Chapter 1

Research Agenda: Gorbachev's New Thinking, the Cold War, and the Fall of the Soviet Union

"If not me, who? And if not now, when?"

- Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev

Geneva, Switzerland in the autumn of 1985 was the first meeting between the Premier of the Soviet Union Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev and the President of the United States Ronald Wilson Reagan, two strong, influential leaders heading down the path of history diametrically opposed to one another. Not long before, in March of 1983, Reagan had characterized the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," sending a clear message of confrontation to the leadership of the Soviet Union and demonstrating the American intention to open up all fronts of the Cold War, specifically an all-out economic attack in the form of a military build-up whose aim was, simply, to outspend the Soviets into extinction. Conversely, in preparation for their first meeting in Geneva, Gorbachev was already showing himself to be a new kind of leader, thinking and planning new strategies, new paradigms of the Soviet Union in its relations with the West. Even before Gorbachev had become party leader, he sought a new way to "humanize Soviet Socialism through an emphasis on the 'human factor' to prove wrong the assertion that an inhuman system cannot be humanized." He had already instituted a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions and anti-satellite weapons and was coming to Geneva ready to propose dramatic cuts

¹ David MacKenzie and Michael W. Curran, *A History of Russia the Soviet Union and Beyond* (London: Wadsworth Publishing, 2002), 622, 681.

² Richard Sakwa, Gorbachev and his Reforms: 1985-1990 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 7.

in overall nuclear arsenals. During their first meeting, though no real specifics were hammered out, even the Cold Warrior Reagan had to agree that a nuclear war could never be won and could never be fought.³ Gorbachev's *new thinking* in regards to foreign policy was characterized by the simple notion that a "nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals." This sea change shocked the world. Indeed for anyone living at the time, suddenly the impossible, an end to the constant threat of complete annihilation, seemed possible. Gorbachev's *new thinking* on domestic and foreign policy seemed to have limitless possibilities. Soon there were free elections in Poland, the Berlin wall fell, and Germany reunified, all leading to the disintegration of the Soviet Union in August, 1991.

The panoply of theories for the fall of the Soviet Union are many, and we in the United States have grown up on the popular, uncomplicated and most ethnocentric theory of all, that American democracy and military power were the overarching reasons for the downfall. Other scholars suggest theories such as a long, slow economic and moral stagnation of the Soviet system that constituted an inevitable collapse. This research agenda anticipates answering the question: To what extent did Gorbachev's *new thinking* have an effect on the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union? Simply put, were Gorbachev's reforms or Reagan's anti-Soviet stance the primary cause, and why? I will argue that Gorbachev's domestic reforms commonly known as *Glasnost*, "openness" and *Perestroika*, "restructuring," while intending to strengthen the country, were among the primary reasons for the end of the Cold War and disintegration of the Soviet Union.

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³ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987), 225, 226.

⁴ Ibid., 140

⁵ Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia: From Nicholas II to Vladimir Putin* (London: Penguin Press, 2003), 448.

This research question will be answered through a constructivist analysis that examines the role of ideas in history. Social constructivism, according to the Ohio State University, International Relations scholar Alexander Wendt in his book, *Social Theory of International Politics*, entails two basic views. These views are, first, "that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and second, that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature," the second being an especially important characteristic in the task of comparing and contrasting the public and scholarly perceptions of the role of the Soviet and American leaders in this historic event. The deeper level of understanding provided by constructivism is instrumental as it goes beyond realist 'hard power' to include ideas and understandings, the non-material intellectual view of times, places, events and actors in an international scenario. Constructivism, by incorporating the realist paradigm, can also be considered a counter response because it transcends the more straightforward, realist discipline of International Relations in terms of hard power as a means to understanding the inner workings of the world.

The course of the paper will start with an historical baseline of where the Soviet Union and the United States stood, in terms of relations and old thinking, at the beginning of Gorbachev's Presidency. The constructivist process, through the agency structure debate and discourse analysis of scholars and politicians, will be employed to engage the interpretations, motivations, influence, and causation of the fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War. This paper will then track through speeches and actions at the Geneva and Reykjavik summits these new social constructions attempted by Gorbachev and Reagan to ascertain both the

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⁶ Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press,1999), 1.

political atmosphere and reality of how each of these constructions were built and their degree of success.

The importance of the research begins with the issue of *Tonypandy*, which is a term first used by the character Alan Grant in Josephine Tey's 1951 novel, *The Daughter of Time*, meaning a faulty collective memory of popular history or the accepted general consensus of a misreading of history, a historical lie that is perpetuated and therefore seen as an unquestioned truth. Essentially, is the American public's view that President Reagan single-handedly put an end to the Cold War through his strong anti-Soviet policies a fanciful legend or political reality? The adage, those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to relive them, is considered a foregone conclusion. Therefore, if we are misreading history and if the lessons we are supposed to be receiving are from the wrong history or a propagandized history, then we are left with a bastardized vision of reality from which to draw our source of problem solving abilities.

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⁷ Ken Conca and Geoffrey D. Dabelk, *Green Planet Blues*, 3rd edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 45.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Constructivism versus Realism,

Engaging the Debate on the End of the Cold War

There are certainly many different variables involved in the end of the Cold War and fall of the Soviet Union, from economic stagnation and material deprivation to roots in the historical, inhumane Lenin/Stalinist system. In this literature review, I will focus and engage the constructivist and realist debates on the end of the Cold War, by defining each of these analytical languages of International Relations and describing how each frames the causes of the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union. This delineation of theoretical approaches is necessary in order to justify the use of a constructivist analysis to address the research question. I will then place my analysis within the constructivist framework.

Realism proposes general laws to explain International Relations events in terms *realpolitik*, or the influence of the material world and military and economic power over ideals in determining state actions. A large part of realism is the notion that states are rational actors, that they pursue interests of self-preservation and the betterment of their society sometimes violently.⁸

Realists of note are former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who as a policy-maker epitomized realist theory in action. From Jeremi Suri's paper, *Henry Kissinger and the Limits of Realism*, "his triangular diplomacy with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, as

⁸ Joshua Goldstein and Jon Pevehouse, *International Relations* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 43.

well as the general conduct of détente, appear to confirm this judgment. Kissinger's writings have also furthered this perception through his constant invocation of concepts like the balance of power, raison d'état, and linkage." Another realist at the forefront of history is George F. Kennan, described by political scientist David Lorio as "a realist, a conservative, a pragmatist, and a pessimist."

The overall angle from which realists approach the Cold War debate is where and why they failed to predict the end of the Soviet Union. Another prominent realist, Kenneth N. Waltz, admits that his realist theory does not "aspire to determine predictions of particular actions. And (realists) have generally been reticent to draw policy prescriptions from their theories . . . His theory explains continuities . . . recurrences and repetitions, not change." However, that description is exactly what a theory is supposed to do; it is a model for analyzing and predicting events. According to *Random House Dictionary*, theory is "a set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested or is widely accepted and can be used to make predictions about natural phenomena."

Waltz also goes to lengths to dispute that the realist version of the end of the Cold War is obsolete in the article, *Structural Realism after the Cold War*. He stated that "the Cold War ended exactly in the way realism would lead one to expect, Soviets trying to right its economy in order to preserve its position (of power) in the world." Jack Donnelly in his book, *Realism and International Relations*, critiques Waltz on the lack of realism's ability to explain the collapse of

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⁹ Jeremy Suri, "Henry Kissinger and the Limits of Realism," *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association* (San Diego: March 22, 2006): 2.

¹⁰ David Lorio, "American Pessimist: George F. Kennan as Realist," *Paper presented to Annual Southwest Political Science Convention* (New Orleans: March 25, 2005): 3.

Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 69, 121.

¹² Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no 3 (Summer 2001): 8.

the Soviet Union, Donnelly explains, "When the Cold War order collapsed seemingly overnight...many sympathetic observers (to realism) began to look elsewhere-especially because the collapse was intimately tied to ideas of democracy and human rights and processes of technological and economic change, important concerns that were excluded by realism." While explaining away a theory based on whether or not it was successful in predicting the end of the Cold War is not entirely fair, the point is that there are severe limits to the scope of realism, especially when confronted with something that outside of realism seems completely rational, that a leader of a country would propose radical changes, if radical changes were needed.

The analytical tool of constructivism that I employ is more in opposition to positivism, or scientifically provable inquiries, rather than realism as it is important to note that constructivism itself is not so much a theory as a lens to view the world, a lens that sees realism as simply another social construction. This lens will be adopted as a means to focus on the social world of human awareness, ideas and beliefs, and shared understanding. Constructivists are more concerned with how state actors define their national interests, identity, and interdependency with other nations. Alexander Wendt, in his book, *Social Theory of International Politics*, goes so far as to suggest that the sudden, unpredictable nature of the end of the Cold War had much to do with the rise of the constructivist school of thought. It seemed to many that these difficulties (explaining the end of the Cold War) stemmed from International Relations' materialist and individualist orientation, such that a more ideational and holistic view of international politics might do better."

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¹³ Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2000), 31.

¹⁴ Goldstein and Pevehouse, *International Relations*, 93.

¹⁵ Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, 4.

Other major constructivists considering the issue of the end of the Cold War are Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, who first used the term constructivist in International Relations, and Vendulka Kubalkova. In their book, International Relations in a Constructed World, they describe the benefits of a constructivist approach, noting that it "tries to integrate and transcend the realist and idealist traditions." Onuf and Kubalkova describe the advantages of a constructivist framework versus a more positivist, scientific approach, "the antonym of the term critical is not uncritical but, in some cases, positivist and in others, problem-solving. . . . Not being critical might mean that a scholar is positivist or interested only in proposing policies to solve narrowly defined problems." The advantages of a constructivist school of thought are the critical and socially aware method of interpreting ideas such as Gorbachev's new thinking paradigm.

The "game changing" nature of Gorbachev's new thinking is addressed by Wendt in the article, Anarchy is What States Make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics, "as one of the most important phenomena in (recent) world politics . . . Gorbachev want(ed) to free the Soviet Union from the coercive social logic of the Cold War and engage the West in far-reaching cooperation."¹⁷ These identities can be altered through the power of ideas, leading to an avalanche of changes. Gorbachev's goal through new thinking was to change the attitudes of the Soviet citizens and the world.

The break-up of the Soviet Union was caused to some extent by years and years of stagnation. Gorbachev attacked this stagnation with a group of reforms such as glasnost, perestroika and new thinking that I will argue brought about the end of his presidency and the Soviet Union.

¹⁶ Vendulka Kubalkova, Nicholas Ofun, and Peter Kowert, eds., International Relations in a Constructed World

⁽Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 5. ¹⁷ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it," *International Organization* 46 no. 2 (Spring 1992): 419, 421.

Chapter 3

Research Design: Methodology and Definitions

This paper will use a qualitative research method, to answer the research question, the why of attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, and culture, rather than a numerical quantitative analysis, to examine the impact of Gorbachev's *new thinking* on the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union. In this research design, I will outline the methodologies used, justify the speeches, public news sources, and scholarly books and articles used. I will then define and justify the terms employed in this analysis, including constructivism, agency versus structure, discourse analysis, *new thinking*, and what constitutes the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. My research is from primary and secondary sources such as biographies and speeches of Gorbachev and Reagan and will examine each leader's motivational history.

For Gorbachev, this history will entail the chronology of his motivations from the *new* thinking reforms and historic summit meeting with Reagan through to the collapse of the Soviet Union. For Reagan, this history will entail the chronology of his motivations through confrontations with competing views of foreign policy towards the Soviet Union within his administration and the Republican Party and his changing attitudes during the summit meetings with Gorbachev.

My methodology will be to separate the discourse into three areas, political speeches, popular discourse, and scholarly literature, categorizing and juxtaposing them according to their

views in order to analyze the inherent rationality of each viewpoint. In scholarly literature, the goal in many cases is to inform as objectively as possible, to frame the facts of an issue in the most straight forward way. Therefore, discourse analysis, or looking behind the meaning of words, is not as important as it is in political speeches where meaning is hidden behind political agendas or in the public discourse where there are a myriad of journalistic agendas behind the words, from profit motivations to seeking personal fame. I will put the speeches in the context of events to ascertain the adaptation of language and tone, dependent on the audience and political situation each leader, Gorbachev and Reagan, finds himself in at the moment.

I will examine the political speeches of Gorbachev that contain references to *new thinking* to ascertain when and where it began to enter into the international public consciousness. The Gorbachev speeches chosen for discourse analysis were for content such as *new thinking* and the chronology of his rhetoric that evolved over the course of time, specifically his use of the language of the revolution such as comrades, and people's revolution and the use of capitalism and democracy as a pejorative. This analysis will entail a close reading of Gorbachev's Political Report to the 1986 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, where the principles of *new thinking* were first introduced, ¹⁸ and also the December 7, 1988 speech to the 43rd U.N. General Assembly Session where Gorbachev calls for mutual cooperation to control the arms race.

The popular cultural discourse will be addressed by examining *Soviet Life* and current attitudes of Russians towards Gorbachev and the end of the Cold War. This will incorporate polling data, which will not be used as an end in itself, but rather as a tool to further illuminate

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¹⁸Kubalkova, Vendulka and A.A. Cruickshank, *Thinking New About Soviet* "New Thinking" (Berkeley, CA: Regents of the University of California, 1989), 19.

the thoughts, opinions, and perceptions of Russians regarding the role that Gorbachev and *new thinking* had on their lives, the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Polling data is available at *Russian Votes* and *FOM: Public Opinion Foundation*, specifically percentages of Russians who felt Gorbachev was responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union through his liberalization policies. An example of opinions from *FOM* in 2002 that illuminate how Russians saw the world are that 29% of Russians believed the Cold War was over compared to 45% who believed the Cold War continue. ¹⁹ This data will add additional layers of insight into how the Russians viewed the events leading up to, and including the end of the Cold War and fall of the Soviet Union.

For the scholarly examination, I will compare and contrast scholars who are proponents of the Reagan as Cold War hero doctrine with those that perceive Gorbachev as the unwitting architect of the end of the Cold War and disintegration of the Soviet Union. I will choose those scholars that are generally considered to be experts on Reagan and Gorbachev's role in the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union. For example, I will analyze the Reagan as Cold War hero views of Brad Smith, juxtaposed with differing opinions by Richard Led Nebow and Janice Grass, and examine the issue of whether or not the Soviet Union was reformable with Stephan Cohen, Archie Brown, and Karen Dawisha. A definition of constructivism has to acknowledge that it has become a different and new analytical tool in International Relations.²⁰ It is a counter to the realist theory, centered on the system of anarchic power-based states that rely on the self-serving rationality of their actors. The emerging constructivism lens sets out a whole

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¹⁹ Public Opinion Foundation (Russia), FOM, "Do You Think the Cold War is Over or is it Still Going On? June 6, 2002" < http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/111_12179/2457_12203/ed0233 (accessed Mar. 29, 2009).

¹⁹ Vendulka Kubalkova, ed., Foreign Policy in a Constructed World (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 19.

different paradigm, looking at the world as a far more socially complex and socially driven place. Vendulka Kubalkova in her book, *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, sites the use of the word "construction" to help create an understanding of constructivism; "a constructivist sees the world as inextricably social and material, that is, seeing people in their world as makers of their world, and seeing the world as a never-ending construction project." This concept of dramatic new social ideas shaping the world as a new paradigm is the draw towards constructivism as a theoretical framework in which to address the issue of Gorbachev's *new thinking*, in a way that is not served well by the realist theoretical structures that would not have a place for the concept of actors behaving in truly unexpected, non-traditional ways.

The agency versus structure debate in constructivism is pertinent to this research as it examines the role of individuals as "agents" in the social construction of their respective societies. Alexander Wendt defines the parameters of this problem, "The agent-structure problem has its origins in two truisms about social life which underlie most social scientific inquiry: One, that human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live; and two, society is made up of social relationships, which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors." In our case, the debate is why do the agents on the world stage, or personalities with free will, interact with, influence, dominate or are overwhelmed by the structure, society, and social institutions with determinism, which in our case is the endless arms race and Cold War confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Gorbachev and Reagan, each in their own way, attempted to be agents of change against the structures of the Cold War pattern of steady escalation and the

²¹ Ibid., 58.

²² Alexander Wendt, The Agency-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 337, 338.

²³ Vendulka Kubalkova, ed., Foreign Policy in a Constructed World, 80.

institutionalization of collective madness, named Mutually Assured Destruction or more commonly known as MAD. I will utilize this lens of understanding to view the true nature of Gorbachev's game changing reforms and Reagan's policies to illuminate the flawed and distrusting perceptions they illicit from the structures of their own and each others' societies.

Discourse analysis for the purpose of this research is defined as the discipline devoted to the investigation of the relationship between form and function in communication."²⁴ To fully analyze the political rhetoric of speeches by Gorbachev, I will utilize Martin Reisigl's approach from the book, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences* of;

A transdisciplinary, *politolinguistic* that brings together and connects rhetoric, critical discourse and concepts in political science. Transdisciplinary perspective is a combining of rhetoric, political science and linguistics, and *politolinguistic* refers to a differentiation among three aspects, polity, policy and politics. Polity constitutes the formal and structural framework as being the basis for political action. Policy manifests itself in areas such as domestic, foreign, economic and social affairs. It is important to understand that political rhetoric has the goal of advertising political position and maintaining power.²⁵

This theoretical construct will allow me to get inside the meaning, both explicitly and implicitly, stated in the speeches of Gorbachev.

To define the reforms of Gorbachev, he himself defines *new thinking* in his book, *Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World*, stating that "The fundamental principle of the new political outlook is very simple: nuclear war cannot be used as a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals." In fact, *new thinking*, according to Kubalkova, "was not announced as items of an agenda, nor were its principles elaborated at

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²⁴ Jan Remkena, *Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2004), 1.

²⁵ Ruth Wodak and Michal Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2008), 96, 97.

²⁶ Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, 140.

the Congress. It was embodied in occasional phrases or sentences, unobtrusively inserted in Gorbachev's five-hour speech."²⁷ There were ten points of *new thinking*, everything from the ecology to flexibility in international relations. Two new international buzzwords came from this *new thinking*; they were *perestroika* meaning "restructuring" and had to do with reforming society top to bottom, and *glasnost* meaning "openness" which embodied the ideas of a freer press and public annunciations of past wrongs perpetrated by former Soviet leaders. However, for foreign policy it was on nuclear war that truly a new direction was taken by a Soviet leader.²⁸ Essentially, Gorbachev was unilaterally calling off the arms race. It is not enough to understand what *new thinking* was but to examine why Gorbachev sought such a dramatic change of the status quo of the Soviet Union when he did; this will be addressed further.

It is relatively easy to place dates on specific events and label them as the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Cold War certainly was over when the Warsaw Pact dissolved in Budapest on 25 February 1991, when the "Protocol for the Termination of the Defense Agreements Concluded within the Warsaw Treaty and Liquidation of Its Military Bodies and Structures" was accepted.²⁹ The Soviet Union as a unified nation was essentially over when on April 23 1991, President of the USSR Gorbachev met with then leader of Russia Boris Yeltsin and leaders of eight other republics at a dacha in the suburbs of Moscow at Novo-Ogarevo and "agreed upon terms of a new union treaty that would create a loose federation in place of the old Soviet Union."³⁰

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³⁰ Ibid., 688.

²⁷ Kubalkova, *Thinking New About Soviet New Thinking*, 19, 20.

²⁸ Ibid., 20-22.

²⁹ MacKenzie and Curran, A History of Russia the Soviet Union and Beyond, 687.

The thrust of this work will not be so much answering a question, to prove or disprove a hypothesis, but rather to illuminate the extent to which the constructivist role of ideas and the constructing of a new paradigm had on the people of not just the former Soviet Union, but also the world. Only a constructivist examination of the impact of Gorbachev's *new thinking* can focus on the social phenomenon of the events leading up to the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. Was a faulty collective memory of popular history such as the Reagan administration's outspending the Soviet Union into oblivion be the impetus for the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union? Or should Gorbachev be recognized for his courage and insight in addressing the troubles in his country using revolutionary ideas that place him alongside some of the most dramatic, unexpected changes in human history that unexpectedly led to the end of his regime?

Chapter 4

The Constructions of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev

The history of Russia has also been a history of personalities and their ideas; mostly these ideas were designed to oppress and control. From the Oprichniki of Ivan the Terrible to Lenin and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Russian leaders have found new and Machiavellian ways to grab power and maintain control with a combination of fear and cult of personality. Through this fear and personal attraction, the Russian people alternately have despised and idolized their leaders and ultimately fall in line. All of these leaders' ideas were, in one way or another, the removal of rights and power from the people, up until Mikhail S. Gorbachev. The reforms of Gorbachev represented a fresh start after years of Soviet stagnation. As was discussed in the research design, I am embarking on a constructivist analysis of the role of ideas in the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The world has seen that the role of ideas to construct and shape realities is vital, from the enlightenment philosophy of Rousseau that led to the French revolution through the historical materialism of Marx and Engels that inspired Lenin's Bolshevik revolution to the policies of George W. Bush that produced the Iraq war. In short, ideas count.

To understand what a game-changing paradigm that Gorbachev's *new thinking* embodied, we must take a look at the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States prior to his accession to power. Relations between the two superpowers were at an all time low, détente was all but dead, SS-20s and Pershing II medium range ballistic missiles were being

installed in the European theater, the Korean airline KAL 007 had been shot down by a Soviet warplane. Meanwhile Reagan was ratcheting up the Cold War rhetoric. Each side had their worldview of the other, and they were so categorically opposed to one another that solutions seemed scarce at best. There existed an unbreakable impasse between the two countries with periods of coexistence broken up by simmering hostilities.

Understanding the Soviet attitude, William Zimmermann, in his book, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations*, discussed the "distribution of power" concept and how it related to the Soviet worldview. Stemming from a Marxist-Leninist analysis of political relationships, the Soviets saw the world as socialism in a constant struggle with the forces of imperialism that Zimmerman characterizes as "a basic contradiction of the contemporary world . . . In the Soviet appraisal the main contradiction between socialism and imperialism shapes the nature of all other contradictions, and the intensity of the contradiction largely determines the global expectation of violence." The Soviets from their traditional Marxist-Leninist frame of mind continued the Cold War as a continuation of the traditional struggle between ideologies and the Bolshevik revolution with no end in sight.

The American worldview was focused on the economic and political unity, the importance of the military industrial complex and the ability of a powerful enemy to unite the masses. The structure of the US military contracting system meant that the more taxpayers' money that was poured into the military industrial complex, the better it was for the economy. This was a difficult problem for the Soviet's command economy, as the more money spent on defense was less for food or medical or industrialization. It is a strange dichotomy. The more the

William Zimmerman, Soviet Perspectives on International Relations: 1956-1967 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 161.

US spent, the stronger it became economically, while the more the Soviets spent, the weaker they became. The military industrial complex and the candidates they supported were content with the Cold War, it was good business. Also, the need for a traditional enemy was fed into the consciousness of the country. Most Americans had no idea who the Soviets were, most confused them with simply Russians, and it did not matter; what mattered was they provided a "them" in an "us versus them" for partisan political rhetoric, encompassing the notion that the only thing the Soviets understood was strength, meaning do not give an inch and certainly never trust them. With these two opposing worldviews, the Soviet Union and the United States simply accepted this bi-polarity. The status quo of an endless arms race between the two superpowers had been completely incorporated into the collective psyches of the world that it seemed infantile to even dream of a way out.

The research design of this paper noted that while there are numerous theories surrounding the end of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism, the goal here is not necessarily to attach a greater role of one of these theories over another, as certainly they all have some merit. It is to understand that the theories and opinions on the end of the Soviet Union are ideas, socially constructed ideas, and to attempt to ascertain the true answer is not as important as understanding the motivations and regimes in the agent/structure model of constructivism that created these theories and explanations. For example, a long detailed accounting of the power struggle between Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin and Gorbachev would only be an explanation of how the Soviet Union fell, but not why. In order to get to the why, it will be necessary to study the actors, Reagan and Gorbachev, to understand their motivations. The psychological constructivist view of Giovanni Chiari and Maria Laura Nuzzo notes "that the

ordering and organization of a person's reality is constituted by their personal experience." The need to understand the histories and motivations of each actor, Reagan and Gorbachev, parallels the agency structure discussion by understanding the intentions of the participants. Thomas Luckman states in his article, *On Social Interaction and the Communicative Construction of Personal Identity, Knowledge and Reality*, that it is necessary to understand that the actions of actors are intentional. "Individual action is intentional — and intentional activities are meaningful to those who engage in them. They are meaningful when they lead to results that they were intended to achieve, and they are meaningful in another, often painful sense, when the consequences of interaction differ from those that were originally anticipated." The source of intentionality in human behavior comes from personal identities, the unique selves that individuals imagine for themselves. Identity, he argues, is the "emerging system of behavioral control within an individual organism." Therefore, an examination of the histories of Reagan and Gorbachev gets at the personal identity that makes up intent that leads to the ability to create a new social paradigm.

The Constructions of Ronald Reagan

Though Ronald Reagan was at one-time a Roosevelt Democrat, he became a Republican, and his political career was based on the issue of being tough on Communism. Earlier in his career as an actor, he had had personal experience with Communism as a member of the left-

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³² Giovanni Chiari and Maria Laura Nuzzo. "Psychological Constructivisms: A Metatheoretical Differentiation," *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 9, no.1 (1996): 167.

³³ Thomas Luckman, "On Social Interaction and the Communicative Construction of Personal Identity, Knowledge and Reality," *Organizational Studies* 29, no. 2 (2008),:279.

³⁴ Ibid., 282.

leaning Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of Arts, Sciences and Professions (HICCASP) and the Conference of Studio Unions/Screen Actors Guild (CSU/SAG). He had even briefly considered joining the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA). Reagan had come under the scrutiny of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) over the issue of Communist influence in Hollywood. He saw how friends and co-workers had been blacklisted, clearly chose to cooperate with HUAC, turned dramatically anti-Communist and became outspoken on the evils of Communism. Reagan developed a contempt for Communism, "as a foreign ideology dedicated to the destruction of the domestic economic system . . . (and the) threat that the Soviet government might someday affect the United States."35 Opposition to Communism became Reagan's political raison d'etre, according to John Patrick Duggins in his book, Ronald Reagan. Reagan "found his vocation in the cause of anti-Communism. That seminal issue carried Reagan from the 1940s, when he was an actor, to the 1980s, when he was President."36 The focus of Reagan's political career forever became linked with confronting what he perceived to be Soviet aggression; his black and white worldview can be characterized by the 1983 "Evil Empire" speech delivered to the National Association of Evangelists in Orlando, Florida. Reagan discussed the Soviet Union by saying we should not "ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire . . . (We are in) a struggle between right and wrong and good and evil."37

According to James Mann, author of *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, the evil empire speech was the first shot in what was Reagan's new foreign policy with the Soviet Union. Shortly after becoming President of the United States, and during Able-Archer 83, a NATO

³⁵ Thomas W. Evans, *The Education of Ronald Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 125.

³⁶ John Patrick Duggins, *Ronald Reagan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), 83. ³⁷ Ibid., 209.

nuclear war rehearsal, Reagan perhaps a bit horrified began to feel that just coexisting with the Soviets and living with the constant threat of nuclear war was unacceptable and saw a way to change this dynamic.³⁸ His initial instincts were to expand military spending, fund proxy wars and increase political rhetoric. Reagan threw his full support behind new and costly weapons programs such as the MX missile system, a railroad track of 200 missiles rotated among 4,600 shelters to be constructed along the track in Nevada and Utah, making it more costly for the Soviets to have to hit them all, the Strategic Defense Initiative, anti-ballistic missile system, and deploying the Pershing II missiles in Western Germany.³⁹ While it is not clear whether Reagan softened his stance towards the Soviets when Gorbachev came into power or it was all part of a strategy, what is clear is that he dismissed the idea that the Cold War was simply an inevitability, and he was at odds with the more traditional, "get tough with the Soviets" stance of the political right, such as columnist George Will and the *National Review*, He was also at odds with the socalled realists in American foreign policy, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and Brent Scowcroft. These groups of analysts, along with American intelligence and Defense Department officials, who were still wary of the Soviets and Gorbachev, saw no reason to attempt reductions in the US nuclear arsenal.

A surprising version of history comes from Gorbachev, who in an interview with *Moscow Echo*, revisited the reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union and listed second, after political infighting, the pressure applied by the Reagan administration, not through the Strategic Defense Initiative commonly referred to as "Star Wars" or the MX missile system, but by collusion with

 $^{^{38}}$ James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan* (New York: Viking, 2009), xi. 39 Ibid., xi.

Saudi Arabia in bringing down oil prices and thus destabilizing the Soviet economic base.⁴⁰ Therefore, as the actions of the U.S. President were both real and perceived by Gorbachev as an external pressure, there was an impetus in forcing reform. Therefore, Reagan's policies were a factor, and their role along with the role of Reagan himself must be a part of this analysis.

The Constructions of Gorbachev

While it goes without saying that Gorbachev's roots and motivations were completely different than those of Reagan, yet he too had unpleasant memories associated with the Communist Party, except in Gorbachev's case it was an association of not belonging. Martin McCauley in his book, Gorbachev describes;

A young man, who's paternal grandmother, Pantelei was arrested in July of 1937 and accused of being a member of a 'counter-revolutionary right-wing Trotskyist organization'...neighbors began avoiding their house as if it were plague-stricken. The other boys in the village shunned Gorbachev. Anyone associated with the family of an 'enemy of the people' was courting arrest. Gorbachev recorded that 'all of this was a great shock to me and has remained in my memory ever since. 41

Gorbachev rose quietly through the ranks of the Communist Party, becoming a key ally to Andropov, who became General Secretary of the Party after Brezhnev's death in 1982. At that time in the Politburo, there began to gradually emerge a group of reform-minded politicians, which included Gorbachev. According to some officials in the Central Committee apparatus,

⁴⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, Tranlsted by Katya Schultze. "Interview with Vladimir Rizhkov Dec. 28, 2008," *Moscow Echo* << http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/smoke/561078-echo/ >> (Accessed Jan. 12, 2009).
⁴¹ Martin McCauley, *Gorbachev*, 15.

Andropov proposed that in his absence the Politburo meetings be chaired by Gorbachev. Following the death of Chernenko on March 11, 1985, the Central Committee plenum elected Gorbachev General Secretary of the Communist Party. 42

Even as Gorbachev was part of the Communist Party establishment, he found reasons for concern.

When he was given the task of examining the possibility of increasing the price of bread and cotton fabrics . . . (Gorbachev) asked to see the state budget and was firmly rebuffed by Andropov: 'The budget is off limits to you.' Gorbachev discovered later that there was a large budget deficit which was partly met by using citizens' savings. (Gorbachev asked himself), how was the budget to be balanced if only the general secretary knew about it?⁴³

After Andropov's death, Gorbachev was a presumed rival to Konstantin Chernenko in the struggle to become the Communist Party's General Secretary. During the short leadership of Chernenko, Gorbachev was Communist Party Secretary in charge of ideology and informally the second most powerful man in the Party.

On March 11, 1985, the Kremlin announced Chernenko's death after only thirteen months as General Secretary...only hours later Moscow confirmed that the Central Committee had named Gorbachev first Party Secretary. *Pravda's* front page featured Gorbachev's reform program; Chernenko's obituary was relegated to page two. Gorbachev's ascension confirmed a decision evidently reached earlier. 44

Gorbachev found himself as the head of a country that arrested his grandmother and left him chastised as a boy; he would change the country and ideology that he loved in order to try to save it. The motivations behind Gorbachev's *new thinking* may be clear, yet the machinations were difficult. His speeches and interviews will be analyzed in the following chapter to ascertain the chronology of the development of *new thinking*.

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⁴² MacKenzie and Curran, A History of Russia the Soviet Union and Beyond, 627-631.

⁴³ Martin McCauley, *Gorbachev*, 42.

⁴⁴ MacKenzie and Curran, A History of Russia the Soviet Union and Beyond, 628.

The impetus for reforms were not because Gorbachev was a closet capitalist or believed in democracy; he was a patriot who saw excesses in corruption and such cults of personality as Stalin and even to a lesser degree Brezhnev as negative influences on the culture. According to Susanne Sternhal in her book, "Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization through Demilitarization states that "Gorbachev was a devout communist to the very end. The driving objective behind his ideas for reform was to legitimize the (Communist) Party's leading role and make Soviet communism a competitive, popular alternative."45 Gorbachev saw the excesses and evils of Stalin as the most destructive force in Soviet history for many reasons; two of the most pertinent, relating to the need for a dramatic shift in thinking;

Are the maintenance of a society and economy in a state of virtual warpreparedness by a perpetuation of the threat of the enemy and fostering a siege mentality with the doctrine of class struggle. . . . (and Gorbachev had to) Renounce the Marxist class struggle and change the Soviet worldview of a perpetual ideological conflict between the 'socialist East' and the 'capitalist West.,46

Gorbachev's reforms were most notably the concepts of perestroika, vast economic, political and institutional reforms through the support of glasnost, meaning openness through the public media, encompassing more freedom of the press and less restrictions on public opinion.⁴⁷ Martin McCauley examines the intentions of *perestroika* in his book, *Gorbachev*,

> Restructuring the economy, transforming industrial relations...the human factor: the need to make more humane social and economic relations by moving away from technocratic management to involving the labor force significantly in industrial production...this was intended to be intra-

⁴⁵ Susanne Sternhal, Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization through Demilitarization (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1997), 2,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷ MacKenzie and Curran, A History of Russia the Soviet Union and Beyond, 630.

systemic reform and was not intended to weaken the foundations of the socialist system.⁴⁸

The intentions of Glasnost are discussed by Richard Sakwa in his book, Gorbachev and his Reforms: 1985-1990. He wrote about the markedly different direction that glasnost meant for the country;

> Glasnost became the word to describe a broad range of policies designed to expose Soviet society to criticism and self-criticism. . . . Gorbachev abandoned the 'newspeak' 'propaganda of success' style of earlier years to allow discussion of problems in the economy and society . . . Glasnost exposed the extent of the crimes of the past and revealed the shortcomings of the present.⁴⁹

Constructivist Alexander Wendt in his article, Anarchy is What States Make of It, called new thinking "one of the most important phenomena in (recent) world politics." 50 Wendt goes on to say that certainly one of the reasons for the end of the Cold War was that the new paradigm created a breakdown of identity commitments inside the Soviet Union that came about by a stand-down of an aggressive posture. Wendt goes so far as to state that, "when Gorbachev 'changed his mind,' (about the nature of the relationship with the United States) the Cold War ended...almost full credit goes for the victory of the United States in the Cold War to the Soviets. The Soviets won it for the United States."51 This is a fascinating view, that can sum up the views of the United States as well, once each of the countries saw each other from a new and enlightened angle, such as when Reagan announced in Moscow in May of 1988 that his comments that the Soviet Union was an "evil empire" was from "another time and another era."52 When the entrenched ideas of the past began to fall, anything seemed possible.

⁴⁸ Martin McCauley, *Gorbachev* (New York: Addison, Wesley, Longman Publishing, 1998), 57.

⁴⁹ Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms: 1985-1990* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice hall, 1991), 65.

⁵⁰ Vendulka Kubalkova, Foreign Policy in a Constructed World, 108.

⁵² James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, xiii.

The Summits

In these cases, Reagan in his motivation to confront communism and Gorbachev in his motivation to institute reforms and save his country were on two different paths towards solving the problems of the Cold War and a possible "hot" nuclear war. Reagan sought a transformation of the conflict through military buildup followed by negotiation from a position of strength, the "Reagan Doctrine," which broke from the Truman Doctrine of containment, followed by conciliation and negotiation. Gorbachev's solution to change was through powerful new ideas designed to restructure the Soviet Union from within and to alleviate the pressures of the Cold War by challenging the status quo of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and by focusing the resources of the Soviet Union on the economy and institutional reforms and away from the path of nuclear confrontation. Essentially, Reagan was busy constructing one world while Gorbachev was constructing another, yet they both were curiously on the same path.

Geneva, 1985

These two leaders, Reagan and Gorbachev, were each individually addressing the needs of their countries by looking at the world in a new way. Though extensively briefed, neither of these leaders had much of an idea about the other. They had grudging respect for one another yet were unsure about advancing any specific goals or agendas. They first met in Geneva and despite some reluctance were determined to at least appear to be making progress. There was no joyous recognition with each other that they were both on the same track, in fact the tenor of the entire meeting was prickly, but there was some hope and the promise of future meetings. This meeting gave them an opportunity to discuss general reasons for tensions, mutual distrust and put forth

their respective agendas. The Reagan agenda was to attempt to clear up the charge that the Americans were seeking military superiority, 2.4 million compared to the Soviet 5.4 million service men and women, and to address American fears not so much that the Soviet Union would launch a first nuclear strike, but that they were seeking military superiority and would therefore have the ability to obtain political concessions. Reagan brought a laundry list of proposals for nuclear arms negotiations, including a dramatic 50% cut in strategic nuclear weapons.⁵³

In Gorbachev's opening address, he alerted Reagan against "delusions" regarding the Soviet economy; it was not "in a perilous state and thus not subject to the leverage of an arms race, it was not lagging behind in high technology, the Soviet Union (also) was not seeking military superiority."⁵⁴ Gorbachev's agenda for the meeting was focused squarely on the United States' SDI programs and was distrustful of Reagan's claims of sharing technology and that because of the defensive nature of SDI, it would eradicate the need for offensive weapons. Gorbachev still felt that the only real use for SDI was for the United States to carry out a first strike and assure its own protection.⁵⁵

The Geneva summit ended with no real concessions or specific agreements, yet there was one phrase in the principles incorporated in the joint statement that stands out; it said that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." In this simple, rather obvious statement came the beginnings of a new paradigm, the beginnings of a new social construction regarding new way for these countries to view one another.

Jack F. Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev* (New York: Random House, 2004), 153-155.
 Ibid., 156.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 157.

Reykjavik, 1986

While the Reykjavik summit was regarded to be a failure at the time, it really was quite a remarkable time in history when two such long time adversaries were able to come together and genuinely establish new ways to think about the arms race and to surpass mutual coexistence to a real and productive relationship with a continual dialogue between two potential allies. They both came to the summit with reasonable hopes for relatively dramatic agreements of groundwork for future agreements on the reduction of nuclear arms. ⁵⁶

Reagan came to the summit prepared to offer a "zero" proposal on all Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) everywhere, not just in Europe, meaning removing the SS-20s and Pershing II missiles in the European theater, and those INF that were still in Asia. Gorbachev opened the summit agenda with specific proposals for a "substantial" reduction overall in Soviet heavy missiles, nearing the 50% proposed at the summit in Geneva. Also, he proposed a prohibition on anti-satellite weapons and a moratorium on all nuclear testing. There were again differences on SDI Reagan, reasserted that they were for strictly defensive purposes and that the technology would be shared, Gorbachev countered angrily that the US did not even share milking machine technology and there would be a second American revolution if Reagan really gave SDI technology to the Soviets.⁵⁷

The meetings went back and forth over two days, proposals and counterproposals, all leading up to a disagreement over one word, laboratories. In order for the package of agreements on INF in Europe and Asia, Gorbachev wanted assurances that the United States would not back out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty for ten years and that there would be no testing in space

⁵⁶ Ibid., 229-231. ⁵⁷ Ibid., 249.

of SDI components outside of laboratories. Reagan for political reasons involving loyalties to military contractors had to allow testing outside of laboratories, yet this was the one point that Gorbachev could not accept. Although the summit closed with both sides coming within one word of genuine nuclear arms reductions, it hardly matters. The two sides were working together, and the debate was over the end of the nuclear arms race, the cornerstone of the Cold War. Subsequent summits in Washington and Moscow were similar in the debate over the minutia of numbers of missiles, warheads, and terms of verification. James Mann focuses on this aspect of the relationship between Reagan and Gorbachev that through tough negotiations led to a mutual like and trust of one another. During a walk through Red Square during the May, 1988 summit, Reagan noted "one simple rule: you don't get in trouble by talking to each other, and not just about each other."58 About the same time, Gorbachev responding to questions surrounding the state of US/Soviet relations stated that, "the winds of the Cold War are being replaced by the winds of hope."⁵⁹ The success was not in the agreements reached or specific numbers of weapon systems eliminated; it was in the dialogue, the ongoing process of constructing a new relationship.

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⁵⁸ James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, 304.

⁵⁹ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, At the Summit (New York: Richardson, Stierman, and Black, 1988), 201.

Chapter 5

The Power of Ideas: The Speeches of Gorbachev

When Gorbachev took office as General Secretary, he saw that the situation in the Soviet Union was such that there was no alternative but reform. In Richard Sakwa's book, *Gorbachev and his Reforms 1985-1990*, he cites;

Thirty years of stalled economic reforms following Stalin's death led to stagnation. Sixty-five years of stalled political reforms following the failure of the 1920 reforms have led to a profound moral, ethical, and social stagnation. Gorbachev constantly argued that there was no time to delay and no alternative to *perestroika*. In his acceptance speech for the presidency of the Supreme Soviet on October 1, 1988, he argued that *perestroika* was 'born through suffering.' 60

An analysis of Gorbachev's speeches will determine the underlying factors and motivations that constitute *new thinking* that eventually laid the groundwork for the social upheaval. I have chosen a chronology of tone and content, that is the evolution of rhetoric becoming bolder and more complicated. The speeches chosen are a sample from the first days of reform before Gorbachev was General Secretary, from one of the first times *perestroika* was mentioned, the December 1984 "Living Creativity of the People," four speeches surrounding the adoption of the reforms and their broader consequences (the more forceful May 17, 1985 inaugural speech at the Smolny Institute in Leningrad, the February 25, 1987 speech at the 18th Congress of Trade Unions of the USSR, the October 1, 1987 Murmansk speech on USSR

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⁶⁰ Richard Sakwa, Gorbachev and his Reforms 1985-1990, 41.

Foreign Relations, and the September 11, 1989 *Perestroika* speech). They all address the continuing process of *perestroika* and attempts to sabotage efforts by international and domestic forces. The final official speech proclaiming the dissolution of the Soviet Union will be examined; finally a retrospective interview given to Zdenek Mlynar in the book, *Conversations with Gorbachev*, will give insight into how Gorbachev viewed the failings of *perestroika*. These seminal speeches and interview began with an increasingly urgent rhetorical tenor and message, then more melancholy and even regret, followed by introspection, and a look at the inherent problems of the Soviet Union.

At this early stage of his career, Gorbachev sensed a need to look at the problems confronting the Soviet Union with fresh eyes. In December, 1984 at a meeting in the Central Committee, Gorbachev gave a report on the "Living Creativity of the People," in which he spoke of the need to overcome dogmatic notions of production relations under socialism, to develop economic self-government, support innovative initiatives, and increase openness and "socialist democracy." The report, published only half a year later, contained the principal provisions that were to provide the basis for the program of *perestroika*. This speech by Gorbachev already showed that he was not going to do things the same way as the Soviet gerontocracy that came before him; there were serious problems facing the Soviet Union and he meant to solve them, yet he also understood that he needed to "sell" these ideas. He was not yet in power, nor did he see himself in that position, so a slight masking of his true political agenda along with his true belief in curing the ills of the Soviet society can be seen by his use of the "buzz words" of revolution along with true reform meant to make the country competitive; "only an intensive economy, developing on the basis of state-of-the-art scientific-technical base...can increase the welfare of

⁶¹ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Articles (Moscow: Progress Publishing, 1987), 464.

the worker."⁶² The opening discussions of restructuring had a familiar rhetorical flare; as he was not yet in power, he had to mask his agenda in the rhetoric of the revolution, but here was a new message of reform.

The contrast of the "Living Creativity of the People," speech with the inaugural address at the Smolney Institute in Leningrad was more than a difference in rhetorical tone. The speeches went from a man who watched his words carefully to one who had suddenly received a great burden of leadership and had no time to lose getting started with his programs of change. From the Schmidt-Häuer, Huber, and Man book, *Gorbachev: The Path to Power*, "dressed in a well cut dark-blue suit, Gorbachev pressed for a new beginning: 'we must all change our attitudes, from the worker to the minister, the Secretary of the Central Committee and the leaders of the government...we must naturally give all our Cadres a chance, but anyone who is not prepared to do so must simply get out of our way and must not be allowed to interfere." Here the tone is more confident and secure, which parallels the content of either you are with us or you are against us.

More than tone was again apparent in Gorbachev's speech, "Restructuring: A Vital Concern of the People," on February 25, 1987 at the 18th Congress of Trade Unions of the USSR. Here Gorbachev spurred on the people while tempering great expectations, all the while in a re-visitation of the more traditional Soviet style of rhetoric. From the book, *Gorbachev: Speeches and Writings Vol.2*;

⁶² Edward A. Hewitt, *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* (Washington DC: Brookings Publishing, 1988), 365.

⁶³ Christian Schmidt-Häuer, Maria Huber, and John Man, *Gorbachev: The Path to Power* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 1986), 115.

Of course we all want changes for the better, and as soon as possible. The great goals which the Party has put forward and the increasing changes in the economic, social, and political spheres have resulted in what may be called a 'revolution of expectations.' Many want quick social and material returns...Let us be frank comrades, there is only one way in which we can achieve acceleration and improve the quality of our entire life: that is through efficient and highly productive work.⁶⁴

An analysis of this speech by Gorbachev sees a return to Soviet style rhetoric, but also trying to be persuasive, as he was beginning the push for more democratization. Robert Service describes the shift in *A History of Modern Russia*; Gorbachev had called for changes in the party's official ideas.

'Developed Socialism' was no longer a topic...instead Gorbachev described the country's condition as 'socialism in the process of self-development'...he was suggesting that socialism had not yet been built in the USSR. Democratization was now proclaimed as a crucial objective. This meant that the Soviet Union was no longer touted as the world's greatest democracy and it was the General Secretary who was saying so.⁶⁵

The tone of the Gorbachev speech of October 1, 1987 again had a quality of self-assurance and sagacity. He had absolute power and was delighting in changing the dynamics with the West by approaching problems in new ways, so that the United States was genuinely confounded. Gorbachev's opening remarks assessed the United States paranoid reactions to his work for peace;

Judging the situation only from the speeches made by top western leaders, including their 'program' statements, everything would seem to be as it has been before: the same anti-Soviet attacks, the same demands on us to show our commitment to peace by giving up our orders and principles, the same confrontational language: 'totalitarianism,' 'communist expansion,' and so on."

66 Mikhail Gorbachev, "USSR Foreign Relations," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 54, no. 5 (Dec. 15, 1987): 130.

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⁶⁴Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *Speeches and Writings: Vol. 2* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1987), 165.

⁶⁵ Robert Service, A History of Modern Russia (London: Penguin Press, 2003), 451.

Gorbachev broke many of the rules of diplomacy as he acknowledged that many analysts saw the economic costs to the Soviet Union and were encouraging the United States to aggressively pursue costly programs that would force the Soviet Union to spend treasure to maintain military parity with the United States on such systems as the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) under the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

Failure of the socioeconomic policy being pursued by the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet Government would accord with the U.S. national interests. In order to 'facilitate' such a failure, the following is recommended: To speed up the programs of costly ABM systems under SDI and draw the USSR into the arms race in order to hinder its reconstructing; to allocate still more funds for the development of expensive high-accuracy weapons...militarist and anti-Soviet forces are clearly concerned lest the interest among the people and political quarters of the West in what is happening in the Soviet Union today and the growing understanding of its foreign policy erase the artificially created 'image of the enemy'-an image which they have been exploiting for scores of years.⁶⁷

The substance of this speech is remarkable; the illusion that the military buildup undertaken by the United States caught Gorbachev and the Soviet Union by surprise or that they were attempting to maintain military parity and thus were already spending themselves into oblivion is dispelled by this speech. Gorbachev knew that this was the propaganda that the Reagan administration dispensed; he was simply ignoring it and proposing that the Soviet Union continue down the path of reform with the quote from the same speech, "Well, it's their business after all. But we shall firmly follow the road of restructuring and *new thinking*." 68

From the standpoint of several years into the reform process, Gorbachev encountered difficulties with the perceived radical nature of *perestroika* and expressed his concerns that many feared the path taken was not working. In the speech given to the people of the USSR on

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⁶⁷ Ibid., 131.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 132.

September 11, 1989, he again took the tone of cheerleader, restating the necessity for the continuation of *perestroika* against domestic forces of opposition;

Efforts are being made to discredit *perestroika* from conservative, leftist, and sometimes unmistakably anti-socialist positions...some are ready to give up *perestroika* and return to the past...Comrades, this is all a very serious matter, and I want to express my position in no uncertain terms. True, *perestroika* is meeting with many difficulties. But it is radical change, a revolution in the economy and in policy, in the ways of thinking and in people's consciousness, in the entire pattern of our life...but *perestroika* has opened up realistic opportunities for society's renewal, for giving society a new quality and for creating truly humane and democratic socialism. 69

Whether it was these international and domestic forces that helped to condemn *perestroika* or if it fell under the weight of its own ambitions is debatable; for Gorbachev, it was these forces that would eventually bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev lost the political battle of his life, and the reins passed to Boris Yeltsin, resulting in the unthinkable dissolution of the Soviet Union, splintering the country into fifteen separate republics. Gorbachev's Christmas 1991 speech officially ended the Soviet Empire and his hold on power, "Dear compatriots, fellow citizens, as a result of the newly formed situation, creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, I cease my activities in the post of the U.S.S.R. President. I am taking this decision out of considerations based on principle. I have firmly stood for independence, self-rule of nations, for the sovereignty of the republics, but at the same time for preservation of the union state, the unity of the country." The tone of Gorbachev's speech was conciliatory and proud, maintaining how he behaved and the direction he intended for the country were sound and true to his principles of democratization. "The policy

⁶⁹ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "Perestroika: The Socialist Renewal of Society," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 58, no.2 (Sept. 1989), 5.

⁷⁰ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "Christmas 1991 Speech Dissolving the USSR." *The Public Purpose website*, Belleview, IL: <<http://www.publicpurpose.com/lib-gorb911225.htm.>> (Accessed, Apr. 11, 2009).

prevailed of dismembering this country and disuniting the state, with which I cannot agree. And after the Alma-Ata meeting and the decisions taken there, my position on this matter has not changed. Besides, I am convinced that decisions of such scale should have been taken on the basis of a popular expression of will."⁷¹ His personal retrospection on his failings went hand in hand with an assessment of the failings of the country. "Fate had it that when I found myself at the head of the state it was already clear that all was not well in the country. There is plenty of everything: land, oil and gas, other natural riches, and God gave us lots of intelligence and talent, yet we lived much worse than developed countries and keep falling behind them more and more."⁷² Gorbachev posed the question of what exactly was wrong with the people of the now former Soviet Union, the nature of problems in the country and his desire to change it through the only way possible, reforms and *new thinking*.

The reason could already be seen: The society was suffocating in the vise of the command-bureaucratic system, doomed to serve ideology and bear the terrible burden of the arms race. It had reached the limit of its possibilities. All attempts at partial reform, and there had been many, had suffered defeat, one after another. The country was losing perspective. We could not go on living like that. Everything had to be changed radically.⁷³

He clearly saw the events that ended the Soviet Union as a mistake that would resonate for some time, preventable if his reforms had had a chance to take hold. "The old system collapsed before the new one had time to begin working, and the crisis in the society became even more acute. The August coup brought the general crisis to its ultimate limit. The most damaging thing about this crisis is the breakup of the statehood. And today I am worried by our people's loss of the

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

citizenship of a great country. The consequences may turn out to be very hard for everyone."74 At the end of the speech, he again reverted to a conciliatory tone and hope; yet with profound personal disappointment, he could foresee the troubles ahead, "I am leaving my post with apprehension, but also with hope, with faith in you, your wisdom and force of spirit. We are the heirs of a great civilization, and its rebirth into a new, modern and dignified life now depends on one and all. Some mistakes could surely have been avoided, many things could have been done better, but I am convinced that sooner or later our common efforts will bear fruit, our nations will live in a prosperous and democratic society. I wish all the best to all of you."75 Gorbachev left feeling that he had been correct all along, that there were serious problems with the Soviet Union and his attempts to change the country had been mired in politics and power plays. He felt his goals were true, but did he understand that with the very things he was trying to achieve, democratization and openness of dissent, he had sowed the seeds of the inevitable collapse of a closed society?

A retrospective interview on *perestroika* was given to author Zdenek Mlynar in the book, Conversations with Gorbachev, approximately a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this interview, Gorbachev had a tone of having been in the right all of these years, and he thought the trouble lay not a reform package not drastic enough, and the true nature of the causes of the failing of the Soviet system was in the totalitarian aspects of the country;

I suffer...not because I actually began the struggle for democracy and fundamental change of the Soviet system. I do not regret that I began that struggle. It had to be done. Now with a certain distance from those events, I of course see many things differently, but in my fundamental positions nothing has changed: I would do it all over, and I would begin again with the struggle for even more democracy, more socialism. However, my understanding of

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

socialism would now be different...today I would know that the goal had to be the removal of the totalitarian system, that reforms in all spheres of life from monopoly ownership up to and including the ideological monopoly –would have to be more profound, more directed toward fundamental principles, but I would not abandon the basic choice I made.⁷⁶

In retrospect, Gorbachev was struggling to make peace with the idea that he was correct, perhaps a little naïve about the true nature of the systemic problems associated with the nature of the Soviet system, yet still unable to see that within the reformation process, if that involved democratization and a curbing of totalitarianism, the very system he was trying to save would unrecognizably change.

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⁷⁶ Zdenek Mlynar, Translated by George Fischer, *Conversations with Gorbachev* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 199-200.

Chapter 6

The Public and Scholarly Views on New Thinking

The Public Sphere

I will address public opinion not so much for answers, but for questions, and to put a broader context into Gorbachev's *new thinking* and what effect it had on the public, both in the Soviet Union and the United States. The opinions of *perestroika* both contemporaneously and in retrospect can gauge the hopes for success and also general attitudes of the people about Gorbachev and his reforms. First, a look will be taken at some opinions of Soviet citizens just six months prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, from the *Soviet Life* article, *Refuting Stereotypes* by Ada Baskina, about a round table discussion between Soviet and American sociologists on many topics, from their opinions of each other to their hopes for Gorbachev's reforms. When discussing the changes in the attitudes of Soviet citizens since before *perestroika*, the Soviet sociologist replied, "this is the sixth year of *perestroika*. Earlier (before *perestroika*) you would have seen restraint, an unwillingness to discuss politics, and mistrust for people, particularly foreigners." While it is difficult to speak for the entirety of Soviet society, it is fair to say that in the eyes of many at the time, *perestroika* constituted a new sense of hope not felt in years.

Years later, the opinions of former Soviet citizens concerning Gorbachev had changed; a look at opinion polls taken in 2002 will gauge the views on Gorbachev and his reforms from the

⁷⁷ Ada Baskina, "Refuting Stereotypes," *Soviet Life* (January, 1991): 23.

standpoint of history. According to the *Russia votes.org*, the opinions of Russians toward their former leader are generally negative, blaming him for the October 1993 violent incident between Yeltsin's forces and the Russian Congress of the People's Deputies in Moscow:

Q. What in your opinion was the real reason for the bloody confrontation between the supporters of president Yeltsin and the supporters of the Supreme Soviet, Khasbulatov and Rutskoi in Moscow on 3-4 October 1993?

	All replies	
	%	
General collapse of the country started by Gorbachev	36	
Irresponsible policy of Yeltsin and his circle	32	
Khasbulatov and Rutskoi trying to retain power at any cost	22	
Readiness of communists and extremists to stage a coup	11	
Indecisiveness of Yeltsin and the government	8	
Divisions in the arm yand security forces	4	
Base crowd instincts	3	
Other	1	
Don't know	15	

Source: Nationwide V CIOM surveys,

20-23 September 2002, N=1600

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Most interesting is the posing of the question. It is not simply stated that Gorbachev was responsible in some indirect way; it is stated as fact in an undisputed way that the country was in a state of general collapse <u>because</u> of Gorbachev. In the minds of Russians, his Presidency and actions brought about the end of the Soviet Union which led to the drastic economic conditions and widespread corruption of the 1990s. The next poll compares the perception of strength by Soviet/Russian leaders; the emphasis is on concessions made towards the United States. Gorbachev scores fairly low on the too hard, and fairly high on the too soft categories:

⁷⁸ Russiavotes.org *Slide 365*, Updated February 18, 2009,

<< http://www.russiavotes.org/index.php>> (Accessed February 21, 2009)

Q. As to how our past and present leaders conducted negotiations with the United States, do you think they A) got significant concessions from the USA, B) made mutual compromises, C) gave too much away, D) followed too hard a line, holding up negotiations or E) don't you know?

	A) Got concess.	В) Сотргот.	C) Too soft	D) Too hard	E) D K
Putin	12	50	13	1	24
Yeltsin	4	18	46	10	22
Gorbachev	15	22	42	6	25
Brezhnev	15	22	11	15	37
Khrushchev	20	14	4	22	40

Source: Nationwide V CIOM surveys,

24-27 M ay 2002, N=1600

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What these opinion polls indicate is not that there was a fairly poor view of Gorbachev; the point is that in the West it was a foregone conclusion that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union were perceived by everyone in the world including the people of the former Soviet Union as a positive event. The image in the Western mind is of people rejoicing as the shackles of totalitarianism were lifted from their lives. In reality, there were many in the former Soviet Union who decried its demise; a wave of nostalgia for the days when the Soviet Union was a superpower had emerged. From the March 26, 2002 article, *Russian Mentality: Uncertainty and Fatalism*, "In provincial Russia, there is a lot of nostalgia for socialism. In the town of Michurinsk, the Tambov Region, where a control group was polled, 74.4% of the respondents supported socialism and only 25.6% supported capitalism." 80

Russian citizens, in an unscientific poll, voted Stalin the third most favorite Russian, from the Reuters article, *Dictator Stalin voted third most popular Russian*. "The "Name of Russia" contest run by the Rossiya state television channel over more than six months closed on Sunday night with a final vote via the Internet and mobile phones. It drew more than 50 million votes in

⁷⁹ Ibid., Slide 331.

⁸⁰ Pravda English Website, "Russian Mentality: Uncertainty and Fatalism," *Pravda.ru* March 26, 2002,

< http://english.pravda.ru/main/2002/03/26/27175.html> (Accessed February 24, 2009).

a nation of 143 million. 'We now have to think very seriously, why the nation chooses to put Josef Vissarionovich Stalin in third place,' prominent actor and film director Nikita Mikhalkov, one of the contest's judges, said after the results of the vote flashed on a screen.'* Why indeed, when Gorbachev took power, he attempted to reform not only the structure of the state but also to reform the minds of the people, to allow them the ability to express themselves more freely, did Russian citizens take the freedom given to them and democratically decide that what they really want was to be ruled with an iron fist? This would be an illiberal democracy, a system that has free and fair elections but those chosen are racists and fascists. Russians have always been drawn to powerful charismatic leaders and defend them in despite of many personal hardships. Whatever hope and promise there had been in the early days of *new thinking* and *perestroika* has turned into cynicism and a longing for the old days, but not the old days of Gorbachev, but the days of Stalin and Brezhnev and Soviet expansion.

Discourse on the Scholarly Literature: New Thinking and Reagan Revisited

As there is such a wealth of material for the scholarly debate on the impact of *new* thinking and perestroika on Soviet society and the part it played in bringing about the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, I will narrow the focus of debate on Reagan as the "winner" of the Cold War versus the impact of Gorbachev's reforms as the overarching cause. From the beginning of this project, my goal was to measure the effect of *new thinking* and

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⁸¹ Dmitry Solovyov, "Dictator Stalin voted third most popular Russian," *Reuters News Service* (December 28, 2008).

perestroika juxtaposed against the popular idea in the West that it was U.S. President Ronald Reagan that had the greatest influence in the end of the Cold War.

The coalescence of Reagan as Cold Warrior argument is illustrated nicely in the Federalist Papers article "Ten Years After Reagan," by Brad Smith;

Reagan's approach to this crisis was four-fold. The first step was to boost flagging spirits in the U.S. and elsewhere. This Reagan did by denouncing the Soviet Union for what it was: an "evil empire." Next, Reagan supported his rhetoric with a massive military build-up . . . the inadequacies of the U.S. military demoralized and underfunded since the inglorious retreat from Vietnam . . . but more than that, what Reagan recognized, that others had not, was that it was possible to win an arms race with the Soviet Union. 82

This analysis is the prototypical American conservative rationale for the fall of Communism. The first problem with this line of thinking is that the Cold War was not a war in the regular sense of a "hot" war. It was in fact a war in the minds of men, a political construct that had more to do with political global influence than a disagreement over any one specific issue. Short of a terrible accident, neither of the two countries was ever going to initiate a nuclear war. Smith continues, "Reagan determined to spend the Soviets into bankruptcy. Finally, from the position of strength he had created, Reagan negotiated...with Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik (and) proved far more successful in setting the stage for a peaceful end to the Cold War than anybody had thought possible...with the Soviets outgunned morally, militarily, and at the negotiating table, the Cold War came to remarkably swift end shortly after Reagan left office." It was, for the US, a victorious end, and an end virtually. As was pointed out in the Gorbachev speech at the 18th Congress of Trade Unions of the USSR, Gorbachev was well aware of the attempts of the United

⁸² Brad Smith, "TenYears After Reagan," *The Federalist Papers*, Colombus, OH: The Federalist Society for Law & Public Policy Studies website.

<< http://users.law.capital.edu/federalistsociety/fp3/reagan.htm>> (Accessed Feb. 14, 2009.).

⁸³ Ibid.

States to "bankrupt" the Soviet Union through an enormous military budget. According to Richard Led Nebow and Janice Gross Stein in their article, *Reagan and the Russians*;

The Soviet Union's defense spending did not rise or fall in response to American military expenditures. Revised estimates by the Central Intelligence Agency indicate that Soviet expenditures on defense remained more or less constant throughout the 1980s. Neither the military buildup under Jimmy Carter and Reagan nor SDI had any real impact on gross spending levels in the USSR. At most the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) shifted the marginal allocation of defense rubles as some funds were allotted for developing countermeasures to ballistic defense.⁸⁴

While it may not be completely fair to critique an article with such a broad ideological framework, it is necessary to set a baseline of the "Reagan as Cold Warrior" mindset.

A more nuanced argument for why Reagan won the Cold War comes from article, Russian Revolution by Dinesh D'Souza, who describes Reagan's "sick bear" theory of the Soviet Union in May 1982 at a commencement address at Eureka College. He said;

The Soviet Empire is faltering because rigid centralized control has destroyed incentives for innovation, efficiency, and individual achievement. But in the midst of social and economic problems, the Soviet dictatorship has forged the largest armed force in the world. It has done so by pre-empting the human needs of its people and, in the end, this course will undermine the foundations of the Soviet system. ⁸⁵

This is the Soviet Union is unreformable argument, and while it has its merits, there are more points to consider. From his article, *Was the Soviet System Reformable?* by Stephen Cohen, "while scholarly 'pessimists' maintained, as most Sovietologists always had, that the system could not be reformed and Gorbachev would therefore fail, many studies conducted during the *perestroika* years now took it for granted that 'systematic change was possible in the Soviet

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⁸⁴Richard Led Nebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Reagan and the Russians," *Atlantic Monthly* (February, 1994): 1.

⁸⁵ Dinesh D'Souza, "Russian Revolution," National Review (June 6, 2004): 1.

context."⁸⁶ In what ways was the Soviet Union reformable? For example, was the destructive inhumane ideology of the former Soviet Union reformable? Consider the draconian methods Lenin used to install the Bolsheviks and purge the intellectuals or reflect on Stalin's "great terror." Cohen points out that "if original sin (violence under Lenin and Stalin) forever disqualifies a political or economic system from redemption, how did slave-holding America become an exemplary democracy? Can it be plausibly or morally argued that an original Soviet evil was greater, more formative, or more at odds with the states professed values than was slavery in the United States."

Addressing Cohen's article, Archie Brown emphasizes the need to make a clear distinction between the transformation of the Soviet system and the end of the Soviet state and also holds that "reform" of the system does not do justice to the extent of the change in the polity. In contradiction to Cohen, he argues that to regard the time before *new thinking* as "communist" rather than "socialist" brings out more clearly the extent of the transformation, whereby a communist system had been abandoned by 1989-90 even though the Soviet Union did not come to an end until December 1991. Brown also draws on recent evidence showing the large element of contingency involved in the dramatic changes of 1985-1991, including the opposition to Gorbachev's acquisition of power which, had it been successful, would have led to very different policies being pursued in the second half of the 1980s. 88

Karen Dawisha suggests that Cohen's argument is based on a minimalist definition of the requirements for the survival of the Soviet Union and that it ignores what she asserts is its most

⁸⁶ Stephen Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" Slavic Review 63 no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 460.

^{8&#}x27; Ibid., 461

⁸⁸ Archie Brown, "A Discussion of Stephen F. Cohen's 'Was the Soviet Union Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 490.

fundamental feature, the essential internalized and structural violence that was at the heart of the Soviet system. She disagrees with Cohen, arguing that at the end of the day, Gorbachev's brilliance and capabilities were restricted by the fact that he was the leader of a country almost totally lacking in political, economic, or social capital. ⁸⁹

While I appreciate the arguments leveled at Cohen, I still concur with his Soviet Union as reformable thesis. Brown points to unknowable hypotheticals such as opposition to Gorbachev's power being successful. I do agree with the Dawisha argument, though the structural violence she speaks of was in place long before Gorbachev, and no worse than slavery in the United States which remnants are still in the long process of overcoming. There is also the question of whether or not the Soviet system could ever fundamentally change. Cohen continues that "the old totalitarian model, the argument that the Soviet Union was structurally unreformable comes in several versions but evidently rests on a basic assumption. The monolithic communist ruling class, or bureaucratic *nomenklatura*, would never permit any changes that actually threatened its monopolistic hold on power and would therefore oppose all types of reform."90 This too is a flawed notion, as every one of the reforms of perestroika were brought before the Duma and considered before being passed. The idea that the all powerful nomenkaltura resisted reforms is simply not true. A final point on whether the Soviet Union was reformable is that on March 17, 1991 a referendum was put before the citizens of Russia and eight of the republics. They were asked: Do you consider necessary the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedom of an

⁸⁹ Karen Dawisha, "A Discussion of Stephen F. Cohen's 'Was the Soviet Union Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 517.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 464.

individual of any nationality will be fully guaranteed? Ninety three percent of the entire Soviet population voted with approximately seventy six percent voting to preserve the Union. ⁹¹While a vote for the continuation of the Soviet Union is not equivalent to endorsing the reforms of Gorbachev, the words they voted on, specifically that the rights and freedoms of an individual of any nationality would be fully guaranteed is not a Marxist-Leninist communal doctrine; it is the language of democracy and plays to a public sentiment that desires something new while maintaining the security they still needed.

Therefore, the argument that the Soviet Union was somehow doomed from its inception does not hold up well, and all the revisions of history that point to Reagan, while his policies certainly applied pressure, as the lone defeater of communism, fail to understand that realist attempts to force the Soviet Union into capitulation were impotent.

Conclusion

This research paper began with a question: To what extent did Gorbachev's new thinking have an effect on the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union? However, these are two distinct, specific episodes; the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, while being intricately entwined, still remain two separate events. I will take each case separately and answer why these events unfolded the way they did, in terms of the constructivist viewpoint that has been established in this entire research paper. To what extent was it due to the new thinking foreign policy of Gorbachev and the end of the Cold War, and how much did it have to do with Reagan? I would not be truthful if I did not admit that as I began this research paper, I

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⁹¹ MacKenzie and Curran, A History of Russia the Soviet Union and Beyond, 687.

was convinced the idea that Reagan had anything to do with the end of the Cold War was nothing more than an American myth, glorified by the Republican Party in their ongoing attempts to deify Reagan. Yet, through the course of my research, it is clear that in the case of the end of the Cold War much credit goes to each. Both Reagan and Gorbachev saw an opportunity for a dramatic shift, each for his own reason and their own construction of how they accomplished it, and in the end they were successful. Why was there a successful conclusion to the end of the Cold War? It ended when the social construction of these two countries shifted from a mindset of a never ending, intractable conflict that would inevitably lead to a third world war, that eventually the two biggest bullies on the block would duke it out. This changed because the leaders of the two countries shocked everyone by saying we can change this; we are willing, in a slow, rational way, to end this madness and to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons. The Cold War was over not because of the SDI or the MX missile system, or external economic pressures applied to the Soviet Union by the United States; it was the shift in perceptions about the former enemy.

While it can be said that Reagan deserves partial credit for the end of the Cold War, the same cannot be said for the collapse of the Soviet Union. The role of Gorbachev's *new thinking* was a key ingredient. The question becomes, was the Soviet Union condemned from the beginning of these reforms due to an inherent structural and institutional stagnation, or was it reformable? If it was reformable, which I have addressed in the last chapter, then what happened was not an historical inevitability but a political power play that went Yeltsin's way. There are essentially two tracks here; one states that Reagan's anti-Soviet policies and military buildup forced economic hardships for the Soviet Union so that the country imploded from within. The second track states that the Soviet Union collapsed because as *glasnost* or the "openness"

reforms took hold, it opened the people's eyes to the reality of the country they lived in, and this popular support brought a dramatic change. The collapse of the Soviet Union stemmed from the very reforms, from the ideas of *new thinking* that were intended to save it, and Gorbachev's misunderstanding of the power of what he had started. Why the specific events played out, to elect Boris Yeltsin as President of the Russian Federation which led to the dissolution of the fifteen republics and the Soviet state itself, is not as important in the analysis as the fact that it was the power of democracy that turned the tables on Gorbachev and his role as leader. This is the answer to the question as to what extent did Gorbachev's *new thinking* have on the fall of the Soviet Union. While making positive humanitarian advances for the Soviet Union, in the end such democratizing agents as *new thinking* contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The freedom to think in a democratic way led to the aspiration of more change, which in the eyes of the Soviet people meant democracy. Wrongly or rightly, they saw democracy as a cure-all for the problems of their society.

People saw what they could not obtain under the Communist system, and though it turned out that they were wrong, they thought that the way to obtain a better life was through a democratic change. They discarded Gorbachev and voted in Yeltsin as President. Subsequently, the changes came too fast, and democracy eventually failed. While making positive humanitarian advances for the Soviet Union, in the end such democratizing agents as *new thinking* contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

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