

GORBACHEV AND REAGAN: HOW THE COLD WAR ENDED

1. Read the questions and answer the questions which follow.

Source A

Freedom leads to prosperity. And now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet Union? Or are they token gestures, intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it?

We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

*From a speech by Ronald Reagan at West Berlin,
12 June 1987.*

Source B

Nothing is less free than pure communism, and yet we have, the past few years, forged a satisfying new closeness with the Soviet Union. I've been asked if this isn't a gamble, and my answer is no, because we're basing our actions not on words but deeds. The détente of the 1970's was based not on actions but empty promises. They'd promise to treat their own people and the people of the world better. But the gulag was still the gulag, and the state was still expansionist.

Well, this time, so far, it's different. Mr. Gorbachev has brought about some internal democratic reforms and begun the withdrawal from Afghanistan. My view is that Mr. Gorbachev is different from previous Soviet leaders. I think he knows some of the things wrong with his society and is trying to fix them. We wish him well. And we'll continue to work together to lessen and eliminate tension and mistrust.

*From Ronald Reagan's farewell speech at the end of his Presidency,
11 January 1989.*

*Gulag is a repressive network of Soviet forced-labour camps

Source C

Reagan felt that with his new policy the Soviets would be forced to choose: either stand down from their continuing confrontation with the West, or face increasingly devastating pressures on the home front.

In his memoirs, he commented on intelligence updates about the condition of the Soviet economy in the 1980s. He noted that even if he had not majored in economics in college, it would have been plain to him that Communism was doomed as a failed economic system. According to Reagan, the situation was so bad that if Western countries got together and cut off credit to it, they could bring it to its knees. The Russians could never win the arms race; the Americans could outspend them forever.

Adapted from a book written by a former advisor to Ronald Reagan, 1992.

Source D



A cartoon published in an American newspaper, 8 June 2004.

**Ronald Reagan passed away on 5 June 2004*

Source E

[A] common refrain among conservatives is that Reagan simply “outspent” the Soviets. But Soviet defense spending remained flat throughout the 1980s. More significantly, Gorbachev was unalterably opposed to increasing military spending; he fought a relentless campaign by the Soviet military-industrial complex to spend exorbitant sums in response to Reagan’s buildup. Despite costing billions of dollars, Reagan’s SDI had no significant effect on Soviet strategic decision making. Gorbachev rejected every single proposal to build a Soviet response to Reagan’s “Star Wars” program.

There is also no evidence that Reagan’s “rollback” policy – which sought to aggressively challenge communist movements throughout the world, from Central America to Afghanistan and Africa – had any influence on the liberalising reforms that catalysed the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the [Soviet problems that led to] Gorbachev’s sweeping reforms predated Reagan’s ascent to leadership by decades.

Extracted from an independent political news site, 2020.

Now answer the following questions:

- (a) Compare and contrast the evidence provided in Sources A and B on Reagan’s views of the Soviet Union in the 1980s. [10]
- (b) How far do Sources A - E support the view that Reagan deserves most credit for ending the Cold War? [30]