


Cold War Leader - Ronald Reagan



 **Understand** - how U.S. President Ronald Reagan helped shape the course of the Cold War + supports end of the Cold War theme.



Reagan as a Cold War Leader + sources help with understanding of Gorbachev + the end of Cold War.

The following sources, will help you understand the views and action of US President Ronald Reagan towards the Soviet Union.

Consider how these sources illustrate how Reagan shaped the development / end of the Cold War.

**Reagan the
Hardliner**

**Military
Building**

**Foreign
Relations**

**Summits +
Treaties**

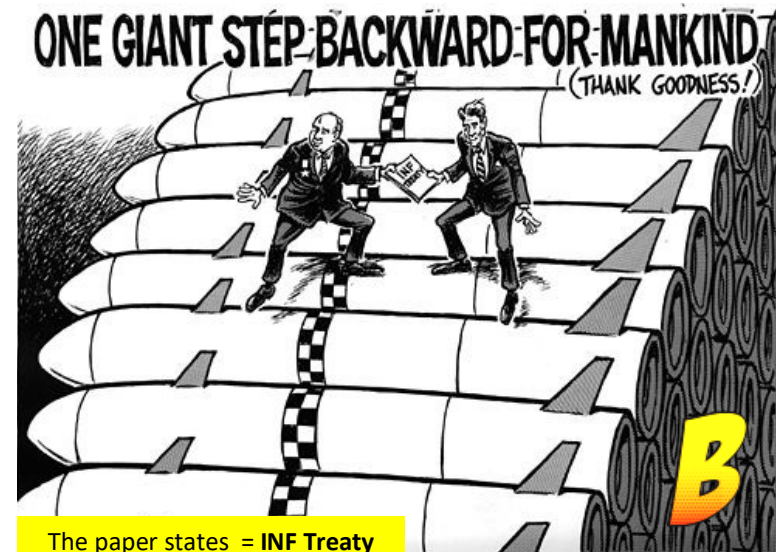
**Gorbachev
Relations**

On the presidential campaign trail in 1980, Jimmy Carter described Reagan as reckless and warmongering. Reagan's 1976 bid for the White House had condemned the Nixon and Ford administration's pursuit of détente for giving away too much to the Soviets.

After Reagan entered the White House in January 1981, his rhetoric and his policies did little to reduce fears of a hard-line, anti-Soviet administration. He dismissed the détente of the 1970s and, in his first press conference as president, called the Soviet Union a nation willing "to lie, to cheat, to steal" to spread communism. The Reagan administration's rhetoric and the deterioration of US-Soviet relations caused alarm. In capitals across the globe, demonstrators took to the streets to denounce Reagan's policies and express their fears that a nuclear war might break out, by accident or otherwise.

vandvreader.org

A



The paper states = INF Treaty

B



**Reagan and UK PM
Margaret Thatcher.**

"He (Reagan) had this overriding conviction, that a strong military face, presented by the United States for year or two of aggressive military spending would bring this hostile system to its knees."

Edmund Morris - Official Biographer.

D

Reagan worked closely with UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. She too was critical of the Soviet Union. Both leaders agreed US nuclear weapons could be based in the UK. This increased NATO's ability to land a 'first strike' in Europe and added greater pressure on the Soviet Union.

BBC History

E

Reagan convinced Congress to increase military expenditure by 13 per cent in 1982. The Strategic Defense Initiative was considered during this period. There was great concern in the USSR that the Soviets would fall even further behind in the arms race.

BBC History

F

New weapons such as the stealth bomber, which could fly undetected by radar, were being developed. Development also continued on the neutron bomb, which could wipe out large numbers of people without destroying buildings and infrastructure.

BBC History

G

Reagan's Plan by Kiron Skinner

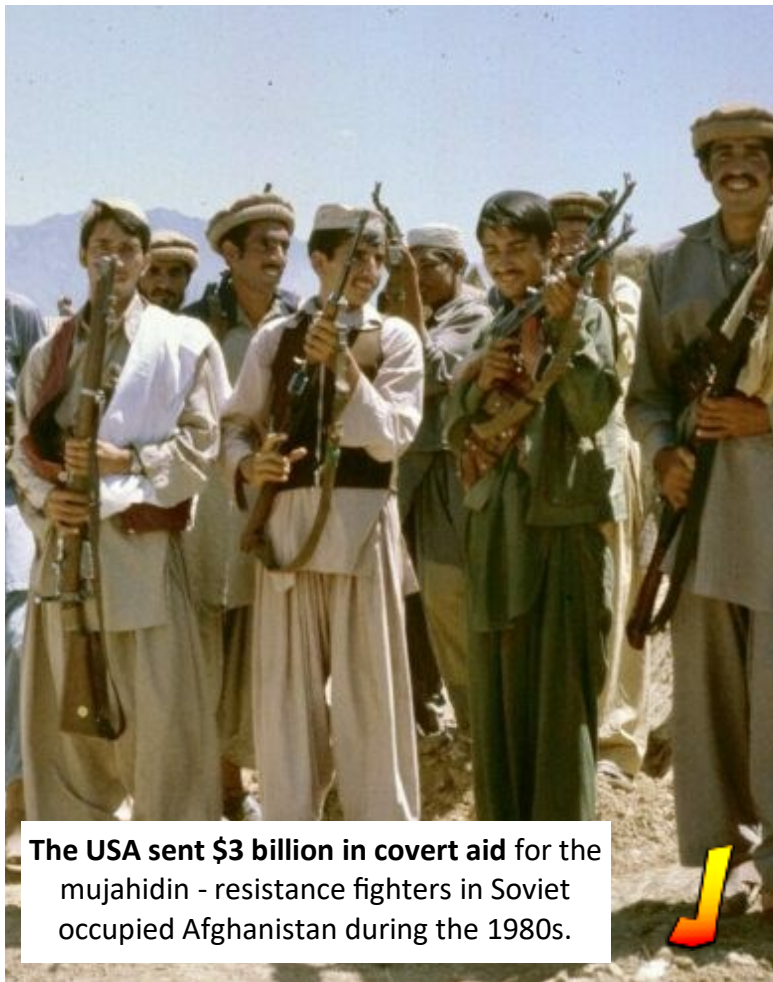
Reagan deduced a grand strategy. The strategy was in one sense as simple as "peace through strength," Reagan's foreign policy mantra during the 1970s. But despite his reputation as a reckless warmonger, his stress on peace as the goal was as firm and sustained as that on strength as the means. "Peace" was the title of one of his daily radio addresses in the spring of 1975. He mentioned U.S.-Soviet peace twice in announcing his intention to seek the presidency on November 20, 1975. Reagan amplified this theme during the 1980 presidential campaign, declaring in a speech in Boston on August 20 that the American goal was "not just . . . peace in our time but . . . Peace for all time."

H



SDI - Strategic Defence Initiative or Star Wars program.
Considered in 1982 and Reagan implemented this

I



The USA sent \$3 billion in covert aid for the mujahidin - resistance fighters in Soviet occupied Afghanistan during the 1980s.

J

Reagan did not trust the Soviet leaders and his relationship with Brezhnev (the leader prior to Gorbachev) was often fraught.

The President thought the USSR was misusing the period of détente to increase Soviet power and influence. In 1983, Reagan made a speech where he called the USSR an evil empire.

BBC History

N

The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty required the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometres. The treaty marked the first time the superpowers had agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals, eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons, and employ extensive on-site inspections for verification

www.armscontrol.org

K

'Mr General Secretary, you can never win an all out arms race with the United States because we will always have the ability to outspend you'. **Reagan to Gorbachev at the Reykjavik summit - 1985.**

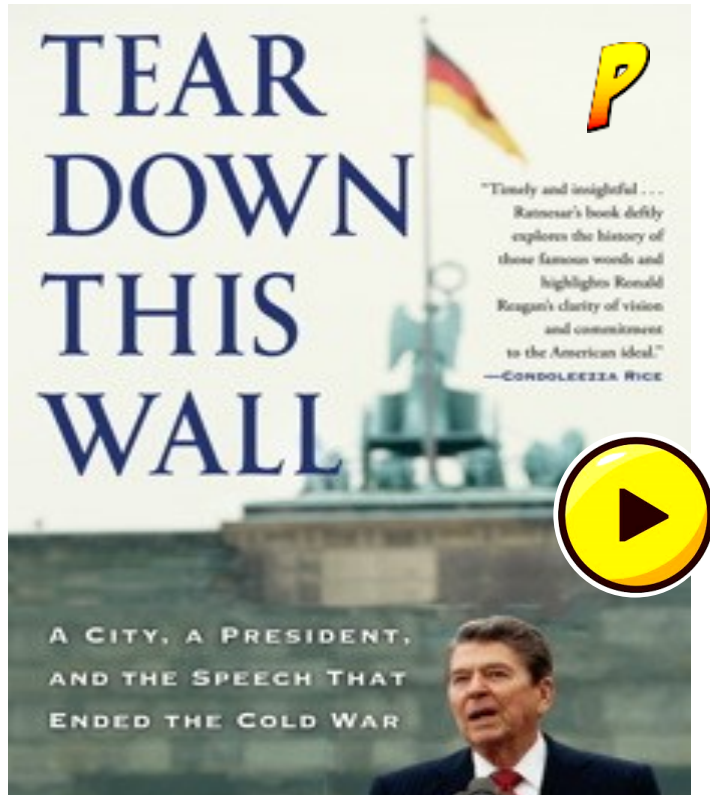
L

The first one-on-one meeting in Geneva was supposed to run for 20 minutes but lasted an hour and a half, Kuhn. Reagan's first impression was positive. "His words were, 'There's a chemistry between the two of us, we listen to one another, we don't agree but maybe there's a way to continue. We've got a long way to go here and hopefully we can find some kind of a common ground.'

M



Tear Down This Wall Speech - June 1987



"I was at lunch with him and he walks in and says, 'This is a new kind of Soviet leader'. I was kind of amused because he had never met an old kind of Soviet leader but he was absolutely right."

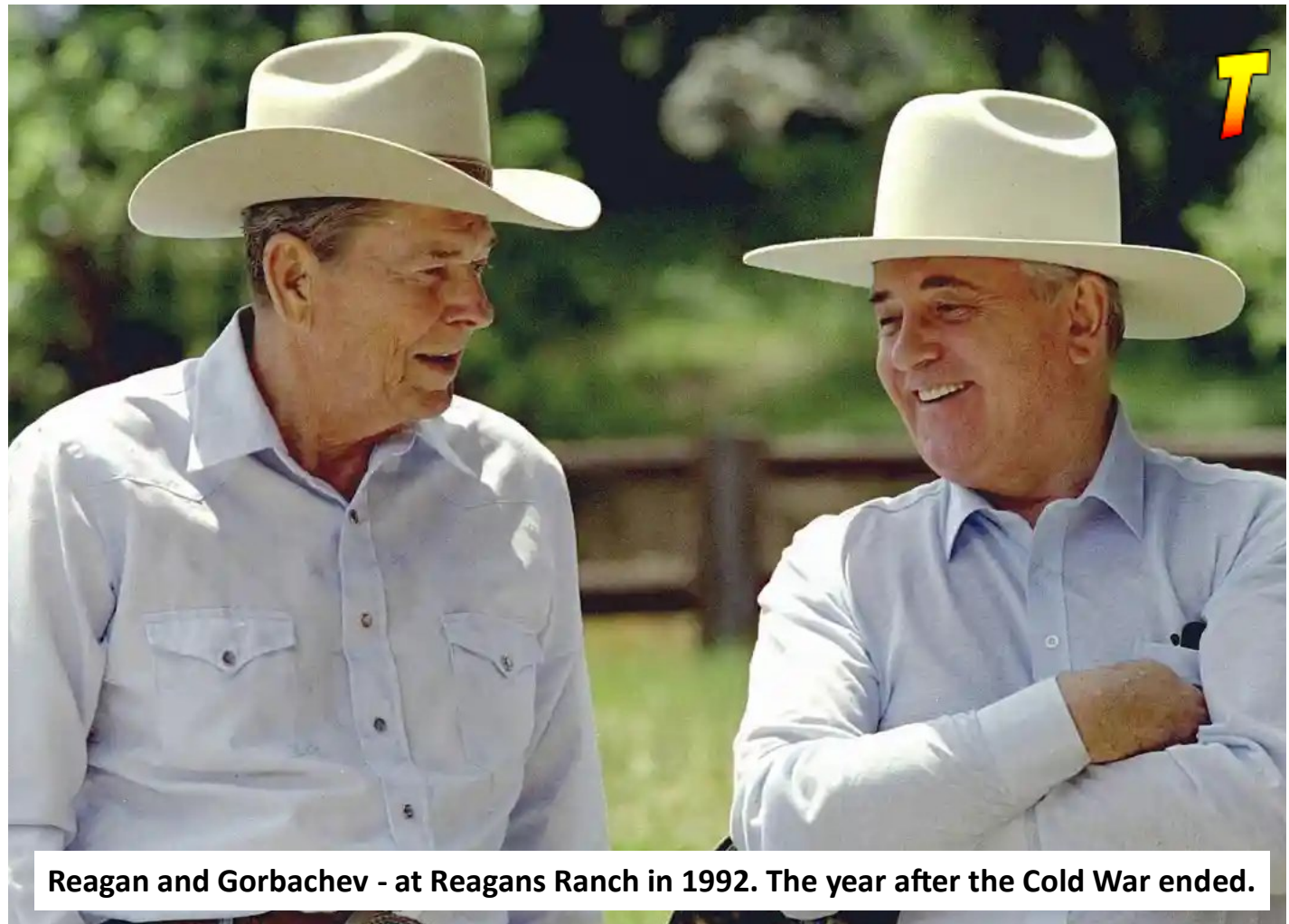
Ken Adelman - Reagan's director of arms control and author of Reagan at Reykjavik, Forty Eight Hours that Ended the Cold War .

Adelman - would not describe the men as friends but said they were always civil to each other. "Ronald Reagan showed great backbone at the Reykjavik summit in 1986 when he walked out without destroying SDI - the Strategic Defence Initiative - when Gorbachev's top priority was to destroy SDI."

Ronald Reagan and Gorbachev, capitalist and communist, were an unlikely pairing but their series of high profile summits have been praised for helping to end the cold war. Together they negotiated a landmark deal in 1987 to scrap intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

Guardian Article.

The "Reagan Doctrine" was used to characterize his policy of supporting anti-Communist insurgents wherever they might be. In his 1985 State of the Union address, President Reagan called upon Congress and the American people to stand up to the Soviet Union. "We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth. **State.gov**



Reagan the Hardliner

Criticism of Détente - 1980

'Evil Empire' Speech - 1983

Reykjavik Summit - 1986 - Commitment to SDI

Military Spending / Expansion

US Congress - New Weapons - 1982

'Peace Through Strength'

Strategic Defence Initiative - SDI - 1983

US Foreign Relations

United Kingdom -

Reagan Doctrine - 1985

Afghanistan



Summits and Treaties

Geneva Summit - 1985

INF Treaty

Trust but Verify

Historiography

Revisionist Perspective

Walter LaFeber "Rather than ending the Cold War, Reagan's policies might have prolonged it. His emphasis on military strength and aggressive rhetoric escalated tensions with the Soviet Union."

Traditionalist Perspective

John Gaddis "Reagan's tough anti-communist stance and commitment to military build-up forced the Soviet Union to confront its economic and ideological failures. His policies played a crucial role in ending the Cold War."

Post-Revised Perspective

Melvyn P. Leffler "Reagan's leadership cannot be discounted, but it must be understood within a broader context. The resolution of the Cold War was a result of both diplomatic efforts +internal dynamics within the Soviet Union."

Multicausal Perspective

Odd Westad "Reagan's role in the Cold War's end should be seen as part of a complex web of factors. Economic changes, social pressures, and internal Soviet dynamics all played a role alongside his anti-communist policies."

Relations with Gorbachev

Nuclear Weapons = 'MAD' = Common Ground

Personal Respect

Resources - and useful for Gorbachev

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/31/gorbachev-and-reagan-the-capitalist-and-communist-who-helped-end-the-cold-war>