USA and the Soviet Union broke down. _____
- Exports of US grain to the Soviet Union were stopped.
- The USA refused to ratify SALT II.
- President Carter took a very firm line with the Soviet Union. His policy towards the Soviet Union became known as the Carter Doctrine.
- The Carter Doctrine stated that the USA would use military force if necessary to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf region.
- The deterioration in Superpower relations was made worse by the election of Ronald Reagan as president of the USA in 1980 and by illness of President Brezhnev and the deaths of his two successors, Andropov and Chernenko.
- For five years there was almost no progress in negotiations between the two countries. _____

The Olympic boycotts, 1980 and 1984

- President Carter announced that the USA would boycott the Moscow Olympic Games if the Soviet Union failed to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.
- President Carter put pressure on the US Olympic Committee to boycott the games and hoped this would encourage other nations to follow the USA.
- In all, 62 countries refused to participate and some of those who boycotted the games held alternative ones called the 'Liberty Bell Classic'.
- In 1984, Chernenko, leader of the USSR, announced the Soviet boycott of the Los Angeles Olympic Games.
- Thirteen other communist countries joined the Soviet boycott and as in 1980, alternative games were held. They were called the Friendship Games.
- The USA was not too concerned about the boycott, because the games were the largest ever held and China participated for the first time since 1932.



Why did the Soviet forces lose the war in Afghanistan?

- The Soviet forces were initially successful; they were able to take control of the cities, but increasingly were unable to counter the guerrilla tactics of the Mujaheddin and lost control of the mountainous countryside.
- Many of the Soviet troops sent to Afghanistan were conscripts, unprepared for the fighting that they were exposed to.
- Their heavy weapons could not be used effectively and they were subject to constant and sudden attacks.
- Increasingly there was little appetite for the war amongst the Soviet troops. Afghanistan did not seem worth fighting and dying for.
- Their opponents, on the other hand, believed that they were fighting for their religion.

What effects did the Afghan War have on the Soviet Union?

- There was increasing opposition to the war from many people inside the Soviet Union as casualties mounted. A Superpower was being humiliated by guerrillas.
- The cost of the war was colossal and played a significant part in the bankruptcy of the Soviet Union in the 1980s. This in turn led to the attempts by Mikhail Gorbachev to reform the Soviet economy. _____

The role of Ronald Reagan

- Reagan became president in 1981. He made no secret of his hatred for the Soviet Union. He called it 'The Evil Empire'.
- He made it clear that he was prepared to discuss arms limitation, but was only prepared to negotiate from strength. If things did not work out, he was not prepared to compromise.
- He was keen to let the world know that the USA was still a Superpower. This meant restoring confidence in the USA and showing that the defeat in Vietnam was a thing of the past.
- For Reagan, this meant challenging communism. He wanted to show the people of the USA that he was not frightened of the Soviet Union.
- When Reagan put forward his defence programme for the USA, he indicated he would spend one trillion dollars.
- His advisers also persuaded him that the USA could win a limited nuclear war. This became known as - (Nuclear Utilization Target Selection – NUTS)



- In 1981, talks on Intermediate Range Missiles (SS-20s and Cruise) began. Reagan offered the 'Zero Option'. Both sides would dismantle and remove their weapons from Europe. Brezhnev refused.
- When martial law was imposed in Poland in December 1981 to stop the activities of the trade union 'Solidarity' led by Lech Walesa; Reagan stopped high technology exports to the Soviet Union.
- In 1982 Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) began. But all talks soon became deadlocked.
- In 1983 Reagan ordered US forces to land in Grenada to crush a Communist takeover.
- The situation was made much more difficult by the death of Brezhnev in 1982, the illness of Andropov in 1983 and the appointment of Chernenko in 1984.
- It was difficult for Reagan to develop any kind of relationship with the Soviet Union as a result of this. For three years very little happened until the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985.

The Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI or 'Star Wars')

- In 1983 Reagan announced 'Star Wars', the Strategic Defence Initiative. This was a plan to shoot down Soviet missiles using lasers in Space.
- This was not a serious proposition in 1983, but it had the effect of putting pressure upon the Soviet leaders. _____
- The Soviet response to the announcement of SDI was to accuse Reagan of warmongering. Reagan was portrayed as the man who was prepared to start a nuclear war and emerge as victor.
- Andropov, the Soviet leader, knew that if SDI was possible then the Soviet Union could not compete in the technological research because the Soviet economy was in dire straits.

Reagan and Gorbachev, 1985-88

The role of Mikhail Gorbachev

- Gorbachev came to power with two slogans **PERESTROIKA** and **GLASNOST**.
- Perestroika referred to 'economic restructuring' in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev believed that the Soviet Union could only survive if the economy was completely rebuilt, doing away with the command economy which had existed since Stalin.



- Glasnost referred to new sense of 'openness', both within the Soviet Union and also with the West. The powers of the KGB were restricted and criticism of the government was allowed. Free elections were held in 1990.
- Gorbachev realised that the Soviet Union's survival depended upon the West. He needed investment, new technology, but most of all arms agreements which would allow him to reduce the Soviet Union's massive defence spending.
- When he became leader, Gorbachev indicated that the Soviet Union would no longer follow the Brezhnev Doctrine.

Gorbachev knew that the Soviet Union was bankrupt. Why was it bankrupt?

- For forty years it had supported Communist regimes around the world through COMECON. In 1977 Cuba had joined. Cuba depended almost totally on the Soviet Union for aid.
- Prices in the Soviet Union were controlled and subsidised. This was a heavy drain on the government.
- The Space programme had been very ambitious and very expensive. In 1975 Soviet and US astronauts had met in Space. It would become almost the last symbol of Superpower status.
- Military expenditure had gone on rising. This stopped spending on consumer goods. No leader dared offend the military in case he was overthrown by a coup.
- The Afghan War was merely the final straw. Soviet troops were withdrawn in 1989.
- The Soviet Union had increasingly come to rely on imports of food and technology from the West. This had to be paid for in foreign currency.
- The Soviet Union was desperate for foreign currency. Sales of roubles were strictly controlled and foreign visitors were allowed to buy in 'Beriozka' shops which contained goods which were not available to Soviet citizens.
- Soviet exports were usually of poor quality; 'Ladas', cheap 'Qualiton' records, for example. There was little incentive to workers to raise standards as everyone was guaranteed a job, cheap housing and public services.
- Officially the last person to be unemployed in the Soviet Union had found a job in 1932.
- There was immense 'black market' in western goods and currency. Tourists would be offered roubles at three or five times the official exchange rate.



- Gorbachev knew that if the Soviet Union was to survive, he had to reduce expenditure. But he also needed foreign aid and new technology.
- The only way of getting it was by making agreements to reduce arms with the West.

Reagan and Gorbachev: the changing relationship between the Superpowers

- Gorbachev knew that if the Soviet Union was to survive, he had to reduce expenditure. But he also needed foreign aid and new technology.
- The only way of getting it was by making agreements to reduce arms with the West.
- Reagan also wanted to cut military expenditure. In 1983 the USA spent \$300,000,000,000 on defence. More than the entire British budget.

The summit conferences and the end of the Cold War

- During the period of the summits Gorbachev made several visits to European countries. Wherever he went he was greeted by huge crowds.
- The term 'Gorbymania' was coined and he was mobbed every where he went - it was as if he was a pop star. The world came to expect a great deal from him.
- The wives of the two presidents also played important roles. Raisa Gorbachev was lively and outgoing and liked to dress fashionably. She was quite different from the wives of previous leaders.
- Nancy Reagan persuaded her husband to moderate his opposition to the Soviet Union. The two women got on well and their friendship wore off on their husbands.

Geneva, 1985

- Gorbachev and Reagan held their first summit meeting in **Geneva** in November 1985.
- Reagan still insisted that the USA would develop 'Star Wars'.
- Few firm decisions were made, but it seemed that the two leaders liked each other and they met without advisers and aides.
- The Geneva Accords were published which indicated that arms limitation talks and human rights were key concerns of the two Superpowers.

Reykjavik, 1986



- There were initial agreements but the fundamental differences over SDI caused the talks to break down. _____
- Despite the failure, the summit paved the way for the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, signed in 1987.

Washington DC, 1987

- The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty, was signed in 1987. **For the first time**, the Superpowers were to destroy nuclear weapons.
- By 1991, as a result of INF, the Soviet Union destroyed 889 of its intermediate-range missiles and 957 shorter-range missiles, and the U.S. destroyed 677 and 169 respectively. _____
- The Treaty included remarkably extensive and intrusive verification inspection and monitoring arrangements to check that weapons were being destroyed.
- It was this acceptance by the Soviet Union that convinced the USA that the two countries could trust each other.

Moscow, 1988

- The INF Treaty was formally ratified.
- Reagan indicated that the Soviet Union could improve its stance on human rights.
- Gorbachev promised to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan.
- Further talks were held to discuss the reductions in armaments and also conventional forces. The talks were known as Strategic Arms Reduction Talks – (START).

New York, 1988

- This was the last summit between Reagan and Gorbachev and it was also attended by President-elect George Bush Snr.
- Gorbachev indicated he was going to speed up arms reduction wanted to complete the START Treaty before Bush became president.
- President-elect Bush and his own advisers were less trusting of Gorbachev than Reagan.

Malta, 1989

- This was between the new President – George Bush Snr. and Gorbachev.



- Gorbachev assured Bush that he would never start a 'hot war' against the USA.
- Observers were quick to point out that if Yalta (1945) was the beginning of the Cold War, then Malta (1989) was the end of it.

Washington, 1990

- Bush Snr. and Gorbachev discussed Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).
- The Treaty for the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) was signed on 31 July 1991.
- This meant reducing 25 to 35 per cent of all their strategic warheads.
- Following the work of the previous summits, the representatives of NATO and the Warsaw Pact signed the Conventional Armed Forces Treaty (CFE) which led to the reduction of weapons based in Europe.

Gorbachev and Eastern Europe

- By the late 1980s, Gorbachev was not prepared to use force to try to keep the countries of Eastern Europe under control, and in any case the Soviet Army was unwilling to act.
- Its morale had been destroyed in Afghanistan and many soldiers did not always receive regular payments.
- Gorbachev rejected the Brezhnev Doctrine. The satellite states of Eastern Europe knew that there would not be the kind of response seen in 1956 and 1968 if there were challenges to Soviet authority.
- Gorbachev openly accepted that the countries of the Warsaw Pact could make changes to their own country independently.
- This became known as the Sinatra Doctrine – from the song 'My Way'. Each state was eventually permitted to follow its own political path.
- Communist rule collapsed in Poland during 1989, and Lech Walesa became President in 1990 after the first free elections since the end of the Second World War. _____
- In September 1989, Hungary opened its borders with Austria and East Germany opened its borders with Austria. Massive numbers of refugees began to flood west.
- This was the signal for change, because it now seemed that the 'iron curtain' could no longer hold back those who opposed Soviet domination.



The Berlin Wall, 1989

- When Gorbachev visited East Germany in October 1989 he indicated that he would no longer interfere in events within that country.
- Unrest began to grow in East Germany and at the beginning of November 1989. The demonstrators demanded changes to the system of government.
- Demonstrations increased in intensity and one meeting had more than one million protestors.
- The East German government tried to defuse the situation by opening the border with West Germany. This served only to allow hundreds of thousands of East Germans to swarm into the West to visit relatives. _____
- East Germans then began attacking the Berlin Wall and the world saw startling images of the Wall being dismantled. The date was 9 November 1989.
- In preparation for reunification, East Germany left the Warsaw Pact in 1990.
- On 3 October 1990, East and West Germany were reunited.

The collapse of the Soviet Empire

- The Communist governments of Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria both resigned in 1989.
- Soviet troops were withdrawn from the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which had been occupied since 1940. The Soviet Union accepted their independence in 1991 independent again.
- In December 1989 the numbers increased dramatically when Nicolai Ceausescu, the Romanian dictator was overthrown and shot.
- In December, Gorbachev met George Bush, the new US president and they declared that the Cold War was over.
- In 1990 the first free elections since November 1918 were held in the Soviet Union.

The end of the Warsaw Pact

- In January 1991, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland announced they would leave the Warsaw Pact.
- Bulgaria also announced its intention to withdraw from the Pact in the following month.



- One again, the Soviet Union did not challenge these decisions. It stated that the military structure of the Pact would be dismantled at the end of March 1991.
- The Warsaw Pact was formally ended on 1 July 1991.

Why did Gorbachev do nothing to stop the collapse of the Soviet bloc?

- He was not prepared to use force and risk bloodshed.
- The Red Army was not paid regularly and its morale had been destroyed in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union was on the verge of financial collapse.
- Gorbachev needed aid from the West, he knew that he would not get it if he ordered a clampdown on the East.
- Events in Eastern Europe influenced different national and ethnic groups inside the Soviet Union. The Baltic States began to press for independence in 1989 and were granted freedom by 1991.
- In May 1991, the new president of the Russian state, Boris Yeltsin began to encourage the socialist republics of the Soviet Union to break away.

There was one last attempt to save the Soviet Union.

- In August 1991, Communist hard-liners tried to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev while he was on holiday in the Crimea.
- Within three days the coup had failed. The Soviet army refused to back the coup.
- The leading figure in the defeat of the Communists was Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president.
- For the first time in seventy-two years the White, Blue and Red flag of Russia, outlawed under Communism, flew over the Kremlin. The Soviet Union no longer existed.
- On December 8, 1991 the Soviet Union was officially declared dissolved and it was replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
- On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as president of the USSR.

The impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union on world affairs

- The collapse of the Soviet Union not only brought an end to the Cold War, but it also produced much greater co-operation between the countries of East and West.

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- Within a matter of years, former members of the communist bloc were seeking admission to NATO and the European Union.
- The United Nations Security Council began to work with much greater unity.
- Communist regimes around the world collapsed for lack of support. Only Cuba and China managed to survive, but both were forced to look for economic support from the West, either industrial or financial, or through increased tourism.
- In Africa and South America, Soviet support for rebel groups disappeared overnight.
- The division of the Soviet Union into separate republics led to an increased threat of nuclear accidents, as nuclear weapons fell into the hands of the Ukraine and Belarus.
- Inside the Russian federation, separatist movements developed in autonomous regions such as Chechnya. This led to increased instability in Russia itself.

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