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A LETTER FROM YOUR DIRECTOR

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This event represents a turning point in the Soviet Union's history, as Mikhail Gorbachev, a champion of reform and reorientation, leads his first Congress as General Secretary. My name is Sierra Chow, and I will be your Director for the conference. I am a third-year student at the University of Toronto, enrolled in Political Science, Psychology, and Philosophy. Should you have any questions about the topics, the committee, the conference, or University of Toronto in general, please reach out to me via email and I will do my best to help.

As you immerse yourself into the USSR of 1986, you will find that there are many respects in which the topics we have presented are inextricably connected. As delegates, you are expected to have an appreciation for this interconnection, understanding that nothing in the real world exists in a vacuum and the consequences of decisions may proliferate in expansive and sometimes unexpected ways. Notwithstanding, we challenge you to critically deconstruct the Union's problems in order to build comprehensive solutions. We have done our best to guide you in this process, dividing the issues into three topics and highlighting some critical points for debate.

In this committee, we intend to engage you with the Party's most critical problems of the era. It is important to understand that this goal supersedes the significance of the specific timing of the Congress – in your research, do not overly consume yourselves with exact timing technicalities. While there are obviously significant differences between the USSR of the late 1980's and that of 1986, there is great value in drawing from proximate years to better understand the problems we face and their potential solutions. This background guide has framed issues in a manner designed to best spur productive debate, with the integrity of the conference timing as a subordinate goal. Moreover, this background guide is only intended to serve as a starting point for your research, and we implore you to delve deeper into each of the topics. To help with this, I encourage you to read the research guide in the appendix.

We look to see each delegate strongly advocating their ideological beliefs and strategic goals; however, equally important is the ability to cooperate, compromise, and create consensus. Each and every one of you brings an important voice to the table in guiding the Party's course and shaping the future of the Union. I am excited to read all of your position papers, and we look forward to meeting you all in February!

Cheers,

Sierra Chow

Director, 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

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TOPIC A: ECONOMIC REFORM AND INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING

As of March 1985, when Gorbachev assumed the position of General Secretary, overall performance by the Soviet system was clearly unsatisfactory. There was a rather obvious problem relating to the connection between system-maintenance and system-transformation. The Stalinist model of ever-increasing inputs of labour and capital with minimal concern for efficiency and productivity had been proved ineffective: labour supply growth had slowed, ever larger expenditures were required to exploit natural resources, and inefficiencies in central planning had become increasingly glaring.¹ Stalin's and Brezhnev's regimes had promised prosperity through autarky, yet it had become evident that the Iron Curtain had caused the Soviets to fall increasingly behind the cutting edge of world standards.² Faced with no competition, manufacturers had lost incentive to innovate, increase quality, or respond to consumer demand.³ Concurrently, the population dynamics had changed to produce a large, educated middle class. This demographic, armed with even the vaguest perceptions of the outside world, demanded better from their government.⁴ If the "stagnation" of the system continues, the legitimacy of the Communist Party could be brought into question due to its lack of effectiveness. Much would depend upon the measures adopted to get the system moving again and how these measures were presented in relation to the ideology of the party.

USKORENIE

Uskorenie, directly translated as "acceleration," has been defined by Gorbachev as the process whereby Soviet citizens must "work in a new way" in order to promote 'renewal.'⁵ At the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum, Gorbachev argued that the development of Soviet society turned on their success in making "qualitative changes in the economy."⁶ A "shift to intensive growth, and a drastic increase in efficiency" was to be accomplished by "the scientific and technical updating of production," the "attainment of the highest world level of labour productivity," and the "improvement of economic relations."⁷

Of the three streams in Gorbachev's plan, the modernization reforms are the most concerned with questions of budgeting and capital injection. Through significantly increasing investment in heavy industry, the increased output of high-technology machinery would

¹ "Rising Political Instability Under Gorbachev: Understanding the Problem and Prospects for Resolution."

² Note: Autarky is the quality of self-sufficiency, when a state can continue its activities without any external assistance or international trade. Applied to the USSR, the term denotes the isolationist policies symbolized by the Iron Curtain: blocked contact with the West and its allied states economically, politically, and culturally.

³ Hough, "Gorbachev's Politics."

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Battle, "Uskorenie, Glasnost' and Perestroika."

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

stimulate higher quality and more efficient production.⁸ Gorbachev has made clear his intention to appropriate as much investment capital as possible into machine building sectors, with much of this channeled into high-technology sectors such as computers, microelectronics, and robots.⁹ Relative to 1981-1985 levels, Gorbachev's plans would increase investment in this sector by 80 percent.¹⁰ The other notable areas poised to profit from budget restructuring are the agro-industrial complex and the fuel and energy sector. The agricultural industry has customarily been devoted about a third of planned investment, demanding a 25 percent increase in growth to reconcile this proportion with the rest of proposed investment.¹¹ Investment in the energy sector would rise by almost 50 percent in the five year plan, with most of this growth seen in oil and coal production.¹²

There is a strong element of trickle-down economics in the plan, relying heavily on the assumption that substantial economic improvement in the industrial, agricultural, and energy sectors will initiate improvements in welfare. Accordingly, the proportion of investment increases in these three sectors leaves no room for any expansion of investment into sectors specifically oriented towards consumer welfare.¹³ There has been some speculation that assuming trickle-down growth leads to an egregious inconsistency between the Party's declared commitment to improving consumer welfare and the actual value they place upon accomplishing this.¹⁴ Moreover, the *glasnost* campaign (discussed below) has given rise to discussions suggesting that the best way to stimulate economic growth would be to invest in welfare; the government must provide an adequate standard of living before expecting any significant changes in aggregate growth or labour productivity.¹⁵

With respect to the military budget, the leadership has maintained a vague stance. It has been implied that financial commitment to the sector will correspond to pressures to protect the Union from impending foreign threats.¹⁶ This vagueness reflects the legacy of the Brezhnev era commitment to demonstrating global power through military potential. However, Gorbachev's "New Political Thinking" (discussed in depth in Topic C of this Background Guide) proposes that the only way to truly achieve acceleration in the Soviet economy is to improve foreign relations.¹⁷ Gorbachev has indicated that he wishes to reduce the role of the military and introduce cutbacks in its size and budget.¹⁸ Firstly, defense spending detracts from the Union's ability to invest in other potentially important sectors. Secondly, the Soviet economy in autarky has proven it cannot keep pace with rapid global innovation, necessitating a less

⁸ "The 27th CPSU Congress: Gorbachev's Unfinished Business."

⁹ "The 27th CPSU Congress: Gorbachev's Unfinished Business."

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Battle, "Uskorenie, Glasnost' and Perestroika."

¹⁶ "The 27th CPSU Congress: Gorbachev's Unfinished Business."

¹⁷ Judson Mitchell and S Arrington, "Gorbachev, Ideology, and the Fate of Soviet Communism."

¹⁸ "Rising Political Instability Under Gorbachev: Understanding the Problem and Prospects for Resolution."

isolationist, more cooperative policy stance.¹⁹ In Gorbachev's view, isolationism and military aggression hinder the Union by limiting opportunities to cooperate and communicate with foreigners on trade, investment, and research and development. Peace is of paramount importance to brokering improved international relations, and a peaceful regime could potentially make the role of the military redundant.

Evidently, the debate on the role of the military extends beyond the scope of budgeting concerns. There are many who fundamentally disagree with Gorbachev's "New Political Thinking". They see consistent military spending as an indication that the new General-Secretary's plans will not materialize. Many military officers appear to resent his position; they fear new limitations on their career opportunities and privileges, and are concerned that Gorbachev's changes will jeopardize Soviet national security.²⁰ Ideological hardliners argue that increased global economic interaction is a step towards capitalism and tarnishes the integrity of the Union's ideological commitment to communism.²¹ Taken to its extreme, this argument puts the legitimacy of the leadership into question, as the proposed changes seem to amount to a rejection of communism let alone developed socialism.²²

The draft guidelines for social and economic development imply growth in National Income would maintain an average of 4.7 percent per year between 1985-2000.²³ The proposed figures have been criticized for being excessively ambitious in light of two current limitations on economic growth: poor economic relations and an inability to affect change in the "human factor" of productivity.²⁴ Materializing changes in foreign relations is burdened with the same issue as affecting changes in the "human factor": the party and bureaucratic system is deeply entrenched in current practices and is highly resistant to change. Even if these obstacles were overcome, shifting the economy to a more market-oriented basis would cause unavoidable disruptions. Economic managers would need time to learn how to operate under the new conditions, including - but not limited to - adjustments for jobs, production mechanisms, wages, prices, and imports.

Despite the obvious challenges, Gorbachev has made headway in reforming the system to accommodate his changes through the *glasnost* campaign, emphasized heavily in the months between the 1985 Plenum and the Congress.²⁵ It is apparent to the General-Secretary that the current party apparatus, including the holdover of Brezhnev supporters, will not provide the adequate support needed to push through his planned reforms. Reforming the economy, according to Gorbachev, requires restructuring the USSR's political institutions.

¹⁹ Judson Mitchell and S Arrington, "Gorbachev, Ideology, and the Fate of Soviet Communism."

²⁰ "Rising Political Instability Under Gorbachev: Understanding the Problem and Prospects for Resolution."

²¹ Ibid.

²² Note: "developed socialism" was an ideological term coined in the Brezhnev era to refer to the Soviet-type economic planning exercised by communist parties at that time. It was considered a tier in the progression towards pure communism.

²³ Dyker, "Soviet Economic Plans and Policies."

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Battle, "Uskorenie, Glasnost' and Perestroika."

Hence, the focal shift from socio-economic to socio-political reform is the effective difference between *uskorenienie* and *glasnost*.

GLASNOST

Glasnost is the “campaign to increase criticism, self-criticism, and openness on a broad scale.”²⁶ The campaign marks a dramatic departure from the long-pervading dogma of censorship in the USSR. The rationale for such reform is based on three assumptions.²⁷ First, an increase in transparency via the mass media would reflect the Party’s commitment to reform. Second, through increasing public discussion of contemporary issues, the leadership, bureaucracy and the state apparatus would be forced to acknowledge their own shortcomings and feel pressure to change. Finally, more open media would provide the state with better feedback on the general acceptance or rejection of their policies.

In the time leading up to the Congress, there have been several notable changes in the Union’s media. An area historically dominated by conservative stalwarts, Gorbachev has made strides in promoting media figures who will be more conducive to his mandate. Popular cultural and artistic figures, who had been vocal supporters of a more open society during the Brezhnev era, have been placed in important posts.²⁸ It is an unprecedented move, designed to encourage critics with a proven record of speaking out against ideological conformity, excessive censorship, and the stifling of artistic and creative expression. The media has been allowed to acknowledge and dissect issues relating to what Gorbachev sees as an excessive and unchanging bureaucracy, including (but not limited to): food shortages, poor housing, drug abuse, Afghanistan veterans’ issues, and corruption.²⁹ Newspapers have begun publishing readers’ letter with increasing frequency, including those disagreeing with policy. Public criticism of Stalin has begun to emerge; a poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko entitled ‘Fuku’ was published in a major journal, and was later praised in a *Pravda* editorial for its criticism of Stalin’s leadership and acknowledgement of his purges.³⁰ For some, the tarnishing of Stalin’s legacy represents a smear of the values and goals that formed the Union’s *raison d’être* for generations.³¹ To Gorbachev’s opponents, publicly acknowledging the inability to achieve a prosperous communist society is tantamount to delegitimizing the entire Party regime.

Condemnation of corruption moved from a general discussion to a more pointed focus on individuals in leadership positions. Charges that officials have placed themselves above the law and abused their position of power were mixed with those of “bribery, theft of state property, poor work performance, wastefulness, excessive self-adulation and lack of criticism

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Battle, “Uskorenienie, Glasnost’ and Perestroika.”

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Rising Political Instability Under Gorbachev: Understanding the Problem and Prospects for Resolution.”

and self-criticism.”³² Naturally, this puts Gorbachev and his campaign at odds with many high ranking officials and ministries. They worry that should the changes inspired by *glasnost* materialize, they will lose many privileges they had become accustomed to.³³ However, on the part of these political actors, it is quite obvious why the existence of extraordinary individual privileges in a ideologically communist system constitutes an insufficient argument for a return to censorship.

Staunchly conservative supporters of censorship believe that the ‘openness’ campaign threatens the integrity of the Party and the Union, as criticism undermines internal peace and the validity of the regime’s power. As Mr. Gorbachev has admitted, those fearing increased democratization anticipate that “it will be used by our people to disorganize society and undermine discipline, to undermine the strength of the system.”³⁴ Greater tolerance for dissent may open a Pandora’s box, allowing the public to unleash ever-increasing demands for more freedom.³⁵ Pent-up frustrations and emotions regarding the suppression campaigns of Brezhnev may explode and get out of control. The most dangerous of these populist campaigns may prove to be the nationalist movements that have blossomed in many republics, unleashing forces that threaten to tear the Union apart.³⁶ Increased proletariat exposure to information about the Western world, particularly the material splendor of their bourgeoisie, might undermine the collective will to establish a pure communist society. This issue will be exacerbated should the proletariat see their quality of life stagnate under Gorbachev. If the Party is to survive, it is clear that the *glasnost* campaign cannot exist without subsequent reforms immediately addressing the publicized problems. Some, however, insist the solution is more simply a return to censorship and punishment for dissent.

PERESTROIKA

“It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things; for the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order...”

- Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince

While the *glasnost* campaign made evident the need for reform, it was not designed to directly carry out change. Gorbachev saw the need for an additional program: *perestroika*. Introduced in the period leading up to the Congress, *perestroika*, or ‘restructuring’, provides Gorbachev with the ability to realize his goal of reform in the state apparatus. Opposition to change is most strongly rooted in the bureaucracy, with various ministers exercising tutelage

³² Ibid.

³³ Taubman and Times, “Gorbachev Opposition.”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Rising Political Instability Under Gorbachev: Understanding the Problem and Prospects for Resolution.”

over differing enterprises.³⁷ Without mid-level support for his policies, Gorbachev can only accomplish partial reform. A top-down approach would start by analyzing which positions in the Politburo and Secretariat can be streamlined, and proposing alternative figures whose political alignments would help Gorbachev consolidate power.

An important aspect of *perestroika* on the political level is the consideration of elections. In an effort to make the Union more democratized and give the citizens a greater voice in state affairs, Gorbachev has publicly considered the potential for changing the process by which state officials gain power.³⁸ Instead of continuing with the system of appointments, election of Party officials could help Gorbachev gain power as the people are able to exercise the will for reform.

Another aspect of restructuring concerns the need for change in the “human factor” of economic productivity. Proposed changes include: streamlining management, appointing new personnel, raising worker discipline, substituting capital for labour, and reducing waste, fraud, and abuse.³⁹ There is renewed discussion about the possibility of the Party ceding power over economic management and allowing increasingly independent economic activity on the part of businesses. Greater autonomy and freedom for businesses poses a threat to the development of the socialist system as it may begin to resemble bourgeois economies. It is of note that the Communist Party of China faces a similar economic predicament, where the ideological roots of the state are increasingly incongruent with its economic practices. The experience in China may provide valuable insight into potential routes for the Soviet Union’s own economic future. Delegates of the 27th Party Congress must determine the viability of Gorbachev’s plans, and might look to other Marxist states or the USSR’s own history to chart a robust social, economic, and political path forward for the Union.

³⁷ Office of Soviet Analysis, “Gorbachev’s Reorganization of the Party: Breaking the Stranglehold of the Apparatus.”

³⁸ Battle, “Uskorenie, Glasnost’ and Perestroika.”

³⁹ “The 27th CPSU Congress: Gorbachev’s Unfinished Business.”

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How should state investment be structured to best stimulate economic growth?
2. How can consumer welfare be improved? How can standards of living be bettered?
3. Is the *glasnost* campaign destabilising the Party's power in the country? Should it be allowed to continue? Does your character benefit from reform or suffer from it?
4. What potential changes to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's (CPSU) structure would:
 - i. Be conducive to Gorbachev's consolidation of power and the realization of his proposed reforms?
 - ii. Help restore a balance in the system to prevent Gorbachev from exercising a monopoly on power, one that could potentially threaten the future of the Party?
5. Should economic power be decentralized? If so, to what extent? How do the potential routes for economic growth relate to Marxist ideology and the pathway towards pure communism? At what point does the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) cease being socialist?



TOPIC B: NATIONAL MOVEMENTS AND SATELLITE STATES

Ethnic, linguistic, and racial nationalism - a recurring theme in both Russian and Soviet history - has posed and continues to pose challenges to the unification of peoples within the USSR, a country of many diverse ethnicities, languages, and races. The issue of responding to popular national movements in the satellite states once again proves troublesome for the Soviet leadership by the mid-1980s. The threat of peripheral republics "breaking away" brings with it the possibility of the disintegration of the Union from within. Should the ideas of sovereignty and independence based on ethnic identity begins to take hold across the non-Russian Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), the foundations for a pan-Soviet union of nations will quickly collapse. The delegates of the 27th Party Congress must explore the history of national movements within the Soviet Union and begin to ascertain their own solution to the problem once and for all.

RUSSIAN NATIONALISM

Russian nationalism was itself originally a movement of the elite until the emergence of radical populist factions. Until the transformation of the Russian Tsardom into the Russian Empire in 1721, Russian nationalism created a hostile environment for minorities in the country such as Jews or Asiatic groups.⁴⁰ Near the beginning of the 20th century, as the Russian Empire was thrown into revolutionary turmoil, an ultra-nationalist, anti-semitic group known as the Black Hundreds fought to keep the Romanov monarchy in power, pushing for their own vision of a pure, standardized Russian identity.⁴¹ Though eventually overthrown by the Bolsheviks in 1917, the underlying sentiments of orthodox groups such as the Black Hundreds has persisted within Russian society.

The founders of the USSR, led by Vladimir Lenin, denounced the majority of Russian nationalist movements, officially declaring nationalism a "hostile ideology". Nationalism, by definition, promoted an insular and inward-looking order of social division that directly contradicted Lenin's idea of proletarian internationalism; one of the main principles of Marxism. Though nationalism was officially disavowed by the state, observers note that Soviet policies have often chosen to continue promoting the tenets of the Russification⁴² program that had began in the 20th century under Tsar Nicholas II.

⁴⁰ Thaden, "The Beginnings of Romantic Nationalism in Russia."

⁴¹ Langer, "Corruption and the Counterrevolution: the Rise and Fall of the Black Hundred."

⁴² Russification is the adoption of the Russian language or aspects of Russian culture by non-Russian communities. In a strict sense, the term "Russification" is used to designate the influence of the Russian language on the Slavic, Baltic and other languages spoken in areas controlled or controlled by Russia. In a historical sense, the term refers to the policies (both official and unofficial) of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in relation to their national constituents and to Russian national minorities, which aimed at Russian domination.

Under leader Nikita Khrushchev, one element of late Soviet nationality policy has been slow-paced assimilation. Khrushchev's government saw language as a powerful means to unify the efforts of many individuals under a common guiding ideology. In the late 1950s, the Soviet government introduced new language and education reforms with the aim of solidifying a more uniform understanding of communism across the realm of associated nations. This resulted in a diminution of native-language schools in the autonomous Russian republics within the USSR. Modeled after the concept of "Fusions of Nations,"⁴³ and other tenets of socialist practice, Khrushchev tried to promote an ethnically blind personnel policy. In May of 1979, Tashkent, the capital of the Uzbek SSR, hosted an all-Union conference entitled 'Russian Language: The Language of Friendship and Cooperation of the Peoples of the USSR.'⁴⁴ This conference resulted in recommendations for improving the study and implementation of the Russian language at every level of the Soviet educational system, set up in a manner that would promote bilingualism while emphasizing Russian as a bridging language across the USSR. After the adoption of these new policies, few resources were allocated for the conservation of native languages, leading to public discontent and popular ambivalence towards the unification of nations.

SATELLITE STATES

A satellite state is defined as a country that, while nominally independent, is still subject to extensive political, military and economical influence from another nation. With WWII drawing to its close, the USSR took hold of many ruined countries in central Europe as the Red Army pushed the Nazi military to surrender at Berlin. These occupied realms became part of the Eastern Bloc, whose consolidation was further established through the Warsaw Pact of 1955. The Eastern Bloc consisted of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, Polish People's Republic, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the People's Republic of Romania, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the Hungarian People's Republic.

Following the occupation of the Baltic countries in the 1940s, the USSR held elections and supported into power pro-Soviet candidates. This resulted in the annexation of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic and Latvian Socialist Republic as part of the expanded group of SSRs⁴⁵. While international condemnation was widespread, the military realities on the ground meant that no power could challenge the Soviet Union's intrusion into the Baltics and the rest of Eastern and Central Europe.

The Brezhnev Doctrine, announced in 1968, has remained a feature of Soviet foreign policy. The Doctrine, named after former leader Leonid Brezhnev, elaborates the right to Soviet

⁴³ Form of policies following doctrines implemented to centralize governing entities and dissipate nationalist ideologies. See: Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism."

⁴⁴ Solchanyk, "Russian Language and Soviet Politics."

⁴⁵ Wettig, *Stalin and the Cold War in Europe*.

intervention within communist countries should the need to protect communism therein become apparent. This ideology has been the conceptual basis for previous interactions with the Eastern Bloc and SSRs. This interventionist approach has served as a form of damage control for Soviet leaders, giving them a blueprint to deal with wayward republics whose citizenry or leadership begin to resist the implementation of socialist values.

These two aforementioned elements allowed the Union's government to ensure the protection of pro-Soviet socialism east of the Iron Curtain, but often came at the cost of exacerbating the tensions that existed between the satellites and the leadership in Moscow. The myriad of uprisings and civil movements that have occurred across Eastern Europe after 1945 exemplify how these tensions can manifest. Observe the way in which Soviet leaders choose to respond to developments in each of the following examples.

HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION, 1956

The Hungarian revolution in 1956 was the first major threat to Soviet control in the region since the end of World War II. The Hungarian government was led by Mátyás Rákosi who like Stalin led multiple forms of oppression towards members opposing parties. Russian language and Communist political instructure became mandatory parts of the educational system. Religious leaders were replaced with those that were loyal to the government and thousands of civilians were relocated to obtain housing for members of the state Communist Party. The Hungarian economy was in crisis, largely due to mounting difficulties in paying back reparations owed after the Second World War; unstable economic policy then led to staggering inflation.

Rakosi's poorly executed emulation of Stalin's original five-year plan fractured the economic stability of Hungary, leading to his resignation as Prime Minister and the subsequent rise of his successor, Imre Nagy. The new minister installed reforms that would improve the agricultural sector and standards of living for Hungarians. These reforms were quickly followed by a policy of broad amnesty,⁴⁶ designed to "redress years of oppression against society and [to] establish credibility."⁴⁷ Although Nagy had promising plans for the nation, former PM Rakosi worked to undermine these reforms and discredit the new leader, leading to Nagy's dismissal in April 1956. Ernő Gerő was then appointed. The improvements made by Nagy did little to satisfy the public's rapacious desire for justice, and opposition to Moscow grew stronger amongst Hungarian citizens. Petofi Circles⁴⁸ were formed by students and intellectuals. Resentment rose within the country following food shortages and the continuing overall deterioration of living conditions.

⁴⁶ The granting of pardons to previously exiled and imprisoned insurgents.

⁴⁷ Csaba, Byrne, and nos Rainer, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*.

⁴⁸ These circles held political debates focusing on the problems faced by civilians in Hungary.

In June 1956, a Polish uprising in Poznań was met with a violent response,⁴⁹ cementing the authority of the Soviet government in Poland and leaving little room for reconciliation with the demonstrators. The event and the USSR's response not only furthered antagonism against Soviet brutality in the Western World, but it also had the compounded effect of increasing discontent within the Eastern Bloc as well.

Further unrest in Poland led to the organization of a demonstration by the Hungarian Writers Union on October 23rd, 1956, in which they would show support for pro-reform movements in Poland. This was quickly joined by university students who had developed 16 national policy demands. The gathering took place next to the statue of Jozsef Bern⁵⁰ and later moved to outside the parliament building as students chanted about the removal of the Soviet coat of arms from the flag of Hungary. Ernő Gerő condemned the writers' and students' demands, further fueling opposition and eventuating in the destruction of Stalin's statue. The unrest was met with the use of tear gas and the opening of fire, alongside mass detention. Violent outbreaks broke out between Hungarian officials and civilians. Faced with a full-scale revolt, Ernő Gerő fled to the Soviet Union and Nagy was reinstated as leader. Civilians obtained tanks and firearms from the AVH,⁵¹ and began putting them to use in their mission to liberate Hungary from Soviet influence.

Soviet Intervention began on October 24th, the next day. Unrest continued until October 30, when most Soviet Tanks had withdrawn from Budapest into the countryside. Nevertheless, a quick re-intervention followed suit on November 4th, as Soviet forces were met by a unified group of Hungarian soldiers and civilians, who carried out a desperate (but ultimately futile) defense. All told, at least 1,569 civilians died and many more were injured by the end of the rebellion on November 11th, 1956.⁵² Thirty years later, the memory of 1956 lives on and Hungary continues to struggle with inflation, debt, and deteriorating standards of living, all contributing to increasing feelings of animosity towards the Soviet Union. In the case of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the first major national challenge to Soviet dominance after 1945, leaders in Moscow resorted to a full-scale military intervention in order to suppress rebellious sentiments in the satellites.

PRAGUE SPRING CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1968

Alexander Dubček became the first Secretary of the Socialist Party in Czechoslovakia, in January of 1968. Dubček was an avid advocate for socialist reforms within Czechoslovakia, emblemized by his famous slogan advocating for "Socialism with a Human Face." After many years of suppression under Stalin's regime, Dubček argued that the party's mission was to "build an advanced socialist society on sound economic foundations, a socialism that corresponds to the historical democratic traditions of Czechoslovakia, and in accordance with

⁴⁹ Discussed later on.

⁵⁰ National hero of Hungary and Poland.

⁵¹ The state protection authority, or "Secret Police."

⁵² Borhi, "One Day That Shook the Communist World."

the experience of other communist parties.”⁵³ This was followed by the abolition of censorship and the Action Program, which increased freedom of speech, limited the power of the secret police, ensured good relations with the Western world, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Blocs, and put forth a 10 year plan towards elections that would form a more democratic socialist state.⁵⁴

These changes concerned the Soviet Union, who saw it as a weakening of the Eastern bloc and who worried it might lead down a similar pathway as the Hungarian Revolution. Without resorting to violence, the Soviet Union held a series of negotiations. When these negotiations neared the verge of failure, a letter arrived to the Soviet leadership, whose writer feared that the future of Czechoslovak socialism was under threat due to Dubček’s “subversive” reforms. The letter called for immediate military assistance from Soviet armed forces, prompting the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary, to invade Czechoslovakia. Though Dubček called for resistance, no efforts were able to undermine the invasion.

Though Czechoslovak ambitions for a better future were suppressed in 1968, perhaps there is new hope for the ideas of Dubček to take flight in the halls of the Kremlin. Mikhail Gorbachev is known to have taken great inspiration from “Socialism with a Human Face,” and these changes can be seen in his own push for clemency in Soviet society through programs such as *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Czechoslovakia remains a satellite state in 1986, and discontent with living standards combined with economic stagnancy sustains a problematic outlook for the future of the nation; bitter memories of the Soviet invasion a mere 18 years ago remains a major issue in relations with the USSR, and serves as a continued rallying cry for Czechoslovak liberation groups.

POLAND SOLIDARITY, 1980

In 1956, the regime in Poland faced a major shock. The country had been annexed into the Eastern Bloc after Soviet occupation during WWII. Major contributors towards the unrests included the continuous decline of living conditions in Poland, and doubt over Soviet promises of improvement.⁵⁵ Notably, workers’ power seemed to be stripped away whenever faced with relevant political altercations; any attempts to demand improved labour conditions were met with brutal oppression, further fueling their discontent.⁵⁶

The city of Poznan was the largest industrial center of the republic. Low wages for workers translated into fewer living resources for working families, causing mass tensions against the system. Underlying causes of civil unrest also stemmed from irregularities in calculating taxes. The workers of the ZISPO factories (the largest group of factories in the city)

⁵³ Navrátil, *The Prague Spring 1968*.

⁵⁴ Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A history of Europe since 1945*. Penguin, 2006.

⁵⁵ “Reasons for the Outbreak - Poznań June 1956 Uprising - Poznan.PL.”

⁵⁶ Ibid.

voiced complaints and created petitions for better wages but were met with little regard for their struggles. On the morning of October 28th, 1956, nearly all ZISPO workers took to the streets, angered by the loss of bonus pays and a raise of the working quotas. They were quickly joined by workers from other plants as well as students.⁵⁷ The demonstrators demanded lower food prices, better wages and some changes to recent laws that affected workers' conditions. Though the workers were looking to negotiate with the Prime Minister of the time, the government declared that they had no authority to solve the problems being faced in the republic. Demonstrators opted, then, to enter into dialogues with the police department, which led to many officers joining in support.⁵⁸ Quickly these protests became violent through the seizing of tanks and arms by the protestors.

The situation in Poland settled only after further violent measures and massive arrests. Those arrested were often beaten and tortured. Although there was never proof or affirmation from the detainees of the involvement of foreign, anti-communist American and Western secret services promoting the revolt, this became the official line from the government.⁵⁹ Communist authorities censored all information on the Poznan events for many years but the memory of these events persisted and played a major role in the rise of Solidarity and the protests of the 1970s.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Poland continued to face hard times. Artificially-low food prices,⁶⁰ designed by the government to keep urban discontent at bay, simply masked the poor state of the economy. Sudden increases on the prices for food and basic necessities took the population by surprise⁶¹ and caused restlessness across the country. Demonstrations against the rise in prices started in the Baltic coastal provinces, culminating in the destruction of many public buildings. These violent confrontations escalated after Władysław Gomułka, longstanding *de facto* leader of Poland,⁶² authorized the use of a limited lethal force to establish peace, alongside orders to prevent protesters from returning to their factories.⁶³ The protest movement spread to other cities, as strikes and workers demonstrations spread across the nation. A general Polish strike had been scheduled for the 21st of December, 1970. These events led Gomułka to resign his post, replaced by Edward Gierek. Following continued strikes, Gierek met personally with workers and apologized for the government's previous mistakes. The workers formulated a series of demands, including the right to freely elect worker councils and representatives, but these were soon eliminated by state officials.

⁵⁷ "Black Thursday - Course of Events - Poznań June 1956 Uprising - Poznan.Pl."

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ "Investigation - Poznań June 1956 Uprising - Poznan.Pl."

⁶⁰ Governmentally subsidized food prices, too low for economic development, usually at the expense of national debt. Strategy also used to increase salary wages.

⁶¹ Dowler, *The Road to Gdansk. Poland and the USSR*.

⁶² De facto leader of post-war Poland until 1948. Following the Polish October he became leader again from 1956 to 1970.

⁶³ "Poland. History. Polish People's Republic - PWN Encyclopedia - a Source of Reliable and Reliable Knowledge."(translated)

Faced with an increase in food prices and a 20% lower income compared to that of workers in heavy industry, textile workers - primarily women - started the Łódź⁶⁴ strikes. Afterwards, prices were lowered and wage increases were announced alongside political changes.⁶⁵ Although the protests called for social and economic changes, the riots awakened the political consciousness of Polish society of the time.⁶⁶ Inspired by the women of Łódź, and frustrated by the lack of basic necessities in the country, activists came together to form organized opposition groups.⁶⁷

The most relevant of these groups was the KOR (Workers' Defence Committee), whose sought to assist victims of the 1976 repression.^{68,69} The dissidents who formed these opposition groups recognized the importance of resisting the abuses of the regime. They were furthered bolstered by alliances between the intelligentsia⁷⁰ and the working class.⁷¹ KOR promoted the rise of independent trade unions, leading to the establishment of Free Trade Unions in 1978, and providing the foundations for the Solidarity movement.

By 1980, Polish authorities were forced into raising consumer prices to a realistic level, instead of taking on greater debt in an attempt to keep wages artificially high and food prices artificially low.⁷² On July 1st, the government announced gradual price rises which once again lead to a series of strikes. Protestors brought the Polish Republic to a halt by occupying various factories and closing the ports. One of the most crucial demands was the establishment of trade unions independent from state control.⁷³ The government was pressured into accepting the Gdańsk Agreement, which "acknowledged the right of employees to have unions, increased the minimum wage, and improved and extended welfare and pensions."⁷⁴

Solidarity, finally a national labour union, was regarded as major political force who would later have meetings with the government regarding the current economic crisis and the required steps to take to solve it.⁷⁵ It is important to note that Solidarity's agenda was not at

⁶⁴ City in central Poland.

⁶⁵ Davies, *God's Playground A History of Poland*.

⁶⁶ Misztal, *Poland after Solidarity*.

⁶⁷ Davies, *God's Playground A History of Poland*.

⁶⁸ The Repression: further attempts to increase food prices, through the masking by propaganda displaying equal or worse struggles in the Western world.

⁶⁹ "The Rise of Solidarnosc – International Socialism."

⁷⁰ A social class composed of individuals involved in complex mental and creative activities aimed at the development and dissemination of culture. The term has been taken from the russian интеллигенция (transliterated as intelliguentsiya.) Originally, the term was applied in the context of Poland, Russia and later, the Soviet Union, and had a narrower meaning based on the self-definition of a certain category of intellectuals.

⁷¹ Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity*.

⁷² Markovich, "Jeffrey Sachs and the Costs of Capitalism. Shock Therapy in Eastern European Transition Economies."

⁷³ Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity*.

⁷⁴ Markovich, "Jeffrey Sachs and the Costs of Capitalism. Shock Therapy in Eastern European Transition Economies."

⁷⁵ Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity*.

this time to promote the independence of Poland from the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ Although promises were made to the public, the Polish government found it difficult to uphold them. Gierek was finally removed from office and was replaced by Stanisław Kania, who made similar promises. Talks of Soviet military intervention started at the end of 1980, but were put at bay by Kania who assured the USSR that they were dealing with the opposition in their own way.

Life within the Polish republic is slowly becoming unbearable, and disagreements between Solidarity and the government have only served to increase hostility towards the union. The first congress of Solidarity issued provocative calls to other Eastern bloc countries to follow Solidarity's footsteps towards socialist reformation and the appreciation of human rights. In 1981, Wojciech Jaruzelski⁷⁷ became Prime Minister, due to pressures from Polish leadership to implement martial law. Forceful action against Polish opposition groups were again encouraged at the Politburo meeting on the 10th of December, by the Soviets. This led to the implementation of martial law and associated measures⁷⁸ on the 13th of December, 1981. Employees of media and educational institutions underwent verification, thousands were banned from their professions, and many were imprisoned for the spread of "false information." Other forms of oppression and censorship have since followed suit, leading to economic turbulence and renewed opposition.⁷⁹ The last demonstration lead directly by Solidarity took place in August of 1982.

Solidarity has nevertheless remained an underground organization, and with support from the Catholic Church it continues to garner influence amongst Polish oppositional factions. The general public in Poland continues to express disappointment and economic hardship has not eased their discontent, yet so far no other public demonstrations have taken place due to the abject harshness of martial law in the country.

THE BALTICS

Following WWII, the nations of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were, like many others, annexed into the USSR. A process of Sovietization took place in order to weaken national identities within the Baltics. Propaganda was used to create a welcoming feeling among the Balts, and aimed to appease opposition such as the Forest Brothers,⁸⁰ who, like many Balts, believed they had the right to self-determination. These nationalist factions threatened the social and economic assimilation of the region, demanding action from Moscow. Hence,

⁷⁶ Pyzik, *Poor but Sexy*.

⁷⁷ Former Polish military officer and had increased popularity within the socialist government.

⁷⁸ Imposition of direct military control of normal civilian functions of government, especially in response to a temporary emergency. Free labour unions were suspended, activists were detained, curfews were imposed, national borders and airports were closed, telephone lines were disconnected and mail was subjected to postal censorship. A six-day work week was imposed and factories, health care services, key factories and others were placed under military management.

⁷⁹ Markovich, "Jeffrey Sachs and the Costs of Capitalism. Shock Therapy in Eastern European Transition Economies."

⁸⁰ Group of partisans who used guerrilla warfare against Soviet rule before and after WWII.

deportation was a primary tactic used to repress opposition in the Baltics, and around 124,000 Estonians, 136,000 Latvians, and 245,000 Lithuanians have been estimated to have been deported between 1944 and 1955. Once Khrushchev took power in 1956, the few deportees who had survived their experience in the *gulags* of Siberia were allowed to return to their homes.

The Soviet Union made investments in the industrial and agricultural sectors of the Baltics. It was important to integrate the economies of these countries into the Soviet system. The fast pace of development damaged the agricultural and housing sectors, affecting the allocation of resources to the urban areas who still lacked in recovering from the damage wrought during WWII. Many of the industries developed had little regard for natural resources, local needs, and the availability of labour;⁸¹ making the Baltic states economically dependent on the USSR. This led to further unrest amongst Balts, most notably in Estonia, where protesters complained about the callous regard heeded to local economic needs and the exportation of Estonian products before domestic demand had been met.⁸² A high influx of Russian settlers affected labour availability within the Baltics, and though they were still in the demographic majority, the Balts worried about how continuing immigration from Russia might disturb their own native power and stability:

“In all three cases the percentage of ethnic natives [in national government] is considerably lower than their percentage [of the] population, showing that the Russian minority exercises a disproportionate share of influence in republic administration.”⁸³

New housing developments, key political roles, and administrative positions were given to Russian-immigrants - further contributing to unrest within these nations. In Estonia, opposition groups fought to resist the immigration of Russian settlers and tried to reserve communist government positions for native Estonians, but they have enjoyed little success.

The Soviet regime has found it difficult to rid the Balts of their religious affiliations and nationalist attitudes, both of which contributed to underground resistance activity. The Helsinki Accords of 1975, signed by the USSR, included a section addressing human rights, ostensibly guaranteeing protections for freedoms in the realms of civil, political, economic, religious, cultural, and social life.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, new measures of Russification were established in the 1970s through the education system, and freedom of expression was decisively limited. Notably, there have been stirrings of a burgeoning group in Latvia calling themselves Helsinki-

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Helsinki Accords: Declaration on Human Rights"

86.⁸⁵ Capitalising on the protections enshrined in the Helsinki Accords, this Human Rights Defense Group threatens to become the first openly organized opposition to the regime. Should others become aware of the group's activities, they may be emboldened to start their own movements. In the era of *glasnost*, it does not seem that merely silencing the group will put an end to the larger issue at hand. While leadership may consider this as an interim solution, it seems evident that the root of instability must be addressed to quell threats in the long-term.

KAZAKHSTAN

The history between early Russian settlements and the Kazakh people posed difficult beginnings for Soviet control over these lands in the mid-twentieth century. Between December 1917 and August 1920, briefly after the fall of the Russian Empire and before the establishment of Soviet dominion over their lands, the Kazakhs formed a semi-independent state (known as the Alash Autonomy) that focused on halting the Bolshevik's efforts to occupy Kazakh territories. They resisted until the Red Army's victory, and subsequent assumption of control over the region in the latter half of 1920.⁸⁶

Being the second largest republic of the USSR, Kazakh territories have played a vital role in Soviet strategic operations. Relations with the Kazakh SSR have typically depended on the contemporary needs of the USSR; measures have ranged from forced collectivization of agrarian goods, in the 1920s and 1930s, to massive resettlements and deportations carried out by the central government in the 1940s. Despite the increased industrialization of the territory, started after the Soviet-German war (1941–1945), Kazakhstan's economy continues to revolve around agriculture. Plans to exploit these agricultural resources did not sit well with the ethnic groups that inhabited the Kazakh territories, resulting in public discontent, famines, and high fatality rates.⁸⁷

The USSR government also uses Kazakhstan as a nuclear testing zone, designated an atomic bomb test site near the town of Semipalatinsk in 1947. Tests are still being conducted today in efforts to develop the USSR Nuclear Arms Project. There are reports that these tests might be having a detrimental impact on the environment, and might be harmful to Kazakh agricultural life. Concerned by the testing taking place on their land, the Anti-Nuclear Movement of Kazakhstan has become a major political force in recent years, gaining popularity amongst locals.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Note: the dais is aware that this group was only officially formed in the months after the Congress, yet it constitutes such an important development in the topic that we are choosing to act as though the group has already come into some early form of existence.

⁸⁶ Ertz, "The Kazakh Catastrophe and Stalin's Order of Priorities, 1929–1933."

⁸⁷ Flynn, *Migrant Resettlement in the Russian Federation*.

⁸⁸ Keenan, "Kazakhstan's Painful Nuclear Past Looms Large Over Its Energy Future."

Gorbachev has given some indications that he plans on replacing the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, Dinmukhamed Konaev. Konaev is an ethnic Kazakh with a considerable amount of public support. While it is within Gorbachev's mandate to decide the appointment of SSRs Secretaries, speculators fear that a new appointment could threaten political balance in the region. To ensure the continued strategic control over the region, it is imperative that Moscow exercise prudence in deciding future leadership candidates. In this regard, the Party is advised to generate suggestions for the General Secretary on how to appease the interests of the Kazakh population while ensuring the leadership effectively, faithfully represents the Party's interests. Should Gorbachev carry through with the First Secretary's replacement, he may benefit from some informed advice on the qualifications and goals politically successful candidates would have.

CORE AND PERIPHERY

With Gorbachev recently assigned as head of state, his policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* have given space for many nations to voice discontent regarding their political and economic situations. It is without doubt that a complex set of policies will have to be set in motion to restore relations with these republics. Military occupation within problematic states has the potential to reinforce Soviet power over the governments of these satellite states - Poland, the Baltics, Kazakhstan, and others - but might come at the cost of damaging the USSR's image amongst local populations. It is necessary to consider ways to restore Soviet popularity in these countries without driving them away or pushing them towards independence. As its own nation, the Soviet Union is not exempt from the economic challenges present in many of the annexed states. Delegates should consider the ways in which the Soviet and satellite economies interact, and what kind of resources the Soviet Union itself possesses to help these countries or bring them back into the fold. Is the problem of breakaway republics and national movements a social one? Is it ideological, or political, or economic at its root? As you sit in the halls of power in Moscow, you should look at the past ways Soviet leaders have responded to such challenges. Delegates may consider force, or diplomacy, they might choose to use propaganda or to help the suffering economies of the region. The outside world and the enemies of the Soviet Union are also watching, and will readily pounce on any opportunities to promote the disintegration of the Eastern bloc. Consider how the internal developments of Soviet policy influence the external, and how events on the periphery of Soviet power are able to shape decisions taken in the core. The way in which you answer these questions will impact the future integrity of the Soviet state and its place, not only in eastern Europe, but the world.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What common causes have contributed to popular discontent within the annexed states, the satellites, and others in the Eastern bloc that are under Soviet influence?
2. What factors lead to the pursuit of military intervention in certain instances (Hungary, Czechoslovakia), or a more diplomatic approach in others?
3. Going forward, should Moscow use a blanket policy (similar to the Brezhnev Doctrine), or should they pick and choose their approach depending on the nature and location of the movement in question? How will they know which approach is best suited for which national movement?
4. Why is it necessary for the USSR to repair relations with these states? What are the implications should they break away from Soviet influence? Think about the Soviet economic system. What is it about a communist economy that makes it necessary to dictate the affairs of other states?



TOPIC C: FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES

THE BREZHNEV ERA

The last major developments in Soviet foreign policy before Gorbachev's rise to power happened under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev, who was leader of the Soviet Union from 1964 to 1982.⁸⁹ The Brezhnev Era began with a policy of "Detente", which aimed to reduce hostility between the USSR and the United States.⁹⁰ This policy included increased discussion with the United States on arms control, exemplified through agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 and the ratification of the Antiballistic Missile Treaty (SALT I).⁹¹ Part of the rationale for detente was the high level of military spending needed to maintain the arms race, which imposed a high cost on the Soviet economy.⁹² Detente also allowed for an expansion of trade between the two powers and gave the Soviets access to loans from the United States for military and civil development.⁹³

Despite this period of detente, by the end of the 1970s the two powers were "back on the brink of confrontation."⁹⁴ This was attributed to various factors, including US disapproval of Soviet domestic policy in regards to dissent in satellite states and continued support of international communist parties. Another reason was the United States' build up of arms under the "Reagan Doctrine," including revitalizing a previously discontinued nuclear bomber program. This led to a subsequent arms build-up by both countries.⁹⁵ Finally, the continued conflict in Afghanistan was seen by many as an irreconcilable tension between East and West that made detente policies ineffective, as the United States and Soviet Union continue to support opposing sides in the conflict with money and arms.⁹⁶ In particular, the USA's subsidization of Mujahideen rebels in Afghanistan, who were combatting the Soviet military, signalled to the Soviets that the United States was unwilling to commit to true detente.⁹⁷ These factors eventually led to the failure of both parties to ratify the SALT II nuclear arms agreement, marking the end of detente and the brief period of amicable relations.⁹⁸

⁸⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Leonid Brezhnev" last modified Nov. 6, 2018.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Leonid-Ilich-Brezhnev>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Detente and Arms Control, 1969-1980," Office of the Historian, accessed Nov 8, 2018.
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/detente>.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Robert Longly, "Successes and Failures of Detente in the Cold War" last modified Nov. 2, 2018.
<https://www.thoughtco.com/detente-cold-war-4151136>.

⁹⁶ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan" last modified Oct. 17, 2018,
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan>.

⁹⁷ Robert Longly, "Successes and Failures of Detente in the Cold War" last modified Nov. 2, 2018.
<https://www.thoughtco.com/detente-cold-war-4151136>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The failure of detente led several party members to believe that conflict with the United States was inevitable, and that agreeing to arms reductions would only weaken the Soviets against their American opponents. In addition, detente posed limits on the Soviets in terms of achieving foreign policy objectives in Europe and the Middle East, objectives that may have been better achieved without the restraints of diplomacy with the US.⁹⁹ In the words of Walter Laqueur, “why go through the motions of detente when through forceful action, [Soviet] aims can be achieved more quickly, cheaply, and effectively?”¹⁰⁰

Many see Gorbachev’s renewal of arms talks with the United States as the beginning a “second detente” while others deem further attempts at cooperation with the USA futile, citing the collapse of detente in the 1970s as an example.¹⁰¹

GORBACHEV’S “NEW THINKING”

Gorbachev changed the Soviet Union’s existing foreign policy by replacing members of the old regime with figures who were younger and more open to the idea of change. For example, his new selection for Minister of Foreign Policy, Eduard Shevardnadze, had no prior experience in the area, but he was open to flexible solutions and creativity, without focusing on adhering to existing policies from previous eras.

Gorbachev’s “new thinking” was developed from his interactions with the leaders of state from the UK, US, and France. Through their dialogues, Gorbachev was unconvinced that any of these countries would instigate a nuclear attack, which allowed him to act boldly.¹⁰² Though he proposed radical new approaches to the Soviet Union’s foreign policy, he is still committed to the idea that the Soviet Union should reduce the US’s global influence as it is the single greatest threat to the future of the Soviet Union, and maintain the Soviet Union’s power over Eastern Europe.¹⁰³ He has taken a historic step in inviting the media into the country to report on issues and present opposing viewpoints.¹⁰⁴

His most dramatic changing view from former leaders is his attention to nuclear and military arms, focusing on “disarmament diplomacy.”¹⁰⁵ This is a diversion from the former idea, mainly popular until the 1970s, which equated Soviet success with a collection of nuclear arms.¹⁰⁶ In January 1986, Gorbachev released a detailed plan to reduce nuclear arms, eventually leading to a planned elimination by 2000; first, the US and Soviet Union would each

⁹⁹ Walter Laqueur. “Detente: What’s Left of it?,” New York Times (New York, NY), Dec. 16, 1973. <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/16/archives/detente-whats-left-of-it-detente.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Longly, “Successes and Failures of Detente in the Cold War.”

¹⁰² David Nathaniel Vigil, “Elusive Equality: The Nuclear Arms Race in Europe and the History of the INF Treaty, 1969-1988,” Order No. 3639934, (2014): 425.

¹⁰³ Dimitri K. Simes, “Gorbachev: A New Foreign Policy?” Foreign Affairs, January 28, 2009, accessed November 07, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/1987-02-01/gorbachev-new-foreign-policy>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

reduce their nuclear supply by half before other countries would follow suit, leading to an eventual destruction of all supplies by the mid-1990s.¹⁰⁷

As stated at the Summit with Reagan, Gorbachev rejected the idea that the Soviet policy was focused on expansionism and global domination. Instead, he spoke out against intervention in the developing world, preferring to focus his policies on the domestic area of the Soviet Union. He supports progress and fostering relationships between the Soviet Union and other countries.¹⁰⁸

Since his appointment in 1985, Gorbachev has focused on reducing conflict with the US, specifically looking at nuclear weapons, so that he could shift his focus inwards, examining the success of internal policies.¹⁰⁹ Him and his allies are looking to strengthen the Soviet Union's relationships with other communist or socialist countries. The Soviet Union views the NATO bloc as imperialistic and wants to work with other socialist allies, viewing it as their duty to unite socialist countries across the world, decreasing the stronghold of capitalist societies.¹¹⁰ As well, it also focuses on strengthening their relationships with newly elected democratic parties in other countries to achieve progress in international matters as all states must work together in search of a solution to a common problem¹¹¹.

Some members of the Soviet leadership see these changes as contrary to Soviet domestic and foreign interests. Many believe that with a stagnating economy, the Soviet Union should seek to protect itself from negotiating with the United States, lest their demands result in compromising Soviet sovereignty.¹¹² These opponents to "New Thinking" believe that by promoting communication with opposition groups, negotiating for disarmament with the US, and by revoking support for communist movements worldwide, Gorbachev's policies would be "used by their [enemies] to disorganized society and undermine the strength of the system."¹¹³ These critics believe that Soviet support for communist movements in the developing world is essential, since the US will likely continue to support anti-communist movements regardless of changes in Soviet policy.¹¹⁴ Thus, without Soviet intervention in the

¹⁰⁷ Vigil, "Elusive Equality: The Nuclear Arms Race in Europe and the History of the INF Treaty, 1969-1988," 426.

¹⁰⁸ "Cold War: Geneva (Reagan-Gorbachev) Summit 2nd Session."

¹⁰⁹ Vigil, "Elusive Equality: The Nuclear Arms Race in Europe and the History of the INF Treaty, 1969-1988," 471.

¹¹⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1986): 53.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 56.

¹¹² Robert Longly, "Successes and Failures of Detente in the Cold War" last modified Nov. 2, 2018. <https://www.thoughtco.com/detente-cold-war-4151136>.

¹¹³ Philip Taubman, "Gorbachev Opposition: How Serious," New York Times (New York, NY), Feb 28, 1987. <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/28/world/gorbachev-opposition-how-serious.html>.

¹¹⁴ Ted Galen Carpenter, "US Aid to Anti-Communist Rebels: The Reagan Doctrine and its Pitfalls," CATO Institute, last modified June 24, 1986. <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/us-aid-anticommunist-rebels-reagan-doctrine-its-pitfalls>.

developing world, the USSR would become further isolated and weakened due to a lack of ideologically similar allies.

From an economic standpoint, some see these policies as an opportunity for economic growth, as the lifting of American grain embargos would help reduce agricultural shortages in the Soviet Union.¹¹⁵ Some also deem that arms agreements are necessary, as an arms race requires significant, and costly, growth in the military-industrial complex.¹¹⁶ Because of this high cost (around 17% of the GDP during the Brezhnev years)¹¹⁷, some believed that in order to focus resources on economic reform, the Soviet government needs to reduce military spending, and thus should seek an end to the arms race.

Yet others argue that the growth of the Soviet petroleum and natural gas markets, which followed the 1973 oil crisis, provides a strong economic foundation that can allow for sustained arms production¹¹⁸. Thus, they see Gorbachev's "New Thinking" as a choice that would weaken the Soviet position rather than an economic necessity.

AMERICAN RELATIONS

After Gorbachev rose to power, there was a positive shift in Soviet-US relations owing to the new direction of the leader. After decades of fraught tension between the two global powerhouses, discussions between Gorbachev and other world leaders led to better relations as he was well-received by the international community. The Soviet approach to US relations is based on the notion that both should recognize and respect each other's methods while practising non-intervention as to ensure the development of mutual trust and a positive relationship.¹¹⁹ Gorbachev altered the Soviet foreign policy to focus not on amassing weapons to achieve parity with its opponents, namely the US, but rather to reduce the threat of another arms race, with a focus on nuclear disarmament.

The first major summit between Gorbachev and Reagan was held in Geneva near the end of 1985. Neither country expected the other to waiver significantly from their respective policies, but they were committed to working together. Gorbachev, specifically, wanted to release a joint statement with Reagan to show that they were pursuing a common goal of peace and progress.¹²⁰ Gorbachev proposed that there should be a decrease in nuclear arms in both countries, calling for an initial reduction by half.¹²¹ Moreover, he wanted to prevent the escalation of another space race, especially due to the emergence of newer, more powerful

¹¹⁵ "Soviet Trade: In America's best interest?," Editorial research reports 1989, 1, no. 1 (1989), <https://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresre1989021000>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ "Detente and Arms Control, 1969-1980," Office of the Historian, accessed Nov 8, 2018. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/detente>.

¹¹⁸ E. Bacon et al., *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (New York, NY: Springer, 2002), 415-416.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁰ "Cold War: Geneva (Reagan-Gorbachev) Summit (Closing Conversation)."

¹²¹ "Cold War: Geneva (Reagan-Gorbachev) Summit 6th Session."

weapons in recent years. As a result of their negotiations, Gorbachev and Reagan issued a joint statement against nuclear warfare. However, substantial actions have not yet been taken.

Yet, some see the United States as using these negotiations as a way to impose their own ideologies on Soviet domestic and economic policy. For example, some American policy-makers saw a prolonged period of cooperation and negotiation with the Soviets as a way to bring about “irreversible internal changes in the Soviet system.”¹²²

The US President, Ronald Reagan, may also be cause for Soviet concern. While some deem him as a potential negotiating partner, others see him as a threat to the Soviet system. Reagan ran for president on a strongly anti-detente and anti-Soviet platform.¹²³ In a 1982 speech he called the Soviet Union an “evil empire” and claimed that the ultimate goal of United States foreign policy should be to promote the American system of “freedom and democracy, which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history.”¹²⁴ This rhetoric calls into question whether the Soviet Union should continue to cooperate with President Reagan or whether American “cooperation” poses a threat to Soviet sovereignty. This is further reinforced through Reagan’s choices to abandon *detente* and build up American arms. Examples of American arms building include getting NATO to store nuclear missiles in West Germany, and the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative or “Star Wars” program which, if successful, could completely eliminate the concept of Mutually-Assured Destruction and leave the Soviet Union militarily and politically vulnerable.¹²⁵ There are also economic concerns that the Soviets may not be able to afford continued engagement in Afghanistan while also building arms to counterbalance the SDI.¹²⁶

SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

The Soviet Union has been engaged in a war against revolutionary radicals in Afghanistan for the past six years. At the onset of the war, then-leader Brezhnev declared that the Soviet Union’s goal was “to stop the armed intervention against the Afghan revolution and all forms of imperialist interference in Afghanistan.”¹²⁷ He justified the involvement, citing the Brezhnev Doctrine of 1968, the 51st article of the UN Charter, and the 4th article of the Soviet-Afghan Treaty of 1978. Brezhnev stressed that when the fundamental aspects of socialism are challenged in a specific region, it is a concern for all socialist countries, not just the one under

¹²² Walter Laqueur. “Detente: What’s Left of it?,” New York Times (New York, NY), Dec. 16, 1973. <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/16/archives/detente-whats-left-of-it-detente.html>.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ronald Reagan, “The Evil Empire” (speech, London, England, June 8, 1962), <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/evilemp.htm>

¹²⁵ Robert Longly, “Successes and Failures of Detente in the Cold War” last modified Nov. 2, 2018. <https://www.thoughtco.com/detente-cold-war-4151136>

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Douglas A. Borer, “Soviet Foreign Policy Toward Afghanistan, 1919–1988.” Order No. EP40662 (1988): 96.

direct attack.¹²⁸ Referencing Article 51, which “guarantees all nations the right to individual or collective self-defence when threatened by outside aggression,” Brezhnev asserted that the United States, Pakistan, and China threatened Afghanistan, and the Soviets were required to provide support.¹²⁹ Moreover, Article 4 of the Soviet-Afghan treaty of 1978 permitted Soviet assistance to maintain the peace and security of Afghanistan.¹³⁰ Therefore, when Afghanistan asked the Soviet Union for aid, it was supported by treaty and international agreements to oblige. By March 1980, the Soviets provided over 85,000 troops, which grew to 115,000 in 1984, which is still the current approximate force.¹³¹ There has been a massive cost for the Soviets over the past few years: at least 30,000 casualties, \$12 billion spending, and destruction of over 4,000 vehicles and aircraft.¹³²

The Soviet Union has been attempting to reconcile the warring factions in Afghanistan and broker peace. Since 1980, the Soviet Union has also been attempting to figure out a way to diplomatically remove itself from the war, owing to global backlash for the initial intervention.¹³³ The war has sharply impacted Afghanistan’s economy, causing the Soviets to supply food, build factories, provide substantial aid, and increase trade, namely in the natural gas sector.¹³⁴ The Soviet Union is also responsible for implementing education programs for students in Afghanistan, in the hopes of educating future leaders who can shape the country’s future; however, attacks from radical factions in Afghanistan have reduced the impact of these schools in rural areas.¹³⁵

Since Gorbachev’s appointment last year, there have been greater strides to affect change in the war. Gorbachev has taken on a new approach, different from his predecessors in calling for a reduction in intervention in Third World countries and push for political freedom in new nations; he acknowledges that there is no one uniform system that can serve every state, and therefore, different countries should be able to govern their own development.¹³⁶ This is a sharp break from the attitudes of past leaders like Brezhnev and other hardliners who are not flexible in their ideological beliefs.¹³⁷ In 1985, in discussion with Reagan, Gorbachev discussed the possibility of removing the Soviet troops as a gesture of progress between the two nations, referencing a joint effort between the two nations.¹³⁸ However, this was not discussed in great detail at the summit, as issues like nuclear proliferation were pushed to the forefront.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 101.

¹³² Ibid., 103.

¹³³ Ibid., 106.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 105.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 109-110.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹³⁸ George Shultz, “Cold War: Geneva (Reagan-Gorbachev) Summit (Shultz Memoirs).”

TURNING POINT

The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union marks a potential turning point for Soviet foreign policy, with many possible paths for the future.

The key question remains as to whether the Soviet Union should pull out of Afghanistan, and if so, how. Potential options include a continuation of the conflict, whether that be through funding to the Afghan government and maintaining a strong Soviet military presence in the area. Some younger, radical reformers advocate to completely abandon the conflict in order to focus on domestic economic issues, while others believe that leaving the conflict strengthens the power of the West, especially since Afghanistan exists to the direct south of the USSR. If the USSR does pull out of Afghanistan, delegates would do well to consider some kind of continued support to the communist State in Afghanistan, in order to protect their ideological ally. Look at the American example in Vietnam, and perhaps you will notice the striking similarities in the issues they faced in their exit from that country. The relationship with the United States plays a key role in this as well; some see a “second detente” as a chance to get the United States to reduce their funding to rebels in Afghanistan, allowing the conflict to de-escalate. However, cooperation with the United States may also mean compromising the Soviet position in the conflict - it may be better to either leave Afghanistan entirely or avoid negotiations with the US that may compromise the USSR’s position there. Others see leaving Afghanistan as an essential prerequisite to renewed cooperation with the United States, and believe the USSR should depart from the conflict as soon as possible.

Some question whether working together with the United States is a goal worth striving for at all. Renewed cooperation with the United States may lead to a pause in the arms race, clearing the way for money and resources to be diverted towards domestic economic development. Yet, the Soviet Union could potentially be compromising its sovereignty by taking this path, and some believe it would be better to try to find a way to economically restructure while still building arms and avoiding negotiations that would make the Soviet Union in any way reliant on the United States.

Delegates will also need to determine how best to advance the wellbeing of global socialism. One potential path is to focus on the Soviet Union and satellite states, while de-emphasizing Soviet involvement in socialist movements outside of the Eastern Bloc. A strong Soviet Union is seen by many as necessary for the continuation and spread of Marxism. It may be worth focusing on Soviet issues first in order to create an economically revitalized country that can defend global socialism more effectively. Others believe that it is the duty of the Soviet Union, as history’s first Marxist state, to continue supporting revolutionary movements and governments beyond Soviet borders, whether that be in Afghanistan, Cuba, or elsewhere in the world. This solution will require determining the kind of support that should be given to foreign socialists and the economic viability of such plans. Some radical reformers propose another path, one that would involve a reduction in the role of spreading Marxism-

Leninism entirely. This may be due to an ideological shift towards more market involvement in the economy, an easing of pressure on national interests, or greater acceptance of the many different forms and pathways to achieving socialism. Yet in doing so, the USSR might be seen as ceding leadership of the communist world to the People's Republic of China. Either way, it presents another policy alternative for the leaders of the Soviet Union to consider.

With many different strategic options to choose from in terms of the conflict in Afghanistan, the relationship with the United States, and the Soviet Union's role in promoting global socialism, the results of this conference will undoubtedly set the foundation for the future evolution of Soviet foreign policy.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are the implications of Gorbachev's focus on nuclear disarmament as a priority of his foreign policy? What is your character's own view on nuclear weaponry and its place in Soviet strategy?
2. How will Gorbachev avoid a repeat of the collapse of Detente if he chooses to work closely with the United States on nuclear disarmament?
3. Should Gorbachev choose to work with President Reagan and how will Gorbachev's changing relationship with the US affect domestic and economic policies in the Soviet Union?
4. Why is it important that neither the US or Soviet Union become completely invulnerable to the nuclear missiles of the other? Think back to the ideas behind the SALT-II agreement. What are the benefits of remaining vulnerable to one another, diplomatically and politically, if not militarily?
5. How should the Soviet Union reconcile its desires to pull out of Afghanistan with its aims of achieving unity among Communist states? By pulling out of Afghanistan at this critical moment, is the Soviet Union allowing the collapse of a communist government and a subsequent turn towards the West in that country?
6. Think of Afghanistan as the USSR's gateway to the Middle East. How hard should they fight to keep that gateway open? How does Afghanistan factor into the regional balance of power?
7. Does the Soviet Union have an obligation to provide aid and military support to countries whose communist leadership is under attack? To what extent should that support go? Reflect on the American commitment to the Truman Doctrine and the Soviet Union's own Brezhnev Doctrine.

CHARACTERS



VIKTOR CHEBRIKOV

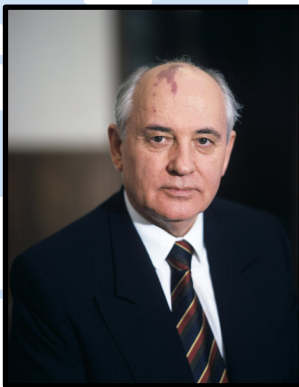
Chairman of the Committee for State Security

Served as Deputy Chairman of the KGB under Yuri Andropov, during which time they spearheaded an anti-corruption campaign. Respected internationally for the strength of the KGB under his direction, including the dismantling of the CIA's network of operatives in the USSR.

Anatoly Dobrynin

Ambassador of the Soviet Union to the United States

Appointed in 1962, Dobrynin has served as ambassador to six US presidents. Negotiation link between the Politburo and American presidency and a key figure in normalizing Soviet relations with the US. Contributed to resolving the Cuban missile crisis; engaged in direct communication with Kissinger throughout detente negotiations.



Mikhail Gorbachev

General Secretary of the CPSU

Elected in 1985, Gorbachev has begun his legacy as an ambitious reformer, introducing doctrines such as *uskorenie*, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and 'new thinking'. He is in a position of paramount importance, as Soviets look to his leadership to exit the Brezhnev stagnation and secure lasting strength and prosperity for the Union.

Anatolijs Gorbunovs

Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU in the Latvian SSR

Active ranking member of the CPSU in the Latvian SSR since 1974.

Notable for breaking with party majority in expressing support for the Latvian independence movement.





Petras Griškevičius

First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party

De facto leader of Lithuania. Member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and a delegate of both the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR and the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union. Strongly conservative Brezhnevite. Supports suppression of Lithuanian culture and heritage, replacing them with Soviet propaganda.

Andrei Gromyko

Chairman of the Presidium

Formerly the Minister of Foreign Affairs (1957 - 1985), during which time his conservative, hardline attitudes dictated foreign policy. Played a direct role in the Cuban Missile Crisis, negotiated numerous arms limitations treaties, and assisted in building Brezhnev's detente policy. Appointed head of state in 1985, following Gorbachev's election.



Gustáv Husák

First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Appointed in 1968 to succeed Alexander Dubček in the wake of the Prague Spring; proved himself to be a loyal ally to Moscow. Initiated the "normalization" effort, reversing Dubček's liberal reforms. Has continued to strategically constrain individual rights and cultural expression, particularly through the use of the secret police.

Wojciech Jaruzelski

First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party

General Jaruzelski served as the Minister of National Defence of the People's Republic of Poland from 1968 to 1983, and orchestrated the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. Named Prime Minister of Poland in 1981, establishing martial law in an attempt to suppress pro-democracy movements. Resigned former roles to become the Chairman of the Polish Council of State in 1985 (the head of Poland); power remains firmly rooted in his military connections.





Vladimir Kryuchkov

Head of the First Chief Directorate

Appointed the head of the First Chief Directorate (PGU) - the KGB foreign operations branch - in 1971. Under his direction, the PGU has had great success in infiltrating and corrupting Western intelligence agencies. The PGU strongly encouraged the invasion of Afghanistan, and is in favour of promoting international revolutionary regimes and supporting various global communist and socialist movements.

Dinmukhamed Kunaev

First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan

A native Kazakh, Kunaev's rise to power is closely tied with the late Leonid Brezhnev, a close friend and loyal political ally. Following Brezhnev's election, Kunaev assumed his current position in the Communist Party of Kazakhstan in 1964. He became a full member of the Politburo in 1971.



Yegor Ligachyov

Second Secretary of the CPSU

Promoted to his current post as *de facto* head of the Secretariat in 1985. Initially expressed support for Gorbachev's reforms, but has recently become increasingly outspoken about his opposition to the social democratic effects of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

Anatoly I. Lukyanov

Head of the General Department of the Central Committee

Began his career as a constitutional lawyer, serving as a legal adviser at the Legal Commission of the Soviet Council of Ministers, the Supreme Soviet, and the Central Committee. Assumed his current role in 1985. Though initially supportive of the *uskorenie* reforms, Lukyanov was put off by the drastic nature of *glasnost* and *perestroika*; he now identifies with the conservative, establishment wing of the party that is growing in concern for the stability of the USSR.





Nikolay Ryzhkov

Chairman of the Council of Ministers

Served as the Head of the Economic Department of the Central Committee (1982-1985) and was affiliated with a party faction dedicated to strengthening Brezhnev's agenda. Ryzhkov was previously in favour of *uskorenie* reforms, and extolled the need for economic restructuring. More recently, he has diverged from Gorbachev's positions, advocating the need for greater production of consumer goods, a less abrupt restructuring, and a gradual transition towards a centralized and regulated market economy.

Volodymyr Shcherbytsky

First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine

Assumed office in 1972; full member of the Politburo since 1971. Close ally of the late Leonid Brezhnev. Shcherbytsky has enacted expansive re-centralization and russification policies in Ukraine. A tactful suppressor of dissent, he opposes Gorbachev's *glasnost* campaign and has expressly renounced the need for *perestroika*.



Eduard Shevardnadze

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Formerly the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party from 1972 to 1985 (*de facto* leader of the Georgian SSR). Initiated an anti-corruption campaign and several successful economic reforms. Appointed Foreign Minister in 1985 and has worked hand-in-hand with Gorbachev to develop the 'New Political Thinking'.

Sergey Sokolov

Minister of Defense

Began his career in the military in 1932. Promoted to Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1978. Commanded the ground forces during the invasion of Afghanistan. Highly respected and decorated for his service; awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union in 1980. Appointed Minister of Defense in 1984.





Deng Xiaoping

Chairman of the Chinese Central Advisory Commission

Rose to power as the leader of the People's Republic of China by 1982. Similar to Gorbachev, Deng inherited a country rife with social conflict and economic stagnation. Crafted the system of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics', a revolutionary doctrine combining socialist ideology with pragmatic market economics. Adopted an export-oriented policy, brokering trade ties by initiating and strengthening relationships with foreign countries.

Aleksandr Yakovlev

Head of the Propaganda Department of the CPSU

Head of the Department of Ideology and Propaganda between 1969 and 1973. Assumed current role in 1985. Senior adviser to Gorbachev; advocate of Soviet non-intervention in Eastern Europe and improved relations with the West. Mastermind behind the logistical implementation of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.



Yury Yaremenko

Deputy Director of the Institute of Economic Forecasting in the Academy of Sciences

Soviet academic versed in Chinese institutions; teaches and writes on the economy of China at Moscow State University. Renowned for his theory of the multilevel economy, providing unique insights into its theoretical and practical application in the USSR. Assumed current role in 1985. High-level adviser to Gorbachev, advocating a gradual transition to a regulated market economy.



Boris Yeltsin

First Secretary of the CPSU Moscow City Committee

Elected as a full member of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1981. Appointed to current role in 1985 - effectively the "Mayor" of Moscow. Radical economic reformer, believes in improving Soviet living standards. Advocates transitioning to a market economy.



ADVICE FOR RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

Although our background guide provides a good overview of the topics, it should not be your final source. Below are some tips and starting points to help you conduct quality research.

Know what you stand for. As an attendee of the Congress, you are representing the thoughts and opinions of a real person. In your position paper and in committee, leave personal biases at the door and do your best to put yourself in the shoes of your character. We understand that particular figures have less of a clear position on some of the issues being debated. For example, if your role is primarily to advocate Chinese style economics, it may not be evident what position you would take on movements in the Baltic states. This is where it is important to understand the interconnected nature of the topics – it is often possible to reasonably extrapolate a stance on a topic given a clear opinion in a related issue.

Appreciate the importance of ideology. The USSR was heavily driven by ideological views. We do not expect you to be an expert in Marxism or Marxism-Leninism, but you are expected to understand the principles of these philosophies, particularly with respect to how they shape the mandates of political actors.

Start general. In a historical committee, having a general understanding of the history of the USSR is valuable. Additionally, some of the topics can become quite specific and it is hard to delve into this depth before understanding the basics. Wikipedia and encyclopedias are great places to begin general searches.

Use credible sources. As with any paper you would write for school, Wikipedia and similar sources are not considered sufficiently credible or academically viable. There are strong primary sources such as the Party Programme and CIA declassified documents; there are also excellent journal articles and reports written on specific issues. The sources referenced in the topic sections should provide you with an idea of the caliber of research we are looking for. If you have trouble accessing any of these journals, feel free to email the me. Alternatively, your school librarian is likely a strong resource in aiding you with finding and accessing resources.

Be wary of biases. Take prudence in evaluating the objectivity of sources. With some English sources, the content may be influenced by a pro-Western or pro-Reagan angle. Remember that you are assuming the role of a Soviet national – you believe in the mandate and ideology of the USSR. Reagan famously called the USSR the “evil empire” – Western sources may reflect this tone, but you should not.

GENERAL RESOURCES

“PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION: A New Edition 1986.”

<https://eurodos.home.xs4all.nl/docu/cpsu-texts/cpsu86-0.htm>.

Strong introduction to Party's history and the main themes of the period.

Released by the CPSU, the document provides good insight into leadership perspective and tone.

TOPIC A KEY RESOURCES

Battle, John M. “Uskorenie, Glasnost’ and Perestroika: The Pattern of Reform under Gorbachev.” *Soviet Studies* 40, no. 3 (July 1, 1988): 367–84.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668138808411764>.

Great introduction into the three campaigns, analyzing their development in relation to each other.

“The 27th CPSU Congress: Gorbachev’s Unfinished Business.” Intelligence Assessment. Central Intelligence Agency, April 1986.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/19860401A.pdf>.

Strong overview of the main ideas presented in the congress; provides a lot of focus on the changes in personnel, which may serve as valuable information to some extent but should not be overly analyzed.

Judson Mitchell, R, and Randall S Arrington. “Gorbachev, Ideology, and the Fate of Soviet Communism.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, no. 33 (2000): 457–74.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-067X\(00\)00016-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-067X(00)00016-7).

Another valuable introduction to Gorbachev’s ideology discussed within the context of Soviet history.

TOPIC B KEY RESOURCES

Davies, Norman. *God’s Playground A History of Poland: Volume II: 1795 to the Present*. Vol. 2. Oxford University Press, 2005.

This source will provide a clear and complete historical background for the rise of Polish insurgency.

Borhi, Laszlo. “One Day That Shook the Communist World: The 1956 Hungarian Uprising and Its Legacy.” *The Historian* 72, no. 3 (2010): 697–.

This source provide a clear and complete background to Hungary’s struggles leading up to the 1956 uprising, as well as the aftermath and the consequences that Soviet military intervention caused.

Thaden, Edward C. “The Beginnings of Romantic Nationalism in Russia.” *American Slavic and East European Review* 13, no. 4 (1954): 500–521.

Background knowledge to historic relationships between the Russian empire and their surrounding nations, which sets the stage for the advent of socialism.

TOPIC C KEY RESOURCES

Simes, Dimitri K. "Gorbachev: A New Foreign Policy?" Foreign Affairs. January 28, 2009.

Accessed November 07, 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/1987-02-01/gorbachev-new-foreign-policy>.

This article was written in the same year as the Congress, showing us an accurate-to-time consideration of the topic, including receptions and projections from various Soviet scholars.

Van Oudenaren, John. "Understanding Soviet Foreign Policy. The Tradition of Change in Soviet Foreign Policy. Two Schools of Soviet Diplomacy." NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIV WASHINGTON DC, April 1990. <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA271580>.

Overviews history of Soviet foreign relations since the early 20th century with specific attention to antecedents that determined Gorbachev's "New Political Thinking" and the policy changes associated with it. Note that this is written four years after the Congress, and thus includes developments that have not occurred yet in our committee.



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