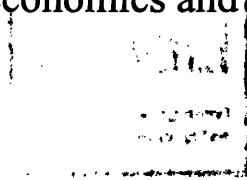


**TITLE PAGE**

**HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY AND  
GREAT POWER VULNERABILITY:  
THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE COLLAPSE  
OF THE SOVIET UNION**

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Doctor of Philosophy.

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2001

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the collapse of Soviet state power from an international perspective. It assesses the extent to which the Soviet Union's international confrontation with the capitalist West, and the end of that confrontation, contributed to the strengthening and weakening of the Soviet state. It shows that the state's international stance of hostility, in *both* social-systemic and geopolitical terms, became a central component of Soviet state power.

Central to this study is the assumption that the continuation of state power is contingent on the successful reproduction of the institutions of political rule. To this end, the thesis develops a historical sociological theory of the state which builds on a critique of neo-Weberian institutional-functional theories of the modern state. Using this theory, the thesis examines the development of Soviet state power and draws out the ways in which the international confrontation with the West reinforced the Soviet state and came to develop and shape its structures and institutions.

Following an examination of the end of the Cold War, the thesis considers the way in which the change in international policy undermined elements of Soviet power, particularly in terms of ideology, legitimacy and material-organisational structures. The retreat from this posture, undertaken by Gorbachev through the 1980s, removed the conflict as a structure of the state, contributed to its weakening and helped make the state vulnerable to the challenges of the 1990-91 period. The thesis concludes that the international confrontation played an important ideational and material role in the development and undermining of Soviet state power. Moreover, the international confrontation was a vital part of the architecture of the Soviet state which helped make the state's claim to rule a more robust and effective socio-political mechanism.

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In writing this thesis I have incurred more debts than I can hope to repay. Here I would like to give credit to the people who have helped me complete this thesis. I would like to thank Michael Mann, Vendulka Kubálková, John Hobson, Chris Reus-Smit and Steve Hobden for permission to cite their respective unpublished manuscripts. Steve Hobden organised a conference on Historical Sociology and International Relations, at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, which helped act as catalyst for my work, and I thank him for facilitating this.

Friends in the International Relations Department at the LSE have provided an ideal environment for undertaking PhD research. I would particularly like to thank Per Hammarlund, Jason Ackleson, Sarah Owen Vandersluis, Mohammed Hafez and Chris Brown each of whom read various chapters in their earlier incarnations and who all helped make the finished product infinitely better.

I am extremely fortunate to have parents who have supported me, in every sense, throughout my studies and to them I owe a special debt of gratitude. Two people, above all, deserve special mention. Catherine Button experienced the production process from day one and helped keep my momentum going when inertia seemed about to set in. More importantly, she read the entire manuscript with a consummate editorial professionalism and inestimably improved the content of this work. For both of these efforts I thank her profusely. Finally, Fred Halliday has been an exemplary supervisor. His guidance, support and confidence in me and my work were crucial to the completion of this thesis. For this support and his friendship I am extremely grateful.

## ACRONYMS USED IN THESIS

CFE	:	Conventional Forces in Europe
CIA	:	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	:	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoCom	:	Co-ordinating Committee on East-West Trade
COMECON	:	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPE	:	Centrally Planned Economy
CPD	:	Congress of People's Deputies
CPSU	:	Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
FRG	:	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	:	German Democratic Republic
GNP	:	Gross National Product
GOSSBANK	:	Soviet State Bank
GOSSNAB	:	Soviet State Acquisition Agency
GOSSPLAN	:	Soviet State Planning Agency
ICBM	:	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
INF	:	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
IR	:	The academic study of International Relations
KGB	:	State Security Council (USSR)
LDP	:	Liberal Democratic Party (Japan)
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NMP	:	National Material Product (Soviet equivalent of GNP)
NSC	:	National Security Council
OPEC	:	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
RCP	:	Russian Communist Party
RSFSR	:	Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic
SDI	:	Strategic Defence Initiative
SSRC	:	Social Science Research Council
START	:	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TsSU	:	Central Statistics Directorate (USSR)
UN	:	United Nations
USA	:	United States of America
USSR	:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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The Soviet Union had possessed the largest military machine ever assembled on this planet by a single political authority. It had been governed by an apparently monolithic party with historically unparalleled instruments of compulsion. Tentacles of its elaborate bureaucracy had reached into every crevice of its subjects' lives. Its ideology had purported to reveal the secret of harnessing the very tides of history. How could such a state simply have destroyed itself?<sup>1</sup>

All major geopolitical processes appear to be working against the continuation of Soviet world power. Cumulative disadvantage should be expected to reach major proportions in the next century, and the coincidence of crises on several fronts simultaneously could occur at any time.<sup>2</sup>

After all, the Soviet Union seemed to be such a giant block of stone, such a vast and powerful state, uniting people of more than a hundred different nationalities.<sup>3</sup>

[T]he chances of system breakdown in the Soviet Union within the next five to ten years are probably better than even.<sup>4</sup>

It is not now (nor will it be during the next decade) in the throes of a true systemic crisis, for it boasts unused reserves of political and social stability that are sufficient to endure the most severe foreseeable difficulties.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* New York: Random House, 1995, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Randall Collins, *Weberian Sociological Theory* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World* New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> R.V. Burks, 'The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union' in Alexander Shtromas and Morton A. Kaplan (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future. Volume 2: Economy and Society* New York: Paragon and PWWA, 1989, pp. 115–65; p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Dibb, *The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower* London: IISS/Macmillan, 1988, p. 260.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THESIS

This thesis is an examination, from an international perspective, of a collapse of state power. Its aim is to assess the role of international factors in state collapse, and their implications for International Relations (IR) theory.<sup>6</sup> In particular, it examines the extent to which the Soviet Union's international confrontation with the capitalist West, and the end of this confrontation, contributed first to the strengthening and then to the weakening of the Soviet state. It argues that this confrontation, of which the Cold War was the acute second phase, became an element of the architecture of the Soviet state, that this confrontation reinforced the Soviet party-state fusion, and that this fusion helped make the state's claim to rule a more robust and effective political mechanism. From the 1920s the USSR's international stance of manifest hostility, in *both* social systemic and geopolitical terms, had become a crucial component of Soviet state power. The retreat from this posture, undertaken by Gorbachev and his leadership team from the mid-1980s, undermined key institutional-functional aspects of the Soviet state by removing this support mechanism and weakening the state.

The thesis aims to make three contributions to IR. In focusing on the international factors which built up and undermined Soviet power, it is a specifically *international* account of the reproduction and then collapse of the USSR. Second, it is an application of historical sociological methods to IR and to a specific IR research question. The method used here involves a critique of

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<sup>6</sup> IR refers to the academic study of international politics which is distinct from the actual events of world politics which the discipline studies.

certain neo-Weberian strands of historical sociology. The dominant approaches of Skocpol and Mann are challenged by the events which this thesis is exploring and as such demand revision in this light. Third, the thesis suggests a reconsideration of a central issue in IR: the nature of the relationship between international and domestic political realms. In short, the thesis offers a novel narrative, from an international point of view, of the making and breaking of Soviet power. It uses and critiques historical sociology in IR and through this provides a way to reconceive the domestic-international relationship.

It should be made clear at the outset that this thesis does not claim that the end of the Cold War *alone* caused the collapse of the Soviet Union. The collapse of a state is a highly complex event that can never be reduced to one overriding cause such as economic crisis, failed leadership or inadequate military power. Events such as these can only be understood as products of both longer-term processes and shorter-term conjunctures. This study will examine one part of this process in the Soviet Union, the role played by the end of the international confrontation with the capitalist West in making the Soviet state vulnerable. Although not claiming that this was the sole cause of the Soviet collapse, this study will argue that the end of the confrontation was, because of the nature of the USSR, a very important factor. The Soviet state had been able to resolve a myriad of economic, political and social problems in the past. The thesis argues that part of the reason why the Soviet state was made fatally vulnerable to its very real economic, social and ethnic problems at this time was the removal of the international conflict from its structures of power.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to sketch out the basic claims of the thesis, put them in the context of the literature which they address and then lay out the plan for the thesis as a whole. As a study of the relationship between Soviet state power and its international environment, it is necessary to begin with a critical overview of the existing literature.

## 1.2 CONTEXT OF THE THESIS

An examination of the role that the international confrontation played in contributing to the weakening the Soviet regime straddles a number of fields rather than sitting neatly within one contained literature. The breadth of the literature, approaches and theoretical commitments engaged with should be regarded as a strength of this approach and should not be considered problematic. This section will critically examine the three main fields on which this study draws: Political Science studies of the collapse of the Soviet Union; IR studies of the end of the Cold War; and Historical Sociological studies of the state and its form of social power. In advancing the argument that international confrontation supported the institutions of the Soviet state and that its demise weakened them, it is necessary to integrate these three sets of literature and, ultimately, to move beyond their particular limitations.

### 1.2.1 *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*

In political science and economic circles there has been an abundance of writing on the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>7</sup> and the transition to what has come to be called post-communism.<sup>8</sup> Despite the breadth of literature which sets out to explain the collapse of the Soviet Union, either in causal or historical terms, it is striking that this corpus almost uniformly describes the collapse as an entirely internally driven event. Aside from glancing towards the international context in the form of a costly arms race, Afghanistan or a diplomatic squeeze, the literature tends to see the collapse wholly or predominantly as a domestic level event. The international dimension is not given thorough or systematic consideration. Matlock's monumental work stresses the failings—moral, political and economic—of the system and puts a heavy emphasis on the problems of empire

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<sup>7</sup> For an early bibliography on works on this period see Abraham J. Edelheit and Hershel Edelheit (eds.), *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union: A Selected Bibliography of Sources in English* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Sound overviews of post-communism are Leslie Holmes, *Postcommunism* Cambridge: Polity, 1997 and Richard Sakwa, *Postcommunism* Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999.

as lying at the root of the Soviet collapse. While he acknowledges the role of individuals, such as Gorbachev and Yeltsin, one is left in no doubt as to his conclusion: the state collapsed due to the systemic failures of an 'evil empire'.<sup>9</sup> Hough's grand study of the period focuses on the internal social conditions for change with a Rostowian emphasis on communism as a transitional phase between agrarian and industrial forms of development.<sup>10</sup> The Gorbachev reforms, he argues, were a Trimberger style 'revolution from above' which was the result of the leadership's reaction to the state's social conditions understood as the culmination of its specific form of industrialisation.<sup>11</sup> Despite its scope, his argument is almost devoid of references to international developments; even Afghanistan escapes his eye.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Kotz and Weir use the concept 'revolution from above' in their study of the end of the Soviet system. They argue that the Soviet Union fell apart due to the abandonment of the Soviet system by its elites which was itself a result of the failure of the socialist economic system.<sup>13</sup>

Laqueur's reflection on the end of the USSR tries to broaden the understanding of this event by placing it alongside the collapse of the other great empires of modern history, specifically Byzantium, and the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires.<sup>14</sup> While he cites many of the internal failings and international political pressures, Laqueur concludes that the edifice tumbled because of the USSR's profound spiritual crisis. This crisis produced a breakdown of self-confidence which, through poor leadership, ultimately rent the empire asunder. Cox's edited volume does not address the collapse in strictly causal terms, but, rather, places it in the context of 'Sovietology' as an academic field and addresses broader questions on the origins of the implosion and the

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<sup>9</sup> Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*. This book is part memoir and part analysis, but for the purposes of classification it is influenced by a clear political science understanding of developments distinct from the memoir and IR literatures.

<sup>10</sup> Jerry Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–91* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen Trimberger, *Revolution From Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt and Peru* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978.

<sup>12</sup> There is one slight reference to the conflict; Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, p. 486.

<sup>13</sup> David M. Kotz with Fred Weir, *Revolution From Above: The Demise of the Soviet System* London: Routledge, 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Laqueur, *The Dream That Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

failure of social science to have contemplated Soviet collapse.<sup>15</sup> Dallin and Lapidus's edited text covers the developments of crisis and the causes of the collapse in great breadth but not much depth. The broader weakness of the book stems from the fact that most of the essays are republications of earlier pieces.<sup>16</sup> The chapters cover the whole gamut of domestic, international, social and economic pressures, but, as with so much of the other literature, the domestic origins of the collapse are the focus.

Following this broad pattern, although with an even heavier emphasis on internal forces, de Tinguy argues, as do the authors of the other essays in her collection, that the Soviet system crumbled from within: the causes were internal tensions of ideological failure, the illegitimacy of the one party system and the retardation of economic development.<sup>17</sup> On a more polemic note, Suraska argues that the Soviet Union collapsed due to its despotism which had prevented 'proper' modernisation from occurring. Suraska argues that this 'proper' modernisation is necessary for such a massive multi-national state to function in the modern world.<sup>18</sup> While Suraska emphasises the warped development of state institutions as the primary cause of the collapse, Carrère d'Encausse argues that the bonds of the USSR were undone by the inevitable strains of nationalism within an autocratic multinational empire.<sup>19</sup> In an overtly historical materialist study Lockwood gives international factors greater credence, but, avoiding political analysis, he argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a direct product of the globalisation of capitalist relations of production.<sup>20</sup>

In his evaluation of the rise and fall of socialism, Lane ascribes the collapse of the Soviet Union primarily to domestic tensions arising from systemic problems within the USSR, with a specific emphasis on economic

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the Death of Communism and the New Russia* London: Pinter, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus (eds.), *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse* Revised Edition, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Anne de Tinguy (ed.), *The Fall of the Soviet Empire* Boulder, CO: East European Monograph Series, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Wisla Suraska, *How the Soviet Union Disappeared: An Essay on the Causes of Dissolution* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire: The Triumph of the Nations* New York: Basic Books, 1993.

<sup>20</sup> David Lockwood, *The Destruction of the Soviet Union: A Study in Globalisation* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.



decline combined with a Tocquevillian expectations gap.<sup>21</sup> While he emphasises domestic systemic causes, Lane notes that several important international factors—relative failure, the dynamism of global capitalism and the influence of foreign leaders on the Soviet leadership—played an important part in the collapse. Here he is joined by a number of authors of shorter pieces who try to draw together the balance of internal and external factors which drove the Soviet collapse. Duedney and Ikenberry argue that, when faced with a dynamic West and a re-stoked Cold War, the limitations of the Soviet form of modernisation were thrown into stark light and the leaders, in their efforts to reform the state, undermined the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> Halliday argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism more broadly was due to the relative failure of the economic system in the context of a dynamic capitalist world.<sup>23</sup> In general, however, the literature which has sought to provide explanations of the Soviet collapse has overwhelmingly stressed the domestic sources of weakness. The emphasis may vary—some argue that nationalities were the pre-eminent problem, others the economy, and yet others the system of rule—but without question the vast majority of scholars have chosen not to locate the Soviet state collapse in its dual international and domestic context. This thesis seeks to rectify this neglect.

### *1.2.2 International Relations and the End of the Cold War*

In the field of IR, broadly conceived, there are two bodies of relevant literature: firstly, the analytic and theoretical studies which often use the end of the Cold war to settle theoretical scores; and secondly, memoirs and contemporary histories which are in many ways the best historical sources for the period.

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<sup>21</sup> David Lane, *The Rise and Fall of State Socialism* Cambridge: Polity, 1996, particularly pp. 105–61.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'The International Sources of Soviet Change' in *International Security* 16.3, 1991, pp. 74–118.

<sup>23</sup> Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1994.

## Theoretical and Analytic Studies

In the ten years or so since the end of the Cold War, the IR literature examining this event has developed substantially. IR most commonly deals with the end of the Cold War as a means to evaluate theory and as a blunt instrument with which to bludgeon theoretical approaches of which one disapproves. Gaddis, an international historian, strongly critiques American IR theory which he claims failed utterly on its own terms.<sup>24</sup> Allen and Goldmann's set of behaviouralist essays is of a less provocative bent than Gaddis, but their common theme is, similarly, that the end of the Cold War has undermined some of the core theoretical notions of IR theory.<sup>25</sup> Realism in IR theory had been under critical fire for some time in the 1980s and the end of the Cold War gave more credence to these claims. Kratochwil takes the opportunity to demonstrate the failings of neorealism, arguing that the end of the Cold War has shown that explaining systems change in terms of an anarchical structure and the distribution of capabilities within that structure is inadequate.<sup>26</sup> Lebow uses it as a means to launch a broader attack on realism,<sup>27</sup> and Nobel follows his lead with a specific attack on Morgenthau's theory of power.<sup>28</sup> Lebow and Risse-Kappen's volume is probably the most cited text in this field.<sup>29</sup> The essays are generally hostile to realism; the broad line of argument which the majority follow is that realism prepared us poorly for the end of the Cold War and therefore IR needs a new theoretical focus. The authors conclude that IR theories should include such

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<sup>24</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, 'International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War' in *International Security* 17.3, 1992-3, pp. 5-58.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Allen and Kjell Goldmann (eds.), *The End of the Cold War: Evaluating Theories of International Relations* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1992.

<sup>26</sup> Friedrich Kratochwil, 'The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-realism as the Science of Realpolitik Without Politics' in *Review of International Studies* 19.1, 1993; pp. 63-80. For a further development of this see Rey Koslowski and Friedrich Kratochwil, 'Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System' in *International Organization* 48.2, pp. 215-247, 1994.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Long Peace, the End of the Cold War, and the Failure of Realism' in *International Organization* 48.2, pp. 249-278, 1994. See also his 'Rise and Fall of the Cold War in Comparative Perspective' in *Review of International Studies* 25.5, 1999, pp. 21-39 for a discussion of some of the methodological and theoretical challenges faced in examinations of the rise and fall of the Cold War.

<sup>28</sup> Jaap Nobel, 'Morgenthau's struggle with power: the theory of power politics and the Cold War' in *Review of International Studies* 21.1, 1995, pp. 61-86.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen (eds.), *The End of the Cold War and International Relations Theory*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995. This collection of essays were originally published as a symposium in *International Organization* 48.2, 1994.

factors as ideas, values, norms and mass-movements within their ontologies and epistemologies. Despite this, realism has not been without its stout yeoman defender, in this instance, the defender of the realm is William Wohlforth who argues that the end of the Cold War is fully compatible with realist theory. He maintains that the shifts in international politics reflected changing power relations and that these power relations were central to the considerations and reasoning of decision makers.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond the theoretical broadsides, Kegley establishes a framework for an ‘autopsy’ of the Cold War.<sup>31</sup> Brooks and Wohlforth argue that material incentives present in the 1980s—specifically the relative decline of the Soviet economy and the globalisation of production in the context of the Soviet Union’s international position—explain the nature and timing of the end of the Cold War better than ideational-focused explanations.<sup>32</sup> Duedney and Ikenberry set out to explain the event by striking a balance between domestic causal factors, the failings of the Soviet form of modernisation, and international ones, the West’s dual thwarting of Soviet expansionism and the presentation of an appealing alternative.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Halliday argues that the Cold War ended due to this balance of international and domestic sources: his catchy phrase, that it was not the gun boat, but the T-shirt which won the Cold War for the West, sums up his case.<sup>34</sup> Two volumes of diplomatic history essays, edited by Armstrong and Goldstein and Hogan respectively, make short and temporally limited judgements on aspects of the strategic and economic causes and implications of

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<sup>30</sup> William C. Wohlforth, ‘Realism and the End of the Cold War’ in *International Security* 19.3, 1995, pp. 91–129; William C. Wohlforth, ‘Reality Check’ in *World Politics* 50.4, 1998, pp. 650–80; Randall L. Schweller and William C. Wohlforth, ‘Power Test: Evaluating Realism in Response to the End of the Cold War’ in *Security Studies* 9.3, 2000, pp. 60–107. Wohlforth has been assisted by Stephen Walt who defends the utility of realism in his ‘The Gorbachev Interlude and International Relations Theory’ in *Diplomatic History* 21.3, 1997, pp. 473–9.

<sup>31</sup> Charles W. Kegley, ‘How Did the Cold War Die: Some Principles for an Autopsy’ in *Mershon International Studies Review*, 38.1, pp. 11–41, 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, ‘Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas’ in *International Security* 25.1, 2001, pp. 5–53.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, ‘Soviet Reform and the End of the Cold War: Explaining Large Scale Historical Change’ in *Review of International Studies* 17.3, 1991, 225–50.

<sup>34</sup> Fred Halliday, ‘The Ends of Cold War’ in *New Left Review*, 180, pp. 5–23; and Fred Halliday, ‘The End of the Cold War and International Relations: Some Analytic and Theoretical Conclusions’ in Steve Smith and Ken Booth (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today* Cambridge: Polity, 1995, pp. 38–61

the end of the Cold War.<sup>35</sup> Summy and Salla's edited text examines why the Cold War ended and concludes that it ended because of the failure of the Soviet economy.<sup>36</sup> Kolodziej argues that the end of the Cold War and the Soviet collapse were produced by the Soviet Union's failure to respond to the inevitable imperatives of order, welfare and legitimacy in modern political life.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Bowker and Brown's edited text contains a number of considerations of the relationship between the end of the Cold War and IR theory.<sup>38</sup> Bowker examines Soviet foreign policy behaviour, arguing that internal weaknesses were largely the cause of foreign policy change.<sup>39</sup> Also, Crockatt's piece evaluates stability theories of international politics in light of the Cold War's end.<sup>40</sup>

IR has also seen a number of works on the end of the Cold War which address specific questions. Chernoff, in contrast to explanations emphasising the impact of the arms race, argues that the West did not spend the Soviets to death.<sup>41</sup> Risse-Kappen also supports the argument that the Reagan administration's spending had little direct impact on Soviet spending and hence on its economic difficulties.<sup>42</sup> Greenstein argues that personalities, particularly those of Reagan and Gorbachev, were the crucial factors explaining the end the Cold War.<sup>43</sup> Lynch's text makes the unconventional argument that the Cold War

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Hogan (ed.), *The End of the Cold War: Its Meanings and Implications* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; David Armstrong and Erik Goldstein (eds.), *The End of the Cold War* London: Frank Cass, 1990.

<sup>36</sup> Ralph Summy and Michael E. Salla (eds.), *Why the Cold War Ended: A Range of Interpretations* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995.

<sup>37</sup> Edward A. Kolodziej, 'Order, Welfare and Legitimacy: A Systemic Explanation for the Soviet Collapse and the End of the Cold War' in *International Politics* 34.2, 1997, pp. 111–51.

<sup>38</sup> Mike Bowker and Robin Brown (eds.), *From Cold War to Collapse: Theory and World Politics in the 1980s* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Mike Bowker, 'Explaining Soviet Foreign Policy Behaviour in the 1980s' in Bowker and Brown (eds.) *From Cold War to Collapse*. For more on this see Mike Bowker, *Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1997.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Crockatt, 'Theories of Stability and the end of the cold war' in Bowker and Brown (eds.) *From Cold War to Collapse*, pp. 59–81.

<sup>41</sup> Fred Chernoff, 'Ending the Cold War: The Soviet Retreat and the US Military Build-up' in *International Affairs* 67.1, pp. 111–26, 1991.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Did "Peace Through Strength" End the Cold War? Lessons from INF' in *International Security* 16.1, 1991, pp. 162–88.

<sup>43</sup> Fred Greenstein, 'The Impact of Personality on the End of the Cold War: A Counterfactual Analysis' in *Political Psychology* 19.1 March, 1998, pp. 1–19; see also his 'Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War: What Difference Did They Make?' in William C. Wohlforth (ed.), *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 199–219.

really ended in the 1960s with the settlement of the division of Europe after the construction of the Berlin wall.<sup>44</sup>

The *Review of International Studies* dedicated a special issue to the end of the Cold War,<sup>45</sup> the publication of which was timed to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the issue Kramer argues that new archival evidence demonstrates that ideology played a more important role in the Cold War than many scholars realised or had conceded in their theories.<sup>46</sup> Patman maintains that the Reagan administration's bellicosity helped to induce Gorbachev's 'new thinking' within the Soviet domestic sphere.<sup>47</sup> Forsberg makes a more constructivist case. By comparing the Soviet rapprochement with Germany and its failure to soothe its relationship with Japan, he contends that the end of the Cold War was the product of a growth in trust between the main players.<sup>48</sup> Sprinkle compares the East-West rivalry of the Cold War with the American North-South rivalry between the states as a way to understand the different outcomes of hostile relations.<sup>49</sup> White and Revell argue that, in light of the end of the Cold War, it is fair to conclude that the Soviet Union was integrated into a normalised system of international diplomacy.<sup>50</sup> Ralph briefly argues that America's role as an agent of liberalism is central to understanding the Soviet convergence on liberal norms of governance.<sup>51</sup> The issue also has two pieces on the role of the Afghanistan conflict. Halliday examines the impact of Afghanistan on Soviet foreign policy making,<sup>52</sup> and Reuveny and Prakash argue

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<sup>44</sup> Allen Lynch, *The Cold War is Over – Again* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992.

<sup>45</sup> *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999.

<sup>46</sup> Mark Kramer, 'Ideology and the Cold War' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 539–76.

<sup>47</sup> Robert G. Patman, 'Reagan, Gorbachev and the emergence of "New Political Thinking"' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 577–601.

<sup>48</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, 'Power, interests and trust: explaining Gorbachev's choices at the end of the Cold War' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 603–21.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Hunt Sprinkle, 'Two Cold Wars and why they ended differently' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 623–39.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen White and Stephen Revell, 'Revolution and integration in Soviet international diplomacy, 1917–1991' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 641–54.

<sup>51</sup> Jason Ralph, 'Security Dilemmas and the end of the Cold War' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 721–5. For a similar and more detailed argument see Robert Jervis, 'Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?' in *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3.1, 2001, pp. 36–60.

<sup>52</sup> Fred Halliday, 'Soviet foreign policymaking [sic] and the Afghanistan war: from "second Mongolia" to "bleeding wound"' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 675–91.

that the Soviet experience in Afghanistan sowed the seeds of the breakdown of the USSR.<sup>53</sup>

The failure of realist theories either to predict or convincingly explain the end of the Cold War, the prominent role of ideas in this period, as well as the growing constructivist trend within IR more generally, have generated a body of constructivist and ideational based accounts of the end of the Cold War. Within Katzenstein's influential edited proto-constructivist text, Herman makes the argument that the turn in Soviet international policy was due to 'cognitive evolution' and 'policy entrepreneurship' within networks of elites.<sup>54</sup> Fierke's unnecessarily complex argument is that the western-based human rights, peace and anti-nuclear movements provided the Soviet elite with new ways of thinking about the conflict and provided the intellectual step ladder for elites to get out of the Cold War mindset.<sup>55</sup> While she uses Wittgensteinian language theory to make the point, ultimately Fierke argues that the end of the Cold War was a civil society informed elite-diplomatic rapprochement. In a similar vein, Evangelista's study examines the role played by transnational movements such as anti-nuclear weapons activists and scientists in the providing a language and set of ideas which brought about the end of the Cold War.<sup>56</sup> Checkel is also interested in the origins of the new thinking evident in the Gorbachev foreign policy elite, but he examines the role of the new generation of elites within the Soviet Union.<sup>57</sup> Checkel argues that new thinking was the product of the arrival of 'policy entrepreneurs' who furnished the ideas that led to what he also portrays as a diplomatic-rapprochement event. English, examining a similar area, examines the role that the intellectuals around Gorbachev played in promoting the 'idea of

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<sup>53</sup> Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, 'The Afghanistan War and the breakdown of the Soviet Union' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 693–708.

<sup>54</sup> Robert G. Herman, 'Identity Norms and National Security: The Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution and the End of the Cold War' in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 271–316.

<sup>55</sup> K.M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies: Critical Investigations in Security* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.

<sup>56</sup> Matthew A. Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behaviour and the End of the Cold War* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997.

the West' as one which the Soviet Union should reform itself around.<sup>58</sup> Forsberg, cited above, is another example of the constructivist approach. Kubálková undertakes what she describes as a 'rule oriented constructivist examination'. She argues that the transformation of Soviet new thinking ended the Cold War, and that the rational choices made under this new aegis had the unintended consequence of bringing about the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>59</sup> Evangelista tries to forge a consensus between constructivist and more realist accounts of the end of the Cold War by using the idea of heresthetics—the use of language to manipulate the political agenda—to show that both ideas and material incentives played a role in Gorbachev's movement to end the Cold War.<sup>60</sup>

### Memoirs and Current Event History

Garthoff's momentous diplomatic history of the transition of US-Soviet relations is the standout in the current-event history field.<sup>61</sup> Oberdorfer's text is an excellent account of the negotiations between the leaderships from 1985 through to the collapse of the Soviet Union, which rightly emphasises the importance of the personal relationships between Gorbachev, Reagan, Schultz and Scheverdnadze.<sup>62</sup> Beschloss and Talbott's text is an insider's account of the Soviet-US relationship which begins with Bush's inauguration, and, like Oberdorfer's book, emphasises the role of personal relationships in shaping the negotiations between the powers.<sup>63</sup> Wolforth's edited volume is an interesting collection of transcripts from conferences at which the major participants in the

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<sup>58</sup> Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals and the End of the Cold War* New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

<sup>59</sup> Vendulka Kubálková, *The Tale of Two Constructivisms at the Cold War's End* Working Paper 9, Research Group in International Security, Programme Conjoint Université de Montréal/McGill University, Montreal, 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Evangelista, 'Norms, Heresthetics and the End of the Cold War' in *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3.1, 2001, pp. 5–35.

<sup>61</sup> Raymond Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994.

<sup>62</sup> Don Oberdorfer, *From Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983–91* Revised Edition, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* London: Little Brown, 1993.

diplomatic proceedings raked over old coals, some declassified documents and several analytic essays.<sup>64</sup>

The accounts of Zelikow and Rice on the one hand, and Lévesque on the other, focus on the relationship between events in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War and do not focus exclusively on the diplomatic rapprochement.<sup>65</sup> One should note that Rice was wearing her first Bush Administration hat at the time of the events which she recounts and the narrative bears these scars. Finally, there are four pieces of revisionist history which warrant mention. Gaddis's 1992 collection evaluates America's role in the process with a longer historical view than most other works of contemporary history.<sup>66</sup> His 1997 text is more a revision of longer-held truths on the Cold War, but his revisions are heavily influenced by the end of the conflict and an increased recognition of the role of ideology in the confrontation.<sup>67</sup> Lebow and Stein's text is a trenchant critique of nuclear deterrence informed by an end-of-the-Cold-War perspective.<sup>68</sup> Finally, FitzGerald argues that Reagan and the SDI did not drive the Soviets to the negotiating table. She does, however, note that Reagan played an important role in humanising relations with the Soviet leader and, as a result of this, humanising American relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>69</sup>

While the current-event history is a reasonably diverse literature, it suffers from two broader problems: firstly, it views the end of the Cold War as a purely diplomatic and foreign policy level event, that is, an agreement of elites and nothing more; secondly, it takes the Cold War as a self-evident and unproblematic fact and does not consider *what* the Cold War was, what the underlying cause of the conflict was, and what its dynamics might have been.

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<sup>64</sup> Wolhforth (ed.), *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War*. The essays look at the role of the leaders: Greenstein, 'Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War', and the role of perception and misperception, Robert Jervis, 'Perception, Misperception and the end of the Cold War', pp. 220–39.

<sup>65</sup> Philip Zelikow and Condoleeza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995; Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.

<sup>66</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

<sup>67</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

<sup>69</sup> Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.



Memoirs are an important source when analysing this kind of contemporary history, particularly when much of the official documentation is either unavailable or reveals very little. While one must be aware of the limitations of such works, there is a remarkable number available from both the American and Soviet points of view. Bush and Scowcroft's recent memoir reiterates the story of high-level negotiations and is peppered with post-hoc ruminations.<sup>70</sup> Holdings similarly examines the period from 1989–1991. As an NSC staffer, his depiction of the American diplomatic side of the story is part eyewitness account, part memoir and part analysis.<sup>71</sup> Gates's memoir covers a longer time frame and his view is overly deterministic on the American side. Still, his narrative is revealing; the account is dramatic and he firmly believes that the Cold War was a crusade in which the forces of righteousness were victorious.<sup>72</sup> George Shultz's memoir is an excellent source which reflects on the shortcomings of both the attitudes, and much of the analysis within, the Reagan administration.<sup>73</sup> Bush's Secretary of State, James Baker, takes over from where Shultz left off and, while interesting in his own right, provides a remarkable fit with the Bush and Scowcroft memoir. Like much of the other literature in this field, Baker emphasises the importance of personal relationships in building trust and forging alliances.<sup>74</sup> The Reagan memoir put together by Morris—a relevant historical source despite its semi-fictional form—does not spend much time on the end of the Cold War, but the pages devoted to it predictably make the argument that Reagan declared 'moral war' on the Soviet Union, set out to spend the Soviets to death, and, ultimately, won the secular crusade against communism.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* New York: Knopf, 1998.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Holdings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of U.S. Policy in Europe* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

<sup>72</sup> However, his conclusion on Gorbachev and his intentions differs dramatically from much of the hawkish advice he gave when in office. Robert Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* New York, Touchstone, 1997.

<sup>73</sup> George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* New York: Robert Stewart, 1993.

<sup>74</sup> James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

<sup>75</sup> Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* London: Harper Collins, 1999.

Soviet memoirs are themselves testimony to the changes brought about by Gorbachev and the reformers. Gorbachev's memoir is a weighty tome which is surprisingly light on detail and circumspect in judgement.<sup>76</sup> Insight into the motivations behind new thinking and reform process are there but discussed in loose terms. Gorbachev clearly feels betrayed, but also recognises certain mistakes. The memoir harbours a curious belief that the reform could have succeeded.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, Shevardnadze's 'non-memoir' tends to the disappointing in its insight into motivation and decision-making, but its coverage of the ideas behind foreign policy reform is still good.<sup>78</sup> Palazchenko, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze's principal interpreter, argues that the peaceful end to the Cold War was the product of the growth of trust and friendship among the leaders on both sides.<sup>79</sup> Dobrynin's account spends the bulk of its not inconsiderable number of pages dealing with the longer-run history of his encounters with American presidents.<sup>80</sup> He feels betrayed by Gorbachev, for he argues that the Soviet state collapsed because of the incompetence of the reformers who, he maintains, never truly understood the nature and scope of the Soviet problems, nor the effect that their reforms would have on Soviet society. He claims that, if handled correctly, the USSR could have been reformed and saved. Boldin's scathing review of the Gorbachev period is coloured by the fact that it was written while he was serving a jail sentence for his participation in the August coup.<sup>81</sup> Like Dobrynin, he lays the blame for the Soviet collapse squarely at Gorbachev's feet, but, despite the bias, the memoirs reveal much about the indecisiveness, poor judgement and vanity of Mikhail Gorbachev. Chernyaev's account is widely cited as the most objective memoir of the period. It charts Gorbachev's successes and mistakes with a candid eye and is charitable in its

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<sup>76</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* London: Bantam, 1997 [orig. 1995].

<sup>77</sup> In Gorbachev's *On My Country and the World* he continues this theme in rather strident terms. Chapters entitled 'The Coup: A Stab in the Back – and the Intrigues of Yeltsin' and 'The Union Could Have Been Preserved' reveal strongly-held resentments.

<sup>78</sup> Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* London: Sinclair-Stevenson 1991.

<sup>79</sup> Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1997. Forsberg echoes this argument, but does not cite the memoir, Forsberg, 'Power, interests and trust'.

<sup>80</sup> Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents, 1962-1986* New York: Times Books, 1995.

<sup>81</sup> Valery Boldin, *Ten Years That Shook the World: The Gorbachev Era as Witnessed by his Chief of Staff* New York: Basic Books, 1994.

defence of Gorbachev and his reforms.<sup>82</sup> Two other important memoirs which cover this period are those of Ligachev and Pankin.<sup>83</sup> Each conveys the period well and demonstrates the initial appeal and then increasing problems of the faction fighting and egos inside Gorbachev's Kremlin. Ligachev, like Chernyaev, covers the longer-term and has more reflective analysis whereas Pankin's is a blow-by-blow account of the final months of the USSR.

### 1.2.3 Historical Sociology

#### Historical Sociology and IR

The final literature that this thesis draws on and seeks to move beyond is the expanding corpus of historical sociology with an international focus. Historical sociology is the study of the development and production of social structures over time and their influence on the outcome of specific events.<sup>84</sup> It is not necessarily international in scope or explanatory framework, but it does address concepts central to IR, notably the state, and has developed much directly relevant analysis of the international dimension. Since the mid 1970s this literature has grown significantly, and has focused on the state and its development as a repository of social power. Such work was not born of the 1970s, but has a longer history stretching back to the 'classic' social theorists, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. The writers of the 1970s and beyond were not starting with a *tabula rasa*; much ground had been cleared not only by the 'classic' theorists, but also by Elias, Braudel, Moore and others.<sup>85</sup> Skocpol's examination of the revolutions of France, Russia and China argues that state

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<sup>82</sup> Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000 [orig. 1993].

<sup>83</sup> Ygor Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin: The Memoirs* New York: Pantheon Books, 1993; Boris Pankin, *The Last Hundred Days of the Soviet Union* London: I.B. Tauris, 1996.

<sup>84</sup> See generally Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* Shepton Mallet: Open Books, 1982.

<sup>85</sup> For example, Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* New York: Urizen Books, 1978; Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation and Capitalism: 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century* 3 Volumes. London: Collins, 1981-5; Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* London: Penguin, 1967; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962; Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

weakness, in *both* its international and domestic context, led to social revolution in semi-agrarian states, and that social revolutions tend to produce strong centralised states.<sup>86</sup> Hers was the first of such international historical sociological studies which took dissatisfaction with existing accounts of the state as a point of departure. Tilly's work on the Vendée had presaged this approach to an extent,<sup>87</sup> and his later work on the historical development of the European state as an institution of resource-extraction and war-making further developed this approach.<sup>88</sup> Evans et al.'s SSRC-sponsored volume formalised the aim of making the historical and social development of the modern state the focal point of this general approach.<sup>89</sup> Mann's two volume study of the development of institutionalised social power culminates in his four part theory of modern state power and firmly established a neo-Weberian mould for historical sociological research.<sup>90</sup> In his critique of historical materialism, Giddens further enhanced the neo-Weberian institutionalised theory of the modern state as an analytical device and historical claim.<sup>91</sup> The most Weberian of all, Collins, has tended to be ignored in IR circles. This is surprising as his notions of geopolitical power and the state are a close fit with IR-realist understandings of world politics.<sup>92</sup> Goldstone's study of rebellion and revolution in the early modern world also develops the Weberian-institutionalist understanding of the state. His analysis also utilises demographic studies to explain the weakening of state institutions among the pre-modern empires.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

<sup>87</sup> Charles Tilly, *The Vendée* London: Edward Arnold, 1964.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Tilly and Garbriel Ardent, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D. 990–1990* Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Charles Tilly and Willem Blockmans, *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, 1000–1800* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994.

<sup>89</sup> Peter B. Evans et al., *Bringing the State Back In* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

<sup>90</sup> Michael Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Volume I: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986; Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States 1760–1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; see also his *States War and Capitalism* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

<sup>91</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence* Cambridge: Polity, 1985.

<sup>92</sup> For example see Randall Collins *Weberian Sociological Theory* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986 and Randall Collins, 'Long Term Social Change and the Territorial Power of States' in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* Vol. 1, 1978, pp. 1–34.

<sup>93</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991.

More recently, a sociological approach has become popular within IR. Hobson explicitly deploys Mann's theory of state power to devise an explanation of tariff policies among the European powers in the late nineteenth century.<sup>94</sup> In a study which draws on more 'classical' Marxian political economy, Rosenberg critiques the realist account of the rise of the state system. He argues that economic form is crucial to the production and functioning of the state system and demonstrates the importance of economic form to the shaping of geopolitical relations.<sup>95</sup> Spruyt's study of the historical origins of the sovereign state demonstrates the historical contingency of this form of political rule.<sup>96</sup> He shows that it is not the inevitable product of history, but of specific developments and conflicts. Halliday's work on the international dimensions of revolution is influenced both by the Skocpolian view of state power and the Marxian emphasis on the political and social implications of economic forms and capitalism in particular.<sup>97</sup> Hobden's overview volume informatively shows the ways in which historical sociology has been used in IR,<sup>98</sup> and Hobden and Hobson's edited volume makes the case, from diverse views, for the utility and benefits of such an approach to the study of world politics.<sup>99</sup> The historical sociology literature that the thesis draws on and seeks to expand is that body which is concerned with the state and conceptions of state power in its international and domestic context.

#### Randall Collins and the Collapse of the USSR

Perhaps the most pertinent example of the historical sociology-IR interface is the work of American Historical Sociologist Randall Collins. In an essay originally written in 1980, and then published in 1986, Collins notes that the Soviet state had passed the peak of its geopolitical powers and on this basis

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<sup>94</sup> John M. Hobson, *The Wealth of States: A Comparative Sociology of International Economic and Political Change* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

<sup>95</sup> Justin Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations* London: Verso, 1994.

<sup>96</sup> Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

<sup>97</sup> Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.

<sup>98</sup> Stephen Hobden, *International Relations and Historical Sociology: Breaking Down Boundaries* London: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>99</sup> Steve Hobden and John Hobson, *Bringing Historical Sociology into International Relations* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

predicted the decline and fall of the Soviet empire.<sup>100</sup> Given the overlap of his work with the subject matter and methodology of this study, it is important to consider his argument in some detail. His prediction is based on a geopolitical theory of state power. This establishes a set of five causal processes which, through a cumulative dynamic, interact and determine the rise and decline of state power.<sup>101</sup> For Collins, the most important aspect in any evaluation of state power is the state's ability to project itself militarily into the international arena; all other politics is secondary to this relationship.

Collins's five geopolitical principles which determine state power are as follows. The first principle states that the size and quality of land of a larger state will mean that it is more able to defeat smaller and less well-endowed states. The second principle notes that some states know that attack will not come from certain quarters as these have natural defences such as deserts, tundra and wide oceans and can thus focus military resources in fewer places. Related to this, Collins also points out that states whose contiguous neighbours are militarily less well-endowed have a distinct advantage.<sup>102</sup> The third principle holds that interior states tend to be at a geopolitical disadvantage and have a tendency to fragment. The fourth principle states that eventually a 'showdown' war between successful marchland states will result. These conflicts tend to produce one of two outcomes: either the victory of one over the others, or a stalemate in which they decline and disintegrate due to the continuing costs of the conflict. The final principle insists that if a state is over-extended it will disintegrate.

When applied to the Russian case, Collins notes that Russia's marchland advantage gave it a geopolitical empire which in time became a liability. After consolidating its East European 'empire', Russia found itself with a 58,000 km border and that it had been transformed into an interior state. The turning point in this 300 year transformation was the 'showdown war' of the Cold War. Also, he argues that Russia had over-extended itself in both ethnic and economic terms. In

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<sup>100</sup> Collins, *Weberian Sociological Theory*, pp. 186–209.

<sup>101</sup> While initially a prediction, his subsequent publication is a vindication of this as an explanatory claim, see Randall Collins, 'Prediction in Macrosociology: The Case of the Soviet Collapse' in *American Journal of Sociology* 100.6, 1995, pp. 1552–93.

<sup>102</sup> Collins distinguishes between what he calls 'marchland' and 'interior' states. Marchland states are ones which are surrounded by few, militarily weak states, and have several frontiers which are impenetrable due to tundra, desert or wide and deep oceans. Interior states have a number of enemies on a number of fronts each of whom is capable of attacking it.

institutional terms, the 'autonomous states' of the USSR provided a political infrastructure of both nationalism and organisation which would aid fragmentation, and would exacerbate the tensions of over-extension. Ultimately, his argument can be summed up in his own words: 'All major geopolitical processes appear to be working against the continuation of Soviet world power. Cumulative disadvantage should be expected to reach major proportions in the next century, and the coincidence of crises on several fronts simultaneously could occur at any time.'<sup>103</sup> In his *post facto* evaluation he claims that 'the pattern, as predicted, was a coincidence of crises on multiple fronts, interacting and accelerating past a tipping point into a generalised breakdown of territorial authority.'<sup>104</sup>

Collins claims predictive success,<sup>105</sup> and at first glance, he seems to have been right—Soviet power did decline, crises in Eastern Europe undermined Soviet control of the USSR and ultimately the Soviet state did break down. Reading his work nearly ten years after the Soviet Union collapsed he must be given credit for being among the few who contemplated the unravelling of Soviet power. Indeed, some of his conclusions were remarkably accurate: the Soviet state broke up along the ethnic lines associated with territorial power, the communist party was a locus of change and so on. But did the Soviet Union break down because of the geopolitical reasons that he claimed? In short, no.

There are a number of reasons why Collins's explanation is ultimately unsatisfactory. First of all, his analysis reproduces one of the continuing myths of geopolitics—the timelessness of the geopolitical logic and imperative. It is simply not reasonable to talk of a Russia that is coherent as a centre of political power over 500 years when one is trying to explain a specifically *Soviet* collapse. The key reasons for Soviet collapse were very much of Soviet making—a weak economic system, an ideology no one supported and a weakness due to international conflict that derived from the political commitments of Soviet communism. Furthermore, there is more to the modern state than territorial control. State power is not simply geopolitically determined, it is the product of social, economic and political forces which must be considered and which

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<sup>103</sup> Collins, *Weberian Sociological Theory*, p. 208.

<sup>104</sup> Collins, 'Prediction in Macrosociology', p. 1570.

<sup>105</sup> Collins, 'Prediction in Macrosociology'.

Collins ignores. The geopolitical crises which Collins feels vindicates his argument were, in fact, political not *geopolitical*. In Collins's world, there is no scope for agency, contingency and chance; individuals are not able to shape their environment but can merely cope with what history places in front of them. Moreover, his argument is deeply deterministic. His reliance on transhistorical geopolitical endowments gives an unwarranted sense of shape to history and to state power and which abstracts the historical realm from its capricious home. In short, Collins's ahistoricism, the one-dimensional nature of his theory of state power, the absence of historical contingency, and his inaccurate reading of the events of the 1980s all combine to make his explanatory framework very weak. While he is right to talk of the inter-linked nature of the unravelling of the empire and of the origins of change coming from within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), his overall reasoning for predicting and later justifying the end of Soviet power are fundamentally flawed. In examining the international aspects of the weakening of Soviet power, this thesis seeks to provide a better explanation of Soviet state collapse than Collins and in so doing to provide a more effective historical sociological method for analysing state collapse in general.

## Conclusion

This thesis seeks to bring together much of the work covered by the preceding three bodies of literature so as to help further our understanding of the international nature of the Soviet collapse. It is a study of the weakening of a form of social power—the state—viewed from a perspective that is at once international and historical-sociological. Historical sociology has been interested in the state as a form of social rule, but has tended to have a limited understanding of the international dimensions of modern state power. This thesis seeks to expand this element of the understanding of the nature of the modern state. At the same time, the thesis seeks to make a substantive contribution to our understanding of the *process* of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. In general terms, IR prefers to view these two central events in the ahistorical, anodyne manner of data-sets and event-points, or merely uses them to prove a theoretical point. For its part, the literature on the collapse of the Soviet



Union has not paid sufficiently careful attention to international factors, the form of the Soviet state as a social structure and the role of the end of the Cold War in the eventual implosion. The thesis seeks to correct these imbalances and to integrate the domestic and international sources of the Cold War into an understanding the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, this study sets out to contribute to the growing literature within IR which insists that we must draw on the work of our colleagues in sociology. As such, this thesis, in attempting to answer the question of how an international confrontation contributed to the making and breaking of the Soviet state, advocates a certain methodological pluralism.

### **1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The two core concepts at the heart of this study—the idea of state vulnerability and Soviet international confrontation—are by no means self-evident. As such, the following section will examine these two concepts and establish how they will be used.

#### *1.3.1 Political Process and State Vulnerability*

IR has long had conceptual problems with the nature of the state and the range of domestic and international factors affecting state action. International historical sociology provides one way of dealing with this problem in a substantive manner. This thesis is, therefore, an attempt to use sociological concepts of state power to illuminate an important question within IR and is also an attempt to critique some historical sociological notions which are challenged by the events under examination. There are several reasons for using this approach in IR. It is an effective way to comprehend the social and historical nature of world politics; it allows us to conceive of the international and domestic spheres not as separate but as two parts of a broader social whole. This facilitates more judicious use of both international and domestic sources of state power and weakness in analysis. Second, it allows us to think in a more

analytically useful manner about the state in its triple international context.<sup>106</sup> Third, it forces us to focus on the historical development of specific phenomena.

This study does not apply a pre-existing historical sociological approach to the research question. Rather, its ambition is to make an original contribution to the development of historical sociological approaches within IR. There are three ways in which the theoretical framework of this thesis fulfils this aim. First, it develops a theory of the state which is distinct both from IR notions of the state and institutional sociological theories. Second, it integrates the ideational—the role of ideas and perceptions—into a theoretical school which has tended to be overly materialistic. It does so by striking a balance between ideational and material determinants and avoiding the fetishism of ideas prevalent in much constructivist IR theory. Third, it develops Skocpol's functional understanding of state power by using a processual dynamic to develop the notion of state power-as-practice.

The concern for the moment is with the peculiar phenomenon of great power vulnerability. The topic has not been studied widely in IR, although Kennedy and Kupchan's two studies are notable exceptions.<sup>107</sup> There are two reasons why these works are not used. First, Kennedy and Kupchan focus on empires and not on states and do not consider the functional aspect of political rule in any great depth. These works also both cling to a very realist notion of power and weakness and hence are concerned purely with the geostrategic dimensions of great power failure. A useful way to probe more carefully the matter of great power vulnerability is to conceive of them as one permutation of a larger form of social domination, that is as states. This means that we examine how, in functional and institutional terms, great powers operate. For it is in the practical aspects of statehood as an institutionalised form of rule that the anomalous notion of great power weakness seems less counter-intuitive.

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<sup>106</sup> The triple context in which states exist are: 1) the inward facing authority over a given territory; 2) the outward facing representative of that territory; 3) the institution which straddles the international and domestic divide.

<sup>107</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994, and Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict, 1500–2000* London: Unwin, Hyman, 1988. Also, Lundestad examines the question of the weakness of great powers inspired by Kennedy's work and the collapse of the USSR. See Geir Lundestad (ed.), *The Fall of Great Powers: Peace, Stability and Legitimacy* Oslo and Oxford: Scandinavian University Press and Oxford University Press, 1994.

The idea of the state used in this thesis will be discussed in depth in Chapter Two, but it is necessary to point out that it uses a distinct institutional-functional theory. This argues that the historical processes of state strengthening and weakening have much to contribute to our understanding of developments in international life.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the idea of state vulnerability refers not to some permanent potential for collapse, but to a particular phase along a process of political change. As distinct from state weakness, the concept of vulnerability stems from the larger view that states, as complex institutions of social power, are constantly changing.<sup>109</sup> This derives from the larger view, articulated by Barrington Moore, that in social science it is not change which requires explanation, but continuity. What Moore calls the ‘assumption of inertia’ causes investigation to overlook some of the most crucial processes which ensure the perpetuation of specific values, systems and structures of rule.<sup>110</sup> The question of Soviet collapse presupposes an answer to a prior question, why and how it lasted as it did. In recognising the importance of the process of reproduction to the perpetuation of states and functional institutions of political rule, the thesis first devises a processual theory of state power—one which takes the process of reproduction as its first concern—and second, develops an explanation of how the processes of reproduction are disrupted.

States, understood as social institutions, are constantly produced and reproduced by social processes. Their reproduction therefore is never guaranteed.<sup>111</sup> States are powerful social institutions. The combination of physical might and what are seen to be legitimate principles of rule have ensured that, in modern times, states have tended to be strong and are able to survive weakening such as that caused by financial crisis, social upheaval or external threat. However, a state’s continued survival is never certain and in some circumstances the state can be weakened, become vulnerable and possibly collapse, be overthrown or overturned by revolution. Vulnerability is therefore one aspect of a larger process of political change. Unlike more traditional IR

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<sup>108</sup> The theory of the state used in the thesis develops the ideas set out in Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*.

<sup>109</sup> Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State* London: Routledge, 1996; and Gianfranco Poggi, *The State, Its Nature, Development and Prospects* Cambridge: Polity, 1990, pp. 97–105.

<sup>110</sup> Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, p. 486.

studies, where vulnerability refers to a military threat or perceived threat,<sup>112</sup> the notion is used in this study to indicate a situation in which the fundamental nature of state power has changed: the state is unable to reproduce itself in the old way but it has yet to find a new way of doing so and so therefore faces challenges to its rule.

The process by which state power is reproduced can be thought of as following two 'tracks', a stability track and an instability track. The image of two tracks represents the paths along which states travel in history. Given certain developments, such as famine, economic failure, or invasion, a state may no longer be able to reproduce its power, and is pushed onto the continuum of instability. This second track comprises five stages of state instability. While this track represents the downward steps of state control, it is not deterministic and states may, through dint of luck, leadership or circumstances, recover their previous grip on society and return, albeit chastened, to the stability track. The five stages follow this general pattern. The first is a profound crisis, the second is vulnerability, the third is breakdown, the fourth is conflict between factions and the fifth is reconstitution. This progression illustrates the stages of state change in weakened circumstances and highlights the progressive nature of such change. Obviously, states which undergo crisis or vulnerability can head-off this challenge and not progress on to breakdown and collapse. The purpose of this approach is to show that, when states are faced with trying circumstances, they may no longer be able to deal with the longer-term conditions with which they had, previously, been able to cope. The fragmentation of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s is an example of how a state had, in the past, been able to deal with ethnic tension, but was not able to do so in changed circumstances.

The first stage of the process, state crisis, refers to the developments which jolt the state off the stability track. State crisis entails serious problems undermining the ability of the state to go on reproducing itself as it had in the past. These problems can range from demographic changes to fiscal crises, from famine to a change in elite attitudes to the state, or from war to a change in popular attitudes to the state. The problems may be singular or multiple,

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<sup>111</sup> On social processes and states see generally J.P. Nettl, 'The State as a Conceptual Variable' in *World Politics* 20.4, 1968, pp. 559–92, and Evans et al., *Bringing the State Back In*.

<sup>112</sup> For examples of such studies see above note 107.

domestic or international. However, history shows that the sort of crises likely to destabilise state power are usually multiple, such as bankruptcy combined with popular resentment. The second stage is state vulnerability in which the anchors securing the state's successful reproduction are loose, its condition is weakened and fragile and it has not yet found secure ground on which to re-anchor itself. In this situation, the state not only finds itself weakened but will also find it very difficult to deal with other matters besides the instigating crises.

The term vulnerability describes a situation in which three clear developments have occurred or are in the process of occurring. First, the old mechanisms for rule are no longer effective. Second, new mechanisms for rule have yet to be found, and third, there exist clear challenges to the state which have the potential to destroy it. If the first two developments have occurred, but there is no clear challenge or set of challenges, then it is unreasonable to talk of a vulnerable state. For example, the American state was not vulnerable during the Great Depression even though the old way of relating to the economy and to the social needs of its population could no longer continue. Although it hunted for a new way for several years there was no clear and meaningful challenge to its rule during this period.

If the state is made vulnerable and is not able to rectify the situation, then it begins to enter the third stage, state breakdown. Alternatively, if it has dealt with the crisis and has found a new way of going on, then the following stage is state consolidation. At this point of state breakdown the state may fragment and disappear in a manner akin to Iran in 1978–9. It may cling to the trappings of power even while those trappings have less and less meaning, as the Kerensky government did in Russia in 1917. State breakdown is a brief stage and is the prelude to the fourth stage which is the battle for the new state. This battle may involve revolution, coup, rebellion or further fragmentation. The hallmark of this fourth stage is the struggle between various groups for control of state power. Once state power has been claimed and the fight has petered out, then the fifth stage is entered. This final phase is the reconstitution and consolidation of the state with a new form of rule. This may involve new or old members of the elite, but it is signified by restructured state institutions, by clear state efforts to buttress its new institutions and principles of rule, and by the successful formulation of new and effective processes which reproduce state power.

The implications of ‘vulnerability’ are clear. Upon entering this stage the state is under pressure to rectify and reconstitute the mechanisms with which it rules and with which it relates to the society below and the international above. If it fails to do so in an effective manner, then the challenges which are present will most likely overwhelm it and force revolutionary change. By revolutionary is meant change which involves a radical shift in the nature of economic and political structures of the state and society. By rights, great powers ought to be less prone to vulnerability, or, at the very least, should be better placed to cope with it. However, the converse may be closer to the truth because the size and complexity of great powers means that their structures of rule tend to brittleness or rigidity when weakened.<sup>113</sup>

The Soviet state underwent all five stages to emerge, in 1992, a loose-knit organisation of newly sovereign states, roughly based on liberal-capitalist systems of rule. Due to the complexity of the matter and the space limits of the thesis, the focus of this study is the second stage of this continuum, that is the vulnerability of the Soviet state. Specifically, it is concerned with the way in which the end of the Cold War contributed to the weakening of the Soviet state’s ability to continue to rule as it had in the past.

### *1.3.2 International Confrontation and the Cold War*

From the outset, the Soviet Union existed in a state of international acrimony. The ideas and actions of the revolutionary state and the hostility to these by western powers produced a clear condition of confrontation and antagonism between the Soviet Union and the western powers. Since this study is concerned with the way in which this condition of international confrontation influenced the structures of Soviet state power, it is important to make clear what is meant by the notion of Soviet international confrontation. This confrontation refers to the conflict between two mutually antagonistic socio-economic systems—capitalism and Soviet communism—which was, ultimately, about which

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<sup>113</sup> The distinction between these two is important. The terms refer to the reaction of an institution upon the application of force. Brittleness refers to a liability to fracture or shatter rather quickly

system could provide the better way of life, about who could make the world in its own image. The confrontation between the Soviet Union and the capitalist powers varied in intensity and location, and lasted for the duration of the Soviet Union's existence. The conflict was not an accident or the product of misperception; it was both a product of the internal characteristics of the Soviet state and the challenge that the revolutionary power presented to the capitalist system. Specifically, the confrontation was provoked by the Soviet attempt to create a new and fundamentally better form of socio-economic life based on a radically different system of property ownership, production and distribution mechanisms, a system which overtly sought to replace capitalism. It was a clear threat not only to narrow national interests of other states, but also to the larger interests of the capitalist international system. Such a challenge naturally provoked reaction which aimed to remove the threat of Soviet communism—both direct and indirect—to the world at large. The counter-revolutionary impulse of 1918–21, the fascist challenge of the 30s and 40s in Italy, Spain and Germany, as well as the hostility of the Cold War were examples of these counter-revolutionary tendencies. Importantly, the confrontation consisted of a longer-term underlying socio-economic, ideological and geo-political hostility between the leading protagonists, before and after World War II.

The confrontation can be divided into two clear periods: the first, 1917–1941; and the second, 1945–1988. The period between 1941 and 1945 was marked by a state of warfare between one of the confronting powers, fascist Germany, and the Soviet Union as well as a temporary and uneasy alliance between the USSR and the other capitalist powers. The first period consisted of less overt hostility, but nonetheless involved clear competition and challenge between the capitalist powers and the USSR. The second period was the Cold War. This second phase of confrontation arose for similar reasons as the first phase—the socio-economic, geopolitical and ideological challenge presented by the Soviet Union and the hostility that this engendered in the West. Importantly, the Cold War phase accentuated the competition due to two important developments: nuclear weapons and the spread of Soviet revolutionary models

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after the application of force. Rigidity refers to a stiffness or inflexibility which takes a longer period of time and great force to produce fracturing.

around the world, particularly in the decolonising states of the former European empires.

To summarise, the East-West conflict that so shaped the Soviet state predated the Cold War. The Cold War itself was the second phase of this longer-run international confrontation which derived from the Soviet domestic socio-political order. The conflict was propelled by Soviet domestic commitments, and international actions, as well as the counter-revolutionary tendencies of the capitalist states. The international confrontation consisted of socio-economic, ideological, and geopolitical competition in a longer-run conflict over which system could provide the better form of social life.

#### International Confrontation: 1917–1941

The first phase of international confrontation was marked by the acrimony between the capitalist powers and the Soviet Union. On the one hand, the USA was clearly the pre-eminent power, but was somewhat detached in terms of its international commitments. On the other, fascist Germany threatened the Soviet state in very clear geopolitical terms. The interventions in the Civil War of 1918–21, and the later German invasion were two violent book-ends of a period in which the foundations of the Soviet state were built. During this time the confrontation was most evident in Soviet domestic action, that is the effort to build an economic system which would not only outperform the capitalist system, but which could provide the wherewithal to fight off what was rightly seen to be an inevitable war with a militarised capitalist Germany.

While the confrontation—socio-economic, geopolitical and ideological—of this time was pre-eminently visible in domestic terms, it also had clear international aspects. The confrontation during this period was pre-eminently between the USSR and European powers, particularly Britain and Germany. Yet, Soviet-American relations are illustrative of the underlying ideological competition which in time underpinned the Cold War. For example, the reason that the US did not recognise the Soviet government until 1933 was not only the Soviet repudiation of debt and confiscation of property, but also the Soviet government's failure to adhere to the norms of the international system,



particularly the non-interference norm, and most specifically its overt revolutionary aims and practices.<sup>114</sup> The language of State Department officials prior to the recognition was very clear: ‘the fundamental obstacle in the way of the establishment with Russia of the relations usual between nations in diplomatic intercourse is the world revolutionary aims and practices of the rulers of that country.’<sup>115</sup>

William C. Bullitt, the US ambassador to Moscow, in writing to the Secretary of State in July 1935 makes clear the sense of international confrontation: ‘it is my conviction that there has been no decrease in the determination of the Soviet government to produce world revolution.’<sup>116</sup> For him the peaceful international political posture of the 1930s was merely a tactical respite, as he puts it ‘*reculer pour mieux sauter*’.<sup>117</sup> The following year, he wrote to the Secretary of State regarding the broad direction of US policy towards the Soviet Union. Bullitt reinforced the sense that ideological mistrust was the underlying character of the relations between the two powers: ‘We should not cherish for a moment the illusion that it is possible to establish really friendly relations with the Soviet government or with any communist party or communist individual.’<sup>118</sup> It was a mistrust that emanated not from a concern about geopolitical power, but about ideology and the revolutionary challenge that the Soviets represented.

The first period of confrontation, as defined above, ended with Operation Barbarossa. But, as events in the post-war world made clear, the confrontation between the Soviets and the capitalist world had not been ended by a brief alliance to fight a mutual enemy. Rather, the systemic competition which had been patched over by war-time friendship returned with fresh vigour, re-energised by key changes which produced the second phase of international competition—the Cold War.

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<sup>114</sup> For example, the statement by the Secretary of State on 31 August 1935 protesting against what he described as the violation of the protocols of the recognition agreement of 16 November 1933, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, Washington DC: United States Government Publishing Office, 1952, pp. 257–8.

<sup>115</sup> Memo from Robert F. Kelly, Chief of Division of East European Affairs, Department of State, 27 July 1933, in *FRUS: The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> Letter of 19 July 1936, *FRUS: The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, p. 224.

<sup>117</sup> *FRUS: The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, p. 225.

<sup>118</sup> Memo from Bullitt, 20 April 1936, *FRUS: The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, p. 294.

## International Confrontation: The Cold War

As the Cold War represents the more obvious and acute part of the longer-run confrontation, it is necessary to spend some time discussing its meaning in historical and analytical terms. The second phase was marked by geopolitical and socio-economic conflict between an American-led West and a Soviet-led East. Three developments in world politics transformed the simmering international confrontation into an acute geopolitical and ideological conflict with global implications.<sup>119</sup> First, the Soviet Union had developed economically to become a power of genuine international standing and magnitude. The success of Stalinist industrialisation meant that the Soviet Union could project itself internationally in socio-systemic as well as in military terms.<sup>120</sup> Under a radically different socio-economic regime, the Soviets could produce tanks and missiles and teachers and engineers. Second, the major powers, notably Germany, France, Britain and Japan, had been destroyed by the ravages of world war. Also, fascism, the other major contestatory ideology of the twentieth century, had been crushed by World War II. Third, the USA shifted from being a state uncomfortable with its global power to one which was willing to lead the world in post-war reconstruction and redevelopment.<sup>121</sup> Prior to World War II, the USSR had been unable to project itself, militarily and socio-economically, and the USA had been unwilling to do so. After 1945, all that changed.

It is illustrative to place the idea of the Cold War as the second phase of a longer-run international confrontation in the context of the wider literature. Alexei Filitov rightly notes that 'no commonly accepted definition of what the Cold War was exists.'<sup>122</sup> The basic question of *what* the Cold War was drives the disagreement among scholars and analysts. There is no settled opinion regarding

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<sup>119</sup> It is important to emphasise that while the rivalry had been intensified by material developments, the underlying international confrontation between the Soviet Union and western capitalism existed in a very similar sense.

<sup>120</sup> On the industrialisation generally see R.W. Davies, Mark Harrison, and S.G. Wheatcroft (eds.) *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 and Naum Jasny, *Soviet Industrialisation, 1928–1952* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

<sup>121</sup> See generally D.K. Adams, *America in the Twentieth Century: A Study of the United States since 1917* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

the character of the Cold War. There are conflicting arguments regarding why the Cold War happened, what it was over, why détente occurred, and why it ended. Despite the proliferation of views, one of several possible taxonomies sees a realist, a liberal, and a radical or internalist understanding of the Cold War. Each of these broad categories differs in terms of emphasis on the causes, the weighing of various facts, level of analysis and the understanding of the underlying dynamic of conflict.

The realist interpretation views the Cold War as a great power conflict between the two geopolitically dominant powers which emerged from World War II. Such views see the Cold War as pre-eminently a military struggle, emerging out of the breakdown of the World War II alliance and shaped by the verities of the 'balance of power' and relative threat perceptions in the context of global anarchy.<sup>123</sup> This view is well illustrated by Wohlforth's echoing of Thucydides: 'the Cold War was caused by the rise of Soviet power and the fear this caused in the West.'<sup>124</sup> Similarly, the liberal interpretation sees the Cold War as a military conflict, but a conflict that was not the result of power vacuums but the product of poor policy decisions, misperceptions and missed opportunities.<sup>125</sup> For these writers the origins and dynamics of the conflict derive from the actions and ideas of the individual decision makers in the immediate post-war context. An important distinction between the realists and the liberals is the question of inevitability. Liberals argue that, with better knowledge and communication, the Cold War could have been avoided. Realists argue that, due to the distribution of power in the international system at the time, a conflict between the two great powers was inevitable. For the radical or 'internalist', the Cold War was a military conflict coloured with the patina of ideological rhetoric which was used

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<sup>122</sup> Alexei Filitov, 'Victory in the Post-war Era: Despite the Cold War or Because of it?' in Michael J. Hogan (ed.), *The End of the Cold War: Its Meanings and Implications*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 79.

<sup>123</sup> Three good examples are John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union and the United States: An Interpretive History* Second Edition, New York: McGraw Hill, 1990, William C. Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, and David S. Mason, *Revolution in East-Central Europe: The Rise and Fall of Communism and the Cold War* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992.

<sup>124</sup> Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', p. 96.

<sup>125</sup> Two examples of this are Deborah Welch Larson, *The Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985; Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*, London: André Deutsch, 1978.

by both sides to establish and further the domination of their own spheres of influence.<sup>126</sup> For these writers the Cold War was primarily used as an instrumental mechanism for elite control and to reinforce systems of rule within each bloc and was not really a conflict of values, ideas, or interests.<sup>127</sup> Within the broad heading of 'radical' understandings there is also Halliday's inter-systemic interpretation, a toned-down Marxist categorisation, which sees the Cold War as a conflict of both an ideological and geopolitical nature that was between two socio-economic systems and which was the product of the fundamentally antithetical and antagonistic universal claims which each state represented.<sup>128</sup>

For the terms of this study, the first three categories are not satisfactory due, respectively, to their understanding of the historical record, their theoretical over-determinism and their explanatory weakness in the light of the end of hostilities. By locating the Cold War as the second half of a larger socio-economic and ideological confrontation, this thesis avoids the over-determinism of the internalists who clearly overstate the extent to which leaderships on both sides understood the conflict and how it benefited them, and the historical limitations of the realists and liberals.<sup>129</sup> Internalists also fail to recognise the compromised nature of decision-making on both sides, preferring a neat instrumentalism to the chaotic reality of politics. On the other hand, the realists and liberals are simply historically inaccurate. The absence of ideological and normative dimensions in their understanding is a manifest failing given the strategically irrational actions of both sides. In short then, the approach of this

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<sup>126</sup> For example, Mary Kaldor, *The Imaginary War: Understanding East-West Conflict* Oxford: Blackwell, 1990; Noam Chomsky, *Towards a New Cold War* New York: Pantheon, 1982; C. Wright Mills, *The Causes of World War III* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958; Michael Cox, 'The Cold War and Stalinism in the Age of Capitalist Decline' in *Critique* 17, 1986, pp. 17–82.

<sup>127</sup> In this category there is a greater divergence among opinion than in the others, but there is still a clear thread of instrumentalism which unifies the group.

<sup>128</sup> Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* Second Edition, London: Verso, 1986 and Fred Halliday, 'Cold War as Inter-Systemic Conflict: Initial Theses' in Mike Bowker and Robin Brown (eds.), *From Cold War to Collapse: Theory and World Politics in the 1980s* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 21–34. This approach develops the view of Isaac Deutscher articulated most clearly in his *The Great Contest: Russia and the West* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960.

<sup>129</sup> Most histories of the Cold War begin some time between 1942 and 1947, for example, Lynn Etheridge Davis, *The Cold War Begins: Soviet American Conflict over Eastern Europe* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974 or J.P.D. Dunbabin, *The Cold War: The Great Powers and their Allies* London: Longman, 1994. However, others go back to 1917 in their studies see for example, André Fontaine, *History of the Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Korean War, 1917–1950* London: Secker & Warburg, 1965 or D.F. Fleming, *The Cold War and its Origins, 1917–1960* Volume One, 1917–1950, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961.

thesis eschews the determinism of the internalists and the simplification of the realists and liberals. The Cold War was an acute phase of the conflict between capitalism and Soviet communism. This longer conflict was a struggle to provide a better form of social life and to make the world in its own image. The international confrontation described here has close affinities with the inter-systemic thesis, but it differs by noting that the Cold War was one part of a longer-run ideological and socio-economic confrontation.

While the Cold War was not simply a 'clash of ideas', ideational antagonism underpinned much of the fear and loathing. The international confrontation, which was manifested after 1945 as the Cold War, was produced by five central developments: 1) the ideas of the Russian revolution and their rejection by Western capitalism, each side had antithetical, universalistic and evangelical imperatives; 2) the ability of the Soviets and American-led West to be able to make good these ideals; 3) the willingness of both sides to engage the other in competition, in both social-systemic and military-strategic terms; 4) the lack of any greater force, in ideological, military or economic terms, to prevent it; and, finally, 5) a logic of competition which ensured that specific actions and reciprocal reactions became both causes and effects of Cold War. Each of these played a role in inducing the Cold War and perpetuating it as a form of conflict.

The view of the Cold War as the second half of a larger conflict implies that the only way in which the Cold War was going to end was for one side to renounce that which it was fighting over, that is, its socio-economic system. So, while the fluctuation in the level of hostility during Cold War was produced by changing levels of intensity of the five developments, the demise of the Cold War was the product of a shift not simply in these, but in the underlying goals of the struggle; a shift away from confrontation over socio-economic systems.

Between 1917 and 1988–90 therefore, a condition of international confrontation existed between the USSR and Western capitalism. In the first phase the competition was more evident in ideological and socio-systemic terms. In the second phase, once the old order had been pushed aside, a process beginning with the Depression in the West and industrialisation in the East and ending with the Potsdam conference, political will, material capability, and fear produced the Cold War. From around 1947 until 1989–90 the Cold War persisted and was characterised by socio-economic and geostrategic rivalry between the

two blocs, and was driven by the international and domestic commitments of the USSR and the American-led West.

One episode of the early 1980s illustrates some aspects of the international confrontation well. At a meeting between Gromyko and Reagan on 28 September 1984, Reagan claimed that Soviet policy, from its earliest days, had been designed to promote world revolution. He went on to say that the US viewed the USSR as a revolutionary power, an expansionist state, and that while they did not wish to change the Soviets' social system, they were willing to recognise and respect their status as a superpower.<sup>130</sup> Gromyko responded by saying:

Certainly we take the view that the capitalist order will be replaced by the socialist order, we believe this in the way people believe the sun will rise tomorrow morning – but this process will occur quite naturally, as a result of historical development. We do not believe in political or military intimidation, and nobody should accuse us of trying to change America's social structure by force, nor that of any other country. We have no such plans and never have had.<sup>131</sup>

Although this exchange should be seen in the context of three years of Reaganite anti-Soviet rhetoric, the nature of relations between the two and their larger view of their place in the world is well demonstrated in this dialogue. The exchange evokes the various layers of meaning that the Cold War had, the ideas, the fear, the clash of systems, the dogmatic rhetoric and the importance of military and strategic concerns in reinforcing ideological commitments. These layers of meaning were derived from the longer-run nature of the confrontation between the systems.

In sum, the international confrontation was a product of the Soviet desire to mould the world in its own image, the capitalist resistance to this, and their own desire to shape the world in a capitalist fashion. As a result of the longer-term origins of the Cold War, the conflict cannot be understood as simply a military struggle, nor an economic one, but must be seen as a socio-economic

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<sup>130</sup> Such views had long been part of Reagan's political persona, and were a key theme of his 1980 presidential campaign and the hallmark of the early years of his presidency. In his first press conference as President he condemned détente and said 'I know of no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution, and including the present leadership that has not more than once repeated ... that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state.' Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, p. 436.

battle for hearts and minds which involved a massive military commitment. The Cold War ended when the Soviets, under instigation from the reformist leadership, rejected the ideas, institutions and practices of the Russian revolution and its Stalinist successor and instead attempted unsuccessfully to build within the USSR a society based on the values of liberal capitalism.

Cox identifies a structure or 'system' of Cold War relations which emerged after World War II based on strategic and ideological rivalry.<sup>132</sup> While this thesis may disagree in some ways with his particular notion of system, it is a central concept in the sense that any analysis of the Cold War must see the conflict as more than simply the sum of Soviet-American relations. The confrontation between social systems established itself as a structuring element of international politics. The conflict established the framework of antagonistic relations and, more broadly, it constructed the parameters for international relations in the post-war period. This structure of international relations had a logic, a self-reinforcing dynamic, which shaped the inter-locking alliances, and conflicts across the world. Underpinning the system was a developing global capitalism against which the Soviets and their allies were fighting to create a different way of organising social life.

The Cold War system provided both a moral and strategic context for political action. This meant that the Cold War permeated regional and local conflicts, and often gave them an international character which belied their actual underlying causes, and gave them further impetus which warped the original aims and made resolution more complex. While the Cold War shaped the political dynamics of post-colonial movements and other struggles, these struggles and conflicts were not proxy wars in the sense that they were wars fought on behalf of the Cold War protagonists. They had the character of Cold War stamped on them, but the struggles were local in substance, with Cold War rhetoric, armaments and aid fuelling their fights. While the conflict shaped international politics, and placed all political actors and movements within a

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<sup>131</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, p. 90.

<sup>132</sup> He refers to a 'system' in which both powers recognised 'that a carefully managed antagonism actually served their respective interests.' Michael Cox, 'From the Truman Doctrine to the Second Superpower Détente: The Rise and Fall of the Cold War' in *Journal of Peace Research*, 27.1, 1990, pp. 25–41; p. 30. See also Michael Cox, 'Western Capitalism and the Cold War System' in Martin Shaw (ed.), *War, State, Society* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984, pp. 136–94.

context in which they were constantly located, the Cold War was not the sole determinant of world politics. The bi-polar characterisation can be somewhat misleading, the world was not neatly cleft in two, rather there were two blocs involved in a large-scale sustained conflict.

#### **1.4 THESIS OVERVIEW**

The thesis will be set out in six further chapters. The second chapter will discuss the theoretical method, its ontology and assumptions, and will establish the parameters of the study. The final part of that chapter will set out the theory of the state which will be used to analyse the international sources of Soviet state power so that we can then make a judgement about the contribution of the international confrontation to the strengthening and weakening of Soviet structures of power. The approach builds on, but substantively diverges from, Mann's theory of state power. The third and fourth chapters study the development and form of the Soviet state. So much space is devoted to this for two reasons. First, the argument turns on the understanding of what the Soviet state was and how the change in its international relations destabilised its structures of power. Thus a robust theoretical notion of the Soviet state is needed. Second, the collapse of the Soviet Union had its origins not merely in the squabbles of the CPSU in 1987–91, but in the longer-term structures of power which built certain fault-lines into the system. To understand this it is imperative to spend time elaborating the developmental questions of the state.

The third chapter examines the form of Soviet state power with particular reference to the role of the international confrontation in the consolidation and reproduction of Soviet structures of state power. The chapter pays close attention to the impact of the international confrontation on the shape of the Soviet state and its development in both instrumental and ideological senses and particularly its role as a form of state power-as-practice, a concept set out in Chapter Two. The fourth chapter examines the political-economic role of the international confrontation in Soviet state power and shows the importance of international factors to the stability of the Soviet economic system. It examines the way in which the conflict penetrated the structures of the Soviet economy and helped



produce and reproduce the foundations of state power. The fifth and sixth chapters then complete the study by looking at the process of the end of the Cold War and the vulnerability of the Soviet state respectively. Chapter Five examines what is meant by the end of the Cold War. It shows that the cessation of this conflict of systems and states, and the end of a structure of international politics, was a product of important movements made within the two central states, the most significant of these being the reluctant rejection of the legacy of the Russian Revolution undertaken by the Soviet leadership. The sixth chapter brings the strands of the thesis together and evaluates how the change in the international conditions of Soviet existence contributed to the weakness of the state and thereby determines the extent to which the end of the Cold War contributed to Soviet vulnerability. The evaluation focuses on the way in which the lack of an international posture of both ideological and material strategic hostility fostered social forces which undermined the Soviet state's hold on power. Finally, the thesis will conclude with a short chapter which evaluates the claims of the thesis, reviews its contribution and sets out a number of avenues for further research based on its insights and conclusions.

To begin a study of such a large historical canvas and with a complex theoretical disposition can be arduous. It can be difficult to know where to look first, what to ignore, and what to examine more closely. Among the morass of history and theory a reasonable first path can be cleared by a close examination of the theoretical concept at the heart of this study: the state. Thus we turn now to the historical sociological method of the thesis and the development of a novel theory of state power.

## 2 A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD

Of the aims of International Relations (IR) enquiry perhaps the pre-eminent is the explanation of international events and phenomena, understood as the relations between states. ‘Why do states go to war with one another?’ was the foundation question of the contemporary discipline, with more recent debates focusing on such problems as state co-operation under conditions of anarchy, and the rise of regionalism in world politics.<sup>1</sup> Without question, many feel that one of the overriding intellectual purposes of IR is to explain international events.<sup>2</sup> This thesis is an effort to explain aspects of the relationship between the end of the Cold War and the weakness and vulnerability of the Soviet state. It is not an explanation of why the Cold War ended. Rather, it is a study of the way in which a structure of world politics contributed to the development and weakening of Soviet power. It is situated within IR as it addresses the impact of an international conflict on the development and demise of state power. Yet, IR is not, theoretically speaking, an ideal place to be located.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the methodological footing of the thesis as a whole and to establish a better theoretical place to commence a

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Co-operation* New York: Basic Books, 1984; Charles Glaser, ‘Realists as Optimists: Co-operation as Self Help’ in *International Security* 19.3, 1995, pp. 50–90; Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne (eds.), *Regionalism and World Order* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996; <sup>Andrew</sup> Hurrell, ‘Explaining the resurgence of regionalism in world politics’ in *Review of International Studies* 21.4, 1995, pp. 331–58.

<sup>2</sup> While there is scant literature on explanation in IR, there are a number of discussions see Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* Oxford: Clarendon, 1992; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inferences in Qualitative Research* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994; and Hidemi Suganami, ‘Agents, Structures and Narratives’ in *European Journal of International Relations* 5.3, 1999, pp. 365–86.

study of the international dimensions of Soviet state collapse. IR has always had theoretical difficulty with the state and has also preferred to maintain an analytic distinction between domestic and international. Yet the Soviet case requires careful scrutiny of both of these fields. In retrospect, the collapse of the Soviet state has forced analysts to rethink some aspects of causation. The manifest problems of Soviet rule—from corruption to alcoholism, economic stagnation to ideological disillusion—force us to ask not why the Soviet Union collapsed, but why and how it held itself together. This question is challenging and to answer it with any degree of sophistication requires asking an anterior question, that is how do states hold themselves together? This leads to an important part of this enquiry, the examination of the processes of the reproduction of state power. The ways in which a state comes to rule over a territory and a population, and the manner in which it is able to continue to do so are fundamental to understanding how it is that they are *unable* to continue to do so. In the light of the Soviet collapse, and the evident precariousness of its state structures, the nature of this process in the USSR is no small matter of concern. This thesis develops a novel historical sociological theory of state power which addresses this problem directly and from an international point of view. Given the difficulties of the Soviet state this theoretical approach may yield useful insights when applied to the case of the USSR.

While this thesis does not draw on traditional IR theory, it is not coming entirely from the darkness. Thus, the first part of this chapter will briefly chart and explain the rise of historical sociology in IR, the realisation of its pertinence and the increase in reference to and utilisation of this approach. The second part will set out the assumptions and method of this international historical sociology. The third section will elaborate these broader propositions and set out the theory of state power which will be used to come to terms with the role of the Cold War in the development and weakening of Soviet power. Ultimately, this chapter will advance the historical sociological dimensions of the thesis which will be used subsequently to make the empirical case. In modifying existing historical sociological approaches, this thesis makes three contributions: it sets out a novel theory of state power; it adds an ideational dimension to historical sociological

studies of international phenomena; and it expands Skocpol's functional theory of state power to develop the analytic concept of state power-as-practice.

## 2.1 THE RISE OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY IN IR

As Hobden demonstrates, historical sociology has been on the rise in IR.<sup>3</sup> A recent debate in the *Review of International Political Economy* demonstrates the interest this provokes within the field and the liveliness of the exchanges.<sup>4</sup> Of course, IR has always had an historical dimension;<sup>5</sup> one cannot read Waltz, Morgenthau, Carr, Wight, Bull, or Rosecrance, and overlook this aspect of their work.<sup>6</sup> But the use of history in IR has not had a dimension that is also sociological and that has influenced the field in any significant and sustained sense.<sup>7</sup> IR does have what can be called a sociological dimension which is most evident in the work of the English School and their notion of international society.<sup>8</sup> However, while the heuristic device of 'society' has provided a

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Hobden, *International Relations and Historical Sociology: Breaking Down Boundaries* London: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> *Review of International Political Economy*, 3.2, 1998, pp. 284–361 with John M. Hobson, Martin Shaw, Hendrik Spruyt, and Sandra Halperin.

<sup>5</sup> For a good overview of this see Stephen Hobden, 'Historical Sociology: Back to the Future of International Relations' in Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (eds.), *Bringing Historical Sociology into International Relations* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming. See also Thomas W. Smith, *History and International Relations* London: Routledge, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* New York: Columbia University Press, 1959; Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* New York: Knopf, 1949; E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* London: Macmillan, 1939; Martin Wight, *Power Politics* Leicester University Press/RIIA, 1978; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977; and Richard N. Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics: International Systems in Perspective* Boston: Little, Brown, 1963.

<sup>7</sup> The exception to this is the work of Raymond Aron. Yet, his work has not shaped the contours of the field in the manner one might have expected, due, in part, to the profound shaking of American IR by the behaviouralist 'revolution' going on at the time when Aron was at his most productive and influential. To gauge the reaction to Aron's work, see the intemperate response to his *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964 [orig. 1962] published by Oran Young, 'Aron and the Whale: A Jonah in Theory' in Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau (eds.), *Contending Approaches to International Politics* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 129–43.

<sup>8</sup> See Evan Luard, *Types of International Society* New York: Free Press 1976, Part I, entitled 'The Case for a Sociological Approach'. Also, both Waltz and Armstrong use sociological notions in their work. They both deploy the concept of socialisation to refer, in different ways, to the manner in which the international system co-opts states into behaving in a particular manner. Waltz focuses on functional similarity driving this, whereas Armstrong argues that the norms of international society socialise the recalcitrant revolutionary state. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory*

convenient tool to analyse IR, the concept is a limited one which hinges on a loose analogy rather than a systematic application of this complex notion. Their sociological dimension does not scrutinise the social nature, location and formation of international power, but deploys an analogy to describe the sociable nature of corporealised inter-state relations. While this sheds more light on the dynamics of international politics than Waltzian neorealism, it is still a limited understanding of the nature of IR. These views tend to down-grade the complexity of international life and homogenise disparate forces in the name of convenience dressed up as theoretical parsimony. Many felt that such approaches were insufficient and that something more was needed. Cox's critical theory piece of 1981 was perhaps the first murmur of a sociological bent.<sup>9</sup> Further explicit demands for an inclusion of a specifically historical sociological method in IR came from Halliday in 1987 and then Jarvis in 1989.<sup>10</sup>

Interest in historical sociology, like other developments in IR brought in from cognate disciplines, was slow to develop. In time, IR scholars found their interest piqued by the arrival of some major and influential works of historical sociology.<sup>11</sup> There was a number of reasons for this interest in things historical and sociological. The 1980s saw an increasing dissatisfaction with realism expressed in much literature.<sup>12</sup> Many scholars spent a great deal of time and energy both critiquing the dominant approach and clearing paths for 'ways

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*of International Politics* Boston: Little Brown, 1979; David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10.2, 1981, pp. 126–55.

<sup>10</sup> Fred Halliday, 'State and Society in International Relations: A Second Agenda' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 16.2, 1987, pp. 215–29; Anthony Jarvis, 'Societies, States and Geopolitics' in *Review of International Studies* 15.3, 1989, pp. 281–93.

<sup>11</sup> Of particular influence have been Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; Michael Mann, *Sources of Social Power* Two Volumes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986 and 1993; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990–1990* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990; Peter Evans et al (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; John A. Hall (ed.), *States in History* Oxford: Blackwell, 1986; Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* Cambridge: Polity 1985.

<sup>12</sup> Criticism came from all sides, for overviews of some of the key debates see: Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* New York: Columbia University Press, 1986; Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (eds.), *Gender and International Relations* Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991; Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)introduction to International Relations* Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner, 1994; Ray Maghroori and Bennet Ramberg (eds.), *Globalism Versus Realism: International Relations' Third Debate* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1982; John A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics* London: Pinter, 1983; James der

forward'. Historical sociology was one choice set out in the expanding 'menu' of theoretical approaches to the study of world politics. If the 1980s and early 1990s was the era of the critique of realism and the so-called 'Third Debate', then the late 1990s saw the fleshing out into substantive works of some of these suggested alternatives. The breadth and depth of the critique of realism opened theoretical terrain for alternative ways of thinking and doing IR. Alongside this, the end of the Cold War revealed the failing of realist approaches and brought home to scholars the need to think about the world in different ways. The changed circumstances in world politics also meant that the institutional context was much more conducive to non-realist approaches. Scholars were faced with these twin openings which facilitated substantive analysis of a non-realist nature. Thus, with some prodding, IR scholars realised that there were people doing work outside the confines of institutional IR which could be of clear benefit to the study of world politics. Slowly, historical sociology began to leach through the wall.<sup>13</sup>

Within the institutional domain of sociology, growing dissatisfaction with Parsonian functionalism and elite-based theory, as well as a scepticism of Marxist accounts of the state, led a number of scholars to examine the notion, development and power of the modern state.<sup>14</sup> As Michael Mann reflectively remarks, '[we] came to identify distinctive autonomous power resources lying with states, especially in matters relating to war and peace.'<sup>15</sup> The fact that these historical sociologists examine such phenomena as the state and its formation,

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Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989.

<sup>13</sup> These openings have also facilitated the advances of constructivism. Some notable constructivist works include: Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*; Jens Bartelsen, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995; Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Condition of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; and Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism* Oxford: Blackwell, 1988 and *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II: The Rise of Classes and Nation States, 1760–1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Tilly (eds.), *Coercion, Capital, and European States*; Giddens, *Nation State and Violence*; Evans et. al (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*; John A. Hall, *Coercion and Consent: Studies on the Modern State* Cambridge: Polity, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Mann, 'The Polymorphous State and Ethnic Cleansing', in Hobden and Hobson, (eds.), *Bringing Historical Sociology into International Relations*.

wars and revolution has meant that this body of historical sociology is a natural point of departure for IR scholars dissatisfied with existing approaches, and consequently, IR has been most influenced by it.<sup>16</sup> Its appeal was further enhanced by the very realist conception of the international used by these historical sociologists.<sup>17</sup>

Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* was the first and most clear-cut example of the sociological turn towards the state and the forms of its social power.<sup>18</sup> It is her notion of state autonomy which has resonated most with IR scholars. In developing this concept, Skocpol breaks with the sociological wisdom of her time and identifies the state as an institution which has autonomous social power and which does not merely reflect the interests of the ruling class, nor the mode of production, and is not simply an arena in which interest groups and parties struggle for influence.<sup>19</sup> Other writers within historical sociology who have been of major interest to IR scholars because of their engagement with the state and its historical development are Michael Mann, Charles Tilly and Anthony Giddens.<sup>20</sup> All three develop the concept of state autonomy and consider the developmental and constitutive process of state development in its international context. While they each have specific theories, and deploy them in different ways, they share a broadly similar institutional-functional view of the state, and the historical development of this form of social power. For them, the rise and fall of particular states is driven by the strength or weakness of this autonomous power.

Historical sociology appeals to IR scholars not because it can simply be tacked-on to existing IR theory—it cannot—but because it can provide an alternative analytic lens through which world politics can be viewed. It is useful because it takes the state seriously as an international social institution, and sees it not as an eternal entity, but as a contingent social form, the product and transmitter of specific social forces. Historical sociology provides a clear basis

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<sup>16</sup> Though it is important to note that in so doing it did not present a fundamental challenge to existing IR theories.

<sup>17</sup> On Tilly, Skocpol and Mann's very realist understanding of the international see Hobden, *International Relations and Historical Sociology*.

<sup>18</sup> Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.

<sup>19</sup> For details on her notion of state autonomy see Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 24–32.

<sup>20</sup> See above note 11.

for analysing the material and ideological power of states, their international and domestic contexts and the role of the world historical context in determining and shaping international phenomena.<sup>21</sup> Specifically, historical sociology provides a historically grounded method for addressing specific research questions.<sup>22</sup> The appeal and pertinence of historical sociology in IR is clear. An intellectual space for it was prised open by events in world politics, and the critique of realism which demanded a substantive, non-realist research agenda. While historical sociology is still an approach that is on the fringes, and the body of literature is still slight, its grounding as a question-driven research agenda and the results of this research may yet push it into the mainstream.

## 2.2 INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD

### 2.2.1 Assumptions and Ontology

All social science methods are shaped by their theoretical commitments. Their parameters are established by their ontology, which is itself the product of basic beliefs and assumptions of what the social world is, how it works and consequently how we can come to know it. Smith writes that historical sociology 'is the study of the past to find out how societies work and change',<sup>23</sup> while Abrams claims that it 'seek[s] to understand the puzzle of human agency and ... seek[s] to do so in terms of the process of social structuring.'<sup>24</sup> As historical

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<sup>21</sup> For more details on the appeal of historical sociology to IR and an outline of a research agenda see John M. Hobson, 'The Second Wave of Weberian Historical Sociology: The historical sociology of the state and the state of historical sociology in international relations' in *Review of International Political Economy* 5.2, 1998, pp. 284–320; for an agenda for a Marxian approach see Justin Rosenberg, 'The International Imagination: IR Theory and "Classic Social Analysis"' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23.1, 1994, pp. 85–108.

<sup>22</sup> The more notable recent texts that have overtly adopted an historical sociological method are Hobson, *The Wealth of States*; Justin Rosenberg, *Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations* London: Verso, 1994; Sandra Halperin, *In the Mirror of the Third World: Capitalist Development in modern Europe* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997; Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999; Hobden, *International Relations and Historical Sociology*.

<sup>23</sup> Dennis Smith, *The Rise of Historical Sociology* Cambridge: Polity, 1991, p.3.

<sup>24</sup> Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* Shepton Mallet: Open Books, 1982, p. x.



sociology has multiple meanings,<sup>25</sup> the following section will set out the ontological and epistemological foundations of this study.

The primary assumption in this thesis is that social structures embed human relations in particular frameworks at given times. They are flexible, mutable and vary in time and space. They shape people's actions and are in turn re-shaped by these actions. Historical sociology seeks to identify and study these structures, with a particular interest in how they are produced and reproduced over time and how they affect people's lives. An international historical sociology examines the complex cascade of power relations across, between and within states, and their interactions. As a result, this method eschews the limited focus of a particular level of analysis, and does not present a static methodological aperture; perhaps international historical sociology is best described as an analytic stance rather than a methodology as such.<sup>26</sup> Substantive analysis is possible through a careful focus on social structures and agents behind particular developments, and not on a model which pre-determines the dominant forces.

There are three ontological claims which underlie this inquiry and its analytic focal points. The first is that all human institutions are inherently social. Second, these social institutions are historically constituted and located; they are produced by specific processes. Third, these social phenomena are inherently political and contested. That is, a particular institution exists because another one does not and this conflict and contest is crucial to the formation of the institution's current shape. The focus, then, is not on perennial essential characteristics, but on the social forces which constitute world politics. Historical sociology is useful in many forms of social inquiry, but it is best suited to developments or trends over time. These need not be 'large scale' trends such as states or revolution. Other concerns such as family, poverty and missile guidance

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<sup>25</sup> There are many forms of historical sociology, indeed many who are doing such research possibly would disagree with the ideas discussed here.

<sup>26</sup> Checkel argues that this lack of a core 'theoretical' agenda is a weakness of constructivism. The point of such non-positivist approaches is to move away from the dry and limiting practice of abstract theory-building and instead to use an open analytic method based on certain assumptions. It involves a conception of theory and its underlying purpose which sits uncomfortably with North American positivist commitments because it avoids the limits of parsimony in favour of the possibility of complexity based on inductive and not deductive

systems all have a sociological history.<sup>27</sup> In the case of IR, the analytic position which Hobsbawm calls the 'bird's eye view' is most useful.<sup>28</sup>

### Social Structures

This thesis emphasises the concept of social structures. It is important to discuss this a little further so that the analytic coherence of the theory of the state, and the subsequent examination of the Soviet state, is readily apparent. In IR the notion of structure is often assumed. Generally, a structure is assumed to be a pattern of social relationships which imposes order by constraining the possible choices of action. However, the idea of social structure used in this method is more constitutive than this.<sup>29</sup> It indicates the ordering of economic, political and social power institutions in a particular way which presents individuals with a menu of choices for action. Examples of these include the state, legal systems, class, the education system, and so on. These structures are not just external to people's lives, they are part of those lives and are at the same time products of their choices. Giddens expresses this neatly: 'Structure is both the medium and the outcome of the human activities which it recursively organises.'<sup>30</sup> Within this

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methods. Jeffrey Checkel, 'The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory' in *World Politics* 50.2, 1998, pp. 324–48.

<sup>27</sup> Some more notable 'macro' level works of historical sociology: Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* London: Penguin, 1967; Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*; Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation and Capitalism: 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century* Three Volumes, London: Collins, 1981–5; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962; Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991. For bird's eye views of other social phenomena see Tony Novak, *Poverty and the State: an Historical Sociology* Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988; Peter Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations: Essays in Historical Sociology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; Donald A. Mackenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: An Historical Sociology of Nuclear Missile Guidance* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990. The thesis avoids the distinction of macro and micro deployed in much sociology as all social action involves both individual actions and socially generated structures, the differentiation is artificial, on this see Jeffrey C. Alexander and B. Grieson, 'From Reduction to Linkage: The Long View of the Micro–Macro Link' in Jeffrey C. Alexander et al. (eds.), *The Micro-Macro Link*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, pp. 1–42.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century* London: Michael Joseph, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that in most social theory the notion of social structure is so reliant on a specific system and set of circumstances that definitions are not broadly transferable, for a classic example see the notion used in Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory With Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers* Second Edition, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949.

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology* Cambridge: Polity, 1987, p. 61.

broad conception, structures have four general functions: they constitute actors, constrain them, liberate them and impose change upon them. The first two of the four tend to dominate references to structure in IR. For example, the 'structure of anarchy' places a state in a situation in which it can do x, y, or z, but not a, b, or c.<sup>31</sup> 'Structure' refers to the social process which places the actor in a choice-making position and which shapes the possibility of choice. The structure which allows Nato to bomb Serbia for actions in Kosovo, but not Russia for actions in Chechnya illustrates this notion of structure

Structures can also be patterns which promote change. Whether through economic hardship, the transmission of ideas or through the nature of learning, structures can provide a possibility for action.<sup>32</sup> The final sense refers to those moments in which structures are not forces for stability, but for change. That is when social life is organised so that radical and uncontrollable transformation results. Taking Giddens's recursive view of structures, one can note that patterns arise in which action taken due to specific conditions can undermine the circumstances which produced the initial structure and then, in a zipper-like manner, induce subsequent action which yet further undermines the anterior conditions. These structures spiral the constituent social relations out of control; stock market crashes, state collapses and revolutions are examples of this.<sup>33</sup> To reiterate, in this thesis, structures are recognised as having different forms which inter-relate, and they have a double purpose as both the medium and the outcome of social action.

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<sup>31</sup> This is the sense that Waltz uses the term in his *Theory of International Politics*. Choices are limited by the political considerations of a structure of anarchy and informed by relative threat perceptions.

<sup>32</sup> The international political realignment after war is a clear example. Also, the possibilities opened up by such structured change can be great. In Britain, the end of WWII and the Marshall plan facilitated the construction of the welfare state where previously it had been impossible. In South East Asia, the international political structure of Cold War provided the context for the creation of ASEAN.

<sup>33</sup> A good example of this is the self-fulfilling prophesy of bank collapse in which a bank is rumoured to be on the verge of collapse, so customers pull out all their money thereby ensuring that it does collapse. Similarly, the near collapse of the hedge fund Long Term Capital Management was mainly due to the publication of a fax which was interpreted as an act of desperation, as a result of which no one would buy any of their assets and hence they teetered on the brink. For a good discussion of this see Donald Mackenzie, 'Fear in the markets' in *London Review of Books* 22.8, April 2000, pp. 31–2.

## An International Historical Sociology

Historical sociology underlines the essential historicity and contingency of the social realm, and attempts to focus theoretically on the historical formation of social structures and to examine the significance of these processes on contemporary developments. For IR, focussing on the social realm rather than the strictly 'international' allows us to transcend the traditional domestic-international dividing line which has been the defining point of the discipline. Inside the state there is the condition of hierarchy, outside it the condition of anarchy. This axiom has been the hallmark of much theorising in IR.<sup>34</sup> The idea that the domestic and the international are discrete realms increasingly is being questioned, and rightly so. International historical sociology is one way of overcoming this divide which provides a specific means of conceiving of the relationship between overlapping and intersecting political and social realms. For example, when looking at revolutions arguably one can see an international-domestic-international causal chain which demonstrates the relationship between these two spheres.<sup>35</sup> Taking this a step further, historical sociologists have argued that the international and the domestic are mutually constitutive and, as such, causal relationships will run from one realm to the other, and will not follow a single temporally or spatially delineated logic.<sup>36</sup> But this, like the causal chain of revolutions above, only goes some of the way. An international historical sociology must see the social world as a whole which has been carved up into spheres by specific forces and processes.<sup>37</sup> Thus the international and domestic

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<sup>34</sup> For an overview of this see Ian Clark, *Globalisation and International Relations Theory* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 15–32. There have been many critiques of this as a departure point for the study of IR, see for example, R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: international relations as political theory* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> Halliday, following Skocpol, establishes a causal chain, which claims that international events cause state-level weakness and revolutions which in turn then lead to international transformation, instability and war, in Fred Halliday, "'The Sixth Great Power' – on the study of revolution and international relations' in *Review of International Studies* 16.3, 1990, pp. 207–221. This is then developed by John Hobson in his *Wealth of States* with the discussion of the 'spatial trinity' of causation, see Chapter 7 and specifically, p. 266.

<sup>36</sup> Initially articulated by Mann and Giddens.

<sup>37</sup> On the argument for holism in international relations see Rosenberg, 'The International Imagination'.

spheres should be seen as not just overlapping, nor as mutually constitutive, but as clear linked parts of a social whole which constitutes the modern world political system. A central element of this system is the social process which produces the formal differentiation of spheres—of domestic and international—despite their clear substantive overlap and inter-penetration.

### An Ideational Historical Sociology

Historical sociology has rightly been accused of being too rationalistic and materialistic. It has at times shut out the role of ideas and identities in shaping and giving meaning to social structures.<sup>38</sup> One of the aims of this work is to begin to rectify the materialist imbalance in historical sociological studies. Ideas and norms are central to the production of social structures, and as such they must figure in any analysis that focuses on such structures. But it is crucial that the right balance is struck between the truism that everything is socially constructed and the over-determinism of the material structures of life. Clarity of position is crucial when trying to strike this balance. In the sense that, in comprehending the world we mediate it with our subjective understanding of the world, then indeed all things are socially constructed and ideas are primary. But that is only acceptable if one is analysing *how* analysts or politicians think about the world. When ideas solidify into practice one must remember that these ideas come from a material location and go into one. Ideas are not born free; everywhere they are in the chains of their material existence. It is precisely this balance which the theory of state power set out below attempts to strike.

Historical sociology is an engagement with a different set of questions from traditional 'problem solving' approaches in IR.<sup>39</sup> The problematic underlying international historical sociology is the social structuring of international life. Here, international life is not limited merely to states and sovereignty. The international canvas is broad and it allows the investigation of a

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<sup>38</sup> Christian Reus-Smit, 'History of Ideas and the Idea of History' in Hobden and Hobson (eds.), *Bringing Historical Sociology into International Relations*.

<sup>39</sup> The distinction between problem solving and critical theories is made by Cox, 'States, Social Forces'.

range of significant international social forces which shaped the development and decline of Soviet state power. Speaking more broadly, there is a rich promise in an historical sociological approach for IR because it illuminates the social dynamics of contemporary world politics and tries to substantiate, in real, and human terms, the social forces which shape modern life.

### 2.2.2 *Method*

As mentioned in Chapter One, studies of the Soviet collapse generally overlook, avoid or understate the international factors which caused the Soviet collapse.<sup>40</sup> These studies are useful in their own right, and yet have distinct limitations. This thesis locates the collapse in its historical and international sociological context. In doing so, it seeks to strike the right balance between international and domestic causes, as well as provide a framework in which the role played by shifts within the Soviet elite, and the change in values and ideas can be better understood. The purpose of this approach is to use history to shed light on our understanding of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and to draw attention to the importance of historicising these developments. The method set out here is leavened with an awareness of the contingency of historical developments, and attention is paid to both the historicisation of social structures and the contingency of social phenomena.

The sociological approach of this thesis does not dwell on interests understood as the instrumental benefits of the ruling class over the population. Though these interests were clearly important in the Soviet case, and doubtless play a role in state reproduction the world over, this thesis is concerned with the interests of the state institutions themselves. The institutions are understood to have a pre-eminent interest in their own reproduction. These larger structures locate the ruling elite within a framework in which their interests are determined by these primary concerns. Our concern is with the way in which the structures and processes of the state interact with the international to reproduce their dominance.

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 12–5 .

This method is neither hermeneutic nor positivist, in the Humean sense, although it incorporates insights from both of these approaches. It is an attempt to examine the international elements of Soviet state collapse by focusing on the historical and political development of two social structures which were central to the fragmentation: the form of the Soviet state and its international confrontation with the capitalist West. This approach puts a particular focus on the processual nature of the relationships between structures and emphasises the broader importance of this view of the social world. There are at least three other strategies for a historical sociological analysis: counterfactual analysis,<sup>41</sup> comparative analysis<sup>42</sup> and complex process tracing.<sup>43</sup>

International historical sociology is built on the assumption that social structures exist, embed actors, give them meaning and shape their destiny. The difficulty, of course, is the selection and identification of these structures. In any given instance there is a bewildering array of structures operating at a range of levels, as well as a similarly staggering number of possible actors reacting to these situations.<sup>44</sup> For example, trying to determine why an election was called, or why an electoral outcome came to pass is difficult, despite the fact that elections are events which are bounded, have limited participants, specific rules and clear motives. There are a range of structures which may influence the explanation: the political system; the party system; the electoral system and cycle; the economic system; international factors; the popularity of the candidate and the resonance of the issues she has raised with the electorate; the machinations of voting patterns; dissatisfaction with the incumbent; the effect of the economy on the electorate and such banal matters as the weather. This list is not exhaustive. In spite of the possibility of a profusion of structures, analysts

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<sup>41</sup> See David Sylvan and Stephen Mejaski, 'A Methodology for the Study of Historical Counterfactuals' in *International Studies Quarterly* 42.1, 1998, pp. 79–108. More generally see Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin (eds.), *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological and Psychological Perspectives* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

<sup>42</sup> An example of this sort is in Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion*, pp. 2–61.

<sup>43</sup> See A.L. George 'The Causal Nexus Between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-making Behaviour: The Operational Code Belief System' in L.S. Flakowski (ed.), *Psychological Models in International Politics* Boulder CO: Westview, 1979, pp. 95–124.

<sup>44</sup> Goldstone uses the mathematical image of fractals to refer to the way in which order emerges from the endless chain of structures and action in the social realm. For him, explaining social developments involves a 'near fractal' account, in which some structures more heavily drive order than others, Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion*, pp. 46–51.

can confidently draw conclusions. They do this by ordering which elements are more important through empirical scrutiny. This may be via exit booth polls, direct polling, result scrutiny and so on.

Two of the most important changes in social structures which paved the way for the Soviet collapse were the end of the Cold War and the problems within the Soviet state. International confrontation—of which Cold War was the second and acute phase—played a considerable role in the institutional development of the Soviet state and the change in international stance precipitated by its end clearly played a role in the destabilisation of the USSR. The conflict of values, economic systems, missiles and threats that was driven by the domestic commitments of the protagonist states became a clear, though variable, structure of world politics. However, it was a structure which cannot be isolated in the international realm, for it was the production and reproduction of this hostility by the dominant states which impelled it. Furthermore, the development of states themselves was shaped by this system of relations.

Thus, our concern is the extent to which the Soviet international confrontation played a role as a support mechanism reinforcing the effectiveness of Soviet state rule and the impact that the ending of this system of conflict had on the stability and solidity of the Soviet institutions of rule. Accordingly, careful consideration of the nature of the Soviet state is required. This study begins with the assumption that the shape of the international political system affects states and their relationships with their societies and, in turn, the international political system is shaped by the action of states. It will use a historical sociological theory of the modern state to articulate a theoretical framework of state power. The nature of the Soviet state will be adduced from this theory. This allows the thesis to determine the extent to which the institutions of Soviet state rule were affected by this international structure which was itself partly the result of the Soviet state's internal organisation. In short, a theory of state power will be used to help determine the role of the international confrontation in the formation and destruction of the Soviet state. A processual view of state power—one which focuses on the process of the reproduction of Soviet power—is used to examine how international confrontation helped the Soviet state stay together.



Having set out the processes of the reproduction we can then consider the rupture in this mechanism using the continuum of political change set out in Chapter One. In this way we can then establish how the ending of the conflict undermined Soviet state institutions. The continuum, combined with the ideal type of state power set out below, will be used to judge the extent to which the end of the Cold War contributed to the vulnerability of the Soviet state. The rest of this chapter will elaborate the international historical sociological framework of modern state power.

### **2.3 A FRAMEWORK THEORY OF MODERN STATE POWER**

Theories of state power are necessarily complex. This section will discuss the theory in the following manner. It begins with an overview and critique of Mann's theory of the state. From there it begins to reconstruct an institutional theory by defining the pattern of states in terms of five constituent elements. Third, it discusses the relationship between institutions and functions and examines how states reproduce themselves and the importance of this process to their power. This is developed using the idea of state 'power-as-practice'. The section concludes with an examination of the structural and instrumental ways in which states use the international to reinforce their positions of political dominance.

### 2.3.1 *The Basis of a Theory of State Power*

The modern state has been much theorised and discussed, and its form and nature have all been written on widely.<sup>45</sup> This section will elaborate a theory of state power which develops Mann's theory of the modern state. Mann is used as the basis as his approach is the most thorough and analytically useful theory that is not reductionist, is historically and socially grounded and is located in an international context.<sup>46</sup> The theory set out here has a sharper focus on two dimensions of state power neglected by Mann—the international and the process of state reproduction. More specifically, the theory will be based on an examination of the relationship between the institutions of the state and functions of the state and how this interaction—the process of production and reproduction—produces a key element of state power. This theory breaks the state up into its constituent elements, that is its institutions, functions, purposes and principles. Its aim, however, is to emphasise how these elements fit together and how this interlinking, in its simultaneous international and domestic contexts, produces the state as a complex actor with multiple dimensions located historically and internationally. This coagulation of social power is considered as a model against which the Soviet form will be measured so as to determine the nature and limits of the international confrontation's impact on Soviet state power.

Mann's theory developed from his interest in the manner in which states have come to play a greater and greater 'structuring role in society' which, he argues, is due to the historical configuration of his four sources of social power: ideological, military, economic and political.<sup>47</sup> His approach borrows from the

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<sup>45</sup> Some of the notable monographs include Evans et al., *Bringing the State Back In*; Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982; John A. Hall, *Coercion and Consent: Studies on the Modern State* Cambridge: Polity, 1994; Andrew Vincent, *Theories of the State* Oxford: Blackwell, 1987; Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* London: New Left Books, 1978; Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*; Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy, Liberty and Equality*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986; and David Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State: Essays on State, Power and Democracy* Cambridge: Polity, 1989.

<sup>46</sup> Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, pp. 44–91.

<sup>47</sup> He focuses overly on the domestic, or bounded sources of power, though he himself makes clear that social totality is not bounded and societies are far from unitary. For details on this see his *Sources of Social Power, Volume I: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, Chapter 1.

insights of the five major theoretical notions of the modern state.<sup>48</sup> But, in inductively arriving at a fluid, complex and idealised account of the state, he leans most heavily on institutional statisticians such as Giddens and Tilly.<sup>49</sup> Mann attempts to emphasise a number of key characteristics of this coagulation of social power which led to its having a structuring role in domestic society below and *realpolitik* above. First, he establishes that the state has a certain degree of autonomy; it does not merely reflect the requirements of the ruling class or the mode of production, nor is it simply an arena in which interest groups and parties struggle for influence. Second, he emphasises that state and society are clearly related, but that neither are unitary in the sense that most tend to conceive of them. Third, the modern western state is polymorphous in the sense that it can be found in multiple places with multiple functions. These different roles—such as order imposition or security provision—create a range of power networks at the centre of which lies the state. Over time, these networks ‘crystallise’ in specific forms which structure the nature of the state, its relations to society, and thus society itself.

In Mann’s ‘partly institutional, partly functional polymorphous theory’ the institutional view carries the greater explanatory function, though it cannot be effectively utilised without the polymorphous conception of crystallisations of specific power networks. Mann’s definition is telling:

The state is a differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate to and from a centre, to cover a territorially demarcated area over which it exercises some degree of authoritative, binding rule making, backed up by some organized physical force.<sup>50</sup>

While he avoids setting out the functional specifics of states, he notes that functions help to ‘simplify multiple institutions in terms of the underlying functions undertaken by particular states.’<sup>51</sup> The various crystallisations of power networks that comprise the state are, for Mann, ‘erratically entwined’, and it is these irregular entanglements which *are* the state. Despite all this tangling, he

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<sup>48</sup> The five theories which he draws together are: class-based; pluralist; elitist (which he equates with IR realism); institutional statism; and ‘cock-up/foul-up’ theory.

<sup>49</sup> Giddens, *Nation-State*; Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*.

<sup>50</sup> Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, p. 55.

<sup>51</sup> Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, p. 76.

argues, we can reasonably talk about a singular action of a state in which power has been invoked, and all citizens become 'subject to the singular and sovereign power of the state.'<sup>52</sup>

For Mann, states are the products of the authoritative centralisation and institutionalisation of social relations in which they have despotic and infrastructural power over their bounded society.<sup>53</sup> Despotic and infrastructural powers are inter-related, though not in any causal or necessary way. The final element of his notion of the state are the groups of people who mediate these power networks and bargain between state and society. He identifies three clear groups of people who undertake this role: state elites, parties<sup>54</sup> and constituencies. These groups interact and are the mechanisms by which the state penetrates society and society penetrates the state. He argues that state elite power radiates out into society, the power of constituencies flows in to the state, and the power of parties tends to move in both directions.<sup>55</sup>

Mann presents a complex institutional theory of the state. The polymorphous-functional aspect attempts to give an analytic edge to the manifest diversity of the forms that states take so that we can understand their formation and dynamics in a broader comparative and historical sense. States are institutions of authority which centralise power networks in specific areas. Due to historical developments, he argues, states have tended to have certain dominant characteristics, and he identifies four of these: the capitalist, militarist, representative and the nationalist. Ultimately, the state is portrayed as having a degree of autonomy, but it is not unitary nor singular in this action at all times. Mann's theory emphasises that state power hangs on the specific nature of the combinations of the higher level crystallisations. Finally, he carefully limits the ambitions of his theory. He does not claim that it *explains* state action, rather, he

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<sup>52</sup> Michael Mann, 'The Polymorphous State and Ethnic Cleansing', Conference Paper presented to 'Bringing Historical Sociologies into International Relations', University of Wales, Aberystwyth, July 1999, p.6.

<sup>53</sup> Despotic power refers to the power of state elites over the population as a whole which can be undertaken without process or negotiation and in an arbitrary sense. Infrastructural power refers to the ability of the state to 'penetrate its territories and logistically implement decisions.' Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, p. 59.

<sup>54</sup> He means parties in the Weberian sense, that is a term which refers to any organised group which seeks to influence politics, and not just formal political parties which participate in the governing of a state.

<sup>55</sup> Mann, 'Polymorphous State', pp. 4-8.

claims that it provides an explanation for the *patterns* of state behaviour and action in the modern world.

Mann incorporates certain international aspects of state power. Though he tends to focus more on developments within the state rather than on the role of international factors in shaping the state, there is an explicit and implicit acknowledgement of this important source of power for states. Explicitly, he notes that his definition of the state establishes it in a network of political relations with other states.<sup>56</sup> Yet, in his analysis, consideration of the international is reduced merely to a realm of war and peace-making.<sup>57</sup> While he considers the parties influencing foreign policy<sup>58</sup> and the role of war-making and the military revolution in further increasing the power base of states,<sup>59</sup> there is little consideration of anything else 'out there' which may affect the polymorphous modern state's reproduction of itself.<sup>60</sup> A recognition of the necessarily international nature of the principles upon which the institutions of the modern state rely is implicit in this theory. There are three obvious international dimensions that figure in the background of his formulation but are not considered in sufficient detail: the role of global capitalism; the globalisation of the modern state; and the internationalisation of technology. Despite his awareness of the international dimensions of state power, Mann's theory conceives of the international as simply a realm of war and peace between states. This is not enough for this thesis. More careful and systematic examination of the international is needed to shed light on the modern state generally, and the Soviet experience specifically.

If Mann does not pay careful enough attention to the international dimensions of state power, then in equal measure and related to this, he does not consider the processual nature of state power. This processual complaint has two dimensions. The first problem is that Mann does not consider the formation and re-formation (or production and reproduction) of state power as a continuous process of related social occurrences which mould the state as an actualised form

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<sup>56</sup> Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, p. 56.

<sup>57</sup> What he terms the 'duality of foreign policy', Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, p. 69.

<sup>58</sup> Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, pp. 69–75.

<sup>59</sup> Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, pp. 66–7.

<sup>60</sup> Hobden critiques Mann along these lines in his *International Relations and Historical Sociology*.

of social domination. The point is that the relations *of* the state, such as the practices of sovereignty, economic restructuring, and tariff barriers, create the state and the system of relations between them. Despite reference to the mutually constitutive nature of the relationship between the domestic and the international, Mann's theory is unable to come to terms with the nature of this process of mutual constitution understood as the social mechanisms which *at the same time* produce apparently separate spheres. The second problem with his account is that it fails to realise that the functional-institutional theory of the state needs to be premised on that very functionality as a source of power. When organising a theory of the state it is a useful heuristic device to separate the institutional elements (such as bodies of rule-making) from functional ones (such as provider of security). Yet there is an ineluctable relationship between institutions and the functions of the state: they simultaneously are, reproduce and justify the state.<sup>61</sup> In essence, the provision of institutions and functions should be seen not only as a property of the state, but also as a dimension of its power.

Mann's 'polymorphous' notion of the state, while a useful and influential theory, does not adequately capture the international and processual elements of state power. These two elements are crucial to understanding the nature of the modern state, the fragility of Soviet state power and the role of the international confrontation with the capitalist West in its development and demise.

### 2.3.2 *Patterning of State Rule*

To build a theory of state power which more adequately copes with international and processual dimensions we must begin with the larger terms which depict what the state is and how it functions.<sup>62</sup> States are made up of different elements arranged in a particular manner. How these elements relate to one another will determine the nature of state power in a given instance. The idea of 'patterning' refers to the way in which the inter-related institutions and

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<sup>61</sup> The situation in which certain elements of state power are undermined due to a failure to adequately provide these can be thought of as a corollary of this theory.

<sup>62</sup> This theory is an ideal-type theorisation of the modern state based on the globalisation of the western state.

practices organise the state. A 'pattern' is a configuration of the elements of rule. The specific pattern of a state hinges on the nature of, and inter-relationship between, the central elements of rule. These elements are here deemed to be: the state's functional institutions; the principles of legitimate rule; the form and relationship of these institutions to the system of economic production; and the form and nature of the penetration of society by the state in both despotic and infrastructural senses. These elements are connected by sets of social processes which facilitate the production and reproduction of the state over time. The idea of patterning thus refers to the way in which these elements are configured. A way of illustrating this is to think of the modern state as a constellation of social forms. Each part can be seen individually, but it is only as part of the broader pattern that it can be an effective mechanism for an overarching system of rule.

The role of state institutions dominates many discussions of the state. In this context, the concept of an institution of the state refers to specific circumscribed bodies which substantively fulfil specific functions and carry out the process of state rule.<sup>63</sup> Each institution serves a specific and delimited purpose, such as the extraction of wealth, the guarding of territory, the enforcement of state rules and so on. The institution is the body established to achieve these ends. The functional institutions are some of the most important aspects of the pattern. How they relate to other elements, such as the principle of rule and the economic form, and how they go about fulfilling their functions will crucially determine the pattern of a given state.

The ideational aspect has generally been neglected in historical sociological studies and this theory seeks to rectify this neglect. Thus, the second important element of the patterning of the state is the principle of rule. This refers to the various underlying ideas which, to a greater or lesser extent, provide an ideational context, both liberating and constraining, for the holding together and effective functioning of the state pattern. The principle is *both* the idea and the conjugation of this idea in the material practice of state action. This links the notions of legitimacy utilised by writers such as Weber and Habermas with particular ideas of rule which establish political and social limits to the

possibility of state action.<sup>64</sup> For example, the underlying principle of evangelical liberalism which underpins the American state prevents it from considering the nationalisation of the finance and banking sector. On the other hand, one might have thought that, in Communist China, the underlying principle of communism would have meant that Deng's Four Modernisations were beyond reach.<sup>65</sup> In this case the political limits established by the principles were not as steadfast as they might have been in the US or Germany and the state was able to impose them on Chinese society. This was due to the malleable principles which were more easily shaped by the Chinese elite at the time, the level of despotic power of the Chinese state and an international context receptive to such action. The principle of rule is constituted by the values and ideas which it embodies. It is important to remember that, as an idea, it is an element of the patterning of state power, but it is only made meaningful through its playing out.

Third, the nature of economic relations, which are undertaken under the supervision of the state, is central to the form of the state. The nature of property and labour rights, the context of relations of exchange, the imperatives of production and so on have a profound affect on the shape and range of state power. This is true at an institutional level—the legal structure, the nature of land division, urbanisation etc.—but is equally true at the normative and functional level. The question of what the state should do in the economy will, in part, be answered by the economic relations within and between borders. This clearly has implications for the process of production. From agrarian subsistence to post-industrial capitalism, the nature of economic relations will limit what the state can do and what it thinks it can do in this process.

The last of the pattern's elements of state power is the relationship between state and society. Essentially, this refers to the character of the means with which the institutions of rule interact with the population that they dominate. There are three major forms which this can take and that need to be

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<sup>63</sup> Formal delineation is not necessary as often formal declarations can obscure the real workings of states. The modern British structure of governmental power is an example of such obscurantism.

<sup>64</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* London: Heinemann, 1976, and Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of an Interpretive Sociology* New York: Bedminster, 1968 Vol.1, pp. 212–301.

<sup>65</sup> On the four modernisations see Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 48–65.



considered when elaborating a specific state's pattern. The first is the level and form of the penetration of society by the state. The second is the limit of the state, that is, the nature of the borders of the state, where they are located and how consistently they are adhered to. The third is the means with which the state discriminates between the spheres of state and society. This refers to the fact that states treat the actions of its subjects differently from the way it treats its own and also recognises the fact that there is often a good deal of overlap between state and society. Of the elements of the constellation, this is perhaps the most variable across a period of time.

The two final aspects of the patterning of state power have to do with the relational mechanisms of the production and reproduction of state power. States are not static entities and the means with which they come into being, reinforce themselves and change themselves will clearly shape the pattern of their power. These two aspects are social processes and social networks. These two elements allow us to conceive how the state, as a complex social entity, functions. Social processes are the broad system of related interactions which facilitate the working of social systems, and in this instance, the patterning of state power.<sup>66</sup> Rescher expresses it well: a process 'is a coordinated group of changes in the complexion of reality, an organized family of occurrences that are systematically linked to one another causally or functionally.'<sup>67</sup> 'Networks' are the routine pathways of social transactions which link the various patterns of the state to individuals inside and outside the state.<sup>68</sup> For example, the transactions can be tax payments, jail sentences, school curricula, military conscription, dole payments or medical prescriptions. These sets are flexible and, while they tend to predominate within the boundary of the state, there are many which transcend borders. In short, networks are regularised sets of social processes.

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<sup>66</sup> That is not to say that social processes are the sole domain of the state. They are important elements of all social life. In this instance, the concept provides a useful analytic view of the workings of states understood as forms of social rule.

<sup>67</sup> Nicholas Rescher, *Process Metaphysics* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996, p. 38.

<sup>68</sup> This definition is adapted from the notion of networks set out by Manuel Castells in his work on network societies. He defines a network as 'a set of interconnected nodes. A node is the point at which a curve intersects itself. What a node is, concretely speaking, depends on the kind of concrete networks of which we speak ... They [nodes] are coca fields and poppy fields, clandestine laboratories, secret landing strips, street gangs, and money-laundering financial institutions, in the network of drug traffic that penetrates economies, societies and states

### 2.3.3 *How the State Functions*

Having established the way in which states are configured, we now turn to the material aspects of state power. As the emphasis here is on the important role of state reproduction, the idea of state power-as-practice is advanced as a way to analyse this phenomenon. The state can be thought of as a bundle of institutions that collectively make moral, political and social claims which frame the social relations of the people bounded by the limitations set by a given body of institutions and delimited territory. This bundle is located at the centre of a series of social networks and its claims radiate outwards in a centripetal fashion. This set of institutions is distinguished from other social institutions by the nature of these claims, the most important of which is the transcendental claim that it is the highest legitimate moral authority within its territory. This is a necessary antecedent to the traditional Weberian statement that the state is the institution which claims the monopoly of legitimate violence in given territory.<sup>69</sup> The ultimate deployment of violence is not the best means of distinguishing the state from other social institutions. The state is marked out as manifestly distinct by the totalising nature of the state's claims and the way these claims are materially enforced. State institutions can be differentiated from non-state institutions which perform similar roles because they are institutions of control which frame social relations within the society based on the transcendent claim to moral authority which, in turn, has a dual international and domestic anchor. The institutions, taken individually, are pillars of the state—they support the overarching set and reinforce its claims—while *at the same time* they are that which they support. They should be considered to be both the structures of the state that themselves configure the state. Finally, the international context and production of this institution is of paramount importance. States must be thought of as institutions that carve up the social world into separate formal entities, but are substantively

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throughout the world.' Manuel Castells, *Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Volume 1. The Rise of the Network Society* Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p. 470.

<sup>69</sup> See Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 901–40. For a discussion of this see Randall Collins, *Weberian Sociological Theory* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 145–166.

part of a broader social whole. The transcendent claim to authority over a territory is premised on the assumption that the world is made up of similar parcels of authority which each regard as of the same type.

It is important to distinguish this modern territorialised form of social power from earlier forms of rule. First and foremost, the modern state is a secular idea which has, at its root, a disenchanting rational base. Second, unlike the absolutist states of previous eras or the Byzantine, Ottoman, or Mongol empires, it is a globalised form. Modern states rely on the principle that the entire planet is divided into domains which are morally equal. In instances they may have treated other states or empires as equal, but the idea of rule underpinning the modern state is historically unique and qualitatively different from which has gone before. The modern state is, furthermore, institutionally rationalised in the sense that its functional institutions are differentiated and professionally administered in a manner clearly different from previous periods.

This theory of the state builds on Mann in a number of ways. First, here the nature of authority is not simply the endowed quality which Mann ascribes.<sup>70</sup> Rather, this theory of the nature of authority relies on a specific plea to a transcendent and yet contingent social property.<sup>71</sup> Second, the polymorphic-institutional-functional description is reinforced by a view of the institutions and their functions as a source of power. That is the idea of state power-as practice. The function is served not just in the instrumental sense that, for example, taxation provides the state with the means to pay people to enforce laws, adjudicate disputes and so on. In deploying institutions of power justified in terms of a transcendent moral claim, these institutions serve the state by reinforcing its position as a solid network of social power. The institutions are not merely the means for producing and reproducing state power, they are the real forms of it at the same time as being the reinforcement mechanism. Hence, the playing out of state power can be described as a form of 'power-as-practice', that is the process of state power is itself usable because it is invoked in the name of the state. This notion is central to the process of state reproduction for it

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<sup>70</sup> Note Mann's definition: 'it exercises some degree of authoritative, binding rule making, backed up by some organized physical force.' Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol. II*, p. 55.

considers the ways in which states as social institutions are able to reproduce their universalising form of political and social domination.

### State 'Power-as-Practice'

The concept of power-as-practice adds a third processual dimension to Skocpol's functional notion of state institutions. Skocpol argues that state institutions have two roles: they extract power from society and then deploy it to control the territory and population.<sup>72</sup> The concept set out here argues that the practice of this extraction and deployment is itself a crucial third aspect of state functional power. Power-as-practice attempts to probe the process of state reproduction for it is central to the state's political power.

To consider the idea of power-as-practice in more detail we shall examine the institution of state resource extraction to demonstrate the implications of this assertion. All states must extract resources to perpetuate their dominance over their population and territory. How a state does this depends on its resources, level of development, and economic and political. For example, the notion of income tax as a source of state revenue is unheard of in some states, while people in other states willingly part with 40% of their income. Some states rely on the taxation of income, others on revenue derived from state owned enterprises, others from the sale of oil and so on. However they do it, states must acquire resources if they are to rule. Skocpol writes that a state 'first and fundamentally extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organizations.'<sup>73</sup> For her, state power relies, in the first instance, on the extraction of resources. Only then, when it has this material power, can the state deploy these resources to consolidate its base and go on to reinforce its rule through various power extraction and deployment mechanisms such as restructuring class relations, nationalising industry and so on.

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<sup>71</sup> In the modern instance this is the principle of sovereignty, for a discussion of this see Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>72</sup> Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.

<sup>73</sup> Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, p. 29.

This is only partially correct. Skocpol orders the processes of state power based on the claim that states firstly tap these reservoirs of power and then deploy the resources to consolidate state power. For her, the chronological order is important. States clearly need resources; the power of discourse and ideology is limited without economic and physical backing. Yet the presumed temporal distinction between extraction and deployment limits the understanding of the role that specific institutions play in establishing and reproducing the state. A more complete view of the institution of resource extraction should see it as a structure of state power, as a 'source' of social power, but not just in the instrumental sense which informs Skocpol's claim.

When resource extraction is considered from the power-as-practice point of view, it becomes clear that it has three mutually reinforcing dimensions. The first is an instrumental one, the second is as a representative of the singular and multiple identity of the state and third as an incarnation of the moral claim to transcendent authority.

The first dimension is an instrumentalism which has more depth than Skocpol gives it. The resource extraction institution acts as a transmission belt taking material resources from the broader social context—both international and domestic—to the state. The institution extracts fuel for the state's domination of society. As such, the state is defined partially by its central location in networks of power and by its tendency to centralise the structures of these networks. This results in a broader centripetal patterning of social power within states. This has been examined in detail by others who broadly argue that, due to technological developments,<sup>74</sup> the mechanisms, justification for and concentration of the state's acquisition of the means of domination radically changed.<sup>75</sup> The threat of war, in the context of the military revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, meant that European states needed to extract massive amounts of wealth to pay for security. This presaged a wholesale centralisation of state power, and a

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<sup>74</sup> The most prominent of these material developments is the revolution in inter-state war practices and technology, but one could easily add revolutions, ideas, and religion to the list of transformative social phenomena.

<sup>75</sup> Three of the more prominent studies are Charles Tilly and Gabriel Ardant (eds.), *Formation of National States in Western Europe* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975, Mann, *States, War and Capitalism*; and Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

change in the nature of the state's fiscal relationship with society and with the international lending institutions of the time, and, ultimately, led to a restructuring of the relationship between state and society.<sup>76</sup> In short, the physical threat of destruction facilitated a justifiable extension of the state's right to the wealth of the society below. This principle still stands. Though it is not war that interests us here, it is the mechanism of the centralisation of the removal of wealth from the society whether by tax, ownership and trade of commodities, or ownership of the means of production.

Second, the institution of resource extraction is also a representative of the singular and multiple identities of states. It is singular in that it represents to its subjects a single voice that must be obeyed. If it is not adhered to, coercive mechanisms will swing into action. For example, in Britain today, failure to comply with taxation legislation will result in prosecution and possible incarceration. At the same time as the state is taxing its subjects or imposing tariffs on goods passing through its borders, it is simultaneously enforcing adherence to its criminal code, educating its citizens, censoring art, or paying for operations. This is what Mann refers to as the polymorphous 'erratically entwined crystallisations' of state power networks.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the process of fuelling itself with the material wherewithal to project its power is both a singular and multiple face of state power.

Broadly speaking, the institutions of state serve a clear purpose, to extract wealth, coerce citizens, and wage war; in other words, they support the overarching state edifice. This portrayal leaves out one important element. To understand this third dimension we need to go back a step. If we take Skocpol's claim that states first and foremost extract resources and then utilise them to buttress their position, we are left with an obvious question—how do states acquire these resources in the first place and then go on re-acquiring them as needed? The simplistic answer is via force: the state is formed by those who have the preponderant coercive power which allows the forcible removal of wealth from the population. The ruthless acquisition of peasant produce under War Communism and the subsequent collectivisation under Stalin in the early years

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<sup>76</sup> The best exposition of this was originally Hintze *Historical Essays* and more recently, Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*.

of the Soviet Union might be one such example.<sup>78</sup> Is this brutal, very primitive accumulation, all that is at the heart of state power? The logic seems to be that, once the pump of state resource acquisition has been primed via the forced extraction of wealth, the vague invocation of 'state power' is enough to explain the reproduction of power networks. This does not tell the full story. Central to the acquisition of wealth over time, not merely in the first instance, is the third dimension of state power in institutions, that is, a meaningful incarnation of the broader moral claim to transcendent authority made in the name of the state. States are what they do and they do what they are. This is not tautological, but is the process of power-as-practice. By carrying out actions in the name of the state they not only reinforce the state materially through the product of those actions—wealth, oil, booty, food—they give the state purpose, they define what it is, what it does and they justify its presence. In short, they buttress the legitimacy of the moral claim to transcendent authority.

The institutions of power are not merely instrumental mechanisms, but are themselves manifestations of power. They embody the state, give it purpose, and establish the limits of the politically possible. State institutional power should be understood as a continual process of accumulation, reinforcement, domination and control which produces and reproduces the state, or, in certain circumstances, fails to reproduce it. The Skocpol view—first extract and then act—tells only part of the story. To be able to extract resources over time you have to wield state power. In this instance, state power is not necessarily coercive, but is fundamentally bound up in the institution itself. Institutions of the state involve the simultaneous duality of state power—the moral claim to transcendent authority and at the same time the mechanistic element which serves the material requirements of the functioning of rule. When a state extracts material resources the act buttresses its position within society both materially and ideationally.

Material resource extraction is a fundamental element of state power. The empty state coffers in France in the 1780s (due to the royal state's involvement in

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<sup>77</sup> Mann, 'Polymorphous State', p.6.

<sup>78</sup> On which see E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923* Volume Two, London: Macmillan, 1952, pp. 147–268; on expropriation of the peasants by force see Moshe Lewin, *The*

costly international warfare) caused a weakness in the state which drove the division in the ruling class and allowed the revolution to take place.<sup>79</sup> As an effective institution of state, resource extraction, and all other institutions of state, should be understood in all three of the dimensions set out above; that is, as a multiple and singular faces of the diverse modern state, as an instrumental mechanism of power and as a power source projected through the realisation of the claim to transcendent authority which underpins the state. To summarise, it is the interplay of these dimensions in their simultaneous international and domestic context which provides the robust base to the political claims of the state.

We have considered what the state is, and how it functions. The final point is to make clear why it functions. The purpose of state power has often been conflated with the description of what the state does and how it operates. This confusion is understandable given the complexity of the modern state and the fact that its functions serve both to define it and to perpetuate it. But one must not over-endow the entity with intentionality nor establish unreliable links between purpose and outcome. Given states' complexity and polymorphic nature, only in rare circumstances can one trace any such singularity of intent and outcome.<sup>80</sup>

Often the state's purpose has been associated with those who have benefited from the patternings of structured power.<sup>81</sup> One needs to make the distinction between specific instances of state instrumental purpose and the broader, social purpose of the state. The pre-eminent purpose of state power is the reproduction of the structures of power that have established the pattern of institutions in such a manner as to produce their predominance. The moral claim which underpins the state's authority takes as its reference point the international. Thus, implicit in this primary purpose of the state, is the reproduction of the

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*Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* London: Methuen, 1985, pp. 142–77.

<sup>79</sup> See C.B.A. Behrens, *The Ancien Régime* London: Harcourt Brace, 1967, pp. 138–62, and Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 51–67.

<sup>80</sup> For example in the context of total war.

<sup>81</sup> Most famously associated with the Marxist view of the state. See, for example, Jessop, *The Capitalist State*; and Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*.



broader international patternings of social power which permit states to make and successfully cling to this claim for moral authority.

A social-instrumental purpose related to this must also be considered; that is, the way in which states maintain a civil order within. This refers both to the establishment of patterned norms for reasonable behaviour and punishments for deviance from these, as well as the broader establishment of the framework for the existence of its population. Two different writers illustrate this second dimension well. On the one hand Windsor claims that the state is a self-regulating entity that is 'a social form which comprises the framework for the relations of its citizens.'<sup>82</sup> On the other, Mann emphasises the recursive relationship between autonomy and social life conceived more broadly: 'autonomous state power is the product of the usefulness of enhanced territorial centralisation to social life in general.'<sup>83</sup>

Regardless of how elites alter state institutions, whether they introduce conscription, nationalise industry, or impose income taxation, the purpose of these institutions is fundamentally double: to re-produce state power and to shape the society in a given manner, that is to establish the framework for social relations both within and between states.

#### 2.3.4 *International Elements of State Power*

The state, theoretically and empirically, cannot be understood in isolation from its international context; it is nothing if not international. The modern state exists in a triple international context: as a domestic centralising power institution; as an international actor; and as a power repository lying at the nexus of these two political realms. Because of this, the international provides important sources for the accumulation of state social power. It is useful to distinguish between the structural and instrumental ways in which this occurs. The 'structural' elements are the ways in which the international provides the broader social context for the existence and perpetuation of the modern state as a

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<sup>82</sup> Philip Windsor, 'The Justification of the State' in Michael Donelan (ed.), *The Reason of States: A Study in International Political Theory* London: Allen and Unwin, 1978, p. 187.

<sup>83</sup> Mann 'The Autonomous Power', p. 135.

form of political rule. These are social settings or contexts which do not have immediate instantiation, but without which the modern state simply could not be. First, the state derives the possibility of being from the international. The modern state is the product of the historical development of the demarcation of the social world into territorial units which are each dominated by one central authority. The formal authority of the state derives from the mechanisms which have carved up the social realm into particular political realms. Second, the demarcation of space into parcels of absolute institutionalised authority is the source of state autonomy.<sup>84</sup> Third, the principles of statehood, derived from the international realm, bestow the state with a strong sense of legitimacy and add a practical edge to the moral claim of authority. Finally, it is one of the sources of the social forces which shape the patterning of state power. The international is the source of the moral claim to transcendent authority and the practices of international politics provide a material dimension that further consolidates the domestic claims of the institutions of power.

These 'structural' dimensions are prerequisites for the instrumental elements, for it is this broader context which allow states to utilise this extra-territorial space. First, states use the international as a source of material resources. This involves things such as tariffs, trade, and the importation of resources not within its territory, as well as in less direct forms, such as entry charges and monetary loans from international lending organisations. Second, the international is a source of ideas which states can deploy as they see fit. The examples of this are massive. From privatisation to nationalisation, states have always looked outward as well as inward for inspiration. Also, they have sought to be the inspiration, or model for others to follow. Third, the state can utilise the international geopolitical situation for instrumental advantage. For example, states have used what appears to be a threatening international environment to re-order society or to enforce martial law, to increase spending on the military to

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<sup>84</sup> On autonomy see Michael Mann, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanics and Results' in John A. Hall (ed.), *States in History* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, pp. 109–36; Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 24–33; Giddens, *Nation-State and Violence*; Hobson, *Wealth of States*. There are at least three ways in which states can be described as having autonomy: i) states reflect institutionalised power separate from the dominant social forces of society below; ii) their power has a degree of independence from international forces; and iii) they have autonomy to act with a sovereign finality. Autonomy does not, however, mean the total freedom and ability to act howsoever the state pleases.

shore up support. In the case of direct hostilities modern states tend to re-order radically the economic base of the society. They can introduce conscription where previously it was politically impossible, they can introduce more arbitrary forms of justice and so on. Finally, states can use the international as a reference point for their own action. Social developments in other states can prompt changed societal choices in the home state. Just as states use their society and territory to produce institutions of power networks, they use the international system for the same purpose. If one does not conceive of the state in its triple international context, then it is easy to overlook the diverse sources of power and autonomy which shape, weaken, reinforce or challenge the institutions of the state.<sup>85</sup>

When thinking about the state, however, one must be conscious of the problem of the singular. States do many things at the same time. For example, in 1979 the Soviet state provided medical care and treatment to all its citizens, it claimed to have harvested 179 million tonnes of wheat in the state and collective farms,<sup>86</sup> it invaded Afghanistan and provided millions of roubles and technology in aid and arms to Cuba and other 'fraternal' states. It did many other things besides. How, then, is it reasonable to talk of a single Soviet state of 1979? It is plausible if one links the range of functional institutions with the moral claim mentioned earlier. The state acts at the same time singularly and in multiple forms and locations. The singular is met by the subject of the power network when it comes up against a state decision which limits action. That is, the state, in its singular form, can be seen in specific situations such as the handling of applications for exit visas, imposing court sentences, making a declaration of war, imposing taxation demands or deciding to liberalise the media. The reason it is able to do all this is the state's moral claim which is a double claim hiding inside a single plea. The state claims ultimate moral suasion by virtue of its invocation of the transcendent necessary to its claim to sovereignty and by its very existence which conjugates this claim into a meaningful material form.

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<sup>85</sup> Sources of power can also be sources of weakness. The later chapters of the thesis will explore this idea in more depth.

<sup>86</sup> Speech by President Leonid Brezhnev, 'State Plan and State Budget for 1980' in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* Vol. XXVI, London: Keesing's, 1980, p. 30113.

The state is a powerful social actor. We have shown that the international and processual dimensions of state power can be understood by considering the moral claim that the state makes for itself in its necessarily international context. As a totality, the modern state should be conceived of as an agglomeration of social power networks. It should be thought of as consisting of both institutions and functions in which power-as-practice is central to its workings, and it must be thought of as having and imparting some sort of order.<sup>87</sup> While these highly complex entities are not as neatly ordered as Swiss watches, they are not utterly chaotic. The identifiable patterning of the networks of power is the key to understanding the nature and dynamics of specific states. Ultimately, the idea of the modern state here hinges on two points: its international location and its processual development. The institution cannot be divorced from its internationality, nor can the production and reproduction of its systems of rule be ignored.

To summarise the second part of the chapter, the view of modern state power used in this thesis sees the state as an international social power actor which consists of a bundle of social institutions. These social institutions are united by their representation of a practised transcendent moral claim to authority and, at the same time, serve the instrumental purpose of supporting the state and shaping social relations within and between states. Domestically, states are located centrally in terms of their institutions and their power networks which are centripetal and territorially constituted. While they are formally bounded, their sources of power come from networks which transcend boundaries. That is, they have sources that are both domestic and international, and thus must be understood in terms of their origins and unfolding in their dual international and domestic contexts. While the patterning of state institutions is unique, they all share common characteristics and purposes, that is, to reproduce the structures of power and to establish the framework for social relations. The key to understanding the modern state lies in the understanding of it as a bundle of instrumental institutions serving particular purposes which it does by making a

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<sup>87</sup> By this we mean order in the sense of a patterning of power networks within the state which imposes a predictable social pattern on relations in society, as well as imposing a predictable set of relations upon the larger political system. That is, states impose order on the world political system through the formation of an international system of sovereign states.

moral claim to a transcendent authority. This link between instrumentalism and transcendentalism is found in the process of state reproduction termed here state power-as-practice. This novel theory of the workings of states puts the process of production and reproduction at the centre of its explanatory framework. More specifically, it does so from an international point of view which corrects some of the functional limits of existing historical sociological theories of the state and introduces an important ideational aspect to balance the materialist bias of other approaches. The task now is to apply this understanding of state power to the Soviet case so as to come to terms with the international sources of state power. In this way we may determine the relationship between the Soviet Union's international confrontation with the capitalist West and the rise and fall of the Soviet state.

### 3 THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SOVIET STATE POWER

The challenge, in analysing the Soviet state, lies in the identification of the limits of state power. The Soviet Union did not have a clearly circumscribed state in the way that most liberal-capitalist or authoritarian states do. This was the result of two important developments. First, between 1917 and 1928, the Bolshevik party undertook a rapid and violent reformulation of society, and its relationship with the state, which smashed the divisions between the public and private spheres.<sup>1</sup> In liberal-capitalist states, the private sphere of social and economic relations developed reasonably free from state interference. In some states, such as Britain in the nineteenth century, social conditions existed which bred an active political pursuit of a minimal involvement of the state in people's lives.<sup>2</sup> In such states, the ideas which determined the limits of the state were property rights, individual rights and free exchange. These ideas were predicated on a legitimate distinction between relations in which the state had a right to interfere and those in which it did not. Central to this was the belief that the state had clearly demarcated institutions to pursue the facilitation of property rights, individual rights and free exchange. Even if, as was the case in post-World War II Britain, the state undertook the nationalisation of certain sectors, such as health care or transport, it did not mean that the distinction between public and private had ended, but simply that the shape of these demarcated spheres had been altered.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> On this generally see E.H. Carr, *The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin, 1917–1929* London: Macmillan, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill were significant writers whose ideas influenced the ideas and political practice of English liberalism. On liberal England and its politics see Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846–1946* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Clement Attlee's speech to both houses of the US Congress in September 1945 emphasised that, despite Britain's widespread nationalisation programmes and the Labour Party's professed

Bolsheviks laid waste to such an embryonic state of affairs as existed in Russia in 1917. They utterly rejected this division. Due to their violent objection to the principles which produced this separation—the right to private property, individual rights and free exchange—the clear distinction between private and public was obliterated.

The second reason for the absence of a clearly delineated and formally demarcated state function was the chaotic formation of the state. Having smashed the foundations of a liberal order, the Bolsheviks needed to find new means for ordering society based on the radically different principles which they espoused. Initially, the state was to be a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ that would usher in communism as the world revolution took hold.<sup>4</sup> This did not occur. The revolution was invaded, society was at war with itself and the party had no meaningful plan for action. An authoritarian party-state fusion emerged from the rubble of the revolutionary society as the best means for imposing order and achieving the Bolsheviks’ revolutionary aims. Curiously, the idea of a state separate from, though reliant upon, the party was maintained and enshrined in the Constitutions of 1924 and 1932 although there was no functional need for such a formal statement. No practical structures existed to establish the role of the state and its legitimate and illegitimate rights, the various constitutions were not meaningful restraints on state action and did not accurately describe the limits of state power.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet state became a sprawling, protean morass. Dominated by the CPSU, it was an extensive bureaucracy. It owned the means of production, it ran the kindergartens, it made paper-clips, it administered healthcare, it funded revolutionary movements around the world—in short, it can be reasonably argued that the Soviet state did most things in the USSR. Yet clearly, the state

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socialism, he and his party were not fundamentally illiberal. The first drafts of his speech included a reference to himself as the first socialist prime minister to address a joint sitting. This remark was removed from the final version. *Attlee Papers* Box 23, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>4</sup> For a view and justification of the type of social order to be built after the revolution see V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution: The Marxist teaching of the state and the task of the proletariat in the revolution* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992 [orig. 1918]. For a discussion of its implications see E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923. Volume 1* London: Macmillan, 1950, pp. 233–49.

<sup>5</sup> The USSR had four constitutions: 1918, upon the foundation of the Soviet Republic; 1924, upon the creation of the USSR; 1936, as an articulation of the Stalinist principles of socialism; and 1977, to mark the onset of ‘developed socialism’. The Soviet Constitution, in its various forms, was an ideological document and not a functional one. The problematic nature of taking the

was not everything, there was a society of people who acted autonomously. There was a large and active 'second economy',<sup>6</sup> and there were limits to Soviet power.

Given this morass—the overwhelming size and scope combined with unreliable documentation and sources—how can one make judgements about the Soviet state? The theory set out in Chapter Two provides one way to examine such an entity. From around 1928–31 the system of Soviet rule became a settled affair. While there were changes and reforms right through to 1991, the basic structures of the USSR were established during this period. In this way it is reasonable to talk about the underlying character of the Soviet state across a longer period of time and to try to gauge the role of the international confrontation in the production and reproduction of Soviet power. This chapter will consider the consolidation and reproduction of Soviet power and the role of international confrontation in this process. Its purpose is to examine the nature of the Soviet state, and particularly the international aspects of its power, using the theoretical model set out in Chapter Two, and will do so in the following way. First, it will consider the CPSU's role in this process, it will then examine the broader pattern of Soviet power, finally, it will set out the international sources of Soviet power.

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Soviet constitution at face value can be seen in Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *The Truth About Soviet Russia* London: Longman, Green and Co., 1942.

<sup>6</sup> See Gregory Grossman, 'The "Second Economy" of the USSR' in *Problems of Communism* 26, Sept-Oct 1977, pp. 25–40; and F.J.M. Feldbrugge, 'Government and the Shadow Economy in the Soviet Union' in *Soviet Studies* 36.4, 1984, pp. 528–43.



### 3.1 THE CPSU AND THE SOVIET STATE

The CPSU was without question the most important institution of the Soviet state.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the study must firstly consider the role of the revolutionary party in the broader system of rule.<sup>8</sup> Sakwa writes that '[t]he Soviet Union, in effect, had two operative governments, the party and the state system.'<sup>9</sup> Skocpol refers to the early Soviet Union with the paired term 'party-state', so difficult was it to distinguish between the two.<sup>10</sup> This section will consider whether the characterisation of 'party-state', that is, a functional and institutional elision of two institutions, is an accurate depiction of the patterning of state power in the USSR or whether Sakwa's distinction is more accurate.

While the party's importance clearly varied over time—for example, under Stalin it played a much smaller role in policy-making and implementation than it did under Brezhnev—it was the repository of the legacy of revolutionary vanguardism. As such, the party claimed to be the 'representative of the workers' will' and the institution with the greatest control over Soviet society.<sup>11</sup> While formal statements of Soviet power reveal little about its actual function, the rhetorical articulation of the role of the party in the constitution of 1977 is revealing:

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<sup>7</sup> See generally Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* Third Edition, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> For various discussions of the Soviet system of rule see: Archie Brown, *Soviet Politics and Political Science* London: Macmillan, 1974; Robert Conquest, *The Soviet Political System* London: Bodley Head, 1968; Ronald J. Hill, *Soviet Union: Politics, Economics and Society from Lenin to Gorbachev* Second Edition, London: Pinter, 1989; Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979; David Lane, *Soviet State and Politics* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985; Mary McCauley, *Politics and the Soviet Union* London: Penguin, 1977; Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective* Second Edition, London: Routledge, 1998; Robert G. Wesson, *The Soviet Russian State* New York: John Wiley, 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 206–35. For more detail on the 'party-state' see Carl Linden, *The Soviet Party-State: The Politics of Ideocratic Despotism* Westport, CT: Praeger, 1983, particularly pp. 1–29; see also Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. 1*, pp. 214–32 on the early relationship between party and state.

<sup>11</sup> On Stalin's treatment of the party see Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Stalin: Order through Terror* London: Longman, 1981; on the party under Brezhnev see Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability and Change in the Soviet Union* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 81–96.

The leading guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organisation and public organisation, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and it serves the people. The CPSU, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.<sup>12</sup>

Despite this prominent sounding claim, the formal role of the CPSU was as a ruling body and not just a governing one. Scholars are divided on what sort of label to put on the CPSU. Various descriptions such as executive, ruling, governing, leading, and dictating have been put forward. To avoid such semantic wrangles, we shall consider the functions of the CPSU as they pertain to the state and its various structures of power.

### 3.1.1 *Ideology and State Functions of the CPSU*

Soviet ideology was a complex and potent force with many dimensions.<sup>13</sup> Sakwa summarises nine sets of issues which characterise the ruling ideology over time.<sup>14</sup> Without question, it was the form, nature and dynamics of the ideology, and the way it was translated into effective forms of rule, that distinguished the Soviet Union from other states and which worried the states of the liberal Western world. For Sakwa, ideology was not just a broad underlying principle or a device to mask the domination of the ruling class, it was a foundational part of the state, it was a clear element of the authority structure.<sup>15</sup> As he writes, '[t]he Soviet state had ideology built into its foundations to inspire

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<sup>12</sup> Article 6 of the 1977 'Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' in *USSR: Sixty Years of the Union: 1922-1982. A Collection of Legislative Acts and Other Documents* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982.

<sup>13</sup> This refers to the protean Marxism-Leninism with which the Soviet Union ruled, see generally Stephen White and Alex Pravda (eds.), *Ideology and Soviet Politics* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

<sup>14</sup> The nine are: a basis in dialectical materialism; a Leninist notion of voluntarism; a belief in the economic determinants of social relations; a commitment to Marxism-Leninism; a belief in the scientific basis of communism; a heavy technocratic bias in notions of social change; a fusion of political ideology with social beliefs; a profound teleology; and a malleability. Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, pp. 171-4.

<sup>15</sup> Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, pp. 174-7.

and legitimise its actions and its very existence.’<sup>16</sup> While ideology was clearly central to the state’s system of control and its institutional forms, it was not a blueprint for action; nor did it spring forth from the air. The CPSU was the point at which ideology became a material form of political rule. Ideology, in this sense, was a crucial form of state that was also, in a sense, distinct from the state.

From this point of view, the CPSU’s most significant function was its role as the source and repository of the underlying ideological principle of state socialism.<sup>17</sup> This was important in a number of senses. First, as the holders of the ideology, the party wielded tremendous practical power. Second, the party was the vanguard of society, taking the historical place of the revolutionary catalyst which, in theory, should have been the role of the working class. While this was in some ways a rhetorical device, it had clear functional implications in terms of the *nomenklatura*, the production of a supervisory *apparat* and, most famously, in the leading role played by the *politburo* and the *vozhd* or leader. Third, as a further result of the ideology, the CPSU was the only permitted political entity in society. Fourth, the party defined its right to rule in terms of a sort of manifest expression of historical will, but, crucially, this historical will rested on a moral promise, the promise to deliver socialism, to catch-up with the industrialised West and to deliver a better life for all. All this built in to the foundations of the party’s claim to rule a weakness which was later to play a large role in its undoing.

Thus ideology functioned to legitimate CPSU rule, to reinforce its total grip on society and the state and to establish the larger political framework in which this ruling elite operated. The actualisation of an ideological principle into a functional form of political rule meant the fusion of a set of principles and an organisational body to create a functioning form of authority and control. This unity made the CPSU unique for it did not stand separate from the state, but penetrated the institutions of government, socialised the society below and

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<sup>16</sup> Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, p. 177.

<sup>17</sup> The term is David Lane’s, he defines it as ‘a society distinguished by a state-owned, more or less centrally administered economy, controlled by a domestic communist party which seeks, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and through the agency of the state, to mobilise the population to reach a classless society.’ David Lane, *The Rise and Fall of State Socialism* Cambridge: Polity, 1996, p. 5. The use of this phrase emphasises the functional nature of the ideology. For more on the specifically Russian origins of this see David Lane, *Soviet Economy and Society* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, Chapter One.

provided an underlying principle of social organisation which structured society. Thus, the ideological justification for revolutionary rule permeated the morass of Soviet life and, through this, the Soviet state became acutely internationalised as the underlying values were, in essence, relative claims pegged to the achievements of the international social norm.

State socialism was a functioning element of state domination which relied on a value system based on moral superiority and social competition. This value system did not and could not exist in a vacuum. It required a liberal-capitalist order to function. Its claims were made in terms of absolutes—the elimination of class, and the creation of a state which administered things—yet the practice of these claims was relative. The malleable idea of state socialism, and the CPSU's practice of it in the context of a hostile geopolitical context, established the framework in which the party made and buttressed its claims to rule. Hence international confrontation can be understood as a product of the CPSU ideology, but, more than that, it became a part of the larger ideological dimensions justifying party rule because it placed the relative success or failure of the claims of state socialism in the lap of the party and the state.

The legitimacy of the Soviet state was a second area in which the ideological dimensions of the CPSU was significant. Legitimacy refers here both to the sense that rule by the Soviet state was carried out more through consent than coercion, which seems to have been the case from 1953 on, and to the sense that the elite felt a sense of belief in what they were doing.<sup>18</sup> It refers also to the way in which the state could justify the actions of a command economy. This style of legitimation, linking material achievements to political rule, has been labelled by Holmes as 'eudaemonic' legitimation.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, the party linked its claims to legitimate rule and authority to the success of its internationally oriented claim of social provision. This claim had a clear effect on the political possibilities for the restructuring of political and social life under Soviet rule.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The notion of legitimacy here draws on Weber and Habermas's views, see Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* London: Heinemann, 1976, and Max Weber *Economy and Society: An Outline of an Interpretive Sociology* New York: Bedminster, 1968 Vol.1, pp. 212–301.

<sup>19</sup> Leslie Holmes, *The End of Communist Power: Anti-corruption Campaigns and Legitimation Crisis* Cambridge: Polity, 1993.

<sup>20</sup> During the mid 1950s there was concern in the West, that, due to the apparent success of Soviet industrialisation, their 'model' would appeal to developing countries as one to adopt. For a good

### 3.1.2 Capturing the Institutions of State

While a very important functional element of the party was its role as the repository of the underlying principle of the Soviet state, there was a range of more material aspects of the CPSU's role. The USSR had been made by the Bolshevik party which had become the CPSU.<sup>21</sup> For the Bolsheviks' claim to state power to have any meaning, they had to exercise state power and successfully defend it. This they did by creating and centralising the functions of state in a brutal fashion.<sup>22</sup> In the context of chaos—Civil War, national economic crisis and a hostile international environment—the party had a great impetus to centralise. The Bolshevik party was the only political group with the organisational and coercive capacity to be able to impose order on the society and this they did through coercion and centralisation.<sup>23</sup> This established the pattern of rule that was to follow, in varying forms, for the following 60 years.

In a more direct sense, CPSU control over the state was seen in the efforts to penetrate the ostensibly separate institutions of the state, such as the Ministries, the state owned enterprises and the military.<sup>24</sup> These efforts demonstrate most clearly the linkages between the state and the party, and the murkiness of the distinction between state and party. They reveal that the party was pre-eminently an organisational body. Its role was not to run the steel production or the trains. Rather, it *supervised* these tasks and it did so in a

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example of the concern this caused and discussion of what should be done about it see Raymond Aron et al, *The Soviet Economy: A Discussion* London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1956.

<sup>21</sup> It formally became the CPSU in 1952, one of Stalin's final acts which some interpret as his symbolic burial of the ideals and aspirations of the Bolshevik seizure of power.

<sup>22</sup> Harry Best, *The Soviet State and its Inception* New York: Philosophical Library, 1950; Carr, *Russian Revolution*, pp. 38–60, pp. 106–130; Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. 1*, pp. 151–232; Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* London: Fontana, 1992, pp. 506–65, pp. 671–713; William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* Volume 2, New York: Universal Library, 1965, pp. 25–65, pp. 96–117, and pp. 359–77.

<sup>23</sup> On this dimension of state building see Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 206–33, and Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. 1*, pp. 151–83 and on the original capturing of the state see pp. 214–32. On the general economic conditions see E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923, Volume 2* London: Macmillan, 1952, pp. 28–145; on war communism see pp. 147–267; and on NEP see pp. 280–358; see also Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime 1919–1924* London: Fontana, 1994, pp. 436–488 (on the Civil War) and pp. 497–501.

<sup>24</sup> See generally Ronald J. Hill and Peter Frank, *The Soviet Communist Party* Third Edition, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.

number of ways. Sakwa argues that the party is best thought of as an executive branch of government and he sets out the following six mechanisms through which it had control of the state: the use of party groups in soviets, institutions and mass organisations; influence channelled through networks of primary political organisations; *nomenklatura* control of significant appointments; interlocking membership of various institutions such as a local party boss heading a local soviet; the primary decision making body was the Central Committee Secretariat; and party pressure for accountability in the implementation of decisions.<sup>25</sup> As a broad sketch of the means of influence, Sakwa's picture is fair. The problem is the use of the word 'control'. This implies that the party controlled mechanisms and outcomes, and, while the institutions existed to try to ensure party dominance and loyalty, in such a monolithic system one could show 'loyalty' without demonstrating effective compliance. In such a system, if political authority is strong then it is very effective. If, on the other hand, it is weak then, due to the unclear nature of the state and the loose formal anchor of political authority, those in positions of non-political power (such as military, security or economic actors) can resist pressures for control and compliance. The problem is precisely that the monolithism of the state provides not only the possibility for great control, but also the potential for an inability to control.<sup>26</sup>

This point is made by Whitefield who argues that, since 1965, power in the USSR did not lie overwhelmingly with the politicians supposedly controlled by the CPSU, but was somewhat inchoate.<sup>27</sup> He argues that industrial power emasculated political authority, which, in the long run, led to *perestroika* and *glasnost* being introduced by Gorbachev as a means to undermine the ministries hindering the reform process.<sup>28</sup> He argues that the CPSU was weak, that the *nomenklatura* system was ineffective as a means of control and that the Secretariat of the Central Committee had been captured by the ministries. While his argument is somewhat overstated in favour of industrial ministries, he demonstrates amply that power was more diffuse in the Soviet state than is

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<sup>25</sup> Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, pp. 96–9.

<sup>26</sup> This is one element of state weakness that will be probed in later chapters.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen Whitefield, *Industrial Power and the Soviet State* Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

usually represented. This has implications for Soviet state autonomy. The ministries were an arm of the state and thus a representation of the broader moral claim of statehood and, as they were backed with this practical authority, they were able to effect an autonomous power base themselves. They could act independently from the formal and substantive authority of the party, though still as an entity of the state. As Whitefield writes:

The terms in which interference in the economy by the party were couched...and the organisations which were charged with institutionalising these claims...effectively legitimized the activities of constitutional actors whose powers and interests were often distinct from those of politicians.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, the state means by which the party attempted to control society facilitated a diminution of its practical power and further blurred the nature of the Soviet state.

The other major function of the CPSU, in terms of capturing the mechanisms of state, was that of co-ordination and control of the policy creation and implementation process. After Stalin, who had virtually shut the bulk of the party out of the effective mechanisms of power, the *apparat* of the CPSU became the prime source of policy.<sup>30</sup> The various departments and commissions of the Central Committee Secretariat carried out the policy formulation in areas such as foreign relations, law, economic and social relations, ideology, agriculture. But they did so at the behest of the Politburo, the chief policy decision-making body.<sup>31</sup> Through the *nomenklatura* system, the party ensured that policy was implemented at the ministerial and other levels in the manner that it saw fit.<sup>32</sup> The penetration of the entire range of Soviet bodies, from the military to the medicinal, from printing to payments, was completed by this process of party approval and appointment. In the military, this often meant the placement of a

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<sup>28</sup> Kristian Gerner and Stefan Hedlund make a similar point in *Ideology and Rationality in the Soviet Model* London: Routledge, 1989.

<sup>29</sup> Whitefield, *Industrial Power and the Soviet State*, p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> See above note 11.

<sup>31</sup> The Politburo had no real executive authority and its control over ministries was not like a liberal-capitalist state's cabinet. This was a product both of the substantive problems of power and the functions of the ministries. On the Politburo see John Löwenhardt, *The Soviet Politburo* Edinburgh: Canongate, 1982.

<sup>32</sup> On the working of the *nomenklatura* system see Mikhail Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura: Anatomy of the Soviet Ruling Class* London: Bodley Head, 1984.

political officer in a military grouping to ensure that officers lower down the chain of command were participating as they ought. The logic was simple; by placing their people in all of the key posts, the party could ensure that CPSU policy was adhered to and that it was effectively co-ordinated and supervised. The final mechanism was the most notorious, that is, CPSU control of the secret police.<sup>33</sup> From the very beginning the Cheka was answerable only to the most senior members of the party. After Stalin, the party ensured that the service would always remain subordinate to its wishes, and it was not until Andropov was brought into the Politburo that the KGB had such high representation.<sup>34</sup>

On paper then, it seems clear that policy was formulated by the CPSU and carried out by the 'government', the body of ministries, state committees, and planning agencies. The 'government' received policy instructions and, on close supervision by party representatives located strategically throughout these bodies, ensured that party decisions were carried out. The picture is one of an integrated bureaucratic system with a hierarchy of power reaching an apex at the Politburo of the CPSU. The CPSU was the premier institution in the state. It had a formal position of authority unparalleled in society, it had a system of control and co-ordination and was, most crucially, the vessel in which the ruling ideology of the state—state socialism—rested. The Soviets had been effectively sidelined by Stalin as genuine participants in the political process.<sup>35</sup> In simple terms, the CPSU had captured the state, the economy and society.<sup>36</sup> The 'leading role' of the party promised by the constitutions would seem to be an inadequate term. The state had fused itself with the economy and had penetrated many corners of society. This had come about because of the ideas, tenacity and control of the CPSU.

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<sup>33</sup> On the KGB see Yevgenia Albats, *KGB: State Within a State* London: I.B. Tauris, 1995; and Amy Knight, *The KGB: Police, and Politics in the Soviet Union* Revised Edition, London: Unwin 1990.

<sup>34</sup> Andropov was the first and only leader of the USSR not to rise from the party *apparatus* but from the KGB, a telling indication of the path to power and the concern about the KGB.

<sup>35</sup> Though technically the President of the Supreme Soviet was the titular head of state, Gorbachev's 'bumping up' of Andrei Gromyko to this role indicates its fundamental lack of power. On which see Dmitri Volkogonov, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire: Political Leaders from Lenin to Gorbachev* London: Harper Collins, 1999, pp. 490–1.

<sup>36</sup> See Linden, *The Soviet Party-State*, particularly pp. 31–56, for this view, for a detailed history of the beginnings of this see Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. 1*, pp. 214–32.



## Levels of Control

The problem, as Whitefield indicates, is that this picture was hardly representative of the actual political power of the CPSU.<sup>37</sup> While this power clearly existed in certain instances—in extra-judicial action, foreign affairs and so on—in the case of the day to day political sphere, the fusion of economy and politics had created a structure which allowed for significant autonomy among the constituent elements of the state. The problem lay at the heart of the political structure that was built on the idea of socialist production. As indicated in the previous chapter, the actual practice of statehood embodied in its institutions shapes the state, its limits and its possibilities. Ultimately, the disorderly shape of the Soviet state and its convoluted networks of power was the result of the party perpetually trying, through various means, to control the state. These attempts were always only partial successes; the CPSU did not have complete practical control over the state. Indeed, it was some way from this state of affairs. But the effort to control shaped the constellation of power quite strongly and gave rise to the very system it could not control in the manner that it wished to. Thus, the CPSU must be seen as a crucial state actor and institution, but not as much for its material hold on the state, which was ragged and incomplete, but as the repository of the idea which legitimated and justified the state.

### **3.2 THE PATTERNING OF SOVIET STATE POWER**

Mann states that the Soviet Union was the apotheosis of the modern authoritarian state as it was imbued with high levels of both despotic and infrastructural power.<sup>38</sup> This characterisation may be a fair one, but it does not clearly establish the patternings of power. Using the concepts set out in Chapter Two, the following section will characterise the functioning of the Soviet state as a product of patterns of social processes and highlight the sources of social

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<sup>37</sup> Whitefield, *Industrial Power and the Soviet State*.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States 1760–1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 60.

power—material and ideational—that facilitated the production and reproduction of the Soviet state.

By ‘patterning’ we mean the location of, and relations between, the elements of state which, taken together, produce its anatomy. The metaphor used in Chapter Two portrayed states as constellations of institutions, principles and processes which need to be seen in their full context to understand how they work. As set out in the final part of the previous chapter, states have various configurations of the following four elements which produce their pattern of rule: the organisation of functional institutions; the principles of rule; the form of economic relations; and the relationship between state and society.<sup>39</sup> The Soviet state was no exception.

### *3.2.1 Elements of State I: Functional Institutions*

The institutions of the Soviet state provided much to the Soviet citizen—housing, education, food, defence, order, the very future itself—all was delivered by the state. Yet its all-consuming nature, and the fusion of public and private spheres makes delineating the Soviet state’s configuration difficult. To reiterate the point made in Chapter Two, configuration refers to the nature of the interaction between principle, authority, and function. For example, the state extracts resources, teaches its citizens, and nationalises industry, it does this through a series of social relations and processes formalised in institutions of the state. These relations, their hierarchies, rules, regulations and networks are the result of configurations of state power institutions.

The Soviet state can be characterised as having had a highly centralised, top-down, ideologically constrained and informal configuration of institutions. The state had high levels of despotic and infrastructural power, but lower levels of practical institutional control. Communication between institutions was poor

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<sup>39</sup> More diverse characteristics such as geography, culture and class do not figure here as this schema is predicated on the notion that modern states are institutionally similar. These four categories are the elements all states share and which facilitate particular types of rule within a broader system of similarity. Culture and other factors clearly will play a role in the development of the state, but are secondary, in this analysis, to the elements of the ‘constellation’.

as was knowledge of how the system functioned.<sup>40</sup> Authority was precisely defined, but imprecisely utilised and carried out. The monolithic character of the institutions led, not only to the much discussed inefficiency of the system, but also led to an ineffective utilisation of authority.

### Comparing the Soviet and American Configurations

To clarify this point it is illustrative to compare briefly the configuration of the Soviet institutions with those of its liberal-capitalist antithesis—the USA. The Soviet state, via the efforts of the CPSU, was highly centralised. In all spheres, the state was located at the centre and social life radiated out from it in practical subordination. From the role of *GOSPLAN* and *GOSBANK* in the economy, to the subservience of the republics to the Union and CPSU, from the ideology of Soviet socialism as a supra-national identity to an education system laden with Marxist-Leninist values, this centralisation was all pervasive. The American state, while being highly centralised, has two key differences regarding the form of centralisation. First, it has a clearly demarcated and judicially upheld federal division of power. It has two levels of authority, that of the federal government, based in Washington with formal final authority, and also that of the constituent states which likewise have constitutionally guaranteed lines of ultimate authority over which the federal state cannot step.<sup>41</sup> While the Soviet Union was technically a federation, in practice there was no final authority within lower level federal bodies. Second, the American state does not concern itself with anywhere near as wide a range of activities as the Soviet state did. While it regulates certain elements of economic and social life through, for example, environmental requirements or the legal backing of contract law, it stands clearly separate from the private sphere of economic and social life. The Soviet state was dramatically more centralised than the American state.

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<sup>40</sup> See Manuel Castells, *Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Volume 3. End of Millennium* Oxford: Blackwells, 1998, pp. 13–36.

<sup>41</sup> M.J.C. Vile, *The Structure of American Federalism* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; Thomas R. Dye, *American Federalism: Competition Among Governments* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990.

If the Soviet state was clearly vertically organised, so is the American state. Yet, while the American system generally follows the formal divisions of power—indeed the formal divisions play a very important role in political life—in the USSR this was simply not the case. In the USSR the system of rule was unclear, informal and changed with time and personnel. In a similar sense, both states were ideologically constrained. By this we mean that the underlying principles of rule in both systems established limits to the politically possible. In the USSR the state could not privatise steel production. Similarly, the reverse is true in the USA. The historical development of ideology into solid forms of domination, as well as their respective locations at the centre of international blocs hostile to the other, meant that the choice for policy action was ideologically and politically constrained. Further, if the Soviets had a high degree of despotic power—the freedom to act arbitrarily in domestic life—the Americans are the diametric opposite. In terms of infrastructural power, the penetration of society and the ability to implement its decisions, the Americans have reasonably high levels, yet questions should be asked about the Soviet powers of implementation. Furthermore, where the Soviets had poor communication between institutions, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the Americans have good levels of communication.

While life in the Soviet Union was highly bureaucratised, the bureaucracy was not rationalised and efficient in the way it is in the West due to its very different purpose and its social context.<sup>42</sup> The Soviets had multiple and overlapping bureaucracies. The departments of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, the bureaucracies of the ministries and those of the various committees and Soviets at the republic and *oblast* level all served similar functions, often with a great deal of overlap.<sup>43</sup> In the USA, while there are multiple bureaucracies which have some overlap, they tend to share information reasonably freely. Two final contrasts: whereas knowledge of the workings of the American state is good, in the USSR it was poor; likewise, authority structures

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<sup>42</sup> For a discussion on the relationship between bureaucracy and capitalism along Weberian lines see Derek Sayer, *Capitalism and Modernity: An Excursus on Marx and Weber* London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 135–48.

<sup>43</sup> On this see Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, pp. 96–105, pp. 110–19, pp. 149–68, pp. 219–25, pp. 254–69.

are, in the US, clearly delineated and followed, but in the USSR were formally delineated but substantively very chaotic.

### 3.2.2 *Elements of State II: Principles of Rule*

The principle of rule gives direction to decision-making, delimits notions of the politically possible and establishes structures of rhetoric and values which must be referred to. It is not sufficient simply to identify a broad category such as liberalism or state socialism as the principle of rule. The idea here refers to the way in which specific ideas of legitimate rule are conjugated by the state as forms of rule and means by which domination is carried out. In the Soviet state, there were several underlying principles. The pre-eminent principle was the establishment of a communist order. This had a double meaning: the achievement of communism within the USSR and the overtaking and eventual overthrow of capitalism world-wide. The principle was predicated on this necessary internationalism. Despite Stalin's efforts, the *idea* of communism was not viable in a bounded sense. As an effective and a legitimate form of rule, that is one to which both the population and elites would consent, not just be coerced, it required an international dimension. Related to this, a number of other principles of rule both liberated and constrained the state: an underlying drive for emancipation and a formal pursuit of egalitarianism and social justice. But one must remember that these were realised in their Soviet socialist sense. More specifically, the notion of vanguardism and the role of the party as a duty-bound and privileged institution was clear. The idea of the Soviet state as a workers' state was a direct subset of the communist idea and one which had a damaging impact when the discrepancy between the idea and the practice hit home. The projection of an internationalism via the spread of, and support for, revolution and socialism played an important role in the playing out of this idea. This could be seen in Eastern Europe and also in the support for third world revolutions in the post-1945 period.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> On this see Robert Cassen (ed.), *Soviet Interests in the Third World* London: RIIA and Sage, 1985; Roger E. Kaset (ed.), *The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World* Cambridge:

In different periods these ideas were conjugated in different ways. From Stalin's 'socialism in one country' to Khrushchev's 'thaw', from the reformism of the early Brezhnev period to the radical changes embodied by Gorbachev's *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and *demokratisatsiia*, each and every leader and state institution had to move in relation to these ideas.<sup>45</sup> The ideas can constrain action, but primarily they establish the position from which one can move. If the famous line in the American Constitution referring to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' is a snap-shot of the ideas of the USA, then one might say that in the Soviet Union the ideal which established certain limits to the institutional dimensions of state was 'life, equality and the pursuit of communism'.

### 3.2.3 *Elements of State III: Economic Form*

In the Soviet state, the third element of state patterning, the form of economic relations and the position of the state vis-à-vis these relations derived, in part, from the principles of rule. The form of economic relations in the Soviet Union is well known. The economy was organised by the state, the means of production were owned by the state and resources were allocated along supposedly rational lines.<sup>46</sup> On 28 June 1918, the Soviet state nationalised the means of production and thus extinguished the separate market relations of the economy and established them on a state owned, politically directed and non-

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Cambridge University Press, 1987; and Rajan Menon, *Soviet Power and the Third World* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986.

<sup>45</sup> On the respective different use of ideas see: on Stalinism, Alan Wood, *Stalin and Stalinism* London: Routledge, 1990 and E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Three Volumes, London: Macmillan, 1958–64; on the Khrushchev 'thaw', Fedor Burlatskii, *Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring: The Era of Khrushchev through the Eyes of His Advisor* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991, Martin McCauley (ed.), *The Khrushchev Era, 1954–1964* Harlow: Longman, 1995; on Gorbachev, Jerry Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–91* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997 and Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms, 1985–90* London: Prentice Hall, 1990.

<sup>46</sup> Traditionally known as a planned economy, many have argued that this is a misnomer as the term plan connotes much greater order than ever existed. This thesis will use the term command economy. For more on this distinction see Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, p. 278, see also Peter Rutland, *The Myth of the Plan: Lesson of the Soviet Planning Experience* London: Hutchison, 1985. On the Soviet economic system see Alec Nove, *The Soviet Economic System* Third Edition, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986; David A. Dyker, *The Soviet Economic System* London: Crosby, 1976; and Paul R. Gregory and Robert C. Stuart, *Russian and Soviet Economic Performance and Structure* Seventh Edition, Boston: Addison Wesley, 2001, pp. 1–175.

market basis.<sup>47</sup> The Soviet economy had four clear political aims: the transformation to communism and the overtaking of capitalism; the legitimisation of the Soviet state; the achievement of full employment; and the provision of fuel for the revolution.<sup>48</sup> In terms of practical organisation, this meant that the state and its success were fundamentally linked to developments in the economic sphere.

State ownership of the means of production was the key to the Soviet system, and its control of the economy was exercised through the state owned monopolies.<sup>49</sup> The economy was politically directed by the planning mechanisms (*GOSSPLAN* and its sub-agency *GOSSNAB*) which determined everything from input price to wage levels. Decisions about the economy were political and were fuelled by the commitment of the CPSU to extensive growth.<sup>50</sup> The development of the economy was predicated on extensive growth in inputs and not intensive growth based on productivity. This was indicative of the selective political economic aims for growth, the result of which was the extremely unbalanced nature of the economy. The best example of this was the dramatic imbalance between military hardware and technology and the quality of consumer goods.<sup>51</sup> Within each production sector there existed a centralised, hierarchical and vertically integrated management-authority structure. This management structure had very little scope for initiative as command planning dictated the basis of the

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<sup>47</sup> Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. 2*, pp. 99–100. After a short experiment with some market elements during the NEP, full nationalisation occurred after Stalin consolidated his rule.

<sup>48</sup> On the political nature of the Soviet economy see Lane, *Soviet Economy and Society*; and Hans-Hermann Höhmann, Alec Nove and Heinrich Vogel (eds.), *Economics and Politics in the USSR: The Problems of Interdependence* Boulder, CO: Westview and Federal Institute for Eastern Europe and International Studies, 1986.

<sup>49</sup> Between 1924 and 1937 the Soviet state acquired a virtual monopoly on all the legal means of production. The following figures are the percentage share of the state sector in the Soviet economy in 1937: national income 99.1; industrial output 99.8; gross agricultural output 98.5; retail trade 100. Goskomstat, *Nardodnoe Khaziazivstvo SSSR za 70 let* Moskva: Finansi i statistika, 1987, p. 42. Note the exception in the production of agriculture, a sphere in which there were three forms of ownership: state; co-operative (*kholkoz*); and private. Note also that there was doubtless a sizeable, though unmentioned black market aspect of the economy.

<sup>50</sup> Though in the last days there were shifts to more intensive growth and consumer oriented production. This was slight and not representative of Soviet economic development.

<sup>51</sup> On the size of Soviet military expenditures see R.T. Maddock, *The Political Economy of Soviet Defence Spending* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, particularly pp. 66–94; on the problems of consumer goods see Marshall I. Goldman, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System* New York: W.W. Norton, 1983, pp. 97–100, p. 123.

day-to-day running of production.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the Soviet state did not stand outside economic relations and provide what Adam Smith described as the ‘orderly oppression of law’, but itself seized the economy and imposed the ‘disorderly oppression of Soviet socialism’ as an economic model.<sup>53</sup>

#### 3.2.4 *Elements of State IV: State-Society Relations*

Our final concern is with the role of state-society relations within the pattern of the Soviet state. One could go so far as to describe the Soviet system of social life as a form of statism, which Moshe Lewin claims refers not merely to the location of the state at the centre of social life but ‘an ideology extolling its superiority as the highest principle of social organisation, for which Hegel’s “absolutization” of the state...would serve here as a fitting description.’<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, Castells defines Soviet statism as:

a social system organised around the appropriation of the economic surplus produced in society by the holders of power in the state apparatus ... oriented toward power maximising; that is toward increasing the military and ideological capacity of the state apparatus to impose its goals on a great number of subjects and at deeper levels of their consciousness.<sup>55</sup>

Hungarian economist János Kornai also recognises this when he writes that the political-economic structure of Marxism Leninism ‘proliferates with an elemental force, propagating itself and penetrating into every social relationship.’<sup>56</sup>

Yet society clearly lived life free, on the whole, from the direct control or observation of the state. It is easy to think of the USSR as a society in which the state penetrated every level in a panopticon-like state of observation and control.

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<sup>52</sup> Seweryn Bialer gives a brief overview of the political character of the Soviet economy, *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline* New York: Knopf, 1986, pp. 6–7; for other overviews of elements of the economy see above note 46.

<sup>53</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* Oxford: Clarendon, 1976 [orig. 1776].

<sup>54</sup> Moshe Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia: The Drive and Drift of a Superstate* New York: New Press, 1995, p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> Castells, *End of Millennium*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 369.



This was not the case, as the levels of apathy, and alcoholism so dramatically demonstrated in the 1970s and 1980s. It provided for all forms of social need such as education, welfare, and medical care. Its relations with society were not entirely coercive and while a massive political apathy hung over the land, the fact that this mass disenchantment did not translate into direct action was due to the continuing ability of the state to satisfy the basic material needs of society. Yet there was clearly a real ignorance of the nature of the population and its needs and desires. Andropov articulated this when he said, in 1979, '[w]e have not properly studied the society in which we live and work and have not yet fully discovered the laws governing its development, particularly the economic ones.'<sup>57</sup> The Soviet state set out to structure social life in a very particular way. Though it displayed a basic ignorance of the needs of the population, it played an extremely active part in the life of its citizens, through the provision of the entirety of social and economic services expected by its population.

To summarise, the USSR was a protean state. Reliant on informal networks and not formally delineated processes of rule, it lurched from party-launched initiative to initiative, and did not follow or establish clear systems of rule. Its monolithism undermined the practice of authority and decision-makers had little substantive knowledge of the actual workings of the system.<sup>58</sup> Lewin captures its essence well when he writes that the result of years of Soviet rule was 'an economic system without economics and a political system without politics.'<sup>59</sup> The Soviet constellation was huge, disorganised, over-stretched and internationally exposed, at both the strategic and ideological level, to forces well beyond its control and its understanding. In short, the Soviet state can be said to have been an institutional quagmire, an economic nightmare and an ideological powder keg. Indeed, this then returns us to the question with which Chapter Two began: how did the USSR survive for so long? There are a number of tentative answers to this. First, that a high level of coercion had become socially routinised goes some way to explaining the passivity of the populace. Furthermore, there

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Bialer, *Soviet Paradox*, p. 122. This reference to 'laws of development' is revealing. It suggests that they were aware of that their way had problems, yet they were not aware of their flawed understanding of the nature of social life.

<sup>58</sup> This was one of the reasons why, in the crises of the 1980s, Gorbachev found foreign affairs so much more amenable, at least there he knew where he stood.

<sup>59</sup> Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia*, p. 93.

was a unity among the elites regarding power and interests. The second aspect of an explanation is that the Soviet state drew remarkable strength from its hostile international engagement with the liberal capitalist world. One of the key features of the process of Soviet state reproduction was the existence of international sources of power which reinforced its position. It is to these international sources of power that we now turn.

### 3.3 THE INTERNATIONAL SOURCES OF SOVIET STATE POWER

Tilly's argument that the technological requirements of the military revolution required states to increase massively their administrative and coercive capacity led him to the pithy remark that 'war made the state and the state made war.'<sup>60</sup> Such a claim could easily be extended to explain the formation and consolidation of the Soviet state. The exigencies of the post-1917 period drove the Bolsheviks to consolidate their power by increasing massively the administrative, coercive and distributive capacities of the state. The war with the counter-revolutionary forces, both internal and international, solidified the Soviet forms of state and consolidated their power base. The shift to rapid industrialisation and agricultural collectivisation, and away from the NEP of the Lenin period, was a response to the economic and social chaos of the time and was also the best way for the Bolsheviks to perpetuate their Soviet form of rule.<sup>61</sup> From its inception, the international played a central role in shaping the Soviet state. It is worth reiterating here that state power, while formally bounded, has sources and deltas which are substantively cross-border. The modern state is a specific formation of geopolitical space. The appearance of a territorially delimited and circumscribed power is an important product of this formation, it is not a mask but rather a practice which has developed over time. The structures

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<sup>60</sup> Charles Tilly and Gabriel Ardent (eds.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975.

<sup>61</sup> This view is accepted by two scholars with two very different political views: Skocpol in her *Sources of Social Revolution*, pp. 206–35; and Richard Pipes, *Three Whys of the Russian Revolution* London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 63–84, and in his *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*, pp. 436–88; pp. 497–501. Each has, however, a quite distinct interpretation of events.

which create the appearance of firm delineation reinforce the state as a form of rule and are central elements of modern state power.

### 3.3.1 *The Internationalised Soviet State*

The international was at the heart of the Soviet state's constellation; the central organising principles of rule were internationally produced and reliant on developments beyond the state's borders. Furthermore, the international provided the state with a range of material and ideational forces which it could harness. Here we shall consider four general categories of social power that were international in the sense that Soviet state institutions drew on, and were supported by, resources beyond their territorially sovereign sphere. These categories are: structural factors; material factors; social-cultural factors; and international confrontation. This section will examine the ways in which the international system of sovereign states provided the Soviet state with the means to reinforce its system of domination.

#### Structural Elements

The international system confers the possibility of statehood, that is, institutionalised domination of a territory. When an institution of rule is formed and is recognised by other members of the system as being functionally similar, it provides an important, though not final, dimension to that institution's claim to legitimate authority.<sup>62</sup> The international system confers upon a state legitimacy and an element of structural power. Although this does not occur instantaneously, and is a product of specific social practices, over time, the situation becomes normalised and the group which has been able to structure the institutions of rule has a distinct advantage. This was clearly the case in post-revolutionary Russia. The Bolshevik triumph from the chaos that followed their seizure of power gave them not only an institutional edge—they ruled because

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<sup>62</sup> Consider the problems of Afghanistan, or Chechnya given the international unwillingness to recognise those who claim to be their legitimate rulers compared with East Timor or Cambodia.

they could and the liberals and whites could not—but, over time, through international recognition and participation in international life, they achieved an internal legitimacy that no amount of coercion could ever bring about. The international context of their seizure of power did not just necessitate the creation of a dictatorial state and hierarchical structures of coercion and control, it bestowed legitimacy and authority on a newly formed USSR. With the recognition by the USA in 1932, the formation of the USSR as a sovereign state was complete.

### Instrumental Elements

The major means of resource extraction from the international were the export of commodities (due to the Soviet state's monopoly on foreign trade), the sale of the produce of state owned enterprises to other states and the acquisition of goods needed within the USSR such as grain and machine parts. The most important in financial terms were sales to Western capitalist states of wheat in the 1930s and oil and gold in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>63</sup> There were quantities of products exported to non-COMECON states, generally missiles and arms, but these were rarely traded with the West. COMECON states were the source and destination of manufactured goods and components. Importantly, the West and COMECON states were the source of materials which the state required but lacked or could not produce itself such as grain in the 1970s, computer technology, and so on.<sup>64</sup> A remark from the rector of the Soviet Foreign Trade Academy illustrates this:

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<sup>63</sup> In 1978 oil and oil related exports accounted for USD 5.3 billion. On this and Soviet foreign trade more generally see Ed A. Hewett, 'Foreign Economic Relations' in Abram Bergson and Herbert S. Levine (eds.), *The Soviet Economy Towards the Year 2000* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp. 269–310.

<sup>64</sup> See Nove, *Soviet Economic System*; Krylov, *Soviet Economy*, pp. 221–32; IMF, World Bank, OECD and EBRD, *Study of the Soviet Economy Three Volumes*, Paris: Joint Publication of IMF, WB, OECD and EBRD, 1991, Vol. 1, pp. 435–42, Vol. 2, pp. 41–5.

Like other countries, the Soviet Union uses the advantages of foreign economic relations to create additional possibilities for more rapid economic development, higher production efficiency and accelerated scientific and technological progress. In addition, stronger trade and economic ties help promote political relations between countries and improve the international situation.<sup>65</sup>

### Social-Cultural

The third area is the cultural-social, and specifically the utilisation of that most international of ideas, modern nationalism. This aspect manifested itself most obviously in sporting and cultural forms. The Soviets placed a heavy emphasis on international excellence in sport.<sup>66</sup> The arena of international sporting competition, particularly the Olympic games, gave the state a way to demonstrate its superiority in a manner that resonated both domestically and internationally. The second was the cultural-artistic. This appealed less to the sensibilities of much of the CPSU elite, but was found to be a resonant marker with which the Soviets could attach themselves both to the past and the future and demonstrate their part of and superiority to the world at large. The international context of cultural achievement provided a significant source of state affirmation of its ruling principle and domestic legitimacy. This field provided a way for an internationalist ideology to invoke very nationalistic ideals to buttress its claims to rule.

### International Confrontation

Finally, the international confrontation between the liberal-capitalist states and the USSR permeated state structures and became a fundamental element of the state's social power. As set out earlier, from the outset the USSR confronted, and was in confrontation with, the rest of the world. The Allied intervention of 1918–21 was driven largely by the desire to crush the revolution

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<sup>65</sup> Boris Vaganov, 'Foreign Economic Relations' in Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, *Soviet Economy Today: With Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1981–85 and for the Period Ending in 1990* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981, p. 176.

<sup>66</sup> On which see N.N. Shneidman, *The Soviet Road to Olympus: Theory and Practice of Soviet Physical Culture and Sport* London: Routledge and Keagan, 1979.

whose ideas so challenged the world.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the Versailles Treaty had had a profoundly anti-Bolshevik character, derived from the deep-seated hostility held by Wilson and company towards the ideals and aspirations of the Russian Revolution which had become formalised in the principles of state rule.<sup>68</sup> To reiterate the idea set out in Chapter One, ‘international confrontation’ refers to the chronic conflict between social systems which had three dimensions: socio-economic, ideological and geopolitical. It was the product of two rival and mutually contradictory evangelical world views and was, in its latter phase, transformed through the development of mammoth military power and by political developments into the Cold War which established the structural parameters for international politics for its duration.<sup>69</sup> The confrontation may have seemed, during the most tense and frightening moments, to be about nuclear advantage, strategic initiative and megadeaths. It was, in reality, a confrontation about quality of life, about which system would prevail in providing a better life for the mass of people, fought out in the context of the nuclear nightmare.

### 3.3.2 *International Confrontation and Soviet State Structures*

How did this international conflict translate into the stuff of state power? The way in which states conduct their international relations emanates, to a certain extent, from their system of rule. The patterns of state power—liberal-capitalist, centralised-authoritarian, or diffused-absolutist—set limits to the manner in which a state relates to the outside world. The reverse of this claim is also true. The various ways in which a state relates to the rest of the world—through international trade, diplomacy, treaties, organisations or war—shapes the material and ideational conditions of life within the territory and, more specifically, affects the ability of the state to rule. In this vein, Rosenberg writes,

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<sup>67</sup> Though one must emphasise that the counter-revolutionary impulse was not the sole determining factor, the sheer confusion of the time and the particular dilemmas of a nineteenth century power political mind-set attempting to deal with the singular challenge of the twentieth century. For a discussion from such a view point see George F. Kennan, *Soviet American Relations, 1917–20. Volume II: The Decision to Intervene* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958.

<sup>68</sup> On the counter-revolutionary element in the Treaty of Versailles see Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counter-revolution at Versailles, 1918–19* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 36–47.

‘it would be impossible to understand the Soviet presence in the international system in terms of states and markets. It was precisely an attempt to abolish both of them.’<sup>70</sup> It was this, the desire to destroy the system of states and markets within and without, which made the international system such a highly charged arena.<sup>71</sup> But, it was the larger confrontation—of which the Cold War was the second half—which crucially affected some of the key mechanisms of social rule utilised by the Soviet state.

In the Soviet case, the hostile international engagement with the liberal-capitalist states became an embedded element of the state’s structure. Over time, it became a political glue that gave legitimacy to the system of rule, drove its material development, stimulated its economy, and provided it with a dynamic and malleable underlying organisational principle. It should be emphasised that it was not the only thing holding the state together, but it was a central element in the reproduction of state power.

#### International Confrontation and the Idea of Power

The ideational was the broadest sense in which the international conflict became a source of power. It was the international reference point for the revolutionary claims of the state and provided a very real and material dimension—in the dual sense of purpose and direction and also of threat and challenge—to the underlying organisational principle of the state. There were at least five aspects of the way in which the idea of competition and the very real conflict permeated the state and provided it with the means with which the institution could perpetuate its rule. These were: 1) the sense of legitimacy which confrontation bestowed on the state and particularly the CPSU’s efforts to control it; 2) a means for the justification of privations, difficulties and the direction of social life dictated by the state; 3) the provision of a structuring sense

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<sup>70</sup> Justin Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations* London: Verso, 1994, p. 134.

<sup>71</sup> One must not overstate this. While the aim was clearly to live in a communist world, the doctrine of peaceful coexistence became increasingly important as the Cold War wore on. During détente the capitalist world economy became an increasing source of material goods. The belief was that in peaceful conditions the ‘true’ superiority of the Soviet system would become clear. For an articulation of this see N.A. Tikhonov, *Soviet Economy: Achievements, Problems, Prospects* Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1983.

of purpose, that is the system was an embodiment of the belief that humanity could know its problems, correct them and progress to a better way of life; 4) as a source of prestige; and 5) in its dual incarnation as a purpose and a challenge, the international confrontation established a set of political limits for action, and set the parameters of the politically possible in a manner conducive to the CPSU's continued position of dominance within the state. If Whitefield is right to argue that the authority of the political actors in the USSR was weak due to an inability to regulate the mechanisms of power,<sup>72</sup> then one must concede that the international confrontation was a point at which the politicians could activate the potency of the state power that was within their grasp.

The larger historical project of the building of communism, the spread of the revolution and the overthrow of capitalism was to be driven by the successful utilisation of the power capacity of the Soviet state. The ideational aspect was supported by and also drove the material ways in which the state was made strong by the international confrontation. The greatest beneficiary of this was the military. Both technologically and economically, the military threat of the capitalist powers helped the state feed the military and helped the military to fuel the state. This became even more dramatic in the post-war phase. The development path of intensive industrialisation based on the 'metal-eating' outputs was designed to industrialise as rapidly as possible in a manner that would also provide real security from without and an increased means for coercion within. The growth and eventual retardation of the Soviet economy was influenced by the privileging of the military that was facilitated by the international confrontation and perpetuated by its second half, the Cold War.

### International Confrontation and Soviet State Political Economy

The Polish economist Oskar Lange described the Soviet economy as a war economy.<sup>73</sup> He determined that its single purpose of rapid industrialisation in the context of the pursuit of socialism made it similar to a capitalist economy fundamentally reordered by a condition of total war in which everything in the

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<sup>72</sup> Whitefield, *Industrial Power and the Soviet State*.



economy is straining for one end—the defeat of the immediate threat to the state and society. The international confrontation was a structuring element in this war economy; it was the war being fought by the economy. The conflict stimulated the economy and more generally acted as an economic road map. One of the major difficulties in a command economy is the determination of the rational calculation of needs without the meaningful indicators of value, scarcity or worth that are present in a capitalist system. The conflict provided some sense of value and worth from which meaningful, if flawed, decisions could be made. Due to the centrality of the political economy to the Soviet party-state-economy fusion, this aspect will be examined in detail in the following chapter.

### International Confrontation and Political Institutions

The international confrontation penetrated the political institutions in a number of ways. As shown earlier, the ordering of political authority was a product of substantive practice and not of formal allocation. Thus, the conflict provided a means for establishing and reaffirming a functional hierarchy within the various arms of power. Again, it must be stressed that it was not the only way that this occurred, but was one among a number of important means. Furthermore, the confrontation provided a more useful context for the formulation of foreign relations. The Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence had, after WWII, been developed into what has been termed ‘expansive’ peaceful coexistence, but this, combined with the somewhat platitudinous ‘correlation of forces’ was the only informing idea on the practice of Soviet foreign policy. In the face of this, the Cold War phase of the international confrontation provided a clear and immediate organisational framework.<sup>74</sup> This does not mean that Soviet foreign policy can be understood as purely the product of revolutionary rhetoric. Rather, it means that the conflict with the capitalist West provided a more immediate set of markers for the formulation of foreign policy decisions where Marxism-Leninism failed. Finally, the international confrontation penetrated

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<sup>73</sup> Oskar Lange, ‘The Role of Planning in a Socialist Economy’ in Morris Bornstein (ed.), *Comparative Economic Systems: Models and Causes* Homewood, IL: Irwin, 1965, pp. 200–1.

social life. That people lived their lives in the context of the messianic struggle for communism was evident in a number of areas, most prominently in education and the transmission of values and ideas. This is unsurprising given the Leninist faith in praxis and the necessity of theory and ideas in social organisation. Also, in daily life the international confrontation pervaded individuals' lives as it was invoked as the justification for privations, shortages and overly coercive behaviour.

In sum then, the Soviet confrontation with the capitalist West over socio-economic systems, geopolitics and ideology figured highly in the organisation and functioning of the Soviet state. The conflict provided the state with clear and effective sources of social power. Furthermore, the deep penetration of the conflict into the form of the state acutely internationalised the Soviet state. The successful reproduction of its form was reliant on, and sensitive to, matters beyond its borders in a much greater way than liberal-capitalist states.

### Conclusion

The Soviet state, like all states, spilled over its formal boundaries to produce and reproduce itself. It drew on domestic and international sources of power to facilitate its domination over the Soviet citizenry. Unlike most modern states, the Soviet state was extremely rigid and was not able to respond at all well to changes in these conditions. Furthermore, the command economy and the state were so closely linked to the international confrontation that the political-economy became, in many ways, the true battleground of the socio-systemic conflict. In particular, the Soviet state's fate was tied inextricably to two related phenomena: the Cold War and the command economy. Success in one field would mean success in the other, which would ensure the state's strength. Unbeknownst to the leadership, failure in one meant the eventual collapse of the state. Having established the international configuration of the Soviet state and its political patterns more broadly, we must recognise that the political economy of the Soviet Union was of fundamental importance to the playing out of the

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<sup>74</sup> In such a teleological state, in which decision makers placed so much faith in human rationality and a notion of theory, the provision of purpose had a much greater social purchase there than it might have had elsewhere.

international confrontation, its end and the state's demise, and so it is to this field that we turn next.

#### 4 INTERNATIONAL CONFRONTATION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE SOVIET STATE

*We either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries economically... Perish or forge full steam ahead.<sup>1</sup>*

*We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do so, or we shall go under.<sup>2</sup>*

These oft-quoted remarks of Lenin and Stalin reflect the conditions of international competition and hostility that the young Bolshevik regime made for itself. They are usually cited to demonstrate the regime's use of external military pressure to mobilise industrialisation. While this is a legitimate interpretation, their broader meaning must also be recognised: these exhortations illustrate the centrality of modernisation, industrialisation and economic performance to the development of Soviet state power and the international context in which this occurred. As the previous chapter has shown, the Bolsheviks seized the state, took control of the productive forces of Tsarist Russia and set about trying to create a new form of society. This new state self-consciously tried to establish an economic system that was manifestly better than that found in the industrialised-capitalist West. The programme and its institutions were inherently competitive, and it was the claim to moral and economic superiority that laid the seeds of both

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<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, quoted in Hans-Hermann Höhmann, 'The Place of Economic Policy Objectives on the List of Soviet Political Priorities' in Hans-Hermann Höhmann, Alec Nove and Heinrich Vogel (eds.), *Economics and Politics in the USSR: The Problems of Interdependence* Boulder, CO: Westview and Federal Institute for Eastern Europe and International Studies, 1986, pp. 41–57; p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Stalin, 'The Tasks of Business Executives' Speech Delivered at the First All Union Conference of Leading Personnel of Socialist Industry, 4 February 1931, in J.V. Stalin, *Works*

Soviet international confrontation and, ultimately, the failure of the Soviet state. The construction of a highly politicised form of economy was so important to Soviet power because it was the pre-eminent political justification for CPSU rule and because it placed the Soviet party-state-economy fusion directly in an international comparative framework.

The previous chapter has shown the fused nature of the Soviet party-state-economy and examined the first two parts of this triangle. However, as the political-economic programme was of such central importance to the state—it was the purpose of the state and the Bolshevik motivation for seizing of state power—this chapter will explore the political economy of Soviet state power and will use the idea of power-as-practice to shed light on the role of the economy as a reinforcing practice of state power. Specifically, this chapter will explain the way in which the international confrontation was embedded in the structures of the state and will show that the international confrontation helped to produce and reproduce the foundations of state power in such a way that the state would be made strong and then, when the conditions of conflict changed, critically weak. The socio-systemic confrontation, conceived in the sense of both the competition of social systems and the geopolitical challenge discussed in Chapter One,<sup>3</sup> helped shape the contours of the economy and, due to the political fusion of state power set out in the previous chapter, overtly politicised its workings and performance. The international confrontation provided a macro criterion of value for the Soviet economy—indeed for the state more broadly—and hence became an important part of the ideological and political glue which made the fusion of state-party-economy more robust.

The chapter has three parts. The first will argue that the Soviet political economy can be characterised as a ‘war economy.’ This illustrates the singularity of the Soviet economy and sheds light on the role played by the international confrontation in the development of the economic system. The second will then use this characterisation as the basis for an analysis of the Soviet economy. This

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Volume 13, July 1930–January 1934, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955 [orig. 1949], pp. 31–44, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 34–47. International confrontation refers to the chronic antagonism which existed between the Soviet Union and the capitalist West. While the confrontation varied in intensity, it had three main dimensions: socio-economic competition; geopolitical conflict; and

section will use a comparative economic systems schema to elucidate the influence of international confrontation on the economy. The final section will show how these international elements developed certain weak spots, or fissures, in the state. This thesis contends that the end of the Cold War robbed the Soviet state of a crucial source of social power and thus contributed to the state's vulnerability. The chapter does not seek to explain *why* the Soviet economy performed so poorly, nor why it seemed to implode in the late 1980s. Rather, it seeks to establish the extent to which the international context of Soviet state power shaped its economy so that one may determine the extent to which a change in that international context would destabilise aspects of state power.

#### 4.1 THE SOVIET ECONOMY AS A WAR ECONOMY

*I think that, essentially, it [the Soviet economy] can be described as a sui generis war economy. Such methods of war economy are not peculiar to socialism because they are also used in capitalist countries in wartime.<sup>4</sup>*

The Soviet Union was always at war. The civil war, the Great Patriotic War, the Cold War and the Afghan War were all conflicts that were central to Soviet life. For 49 of the 74 years of its existence, the Soviet Union was in overt conflict with outside powers. By considering the Stalinist purges, collectivisation and forced industrialisation as a war conducted by the state on Soviet society, one could add yet more years to this total. One could reasonably claim that the Soviet state was born of war, tempered by its heat and ultimately destroyed by its permanence.<sup>5</sup> Given such a historical legacy, it should be uncontroversial to characterise the political economy of the Soviet Union as a war economy. This description does not derive simply from the historical circumstances of war, but from the broader economic goal which the Bolshevik revolutionaries set for

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ideological challenge. At its base it was a conflict between two antagonistic and mutually contradictory social systems over which could provide the superior way of life.

<sup>4</sup> Oskar Lange, 'The Role of Planning in a Socialist Economy' in Morris Bornstein (ed.), *Comparative Economic Systems: Models and Causes* Homewood, IL: Irwin, 1965, pp. 200–1.

<sup>5</sup> For a similar interpretation, though only in passing, see Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941–1991* London: Routledge, 1995, p. 371.

themselves: surpassing capitalism.<sup>6</sup> Since 1928, when the foundations for the Soviet economy were set in place, the Soviet economy was at war; it was at war with capitalism.

The broader idea of the Soviet economy as a 'war economy' is not new. Lange used the notion to illuminate the nature and development of early socialist planning and its purposive affinities to the phenomenon of 'war economy' in the capitalist world.<sup>7</sup> He is not alone in touching on this idea, Burks writes that

the Russian version of the centrally planned economy is an extreme form of the kind of economy a Western industrial state might develop for the purpose of waging a prolonged and decisive war. In Soviet Russia, preparation for war, or the waging of it, has been the overwhelming concern of the rulers of the country for the last 57 years. It would not be far from the truth to assert that in an international situation of nuclear stalemate, waging a 'cold war' is a necessary correlate of a command economy of the Soviet type.<sup>8</sup>

Marie Lavigne echoes this sentiment, noting that conditions for planning are ideal in wartime because there are only a few, very clear priorities, there is an obvious objective and it can be implemented with rigid discipline.<sup>9</sup>

Others have characterised the Soviet economy in different ways. These views tend to come from the left and specifically from those who argue that the USSR was not in any meaningful sense a socialist economy. Harding maintains that the Soviet state was an 'organic labour state', that is, a state which serves the prerequisites of the productive system and in which all elements of society—political systems, workers, classes, etc.—are directed to the maximisation of productive capacity.<sup>10</sup> His argument sheds an interesting light on the economy's obsession with productive capacity to the detriment of other aspects of social life, but his representation is too deterministic. He overlooks precisely who or what

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<sup>6</sup> In the sense that the Bolsheviks clearly set out to establish a superior economic system that would usher in a new historical phase. As Harding shows, while underlying motivation remained the same, the means to achieve this changed once they had seized power. See Neil Harding, 'Socialism, Society and the Organic Labour State' in Neil Harding (ed.), *The State in Socialist Society* Basingstoke: Macmillan and St Antony's College, 1984, pp. 1–50.

<sup>7</sup> Lange, 'The Role of Planning in a Socialist Economy'.

<sup>8</sup> R.V. Burks, 'The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union' in Alexander Shtromas and Morton A. Kaplan (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future. Volume 1: System and State* New York: Paragon and PWWA, 1989, pp. 115–65; p. 120.

<sup>9</sup> Marie Lavigne, *The Economic Transition: From Socialist Economy to Market Economy* Second Edition, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Harding, 'Socialism, Society and the Organic Labour State'.

was directing the nature of production. Furthermore, Harding ignores the international dimensions of both the state and the nature of production, thus creating a rather artificial concept. The characterisation set out here overcomes this weakness by placing the political economy of Soviet power in the context of the international competition which shaped its development.

Cliff's theory of state capitalism is a more extreme view. His theory essentially argues that, because the means of production in the USSR were still owned by the state, and not held in common, and because the workers were still subjugated to a ruling class, the state was in essence capitalist.<sup>11</sup> His argument is damaged by the teleological assumptions which underpin it, and from the presumption of the historical correctness of Marx's theory of value and notions of crisis. Furthermore, Cliff completely overlooks the significant ways in which the Soviet economy was distinct from a capitalist one. Good examples of this were the allocative mechanism and the incentives and purposes of production. Moreover, he utterly neglects state power as a specific autonomous form of social power. Thus, his reductive understanding of the economy is one which not only ignores the international confrontation and its role in the development of Soviet power, but also does not consider the ways in which the Soviet economic system was clearly different from capitalism.

The characterisation of war economy here derives from a larger view of the Soviet economic system and is distinct from Harding and Cliff's views. This view highlights two important aspects of the Soviet economy: first, it clarifies the way in which the Soviet competition with the liberal capitalist West established priorities and objectives and shaped the institutional implementation of the economy; second, it demonstrates the singularity and rigidity of the Soviet political economy and the resulting rigidity of the state.

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<sup>11</sup> Tony Cliff, *State Capitalism in Russia* Revised Edition, London: Bookmarks, 1996.



### 4.1.1 Defining a War Economy

The notion of a ‘war economy’ derives from the term used to describe the characteristics of a liberal-capitalist economy after its transformation in conditions of total war. The term refers not to the threat, nor the fight itself, but to the functioning of the economy after its restructuring for the purpose of fighting the war. During conditions of total war, a liberal capitalist state exerts its considerable muscle to the fullest extent to recast its economy so as to fight off the immediate and massive threat to its existence or to project a massive challenge to other states. This temporary transformation is radical and, because of this, the threat or objective has to be clear, present and overwhelming to demand such a dramatic overhaul. A good example of this was Britain during World War II. The government was reluctant to undertake such a shift and impose the necessary strictures, but the Nazi challenge required it.<sup>12</sup>

An important characteristic of a liberal-capitalist economy is that it has no purpose.<sup>13</sup> It exists as an aggregate of transactions in a more or less regulated market-place in which participants may be individuals, groups, firms or states. Production occurs in a system of consumer choice and for the purpose of profit. Arguments that such economies serve the purposes of the ruling class or the state, or that the purpose of the economy is to feed, employ or enrich the population, do not undermine the argument that the economy *as a whole* has no purpose in an instrumental sense. The very principles upon which the system operates—private property, free exchange, legitimate profit—do not allow the

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<sup>12</sup> W.K. Hancock, *The British War Economy* London: HMSO, 1949. Interestingly, the British felt the need to formulate proper legislation permitting the concentration of emergency powers in the central government as they had lost a number of legal actions taken by citizens during and after World War I against unreasonable action, see pp. 83–8 for details. Hancock’s comment is telling: ‘In its organisations for the country’s war effort, the British Government was never hampered by the insufficiency of legal powers; but it held these powers subject to good behaviour, as a trust bestowed upon it by Parliament and people for a *specific purpose within a specific period of emergency*.’ Italics added, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> This refers to an absence of a specifically *instrumental* purpose. Many have argued that the purpose of a liberal economy is the impersonal regulation of transactions and others would argue that the philosophical justification of freedom is its purpose. For examples of this see: John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* Volumes II and III of *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965, see particularly Books IV and V; Friedrich von Hayek, *Law Legislation and Liberty: A New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy* Three Volumes, London: Routledge Kegan and Paul, 1982, see particularly *Volume 1: Rules and Order*.

imposition of an overarching instrumental end. Under conditions of total war, states fundamentally reorder their economies to impose an end, that is, to fight off a threat.<sup>14</sup> In reorienting the economy to serve a purpose a state must temporarily suspend the principles and proper functioning of the liberal-capitalist system. Such singularity can only be forced under extreme circumstances and the conditions will not be tolerated once the objective has been achieved.

A war economy can be thought of as having the following characteristics. First, war provides an overwhelming objective for economic activity. Economic activity no longer turns on profit and loss but on the requirements for waging and winning war as dictated by the state. Second, the threat of war provides a means for prioritising economic activity, for example, giving the production of fighter planes priority over tractors or railroad carriages over automobiles. Rather than taking instructions from profit motive, market signals and price information, production priorities are determined by different messages: instructions from the centre, material limits of supply and so on. Third, the intentions in the economy change at the micro level. At the micro level objectives cease to be about profitability or market share but about fulfilment of instructions and state requirements.<sup>15</sup> Fourth, the war economy establishes quite different rules to which the participants must adhere. These changes tend to affect private parties' legal obligations to the state and the like, rather than entailing fundamental shifts in forms of ownership, property rights or contractual arrangements. For example, certain forms of economic activity previously considered legitimate are outlawed, such as black market trade in food, hoarding or trade with certain other parties such as the enemy; punishments for transgression can similarly increase in severity. Finally, because the war economy is a different framework in which economic activity occurs, sociological shifts can be produced by the social changes engendered by the transformation. This refers to changes in the social and political dimensions of life. These may manifest themselves in morale shifts amongst the population, or changes in dietary, political or social expectations. In

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<sup>14</sup> On this see generally John J. Carson, *Manpower for Victory: Total Mobilization for Total War* New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1943; Burnham P. Beckwith, *Total War: The Economic Theory of a War Economy* Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1943; Berenice A. Carroll, *Design for Total War: Arms and Economics in the Third Reich* The Hague: Mouton, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> While objectives might have changed, firms are still permitted to make a profit or a loss and the leniency of states on bankrupt businesses tends not to increase too markedly.

short, in capitalist states the existence of a war economy is a fundamental but temporary break with previous socio-economic structures. This disturbance in the economic framework alters the social ground on which the economy is built.

In a liberal-capitalist economy, a condition of 'war economy' can be said to involve these five changes. But to characterise the Soviet economy as a war economy requires a slightly broader categorical schema because of the scale of the Soviet economy and the fact that its economy was not a temporary transformation of a liberal order. To this end, the concept of 'war economy' denotes the condition in which a state's economy has a clear purpose, ordered priorities, obvious objectives, particular rules of economic relations which derive from the over-riding war purpose and a framework of relations established by this specific aim. Most importantly, these conditions should be the norm of economic relations and should persist over a period of time. It is the duration and permanence of these conditions which clearly differentiates a war economy from a liberal capitalist one; the liberal system is marked by the absence of an overt instrumental socio-political purpose over the longer-term.

The Soviet economy clearly exhibited these five characteristics. It displayed a purposive economic direction, it had clearly established economic priorities with visible objectives, rules and frameworks related to the purpose. The question then is not whether there *was* an underlying purpose, but *what* that purpose or purposes might have been. Höhmann argues that the purpose of the economy was the building of communism,<sup>16</sup> the IMF claims that it was to catch up with the West through a 'dash for growth',<sup>17</sup> and Nove contends that it was to legitimate and reinforce CPSU rule.<sup>18</sup> These are the three most common views of the purpose of economic activity in the USSR. However, they are not mutually exclusive interpretations; they fit together if one takes as a unifying purpose the victory over the capitalist West through the provision of a superior economic form. Thus the 'war' of the war economy was the competition for the hearts and minds of people. The purpose, in simple terms, was the overtaking of capitalist socio-economic development by the Soviet communist model.

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<sup>16</sup> Höhmann, 'The Place of Economic Policy Objectives', p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> IMF et al, *A Study of the Soviet Economy* Paris: Joint Publication of the IMF, World Bank, OECD, EBRD, 1991, Volume 1, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Alec Nove, *The Soviet Economic System* Third Edition, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, p. 3.

This broader aim established the context of these three interpretations of purpose set out above: the building of communism; the catch-up with the West; and the legitimacy of CPSU rule. Nove writes that the stated aim of the leadership was to 'build communism' and that this aim 'legitimizes the monopoly rule of the CPSU, *which claims to lead the people to this objective.*'<sup>19</sup> Yet it is wrong to imply that the Soviet state was merely an edifice for the maintenance of CPSU power, the vested interests within the CPSU. The beliefs of the elites and their actions clearly indicate that CPSU rule was about more than simply clinging to power by whatever means necessary. The unifying thread which gave the three purposes of the economy greater coherence and helped to turn the instrumentalism of the economy into an effective means of state rule was the international confrontation with the capitalist West.

#### 4.1.2 *International Confrontation and the Soviet War Economy*

It is not enough to identify the underlying purpose and then be satisfied that the Soviet Union had a war economy. We need to show specifically *how* the international posture of the Soviet Union penetrated the state's economic institutions. There were five central ways in which the Soviet confrontation with the capitalist West contributed to the shaping of the economic system: the conflict provided a *telos*; it helped to establish settings and priorities; it provided a singularity of purpose; it built structural problems into the system; and it gave a concrete grounding for the relationship between legitimacy and ideology which facilitated the efficacy of the CPSU's grip on state power.

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<sup>19</sup> Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 3, italics added. For a recent articulation of this see N.A. Tikhonov, *Soviet Economy: Achievements, Problems and Prospects* Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1983. For a similar articulation see Tigran Khachaturov, 'Introduction' in Novosti Press Agency, *Soviet Economy Today: With Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1981–85 and for the Period Ending in 1990* Moscow and Westport, CT: Novosti Press Agency and Greenwood Press, 1981, pp. 3–16, particularly p. 10 and p. 16.

## Telos

Laïdi writes that the Cold War was a teleological international system which bound peoples' ideas and states' interests into an inescapable system of meaning.<sup>20</sup> Such a system of meaning was clearly present in the Soviet Union; indeed the project of the Bolshevik revolution had been world-wide revolution, that is, a projection of Laïdi-type meaning upon the world.<sup>21</sup> The implication of Laïdi's view is that we need to take a step back from the teleological implications of the Cold War for the international system, and to address the *source* of that teleology. If the notion of a *telos* is understood as an endpoint for social development which is *linked* with a specific means for achieving that end, then it is clear that the Soviet social system generally, and the economic system specifically, were profoundly teleological. The *telos* of the Soviet economy was the provision of a 'better life' through the conquering of the capitalist social system by a supposedly superior rational planning system which resolved the irrationalities of the market process of allocation and accumulation. This endpoint was not merely present at the metaphysical level. The importance of an all encompassing political project to the organisation and functioning of the economy was clear and most striking in three specific economic areas: the decision-making process; the planning mechanism;<sup>22</sup> and the price system.<sup>23</sup>

The Marxist-Leninist disposition of the CPSU made fertile ground for principle-driven economic decisions. The *telos* of war economy gave the Soviet

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<sup>20</sup> Zaki Laïdi, *A World Without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics* London: Routledge, 1998, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> Laïdi writes that 'meaning' involves 'a triple notion of foundation, unity and final goal. "Foundation" meaning the basic principle on which a collective project depends; "unity" meaning that "world images" are collected into a coherent plan of the whole; and "end" or "final goal", meaning projection towards an elsewhere that is deemed to be better.' Laïdi, *A World Without Meaning*, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> On economic planning see: Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, pp. 17–47; Peter Rutland, *The Myth of the Plan: Lessons of Soviet Planning Experience* London: Hutchison, 1985, pp. 101–67; Abram Bergson, *The Economics of Soviet Planning* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964; Fyodor I. Kushnirsky, *Soviet Economic Planning, 1965–1980* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980; and Paul R. Gregory and Robert C. Stuart, *Russian and Soviet Economic Performance and Structure* Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2001, pp. 89–111.

<sup>23</sup> On Soviet pricing mechanisms see Nove, *Soviet Economic System*, pp. 173–99; Ed A. Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1988, pp. 130–5; János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of*

economy a reasonably coherent framework of social meaning with which it could ground policy decisions and economic action. There is a well-worn story which illustrates this. A Soviet economist at a conference was overheard saying to a colleague 'when the revolution comes, we will have to keep one capitalist country so that we know what level to set prices at.'<sup>24</sup>

Each of these three systems—decision-making, planning and price—clearly required specific decisions based on information about the economy. The Soviets fiercely rejected market information systems, thus, information had to be derived in different ways. The system which was used essentially meant that both macro and micro decisions were based on specific principles rather than other more objective measures. At the macro level, each Five Year Plan and its mindless optimism was influenced by both the aim to improve the previous levels of production and the desire to catch-up and over-take the West in production levels.<sup>25</sup> For an example from the micro level, the absurdly expensive retail food price subsidies had a dual political purpose: to provide basic material goods at a very cheap price *unlike capitalist states*, where the irrationalities of the market ruled and the state rarely intervened; and to keep the people placated.<sup>26</sup> The damaging isolation of the economy from the world markets—the prime aim of which was to shield the economy from externally driven price fluctuations—is a further example of the impetus that the war economy had on economic decisions.<sup>27</sup> When a decision was to be taken, the information which formed the basis on which it was made was derived from information systems

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*Communism* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, pp. 146–159; and Alan Abouchar (ed.), *The Socialist Price Mechanism* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977.

<sup>24</sup> This story has been attributed to at least Wladimerz Brusz, Alec Nove, and an anonymous Czechoslovak economist; it is most likely apocryphal.

<sup>25</sup> On the Five Year Plans see Nove, *An Economic History*; and on the Stalinist approach to economic development see Robert W. Campbell, *The Failure of Soviet Economic Planning: System, Performance, Reform* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992, pp. 33–48; for detail on the pre-World War II plans see R.W. Davies, Mark Harrison, and S.G. Wheatcroft (eds.), *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, and from 1965 see Kushnirsky, *Soviet Economic Planning*.

<sup>26</sup> On the retail price subsidies see Marshall I. Goldman, *The USSR in Crisis: The Future of an Economic System* New York: W.W. Norton, 1983, pp. 66–77; Zhores Medvedev, 'What Caused the Collapse of the USSR' in *International Affairs (Moscow)* 44.2, 1998, pp. 84–95.

<sup>27</sup> On foreign trade and economic relations see Ed A. Hewett, 'Foreign Economic Relations' in Abram Bergson and Herbert S. Levine (eds.), *The Soviet Economy Towards the Year 2000* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp. 269–310; and Marshall I. Goldman, 'The Changing Role of Raw Material Export and Soviet Foreign Trade' in Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change* Washington DC: USGPO, 1979, Volume 1, pp. 177–95.

characterised by principle and value-driven processes and not information reflecting accurate measures of social need, cost or scarcity. The confrontation with the West established parameters in which these principles could have a meaningful impact on decision-making. The underlying *telos* played a clear functional role in the Soviet economy.

Related to this functional role, Burks writes that the Soviet system needed a supernal mission to hold it together. Although he does not explain why this should be the case, he claims that:

[t]o operate successfully, a polity of this nature must be charged with an overriding objective such as the need to manage a world revolution, build socialism in one country, or repulse the invasion of an overpowering hereditary enemy.<sup>28</sup>

He implies that there was a need for some sort of emergency sociological ‘glue’ to keep the political-economic system working, and, to an extent he is right. However, he is wrong to spread the ‘objectives’ so widely and to overlook the broader social framework which gave each of the points he draws out salience; that is, the confrontation with the capitalist West. The international hostility of the struggle between economic systems established the context for claims about socialism in one country, the defeat of fascism, the promotion of world revolution, and the overtaking of capitalism. The immediate challenges meant that this larger context was able to have a firm and coherent purchase on the minds of the elite and helped these ideas to resonate with the society at large. In sum, the international confrontation provided a *telos* to a war economy system. It gave a sharper edge—in both the narrow geopolitical sense, but also in the broader socio-economic system sense—to the invocation to ‘build communism’. The political economy was given a purpose, a direction to head towards and a framework with which principle could be translated into specific economic decisions.

The *telos* of socio-systemic competition found fertile ground in the Soviet political system of ‘theorised’ Marxism-Leninism. The competition penetrated the economy through the provision of specific patterns of planning and price systems and provided a broader sociological bonding mechanism which, in

holding the system together, helped to strengthen state power. The *telos* suffused the system, helped to give it a coherent framework and was central to prescribing the clear limits and boundaries of acceptable political discourse and decisions.

### Priorities

Beyond the context of *telos*, the confrontation with the West was a central touchstone for planners and decision-makers who established the settings and priorities of the economic system. Under Stalin, the Soviets established an economic system predicated on extensive growth with a specific focus on heavy industry and military production.<sup>29</sup> While Khrushchev and Brezhnev made repeated declarations to move priorities away from Type A production,<sup>30</sup> in terms of the allocation of resources, investment and manpower, heavy industry continued to predominate.<sup>31</sup>

Castells notes that the Soviet economy had a logic of 'cascading priorities' which made economic development so successful in its first twenty years. These prioritised tiers were: 1) agriculture had to feed the cities and labour had to move to industry; 2) consumer goods had to concede to capital goods (type A); 3) heavy industry had to be subordinate to military requirements which were, he argues, the cornerstone of the system.<sup>32</sup> Castells's characterisation is a useful one, as it focuses on the political nature of the priorities of the economy and hence on the political moulding of economic structures. However, there is an underlying one-dimensional military imperative driving Castells's cascade of tiers. According to his logic, military pre-dominance derived from some unidentified imperative of the system which might have been realist-geopolitical, revolutionary-internationalist or some combination of the two. If one puts the

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<sup>28</sup> Burks, 'The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union', p. 149.

<sup>29</sup> On the Stalinist basis of the economic system see Nove, *An Economic History*, pp. 159–225; Alex F. Dowlah and John E. Elliott, *The Life and Times of Soviet Socialism* Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997, pp. 67–103; and on the prioritisation of these elements leading to the singularisation of production see Goldman, *The USSR in Crisis*, pp. 47–62.

<sup>30</sup> This was the Soviet notation for heavy-capital intensive production, as opposed to Type B which referred to light industry production such as consumer goods.

<sup>31</sup> On this see Dowlah and Elliott, *The Life and Times of Soviet Socialism*, pp. 126–31; and Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, pp. 227–38.



conquering of capitalism, in both the military and socio-economic sense, as the cornerstone of Castells' schema, then the logic of the system is located in a dynamic historical-political context. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of the international stance of the Soviet regime to its own macro-priorities and its economic structures.

The broader set of priorities established a clear focus with which to determine particular economic settings. For example, Lavigne argues that decisions on economic settings, plans and the like derived from five priorities: investment over consumption; industry over other branches; heavy industry over other industry; productive over non-productive; and capitalist encirclement leading to war preparation and the dominance of military industrial production.<sup>33</sup> As Nove writes, 'investment decisions [became] a function of politically determined priorities and their material-balance logic.'<sup>34</sup> The political nature of the economic decision-making process required a political framework. International confrontation with the West provided this backstop and the economic context of a higher order which shaped the nature of such decisions. The ordering of the priorities of the economy derived from the broader context which, in turn, established a framework that helped to produce specific decisions such as plan calculations, price setting, and the allocation of investment. The internationalised nature of the economic order—resulting from the international confrontation—helped to shape the actual form and running of the economy, though, of course, it was not the *only* consideration in the decision-makers' minds.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Manuel Castells, *Information Age: Economy, Society, Culture. Volume 3. End of Millennium* Oxford: Blackwells, 1998, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Lavigne, *The Economic Transition*, p. 50

<sup>34</sup> Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 145.

<sup>35</sup> There was a host of other considerations such as short-term party politicking, and so on, but the international confrontation set limits and parameters for action.

## Telos, Singularity and its Problems

Above all, a war economy must have a clear and identifiable overarching purpose. The purposiveness of the macro-economic system, despite its chaotic micro-manifestations, clearly distinguished the Soviet system from a traditional liberal-capitalist one. The imposition of a singular and politically defined purpose on an economy and society was to have unforeseen consequences. Specifically, the playing out of the *telos* in a highly singular fashion had two significant implications: singularity built in specific problems and left them uncorrected; and singularity encouraged a systemic reliance on coherence and unity which prevented problems from being acknowledged and made the system rigid.

The Soviet economy had an overarching singular purpose: to build communism through a 'historically superior' form of production and so provide a qualitatively and quantitatively better life for the Soviet people than that provided in the West. The means the regime chose to fulfil this purpose had a number of effects such as the maintenance of power by the CPSU, corruption, and military predominance. However, the most obvious manifestation of the singularity of purpose was the establishment of a cascading set of priorities. The nature of these priorities built the problems of the hypertrophic system into its foundations. Writing on the system's economic decline prior to its collapse, Ellman and Kontorovitch rightly point out: 'The ultimate causes of the slow-down are all rooted in the fundamental characteristics of the Soviet system.'<sup>36</sup> Like many analysts, they argue that the larger structural problems of the Soviet economy were an inevitable product of the particular nature of Soviet economic development and that these problems were thrown into stark relief in the context of a far more robust global capitalist economy.<sup>37</sup> The singular purpose drove an

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovitch, 'Overview' in Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet Economic System* London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 1–39; p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> Some authors who note these fundamental problems of the economy include: Goldman, *USSR in Crisis*; Vladimir Kontorovitch, 'The Current State of the Soviet Economy: Deepening Crisis or Recovery?' in Alexander Shtromas and Morton A. Kaplan (eds.) *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future. Volume 2: Economy and Society* New York: Paragon and PWPA, 1989, pp. 8–30; Sei Fujita, *The Soviet Economy as a Social Experiment: Lessons from the Twentieth*

economic strategy that had profound problems at its base. These problems were exacerbated by the relative nature of the purpose. The economy and society could only make sense in an international *relational* fashion, and, as history has shown, the dynamic nature of capitalism and the static development of the Soviet war economy made the structural limitations of Soviet economy glaringly obvious.<sup>38</sup>

The Soviet system was a tightly bound and coherent system. Its power and strength relied on a logic of unity. Some have used the metaphor of 'USSR Inc.' to convey the unity of the system.<sup>39</sup> This is useful in that it portrays the centralisation of the system and the fact that the CPSU ran the economy virtually *in toto*, but it does not convey the rigidity of the system. The Soviet economy had a set of hierarchical elements in which 'the sum of the parts makes up an integral whole.'<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the system could not cope with economic relationships and institutions that were inimical to it, such as market exchanges, or a free press.

The rapid unravelling of the system in the late Gorbachev period illustrated the reliance of the system on a singular logic, as well as demonstrating that the leadership clearly did not understand how tightly bound the socio-economic system was. As Yuri Orlov, writing in the *New York Times* in 1991, argues:

Gorbachev understood nothing when he began.... All he knew was that socialism must be improved. His idea was simple, and close to Western thinking: if you take socialism and add democracy and free speech, all will be well. But what he discovered was that the system designed by Lenin was such that once you pulled out one brick, the whole thing fell apart.

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Century Osaka: Osaka University of Economics and Law Press, 1999; William Easterly and Stanley Fischer, *The Soviet Economic Decline: Historical and Republican Data* Cambridge, MA: National Bureau for Economic Research, Working Paper 4735, 1994; Padma Desai, *The Soviet Economy: Problems and Prospects* Oxford: Blackwell, 1987; Gur Ofer, *Soviet Economic Growth: 1928-1985* Los Angeles: RAND/UCLA Centre for the Study of Soviet International Behaviour, 1988.

<sup>38</sup> On the relative nature of the problems see Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet Economic System*; Kornai, *The Socialist System*, particularly Chapter 16 and Goldman, *USSR in Crisis*. He portrays this well: 'As long as Soviet citizens look only to their past, they have plenty to be grateful for. However, if they look ahead or even sideways to Western Europe or even Asia, then there is likely to be considerable resentment and bitterness.' p. 100.

<sup>39</sup> Trevor Buck and John Cole, *Modern Soviet Economic Performance* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987, pp. 1-7; Nove, *Economic System*, pp. 235-7

<sup>40</sup> Kornai, *The Socialist System*, p. 366.

Now he's trying to push the brick back in. This is the farce and the tragedy.<sup>41</sup>

The party-state-economy triad was a rigid structure. It was a tightly bound interlocking set of institutions, but one that could not be changed in any profound sense, neither in principle, structure nor values. This rigidity was a part of the foundation stone of the Soviet system and derived directly from the state's Stalinist footing. It is important to stress that the war economy was not the *sole* cause, but a contributing factor to this unrecognised built-in obsolescence and rigidity.

As economies develop and industrialise they become more complex. Elements of the system can develop dynamics of their own which are related to, but independent from, the underlying structures of the economy. This process can produce what may be called the problems of permanence. In a war economy, such developments can seriously undermine the system, both in terms of economic function and socio-political rule. The problems of permanence had, in the USSR, two major implications. For the USSR, the success of development in areas such as education and social welfare meant that there were sociological changes in societal expectations and demands with which the state could not cope. In a more typical war economy situation, that is, one of limited duration, the objectives remain clear and focused. In the Soviet instance, as time went on, the objectives of an economy structured around goals and objectives began to be unclear both to society at large, as well as to the elites. The goal became perpetually deferred to the point where no one, not even the elites, truly believed it would be achieved. Related to this was the basic problem of morale in which a population and state reared in a system defined by a clear purpose loses its way as the purposiveness seeps away. In short, the singularity of purpose of a war economy helped to organise the economy, but it entrenched a static rigidity and the problems of permanence into its foundations.

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<sup>41</sup> Yuri F. Orlov, in the *New York Times* 10 February 1991, p. A4.

## War Economy and the CPSU

The term war economy has been chosen not simply because of the mechanical similarities, but also because of the way it emphasises the penetration of international hostility into domestic state structures, and hence into society more broadly. Specifically, this characterisation emphasises the centrality of international confrontation to the state and therefore, to the CPSU. As Shtromas and Kaplan write, 'its [the CPSU's] monopoly of power depends on its remaining the master of economic enterprise.'<sup>42</sup> The CPSU's claim to legitimate power was initially predicated on the Leninist notion that the Bolshevik party was the agent of historical forces that were about to engulf the world. Their faith was not rewarded and the principles of legitimate rule were reformulated; their claim to the right to rule became linked to the ideology of the construction of communism within, and the surpassing of capitalism without. The core principle of the economic system was that the CPSU must have institutionalised command of all major aspects of economic activity.<sup>43</sup> Because of this, the economy's control and success were central to the party's ability to retain its hold on power. As Nove writes, 'the underlying principles on which the economy [was] run imply that the Soviet planning apparatus and political leadership claims to know what society needs and issues *instructions* so that the needs of society are met.'<sup>44</sup>

The war economy helped the CPSU strike a chord of legitimacy within and below. By presenting itself as the defender of the Soviet state and society from without as well as the provider of a better life within, the CPSU achieved the necessary legitimacy to rule. Most importantly, the international posture gave the party an exclusive position of political power and established a limit to possible political and economic action within the state. These commitments established limits to the politically feasible forms of economic change, structure and reform. Market options were out of the question, private ownership and profit incentives were unthinkable. Also, it established clear and tangible criteria for failure which, by the 1970s began to become clear to certain elements of the

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<sup>42</sup> Shtromas and Kaplan, 'Introduction' in Shtromas and Kaplan (eds.) *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future. Volume 2*, pp. xi–xxxiii; p. xv.

<sup>43</sup> On this formal principle see Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, p. 101.

leadership.<sup>45</sup> The war economy's aim was the overtaking of capitalism in a political *and* economic sense, and on both fronts the system manifestly failed even to keep up. Ultimately, the confrontation with the capitalist West—which became institutionalised in the structures of the economy—helped to translate a broader ideological belief system into a specific decision-making framework.

## 4.2 INTERNATIONAL CONFRONTATION AND THE SOVIET ECONOMY

Hewett notes that to distinguish economic systems from one another it can be instructive to focus on three elements: the decision-making hierarchy, which has the responsibility and power over resource allocation; the information system, which provides decision-makers with the data to base actions on; and the incentive systems which are deployed by the elite to induce resource allocation.<sup>46</sup> This three part schema will be the framework used to show the ways in which the international confrontation shaped the structures of the economic system by addressing three questions: how did the confrontation shape the actions of those who had power to determine resource allocation; how did it influence their information systems; and how was the international confrontation used to motivate and induce resource allocation mechanisms.

Before we go further, it is helpful to consider the basic pattern and characteristics of the Soviet economic system. The Soviet system of economic organisation had five key characteristics: 1) state ownership of virtually all forms of production; 2) a highly centralised bureaucratic system co-ordinating economic activity; 3) a mono-hierarchical decision-making system; 4) economic exchanges that were planned in an imperative style based on physical measurement; and 5) an overwhelming predominance of the CPSU over the state

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<sup>44</sup> Nove, *Economic System*, p. 9, italics in original.

<sup>45</sup> One moment which sparked Gorbachev's mind on the need for reform was a trip to Canada where he saw, first hand, just how far behind the West the USSR was. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* London: Bantam, 1997 [orig.1995], pp. 190–2.

<sup>46</sup> Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, p. 98. He derives the schema from John Michael Montias, *The Structure of Economic Systems* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976.

and economy.<sup>47</sup> These characteristics emphasise the centrality of the party and the political-economic nature of the institutional relationships. The Soviet economy produced very specific phenomena which derived from these institutions and their activities, the most notable of which were: forced growth; under-employment; chronic shortages; poor quality and quantity of consumer goods; declining growth rates over the long term; low productivity; and an inability to adapt technology to the productive process. This has led some to describe the Soviet economy as having been a shortage economy.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Decision-Making Hierarchy

Within this broader context, how were the actions of the elite influenced by the conditions of international confrontation? First, and most obviously, the confrontation—particularly in the Cold War phase—established and reinforced both the militarisation of the economy and the decision to devote the highest levels of investment and the best manpower to the military-industrial sector. As a consequence, design and procurement systems which were different from the rest of the economy were also produced.<sup>49</sup> This ensured that the military got the best planners and managers and, as the state was the only customer, the sector had a

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<sup>47</sup> This view and the following discussion is derived from the following sources on the economic system, non-Soviet: Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*; Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet Economic System*; IMF et al., *A Study of the Soviet Economy* Vols. 1–3; David Lane, *Soviet Economy and Society* Oxford: Blackwell, 1985; Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change* Washington DC: USGPO, 1979, Volume 1; Nicolas Spulber, *Restructuring the Soviet Economy: In Search of the Market* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991. Soviet sources: Tikhonov, *Soviet Economy*; Novosti Press Agency, *Soviet Economy Today*; Central Statistical Administration, *The USSR Economy: A Statistical Abstract* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1957; and Goskomstat, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo CCCP za 70 Let* Moscow: Finansii i statistika, 1987.

<sup>48</sup> The notion of a shortage economy in the Soviet style command economy is best examined by János Kornai, *The Economics of Shortage* Two Volumes, Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1980. While the text is primarily focused on Hungary, the broader theory is relevant to our case.

<sup>49</sup> On which see Seweryn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline* Knopf: New York, 1986; on the military dimensions of the economy more generally see Henry S. Rowen and Charles Woll (eds.), *The Impoverished Superpower: Perestroika and the Soviet Military Balance* San Francisco: ICS Press, 1990; R.T. Maddock, *The Political Economy of Soviet Defence Spending* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988 and Michael Checinski, 'The Impact of Defence Policy Options on the Dynamics of the Soviet Economy' in Shtromas and Kaplan (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future. Volume 2*, pp. 31–69.

quite different dynamic.<sup>50</sup> Writing in 1953 on the remarkable speed and strength of Soviet industrialisation, Kennan illustrates the politicised prioritisation of the economy:

had the US... chosen to refrain from the development of a modern transport system, prohibited construction of residential housing beyond a limit of some 5 m<sup>2</sup>/person, and had left for consumer goods only 28% of the total industrial output and had she then devoted to the development of heavy industry and armaments production the resources thus saved—had these things been done, I have no doubt that the pace of industrial development in American over that period would have been little short of phenomenal.<sup>51</sup>

The international confrontation ensured that the retardation of the economy was perpetuated at the cost of a more balanced form of economic development during the Cold War phase.

The second place that the effect of the international confrontation could be seen was the decision to introduce and maintain, despite its massive costs, a comprehensive social welfare system.<sup>52</sup> If the sole purpose of the economy was a purely military or geostrategic confrontation, it would not have made sense to maintain such huge subsidies of bread and basic foodstuffs. But the international confrontation was a competition between socio-economic systems and hence the political options of the decision-makers were dictated by these exigencies. They were locked into particular commitments and the provision of economically costly social benefits was a necessary dimension of this. The ability to proclaim that life was better in the USSR and was constantly improving was central to the Soviet state and its international posture.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 171. The sphere was totally isolated from the rest of the economy. There was no possibility of 'spin-offs' from the system's sole high-performing sector.

<sup>51</sup> George F. Kennan, 'Discussion' in Raymond Aron et al., *The Soviet Economy: A Discussion* London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1956, pp. 83–6; p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> On the scope of the social benefits enjoyed by Soviet citizens see Tikhonov, *Soviet Economy*, pp. 186–7, though one must be aware of the limitations of both the quality and their availability. For a western description of trends in education and healthcare from 1950 onwards see Michael Ryan and Richard Prentice, *Social Trends in the Soviet Union from 1950* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987, pp. 71–97.

<sup>53</sup> This system was also left untouched for fear of arousing popular discontent, but this placation was not the initial reason for the system's introduction.



The confrontation ensured that the remains of markets in official economic exchange were crushed.<sup>54</sup> The party could not countenance the introduction of procedures that were antithetical both to the principles which had put the economy on a war footing and to the systems of resource allocation which ensured the coherence of the system over which they were masters. Kornai notes that the economic system produced what he calls a 'soft budget constraint' in micro-economic activity.<sup>55</sup> That is, a situation in which firms have no direct pressure to curb spending within their enterprise. If a firm were to overshoot its allotted budget, the firm knew that it could rely on easy subsidies, generous tax breaks, and soft credit and pricing from the state to get it out of trouble. In short, for managers there was no fear, in budgetary terms, to discipline their action. The soft budget constraint was a direct product of the CPSU's economic system. The existing political commitments meant that the CPSU's hostility towards market principles of fiscal discipline and the possibility of enterprise failure could not be compromised for fear of being seen as losing the argument to the West and, more directly, losing its own position of power and influence.

The impact of the international confrontation on Soviet decision-makers can also be seen in their manipulation of statistics. Soviet statistics were notoriously unreliable; Western analysts spent countless years trying to model the economy so as to understand the exact nature of the Soviet economic system.<sup>56</sup> Soviet statistics were plainly uninformative, both for the Western student and for the Soviet planner. There were three reasons for this. First, the statistics system was not revealed to the outside world and was distinct from

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<sup>54</sup> Market exchanges clearly existed in the system, the *na levo* black market and the co-operative food markets being the most obvious, see generally Gregory Grossman, 'The "Second Economy" of the USSR' in *Problems of Communism* 26, Sept-Oct 1977, pp. 25-40; and F.J.M. Feldbrugge, 'Government and the Shadow Economy in the Soviet Union' in *Soviet Studies* 36.4, 1984, pp. 528-43.

<sup>55</sup> Kornai, *The Socialist System*, pp. 140-49; for a more detailed articulation see János Kornai, 'The Soft Budget Constraint' in *Kyklos: Internationale Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaften* 39.1, 1986, pp. 3-30, and Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*.

<sup>56</sup> Some of the better examples are: Abram Bergson, *The Real National Income of Soviet Russia Since 1928* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961; Abram Bergson, *Productivity and the Socialist System: The USSR and the West* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978; Michael Ellman, 'Did Soviet Economic Growth End in 1978?' in Jan F. Drewnowski (ed.), *Crisis in the East European Economy: The Spread of the Polish Disease* London: Croom Helm, 1982, pp. 131-42; Richard Erwin, 'The Soviet Statistical Debate: Khanin versus TsSU' in Rowen and Woll (eds.), *The Impoverished Superpower*, pp. 63-92; and Mark Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth Since 1928: The Alternative Statistics of G.I. Khanin' in *Europe/Asia Studies* 45.1, 1993, pp. 141-67.

more traditional Western methods. Second, the statistics were greatly exaggerated and manipulated for political reasons. Third, they were used to hide subsidies and the like and also obscured from view non-state economic exchanges such as the black market and barter. Part of the reason for this obfuscation was the role that statistics played in the socio-systemic competition; statistics functioned as a billboard of the success or failure of the economy. As a result, they were subject to great exaggeration and inaccuracy. As highlighted by Harrison, such exaggeration and dubious statistics lulled the regime into a false sense of complacency regarding the success and long-term durability of the system.<sup>57</sup>

The war economy reinforced the logic of the system in the minds of the decision-makers and it penetrated the formulation of plans and plan processes. It did so in the sense that the planners were constantly looking over their shoulders, determining what to do based on perceptions of what needed to be done *vis-à-vis* the capitalist economies. That is not to say that they were literally comparing figures on a monthly or daily basis. Rather, they were basing their plans on a broader goal that was inherently linked to progress beyond their control, that is, the socio-economic success of the capitalist world. One way of thinking of this is to conceive of the Soviet party-state as a 'mobilisation regime' in which the confrontation with the capitalist West provided a central disciplining measure for mobilisation.<sup>58</sup>

In summary then, the leadership's decision-making actions were clearly shaped by the international confrontation. The confrontation influenced decisions on the form of the economy, and reinforced decisions about its shape; it fuelled an ignorance of the system and helped to ward off market systems of exchange. As well as being a competitive back-drop for political and intellectual manoeuvring, the international confrontation was an element of the economy's decision-making structures.

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<sup>57</sup> Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth', p. 143.

<sup>58</sup> See Höhmann, 'The Place of Economic Policy Objectives on the List of Soviet Political Priorities'.

#### 4.2.2 *Information Systems*

An economic system is a series of institutions, principles and mechanisms which ensure the orderly allocation of resources amongst a population. The mechanisms which transmit information through the system are vital to the form of its development and influence the distribution of resources. The elements of information transmission—the nature of its deployment, the mechanisms of its transfer and its accessibility and transparency—are central to the formation and development of an economic system. In the Soviet Union, one might have thought that the quality of information flows would be good; because the party had control of the state, its coercive and extractive arms could have ensured that all relevant information would be passed upward. This did not happen. The CPSU always had an uncomfortable relationship with the movement of information. From its control of the press to its jamming of foreign radio stations, the flow of ideas and data was something that always made the CPSU uneasy. We shall consider two aspects of the way in which the international confrontation influenced the movement of information in the Soviet economy: prices and knowledge. In a market system, price plays a crucial informational role in the struggle for resources. In the Soviet system, prices had no informational content, yet they did serve a clear set of purposes.<sup>59</sup> Second, we will consider how the conflict influenced the CPSU's knowledge of the economy, how the economy functioned and what its strengths and weaknesses were.

##### The Price Mechanism

Prices are a good example of the informational problems of the Soviet system. The price mechanism hindered the short-term functioning of the economy and also troubled the longer-term development of structures of information flows that were necessary for coping with the changing circumstances of the system. Primarily, prices were intended to support the

planning mechanism. Despite the centralisation of the system, they were very poorly connected throughout the economy. There were four sorts of Soviet prices: those used for exchanges between production units; those used in agriculture; those used in foreign trade; and those used in retail exchanges.<sup>60</sup> In the early Stalin period, prices relied purely on planner direction which was an overt rejection of the 'law of value' inherent in market prices. The limits of this system quickly became apparent and the price system developed into a 'law of value in transformed form', that is, a sort of cost-accounting.<sup>61</sup> Like most elements of the Soviet economy, the model established under Stalin became the basis for the pricing system. Prices, apart from foreign trade,<sup>62</sup> were developed along a cost plus basis, that is, a price represented the nominal 'cost' plus a percentage on capital.

The CPSU had placed universal provision of basic goods at negligible cost at the centre of its political programme.<sup>63</sup> This was to be achieved by banishing the market and fixing prices through subsidies and inducements for producers. Thus, prices were determined by political principle. Kornai identifies three such principles: prices should reflect 'socially necessary' costs, so aspects of production cost such as land, rent and capital were *not* considered part of the socially necessary cost; prices should be the means by which producers are encouraged to perform; and prices should be stable.<sup>64</sup> These principles were not the only ones, there were other principles at work. It was apparent that prices served to try to even out income disparities and to provide all with the basic material necessities of life. Although, in the shortage economy, food may have been cheap, it was hard to come by and queuing, hoarding and the *na levo* black market became everyday features of life. Furthermore, there was a fiercely anti-market principle at work—labour, capital and the like could not be permitted into

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<sup>59</sup> IMF et al., *A Study of the Soviet Economy*, Vol. 1, pp. 9–10; Spulber, *Restructuring the Soviet Economy*, pp. 41–7; Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, pp. 173–87.

<sup>60</sup> Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, pp. 173–5; Gregory and Stuart, *Russian and Soviet Economic Performance*, pp. 124–9; and Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, pp. 130–1.

<sup>61</sup> Nove, *Soviet Economic System*, pp. 175–86; Nicolas Spulber, *The Soviet Economy: Structure, Principle, Problems* Revised Edition, New York: W.W. Norton, 1969, pp. 36–42.

<sup>62</sup> On foreign trade prices see Goldman, *The USSR in Crisis*, pp. 146–50; Nove, *Soviet Economic System*, pp. 280–5.

<sup>63</sup> This must be understood in a larger sense. The Stalinist institutions did not reflect, in an immediate sense, this goal, but the aim was of absolute centrality to the CPSU's claim to rule.

<sup>64</sup> Kornai, *The Socialist System*, p. 150.

the pricing mechanism as it was not ideologically or politically acceptable so to do. Prices, therefore, reflected 'cost' which, due to Soviet dictates, in turn reflected neither the utility nor the scarcity of goods and thus had no indicative role to encourage the production of goods. As Nove says 'prices of this type cannot serve as any sort of guide as to the needs of society or of the customer, that is, as to a social utility howsoever defined.'<sup>65</sup>

Prices ultimately reflected the political priorities of the party and bureaucratic fudging. Buck and Cole show that prices of the Soviet type have two benefits: first they more easily facilitate the aggregation of outputs in the gross-output measure planning system; and second, they can more easily achieve social goals.<sup>66</sup> The IMF notes that the information content of prices was actively suppressed as 'the planners were intent on maintaining the stability both of producer prices, to facilitate the planning process, and of retail prices.'<sup>67</sup> Soviet prices were, in this sense, arbitrary. For the CPSU, it was a perfectly reasonable—if instrumental—system. Market prices displayed an exuberance which could lead to poverty, famine and deprivation. The CPSU rightly recognised that the market was volatile no matter what goods were being traded; it could be as unpredictable with bread as it was with bowler hats.

This highly politicised pricing system became hugely expensive in terms of time, material and human resources. For example, in 1980, the annual subsidies paid to agricultural producers to keep retail prices down was around 35 billion rubles; indeed, 23 billion went on wheat and dairy alone—the retail price of meat was about half the wholesale price paid to the producer.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, it had the obvious problem of feeding an ignorance of the workings of the system. Such a mechanism did not encourage the passing on of information about production conditions up the vertically organised systems of the Soviet economy. Despite constant reform efforts to induce information exchange, there were no mechanisms to ensure that it occurred in an effective manner.<sup>69</sup>

The price system fuelled serious production problems. In capitalist states, production decisions are overwhelmingly economic decisions based on

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<sup>65</sup> Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 176.

<sup>66</sup> Buck and Cole, *Modern Soviet Economic Performance*, p. 14.

<sup>67</sup> IMF et al., *A Study of the Soviet Economy*, Vol. 1, p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> Goldman, *The USSR in Crisis*, p. 77.

production information largely drawn from prices (costs, demand, profitability etc.). The informational content of price is extremely important as it is a concrete base on which decisions can be made. In the USSR, there was no concrete economic information of the kind which prices represent. Rather, the information upon which economic decisions were made was political. In any economic system a point of reference is necessary for decisions; in the USSR the buck stopped with political priorities. It was at the point of political priorities and their calculation that the international confrontation and its consequent war economy inflicted itself on the day-to-day life of Soviet citizens and the longer-term development of the system.

In simple terms, the pricing mechanism was a political tool and not an economic mechanism. This political tool reflected three inter-related dimensions: short-term party political decisions; longer-term political commitments; and the international confrontation's war economy which reinforced these other two dimensions. Historically, the ideology and legitimacy of the party hinged on the commitment to the principles which underpinned the confrontation with the West. Over time, the conflict built into the system specific limitations to political action. For example, Gorbachev had long wanted to introduce more radical price reform, but he was prevented from doing so, knowing full well what the reaction from the population would be. When eventually prices were raised in April 1990, the long-held fears of instability were realised.<sup>70</sup> The international confrontation influenced the price mechanism in the following ways: it was partly responsible for the introduction of the system; it established the base of the mechanism due to its hostility to market principles and thus built into the system some inherent limitations; and the ideological competition prevented the acceptance of other ways of doing things as, politically speaking, one could not accept the opponent's method. Also, in a more direct sense, there was a fear that market-type reforms would contaminate the system and structure and thus threaten the party's position of power. So the international confrontation can be said to have been an important contributory factor in the structure of the price mechanism and the playing out of the priorities it induced.

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<sup>69</sup> Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet System*, p. 137.

<sup>70</sup> Nove, *An Economic History*, pp. 412–3. The consequences of this action were exacerbated by a rise which was too great and broader economic conditions which were not supportive.

## Structural Knowledge

The Soviet leadership did not understand how their economy functioned.<sup>71</sup> It is safe to say that no one really knew, in the sort of detail available to liberal-capitalist states, how the economy functioned, and what its performance levels truly were. The system was highly centralised in a mono-hierarchical sense, and its structures of economic production were monolithic to say the least. The desire to maintain centralised control over such a geographically huge and economically diverse country in the CPSU's dictatorial style induced problems of information processing. In the specific instance of industrial management, it became clear that 'in most instances, *the centre does not know* just what it is that needs doing, in disaggregated detail, while the management in its situation *cannot* know what it is that society needs unless the centre informs it.'<sup>72</sup> In commenting on past reforms, Hewett notes that '[i]nattention to the logic of the system is apparently what has contributed to the failure of so many past efforts at reform in the Soviet Union as well as in Eastern Europe.'<sup>73</sup>

The conflict with the West clearly did not *produce* the ignorance of the system. However, the internal conditions which it induced contributed in two ways to the structural poverty of knowledge. First, as mentioned above, the internal Soviet means for measuring the economy were warped by international confrontation conditions.<sup>74</sup> The Central Statistics Directorate's (TsSU) obfuscations, and the lack of information carried in prices, were two examples of informational ignorance heavily affected by the conflict and its political implications. As a result of this, the centre used a range of non-price and non-aggregate statistical methods to try to glean information. These included the planning commission, direct bureaucratic information, operative horizontal

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<sup>71</sup> For a polemic on Soviet Union's 'elaborate mechanisms of deception' see Wisla Suraska, *How the Soviet Union Disappeared: An Essay on the Causes of Dissolution* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 76.

<sup>73</sup> Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup> Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth'.

information, signals of shortage and surplus from the economy at large and signals of catastrophe.<sup>75</sup> Second, related to this was the ideologically blinkered view of productive and non-productive contributions to the system. The Soviets made a clear distinction between measures of productive contribution and non-productive contribution. A good example of this was the railway signal man who was deemed to be productive when he switched tracks to allow a freight train carrying industrial produce down the line, but was deemed to be non-productive when the same action allowed a passenger train to pass by.

#### 4.2.3 *Incentives*

The problems of adequately motivating workers and managers in the Soviet economy is well known.<sup>76</sup> The concern here is the extent to which the Soviet international confrontation influenced the incentive mechanisms of the CPSU. Like other aspects of the political-economic system, the conflict contributed to, but did not determine, the incentives of the system. When injecting incentives into an economic system, states generally have two distinct forms of policy choice: the material and the moral. With the former, the CPSU used wages, rewards, bonuses, promotion and other traditional devices to induce appropriate action.<sup>77</sup> Also, it was notorious for using other less traditional methods to ensure that its economic ideas were carried out; the forcible collectivisation of agricultural production being an infamous example.<sup>78</sup> The moral form of incentives in the Soviet Union was a set of exhortations issued via propaganda, party offices and local political organisations; it was in this arena that the international confrontation was most evident.

There are two related senses in which the conflict shaped this latter moral dimension of the incentive system. First, it provided a meaningful context for the

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<sup>75</sup> Kornai, *The Socialist System*, pp. 156–7.

<sup>76</sup> Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, pp. 198–230; Burks, 'The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union'; and Leonard Schapiro and Joseph Godson (eds.), *The Soviet Worker: From Lenin to Andropov* Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1984.

<sup>77</sup> For wages, bonuses and other traditional methods see David Lane, *Labour and Employment in the USSR* Brighton: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1986; Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, pp. 201–22.



justification of the privations of the Soviet system. The state openly demanded hard work from the citizens and denied them the deserved rewards for this work. The 'Stakhanovite movement' of the thirties is a well-known example of this, but it was present in greater and lesser forms across the Soviet economy.<sup>79</sup> The international confrontation provided the crucial backdrop which made the call for discipline and motivation effective. For it was the war to create communism within, *combined with* the perception of encirclement by hostile capitalist powers, that gave this call meaning in people's minds. It gave an extra impetus for action so that coercion was not the only motivating force. The state further indicated that things were better in the USSR than in the West, for example, by highlighting racial segregation in the southern states in the USA, or unemployment in Britain. While these may not have been openly believed by the entire population, it established a clear pattern of incentives which helped to move the economy and to develop it in a fashion that, in the long term, was unsustainable. The second, and related, dimension to this moral incentive was the simple idea that things would get better. The promise of communism and mature socialism was long held out to the Soviet citizens. The establishment of an incentive to work and to sacrifice for a specific end provided the citizenry and the elite with a coherent means to measure the 'achievements' of the state. In simple terms, it built into people's lives, at all levels of society, an expectation of sorts that the state would deliver a particular way of life. In doing so, it also provided a personal edge to the sense of failure when the state did not live up to the ideological commitments which lay at its centre.

Unbeknownst to the leadership, the Soviet Union's international relations had internationalised its structures of power such that any clear change in international posture was inevitably going to destabilise its domestic institutions. In the context of an already troubled economy and society, the implications of such a dual crisis were to be dire. Thus far we have established that the international confrontation with the capitalist West penetrated the Soviet economy. This penetration was such that it is reasonable to claim that the

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<sup>78</sup> R.W. Davies, *The Soviet Offensive: The Collectivisation of Soviet Agriculture, 1929–30* London: Macmillan, 1980.

international confrontation was, in a number of ways, embedded in the economic structures of the war economy.

### 4.3 FISSURES AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONFRONTATION

The Soviet economy had many structural weaknesses and inherent deficiencies. This final section will explore the way in which the conditions of the war economy generally, and the international confrontation specifically, contributed to the structural fissures of the Soviet economic system. Fissures are simply lines of weakness which develop over time. They may not be the break-points or fault-lines of system collapse, but are inherent problems. The purpose here is not to examine these fissures in detail, but to consider the extent to which the war economy and the confrontation contributed to these fissures, and the extent to which these drove other broader structural problems of the party-state-economy. We shall focus on four significant fissures to which the conflict was central: the structural limits of economic development; the ideological vulnerability to poor performance; the rigidity of a unified system; and the blindness to longer-term problems induced by relative success in the short-term.

#### 4.3.1 *Structural Limits*

Many scholars believe that the Soviet economy was always doomed to fail both in its aim to surpass capitalism and in absolute terms. With the benefit of hindsight, this judgement seems fair. Yet, to understand the nature of the collapse of the Soviet economy, one must put its structural shortcomings in the context of the political project which gave rise to the peculiar mechanisms of the Soviet command system. The first task then is to set out the structural weaknesses of the economy. From there we can judge the role of the war economy in contributing to and reinforcing these underlying limits.

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<sup>79</sup> For a description of this and its personal implications see Anatoly Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom: The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official* London: Robert Hale, 1947, pp. 187–91.

After its initial development, from 1928–1949, the Soviet economy settled into a pattern of long-term deterioration. This is most evident in large scale indicators such as GNP or the Soviet statistic of NMP.<sup>80</sup> While the extent of growth and size of the decline vary between models, all measures of the Soviet economy, including the Soviet one, concluded that, from the mid-1950s, a steady and precipitous decline in economic performance was observable, as the following table illustrates:

### Various Estimates of Soviet National Product, 1950–1989

*Figures are an average growth rate over the period as an annual percentage*

Period	IMF <sup>81</sup> <i>a</i>	Levine <sup>82</sup>	TsSU <sup>83</sup>	CIA <sup>84</sup>	Khanin <sup>85</sup>
1950–60	–	–	10.2	5.2	7.2
1960–65	6.5	5	6.5	4.8	4.4
1965–70	7.8	5.2	7.7	4.9	4.1
1970–75	5.6	3.7	5.7	3.0	3.2
1975–80	4.3	2.7	4.2	1.9	1.0
1980–85	3.2	–	3.5	1.8	0.6
1985–89	2.7	–	3.0 <i>b</i>	2.7 <i>b</i>	2.0 <i>b</i>

#### Notes:

*a* IMF measures follow 1961–65, 1966–70 ... pattern.

*b* 1985–87.

<sup>80</sup> NMP refers to National Material Product, the official Soviet equivalent to gross domestic product. See Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, p. 69; Stanley Fisher, 'Russia and the Soviet Union Then and Now' in Olivier Jean Blanchard, Kenneth A. Froot and Jeffrey D. Sachs (eds.), *The Transition in Eastern Europe: Volume 1, Country Studies* Chicago: University of Chicago Press and National Bureau of Economic Research, 1994, pp. 221–57; pp. 227–230; Easterly and Fischer, *The Soviet Economic Decline*, pp. 4–8; Desai, *The Soviet Economy* pp. 8–11; Ofer, *Soviet Economic Growth*, pp. 14–22; Anders Åslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform* Second Edition, London: Pinter, 1991, pp. 17–21; Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth Since 1928', pp. 155–8; Herbert S. Levine, 'Possible Causes of the Deterioration of Soviet Productivity Growth in the Period 1976–80', pp. 153–68, in Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *Soviet Economy in the 1980s: Problems and Prospects* Washington DC: USGPO, 1983, Volume 1, p.154.

<sup>81</sup> IMF et al., *A Study of the Soviet Economy*, Vol. 1, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup> Herbert S. Levine, 'Possible Causes of the Deterioration of Soviet Productivity Growth in the Period 1976–80', p. 154.

<sup>83</sup> From Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth Since 1928', pp 155–8; cited also in Åslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform*, p. 17.

<sup>84</sup> CIA, *Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1990* Washington, DC: USGPO, 1990, p. 64.

<sup>85</sup> Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth Since 1928', p. 146. Khanin was a Soviet economist who devised an alternative modelling scheme for calculating Soviet economic growth levels.

There is a range of reasons posited for this decline. Levine argues that it was due to a decreasing return on capital, a low elasticity in the substitution of capital for labour and the low rate of the introduction of new technology.<sup>86</sup> This view is echoed by Easterly and Fisher who reiterate the claim that the decline was the result of the low elasticity of substitution between capital and labour, but they emphasise this phenomenon in the context of extensive growth.<sup>87</sup> Others stress the reliance on extensive growth where enterprises were failing to maintain productivity,<sup>88</sup> an inability to incorporate technology, the defence burden, the lack of incentives, and demoralisation.<sup>89</sup> Aganbegyan maintains that decline was due to the exhaustion of the people and technological backwardness.<sup>90</sup> Burks emphasises the reliance on extensive growth, the increasing complexity of the economy and the problem of a lack of technological innovation.<sup>91</sup> Ellman and Kontorovitch contend that the relaxation of discipline, the loss of control due to increasing complexity and the depletion of natural resources on which the economy was too reliant were to blame.<sup>92</sup> Goldman puts the problem down to an inability to adapt to changing economic conditions and an over-reliance on commodities for economic growth.<sup>93</sup> It is clear that there is a general consensus that the following were particular problems: an over-reliance on extensive growth; a poor rate of technological adoption; the easing of the pressure to perform from above; poor worker morale; increasing complexity; and a deformation of the economy based on military hypertrophy at the cost of other sectors.

The international confrontation played a role in a range of these structural problems. The most obvious connection was the militarisation of the economy due to the imperatives of the international confrontation, and particularly its second phase, the Cold War. Such over-commitment of the economy occurred due to the international circumstances of the state. Interestingly, this sector was

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<sup>86</sup> Herbert S. Levine, 'Possible Causes of the Deterioration of Soviet Productivity Growth in the Period 1976–80', p. 154.

<sup>87</sup> Easterly and Fischer, *The Soviet Economic Decline*, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> Desai, *The Soviet Economy*, pp. 7–60.

<sup>89</sup> Ofer, *Soviet Economic Growth*, pp. 26–7.

<sup>90</sup> Abel Aganbegyan, *The Challenge: The Economics of Perestroika* London: Hutchison, 1988.

<sup>91</sup> Burks, 'The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union', pp. 116–8.

<sup>92</sup> Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet System*, pp. 10–15, see also Kontorovitch, 'The Current State of the Soviet Economy: Deepening Crisis or Recovery?'

<sup>93</sup> Goldman, *USSR in Crisis*.

in some ways a twin economy separate from the rest of the system. Unlike, for example, American military procurement systems which are linked to the rest of the economy in very obvious ways—such as the use of missile navigation systems in commercial airlines—Soviet military production was isolated from the rest of the economy. This was the one area in which the Soviets were internationally competitive, yet they were not able to derive any direct benefits from it for society at large.

The prioritisation of a particular type of industry and of a specific form of economic modernisation was a hallmark of the Soviet system and the Soviet development model. Debates have centred on whether this was the only path of development available to the Bolsheviks, and, while it is not our purpose to answer this question decisively, it is clear that there was nothing *necessary* in that choice.<sup>94</sup> The prioritisation of heavy industrial development, with a distinct emphasis on military production, derived from a range of sources. The decision was clearly influenced by the Soviet aim to catch up with and overtake the West in terms of productive capacity. But there was more to it than that. The emphasis on industrial-military development was a deliberate choice influenced by: internal party politics, particularly of Stalin's manoeuvrings during the 'New Course' debate, its suitability to a dictatorship, its compatibility with the demands of heavy production, the military requirements of the challenging period of the 1930s, and the speed with which it could deliver meaningful comparative growth. But it was pursued for another reason, its ability to support the ideological and material requirements of the systemic competition. The result was that the priorities dictated by this 'catch up' were in heavy industry productive goods at the cost of consumer goods.<sup>95</sup> This priority was achieved by a method of extensive growth, that is, growth in production was achieved primarily through increases in inputs of labour, natural resources and capital and not through further increases in productivity.<sup>96</sup>

The inability to involve adequately technology in production derives from the structural characteristics of the economy. There was no incentive to introduce

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<sup>94</sup> See for example, Alec Nove, *Was Stalinism Really Necessary: Some Problems of Soviet Political Economy* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964.

<sup>95</sup> For an example of the deformation of consumer goods and the privations of Soviet life compared with life in the West, see the table in Appendix II.

the enterprise level efficiency gains that technology could bring. Incentives were plan-fulfilment based, and thus reliant on, quantitative measures of productivity.<sup>97</sup> Thus technology had to be forced in from the top down, an inefficient way to implement change. Furthermore, there was a sense that such change was not necessary, particularly given the Brezhnevian stasis in which many such ideas were mooted. Linked to this was the increasing complexity of the economy as it matured. Growth in complexity was not matched by similar changes in the highly centralised management structures.<sup>98</sup>

The reluctance to move away from the extensive growth/mono-hierarchical centralised system led to serious problems. The international confrontation reinforced the system's inherent conservatism, but did not play a major role in preventing the state from coming to terms with its problems. Finally, worker morale was not directly related to the war economy, but, as time wore on, the ability of the conflict to mobilise began to wear thin, particularly given détente and the indications that, for Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the victory of socialism was not going to come by way of war but by way of the superior demonstrative force of socialism. As Dowlah and Elliott write, 'Soviet socialism's superiority over capitalism now came to be perceived as depending on a particular and optimistic pattern and pace of economic performance.'<sup>99</sup>

Thus the international confrontation played a role in inculcating an inherently limited macro-economic strategy which built into the foundations of the economy certain inherent weaknesses. It played a role in the undermining of Soviet power and, in the context of the claims Khrushchevian claims for the Soviet economy, it left the state open to questions about its right to rule.

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<sup>96</sup> Buck and Cole, *Modern Soviet Economic Performance*, pp. 139–50.

<sup>97</sup> Buck and Cole, *Modern Soviet Economic Performance*, pp. 18–9.

<sup>98</sup> For nine management problems to do with complexity and over centralisation see Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, pp. 109–10.

<sup>99</sup> Dowlah and Elliott, *The Life and Times of Soviet Socialism*, p. 139.

### 4.3.2 *Ideological Vulnerability*

One of the most important fissures that led to a sense of illegitimacy both inside and outside the ruling elite was that the state was vulnerable to economic failure in comparative terms. If the war to produce a better life within and a communist victory without was perceived to have been lost, then the justification for the party's monopoly position over the state and economy was open to criticism. Thus, the war economy built into the system a precise means by which its success or failure could be measured. Success in the conflict was the necessary precursor to the party's position of authority. The CPSU positioned itself in an overwhelming position of despotism on the basis of its claim to be the sole guiding force capable of achieving the revolutionary aims of Soviet socialism. Furthermore, the regime also relied on this sense of a supernal mission to ensure internal party coherence and societal acquiescence.

The aims and method of Soviet rule—the subsuming of state and economy, the destruction of private property, and the criminalisation of market relations in favour of centrally administered ones—were dictated and justified by the larger aims of the struggle for communism. Central to the means and aims of the Soviet state was the notion that it was going to make life better for its citizens and the people of the world in socio-economic terms. The state made no bones about the privations necessary to achieve such an aim, and thus the international confrontation, particularly in its Cold War phase, became the means by which the privations of the Soviet system were justified and which were stoically borne by the population. The CPSU may have been cynically trying to fleece the economy or merely reinforcing their power, but regardless of their motivation, it is the deployment of the *justifications* which is important. For, at the heart of the party-state-economy, there was a flaw—what if the state could not deliver on its promises? This flaw is central to the story of the unravelling of Soviet power and it is important to be aware of its origins and the role of the international confrontation conflict in providing the justification and rhetorical appeal which legitimated the CPSU's claims to power.

### 4.3.3 *Rigidity and Coherence*

The Soviet state was a tightly packed inter-locking network of institutions, values and principles. In retrospect, the reliance of the system on the necessary affinity of all elements of the system is reasonably clear. This system was also shown to have a rigid character; it was inflexible to change and its support mechanisms were highly interdependent—they could not cope with much alteration to their structures. Within the formal economy, no market relations could be introduced because the level of information flow necessary for it to function would not be acceptable to the party, to say nothing of their ideological hostility towards markets. Likewise, the bureaucracy could not be scrutinised to ease corruption for similar informational control reasons. In short, the statism mentioned in Chapter Three drove the unity of the system.<sup>100</sup> The war economy was central to this statism and coherence. The war economy played a central role in fusing the party-state-economy together and keeping them in mutually reinforcing positions.

There are two important dimensions to this fusion. First, the international posture of the Soviet Union helped to ensure that the means by which economic relations were mediated were maintained. The centrally organised command economy was a very specific form of organisation which could only function in one way. The existence of a war economy with a dictatorial party attempting to drive the society in a particular direction, ensured an essentially unchangeable economic system.<sup>101</sup> The mechanisms of planning, transport and communication all relied on the political monopoly of the CPSU which, in turn, relied on its monopoly of economic power. Second, the singularity of the edifice was underlined by the conditions of international confrontation. Singularity refers to the devotion of the economy to one form of production and its specific system of support. The war economy system meant that heavy industrial production was privileged and it built rigidity into the system. The singular mechanisms could

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<sup>100</sup> See Chapter Three, p. 102.

<sup>101</sup> This refers purely to the mechanics of the economy and not to society which had an organic and changing sociological aspect. For a similar view see Ljubo Sirč, 'Can the Current Economic Problems of the USSR Be Solved Within the Framework of a Communist System of Economic Management?' in Shtromas and Kaplan (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future: Volume 2*, pp. 206–238.



not cope with any change without an unravelling of the economic structures of the system. For example, if resources were diverted to the production of high quality shoes, there were no mechanisms to ensure that the shoes were not stolen and sold on the black market, nor were there means by which quality could be ensured due to the fascination with quantitative measures. To change priorities not only meant a different product mix but a radical change in the mechanisms of economic relations; and this was a change that the Soviet economy could not accommodate. The rigid unity of the system was reinforced by the international confrontation. Although the international conflict did not alone create the party-state-economy, it was crucial to the foundations of that system.

#### 4.3.4 *False Sense of Success*

The Soviet 'war economy' was predicated on relative achievements. Due to this relativism it was deemed successful when it appeared to be doing better than the capitalist economies and not when it was either fulfilling its Marxist credo of satisfying people's needs nor, in less ideological terms, adequately coping with the demands of the Soviet people. As a result, at three moments—each suggested below—the Soviet economy's relative success made the elite blind to some of the fundamental weaknesses outlined above. In this sense, the war economy fuelled the ignorance of the system by making the Soviet economy appear stronger and more robust than it was.

The most obvious example of this was the dynamism of Soviet economic growth during the early 1930s when the capitalist states were still reeling from the Great Depression.<sup>102</sup> This contributed to the sense in the USSR that their system was clearly superior, isolated as it was from the shocks of the capitalist system and growing at historically unprecedented levels. Their basic expectations were being fulfilled. This then led to the second moment. In the early to mid-1950s the Soviet economy was performing well.<sup>103</sup> The West, in particular the US, was concerned that the Soviet model would be pursued by

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<sup>102</sup> Nove, *An Economic History*, pp. 189–93.

<sup>103</sup> Nove, *An Economic History*, pp. 342–51. See the papers in Aron et al., *The Soviet Economy* for a good example of western intellectual response to this success.

post-colonial states and some economists even argued that capitalist economies had to adopt elements of the Soviet model to keep up.<sup>104</sup> Despite this relative success, particularly in terms of post-war reconstruction and industrial growth rates, general problems were already visible in terms of the ratchet problem in production,<sup>105</sup> the frozen patterns of productivity and the inherently conservative nature of the plan.<sup>106</sup> This was a moment when a more sober reflection on the economic realities might have taken events down a different path and prevented reinforcement of an already ossifying system. The other moment of relative success came in the 1970s, when the Soviet economy was not performing well on its own terms.<sup>107</sup> Yet, due to the jump in oil prices in 1973 and 1978, Soviet foreign currency earnings sky-rocketed and the petro-dollars that were overflowing the coffers of the OPEC states were being spent on that other major export of the Soviet economy, arms. The West was in recession and the Soviets were receiving a sorely needed cash injection, which gave them a false sense of economic success when no such notion was warranted. Furthermore, the international political success of revolutionary movements in Ethiopia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua and even Iran further fuelled a sense that in international comparative perspective, the Soviet system was not doing too badly.

The comparativist condition of the economy, which was the result of the competition with capitalism, impelled a focus on the relative merits of the system and not more internally-focused assessments. It fuelled an ignorance of the problems of the system and lulled the leadership into a sense of security and conservatism regarding the economy upon which their power was so clearly reliant. Not only did the international confrontation shape the crucial foundations of the political and economic systems, it helped to shape some of its inherent flaws.

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<sup>104</sup> For example Peter Wiles, 'What is to be done about the success of Soviet Industry' in Aron, *The Soviet Economy*, pp. 27–40.

<sup>105</sup> The ratchet problem refers to instances when production levels were deliberately held back so that the following year's target could be more easily reached. This was induced by the planners determining each year's growth as a percentage increase on the previous year. Naturally, this encouraged inefficient use of resources and chronic 'ratcheting'.

<sup>106</sup> Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, pp. 364–9.

<sup>107</sup> Herbert Block, 'Soviet Economic Performance in a Global Context' in Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change* Washington DC: USGPO, 1979, Volume 1, pp. 110–41.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

Ellman and Kontorovitch argue that the Soviet economy was supported by three 'load bearing bricks': the active role of the party in the economy; the official ideology; and the centralised bureaucratic system.<sup>108</sup> For them, the removal or damaging of these 'bricks' undermined the system as a whole. This analogy is useful, but does not capture the story completely. This chapter has shown that these three systems—party, ideology and state—were reinforced as successful mechanisms of rule by the international confrontation. The confrontation was not, however, the sole driving force shaping everything in the economy; such a claim would be an overstatement. On the other hand, it is equally wrong to claim that the ideology-legitimacy nexus of the CPSU and its international stance had no impact whatsoever. The international confrontation is one among a number of important factors which explain the nature and shape of Soviet economic development. Its contribution can be summarised as follows: the pre-eminent role played by the international confrontation in the Soviet economy was to provide a macro criterion of value, thus profoundly influencing the shape and development of the foundations of the economy and its links to state power.

In observing the workings of the German war economy during World War I, Lenin was impressed with its efficiency and strength and was particularly taken by the concentration of state-capitalist power. He took inspiration from this and argued strongly that such a form of organisation was necessary for Bolshevik success. Central to Lenin's idea was the notion of a huge central bank organising orderly economic relations: 'This will be country-wide *book keeping*, country-wide *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods, this will be, so to speak, something in the nature of the *skeleton* of socialist society.'<sup>109</sup> It was at this 'skeletal' level of state organisation that the international—in the form of hostile socio-systemic confrontation—penetrated the Soviet party-state-economy. It was a crucial element of the working system which helped to hold

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<sup>108</sup> Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet System*, pp. 20–2.

the party-state-economy together. It did so by acting as a point of reference. As a structuring idea it performed the important role of being a macro-criterion of value underpinning the idea of the Soviet state. It was central to the *telos* of this profoundly teleological system and crucially located this value on an international comparative footing, one which was to prove precarious in the coming years.

The competition with capitalism in its socio-economic, ideological and geopolitical aspects clearly affected the formation of the economy as a war economy and the development of fissures in its core. It is important to stress the dual dimensions of this competition. On the one hand, some of the fissures did develop into broader problems that contributed to the vulnerability of the state, but on the other the structures of the economy were very much reliant on an unchanging external posture. Many of the important core structures of the Soviet system were made stable by the continuing external conditions of international confrontation, particularly reinforced by the second phase of Cold War. Unfortunately, such realms are rarely static; these structures were fundamentally destabilised when the Cold War was scaled down and ended in the 1980s. Having shown that the socio-systemic conflict was embedded in the structures of the Soviet state and economy, the next chapter will return to the international stance and will examine the ending of the Cold War so that we can make a judgement on the extent to which the removal of the international confrontation contributed to the vulnerability and ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union.

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<sup>109</sup> V.I. Lenin, quoted in Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 36.

## 5 THE ENDING OF THE COLD WAR

*In hundreds of years from now, when people have forgotten the names of the countries their ancestors came from, they will still remember the name of Lenin.*  
in 'Three Songs about Lenin'<sup>1</sup>

*We want peaceful competition between different social systems to develop unimpeded, to encourage mutually advantageous co-operation rather than confrontation and an arms race. We want people of every country to enjoy prosperity welfare and happiness. The road to this lies through proceeding to a nuclear-free, non-violent world. We have embarked on this road, and call on other countries and nations to follow suit.*

Mikhail Gorbachev<sup>2</sup>

The Cold War was the second phase of the Soviet confrontation with the capitalist West. It was created by the revolutionary commitments and practices of the Soviet state, and was brought to an end by their removal from the heart of the regime. The first quote, which features several times in Dziga Vertov's Stalinist propaganda film, depicts the wholesale aim for change which lay at the centre of the Soviet project and which caused such fear in the West. The second quote indicates just how far from the Leninist ideal Gorbachev wanted to take the Soviet Union. It was this journey, from revolutionary internationalist power to accommodating liberal-socialism (to which the West was receptive),<sup>3</sup> which, together with a resurgence of global capitalism, dropped the curtain on the international confrontation and caused such trauma in the Soviet Union.

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<sup>1</sup> *Three Songs About Lenin*, Dir. Dziga Vertov, Moscow, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* London: Collins, 1987, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Receptive in the sense of being willing to talk and act with a reasonable degree of sincerity. One must not, however, ignore the dual policy being pursued, particularly in the early Reagan period, with the arming of third world insurgencies, SDI and the support of the mujahadeen in Afghanistan.

The end of this conflict removed the Cold War from the structures of international politics and, of course, meant the end of the longer-term confrontation which had beset the Soviet state since its inception. The radical shift in foreign and domestic policy within the Soviet Union, and its acceptance by the Western alliance—particularly America’s conservative foreign policy elite—took place between 1985 and 1990, but was also the product of longer-term processes. The previous chapters have shown the importance of the international confrontation to the Soviet state. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the ending of this conflict so that we can determine how these changes helped to undermine Soviet state power. The first section will briefly reiterate the understanding of international confrontation used in this thesis and will emphasise the analytic importance of understanding the end of this conflict as a process. The second section will examine the development and motivation of Soviet new thinking and the translation of these new ideas into concrete policy action. This section will also consider the part played by the USA and will characterise this role as essentially reactive. The conclusion of the chapter will emphasise the need to place the end of the Cold War in the context of longer-term historical developments.

## **5.1 MEANINGS AND ENDINGS**

### *5.1.1 The Cold War and its Conditions*

As discussed in Chapter One, the Cold War should be thought of as the second and more acute phase of a larger international confrontation between the Soviet Union and the capitalist West, between two competing and inherently conflictual social systems. The confrontation was a conflict which had which three aspects: competition between socio-economic systems; geopolitical conflict; and ideological antagonism. The second phase—the Cold War—had three central elements: the continued contest of socio-economic systems; a geostrategic competition which had the nuclear arms race at its centre; and an

involvement in, and conflict over, third world struggles.<sup>4</sup> This understanding of the Cold War draws attention to the struggle's ideological dimensions for these were the terms which would ultimately determine its outcome. It further emphasises the dynamic of the conflict and the role played by both ideas and interests in fuelling the antagonism. Moreover, a view of the Cold War as a part of a larger confrontation places the conflict in its proper historical time-frame.

The Cold War was produced from the pre-war confrontation between the capitalist West and Soviet communism by three historical developments. The conflict was the product of the growth of Soviet power, the destruction of rival powers and ideas—notably that of the other great powers to emerge from the nineteenth century Britain, Germany, and Japan—and fascism, the other major contestatory ideology of the twentieth century. It was compounded by the willingness of the USA to engage internationally and to act to make the world safe for capitalism. Prior to 1945, the international confrontation had been more ideological and socio-economic and not as clearly a geopolitical struggle between a US-led west and the USSR. Reagan was right to note that, from the start, the Soviets had supported the *idea* of world revolution,<sup>5</sup> but initially did not have the military, economic or ideological power to project themselves to this end. Likewise, America had the inclination to make the world in its own image, and it had a virulent hostility to the Bolshevik revolution and all that it stood for, but was not willing or able to impose itself on the world. The Second World War changed all that.

While the conflict was made by these developments, it was not immutable. To continue, the conflict relied on the perpetuation of those conditions through the reinforcing action of political actors within the blocs. While the Cold War influenced and shaped life in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, it could not be ended there; it could only end when the foundational conditions changed, when the ideas, capabilities, willingness and actions of both sides which perpetuated a system of confrontation began to change.

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 36–47. This draws on Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* Second Edition, London: Verso, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* London: Harper Collins, 1999, p. 436.

### 5.1.2 *The Process of Ending*

There is a tendency in much of the literature on the end of the Cold War to focus on the improvement in Soviet-American relations and to remain preoccupied with the nuclear arms agreements, as though the Cold War had just been a geostrategic game which was resolved by a series of arms negotiation talks in the late 1980s.<sup>6</sup> These negotiations were, of course, important to the change in world politics, but were not the only factors. The end of the Cold War must be seen in all its dimensions, that is, as the product of fundamental change in the five conditions set out Chapter One,<sup>7</sup> and, importantly, as a development which occurred over time. The world did not wake up one morning and find itself at peace. The shift occurred gradually and unevenly over a five year period. It was the product of varying incremental movements, in the principles and structures which produced the Cold War. Symbolically, one may point to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the unification of Germany, or the lowering of the Soviet flag over the Kremlin as the moment when the Cold War ended. While symbols are important, such singular moments can be misleading. The Cold War was slowly surpassed by developments in world politics which meant, very simply, that its foundations had evaporated and that, as a structuring force in international politics, the Cold War ceased to matter.

The beginning of the end of the Cold War has been seen by some as the dialogue at the Geneva Summit of 1985, and by others as the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU held between 25 February and 6 March 1986. The shift in values and material commitments were then most dramatically articulated in Gorbachev's speech at the UN on 7 December 1988. As an effective structuring force in world

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<sup>6</sup> For examples of this see Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-91* Revised Edition, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, and Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* London: Little Brown, 1993. Much of the memoir literature also lingers lovingly on the arms control negotiations, summit meetings and high-level diplomacy, to the neglect of the larger-scale historical developments, the domestic constituents in both states to which the negotiators were playing and the larger international context in which these negotiations were taking place.

<sup>7</sup> The five conditions of the post-war period which transformed the confrontation to its acute phase were: 1) the ideas of the Russian revolution and their rejection by an evangelical Western capitalism; 2) the ability of both blocs to act on their ideals; 3) the political willingness of both sides to engage in conflict; 4) the lack of any greater force, either materially or ideologically, to prevent conflict; and 5) a logic of competition compelling reactions.



politics, it was laid to rest with Gorbachev's reluctant acceptance of a re-unified Germany as a full member of the Nato alliance. During this intervening period, four of the most important factors driving the Cold War—Soviet values, Soviet intentions, and Soviet actions, and the reaction to these changes by the US-led alliance—all radically changed. It is important to think of these in a developmental sense because the decisions and actions of the elite were not enough on their own to undermine the conflict. It was pushed over the edge by the application of various changes to international political life which reformulated the structures of world politics.

The end of the Cold War should not be thought of as just an easing of Soviet-American relations which gave the cue to the rest of the world to breathe easy once again. Soviet *novoiye myshlenie*, new thinking, in foreign policy had a sweep that encompassed all of its foreign relations—from relations with the socialist countries, to normalisation of relations with China, India, Asia and the Middle East. The end of the Cold War was about nothing less than the retreat of a set of revolutionary ideas and practices which had been challenging world politics; hence, the end of the Cold War should be seen in this full international context.

## **5.2 THE MEANING AND SOURCES OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR**

### *5.2.1 The End of the Cold War*

The Cold War was ended by the Soviet Union's move away from its ideologically-charged international posture and the acceptance of this move by the US-led Western alliance of liberal-capitalist states. It was a development which took a number of years and was not clearly mapped or planned by either side. The process of ending the conflict was gradual, but its velocity should not be underestimated. Between 1980 and 1983, the prospect of an end to Cold War was virtually impossible to imagine. Ronald Reagan had been elected on a hawkish foreign policy platform and, initially, he had been surrounded by

profoundly anti-Soviet advisers.<sup>8</sup> In May 1982, NSC adviser Warren Clark first articulated what became known as the Reagan doctrine. He said that the USA ‘must be prepared to respond vigorously to opportunities as they arise and to create opportunities where none existed before’ so as to advance USA interests and values world-wide.<sup>9</sup> These ideas became evident in vigorous efforts to ‘roll-back’ what were seen to be Soviet successes in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Angola, El Salvador and Guatemala, and which were thought to derive from the duplicitousness of détente. In 1983 (barely five years before Gorbachev’s speech to the UN), in describing how the Soviets had sacrificed morality to the cause of the revolution, Reagan delivered these infamous words to a group of evangelists in Florida:

I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are. We saw this phenomenon in the 1930s; we see it too often today...Let us pray for the salvation of all those who live in the totalitarian darkness...the focus of evil in the modern world.... I urge you [anti-nuclear campaigners] to beware the temptation...to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil.<sup>10</sup>

Reagan refused to meet with any Soviet officials until late in 1984.<sup>11</sup> Yet, by 1988, in his symbolically dramatic summit in Moscow when asked if he still thought of the Soviet Union as an evil empire he said that he was ‘talking about another time, another era.’<sup>12</sup> This rhapsodic moment was made possible by two important shifts: the decision by the Soviet elite, specifically Gorbachev and his reformist clique, to normalise the Soviet Union; and the slow and reluctant

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<sup>8</sup> Some of the conservatives included Richard Allen followed by Warren ‘Bill’ Clark as NSC adviser with Richard Pipes working underneath him, William Casey as Director of Central Intelligence, Casper Weinberger as Secretary of Defence, and a range of members of the notorious Committee on the Present Danger which had stoked the embers of détente into the flame of the second Cold War, on which see Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* London: Pluto Press, 1983.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, p. 459.

<sup>10</sup> Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, p. 473; the full text of the speech can be found in Paul D. Erickson, *Reagan Speaks: The Making of an American Myth* New York: New York University Press, 1985, pp. 155–66.

<sup>11</sup> Reagan had had a secret meeting with the Soviet ambassador, Anatoly Dobrynin, in early 1983. However, his meeting with Gromyko in late 1984 was his first with a member of the governing body, see Chapter One, p. 44 and note 131 for details of the conversation.

<sup>12</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, p. 299.

acceptance of this shift by the US and the less reluctant acceptance by its Western partners.

The end of the Soviet international confrontation involved three developments: a new set of ideas upon which Soviet international relations were to be founded were developed;<sup>13</sup> a translation of these ideas into concrete action, that is, a willingness to act upon these new ideological principles; and an American willingness to accept this new state of affairs which was then reflected in a new alignment of American capabilities. The more dramatic changes were undertaken and led by the Soviets, while, the generally positive American and Western response was important, it essentially reacted to Soviet developments and did not propel them.

The most profound change in the conditions of the Cold War was the development of a radically changed Soviet view of its place in the world and the way in which it conducted its relations with other states and people. This view had its origins in the broader effort to reform the Soviet economy and society; as Gorbachev said, new political thinking in foreign policy and *perestroika* were 'two sides of the same coin.'<sup>14</sup> But the development of these ideas should to be considered in two contexts: first, the international context of successful global capitalism and a US-led Western alliance; and second, the domestic context of reform and restructuring which required constant radicalisation and resulted in increasing social and political instability. Soviet ideas on how the USSR should position itself developed in clear reaction to these two conditions. In this dual context, one can see three clear phases of Soviet foreign policy thinking and action which derived from the idea of normalising Soviet ideology and the USSR more generally. The first phase of 'demilitarisation' dates from mid-1985 until late-1987. The second, 'liberal normalisation', dates from mid-1987 to mid-1989, and the final phase, 'reactive improvisation', dates from late 1989 to the end of

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<sup>13</sup> Note that these were *international* relations and not simply a re-evaluation of Soviet-US relations. They involved a wholesale rethinking of the Soviet Union's place in the world.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Roy Medvedev and Giulietto Chiesa, *Time of Change: An Insider's View of Russia's Transformation* London: I.B. Tauris, 1991, p. 262. The position taken by Gorbachev should be understood as having a longer history than may be immediately apparent. It derived not only from the Andropov period, but also from the earlier Khrushchev period in which the language and ideas that Gorbachev was to make famous first began to take shape in Soviet political life.

1991.<sup>15</sup> Soviet new thinking between 1985 and 1991 was ultimately characterised by the slow rejection of a ‘two competing systems’ view of the world and the acceptance of the norms and values of international liberalism. This was matched by a reluctant rejection of the ideas of the Russian Revolution which had provided the ideological justification and political blueprint for Soviet rule and its role in the world. It is instructive to separate, for analytic purposes, the development of ideas for and intentions to change from the practical application of these principles.

### 5.2.2 *The Development of New Thinking*

#### Demilitarisation: 1985–1987

The 27<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, held between 25 February and 6 March 1986, is commonly noted as the first enunciation of the new Soviet position. However, incipient signs of new thinking in Soviet foreign policy were evident earlier than this. The initial glimmer appeared in an interview published in *Pravda* on 7 April 1985 in which Gorbachev spoke of the need for an improvement in US-Soviet relations and announced a moratorium on the deployment of intermediate range weapons and on nuclear weapons testing.<sup>16</sup> In the Central Committee plenum held on 23 April, of that year a more detailed discussion on domestic reform and the need for an improved international posture was held.<sup>17</sup> Gorbachev’s appointment of Shevardnadze as foreign minister and then his articulation of a possible new strategic doctrine of ‘reasonable sufficiency’ in Paris in October 1985 further indicated that something resembling a new pattern was beginning to

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<sup>15</sup> Gorbachev also describes three phases in the development of ‘new thinking’ in foreign policy although he periodises them differently. He defines the first period as 1986–1988 which involved the search for an end to the Cold War, the second as the period between 1988 and 1990 which marked the end of the Cold War. The third phase he claims was reached in 1991 and was marked by what he calls the search for a ‘new paradigm for humanity’ in Gorbachev, *On My Country*, pp. 186–7.

<sup>16</sup> Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: America-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1994, p. 214.

<sup>17</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* London: Bantam, 1997 [orig. 1995], pp. 221–24; Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000, pp. 29–31. The published promulgations were referred to in Russia subsequently as Gorbachev’s ‘April Theses’, a reflection on Lenin’s theses of the same name. The author thanks Anna Kuzovaya for this point.

emerge. The symbolic high-point of this early period was the public face presented to the world of arms negotiations made by Gorbachev at the Geneva summit.<sup>18</sup> This was followed by a speech, provided by Gorbachev and the Politburo, and read on Soviet television on 15 January 1986. The speech proposed that the US and USSR remove all intermediate range nuclear weapons from Europe and that nuclear weapons should be eliminated world-wide by the year 2000. It also announced an extension of the Soviet nuclear testing moratorium.<sup>19</sup> While it is clear now that ideas were bubbling to the surface—ideas which were already changing Soviet actions—there was still no coherent articulation of Soviet relations with the rest of the world.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Party Congress ended this wait. In his five hour political report to the Congress, Gorbachev made plain that a qualitatively new phase of Soviet foreign policy was about to be embarked upon. While the early language of the report was reliant on familiar CPSU clichés, Gorbachev went on to develop the view of the Soviet Union's relations with the world which was to characterise this period: the desire to end the military dimension of the international confrontation. This, he said, derived from the growing belief in the interdependence of the world in an age of nuclear weapons and the desire to free the Soviet economy and foreign policy from the heavy burden of the arms race and militarised systemic conflict. As Gorbachev said in his speech:

The clash and struggle of the opposite approaches to the perspectives of world development have become especially complex in nature. Now that the world has huge nuclear stockpiles and the only thing experts argue about is how many times or dozens of times humanity can be destroyed, it is high time to begin an effective withdrawal from the brink of war, from the equilibrium of fear, to normal, civilised forms of relations between the states of the two systems.<sup>20</sup>

At first glance, this was not too dissimilar from some of Khrushchev's claims. However, the genuine novelty of this position could be seen in the major thrust

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<sup>18</sup> For details see Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 139–54; and George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1993, pp. 597–607.

<sup>19</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 156–7; Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp. 531–4.

<sup>20</sup> CPSU Central Committee, *Political Report of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee to the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1986, Delivered by M.S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, 25 February, 1986, pp. 13–4.

of the Soviet concern: that 'the prevailing dialectics of present day development consists in a combination of competition and confrontation between the two systems and in a growing tendency towards *interdependence* of the countries of the world.'<sup>21</sup> The emphasis was on the de-militarisation of the US-Soviet relationship and the pursuit of a process of normalisation with the rest of the world. During the 1985–1990 period, the reform process was characterised by efforts at normalisation—that is, the desire to make the Soviet Union and its relations with the world 'normal'.<sup>22</sup> The norm which was to replace the revolutionary posture was a form of liberalism. Central to this first phase of reform was the idea of liberal interdependence, the view that states are irrevocably linked by common bonds, common problems and mutual vulnerability. The two phenomena which were inducing this situation were perceived to be environmental degradation and nuclear weapons. Despite the commitment to an interdependence view of the world, the different systems and values of the two blocs were still recognised, as Gorbachev said, 'the objective...conditions have taken shape in which confrontation between capitalism and socialism can proceed only and exclusively in forms of peaceful competition.'<sup>23</sup>

In this first phase of new thinking, Gorbachev did not totally remove Marxist-Leninist ideology or the idea of a contest between Soviet communism and the capitalist West from the USSR. However, he did move beyond the stagnant dogmatism of the preceding twenty years and called into question the traditional Soviet view of the conflict between two social systems which had gone under the guise of 'peaceful coexistence'.<sup>24</sup> The aim was to make genuine this otherwise hollow rhetorical claim. The over-riding emphasis during this phase was on the demilitarisation of Soviet international relations based on what

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<sup>21</sup> CPSU Central Committee, *Political Report*, p. 23; italics added.

<sup>22</sup> On the decline of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric and beliefs in foreign policy see Sylvia Woodly, *Gorbachev and the Decline of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> CPSU Central Committee, *Political Report*, p. 76.

<sup>24</sup> On the traditional Soviet view of Cold War and particularly a nuanced discussion of the history of the idea of 'peaceful coexistence' see Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations, 1917–1982* Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1988, especially pp. 35–42 and pp. 44–68.

has been described as, in IR theory terms, a liberal/idealist view of the nature of world politics.<sup>25</sup>

### Liberal Normalisation: 1987–1989

The ideas of reform in foreign policy, while articulated in sweeping terms in 1986, were further developed following the warmer reception they received in the West in 1987 and 1988. There were also developed by *demokratisatsiia* which was implemented to continue at home the reform process that had been hindered by recalcitrant entrenched party interests. Despite progress in US-Soviet relations and the signing of the Delhi declaration on the principles for a non-violent and nuclear weapon free world, the ideas underpinning Soviet international relations were still developing. While there had been a clear articulation, there had not been a systematic discussion of precisely what new thinking in international relations entailed. This new phase was characterised by an acceleration of the process of normalisation and an increasing acceptance of the norms of an international liberalism. Increasingly, the Soviets were moving away from their revolutionary aims and towards a more 'status quo' view of the world and their place in it. During this period, foreign policy radicalisation matched the increasing boldness of domestic reform.

The Washington summit of December 1987, at which the intermediate range nuclear force (INF) treaty was signed, saw a further development of new thinking when the Soviets dropped their fervent opposition to SDI.<sup>26</sup> This period also saw an increase in Soviet commitment to normalising relations around the world; Afghanistan and Nicaragua are the most obvious examples.<sup>27</sup> In his speech on 2 November 1987 celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the October revolution, Gorbachev made what was one of the clearest statements yet of the new Soviet view of its past and its place in the world. The speech further

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<sup>25</sup> On the argument that, in the early phases of new thinking, Gorbachev was influenced by a highly liberal-idealist view see Peter Shearman, 'New Political Thinking Reassessed' in *Review of International Studies* 19.2, 1993, pp. 139–58, particularly pp. 149–52.

<sup>26</sup> See Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 257–71; Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 306 and pp. 325–37.

<sup>27</sup> On this generally see Margot Light, 'Soviet Policy in the Third World' in *International Affairs* 67.2, 1991, pp. 263–80.

elaborated the ideas presented to the 27<sup>th</sup> Party Congress and placed the emphasis firmly on disarmament while also recognising the significance of universal human values. He stated that 'we have become convinced of there being no model of socialism to be emulated by everyone.'<sup>28</sup> His closing words indicated that there was still a conviction that there were two social systems that were part of one world: 'In October 1917 we parted with the old world, rejecting it once and for all. We are moving towards a new world, the world of communism. We shall never turn off that road.'<sup>29</sup>

On 16 March 1988, these ideas were again raised in a speech to the Yugoslav Federal Assembly. There Gorbachev indicated the next development of Soviet new thinking by signalling two important moves. First, he declared that interventionism in Eastern Europe was illegitimate. Second, he approved and underlined the importance and legitimacy of separate socialist forms of development.<sup>30</sup> This significant shift in Soviet thinking about the world was, characteristically, either ignored by the Western world or treated with suspicion.

The pre-eminent systematic articulation of Soviet new thinking as an active political programme was made on 7 December 1988 at the UN. This moment was heavy with symbolism and was a clear signpost that the process of ending the confrontation between Soviet communism and the capitalist West was well advanced. At the UN, the commitment to separate systems and values was dropped, and the emphasis was instead put on the unity of humanity and the interdependence of world politics. As Gorbachev said, '[t]he world economy is becoming a single organism, and no state, whatever its social system or economic status can develop normally outside it.'<sup>31</sup> In this speech, Gorbachev made three dramatic claims which captured the international imagination in a manner not unlike Churchill's Fulton speech of March 1946, an outcome intended by the speaker.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, 'October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues' transcript in the *New York Times*, 3 November 1987, p. A11.

<sup>29</sup> Gorbachev, 'October and Perestroika'.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms, 1985–1990* Hemel Hempstead: Philips Lane, 1990, p. 336; Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 622.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations General Assembly, A/43/PU.72 7 December 1988, *Address by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR*, p. 6

<sup>32</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 592; see also Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 201–3.



First, Gorbachev rejected the legacy of the Russian revolution and the commitment to a separate set of socialist values. He argued that the Russian revolution belonged to the past: 'we have entered an era when progress will be shaped by universal human interests. Awareness of that dictates that world politics too should be guided by the primacy of universal human values.'<sup>33</sup> Second, he rejected the use of force as a legitimate tool of foreign policy, noting that political problems could only be solved through political means. Further, Gorbachev stressed the centrality of freedom of choice to the universal human values he had praised: 'it is also quite clear that the price of freedom of choice is mandatory...Denying that right to peoples, under whatever pretext or rhetorical guise, jeopardises even the fragile balance that has been attained. Freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow of no exception.'<sup>34</sup> Finally, he flagged a raft of arms reductions in Europe and the Soviet Union which had the Western alliance pinching itself in disbelief. The major commitments made were a reduction of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe by 500,000 men, the withdrawal of six tank divisions from the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary,<sup>35</sup> and the reduction of 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircraft. In Gorbachev's words, 'we shall maintain our country's defence capability at a level of reasonable and reliable sufficiency so that no one will be tempted to encroach on the security of the Soviet Union and our allies.'<sup>36</sup> At the time, it was the announcement of arms reductions which caught media and political attention, but the USSR's international political posture was truly transformed by the first two principles—the rejection of socialist values and the rejection of the use of force as a tool of foreign policy—which began not just to chip away at, but to rip out the foundations of the international confrontation which had beset the USSR since 1917.

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<sup>33</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Address by Mikhail Gorbachev*, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Address by Mikhail Gorbachev*, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> This was a total of approximately 10,000 tanks.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Address by Mikhail Gorbachev*, pp. 27–8.

## Reactive Improvisation: 1989–1991

Gorbachev's speech to the UN was not just a signal to the world that the internal Soviet conditions which had brought about the Cold War were past, it was a broader attempt to revive international organisations, and especially the UN.<sup>37</sup> This larger aim was indicative of the fact that, at this point, Gorbachev and his foreign policy team still felt very much in control of events. Yet, on the day he gave the speech, a devastating earthquake hit Armenia and Gorbachev was forced to cut short his visit and return to his increasingly chaotic country. This event was a poignant metaphor of his split existence; internationally involved in reordering the international system on a distinctly safer basis, and domestically increasingly less in charge, as the once great Soviet Union underwent a disorderly breakdown of power.

The final phase of Soviet foreign policy re-orientation was characterised by a reactive quality which saw momentum move away from the Soviet Union, because of the increasing domestic impotence of the reformist elite and Gorbachev in particular.<sup>38</sup> By 1989, the ideas of new thinking had found a life of their own, seen most dramatically with the departure of the Eastern European communist states from June 1989 onwards. Initially, the playing out of the ideas in Eastern Europe was supported by Gorbachev and the foreign policy elite. On 6 July, Gorbachev gave his famous 'Common European Home' speech to the council of Europe in Strasbourg, and, in Helsinki on 25 October, he emphasised that the USSR had no right to interfere in the affairs of Eastern Europe.<sup>39</sup> Both of these speeches were in line with, and did not develop the ideas informing, Soviet foreign policy beyond the UN speech. But there were significant announcements of the Cold War endgame still to come. At the Malta Summit of December 1989,

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<sup>37</sup> In an interview in *Pravda* in September 1987, Gorbachev noted that it was becoming clear that the military antagonism of the previous years could only be prevented through the revival of international organisations, and specifically the UN. See Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 570.

<sup>38</sup> Shearman argues that, in this period 'new thinking' shifted from being shaped by a liberal/idealist view of the world to a more realist view. Shearman, 'New Political Thinking Reassessed'.

<sup>39</sup> It is this latter speech which prompted Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet foreign ministry spokesman, to joke at a press conference that the Brezhnev doctrine had been replaced by the Sinatra Doctrine. This was confirmed, in more serious tones, by a communiqué from the Warsaw Pact leaders following their meeting of 26–27 October 1989.

Gorbachev told Bush that the US was no longer seen as an enemy by the Soviet Union: 'We don't consider you an enemy any more...things have changed. We want you in Europe. You ought to be in Europe. It's important for the future of the Continent that you're there. So don't think that we want you to leave.'<sup>40</sup>

Despite his commitment to the self-determination of the countries of Eastern Europe, Gorbachev was extremely reluctant to accept German reunification within Nato. But he was forced to accept this most uncomfortable of developments with vague promises about limits to Nato expansion<sup>41</sup> and three financial assurances from the FRG.<sup>42</sup> These assurances were: that the FRG would assume all of the GDR's economic obligations to Moscow; that it would extend a USD 3 billion line of credit to the USSR; and that it would cover the costs of Soviet troops in East Germany during the transition period.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, while there was a sense within the leadership that it was only fair to accept this, there was also a realisation that there was very little that the Soviet Union could reasonably do to stop these unpalatable developments.<sup>44</sup>

Following this period, Gorbachev began to move to the right within Soviet domestic politics to try to shore up his power base and reinforce the powers of the presidency.<sup>45</sup> This resulted in Shevardnadze's resignation on 20 December 1990.<sup>46</sup> By this point, however, the Cold War was over. Europe was no longer divided, and the values and ideals of the Soviet Union were no longer at odds with the rest of the world. The US-led West had nothing to oppose and third world conflicts had been drained of their Cold War colouring. The final chapter of the Cold War, German unification within Nato, undertaken without a genuine Soviet blessing, was unquestionably the symbol of this phase. Reluctant

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<sup>40</sup> Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 163; see also George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998, pp. 168–73; and Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 233–5.

<sup>41</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 239.

<sup>42</sup> Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp.235–40, and pp. 271–3.

<sup>43</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 296; on the negotiations generally see James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992* New York: G.P. Putnam's & Sons, 1995, pp. 230–8, and pp. 244–59.

<sup>44</sup> Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. 172.

<sup>45</sup> See Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* New York: Random House, 1995, pp. 421–48.

<sup>46</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 442–5; Garthoff, *Great Transition*, p. 442; Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991, pp. 197–200; and Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 312–3.

to allow the principles that they had articulated to be properly played out, there was little that the Soviets could do. The ideals of 1988 had developed a dynamism of their own which had overrun their Soviet progenitors. Furthermore, it was Gorbachev's increasing reliance on his last area of political success—foreign policy—which further hindered both his domestic political credibility and also his ability to shape international developments in his favour. Dobrynin summarises this well: 'From 1989 on Soviet diplomacy became progressively less effective because of the urgent pressure of Gorbachev's domestic political agenda and his efforts to sustain his weakening reputation at home by what appeared to be success abroad.'<sup>47</sup>

### 5.2.3 *Soviet New Thinking and Action*

There were four clear ways in which new thinking, when put into practice by the Soviet elite, led to a new ordering of world politics: the massive reduction in strategic and conventional arms; the adoption of a new strategic military doctrine; the participation in a new system of liberal global relations; and the end of support for third world revolutions, revolutionary movements and 'fraternal' communist regimes.

#### Arms Reduction

Soviet commitment to nuclear and conventional arms reduction—its retreat from the arms race aspect of the Cold War—was the most dramatic part of the unmaking of the international confrontation. The moratorium on nuclear testing announced in April 1985, less than a month after Gorbachev took office, gave an early indication of the direction in which the Soviets were going. On 27 September of that year, Shevardnadze delivered a letter from Gorbachev to Reagan suggesting an agreement for both sides to cut their long-range nuclear

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<sup>47</sup> Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents, 1962–1986* New York: Times Books, 1995, p. 628.

capacity by 50%.<sup>48</sup> This presaged the discussion at the Geneva summit at which Gorbachev accepted American suggestions for a 50% reduction in strategic arms and an interim agreement on intermediate range forces. The possibility of agreement was dashed by the Americans' commitment to SDI, their determination to link arms reduction to it, and Gorbachev's implacability in the face of missile defence systems.<sup>49</sup> A year later, this was followed by a whole raft of cuts proposed by Gorbachev at the Reykjavik summit including 50% cuts in all categories of strategic arms<sup>50</sup> and further concessions on INF. During negotiations, this expanded into a total elimination of all INF missiles in Europe and all ballistic missiles over a ten year period.<sup>51</sup> This too collapsed in the face of American and Soviet intransigence over SDI. On 28 February 1987, Gorbachev finally de-linked SDI from an INF arms reduction package<sup>52</sup> and, on 8 December that year,<sup>53</sup> the INF treaty which eliminated all medium and short range missiles—about 4% of their respective arsenals—was signed.<sup>54</sup>

In arms reduction, 1988 was a year of symbolic import but little further substantive agreement. The Moscow Summit was largely ceremonial<sup>55</sup> although, as noted above, the UN speech marked a distinct acceleration of Soviet unilateral pronouncements.<sup>56</sup> On 7 April 1989, Gorbachev announced a cessation in the Soviet production of weapons grade plutonium,<sup>57</sup> but further negotiation and agreements were put on hold due to the Bush 'pause' in relations with the

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<sup>48</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, p. 129; on this more generally see Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, pp. 81–2.

<sup>49</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 144–50; Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 238–48; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 597–607.

<sup>50</sup> This included the previously excluded land and sea based heavy ICBMs and bombers.

<sup>51</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 189–205; Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 287–91; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 757–777; and Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 81–6.

<sup>52</sup> For an explanation which links Gorbachev's shift to the critique of his position made by Andrei Sakharov see Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000, pp. 409–11.

<sup>53</sup> At precisely 1.45pm, a time suggested by Nancy Reagan at the behest of her astrologer, Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, p. 259.

<sup>54</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 257–66; Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 142–3; Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 326–37; and Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 1009–15.

<sup>55</sup> While nothing new was achieved, the symbolic affect was great. Many feel that this summit played a large role in ending both sides' long held views of the other state as an 'enemy', see Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 351–8; and Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 292–307.

<sup>56</sup> See above notes 31 and 35.

Soviets.<sup>58</sup> It was not until the Malta Summit that the Soviets were able to re-establish a proper working relationship with the American administration of the sort needed for such politically risky arms negotiations agreements.<sup>59</sup> Once the relationship had been re-established, the arms reduction agreements which definitively ended the arms race dimension of the Cold War came thick and fast.

Despite difficult negotiations and increasingly trying domestic political circumstances for the Soviets, the Washington summit of May-June 1990 produced remarkable results culminating in the signature of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty on 19 November.<sup>60</sup> This treaty committed the Soviets to a 70% reduction in conventional forces stationed West of the Urals. In conventional terms, which had been of central importance to Soviet military strategy, new thinking resulted in the reductions flagged at the UN, the massive withdrawal of tank battalions mentioned earlier, the withdrawal of six Soviet divisions from Mongolia and the disbanding of twelve divisions which had been stationed along the Chinese border. This was followed in July 1991 by the signature of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). In terms of absolute quantities, START was the most momentous of all the agreements yet signed. It involved the reduction of 25% of the American and 35% of the Soviet strategic arsenals, and had taken nine years of negotiations to produce.<sup>61</sup> Yet the treaty was something of a damp squib by the time it was signed, for world politics had changed so dramatically in those nine years. The process of demilitarisation which began with a nuclear test moratorium, had, by the end of 1989, led to a situation in which no Soviet troops were involved in conflict anywhere in the world, and culminated in the signature of START. Soviet military capability had been dramatically changed, both in terms of strategic-military allocations and strategic posture and purpose.

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<sup>57</sup> *New York Times*, 8 April 1989, p. A1; see also Todd Perry, 'Stemming Russia's Plutonium Tide: Cooperative Efforts to Convert Military Reactors' in *Nonproliferation Review* 4.2, 1997, pp. 104-14.

<sup>58</sup> Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 25-78.

<sup>59</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp. 658-65.

<sup>60</sup> On the Washington summit see Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp. 252-4; Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 215-28; and Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 410-30. On CFE see generally Stuart Croft (ed.), *The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty: The Cold War Endgame* Aldershot: Dartmouth Press, 1994.

<sup>61</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 454-8; on the negotiations and the treaty more generally see Kerry M. Karchener, *Negotiating START: Strategic Arms Reduction Talks and the Quest for Strategic Stability* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992.

## New Military Doctrine

The second aspect of the transformation in Soviet action was the assumption of a new military doctrine by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. The demilitarisation of strategic and conventional forces was matched with a broader strategic vision. In a speech to French National Assembly members on 3 October 1985, during his first trip abroad as General Secretary, Gorbachev flagged a raft of potential arms cuts based on a possible change in armaments doctrine which he labelled 'reasonable sufficiency'.<sup>62</sup> The general direction in which military strategy was tending was articulated in typical Gorbachev fashion in his 1987 book, *Perestroika*: 'Never, under any circumstances, will our country begin military operations against Western Europe unless we and our allies are attacked by Nato! Never, I repeat never!'<sup>63</sup> This developed into what came to be known as 'non-offensive defence', also known as 'necessary sufficiency'.<sup>64</sup> This represented a wholesale transformation to a security doctrine informed by a liberal-interdependence view of strategic relations and not the traditional Soviet notion that class conflict and capitalist antagonism were the driving forces of geopolitics.<sup>65</sup>

The traditional Soviet security doctrine had been founded on the premise that capitalist growth was inherently militaristic, that inter-state warfare was the result of class conflict which was the inevitable nature of capitalist international relations, and that the Soviet Union and its bloc were encircled by an alliance of hostile capitalist powers. This view was also influenced by an historical sense of strategic inferiority, the product of 150 years of invasion and strife. These ideas and circumstances produced a formal strategic doctrine characterised by 'offensive defence', a strategy based on preventative action in the large buffer

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<sup>62</sup> *New York Times*, 4 October 1985, p. A12.

<sup>63</sup> Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 203.

<sup>64</sup> Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, p. 333.

<sup>65</sup> It has been a matter of debate as to whether official doctrine actually informed action in a practical sense. It is clear that it did to a certain extent. But even if it was not the ultimate determinant, and we cannot say for certain that it was not, the symbolic importance of the official shift must not be underestimated as it represents a genuine political gesture of a change in values and its consequent political and strategic priorities.

zone of Eastern Europe.<sup>66</sup> The defensive strategy was underpinned with a commitment to nuclear deterrence which relied primarily on the Soviet arsenal of heavy ICBMs and required the control and domination of the buffer zone. The new view of military security was built on the idea of a 'common European home', which presumed the view of Europe as a single entity, from the Atlantic to the Urals. This moved beyond the idea necessary to traditional Soviet defence—the pliant submission of Eastern Europe.<sup>67</sup>

On 29 May 1987, a communiqué was issued following a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation which, following pressure from Moscow, announced the shift in the Pact's military doctrine to a strategic defence posture. Specifically, this involved the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons, any further territorial claims and the formal declaration that no state was seen as an enemy.<sup>68</sup> This moved the USSR and the Pact from a position in which the military had been organised for fighting and winning wars to a position in which it was organised for war prevention. The new doctrine had a clear impact on the Soviet military as the drastic reduction in conventional forces set out above demonstrates. Furthermore, it led to a restructuring of the military to increase defensive capacity and to decrease its offensive strength both in Europe and in Asia. It also entailed a reduction in military production of approximately 20% and further meant that training exercises focused more heavily on defence.<sup>69</sup> The impact of new thinking on Soviet military strategy and its consequent effects on military

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<sup>66</sup> The cornerstone was a nuclear deterrent combined with a commitment to waging a war which involved, in the event of a nuclear strike, a rapid conventional thrust across Western Europe to the English channel. On the pre-1985 security doctrine and its perception in the West see Gregory Flynn (ed.), *Soviet Military Doctrine and Western Policy* London: Routledge, 1989. On the historical development of the Soviet military doctrine see Willard C. Frank Jr and Phillip S. Gillette (eds.), *Soviet Military Doctrine from Lenin to Gorbachev, 1915–1991* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992.

<sup>67</sup> On the new Soviet doctrine see generally Christoph Bluth, *New Thinking in Soviet Military Policy* London: RIIA and Pinter, 1990; Raymond L. Garthoff, *Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1990; and William C. Green and Theodore Karasik (eds.), *Gorbachev and His Generals: The Reform of the Soviet Military Doctrine* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990.

<sup>68</sup> See Raymond L. Garthoff, 'New Thinking and Soviet Military Doctrine' in Frank and Gillette (eds.), *Soviet Military Doctrine from Lenin to Gorbachev*, pp. 195–209; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 231–2; Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 306. No first use had been Soviet policy, but it was not unilateral and had an exception based on external provocation. The shift was to a unilateralist position.

<sup>69</sup> Garthoff, 'New Thinking and Soviet Military Doctrine', pp. 201–5.



capabilities were a vital step towards the creation of a new context for world politics and the ending of the Soviet confrontation with the capitalist West.

### Liberal International Relations

While Soviet softening of its relations with America was certainly an important element of the end of the Cold War, it was only part of the story. Soviet engagement with America was the centre-piece of a larger effort to improve Soviet relations in a global sense. As Gorbachev remarked: 'one must not in world politics restrict oneself to relations with just one country alone, even if it is a very important one.'<sup>70</sup> On 23 May 1986, Gorbachev gave a speech to the ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he insisted that the diplomats rethink Soviet relations with Europe and specifically that they should no longer look at Europe through the prism of Soviet relations with the United States.<sup>71</sup> The normalisation of Soviet relations aimed to remove Soviet foreign relations from the fetters of Soviet-American acrimony. Across Europe, the Soviets dramatically improved relations, most notably with the FRG, Spain, France and Great Britain.<sup>72</sup> But the commitment to a globally focused normalisation was demonstrated outside the more obvious centres of Soviet interest.<sup>73</sup> On 28 July 1986, Gorbachev announced the removal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and Mongolia.<sup>74</sup> The signing of the Delhi declaration in November 1986 was also part of this broader effort to globalise more benign relations.<sup>75</sup> In February 1987, Shevardnadze

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<sup>70</sup> Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 221.

<sup>71</sup> Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 242.

<sup>72</sup> On the influence of and relationship between Gorbachev and European political leaders see Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, pp. 115–7.

<sup>73</sup> See generally Light, 'Soviet Policy in the Third World' and Melvin A. Goodman, 'Introduction: Moscow's Plans for Conflict Resolution in the Third World' in Melvin A. Goodman (ed.), *The End of Superpower Conflict in the Third World* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992, pp. 1–18.

<sup>74</sup> *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* Vol. XXXI, London: Keesing's, 1985, p. 34529. The announcement referred to six troop regiments from Afghanistan and 'substantial' numbers from Mongolia.

<sup>75</sup> Palazchenko, *My Years With Gorbachev*, pp. 58–60.

undertook a tour of Asia to revitalise relations with states in the region and to emphasise the importance of Asia to the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup>

On 22 December 1988, agreements between Angola, South Africa and Cuba were signed which removed Cuban troops from Angola and established the independence of Namibia.<sup>77</sup> These developments were brought about directly by Soviet pressure on Cuba and Angola, and British pressure on South Africa following the defeat of its forces. These agreements demonstrated the Soviet belief in a new way of doing business in international relations and, importantly, demonstrated its support for the political resolution of conflicts. This was followed several weeks later by the Vietnamese announcement, on January 6, that it would remove all of its forces from Cambodia. This decision was the direct result of Soviet pressure on the Vietnamese and reassurances to the Cambodians.<sup>78</sup> In May 1989, relations with China were normalised, ending decades of acrimony and hostility, and easing tension on the world's most militarised border; perhaps this normalisation was the most notable shift of this set. It is clear that Soviet new thinking did not simply revolve around a Washington pole, it was characterised by action which displayed an awareness of the global influence of the great powers in a Cold War context. More importantly, it was marked by a firm desire to ensure political solutions to conflicts and struggles around the world. These efforts were propelled by an attempt to reduce the costs, in both economic and political terms, of the consequences of Soviet Cold War foreign policy as well as a change in underlying beliefs. Most significantly, they represented a clear break with the traditional role that had been played by the Soviet Union in world politics generally, and regional conflicts specifically.

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<sup>76</sup> Palazchenko, *My Years With Gorbachev*, p. 62–3. It was in the deliberately innocuous setting of an Australian government lunch that Shevardnadze announced the Soviet decision to de-link SDI conditions from any potential INF agreement.

<sup>77</sup> W. Martin James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974–1990* New Brunswick, NJ : Transaction Publishers, 1991, and Peter Clement, 'U.S.-Russian Cooperation in Africa' in Goodman (ed.), *The End of Superpower Conflict in the Third World*, pp. 79–83.

<sup>78</sup> See Jack Turner, *Soviet New Thinking and the Cambodian Conflict* Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1994.

## Revolutionary Regimes Jettisoned

The fourth change in Soviet action was its ending of support for third world revolutionary movements and regimes, its withdrawal from international engagements and its effective termination of the international communist movement.<sup>79</sup> One of the most important aspects of the end of the Cold War was the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Afghanistan had become a 'bleeding wound' in the side of Soviet power, and the leadership saw it as a miscalculation which was hurting Soviet interests at home and abroad.<sup>80</sup> As the Soviet incursion was costing an enormous amount in monetary, morale and military terms, the decision to withdraw was made for both instrumental and values-based reasons. On 5 July 1990, Gorbachev told *Pravda* that the intervention in Afghanistan had cost around 60 billion roubles.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, the various sanctions imposed by the West since 1980 had damaged the Soviet economy. These sanctions not only hindered economic performance, but made efforts to normalise political relations more difficult.

In values-based terms, things were less straightforward. Initially, Gorbachev had pushed for victory via an escalation in 1985–6, but, when it became clear that things were not going their way, the decision was taken to withdraw from the fiasco. It was then presented in more values-based terms. On Soviet television on 8 February 1988, a sombre Gorbachev announced that on 15 May Soviet troops were to begin a wholesale withdrawal from Afghanistan. Between then and 14 April, the foreign ministers of the USA, the USSR, Afghanistan and Pakistan negotiated the terms and conditions of withdrawal and the status of the Afghan government. The withdrawal was completed on 15 February of the following year.<sup>82</sup> As Reuveny and Prakash point out, the

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<sup>79</sup> See generally W. Raymond Duncan and Carolyn McGuiffert Ekedhal, *Moscow and the Third World Under Gorbachev* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990; and Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 205–8.

<sup>80</sup> See Fred Halliday, 'Soviet Foreign policymaking [sic] and the Afghanistan War: from "second Mongolia" to "bleeding wound"' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 675–691.

<sup>81</sup> Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, p. 336.

<sup>82</sup> On the Soviet withdrawal see generally, Diego Cordovez, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995; and Amin Saikal and William Maley (eds.), *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Afghanistan war decreased the legitimacy of the military, encouraged non-Russian republics to pursue independence and helped to produce new pre-glasnost forms of political participation.<sup>83</sup>

The Soviet Union had supported the Sandinistas in Nicaragua up to and after the 1979 revolution.<sup>84</sup> On 16 May 1989, the *Washington Post* reported that the Soviets had stopped supplying them with weapons and aid.<sup>85</sup> While the USSR did not end its economic aid to Cuba, it did try to get Castro to follow the proposed political solution to the problem of El Salvador, but with little success.<sup>86</sup> The removal of support for revolutionary states entailed more than simply the ending of economic or military aid to revolutionary regimes, it was part of a larger strategy which left the international communist movement as politically moribund as its members' economies.

The best illustration of the Soviets' wholesale departure from the support of third world revolutionary regimes was the Soviet diplomatic support of the US-led UN response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Shevardnadze said that 'if the world community could not stop the aggressors against Kuwait then it would have gained nothing from the end of the Cold War.'<sup>87</sup> It was the ultimate illustration of the shift in Soviet foreign relations, for it involved the support of a UN-sanctioned war against a former client state.<sup>88</sup> This demonstrated both their commitment to a new way of addressing international problems, their support for international organisations, and that their past ideological and strategic commitments were very firmly part of history.

To summarise, Soviet action which derived from new thinking consisted of four important developments: the scaling back and reconfiguration of military

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<sup>83</sup> Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, 'The Afghanistan War and the Breakdown of the Soviet Union' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 693–708.

<sup>84</sup> See generally John A. Booth, *The End of the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* Second Edition, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994.

<sup>85</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 340–1; Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 662; Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 379, p. 407.

<sup>86</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 698–9.

<sup>87</sup> Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 247.

<sup>88</sup> The Soviets were far from unified behind the Gorbachev/Shevardnadze position. The hard-liners in Moscow were fiercely against what they considered to be a heavy handed piece of American unilateralism. Furthermore, in keeping with the dictates of new thinking, the Soviets were far more committed to a diplomatic settlement than the Americans. To this end, Primakov spent many hours trying to talk Hussein around. See Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 270–2, and pp. 330–7; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 432–449; Baker, *The*

allocations; the adoption of a new military doctrine; the formation of a more normal posture across the gamut of international relations; and the withdrawal of support for third world conflicts and revolutionary regimes. Through these, new thinking produced actions which helped end the chronic international confrontation and radically reformed the structures of international politics.

#### 5.2.4 *The Reasons for Soviet Change*

The shifts in Soviet ideology and in their philosophy of international engagement, were remarkable. Yet it is far from clear precisely why such changes came about. Many have argued that the Soviets changed tack because of the disastrous state of their economy,<sup>89</sup> some have argued that it was due to the rise of a Western-focused elite,<sup>90</sup> and others have claimed that the sage firmness of Reagan's Republican-right position produced the change.<sup>91</sup> Yet none of these positions is entirely accurate. The development of such a radical new way of doing things clearly had multiple origins. These sources of change can be attributed both to structural developments, that is, long term changes in society and problems in the economy, as well as to more agential factors to do with individual values, approaches and beliefs. While one should be wary of over-attributing coherence to a process that was clearly anything but, one can identify four related sources of the Soviet shift: instrumental; normative; normalisational-developmental; and popular support-based.

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*Politics of Diplomacy*, pp. 1–16; pp. 281–83; pp. 308–313; pp. 346–51; pp. 396–408; and Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp. 711–30.

<sup>89</sup> Brooks and Wohlforth argue that the material incentives of declining economic performance and the globalisation of production induced the changes, Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, 'Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas' in *International Security* 25.1, 2001, pp. 5–53. See also Ralph Summy and Michael E. Salla (eds.), *Why the Cold War Ended: A Range of Interpretations* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995.

<sup>90</sup> Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals and the End of the Cold War* New York: Columbia University Press, 2000; and Jeffrey Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behaviour and the End of the Cold War* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997.

<sup>91</sup> Robert G. Patman, 'Reagan, Gorbachev and the emergence of "New Political Thinking"' in *Review of International Studies* 25.4, 1999, pp. 577–601; and Richard Pipes, 'Misinterpreting the Cold War: The Hardliners got it right' in *Foreign Affairs* 74.1, 1995, pp. 154–60.

## Instrumental Sources

After the event, many have claimed that the Gorbachev-led shift in foreign policy orientation was a clearly-thought-out strategy that was part of the broader effort to reform the Soviet Union. The argument is essentially that the reformers recognised that a benign international environment was necessary to pursue domestic reform and, thus, systematically set out to achieve this.<sup>92</sup> As shown in the previous chapter, the Soviet economy and society were in a grim state. Gorbachev and company had, initially, made it their business to reform society and the economy by tinkering with aspects of the economic system and not challenging the underlying structures. They realised that the effort was going to be arduous and costly and would require a change in foreign policy. Thus, foreign policy reform was to be one of the means to provide ‘a better life for Soviet people and to establish higher models of social organisation and social justice.’<sup>93</sup> Shevardnadze, in his memoir, writes as much when he says that, in 1986, the chief national objective was ‘to create the maximum favourable external conditions needed in order to conduct internal reform.’<sup>94</sup> Such a view of the overall process is too neat, although there was, no doubt, an element of this intention within the elite. Between 1985 and 1987, the reformers manifestly misunderstood the scale of domestic reform necessary. To be credible any correlation between domestic and foreign policy reform must account for this misunderstanding. Furthermore, the neat instrumental argument attributes to Gorbachev an organisational forethought which history has shown he simply did not have.<sup>95</sup> The process was reasonably incoherent and was not simply the product of an instrumental calculation of interests. However, one should not reject the instrumental source of change outright. It is clear that the new thinking in foreign policy was designed by the leadership to achieve certain payoffs within Soviet society.

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<sup>92</sup> Gorbachev makes this case, see his *On My Country*, p. 66.

<sup>93</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, Speech at the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Meeting, 10 April 1987, full text in J.L. Black (ed.), *USSR Documents, 1987: The Gorbachev Reforms* Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1988, p. 316.

<sup>94</sup> Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. xi.

<sup>95</sup> For two criticisms along these lines see Dobrynin, *In Confidence* and Valery Boldin, *Ten Years That Shook the World: The Gorbachev Era As Witnessed by his Chief of Staff* New York: Basic Books, 1994.

One of the prime motivations for the Soviet demilitarisation of relations with the West and the world at large was the crippling cost of the arms race and its resulting deformation of the economy. No one really knew quite what the Soviets were spending on defence; no meaningful objective calculus of expenditure or cost existed.<sup>96</sup> Gorbachev writes in his memoirs of his surprise at discovering that military expenditure was approximately 40% of the state budget and that military production accounted for around 20% of Soviet gross national product.<sup>97</sup> The turn in military posture was influenced by a ‘guns or butter’ view of reform.<sup>98</sup> Believing that the Soviet economy could not go on functioning in the old way, the leadership made the choice, haphazardly and poorly thought-out though it was, for butter and not guns.

The instrumental aspect of ‘new thinking’ was not, however, simply about freeing the economy and society from the crippling impact of the arms race, which was itself both a cause and effect of Cold War. There were two other key intentions: first, it aimed to reel-in the draining cost of its overseas commitments, what could be called the cost of empire. The three largest instances of overseas cost were Afghanistan, Eastern Europe and the support for third world regimes—with Cuba being the single largest recipient.<sup>99</sup> The direct cost of Afghanistan has been mentioned, but it was also the effect of sanctions, as well as the cost on Soviet morale more generally which were of concern. Second, the Soviet Union needed to participate in the world on reasonable terms. Eastern Europe had long since proven to be an expensive client region. The realisation that, in terms of trade, the Soviet Union was exporting primary material and importing finished goods from its supposedly inferior allies had spurred some of the early ideas of reformers. New thinking aimed to change this state of affairs. The longer-term view was to try to transform Eastern Europe from a security zone into a link to the world markets of the global capitalist

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<sup>96</sup> See Chapter Four, note 49.

<sup>97</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 277.

<sup>98</sup> This was brought up in terms of ‘disarmament or development’ in his speech on the seventieth anniversary of the revolution. See Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, p. 325.

<sup>99</sup> On Cuba’s economic dependence on the Soviet Union see Peter Shearman, *The Soviet Union and Cuba* London: RIIA and Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1987, pp. 1–32. In *Izvestiia*, on 1 March 1990, the Soviets published a debtors list of socialist countries from whom substantial credits were owed. The top of the list was Cuba owing 15,490.6 million roubles, this was followed by Mongolia with 9,542.7 and Vietnam with 9,132.2 million. See Light ‘Soviet Policy in the Third World’, p. 273 and Goodman, ‘Introduction: Moscow’s Plan’, p. 5.

economy.<sup>100</sup> Pravda notes that Eastern Europe's value to the Soviet Union had declined dramatically, as a sphere of domination and source of legitimacy, as a reliable part of the international communist movement and as a *cordon sanitaire*.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, it was becoming a burden in financial and political terms.<sup>102</sup> Gorbachev noted that Eastern Europe was surviving on an expensive 'artificial respirator' and that the 'Soviets could no longer continue economic relations along these lines.'<sup>103</sup>

The realisation of the stagnation of the economy, the consequent demoralisation of society and the desire to change this was central to Soviet reforms, both in domestic and foreign policy. The Soviet economy could produce international standard jet fighters, but could not manufacture durable shoes. One way to solve this problem was to participate in the capitalist international division of production. The leadership also felt that normal economic relations were necessary for peaceful relations, to stimulate the economy and supplement its own productive capacity. Ultimately, the Soviets recognised that it was necessary to participate in the global economy if the USSR was to become a truly modern state with balanced development. As a result of this recognition, the leadership wanted to shift its foreign relations so that it could participate in the liberal world order.

The other broadly instrumental purpose served by the shift in Soviet foreign policy was the effort to overcome a range of Cold War political obstacles which had hindered Soviet economic development. As a direct result of the conflict, the West had created a series of hindrances to damage the Soviets. The prime example of this was CoCom. CoCom was a committee of Nato countries<sup>104</sup> plus Australia and Japan which produced a list of 'strategically important technology' which was not to be sold to the USSR. It was the coordinating mechanism of a form of economic warfare against the Soviet

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<sup>100</sup> Alex Pravda, 'Soviet Policy Towards Eastern Europe in Transition: The Means Justify the Ends' in Alex Pravda (ed.), *The End of Outer Empire: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition* London: RIIA and Sage, 1992, pp. 1–34; p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> Pravda, 'Soviet Policy Towards Eastern Europe', p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> On this see Valerie Bunce, 'The Empire Strikes Back: The Evolution of the Eastern Bloc from a Soviet Asset to a Soviet Liability' in *International Organization* 39.1, 1985, pp. 1–46.

<sup>103</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 604.

<sup>104</sup> Not including Iceland who opted out.



Union.<sup>105</sup> Its ostensible purpose was to ensure that the West and Nato maintained their military advantage over the USSR through a strategic embargo of goods although, at times, it was used to bully non-member states into adhering to its dictates.<sup>106</sup> It both deprived the USSR of technology and developments available in the wider world, and also reinforced the liberal-capitalist trading system.<sup>107</sup> It is clear that, in reaction to such structural hindrances, the leaders of the Soviet Union tried to change foreign relations to help reform the Soviet economy and Soviet society more broadly.

The instrumentalism behind Soviet new thinking needs to be seen as an important motivating factor, but two points need to be emphasised. First, it was not as coherently pursued and rationally calculated as is often presented. Second, it was not just about establishing a benign and less costly international environment for the reform process; the aim was to become a full and participating member of the international system so that Soviet society could be improved.

### Normative Sources

While instrumentalism was a central motivation, it was not the only driving force behind the changes within and without the Soviet Union. Gorbachev and his foreign policy team represented a new generation of Soviet leaders and, importantly, embodied a new set of ideas and norms which had been produced by the society which they in turn sought to revitalise. To a certain extent, the ending of the Cold War and the embrace of new thinking were due to a belief in the values which were at the heart of the reforms. New thinking derived from the reluctant recognition that capitalism could be successful without necessarily being bellicose, and was reinforced by a belief that the destructive power of nuclear weapons had radically changed the nature of conflict. The risk of utter annihilation was simply too great to justify the

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<sup>105</sup> See Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

<sup>106</sup> Mastanduno, *Economic Containment*, p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> On economic warfare against the Soviet Union more generally see Henry R. Naus and Kevin Quigley (eds.), *The Allies and East-West Economic Relations: Past Conflicts and Present Choices* New York: Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, 1984.

militarised dimension of the international conflict which had persisted for so long. Finally, there was shift in the understanding of the role of class in international politics.<sup>108</sup> No longer did the Soviets believe that class conflict was the prime dynamic of world politics. Rather, they had begun to believe in the liberal interdependence view of international relations.

A changed set of beliefs about how the world worked reflected changes in the broader value system of the leadership. Thus, new thinking meant that a sense of separate socialist values was left behind and a qualitatively different and, importantly, liberal set of values and rights replaced it. These were the values of universal human rights, self-determination, democratic government, the immorality of nuclear weapons and a belief in the mutual nature of security.<sup>109</sup> The pursuit of nuclear arms reduction, the shift in strategic doctrine, the step away from third world revolutionary regimes, the embrace of international organisations and the improvement in global relations were all undertaken, to a certain extent, because of a belief in these liberal values. Furthermore, the acceptance of the revolutions of 1989 was in keeping with these values.<sup>110</sup> Palazchenko remembers Shevardnadze saying, regarding Afghanistan and Eastern Europe, 'if they stand for something and have any real support among their people, they must cope themselves.'<sup>111</sup> This was a clear illustration of the implications of these beliefs for Soviet action. Perhaps more than the military reduction or the shift in strategic doctrine, the acceptance of liberal norms truly represented the end of the international confrontation. For the change represented, not the ineffable hand of history, but a recognition, both from above and below, that the Soviet set of values were fundamentally lacking. The chronic confrontation between Soviet communism and Western capitalism had been as much about ways of life as about military power, and the acceptance of norms, which had previously been so vigorously rejected, meant a rejection of the fundamentals of that conflict.

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<sup>108</sup> Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, pp. 320–2.

<sup>109</sup> See generally Archie Brown (ed.), *New Thinking in Soviet Politics* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992.

<sup>110</sup> As well as the mistaken thought that they would stay in the socialist fold.

<sup>111</sup> Palazchenko, *My Years With Gorbachev*, p. 89.

## Developmental-Normalisation

These two strands of agential motivation overlapped in the third which is a more structural change. At the heart of the domestic and international reforms lay the desire to make the Soviet Union 'normal'. Brown argues that the new thinking in foreign policy was consonant with domestic reforms, that they were in keeping with the desire to make the Soviet Union a modern state with a developed economy and normal relations with the world.<sup>112</sup> While not using the word 'normal', Gorbachev, writing in his memoirs, demonstrates this intent: 'we understood that in today's world of mutual interdependence progress is unthinkable for any society which is fenced off from the world by impenetrable state frontiers and ideological barriers.'<sup>113</sup> This recognition of Soviet abnormality was the product of the development of Soviet society itself. The growth of the economy, urbanisation and a massive increase in education meant that Soviet society grew within itself the means to realise its faults and to try to rectify them.<sup>114</sup> The generation which came to rule the Soviet state had travelled, was educated and was aware of how out of step its state and society was from the prevailing international norms. The arrival of Gorbachev in a position of power gave an opportunity for societal dissatisfaction to be expressed at the higher levels in an effort to try to change society.<sup>115</sup> That Gorbachev and the reformers were not a minority clique amongst a hard-line consensus was borne out by the general acceptance of the majority of the Gorbachev reforms and concessions by the military. This was due to a recognition within the military that the economy had to be reformed if military power was to survive. Also, it is clear that, within the military, there had also been a change in generation. The new generation,

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<sup>112</sup> Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 237.

<sup>113</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 519.

<sup>114</sup> Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.

<sup>115</sup> Thus, had Romanov and not Gorbachev acceded to the general secretaryship changes would merely have been postponed. Society was pregnant with the realisation of its ills. While the proponents of reform and many of their ideas were domestically generated, there was also an international impact on the shaping of these ideas. See generally Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change*; K.M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies: Critical Investigations in Security* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. Evangelista also makes the case, though less convincingly, for the role of peace movements in inspiring reform and its shape, see his *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

while more conservative than Gorbachev or Yakovlev, was well aware of the need for normalisation.<sup>116</sup>

### Domestic Constituencies

To understand the Soviet sources of change one must look to the instrumental, the ideational, the developmental and also to the domestic political context. Much of the impetus for specific decisions came from the political context in which the elite found themselves. For example, for many, Chernobyl was a catalyst which helped encourage a recognition of the need for rapid and fundamental change.<sup>117</sup> Also, foreign policy was used to garner support for the leadership within the USSR. In crude terms, foreign policy success in the West was central to Gorbachev's power in the mid-1980s. Gorbachev used foreign policy to manoeuvre domestically, and foreign policy choices in turn reflected that manoeuvring. It made him popular within the USSR and meant that, politically, he had a greater freedom to act. Yet this itself was subject to diminishing returns. As Gorbachev became unpopular at home due to the chaos he had helped to unleash upon his people, his foreign policy 'triumphs' began to be seen as failings. Boldin is typically damning: 'the new thinking in international affairs, combined with other perestroika measures, however well intentioned, effectively wrecked the country's military defence complex.'<sup>118</sup> Dobrynin is critical, but in a more measured fashion; he feels that Gorbachev sacrificed longer-term Soviet and Russian interests in his desire to be popular with the West. In Gorbachev's increasing reliance on what Weber might have termed 'external prestige' to buttress his rapidly weakening domestic position, it is clear that America extracted concessions at too low a political price from Gorbachev, which only made worse his position at home.<sup>119</sup>

In sum, Soviet change stemmed from four interrelated sources. First, the desire to improve society within via a more benign policy without. Second, it came from the ideas of new thinking which themselves were the product of both international and domestic developments. Third, change came from the

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<sup>116</sup> Medvedev and Chiesa, *Time of Change*, p. 167.

<sup>117</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 106; Medvedev and Chiesa, *Time of Change*, pp. 6-7

<sup>118</sup> Boldin, *Ten Years That Shook the World*, p. 296.

development of Soviet society and its production of people willing and capable of assessing their society critically, and fourth it was produced, to a degree, by domestic politics and political experience.

### 5.2.5 *The American Response*

While the Soviets changed dramatically during this period, American policy was essentially reactive to these changes. During this period, the underlying philosophy underpinning American foreign policy did not change in any dramatic sense. While it is undeniable that the nature of relations between the two powers improved and remarkable levels of concord were reached, the informing ideas and values of American foreign policy remained constant. The US reacted to Soviet shifts and did not, in any meaningful sense, induce them. While Reagan's hostility in his first term may have helped clear the ground for the reformers, the process of reshaping international politics was pre-eminently driven by the Soviets.<sup>120</sup> The Soviet Union was changing and ended up no longer behaving in a manner which the capitalist states—particularly the US—felt it had to fight against or to fear.

It is important, however, to draw a distinction between the response, of the Reagan and Bush administrations to the Soviet shifts. Curiously, as a result of being virulently anti-Communist, Reagan was, in domestic political terms, able to react more positively to the Soviet overtures than Bush. Bush was hindered by longer-term accusations of being 'soft' on communism. Yet, even Reagan's reaction was coloured heavily by the restrictions of his domestic political circumstances.<sup>121</sup> While each administration had its own views, one can identify a number of continuations in attitude and approach. First, both

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<sup>119</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 629.

<sup>120</sup> Patman overstates his case that Reagan's bellicosity was one of the most important factors facilitating the emergence of new thinking within the political elite. He is right to say that Reagan helped Gorbachev in his manoeuvring to achieve the position of General Secretary. But, the ideas Gorbachev was using, the people he surrounded himself with, and, most importantly, the nature of Soviet society more broadly were well beyond any influence Reagan may have had—change in the Soviet Union was going to happen. Robert G. Patman, 'Reagan, Gorbachev and the Emergence of "New Political Thinking"'. On this latter point see also, Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, pp. 226–7.

uncharitably pocketed concessions without an equitable or reciprocal reaction. Second, the expectation that the Soviets would and should go further than the Americans was continued. Third, both shared an inability to see the shifts in the Soviet Union as genuine and, finally, both administrations were sceptical of Gorbachev's sincerity.<sup>122</sup>

### Reagan Administration

Initially, Reagan espoused the rearming of America, the rolling back of Soviet success in the third world and the strengthening of Western resolve in the face of what he saw as an implacable foe.<sup>123</sup> In his first two years in office, there was little indication that Reagan was particularly interested in talking to the Soviets in terms of arms control or nuclear stockpile reduction. He deliberately fostered acrimonious relations with the USSR and contributed heavily to the heightened tension of the 1978–84 period. The low ebb of this period of hostility was reached in 1983 which saw: the 'evil empire' speech;<sup>124</sup> the Soviet shooting down of KAL 007; the most extensive military exercise in Nato history (testing command and control procedures for nuclear war in the North Atlantic); the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe; and the collapse of START and conventional force negotiations in Geneva and Austria. For the first time in decades there were literally no ongoing discussions between the two powers.<sup>125</sup>

Following pressure from Shultz,<sup>126</sup> a precipitous drop in public esteem with regard to his handling of international affairs prior to an election year,<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> FitzGerald argues case that Reagan's decision to establish positive relations with the Soviets related directly to domestic political inducements. FitzGerald, *Way Out There*.

<sup>122</sup> Although by late 1989 the Bush administration had overcome this last element. Although they lost crucial time to this prevarication.

<sup>123</sup> On what came to be known as the Reagan doctrine see James Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*: Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.

<sup>124</sup> See above note 10.

<sup>125</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 51–68; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 357–77.

<sup>126</sup> During the early period Shultz was the only member of the administration who advocated matching military pressure with political dialogue. His memo to Reagan of March 1983 was the first attempt to plan a possible constructive dialogue, see Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 265–6.

<sup>127</sup> According to polls conducted by Richard Wirthlin, 51% disapproved of Reagan's handling of foreign affairs and 43% felt he was increasing the chances of war, Oberdorfer, *From the Cold*

and the departure of hard-line NSC adviser Clark, Reagan began to soften his rhetoric and make overtures for dialogue. This began with a speech on 16 January 1984 in which Reagan called for increased dialogue between the powers on arms limitations.<sup>128</sup> June to August of that year saw a series of arms limitation offers exchanged between Moscow and Washington, but little of substance came of it.<sup>129</sup> Importantly, INF and START negotiations recommenced in 1985, but, despite a softening of rhetoric, with occasional set-backs,<sup>130</sup> there was little significant change in America's policy towards the USSR and its allies around the world.

Publicly, Reagan justified his mellowing after 1985 with the claim that he was pursuing arms control now because, due to his propitious action, the US had finally caught up with the Soviets and was at last able to 'negotiate from strength'.<sup>131</sup> Others have argued that Reagan had a profound hatred of nuclear weapons and was acting in a calculated fashion to meet that end.<sup>132</sup> The reality was rather more complex. Reagan clearly had no love of nuclear weapons, nor of communism for that matter. But his attitude towards the Soviet Union and its consequent impact on the foreign policy stance of the United States was unchanged. His values, so stark and clear, were one of his most valuable political assets and he knew it. Concessions to the Soviet Union—which were few—tended, not just to be driven by his values, but were also pitched at a domestic political audience. To understand the development of a more conciliatory stance by the US one needs to ignore the 'negotiate from strength' rhetoric and place Reagan's anti-nuclearism alongside three important factors: the increasing influence of more moderate advisers within the administration; the increasingly unthreatening face of the Soviet challenge; and the requirements of his domestic audience to which Reagan paid the closest attention. So Geneva, Reykjavik,

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*War*, pp. 70–1. At the beginning of 1983 his approval rating was 35%, the lowest approval rating of a mid-term president in forty years. This was attributed to a combination of recession and fear of war; see Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, p. 469.

<sup>128</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 72–3.

<sup>129</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, pp. 83–7.

<sup>130</sup> Most memorably the ad-libbed voice check in which Reagan said 'I have signed legislation outlawing Russia forever, the bombing begins in five minutes.'

<sup>131</sup> FitzGerald, *Way Out There*, p. 314.

<sup>132</sup> Morris subscribes to this view in *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, as do: Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*; Gates, *From the Shadows*; and, naturally, Reagan himself in his *An American Life* London: Hutchinson, 1990.

Washington and Moscow should be understood, not just as the popular story of 'two good men struggling to free humanity from nuclear weapons', but also understood as leaders of states trying to achieve certain outcomes for their domestic constituencies. In Gorbachev's case, to lift the burden of a militarised international confrontation from a tired population's back. In Reagan's, to lift his popularity, and to answer his anti-nuclear critics while giving as little away as possible. Interestingly, after each summit with Gorbachev, Reagan's popularity would rise dramatically.<sup>133</sup>

The softening of US-Soviet relations was made possible by the Americans' willingness to talk. Had they refused, it is hard to imagine Gorbachev unilaterally pursuing a demilitarised international relations; the Soviet military, for one, would have been far less sanguine. But beyond this, the American response should be characterised as reactive—they did not initiate an easing of tensions, nor did their bellicosity induce a pacifist turn within the Soviet Union. Although they were not the initiators of improved Soviet-American relations, or an improved system of world politics, their reactions to Soviet overtures were important to bring these into being. A reactive nature does not imply inertia or listlessness; the Americans could have reacted in a number of different ways and their selection of policy from among these choices was generally positive. America's relations with the USSR must also be seen as cautious and conservative. Gorbachev was not perceived as genuine in his reforms by many both inside and outside the administration.<sup>134</sup> As late as 1988, conservative American commentators such as William Safire and Henry Kissinger were criticising Reagan for cutting deals with the USSR which was, in their eyes, 'an unchanging enemy' which had negotiated breathing room.<sup>135</sup> FitzGerald captures the general tenor: 'all the Reagan administration had ever done was to talk to the Soviets, pocket the concessions they made and take credit

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<sup>133</sup> After the 1987 Washington summit, Reagan's approval rating rose to 58%, Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 94.

<sup>134</sup> Congressman Richard Cheney (R.) Wisconsin, represented many conservative minds at the time who thought of the reform process as an attempt to get 'breathing room': 'I'm not sure it is in our interest that he [Gorbachev] succeed. We could just end up with a tough, more impressive adversary.' Quoted in Joseph S. Nye, 'Gorbachev's Russia and U.S. Options' in Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (eds.), *Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988, pp. 385–408; p. 393.

<sup>135</sup> See FitzGerald, *Way Out There*, and Sidney Blumenthal, *Pledging Allegiance* New York: Harper Collins, 1990, pp. 249–51.



for having forced Gorbachev to do what he was doing anyway for his own purposes.’<sup>136</sup> That said, it is important to realise just how hard it was for someone like Reagan, and for his administration, to talk to the Soviets.

### Bush Administration

Despite Bush’s campaigning on continuing the Reagan legacy, a clear break existed between the two administrations. All key personnel within the White House changed and the general tenor of policy was dramatically different from the Reagan years.<sup>137</sup> But, one must remember that these were different times; the conditions of world politics had changed dramatically in eight years. Despite this, the Bush administration, in its attitude to foreign policy, and specifically towards the Soviet Union, maintained some of the key elements of the Reagan period. The scepticism towards the Gorbachev overtures that was evident in the Reagan administration was more glaring during Bush’s first year. This was remarkable given the improvement in relations and the clear evidence of Soviet sincerity. Partly, this derived from the fact that Bush had less political room to manoeuvre, but it was also due to the personal commitments of the people in charge—particularly Bush, Baker and Scowcroft—who were inherently more cautious and conservative than their equivalents in the later Reagan administration.

This conservatism can be seen in their reaction to the pronouncements at the UN in December 1988 which they perceived to be part of a ‘propaganda campaign’. The Bush administration did not wish to take hasty action in case it helped the Soviets capitalise on this campaign. Scowcroft confirms this in his memoir: ‘I was suspicious of Gorbachev’s motives and sceptical of his prospects...He was attempting to kill us with kindness rather than bluster.’<sup>138</sup> At every point in US-Soviet negotiations there was a meanness of spirit, a surprising

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<sup>136</sup> FitzGerald, *Way Out There*, p. 472.

<sup>137</sup> Matlock describes the arrival of the ‘Bush people’ in the White House as resembling a ‘hostile take-over’, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 185.

<sup>138</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 14. If the concern was primarily about the long term political viability of Gorbachev in the face of conservative opposition, then it might have been more understandable. But the idea that they did not believe him is remarkable.

condescension,<sup>139</sup> and an underlying distrust. The informing belief of the Bush administration was that the shift in Soviet international relations was not due to a Reaganite 'peace through strength', nor a revolution in the Soviet Union, but was due to forty years of sustained pressure. They believed that containment had worked.<sup>140</sup>

After the strategic 'pause' in relations,<sup>141</sup> Bush's general policy toward the Soviets was clear. It was a dual-pronged approach which sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union while being cautious to defend US interests in the face of existing military power. This somewhat banal piece of policy took four months to produce. Some months later, what had been perfectly obvious to the rest of the world for some time, finally pierced the Washington bubble. By September 1989, the Bush team reached an epiphany of sorts; they realised that Gorbachev and his reformers were 'for real'.<sup>142</sup> In these months their inaction had contributed to Gorbachev's loss of control of his power base. Interestingly, Bush claims that he did not 'dance on the wall' due to a desire not to poke Gorbachev in the eye.<sup>143</sup> Given the emphasis he put on personal relations in his foreign policy, this may have been part of the reason, but it was also due to his own caution and conservatism which feared a Soviet reversal and the implications that such an outcome might have for him and his 'legacy'.

In allowing the improvement of international relations to continue to be Soviet-led, Bush also followed the Reagan lead. While the Soviets were focusing not simply on the US axis, the US was not substantially changing its broader posture.<sup>144</sup> Under Bush, as under Reagan, America behaved in the manner of its choosing, with scant regard for the concerns of third parties.<sup>145</sup> Bush also continued the Reagan approach of accepting concessions without reciprocating equally either in kind or in type.<sup>146</sup> The major agreements signed were largely the

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<sup>139</sup> The condescension expressed towards Gorbachev regarding economic reforms was an example of the mean-spirited arrogance which characterised some American attitudes at this time.

<sup>140</sup> Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 28.

<sup>141</sup> In retrospect a good opportunity for co-operative action, present in the first 6–8 months of 1989, was squandered by an overly cautious and suspicious administration.

<sup>142</sup> Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War*, p. 371; Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 93.

<sup>143</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 148–51.

<sup>144</sup> The one exception was the move away from support of the Contras, but this had come from domestic political scandal.

<sup>145</sup> The interventions in Panama and the Philippines during 1990 were good examples of this.

<sup>146</sup> See Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 119.

result of Soviet concessions. More importantly, the decision to allow self-determination in Eastern Europe had little to do with America or American pressure. The radical shift in Warsaw Pact doctrine was internally derived and the USSR's acceptance of a unified Germany was due to German inducements, what proved to be empty promises from Nato, and the Soviet inability to act. It is reasonable to ask precisely what active role the Americans played in the dramatic events of 1989–90—the answer: they sat back slightly confused, and spoke words of encouragement and then happily wrote history in their favour. Bush, in his memoir, captures this: 'I think our accomplishment or contribution was in how we guided and shaped the final critical events...We set the right tone of gentle encouragement to the reformers in Eastern Europe, keeping the pressure on the communist governments to move toward greater freedom without pushing the Soviets against a wall and into a bloody crackdown.'<sup>147</sup> In their conservatism, the Bush administration missed a historic opportunity to support the Gorbachev reforms within the USSR with economic and other non-military support measures.<sup>148</sup> These could have helped give stability to a process of profound social change and dislocation by smoothing the economic and non-economic costs of the more radical reforms in the Soviet Union. This they refused to do and their legacy is the poorer for it.

History has given credit to Bush and Reagan, yet it must recognise that the Americans changed fewer of their military capabilities, their strategic intentions and underlying beliefs than did the Soviets. While the American's philosophy of international relations barely changed at all, their willingness to talk in reasonable and open terms was of crucial importance to Gorbachev and the changes he was trying to impose, despite the ongoing hostility in the form of SDI and third world conflicts.<sup>149</sup> The Americans helped give Gorbachev a very

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<sup>147</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 565.

<sup>148</sup> Jack Matlock, then American ambassador to the USSR, had sent a range of policy options to the incoming administration for just this purpose, yet it was ignored except for a small section on joint cooperation on transnational issues. See Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 177–200.

<sup>149</sup> American policy can be thought of as a reverse image of the traditional 'dual track' of revolutionary foreign policy. 'Dual track' refers to a revolutionary state's strategy of, at the same time conducting 'normal' diplomacy, and also challenging the international system through the support of revolutionary challenges and the export of revolution. In a reversal of this method, the Americans had undertaken 'normal' diplomacy with Gorbachev, while at the same time seriously challenging Soviet influence in the third world with a strident counter-revolutionary policy. On the 'dual track' of revolutionary foreign policy see Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, pp. 133–57.

important platform by embracing him as a person to talk to, to take seriously and, belatedly, believe in. In this way, they helped the Soviets limp into international normality for a brief year before the maelstrom of change destroyed them forever.

### **5.3 THE END OF THE COLD WAR IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The end of the Cold War must be understood as the end of the larger international confrontation and not merely a rapprochement between American and Soviet leaders. The Cold War system of relations was built up by the ideas, intentions and actions of the Soviet and Western blocs and it established a structure which shaped world politics and its development for decades. The chapter has shown that the international confrontation was brought to an end by change in all three aspects—ideas, intentions and actions—on the Soviet side, and a change in intention and belated change in actions on the American-led side. The confrontation was the product of the actions of the two major powers and their allies, but was also a structuring limit to the scope of their actions. In short, the end of the Cold War was a victory for the agents of the system over its perceived limits. Remarkably, as late as October 1989, members of the Bush administration were counselling against thinking, saying and acting as though the Cold War was over.<sup>150</sup> Yet, it was clear for all to see that it was, if not utterly gone, then withered beyond recognition.

The Cold War had been more than simply a state of affairs which was defined by the status of the relations between the two main protagonists. It was the second half of a socio-economic, geopolitical and ideological international confrontation between Soviet communism and the capitalist West. The Cold War had been transcended by the removal from the system of the core value of ideological rivalry which had produced the confrontation. This movement of ideas led to the scaling down of the arms race and the end of great power interventions in third world affairs. These developments had been propelled by

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<sup>150</sup> Vice-President Dan Quayle and Scowcroft were the two most prominent, see Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 123.

material developments, particularly the growth in Soviet society, the limits of the Soviet economic system and the recognition of the need to be a part of the liberal world order. The centre-piece, Eastern Europe, had been given its freedom to chose,<sup>151</sup> the Soviets had retreated from all of their military commitments outside their territory, they had pushed for peace deals in conflicts they had previously supported and fuelled, and had even tried to tell Castro what to do. The Americans were slow to react. While they were arguing about SDI, 'Gorbachev launched a political revolution in the Soviet Union. Few in Washington understood what he was doing or where he was going, and the Cold War was over long before the American foreign policy establishment knew it.'<sup>152</sup> The conflict had been changed by the actions of the Soviets who were themselves reacting to longer and shorter term changes in economy and society.

The Cold War was the second phase of the longer-run international confrontation between Soviet communism and the capitalist West. Accordingly, Cold War hostility had its origins not in the breaking down of a war-time alliance, but in the ideas and aspirations of the Russian revolution and the fear and loathing this induced in the West. As the Cold War had a history longer than the fifty or so years of its usual attribution, so too the end of the Cold War had a historical trajectory longer than the 1985–90 period discussed above. The two most significant longer-term dimensions of the end of the Cold War were the Helsinki Final Act and the development, within the USSR and Eastern Europe, of the social and economic conditions for bringing about its end. Helsinki was seen as a betrayal at the time of its conclusion by activists and dissidents who felt that the West had turned its back on them. In return for Soviet lip-service to international norms, the post-war European borders were officially recognised by the Western powers. Yet it was, on the one hand, the hectoring of President Carter and other international players after the agreement was signed,<sup>153</sup> and on the other, the recognition within the Soviet Union and specifically the CPSU that

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<sup>151</sup> The reform process in Eastern Europe had a range of origins—dissident movements within, peace movements without, reform minded communists and so on—but the entire process of change was reliant on the Soviet decision not to intervene to prevent change. As George Bush remarked while flying out of Hungary in July 1989, 'if there were no Gorbachev, there would be nothing of what we've just seen in Poland and Hungary.' Quoted in Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 92.

<sup>152</sup> FitzGerald, *Way Out There*, p. 17–8

<sup>153</sup> Gates makes a similar point at the end of his memoir, see *From the Shadows*, pp. 555–6.

these were norms which they themselves aspired to, that slowly helped push the Soviets to realise that they could not go on relating to the world in the old way. It was Helsinki interacting with the population of a reasonably developed and highly educated state which was the catalyst. The international confrontation was terminated by the rejection of the values and practices of the Russian revolution and the adoption of a new set of values and practices. Of the five conditions of world politics which produced the Cold War out of the larger international confrontation set out in Chapter One, none was left intact by the end of 1990.<sup>154</sup> The USSR's domestic shift and its acceptance by the US-led capitalist West were the two key factors in this development.

The Soviet Union had, in its development, the seeds of its own destruction. It raised social and economic expectations to levels that it could not possibly meet and made them central to its claims to international competitiveness. As it was within the state, so it was without. Soviet society had developed a population and elites who had expectations of its international position—as a leader of social justice, an international defender of emancipation, and a military superpower—which it manifestly could not meet. It was this dual expectation, that things should and must be better inside and outside the state, which drove the new generation of leaders. It was the values and ideas of Helsinki and the UN, and the instrumental desire to improve the economy which, over time, drove the shift in ideas, intentions and actions which brought about the Soviet change. It was the linking of liberal ideas of world politics to concrete material realities—the economic and social retardation of the Soviet Union—which brought the curtain down on the Cold War. These were two developments which had their origins as much in the world of 1917 as in the world of the 1980s.

Crockatt writes that 'while the Soviet Union's capacity to sustain itself was limited to and by the Cold War system, the United States was never so constrained, since it had access to the resources of the world system... The Cold War did not so much collapse as it was bypassed.'<sup>155</sup> As shown in earlier chapters, the international confrontation was a central element of Soviet power; it

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<sup>154</sup> See above note 7.

<sup>155</sup> Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941–1991* London: Routledge, 1995, p. 371.

was at the heart of the 'logic' of the Soviet state, but was not central to the USA. Clearly the confrontation was important to America, but the main logic of American power was capitalism, and, by following a kind of Kennanite position, it was able to withstand the challenge of the Soviet Union and its form of socio-economic power. On the other hand, the international confrontation had penetrated the Soviet state, in both ideological and material terms. On moving away from the conflict, the Soviet Union distanced itself from its revolutionary legacy most rapidly and most profoundly in its foreign policy. Foreign policy reform was, so to speak, the vanguard of the second Russian revolution. It was precisely this vanguardism which meant that the Cold War was transcended and not ended as such. It was transcended because the Soviet Union ceased to be a revolutionary power and it ceased to present a face of challenge to the international system. Rather, the Soviet Union adopted the norms of liberal international relations and, slowly and reluctantly accepted the norms of liberal capitalism domestically.

## 6 THE VULNERABILITY OF A GREAT POWER

*Your dearest wish is for our state structure and our ideological system never to change, to remain as they are for centuries. But history is not like that. Every system either finds a way to develop or else it collapses.*

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 1973<sup>1</sup>

*There is no way that one man can preserve the Soviet Union.*

Boris Yeltsin to reporters in Washington, DC, June 20, 1991<sup>2</sup>

It was the spring of 1988 when Mikhail Gorbachev said to Colin Powell, ‘what are you going to do now that you’ve lost your best enemy?’<sup>3</sup> For many this was and still is the pressing question of world politics.<sup>4</sup> But no one considered the question that Gorbachev should have been asking himself—what was the Soviet Union going to do now that it had lost its ‘best enemy’? With the end of the Cold War, the circumstances of Soviet existence had changed profoundly. The ideology, which had been a foundational and organisational core of the state, was gone. The confidence of an Eastern European buffer zone of ‘fraternal’ states had disappeared virtually overnight, and CPSU rule was frail and getting weaker by the day. Within the Soviet Union, the reform process was unleashing social chaos which, along with divisions in the ruling elite and the leadership’s uncertainty

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Letter to Soviet Leaders* London: Harvill/Collins and the Index on Censorship, 1974 [orig. 1973]; p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* Boston: Little, Brown, 1993, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> Colin Powell with Joseph E. Perisco, *A Soldier’s Way: An Autobiography* London: Hutchinson, 1995, p. 375.

<sup>4</sup> For an example of a response to this question see Samuel P. Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilisations’ in *Foreign Affairs* 74.3, 1993, pp. 22–49.



regarding just how to go about repairing the state, clearly meant that things could never again be as they were.

In the period between the December 1988 UN speech, which was the highest point of the Gorbachev arc, and late August 1991, the Soviet state became an ineffective institution. Ultimately, on a cold and snowy 8 December 1991 in Belovezhsky Forest, Byelorussia, Leonid Kravchuk, Boris Yeltsin and Stanislau Shushkevitch, put it out of its misery. They signed an agreement which formally disposed of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet monolith which had, only a few years ago, been the source of so much fear and loathing, was gone. It was replaced by its fifteen constituent republics and a loose knit Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

This final substantive chapter has two aims. The first is to show the ways in which the ending of the Cold War helped to destabilise the Soviet state and helped to produce the condition of Soviet state vulnerability. The second is to show how the vulnerability and consequent weakness of state institutions allowed three major social forces—elite fragmentation, nationalist/republican demands, and economic crisis—to dissolve the mechanisms with which the Soviet Union had been able to operate and reproduce itself. The aim is to demonstrate that the Soviet state was incapable of adapting to the new social conditions it found itself in. The underlying purpose of the chapter is to use the historical sociological theory developed in this thesis to examine the international dimensions of the failure of the Soviet state with specific reference to the role of the end of the international confrontation in hindering the reproduction processes of the Soviet state.

In Chapter One, vulnerability was defined as the condition in which the means by which the state had previously reproduced its dominance could not continue, but new means had yet to be found, leaving the state vulnerable to challenges to its authority.<sup>6</sup> This chapter will show that the end of the Cold War contributed in several crucial respects, both structural and contingent, to the conditions which made the state vulnerable to forces with which it ultimately

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<sup>5</sup> Source on the conditions, Michael Dobbs, *Down with Big Brother: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, p. 442. The exact phrase in the agreement was abrupt: 'The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is ceasing its existence.' Cited in Dobbs, *Down with Big Brother*, p. 424.

failed to cope. In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union was not a state on the brink of destruction. It was not a seething cauldron of animosity and desperation only held together by the invocation of a mythical enemy and a vigilant and ruthless KGB.<sup>7</sup> Yet by late 1990–early 1991, the populations of many of the republics were at one another’s throats, food was hard to come by and buyers’ panics drove what supplies could be found out of stores faster than they could be unloaded. The economy virtually ceased to function. This fall, from a backward, but still functioning, economy and society, to one of utter chaos was the result of dramatically changed domestic and international circumstances.

The chapter has three parts. The first will give an overview of the constituent elements of the Soviet breakdown and collapse. The purpose of this is to make clear what collapsed and to draw the distinction between the forces impelling state breakdown and the actual collapse of the Soviet state. Second, the chapter will then overview the concepts of vulnerability and state breakdown to show how they will be used to make our evaluation. This section will also distinguish between the structural and contingent sources of vulnerability. The third part will evaluate the extent to which the end of the Cold War played a role in Soviet weakness. It will focus on three points: how the sources of Soviet power emanating from the international confrontation were no longer extant; how the end the Cold War affected Soviet state power-as-practice; and third, how, in a more immediate sense, the end of the Cold War was a political weapon with which opponents could attack the state. The chapter’s conclusion will look at the fatal blows which brought about the final collapse and will evaluate, using the concept of state vulnerability, how the end of the Cold War helped to contribute to the breakdown of Soviet rule. The end of the international confrontation did not cause the collapse of the Soviet Union, but the shift it precipitated in the Soviet Union’s international posture and in the larger conditions of international politics clearly helped to make a once great power vulnerable to forces it had previously been able to withstand.

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 31-36.

<sup>7</sup> On the stability and perceived success of the Brezhnev period as it appeared in the early 1980s see Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Politics: An Introduction* Routledge: London, 1989, pp. 89–91.

## 6.1 CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF THE SOVIET COLLAPSE

Explanations of the collapse of the Soviet Union abound. Certain scholars have asserted that the Soviet Union collapsed because of its despotic nature,<sup>8</sup> while others have argued that it was the product of the reforms in the larger context of economic failure; the result of a 'revolution from above'.<sup>9</sup> Some maintain that the collapse was due to an inability to cope with the information revolution,<sup>10</sup> others have argued that it was an inevitable product of the Soviet system which was not viable and doomed to failure.<sup>11</sup> While it is hard to envisage the Soviet Union limping on in the opening year of the twenty first century, our imaginations must make that effort. It is fair to say that, eventually, the USSR would have crumbled, in the way that all tyrannical regimes do in time. But there was nothing inevitable in the nature or timing of the Soviet Union's fall.<sup>12</sup> Dallin rightly makes the point that the 'Soviet collapse [was] the product of unintended results, both of socio-economic development and of earlier policy choices.'<sup>13</sup> The transformation from a strong state to a broken one was the result of longer-term developments as well as the specific acts of the Gorbachev regime.

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<sup>8</sup> Wisla Suraska, *How the Soviet Union Disappeared: An Essay on the Causes of Dissolution* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.

<sup>9</sup> David M. Kotz with Fred Weir, *Revolution From Above: The Demise of the Soviet System* London: Routledge, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Manuel Castells, *Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Volume 3. End of Millennium* Oxford: Blackwells, 1998, pp. 2–68.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Hillel Ticktin, *Origins of the Crisis in the USSR: Essays on the Political Economy of a Disintegrating System* Armonck, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997; Martin Malia 'From Under the Rubble, What?' *Problems of Communism* 41.1–2, 1992, pp. 89–106.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Dallin, 'Causes of the Collapse of the USSR' in *Post-Soviet Affairs* 8.4, 1992, pp. 279–302; pp. 281–2. On this more generally see Robert Strayer, *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse? Understanding Historical Change* Armonck, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Dallin, 'Causes of the Collapse', p. 281.

### 6.1.1 Identifying State Breakdown

The Soviet Union existed both as an idea and as a state. Cox writes that there were four senses of Soviet existence: it was a functioning planned economy; it was an alternative to capitalism; it was a perceived threat to the West; and it was an empire.<sup>14</sup> That was not all, it was also a set of state institutions, the centre of a global challenge to imperialism and capitalism, and was thought by many to be the repository of the idea of communism. Some even saw the Soviet control of Eastern Europe as a fundamental part of the Union. So when one speaks of the collapse of the Soviet Union, to what, precisely, is one referring?

The concern here is with the Soviet Union understood as a set of institutions of rule. While the other forms of Soviet Union are important, they are secondary to the functioning of the Soviet state. In Chapter Two, the thesis elaborated a theory of state power which showed that the state can be thought of as a bundle of institutions which make a set of moral and political claims which are reinforced by the effective use of force, which in turn frames the social relations of the people within a circumscribed territory.<sup>15</sup> In Chapter Three, this idea was applied to the Soviet state, and, following that argument, this thesis contends that the 'collapse of the Soviet Union' refers, first and foremost, to the breakdown of a specific system of rule over a given population and territory. This means that the institutions of state—the CPSU, the ministries, the KGB etc.—and the patterns through which these institutions relate, both to one another and to the population at large, ceased to function in any meaningful sense which was identifiable with the old regime.

The formal legal end of the USSR occurred at midnight on 31 December 1991. It is a useful date, for, while the legal recognition of what was already a substantive reality may be seen as a belated and purely symbolic move,<sup>16</sup> such a

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Cox, 'Whatever Happened to the USSR? Critical Reflections on Soviet Studies' in Michael Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the Death of Communism and the New Russia* London: Pinter, 1998, pp. 11–31; p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 64–83.

<sup>16</sup> The CIS treaty had been signed on 21 December. The Russian flag had replaced the Soviet flag above the Kremlin at around 7.30pm on 25 December, immediately after Gorbachev had resigned, and Yeltsin had taken over the office of President in Staraya Plashad on 26 December.

view underplays the importance of political symbolism and also ignores the significance of the principle of rule which is central to the proper and adequate functioning of states.<sup>17</sup> One could argue that the Soviet Union ceased to exist during the 'flood of sovereignties' of 1989, or on 20 December 1989, when the Lithuanian Communist Party broke off relations with the CPSU, or even on 4 May when the Latvian parliament declared itself independent from the USSR. But to adhere to these arguments overlooks several important facts. First, despite the problems of 1989–90, the USSR continued to function, albeit poorly, at least until the coup of 1991. Second, while the USSR was clearly an empire of sorts, the loss of empire was not coterminous with the collapse of the state. Third, while the Baltic and central Asian states were crucial to the working of the USSR, their loss was not catastrophic. The Union was predominantly a Slavic affair. Therefore, the collapse of the Soviet Union must be understood, first and foremost, as the failure of the institutions of rule to function effectively in the 'heartland' republics of the RSFSR, Ukraine and Byelorussia.

The breakdown of the Soviet Union was the product of four separate, though related, developments: sovereignty and independence claims; elite fragmentation; the failure of state institutions; and the formation of new state institutions. The first step along this path was taken by the growth of sovereignty and independence claims which had a meaningful form and resonated with various populations. The first claim to sovereignty was made by the Estonian Supreme Soviet on 16 November 1988. Lithuania, Latvia, and Georgia soon followed in 1989.<sup>18</sup> In the spring of 1990, the Baltic states then declared their independence, spurred on by the passing of the Law of Secession from the Union on 3 April 1990. This Act presaged more challenging calls for sovereignty. On 16 July, the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet declared its sovereignty which opened the floodgates. Eleven days later, Byelorussia's Supreme Soviet followed suit and by

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For accounts of this see Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* New York: Random House, 1995, pp. 630–47; Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983–1991* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 466–75; Dobbs, *Down With Big Brother*, pp. 442–51; Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* London: Bantam, 1997 [orig. 1995], pp. 847–51.

<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, the various aspects of the Soviet state were considered to be 'in crisis' up until the hand-over, and then subsequently the crisis was perceived to have receded.

<sup>18</sup> On 18 May, 29 July and 19 November respectively.

the end of the year, ten of the fifteen Union republics had claimed their own sovereignty.<sup>19</sup>

More crucially, in the following year, the flood of sovereignties turned into a tide of independence claims.<sup>20</sup> While the Baltics had always been different from the other republics—closer to Europe, more affluent and more nationalistic—in their bid for independence, however, they established the pattern for the disintegration of the Union. The Baltic states held referenda on their independence and were overwhelmingly supported.<sup>21</sup> Shortly thereafter, Yeltsin garnered more effective power as RSFSR president and, in a highly symbolic moment, was voted in as the first democratically elected Russian leader on 12 June with 57.3% of the vote.<sup>22</sup> Georgia, following the pattern, declared independence on 9 April.<sup>23</sup> But it was not until the coup attempt of 18–21 August that the calls for independence became overwhelming. On 24 August, Ukraine declared itself independent. This declaration was repeated in the following months by Byelorussia,<sup>24</sup> Moldova,<sup>25</sup> Kazakhstan, Tajikistan,<sup>26</sup> Azerbaijan,<sup>27</sup> Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan,<sup>28</sup> Armenia,<sup>29</sup> and Turkmenistan.<sup>30</sup> By 26 October 1991, every single republic, except the RSFSR, had declared itself independent from the Union.

Sovereignty and independence claims alone did not undo the state. But they are indicative of a number of developments. First, they show that the Soviets' moral claim to final legitimate authority had eroded to the point of non-

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<sup>19</sup> Turkmenistan did so on 22 August, Tajikistan on 25 August, Kazakhstan on 25 October and Kyrgyzstan on 30 October.

<sup>20</sup> For an overview of the sovereignty and independence claims see Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire: The Triumph of the Nations* New York: Basic Books, 1993, particularly pp. 29–111 and pp. 144–70.

<sup>21</sup> Lithuania's vote on 9 February garnered a 90.47% vote in favour, *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991, p. 38014. The votes on 3 March in Estonia and Latvia achieved 78% and 74% in favour respectively, *Keesing's Record of World Events* Vol. 37, 1991, p. 38078.

<sup>22</sup> *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991, pp. 38273.

<sup>23</sup> This was after a referendum held on 31 March in which a resounding 98.93% voted in favour, *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991, p. 38078.

<sup>24</sup> 25 August.

<sup>25</sup> 27 August.

<sup>26</sup> Both on 28 August.

<sup>27</sup> 30 August.

<sup>28</sup> Both on 31 August.

<sup>29</sup> 23 September.

<sup>30</sup> 26 October. The sources for notes 24–30 are from various texts including Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire*, *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991 and *The Economist*.

existence. Second, their timing, particularly the explosion of independence claims after the coup attempt, are good evidence that the conservative efforts to seize power marked the beginning of the end for the Soviet state. Third, the claims made the Soviet leadership's efforts to cling to power even more desperate.<sup>31</sup> In Chapter Two, the thesis argued that state power should be understood in processual terms, and particularly that the process of power-as-practice was central to the reproduction of state power.<sup>32</sup> During 1990 and 1991, it was apparent that the inability to practice state power seriously undermined both the functioning and the credibility of the Soviet state.

The split in the ruling elite, and particularly the fracturing and ultimate death of the CPSU, was the second development which propelled Soviet collapse. The CPSU was the most important institution of the Soviet state. As it began to fragment, due both to elite divisions and to a waning institutional capacity, so too the other large state institutions began to fail. Gorbachev contributed to the death of CPSU power in a number of ways. First, he dismantled the apparat in the Central Committee plenum in September 1988. This was a calculated gamble undertaken to try to circumvent those elements within the party which had been blocking reform.<sup>33</sup> The next step towards the CPSU's demise was the removal, from the Constitution, of Article 6 which guaranteed the party's 'leading' role in the state.<sup>34</sup> Both of these were decisions taken by reformist elements within the party. However, it was ultimately forces from without which were to destroy the party. Yeltsin's decree of 20 July 1991, which banned political activity in state institutions, was the first direct attempt to substantially undermine party power. The reality of party emasculation was reflected at the 28<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in July 1991 when it became clear that the newly appointed Politburo would have no role whatsoever in the running of the

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<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that these were only claims. On the whole they were not, at the time, backed-up with effective state capacity.

<sup>32</sup> State power-as-practice refers to the way in which the institutions of the state are able to reproduce themselves through their association with the state as a practised transcendent form of moral authority.

<sup>33</sup> Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, pp. 166–7.

<sup>34</sup> Article 6 was rewritten on 14 March, 1990. The new Article 6 read: 'The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other political, as well as trade union, youth and other public organisations and mass movements, shall take part in the elaboration of the policy of the Soviet state and in the running of state and public affairs through their representatives elected to the Soviet of People's Deputies and in other ways.' Cited in Richard Sakwa, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union: 1917–1991* London: Routledge, 1999, p. 460.

state. The party's actual termination began with Gorbachev's last act prior to his resignation as General Secretary: the suspension of CPSU activities on 24 August 1991, in the aftermath of the failed coup. The party's termination was hastened on 29 August when the Russian Supreme Soviet banned its activities, and was killed off completely when Yeltsin issued a decree which banned the party outright and claimed its property for the RSFSR on 6 November 1991.

It was the failure of the state institutions, such as the economic, fiscal and other institutions, together with the rise of alternative institutions within Russia and the republics, which provided the third development that undid the state. The failure of a state, in functional terms, requires that the vital organs of state power cease to work effectively. In this case, it involved the double movement of a declining efficacy of Soviet institutions combined with the rise of alternative republican and Russian ones. An example of this was the restructuring of the KGB into three separate organisations: a border guard unit; a foreign intelligence service; and an inter-republic internal security service.<sup>35</sup> The rise of alternative institutions, particularly during 1991, ensured a relatively peaceful transition from Soviet to republican rule.

Finally, the death of the Soviet state was finalised by the usurpation of the institutions of the Union by the various bodies of the republics. This process began on 4 November 1991 when the USSR State Council abolished all the Soviet ministries except for those of defence, foreign affairs, and electric and nuclear power. On 15 November, Yeltsin issued a series of presidential decrees taking control of virtually all financial and economic activity going on in the RSFSR. On 22 November, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet took control of what had been the state bank of the USSR. Gorbachev's efforts to hold the Union together in some loose—and clearly not Soviet—form led to the publication of a new Union Treaty on 27 November. Despite this, the USSR passed the point of no return as a functioning and meaningful geopolitical and state entity when the Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence, installing former communist Leonid Kravchuk as President on 1 December.<sup>36</sup> Yeltsin recognised

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<sup>35</sup> On this see generally Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 612–27. This decision was taken by the USSR State Council and was pushed by the republican leaders in the Council.

<sup>36</sup> The referendum on independence passed by 90.32% of the vote, *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991, pp. 38656.



Ukrainian independence and, on 8 December, signed the Belovezh Agreement which declared that the USSR ceased to exist and which established the foundation of the CIS. On 13 December, the Central Asian states agreed to join the CIS. Finally, on recognising that the Soviet state was an empty vessel on 17 December, Gorbachev announced that the USSR would cease to exist at the end of the year. Two formalities remained: on 21 December, the heads of eleven of the newly independent states met in Alma-Ata and signed the treaty forming the CIS,<sup>37</sup> and, on 31 December, the USSR slipped from view.

To reiterate, the institutions of the Soviet state broke down in the following way. A series of sovereignty and independence claims began to undermine already weak structures, the CPSU began to fragment and fracture and was ultimately banned. In place of the failing Soviet institutions, effective Russian and other republican institutions began to emerge. Finally, the remaining formal and substantive elements of the Soviet state were swallowed by the successor states in a series of decrees and agreements. Why was the state susceptible to forces it had, in the past, been capable of resisting? One of the reasons for this was the destabilising of the state, in ideational as well as material terms, brought about by the end of the Cold War.

## **6.2 VULNERABILITY AND WEAKNESS REVISITED**

This thesis has developed a view of state power which focuses on social processes. This approach presumes that the most important action of a state, and consequently the one analysts should be most interested in, is the process of the production and reproduction of its position of dominance. There should never be an assumption of stasis or continuity. Rather, we should presume that specific processes have produced a condition which appears to generate stability, and it is these processes which we must uncover. Based on this, Chapter One outlined a five-stage track of state instability which represents the steps that states go

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<sup>37</sup> The states represented were the Russian Federation, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

through when they are failing to reproduce themselves effectively.<sup>38</sup> On this track, the second stage was designated as state vulnerability. This is premised on the assumption that a state is a system of social institutions which constantly produces and reproduces the mechanisms through which it is able to dominate a given territory and people, meaning that its political power is contingent on the successful reproduction of these mechanisms. However, a state is not always able to cope with changes in either the international or domestic context of its existence. A change in values may undermine its claim to authority, a war may radically weaken its capabilities, or international developments may destabilise the ruling elite. Regardless of the nature of the development, whenever a large-scale change in circumstances affects the patterns of state rule,<sup>39</sup> the state must adjust its means for mediating its relations with the international and domestic contexts so that it can continue to rule effectively. But states are not always capable of making the correct adjustment, due to ignorance of changes in the state's conditions, or an inability to make the necessary changes due to insufficient capabilities, states can be made vulnerable.

Unlike more conventional IR studies in which the term vulnerability refers purely to geo-strategic threats to state power and survival.<sup>40</sup> Here, vulnerability describes a situation in which three clear developments have occurred or are in the process of occurring: the state cannot reproduce its rule as it had in the past; it has yet to find a new set of mechanisms to do so; and a challenge or series of challenges exist which have the potential to destroy it. Related to this idea of state vulnerability is the idea of state weakness. This term requires a little explanation. Hobson provides a useful approach by distinguishing between domestic and international 'state agential power'. He defines domestic state agential power as 'the ability of the state to make domestic or foreign policy as well as shape the domestic realm, free of domestic social-structural requirements or the interests of non-state actors.'<sup>41</sup> Similarly, he

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter One pp. 31-36.

<sup>39</sup> On this concept see Chapter Two, pp. 68-71.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Charles A. Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.

<sup>41</sup> John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 5. This clarifies and develops the ideas found in John M. Hobson, *The Wealth of States: A Comparative Sociology of Economic and Political Change* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

defines international agential power as ‘the ability of the state to make foreign policy and shape the international realm, free of international structural requirements or the interests of international non-state actors.’<sup>42</sup> Although Hobson neglects to say just how it is that some states have more or less of these two forms of agential power, his is still a useful schema because it reaches to the essence of what the state is.

The theory of agential power refers to independent action, but does not consider state capacity understood as the basic means by which states can act. State capacity is the crude attribute which allows state action. It is the material, ideological and moral fuel which provides the state with an ability to act. For example, the state has the capacity to enforce its rules through specific systems of coercion—which may involve rules of law or simply a crude policing system—and it does so by paying for this with its resources. If it were not able to recruit enforcers or pay them, then its capacity to enforce its rules would be undermined. So, state strength has two dimensions, agential power (the ability to act with a degree of autonomy) and capacity (the material dimensions of action).<sup>43</sup> Thus weakness refers to a situation in which both agential and capacity are at low levels. Weakness can contribute to vulnerability, but is conceptually distinct from it.

The relationship between state vulnerability and state weakness is important and reasonably obvious. A state which is vulnerable, but reasonably strong—that is, well endowed with the capacity to act free from certain constraints—is much better placed to cope with the challenges of vulnerability than states which are weak. Conversely, when a state is weak, it is not necessarily doomed. A state which is weak but blessed with good leadership or quirks of fortune may be able to survive periods of vulnerability. The state will succeed or fail as a result of its actions and its larger international and domestic context. No state’s future is pre-determined in a period of vulnerability.

To understand how and why a state has ended up in a situation of vulnerability, one must look both to the structural and to the contingent for the sources of its problems. Clearly, longer-term developments establish a context in

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<sup>42</sup> Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Note that while agential power refers to the independence to resist structural or interest based requirements, a sensitivity must be shown to the limits to independence.

which specific acts or phenomena actually drive the state into this dire condition. In the Soviet case, one may point to a raft of longer-term problems which were structural contributions to vulnerability. The following conditions were among the major structural preconditions for the condition of vulnerability in the USSR: the declining economic performance; corruption; ideological disillusionment; the limits of industrial development; the inability to cope with the third industrial revolution; an easing of control; development of society and changed expectations; international pressure; and the relative failure of the communist model.<sup>44</sup> The contingent elements were: the economic chaos brought on by the leadership's raft of economic reforms; the unleashing of popular forces through *glasnost* and *demokratisatsiia*; the efforts of a faction of the elite to capture the state; the rejection of the ideology at the heart of the state; and the ending of the Cold War. All of these elements, bar the ending of the Cold War, are generally agreed to have weakened the state and helped to bring it down, this thesis seeks to rectify this omission.

### 6.3 THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND SOVIET VULNERABILITY

This thesis is concerned with the international aspects of the Soviet collapse. Specifically, it is interested in the way in which the end of the Soviet international confrontation with the capitalist West weakened the institutions of the state. As such, this chapter does not consider other, more obvious international causes of Soviet collapse, such as the cost of empire, the arms race, and Afghanistan. There are two reasons for this. First, many of these have been adequately studied and scrutinised and the conclusions of these studies do not contradict or undermine the results of this study. Second, this thesis is interested in a different form of causation than that brought about by the immediate

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<sup>44</sup> Others have made similar lists of the longer-term problems of the system, some of which overlap with this one. See for example, Dallin, 'Causes of the Collapse'; Walter Laqueur, *The Dream that Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 71–2; Anne de Tinguy, 'Collapse or Suicide?' in Anne de Tinguy (ed.), *The Fall of the Soviet*

instrumental costs of international engagement. The concern here is with the way in which the Soviet international confrontation influenced the production and reproduction of the Soviet state and how the termination of this conflict damaged the institutional structures of Soviet power.

As shown in the previous chapter, the pursuit of a more benign international posture was part of an effort to reform the Soviet Union. Specifically, one of the aims was to establish better international conditions within which to pursue reform. If the Soviets could escape the costly arms race, decrease funding to third world regimes and enter the capitalist world economy with its more efficient division of labour, then, so the logic went, they stood a much better chance of revitalising the Soviet economy and society. Perversely, it had the opposite effect. The end of the Cold War did not establish a better context for reform or improve Soviet life, but actually destabilised it and, in turn, contributed to the collapse of the Soviet state. It was one among a range of domestic and international developments which undermined the leadership, its political effectiveness, and the state itself. One can identify three distinct, though interrelated, ways in which the change in the international posture of the Soviet state contributed to the pressure on the institutions of this rigid state. The first was the immediate effect that it had on the leadership. Second, the material dimensions of Soviet rule were hindered by the absence of the structuring mechanisms of the international confrontation. Third, the idea of the Soviet Union was undermined by the change in its international posture. The end of the Cold War played an important role in creating a situation of great power vulnerability. While it was not the sole cause of the weakening of the state, it was a significant contributory factor to the creation of a situation in which a state with enormous reserves of military and coercive strength could no longer reproduce itself in the way that it had in the past.

### 6.3.1 Immediate Challenges

The most apparent way in which the end of the Cold War damaged the state stems from the impact that it had on the leadership and specifically on the domestic prestige and political capability of Gorbachev and the reformist elite. The sense that he and Shevardnadze had given in to the West and sold the Soviet Union's military capacity short was an important precursor to the split by the conservative wing of the CPSU and the military. Seen in the context of the economic crisis of 1990–91, the long list of military agreements and geopolitical concessions, from the INF agreement to the Soviet concession to a unified Germany within Nato, began to be seen as a long list of give-aways in which Soviet interests, power and principles had not been protected. From this vantage point, the end of the Cold War appeared as a process in which Gorbachev sacrificed longer-term Soviet interests in an effort to be popular in the West and to use this popularity to his own advantage at home. These sacrifices were, furthermore, extracted by the West at too low a price. The end of the Cold War, from this perspective, took too American a direction.<sup>45</sup> The most immediate impact of this was to energise the conservative ranks and to fuel further the public disillusionment with Gorbachev and his coterie. Colonel Viktor Abalkin articulates this disillusionment: 'We are like Cupid: armed, naked and we impose love on everyone... Sad as it may be, the reality of today's "new thinking," the priority on "common human values," well the reality is that the Soviet Union has lost its status as a superpower. It is treated as if it should know its place. We are bullied now.'<sup>46</sup>

This resulted in the end of the Cold War becoming something of a hook on which to hang other criticisms. The end of the confrontation, far from being both of a practical and rhetorical benefit, was a significant liability. This was compounded by the lack of US aid, credits or other economic assistance which

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<sup>45</sup> Two examples of this sentiment can be found in Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents, 1962–1986* New York: Times Books, 1995, pp. 627–36, and Valery Boldin *Ten Years That Shook The World: The Gorbachev Era as Witnessed by His Chief of Staff* New York: Basic Books, 1994, pp. 294–6.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire* London: Viking, 1993, p. 386.

might have mitigated both the severity of the economic crunch and the perception that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had frittered away the Soviet Union's last remaining symbols of power, influence and grandeur. It was not just the trappings of power which disenchanted people. Both in elite circles and among the populace at large, it was also the sense that Gorbachev had given up on the principles of communism which had been central to so many lives and deaths. For some, he had simply 'sold out' the millions who had died in the Great Patriotic War.<sup>47</sup> Thus the external prestige which had helped launch Gorbachev's reform programme demonstrably hampered his efforts to reform the state and, more importantly clearly weakened his hold on power of the state itself. The end of the Cold War provided neither prestige nor economic and social benefits and only compounded the sense of failure and disillusionment within both the elites and the population at large.

As Gorbachev became less popular and as fault lines emerged in the CPSU, he turned more and more to the international realm to try to re-energise his own political capital. This turning outward for success precipitated a downward spiral in the leadership and the state more generally. In venturing abroad, in failing to reunify the party, and in failing to deal adequately with the very real and tangible economic problems, Gorbachev pushed himself and his reform process further and further into the mire.<sup>48</sup> Not only did he become less popular domestically as a result of efforts to increase his international cachet, he also became less effective internationally. His trips abroad in 1990–91 to shore up his domestic support and to gain credit from the West were unsuccessful. His attendance at the G7 meeting in 1991 was a sad example of this.<sup>49</sup> Gorbachev's falling popularity resulted in arguments within American foreign policy circles on who to back, with Bush supporting Gorbachev but with others arguing that

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<sup>47</sup> Marshall I. Goldman, *What Went Wrong with Perestroika* New York: W.W. Norton, 1991, p.18, see also various criticisms made in Plenums of the Central Committee, and at the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress cited in Russel Bova, 'The Soviet Economy and International Politics' in Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet Economic System* London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 43–58; pp. 50–2.

<sup>48</sup> A poll which was conducted regularly in *Moscow News* demonstrates Gorbachev's waning popularity. The figures were: December 1989, 52%; January 1990, 44%; May 1990, 39%; July 1990, 28%; October 1990, 21% (percentage approval ratings), cited in Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 447.

<sup>49</sup> Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 531–9 and pp. 551–9.

they should be closer to Yeltsin.<sup>50</sup> The immediate impact of the end of the Cold War was to increase the erosion of support for Gorbachev and his elite. It gave succour and political bite to the splits in the CPSU and it further hindered the ability of Gorbachev and the elite to manoeuvre the state out of trouble. But it was not only in the domestic implications of a decline in external prestige that the end of the Cold War contributed to the vulnerability of the Soviet state. Significant problems can also be found at the material and ideational levels.

### 6.3.2 *Material Dimensions of Vulnerability*

At first glance, one might think that the international political change would not have too great an impact on the domestic life of either the state or society. Yet the Cold War's end challenged the very essence of the Soviet state by undermining the CPSU's claim to rule and the ordering of the institutions of state. In Chapters Three and Four, the thesis has shown the various ways in which the international confrontation penetrated the Soviet state and helped to reinforce its system of rule in a larger sense. It was the unshackling of these larger structures of the state which contributed to the destabilisation of the system. These elements of rule have both material and ideational dimensions. Material refers to the way in which the state rules in concrete terms, and ideational refers to the principles and ideas which gives these concrete structures an effective social purchase.<sup>51</sup> While some may argue that the distinction is slightly artificial, it is still useful to distinguish between principle and practice, and an analytic separation helps to clarify how the interaction takes place in specific circumstances. On the material front then, Goldman points out that the sheer chaos in the final years of the USSR was due to the simultaneous introduction of political and economic reforms.<sup>52</sup> He is referring primarily to the problems which resulted from the economic hardship wrought as a result of

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<sup>50</sup> See George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998, pp. 497–517; and indirectly Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 563–4.

<sup>51</sup> The concern is not merely with ideas isolated from their social and historical context. Rather, the focus is on the relationship between the ideas and ideologies and the instrumental-functional aspects of state rule.

<sup>52</sup> Goldman, *What Went Wrong*, p. 124.



reform, and the introduction of *glasnost* which facilitated the vocalisation of complaint. It was this challenge of simultaneity which seriously hindered state action, but a third level of reform should be added to this challenge: the complications introduced by the international political shift. The leadership pursued a radically different international posture and implemented fundamental economic and political changes in the domestic sphere simultaneously. This simultaneity produced a context of chaos in which all of the arms of the state were groping in the darkness, to say nothing of the reaction of the population to this disturbing state of affairs. The simultaneous nature of reforms only exacerbated the trauma within the state and the social disorder experienced by the population.

The second manner in which the end of the Cold War damaged the material dimensions of Soviet state power was its removal as a macro criterion of value. The international confrontation had acted, in the fields of economic planning, foreign policy, social policy and even education, as a key organising principle in the Soviet state. This point was made in detail in Chapter Four, but is worth reiterating. The Soviet state had been structured around the achievement of specific aims. One of these was the development of a qualitatively better social system than that provided by capitalism. This grandiose aim was at the root of the confrontation between Soviet communism and the capitalist West. The confrontation, at both the social and military levels, helped to provide the state with guidance about the 'needs' of society. It facilitated 'knowledge' with which it could make plans for social organisation. In education, as in military spending, the international competition made its presence felt.

In a more direct sense, the international confrontation penetrated the economy and acted as a broader structuring force within the command system. It influenced key structural mechanisms and greatly shaped the nature of many commands. As shown in Chapter Four, the confrontation provided a *telos*; it helped order priorities and gave purpose and order to the decision-making hierarchies of the CPSU, the information systems of the price mechanism and the incentive mechanism. Laqueur notes that the

population had been indoctrinated to believe that a rapacious and aggressive enemy made it necessary for the Soviet Union to engage in costly defence to preserve the achievements of the regime. This state of siege mentality was widespread and deeply rooted. How could the party leadership and the police apparatus be justified without an omnipresent enemy?<sup>53</sup>

Laqueur argues that the Cold War justified the privations of the Soviet system based on this threat.<sup>54</sup> He is right, but his strictly instrumentalist interpretation is an overstatement. The confrontation with the West helped to justify actions, but the justifications were not purely cynical. There was a belief in the threat from the West and that belief was matched by a sense that the Soviet way was necessary to make things better. Thus, in this triple sense, the international confrontation supported the Soviet state. The confrontation was not used purely in an instrumental fashion by the state. It was an instrumental dimension of a larger ordering principle which permeated the state. As a consequence, the end of the Cold War undermined the mechanisms and justifications for, not only the *form* of state, but also for the repressive nature of Soviet rule. Ultimately, the end of the confrontation meant that the directional capacity of the Soviet state had been dramatically undermined.

One example of the problems caused by the departure of the Cold War priorities can be seen in the effort to come to terms with the market system and the subsequent struggles over the type and form of a new economic system. Once the leadership had belatedly realised that the economy needed more radical reform than had been attempted in the first two years, it was clear that there was no consensus about what to replace the old system with, or even how to go about pursuing change. Three significant attempts were made. The first centred on the Enterprise Law, the second on the 500 day plan and the third on the Anti-Crisis plan of 1991.<sup>55</sup> Each of these efforts failed. The reform process was as much hindered by the flip-flopping of the leadership as it was by the larger problems

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<sup>53</sup> Laqueur, *The Dream That Failed*, p. 59.

<sup>54</sup> Though it was not the only justification. The ideology of single party rule, Leninist discipline toward a single line, and the utilisation of the fear of counter-revolution from within were also used to justify privations.

<sup>55</sup> See Anders Åslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform* Second Edition, London: Pinter, 1991, pp. 114–53, and pp. 203–24.

besetting the economy.<sup>56</sup> The economic disaster was compounded by the lack of consensus among the elites about the direction in which to take the economy. The removal of several of the core elements of the economic system which were a product of the international confrontation—the priorities and ordering principles—helped to destabilise the economy and contributed to the condition of vulnerability whereby weakness was compounded by the inability to replace the system.

In ending the Cold War and so moving away from the international confrontation of geopolitics and socio-economics, the Soviet state lost a mechanism by which value could be measured and knowledge generated. In the context of the reform process and its consequent chaos, the end of the Cold War stripped away the elements of the system which helped to make it work. It destabilised state institutions and consequently helped to induce a condition of vulnerability. The end of the Cold War was not the pre-eminent reason for the failure of various institutions of the state in a purely material sense. There were other factors such as bankruptcy, wage blowouts, inflation and the ambivalence of the leadership to the problems exploding in society.

### 6.3.3 *Ideational Vulnerability*

At its heart, the international confrontation was produced by contradictory and antagonistic views on how the world should be ordered. It is not surprising that, of the various ways in which the conflict penetrated the Soviet state, some of the most significant were in the ideational sphere. It was clear that ideology was central to the unity of the CPSU, to its claim to rule and to its organisation of people's lives. In writing about the lapse in faith in communism of the ruling elite, Dallin emphasises just how important the idea of faith was 'for the cohesion of a regime that had chosen to make its ideology so central and weighty a core of its system.'<sup>57</sup> Jack Matlock, America's ambassador to the USSR in the 1980s, correctly notes that 'the Cold War could not end, truly

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<sup>56</sup> On which see generally Goldman, *What Went Wrong*, pp. 203–38; Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration*, pp. 20–28.

<sup>57</sup> Dallin, 'Causes of the Collapse', p. 287.

and definitively, until the Soviet Union had abandoned its system's ideological linchpin, the class struggle concept. And once it did, the system itself had no arguable rationale.<sup>58</sup> Matlock is right to note that, without the underlying revolutionary ideology, both the Cold War and the very state itself had little reason to be.

In Chapter Three, the thesis pointed out five ways in which the international confrontation reinforced the Soviet state's ideological claim to rule and provided it with important sociological 'glue' which held the elite together and helped the Soviet state to predominate. The first was the sense in which the confrontation facilitated the state's efforts to control the population. The second was the way the confrontation was used as a means to justify the privations and difficulties of Soviet life and to justify the direction of social life dictated by the state. Third, it provided a structuring sense of purpose. Fourth, the conflict was a source of prestige and a demonstration of the necessity of communist ways of life. Finally, in its dual incarnation as a purpose and a challenge, the confrontation established a set of limits for political action. The confrontation set the parameters of the politically possible in a manner conducive to the CPSU's continued position of dominance within the state. In short, the international confrontation was a cornerstone of the practised idea of Soviet rule.

While the end of the Cold War clearly undermined these five elements of state control and so destabilised Soviet power, there is more to the end of the Cold War, in ideational terms, than the removal of these struts. Chapter Two showed the importance of a processual understanding of state power and specifically the centrality of power-as-practice to the workings of the modern state.<sup>59</sup> The end of the Cold War severed the link between Soviet ideology and the practice of state rule. To maintain effective rule states need to ensure, not simply that they are materially capable of clinging to power; they need to have more than just enough tanks, guns and money to reproduce themselves in an effective manner. To reproduce, states need to have a meaningful transcendent claim which is then translated by state power-as-practice into a reproducible

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<sup>58</sup> Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 649.

<sup>59</sup> See above note 32.

system of rule. Without this, the state may limp on, but in an increasingly decrepit manner.

The thesis has shown, in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, the importance of revolutionary values to the Soviet state's transcendent moral claim. Furthermore, these chapters have shown that states need to have meaningful incarnations of the larger transcendent moral claim to give their material powers greater social effect. The international confrontation was just such an incarnation. The nature of the moral claims made by the CPSU and consequently by the Soviet state—the construction of communism, inside and outside the USSR, the dictatorship of the party, the right to rule based on the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the idea of class conflict and proletarian internationalism—in the face of a hostile West, produced the confrontation. If the conflict is thought of, not just as a set hostile actions, but as a larger structure of the Soviet state, as a part not just of its ideology, but as a central form of state power-as-practice, then the ideational implications of the end of the Cold War are put into a new light. The end of the Cold War meant more than just an end to arms races and third world intervention. For the Soviet state, it meant that the link between ideology and political practice was severed. More importantly, the transcendent moral claim which the CPSU had been making as a justification for its pre-eminent position had been removed. Without the confrontation between Soviet communism and the capitalist West, then precisely what was the Soviet state for and how was it to rule? Central to CPSU rule was the usurpation of the market system and indeed the international system itself. In surrendering to the very values it had opposed, the Soviet state surrendered its claim to rule. In failing to practice the ideology at the heart of its system the Soviet state fundamentally altered the nature of the state and it was made to struggle to survive, a struggle which it quickly lost.

In short, the end of the Cold War demonstrated clearly that the CPSU could no longer rule as it had in the past. The values on which it had made its claim to rule were shown to be internationally and domestically moribund. In pursuing a more benign international posture, Gorbachev and his elite set about undermining some of the key ideas and practices of the Soviet state. The end of the confrontation not only hampered institutional claims, but also the functional efficacy of state power-as-practice. These changes created the condition of

Soviet state vulnerability. One must wonder whether the leadership would have acted with the same zeal had they had known the implications of their actions. The tenacity with which Gorbachev clung to power in his final years would have one believe otherwise. The end of the Cold War and consequent condition of vulnerability also show us that that the Soviet state, in ideational and material terms, was extremely rigid. Not only was the system rigid, it was, in ideological terms, tightly interwoven and unified; if one element of the structure was altered, the knock-on effects were great. The shift in foreign policy which led to the unpicking of the idea behind Soviet rule demonstrates that the state was like a tightly wound spring. The Soviet failure in the international confrontation undermined the CPSU, its promotion of values which flatly contradicted everything that it had stood for and the way it had practised rule thoroughly undermined the idea and practice of a particularly *Soviet* state.

The international confrontation played an important role in Soviet state power. It had helped to provide a moral claim, mechanisms for material capability, a sense of legitimacy, a justification for actions and, most importantly, was a central part of state power-as-practice in the Soviet reproduction of state power. The end of the Cold War removed a range of power sources from the Soviet state and helped to create the circumstances in which the institutions of the USSR could no longer reproduce Soviet dominance as they had in the past. It was not the only reason for the vulnerability. Long term economic decline, developments in society, the relaxation of control and disillusionment within the CPSU also contributed to this condition. To understand fully the collapse of the Soviet Union, one must add the end of the Cold War to the forces of nationalism, economic crisis and elite fragmentation which ultimately led to the dissolution of this once powerful monolith.

## 6.4 VULNERABILITY AND THE COLLAPSE

The speed with which a great power can fall is remarkable. From a situation of vulnerability, which emerged during 1988 and was evident from the beginning of 1989, the Soviet Union rapidly began to break apart. Independence movements proliferated in the republics, the institutions of the state (particularly the CPSU) and the economic structures fractured. The collapse was caused by developments operating on distinct chronological scales: the long-term structural (phenomena such as declining economic capacity, and disillusioned population), shorter-term contingent (actions such as the reforms of the economic and political systems and the end of the Cold War) and the fatal blows. This last term refers to the blows which, given these two pre-conditions, actually destroyed the state by preventing the mechanisms which reproduced state rule from functioning. The final section of this chapter will briefly set out the 'fatal blows' of the Soviet collapse, namely, nationalism, elite fragmentation and economic collapse, and relate them to the condition of vulnerability. The purpose is not to set out a comprehensive explanation of the Soviet collapse, but to contribute to the ongoing debate about the causes of collapse by using the idea of vulnerability to examine the role that the end of the Cold War played in undermining Soviet power.

### 6.4.1 *Elite Fragmentation*

The unity of the CPSU had been central to the success of the Soviet state.<sup>60</sup> The party had maintained a tenacious hold on power for many decades and the fracturing of the ruling elite in the face of economic, political and social challenges dealt the first of three blows to the Soviet system. As shown in Chapter Three, the CPSU was the bedrock of the state institutions and the fusion of party and state was the hallmark of this mono-hierarchical system. The party's ability to isolate any challenges to its authority with great speed and efficacy had

assured the state's position of primacy. Once the party began to fragment into various groups, this power was terminally shaken.<sup>61</sup>

Under nationalist, economic and other political pressures, the unity of this group began to erode. Gorbachev maintains that the divisions among the reformists seriously undermined Soviet power:

During the years of perestroika the fragmentation of the democrats, the back-biting among them, the attempts by each group to show that it was 'more democratic' than the others ultimately became one of the reasons for the undermining of democratic change and then the interruption of perestroika as a result of the August '91 coup.<sup>62</sup>

Reformist division alone was not the sole problem. The formation of a conservative bloc was equally important in the fragmentation of the elite and the undermining of the Soviet state. The divisions within the party were heavily influenced by differing strategies for maintaining political power. Many feared that the end of the Union would lead to CPSU collapse and hence their removal from power. Others recognised that such movements were likely and that their own political futures lay precisely in helping to kill off the USSR.

The divisions culminated in the ruling elite of the CPSU splitting into three groups. The first rejected the party and headed in a reformist-democratic-nationalist direction and had a decidedly anti-Gorbachev character. This group was headed by Yeltsin and other ex-communist leaders from the republics. Like Kravchuk and Shushkevitch, they were not all democrats, however, they recognised that this separation provided the best chance for their personal political survival. The second group clung to Gorbachev and the party and believed that the Union and party could survive, not only reform, but the introduction of multi-party democracy. The third group were the conservatives who wanted a return to the Stalinist/Brezhnevite ways of the past. They were

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<sup>60</sup> See generally R.J Hill and P. Frank, *The Soviet Communist Party* Third Edition, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.

<sup>61</sup> For a general discussion of the divisions within the CPSU see Jerry F. Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985-1991* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997, pp. 249-77, and pp. 315-40. On the divisions over the Nina Andreyeva letter see Yegor Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin: The Memoirs of Yegor Ligachev* New York: Pantheon Books, 1993, pp. 284-311; and Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000, pp. 153-5.

<sup>62</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World* New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 8.



people like Yanayev, Pavov, Kryuchkov and Yazov who formed the Russian Communist Party (RCP) and who instigated the failed coup. The group was characterised most clearly by an anti-perestroika line, anti-Gorbachev sentiments and a palpable sense that the past had been betrayed.

The first splits could be seen in late 1987, with Yeltsin's criticisms, first of Ligachev and then of Gorbachev at the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee.<sup>63</sup> This resulted in Yeltsin's expulsion from the Politburo on 11 November and his removal from the post of Moscow first party secretary where he had built up a reputation as a visible and energetic reformer.<sup>64</sup> This shook the population's confidence in perestroika generally and Gorbachev's commitment to it more specifically. It also invigorated the conservative challenge which led to the publication of Nina Andreyeva's Stalinist diatribe 'I Cannot Betray my Principles' on 13 March 1988.<sup>65</sup> After this divisive point, the election of the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD) on 26 March 1989 gave a public platform to the emergent factions to gain further political capital.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Gorbachev's decision to have himself elected to the Presidency of the CPD in the old Soviet style rather than subject himself to popular election further isolated him from the reformist faction. A further significant development was the decision taken at the 5 February Central Committee Plenum that the party should abandon its 'leading role' in society and accept some form of democracy. On 11 March, the Soviet Constitution was amended to reflect this decision.<sup>67</sup>

While the reformist element was coalescing around Yeltsin, the conservative opposition was inspired by the reformists' method and they too used Russian nationalism to achieve good representation in the CPD. This led to the formation of the RCP which held its opening Congress between 19 and 23 June and selected the conservative Ivan Polozkov as first secretary. This

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<sup>63</sup> See Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 108–19; Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, pp. 315–40.

<sup>64</sup> Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 116–7; Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, pp. 319–20.

<sup>65</sup> For discussion of the letter and an intriguing interview with Andreyeva see Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, pp. 70–85.

<sup>66</sup> See generally, Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, pp. 140–74.

<sup>67</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp. 410–1. For a broader discussion of the end of CPSU rule see Hough *Democratization and Revolution*, pp. 249–77.

separate party was supported and directed by Ligachev and the conservatives.<sup>68</sup> During this period, Yeltsin's popularity amongst Russians was on the rise and Gorbachev's began to wane.<sup>69</sup> Within the CPSU, the formation of a Democratic Platform on 20–21 January 1991 gave reformers a better organisational base and further undermined Gorbachev's and the CPSU's control and authority.<sup>70</sup>

At the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU, a new Politburo was selected but, significantly, had no real powers. Not only had the reformists and conservatives moved away from the party, even Gorbachev had stopped using it as a platform. Instead, he used his executive powers as President with the State Council as his consultative group. Palazchenko notes that in early April 1990 'it seemed increasingly clear that the left and right despised Gorbachev equally and there was no center—certainly no organised center.'<sup>71</sup> Significantly, on 12 July 1990, at the end of the congress, Yeltsin gave up his membership of the party.<sup>72</sup> The reformist element had decided to move away from the party.

Attached to the referendum on the new Union Treaty was a question regarding the creation of a Russian presidency.<sup>73</sup> This question passed with 69.85% of the vote.<sup>74</sup> Demonstrations in favour of Yeltsin followed on 28 March and, ultimately, resulted in Yeltsin clearly defeating Ryzhkov (Gorbachev's nominated choice) in the election of 12 June.<sup>75</sup> At this point, the CPSU could no longer be said to be the centre of power in the state. It had split into three rough groups and was no longer in any meaningful sense the ruling body of the Soviet state.

Until this point, the interests of the ruling elite had ensured a reasonable unity existed. The changing circumstances, different ideological commitments and different interpretations of how to maintain their individual and collective

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<sup>68</sup> Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp. 455–65.

<sup>69</sup> See above note 48 for polls on Gorbachev's declining popularity. In a 1990 poll for 'Man of the Year' conducted by *Moscow News*, Yeltsin received 32%, Gorbachev 19%, compared with the same poll in 1989 in which Gorbachev had received 46% and Yeltsin 6%, cited in Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 447.

<sup>70</sup> Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 306.

<sup>71</sup> Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* University Park: PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. 184.

<sup>72</sup> See Sakwa, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 468.

<sup>73</sup> Which passed with 76.4% of the vote.

<sup>74</sup> *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991, pp. 38078–9.

interests in this new environment were the factors motivating the split. Furthermore, the CPSU elites' ability to formulate and implement strategies to assert and protect its interests had diminished greatly under Gorbachev. This limited capacity to act, the different directions in which they were tending, combined with the larger context in which the ruling elite was no longer as far removed from the sentiments of society, resulted in the fracturing of CPSU solidarity. The CPSU's solidarity had been one of its greatest assets. When solidarity cracked under the pressure of ideology and interests, the CPSU was undone.

The anti-Gorbachev coup of August 1991 marked the end of the life of the CPSU and, in many ways, the end of the USSR itself.<sup>76</sup> Having already forbidden political activity in state institutions, on 29 August the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR banned all CPSU activities and, on 6 November, Yeltsin issued a decree which banned the CPSU and the RCP and nationalised their property. Thus, the core of the Soviet state was dead. Killed, in the main, by the splits in its ranks which resulted primarily from competing views on how to respond to the challenges to the state brought about by the reforms, by personal rivalries and by the end of the Cold War. Palazchenko and others had suggested early on that one way to prevent the rivalries within the party from becoming fatal and to ease the transition to multi-party democracy, was to overturn the decision of 1921 to ban any dissent from the party line by allowing formal factions within the CPSU.<sup>77</sup> These pleas were ignored.

The splintering of the CPSU into three groups played a central role in the destruction of the Soviet state.<sup>78</sup> The divisions caused a huge amount of organisational weakness which further exacerbated economic problems.

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<sup>75</sup> The results were as follows: Boris Yeltsin 57.3%; Nikolai Ryzhkov 16.85%; Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, 7.81%; Aman-Geldy Tuleyev 6.81%, A. Makashov 3.74%; Vadim Bakatin 3.42%. Source, *Keesing's Record of World Events* London: Keesing's, Vol. 37, 1991, pp. 38273.

<sup>76</sup> For accounts of the coup see Vladimir Pozner, *Eyewitness: A Personal Account of the Unravelling of the Soviet Union* New York: Random House, 1992; Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 578–604, Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, pp. 449–90; Mikhail Gorbachev, *The August Coup* New York: Harper Collins, 1991; Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 373–80 and pp. 401–23; Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, pp. 422–32; and, for the American view of the event and their consequent actions, Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels* pp. 421–42.

<sup>77</sup> Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze*, p. 290.

Furthermore, it gave impetus to the claims of sovereignty and independence. It also allowed RSFSR state institutions to claim, progressively through 1991, virtually all the state functions previously held by the USSR for itself and the successor republics.<sup>79</sup> In rejecting the ideology at its core, the CPSU had undermined the key claim to its legitimate rule. That, combined with the unpopularity of the party and the party's own division, left the once all-pervasive body an empty husk. As a formal institution of the state, the CPSU was unable to reform itself to react to the new circumstances. Over the period of time during which this thesis asserts that the state was vulnerable, the ruling elite split and fought among themselves over how to reconstitute the state and who was to lead this effort. All this stemmed from the two crucial movements at the heart of this thesis, the sociological growth of society and the rejection of the values of the Russian revolution which had so profoundly shaped the Soviet system.

#### 6.4.2 *Economic Collapse*

Yeltsin's ability to tap into people's frustration regarding the economic crisis was crucial to his success in wresting power from Gorbachev and the USSR. Furthermore, the economic failure of the Gorbachev reforms meant that the state institutions were unable to resist the pressure put on them due to their paralysis. Goldman correctly notes that '[b]y failing to master the country's economic problems, Gorbachev lost his chance to win the confidence of the Soviet people.'<sup>80</sup> The problems of the economy were, as noted in Chapter Four, significant. The failure of Gorbachev and the reformers to deliver meaningful economic results, indeed their exacerbation of an already poor economic situation, was a key factor in the break-up.

Under Gorbachev, the Soviet economy went from a parlous situation to utter meltdown, and this deterioration cost him and the USSR dearly. While

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<sup>78</sup> Some have identified four groups: those favouring Western style reforms based around Yakovlev; those who clung to Gorbachev; those who supported Yeltsin and his radical populism; and those who supported Ligachev and a conservative approach.

<sup>79</sup> The key developments were the 20 July decree forbidding political activity in state institutions and the 28 August seizure of the USSR State Bank and the Foreign Trade Bank. See above pp. 205-7 for further details.

<sup>80</sup> Goldman, *What Went Wrong*, p. 18.

longer-term structural problems set the context of decline, ultimately, the economic crisis was caused by a range of shorter-term crises. These immediate problems derived from a series of factors, the most obvious of which were the budget deficits of 1986–88. Those budget deficits drove the huge jump in inflation and the buyers' panic which became the hallmark of the economy from that point onward. The Enterprise Law of 1988 induced further shortages, wage jumps and an increase in demands for government subsidies for failing business. This culminated in Ryzhkov's announcement on 24 May 1990 that the price of bread and other staples was going to triple as of 1 July, with further rises announced for 1 January 1991; the announcement prompted a buying frenzy and yet more social chaos. The economic crisis made the leadership look weak, it emboldened the opposition (both reformist and conservative), and profoundly limited the ability of state institutions to function.<sup>81</sup> After six years of lurching reforms, the population had experienced further massive declines in production, it had suffered exploding inflation with prices shooting ever upwards, the collapse of intra-regional trade, food shortages and widespread social chaos.<sup>82</sup> Viewed from any perspective, the Soviet economy went from a state of general stagnation<sup>83</sup> to an overt meltdown in the 1990–91 period.<sup>84</sup>

Scholars offer a range of explanations as to why the system went into terminal decline. Ellman and Kontorovitch argue that it was the product of the Gorbachev economic reforms.<sup>85</sup> They argue that the weakness of the Soviet system led to the slow-down, but that it was the making of poor, inconsistent, and misinformed decisions which led to the collapse. In their opinion,

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<sup>81</sup> On the economic crisis see generally, Goldman, *What Went Wrong*; Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration*; and Åslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform*.

<sup>82</sup> See generally, CIA Report, 'Beyond Perestroika: The Soviet Economy in Crisis' in Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus (eds.), *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse* Revised Edition, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995, pp. 322–36; and Åslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform*, pp. 182–202.

<sup>83</sup> There is some dispute over the levels of problems in the economy when Gorbachev took over in 1985. Goldman argues that it was in crisis in Marshall I. Goldman, *The USSR in Crisis: The Future of an Economic System* New York: WW Norton, 1983; whereas Burks argues that the crisis was yet to come, in R.V. Burks, 'The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union' in Alexander Shtromas and Morton A. Kaplan (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future. Volume 1: System and State* New York: Paragon and PWPA, 1989, pp. 115–65.

<sup>84</sup> See Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR, 1917–1991* Final Edition, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992, pp. 412–9.

<sup>85</sup> Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration*, pp. 1–39.

the result of Gorbachev's economic policy and his changes to the economic and political system which he had inherited was to demolish a system which functioned, if far from optimally, and to leave in its place a systemic chaos and harmful economic policies which had very adverse effects on the operation of the economy and the welfare of the population.<sup>86</sup>

Harrison argues that the economic crisis was caused by the half-hearted compromises of perestroika, the political reforms which undermined the administrative system and official sabotage.<sup>87</sup> The CIA argues that the problems derived from the breakdown of the traditional economic management system, the loss of control of financial flows, a badly managed attempt to shift the economic emphasis from investment and military production to consumer products and the increasing impact of political and social tensions.<sup>88</sup> Goldman puts the emphasis on a supply side depression which was the result of the decreased power of planners, inflation and private shops sucking what few goods there were out of the system. The supply side depression was itself exacerbated by labour unrest, ethnic turmoil and factory closures.<sup>89</sup> He also argues that rather than improving the economy, the inconsistent and indecisive reforms did more damage than good.<sup>90</sup>

Economic mismanagement steadily diminished the credibility of the leadership both within the ruling elite and amongst the population at large. This, combined with the freedoms of *glasnost*, made for a potent social and political mixture. Gorbachev and the leadership had moved from trying to reform the Soviet system to, in the end, trying to establish some form of regulated market economy. Not only had they changed course, the leadership had proposed and counter-proposed methods for achieving this end. Gorbachev had also shifted his political affiliations within the CPSU elite, between reformist and conservative, depending on how threatened he felt.<sup>91</sup> In so doing, Gorbachev and those around him succeeded only in impoverishing the population, wrecking what little of the

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<sup>86</sup> Ellman and Kontorovitch (eds.), *The Disintegration*, p. 28.

<sup>87</sup> Mark Harrison, 'Soviet Economic Growth Since 1928: The Alternative Statistics of G.I. Khanin' in *Europe-Asia Studies* 45.1, 1993, pp. 141–67, p. 158.

<sup>88</sup> CIA, 'Beyond Perestroika,' p. 328.

<sup>89</sup> Goldman, *What Went Wrong*.

<sup>90</sup> Goldman, *What Went Wrong*, pp. 203–7.

<sup>91</sup> On Gorbachev's political manoeuvring generally see Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 155–211. On his shifts from left to right to left see Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 421–448, and pp. 498–522.

system that still worked and undermining both domestic and international confidence in their capacity to manage the state.

This had three major implications. First, it diminished the stature of Gorbachev and the reformers and made them vulnerable to the splits within the party and to attacks by people and a media which had recently been given the power of free speech. Second, it emboldened the opposition within the elite, and gave political impetus to their demands. Third, it undermined the capacity of the state institutions to function. The end of the Cold War played an indirect role in the undermining of the economic function. Its contribution to this dimension of vulnerability was indirect in the sense that it helped to provide a context in which the criticisms of the leadership had an impact. It undermined key structural elements of the economy, particularly the ordering principles and production priorities. But it is important to emphasise that this dimension of the Soviet breakdown, that is, the escalation of the economic problems to the point of collapse, was pre-eminently of national origin.<sup>92</sup> The economic collapse of 1990–91 played an important role in undermining Soviet power. In a situation of state vulnerability, fiscal and macro-economic crisis dramatically magnified the challenge presented to the state.

#### 6.4.3 *Nationalism and Resentment*

That the Cold War helped to mask a welter of national tensions within the Soviet Union and its East European bloc is incontrovertible. That those tensions played a central role in the collapse of the USSR is also clear. Suny and Carrère d'Encausse, in different ways, make exactly this point.<sup>93</sup> Suny shows how the nation building of the Soviets had succeeded in encouraging distinct national identities as it clamped down on them, in an effort to produce a 'Soviet' nationalism.<sup>94</sup> Carrère d'Encausse maintains that Gorbachev was ignorant of the

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<sup>92</sup> The one exception to this might be the possible impact that large quantities of Western aid would have had if it had been supplied from 1989 as recommended by Matlock. See his memos referred to Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 177–200.

<sup>93</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993; Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire*.

<sup>94</sup> Suny, *Revenge of the Past*.

problems of nationalism and that his actions fuelled existing problems. Furthermore, Castells writes that 'it was the pressure of nationalism, utilised in their personal interest by the political elites of the republics, that ultimately doomed Gorbachev's reformist experiment.'<sup>95</sup>

Nationalism is consequently regarded as a self-evident explanation of the Soviet collapse. Given the ethno-nationalist violence in many parts of the former-Soviet Union, this is hardly surprising. While it is wrong to claim that nationalism had nothing to do with the collapse, it is equally incorrect to assert, in an unproblematised way, that nationalism simply undid the USSR. Carrère d'Encausse argues that the Soviet Union had been a Russian empire and that failure to recognise the resentment in the provinces brought the state to its knees. It is clear that resentments against both Russian and Soviet impositions were great, but a more sophisticated and thought-out understanding of nationalism is needed to make sense of its role in the Soviet collapse and to be validated by the historical record.

This thesis sees nationalism as a functional political ideology rather than as a self-explanatory force in the way Suny and Carrère d'Encausse conceive it. In the Soviet case, the Gellnerite understanding of nationalism is most revealing.<sup>96</sup> The idea of nationalism as a political ideology which asserts that political and national groups should be congruent within a given territory conveys the way in which resentments against Soviet and Russian impositions became political tools in the hands of local and Union level political actors, as well as being sources of more sporadic and aimless violence. It also forces us to think about how nationalist demands interacted with political institutions. More specifically, the nationalism which destabilised the state refers to two separate, though related, phenomena: first, the demand for political independence from the USSR; and second, the more disparate forms of nationalist violence which had more spontaneous characteristics and more protean goals. Thus far we have shown that the end of the Cold War, as well as the specific actions of the CPSU elite, help to explain the timing and nature of the economic and leadership

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<sup>95</sup> Castells, *End of Millennium*, p. 38.

<sup>96</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.



challenges which pushed the Union into the abyss. How then does this relate to the phenomenon of nationalism?

As in Eastern Europe, the political and economic reforms being pursued by the leadership at home had unintended consequences. Gorbachev and Yakovlev realised the need for an increase in autonomy within the Union, but the implications of their actions spun quickly out of their control. Combined with the broader politics of *glasnost*, the circumstances stimulated the long suppressed demands for independence within the Baltic states.<sup>97</sup> Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were home to the most consistent pressure for independence seen in the USSR. A leader of Sajudis, when discussing the movement's tactics for non-violent independence, said '[a]t every step of the way Gorbachev will be confronted with the choice of allowing us to edge closer toward our goal or bringing down his whole policy and probably his own rule with it. For once we have the initiative and we don't intend to lose it.'<sup>98</sup> That they succeeded in their aims is a tribute to the tenacity of the independence movements, but was also the result of the incapacity—both political and institutional—of the Union.

The end of the Cold War had a clear impact on the national demands and violence of the period. Most clearly, it was the demonstration effect of the East European states casting off their communist shackles in 1989 which had the greatest impact. Gorbachev's refusal to support the communist regimes and his support for national self-determination at the international level had clear implications for his domestic action. The combination of domestic reform and *glasnost* with the international support for self-determination, put Gorbachev (who supported increased autonomy but who was terrified of actual independence from the Union) in a difficult situation.<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the nationalist pressures and violence which had arisen in the Baltics, Moldova and the Transcaucas republics was the spur that it gave to Russian nationalism.<sup>100</sup> Without question, once the sense that

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<sup>97</sup> For an overview of the drive for independence of the Baltic states see Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the Path to Independence* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 230, italics in original.

<sup>99</sup> See Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), *The Rise of Nations in the Soviet Union: American Foreign Policy and the Disintegration of the USSR* New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1991.

<sup>100</sup> On the development and implications of Russian nationalism see Vladislav Krasnov, *Russia Beyond Communism: A Chronicle of National Rebirth* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991.

Russia deserved independence from the oppression of the Union gained political momentum, the USSR, as a meaningful entity, was doomed.<sup>101</sup> Even Gorbachev recognised this at the time. The creation of a new Union treaty which had devolved many of the powers of the USSR was instigated by the 'rain of sovereignties'.<sup>102</sup> It was the planned signature of this treaty that was the catalyst for the conservative coup of August 1991.

It was not just claims to national self-determination which hindered state functioning, nationalism of a more spontaneous kind also played a role. The ethno-nationalist strife of the more spontaneous and disparate nature began in Kazakhstan in December of 1986 and slowly escalated in different parts of the USSR.<sup>103</sup> Some of the more notable acts of violence in this period occurred in Uzbekistan,<sup>104</sup> Nagorno-Karabakh,<sup>105</sup> Baku,<sup>106</sup> Moldova,<sup>107</sup> and Georgia.<sup>108</sup> This violence resulted in the dispatch of Soviet troops to try to quell the troubles. The arrival of troops invariably fuelled the violence, exacerbated its consequences for state functions and further damaged the state's popular support. Also, this violence and the breakdown of social order further disrupted the economy, particularly in the supply of food and other basic goods, and helped to propel the economy further into crisis.<sup>109</sup>

Nationalism and nationalist violence of this kind questioned the credibility of the CPSU and made its governing life more difficult by contributing to shortages through the disruption of production and supply chains. Furthermore,

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<sup>101</sup> Gorbachev agrees with this sentiment, in Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp. 447–50.

<sup>102</sup> The new Union treaty required that a republic be treated as a sovereign state with 'full political power on its territory.' Reproduced in Sakwa, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 470–1. The treaty was originally published in *Pravda* on 24 November 1990. For a discussion on the formation and implications of the new treaty see Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, pp. 373–402.

<sup>103</sup> The initial riots in Alma-Ata on 16–18 December were due to the replacement of Dinmukhamed Kunayev as first secretary of the Kazakhstan Communist Party with an ethnic Russian, see Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, p. 127, see also Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire*, pp. 31–4.

<sup>104</sup> Among deported Crimean Tatars and Uzbeks.

<sup>105</sup> Over the right of the region to move from Azerbaijan to Armenia and to call itself Artsakh.

<sup>106</sup> Riots and violence directed mainly at Armenians.

<sup>107</sup> Over ethnic Russian attempts to establish a Dniester Republic.

<sup>108</sup> Due to ethnic strife and secession attempts from South Ossetia.

<sup>109</sup> Nationalism also manifested itself in a raft of declarations by the republics to revert to the previous non-Russian official languages. An interesting example of the contradictions of this was the rise of Ukrainian language demands culminating in a law requiring Ukrainian usage in government despite the very low levels of Ukrainian actually spoken among the population. See Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 155–7.

nationalism served to fuelling the splits within the ruling elite, with each group reacting to incipient nationalism in ways which it felt best served its agenda. The reformers were encouraging independence movements; the conservatives were supporting a crack-down and Gorbachev did not know what to do. The Soviet state was unable to cope with what Remnick calls the 'empire of resentments'.<sup>110</sup> These resentments were suddenly allowed to express themselves. The centre, which had for so long stifled nationalist complaints, was seen to be supportive of similar movements in its 'outer empire' and, importantly, was not strong enough to do anything about them. Lewin expresses it neatly, 'the exit of the nationalities dealt the coup de grace to Gorbachev's government, but it was not they who caused the downfall. It was the decline and de facto downfall of the regime that gave them the chance to leave.'<sup>111</sup> The political manifestation of these resentments, under conditions of vulnerability brought about by the political, economic and social reforms of the 1980s, finally meant that the state, which had successfully managed to fend off nationalist claims for 70 years, was unable to cope.

National resentments in some parts, and a more Gellnerite nationalism in others, made this social phenomenon so explosive. But nationalism did not cause the end of the Soviet Union, the state was not broken by the melted antagonisms of a multi-ethnic empire. Rather, the weakness of the state allowed the resentments and nationalisms to surface. Once on the surface, the elites manipulated these frustrations and the Soviet state could not do enough to control or satisfy them. A further consequence was that these nationalist demands weakened the state in material and moral terms. This weakness, combined with the coup, cracked the Soviet Union.

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<sup>110</sup> Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, p. 190.

<sup>111</sup> Moshe Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia: The Drive and Drift of a Superstate* New York: New Press, 1995, p. 271.

#### 6.4.4 Evaluation

The term vulnerability reflects three changes in the institutions of state rule: the inability to rule in the old way; the absence of a new set of mechanisms; and a clear challenge to the state. In the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, all three conditions were present. Gorbachev and the leadership had utterly changed the nature of the Soviet state's relationship with the international and the domestic spheres. They did so in an effort to revive the Soviet economy and society and normalise the pursuit of socialism in a larger context. But, as the reform process wore on, it became clear that there was no settled consensus on how to re-constitute the Soviet state. The competing constituencies were struggling to influence the shape of the new state. The reformist elite wanted a democratic system whereas the conservatives wanted a sort of Stalinism without the excesses. Gorbachev did not know what he wanted, save that he wanted to remain in charge, and the nationalists wanted out. The ruling elite began to fragment and, as the economy seized up, nationalist violence exploded.

The political struggle over the state became part of the third condition, the challenge to state existence. The Soviet state was clearly challenged in a manner that can only be described as revolutionary.<sup>112</sup> The state was made vulnerable by the efforts to reform the domestic political and economic structures, as well as by the reordering of its international relations in the immediate, material and ideational senses. These developments, at domestic and international levels, caused a fundamental break in the nature and sources of Soviet social power.

In these circumstances, the Soviet state found itself under siege and was unable to respond adequately to these challenges because of its low levels of agential and capacity power. In short, it was too weak and fragmented to cope with the challenges of vulnerability. The longer-term structural problems produced a reform leadership which set about, unbeknownst to them, creating the conditions of state vulnerability. The reinforcing rods of Soviet rule had begun to crack and new ones had not yet been constructed. The state was weakened by

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<sup>112</sup> Revolutionary in the sense that the new systems that people were arguing for involved a wholesale recasting of the fundamental economic and political structures of state and society.

longer-term economic decline, the failure of its ideological claims and failure in its international confrontation with the capitalist West.

That the character of the foreign policy of the USSR was a product of its political system is clear. The changes undertaken by the Soviets which ended the Cold War reflected the developments within the society, but did not reflect changes in the state. When the leadership began to recast the Union's relations with the rest of the world, the implications for its relations with its own society were not realised. As the leadership discovered, the state could not be recast by incremental reforms; a combination of bureaucratic sabotage, larger institutional incapacity and the rigidity of state functions prevented this. As more wholesale changes were introduced, the state began to be undermined dramatically and its ability to overcome its vulnerability was increasingly diminished.

The international confrontation was not an instrumental mechanism whose sole purpose was the control of the Soviet population. The confrontation played an important role in a tightly wound and finely balanced ideological system of rule. This tight system relied far more than liberal states on its international sources of power. More precisely, it relied on the linkage between its international relations and its domestic state rule acting as an integrated larger structure of power and playing a part in the reproduction of Soviet power. It was in and through the conflict with the West that the Soviets demonstrated how and why they were there. It was the struggle against capitalism that gave Soviet rule a depth of social purpose and efficacy. Without the confrontation, the Soviet state needed to be radically reconstituted. The problem was that, as they were changing their international posture—with its consequent structural and ideological adjustments—they were reforming other institutions of state rule and the entire system became vulnerable. The CPSU needed to find something else to justify its existence, to give it direction and with which it could reconstitute its power-as-practice. Its failure to do so was the result both of poor leadership, but also of the inability of the Soviet state to adapt to non-Cold War conditions.

To summarise, the end of the Cold War played an important part in the undermining of the Soviet state. It changed the international conditions of Soviet existence and contributed to the chaos within the state as the Soviets sought out new ways of ruling. It fostered a perception of state weakness, it helped to exacerbate economic decline and contributed to the fragmentation of the ruling

elite. The confrontation with the West had been a central part of the Soviet state's architecture of power. It had played an important role in the production and reproduction of Soviet state power, and its removal contributed to the conditions which allowed the three fatal blows to kill off the Soviet Union. In transcending a conflict which had been at the centre of Soviet life, Gorbachev left behind the very structures which had allowed the Soviet state to function and, without an adequate replacement, the state was fundamentally weakened. The processes with which Soviet rule could function, and the power-as-practice which facilitated effective reproduction of state power, had been disrupted by the removal of a key instrumental and ideational structure of the Soviet state: the confrontation with the capitalist West. The end of the Cold War, unbeknownst to Gorbachev and the leadership, undermined certain essential mechanisms which facilitated the reproduction of the Soviet state.

The international confrontation with the capitalist West was the product of the claims, ideas and practices of the Soviets. The removal of Soviet revolutionary ideas as a result of a change in values and as a pragmatic response to the dictates of a reform agenda meant that the very foundations of the state had to be reformed. This chapter began by noting that Gorbachev should have been asking himself what he was going to do since he had removed the Soviet Union's ideological enemy—liberal capitalism—from the practice of Soviet statehood. Gorbachev needed to set about finding a new and resonant idea which could have allowed the USSR to survive the production of new structures which could once again reproduce the Soviet state as a set of functioning institutions. For it was the ability of Yeltsin and others to provide just such an idea, generally in some form of nationalism, which allowed them to take over where the USSR left off.

## 7 CONCLUSION

*Dear Leonid Ilyich: A language is a much more ancient and inevitable thing than a state. I belong to the Russian language.*

Joseph Brodsky, 1972<sup>1</sup>

States are rarely expected to collapse. At the time of the Soviet involution no one could quite believe their eyes when the USSR underwent what appeared to be an involuntary self-immolation. Yet since then, it has been hard to see the fall as anything but inevitable. The ossifying economy, the stifling political system and the deep sense of depression and disillusion among the population, make it difficult to imagine just how it survived at all. Yet such reflections tend to ignore that which made the collapse of the Soviet Union appear so surprising—it had been a great power. For more than 70 years the Soviet Union had successfully led a global challenge to liberal capitalism. It had a massive military force which harnessed a destructive capacity unseen in history, it controlled a supreme internal coercive power, it had industrialised at an unparalleled rate, it had even been the first power into space. Yet this concentration of wealth and power could not prevent the fragmentation of the state. In our minds, the notion of a great power sits uneasily with vulnerability or weakness. There is a tendency to overlook, not only the limits of great power capability, but also the political complications, difficulties and obstacles which result from the very circumstances which make a state's power great. The size of empire, the reliance on an international alliance system, or the cumbersome workings of a crude economic system—each produces great power, but also places limits on the workings of that power.

The Soviet Union was made vulnerable and, as shown in Chapter Six, the condition of vulnerability led to a full-scale state breakdown. The international confrontation had helped to produce the Soviet Union's great power status and its ending also helped to induce Soviet vulnerability, a process which this thesis has charted in some detail. The purpose of this final chapter is to evaluate the claims of the thesis, to outline its contribution and to set out some suggestions for a future research agenda deriving from its theoretical and empirical insights.

## 7.1 CONTRIBUTION AND OVERVIEW

### 7.1.1 Overview

The thesis set out to examine the relationship between the Soviet Union's confrontation with the capitalist West and the production and reproduction of Soviet state power. In doing so from a historical sociological perspective, it has shown that this confrontation was an important structural part of the pattern of Soviet state power. The first chapter established the analytic framework by defining the international confrontation as the chronic international conflict between the Soviet Union and the West. This confrontation had three aspects: socio-economic competition; ideological conflict; and a geopolitical rivalry. The confrontation was between two mutually antagonistic universalising social systems which fought to shape the world in their own image. That chapter then set out the concept of vulnerability by locating it on a five step process of political change. Vulnerability was noted as designating the situation in which the mechanisms with which the state can successfully reproduce itself are no longer effective, no new mechanisms have been found and a clear challenge or set of challenges to the continuation of state power exists. This view derives from an institutional-functional understanding of the state which argues that states are not permanent concrete entities, but contingent social institutions which reflect the social circumstances in which they exist. As a consequence, the thesis

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire* London: Viking,



examined in detail the processes which facilitate the production and reproduction of state power over time.

The second chapter set out the historical sociological method of the thesis. It developed a theory of modern state power which was used to analyse the Soviet state. The theory draws on Mann's notion of the modern state, but develops it by focusing on the international and processual dimensions of state power, with a particular interest in the processes of state production and reproduction. It emphasises the latter by drawing out the theory of state power-as-practice. This theory notes that state institutions are not only functional-instrumental mechanisms, but are themselves both the form and the function of state power. Hence, the state is thought of as a bundle of institutions which are brought together through the uniform practice of a transcendent moral claim to authority.

Chapter Three used this theory of state power to analyse the Soviet Union. It focused on the broader practices of Soviet power and concluded that the international confrontation played an important structural role in these practices. In this way, the confrontation was as an international source of Soviet power. Specifically, it showed that the confrontation played a role in three key aspects of Soviet rule: it was central to the principles of Soviet rule; it penetrated the economic system; and it was a part of the Soviet political institutions. The fourth chapter examined the role of the international confrontation in the political economy. It argued that the Soviet economy, due to its politicised purposiveness and singularity, could be thought of as a war economy. This characterisation acted as an analytic point of departure for the examination of the role of the international conflict in the political economy. It demonstrated that the confrontation penetrated both the ideational and material aspects of the Soviet economy and that this penetration also built fissures into the system. The fifth chapter returned to the international and examined the process of the end of the Cold War. It showed that the end of the Cold War was primarily a result of the Soviet shift away from the ideas and practices of the Russian revolution in the context of a firm but also receptive West. The changes within the Soviet state were themselves shown to be the product of both longer and shorter-term

domestic and international developments. Chapter Six then applied the idea of vulnerability to the Soviet state to determine the extent to which the end of the Cold War contributed to the weakening of Soviet power and its relationship to the state's subsequent collapse. It showed that, not only did the end of the Cold War hinder the reproduction processes of the Soviet state, it also aided the forces which ultimately drove the state from a condition of vulnerability to total collapse.

We can conclude, then, that the end of the Cold War was an important contributory factor in the weakening of the Soviet state. While there were other significant developments in that weakening, such as the ossification of the economy and the disillusionment with Soviet ideology among the population and the elites, the end of the Cold War played a central role in helping to propel the three forces which ultimately smashed the Soviet state: economic crisis, nationalism and elite fragmentation. The concept of state power-as-practice makes clear that the international confrontation was fundamental to the Soviet state, in both material and ideational terms. A logical consequence of the Soviet state's transcendent claim was some form of conflict with the capitalist world. The revolutionary ideas and material practice of statehood and society could not coexist in political or rhetorical terms with the capitalist world. Once the ideas which had produced the conflict had been jettisoned, the state found itself suddenly bereft of an effective transcendental claim. In ending the conflict over social systems and by rejecting their revolutionary alternative, the Soviets had ended the set of principles which had justified Soviet state rule and around which many of its institutions had been organised. In short, because of the end of the Cold War, the Soviet state could not reproduce itself as it had in the past.

### 7.1.2 *Theoretical and Empirical Contributions*

In showing the significance of the end of the Cold War to the collapse of the Soviet state, this thesis has made three clear contributions. First, it produced a specifically international account of the reproduction and then collapse of the Soviet state. Second, it applied a distinct historical sociological method to an international problem. Third, through this exercise, it set out one way of reconsidering the relationship between domestic and international spheres.

The traditional story of the collapse of Soviet power subscribes to the view that the Soviet collapse was an almost exclusively domestic event. Many of the major works on the collapse of communism fail to mention the international in anything but the most basic sense.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as this thesis has shown, such a view is incomplete. This thesis has demonstrated that Soviet state power was constituted by structures which went well beyond its borders. The process of Soviet state reproduction was greatly influenced by international factors and one of the most significant was its confrontation with the capitalist West. The victory of capitalist structures and values over a brutal and stultifying Soviet communism was, in many ways, due to a very real sense that the Soviet Union could not match the quality of life provided by the West despite its promise of a qualitatively better form of existence. The centrality of this claim to the Soviet project, and to the Cold War, meant that the rejection of these values for a 'we gotta have that' consumer capitalism condemned the Soviet Union to oblivion.

The second major contribution of the thesis is its engagement with, and development of, historical sociological approaches in IR. The thesis made three specific contributions. First, it developed a theory of the state in which analysis is not only focussed on international as well as domestic sources of state reproductive processes, but also takes seriously the interaction of material and ideational dimensions of state power. Second, by developing the concept of state power-as-practice, it adds a third and more dynamic understanding of state functions to the institutional-functional model set out by Skocpol. Third, it puts the question of the reproduction of state structures firmly at the centre of analysis

in an attempt to overcome the limits of the assumption of stability and stasis which pervades much work.

This thesis demonstrates the analytic utility of an international historical sociological method for the study of world politics. Some complain that the theoretical pluralism of IR indicates a field in disarray. This is not the case: a methodological pluralism and healthy debate across methods is indicative of an intellectual vitality and analytic openness which displays the sound condition of the state of IR.<sup>3</sup> The historical sociological method utilised in this thesis is one which produces insights into the workings of world politics which are not available with other approaches. This method has four benefits for the theoretical study of world politics. First, it is an excellent means for analysing and making explicit the social, historical and, above all, *political* nature of world politics. Second, it facilitates a means for apprehending the balance of domestic and international sources of developments in international politics. Third, it forces us to reflect on and examine the historical and social development of specific events. This means that we will have a greater theoretical awareness of history and a more sophisticated and analytically useful understanding of social structures in our study. Fourth, it is an approach which is firmly grounded in broader social science of which IR is a part, but which it tends to deny, ignore or forget. This method helps to provoke an awareness of theoretical and empirical developments in parallel fields which can overcome the redundancy of duplicated research and theoretical debates.

Historical sociology is not, however, a field which can be simply bolted on to IR. Not only does this thesis engage with historical sociology, it critiques certain strands to develop a particular analytic method for analysing state power. IR has long had a theoretical difficulty in coping with the state. The theory set out in Chapters Two and Three is one possible means of conceiving of this social actor which allows a truly international understanding of the state. It provides a conception of state power that is both historically and politically grounded and, in making a claim about what the state is and how it functions, allows students to

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<sup>2</sup> Hough's study is a good example. Jerry Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985-91* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> This holds true for British and European IR, but such pluralism does not seem to be so widespread in North American circles.

take the state seriously as a conceptual variable and social actor, and not merely as an analytic reification.

This method adds a third dimension to Skocpol's dual dimensions of state functional power; the concept of power-as-practice is used to highlight the processual and dynamic nature of the modern state. This notion, which argues that the continued practice of state power relies on the simultaneous role of state institutions as functional-instrumental bodies, as well as manifestations of the transcendent moral claim to absolute authority, can help shed light on the forces which strengthen and weaken state power, understood as a form of social control. Furthermore, it emphasises that the state exists in a triple international context: as domestically dominant actor; as an international actor, with domestic power respected by other similar powers; and as the institution which both creates and straddles the border of the international and the domestic. It is this triple context which makes the state the reference point for legitimate moral and political action in the modern world.

In his edited volume reflecting on the Soviet collapse and the failures of Sovietology, Cox remarks that the failure of Soviet watchers derived, in part, from the epistemological and ontological commitments of the social sciences. Specifically, he highlights three problems: the dominance of empiricism; resistance to prediction; and, most tellingly, the fact that social scientists are much better equipped to deal with stable structures than with change.<sup>4</sup> While this thesis does not agree that prediction is necessarily what social science should be engaged in, it has presented one specific theoretical means to address the problem of an ontological and epistemological commitment to stasis and presumptions of inertia.

The historical sociological theory of the state set out here takes as its starting point a concern with the assumption of inertia. This approach developed a number of theoretical strategies which help to rectify the last of Cox's noted deficiencies. The theory examines the processes by which states are made and unmade, that is, the political processes through which states produce and reproduce themselves. It does this due to a belief that analysts must ask

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Cox, 'Whatever Happened to the USSR? Critical Reflection on Soviet Studies' in Michael Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the Death of Communism and the New Russia* London: Pinter, 1998, pp. 11–31; pp. 16–7.

themselves how social structures remain stable. They must not take an apparent stability as a 'normal' or 'natural' state of affairs. A focus on state power as the product of both domestic and international forces which are constantly shifting, and on the institutions which reproduce dominance, provides one means to overcome the intellectual predilection for stability in IR and the social sciences more broadly.

The third major contribution of this thesis is to point to one way forward in our struggle to overcome the artificial 'Great Divide' which supposedly marks IR off from other social sciences.<sup>5</sup> Clark writes that globalisation, as both a phenomenon and as an analytic concept, 'challenges head-on the claim to structurally differentiated behaviour in the two fields [domestic and international].'<sup>6</sup> He is right, but does not go far enough. While globalisation most starkly puts lie to the myth of socially separate fields and separate logics of action, things have always been thus. The historical sociological method presented here explicitly seeks to uncover the nature of the relationship between the two realms. Indeed, one of the implications of this study is to consider and examine precisely how it is that these interrelated social realms have been made to appear as though they are discrete. An extremely important line of research which emanates from this realisation is an examination of the discursive, material and historical social processes which have produced the formal differentiation of spheres despite their substantive overlap. Political action has no *inherent* logic determined by the structural conditions of its realm. This approach takes international holism as starting point and shows that, by asking precisely how the social realm has been carved up into political units, and what the implications of this are for social life, we can produce instructive insights into social science more broadly and international politics specifically. More generally, by using a historical sociological method and emphasising the social and historical contexts of world politics this thesis tries to relocate IR as a study of the social world in which the relations between states are but one part.

Aron has written that international systems tend to the homogenous or heterogeneous depending on the relative similarities of domestic political

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<sup>5</sup> On the 'great divide' as the hallmark of IR see Ian Clark, *Globalisation and International Relations Theory* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 15–32.

<sup>6</sup> Clark, *Globalisation and International Relations Theory*, p. 16.

systems and values.<sup>7</sup> His insight is useful for characterising the dynamics of given international systems, but his writing does not indicate precisely how or why this should be the case. Nor does it set out a means for analysing the ways in which such different political systems interrelate. A different strategy for approaching the relations between orders is proposed by Giddens and others who argue that the domestic and international are ‘mutually co-constitutive.’<sup>8</sup> Again, such a notion sounds compelling, but the concept has no analytic utility beyond the descriptive. This problem can be resolved through the use of an international historical sociological method. By focusing on the nature of social structures, their inter-relationship and their historical production, the student of world politics can begin to make sense of how and why the domestic and international relate at given moments. This study is one such example. It set out to determine the extent to which the Soviet Union’s international confrontation with the capitalist West affected and shaped Soviet state power. The research shows that the confrontation was produced by the fear and loathing of each side and the willingness to act on these sentiments. This established an international order which related to, and reacted with, the respective states’ domestic structures in very different ways. Ultimately, the Soviet state was deeply reliant on the world order its ideology had created and, when it set about changing that order, unknowingly, it undermined key elements of its own existence.

In short then, this research has shown that the Soviet international confrontation played an important ideological and material role in the development and undermining of Soviet state power. The thesis shows that students of international affairs need to have a more nuanced understanding of the nature and origins of state power. When analysing state actions in international politics, IR scholars need to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of the modern state and to engage more critically with the historical origins and social characteristics of this institution. The conclusions of the thesis demonstrate that: the structures of international order have both domestic and international origins; that the character of the international system derives from multiple sources; and that the political and institutional character of the key elements of

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<sup>7</sup> Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966 [orig. 1962], pp. 94–124.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* Cambridge: Polity, 1985.

the system play a crucial role, both in ideational and material terms, in shaping the larger structures of the system as well as the smaller structures which influence and direct people's lives.

## 7.2 EVALUATION

In a historical sociological examination of the relationship between international politics and domestic state structures, there will always be problems with and limits to the conclusions. Of the many difficulties and pitfalls, four are most pressing and deserve some comment. These are problems which are, in some way, shared by all social sciences for they are intimately bound up with the social nature of the realm which we study. Yet, due to the strong emphasis on social and historical dimensions in this thesis, they are especially pertinent here.

First, the selection of social structures for examination can be arbitrary and the means with which analysts justify their choices can leave room for abuse. The justification for the choice of particular structures is perhaps the most important aspect of any such analysis. Why the scholar has chosen to examine, for example, the financial power of the state and not intra-class tensions to explain a given development must be explained. While one can never definitively answer any social question, the analyst must be self-conscious of the reasons for examining one set of phenomena and not others. These reasons must be justified for the study to be convincing on its own terms.

The other sense in which this first problem can be seen is in the macro historical nature of the method. What Hobsbawm calls the 'bird's eye view' of history,<sup>9</sup> and what Collins calls macrosociology are different labels for a similar challenge;<sup>10</sup> that is, the extent to which one can reasonably draw meaningful conclusions about such large scale events. The problem is that such an approach necessarily involves glossing over many smaller-level events. Collins puts forward one method for establishing the link between micro and macro level

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<sup>9</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* London: Michael Joseph, 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Randall Collins, 'On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology' in *American Journal of Sociology* 86.5, 1981, pp. 984–1014.



events by arguing that macro-structures, such as state, nation, class or economy should be understood as aggregations of microsituations.<sup>11</sup> While such a resolution may not be satisfactory, it is crucial that the study be sensitive to this relationship and that the connection between larger and smaller views is set out clearly. Also, the bird's eye view can obscure important dimensions of social life which are not apparently important. It may overshadow workings such as the role of decision-makers' families in formulating specific strategies, or it may ignore the role of education in the development of social sensibilities. But mainstream IR theories also have to grapple with the problem of how to carve up the social world. The debates in IR concerning levels of analysis and the benefits of systemic as opposed to reductive theories are attempts to resolve this dilemma. As in IR, there can be no final resolution of this problem, except to say that the research must do its utmost to scour the landscape so as to highlight the important causal relationships.

The problem of how to evaluate competing claims about a particular event is the second difficulty that this method throws up and with which the student must grapple. In examining the end of the Cold War, some have argued that ideas were the crucial structure that undermined the conflict,<sup>12</sup> others have stated that it was the international pressure of an escalated arms race.<sup>13</sup> This thesis has argued that the social development of Soviet society in the context of a chronic international confrontation led to the decision to move away from the values which had underpinned the conflict and which led to the transcendence of the competition. How do we judge between these radically different views of the core points, particularly when one stresses ideational and others rational or material claims? One may have misread the historical evidence, and another may be manipulating facts. It is the task of academics to criticise each other's work so as to uncover any misreading of events and any disingenuous or duplicitous action. Yet, the challenge of adjudication between methods and conclusions still

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<sup>11</sup> Collins, 'On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology'.

<sup>12</sup> For example Jeffrey Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behaviour and the End of the Cold War* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997; and K.M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies: Critical Investigations in Security* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> For example Robert Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How they Won the Cold War* New York: Touchstone, 1997; and Richard Pipes,

hangs heavily in the air. At the very least, we can hope that both reader and writer reflect critically on what convinces them and why, on what each finds convincing and why they find it so.<sup>14</sup> This does not, unfortunately, make for easy resolution.

The behaviouralist approach in IR has been one attempt to resolve this problem in a definitive sense. But, there are limits to the overly positivistic commitments of social scientific attempts to apprehend the world. The pre-eminent of these is that social life does not exist in laboratory conditions and there are no opportunities to re-create the phenomena which we are trying to explain and understand. We have to make do with an event happening only once, and in a manner which is inherently social and therefore resistant to the artificial attempts to produce 'independent' and 'dependent' variables. Generalisation is not the aim of this approach. Rather, the intention is to theoretically uncover patterned outcomes and dominant social structures. The approach used here rejects the idea that there can ever be a transhistorical 'independent variable' which can be identified and used across time and place so that 'generalisations' can be made.<sup>15</sup> As such, the aim of the scholar must be to set down a more compelling explanation about a given event than already exists, and it must be compelling based on rational argumentation and logical and consistent judgements.

The third, and perhaps most pressing problem is the question of history. An analytic stance which emphasises the historical must be sensitive to the politics of history and historiography. Such an approach must be very wary of whose history the analysts are using, how they are reading it and must also consider whether what those analysts are doing merely adds up to a base revisionism in disguise. History can be a corrective to the mistaken musings of the present, but it can also be roundly abused to justify specious claims. One

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'Misinterpreting the Cold War: The Hardliners got it right' in *Foreign Affairs* 74.1, 1995, pp. 154–60.

<sup>14</sup> For example Kiser and Hechter inveigh against the inductive method of historical sociology which is used in this thesis. They argue that the problems of selection, testing, and the ratio of cases to yield are all too unsystematic to produce 'sound' results which are not generalisable. For them acceptable explanations are the product of 'rigorous' method, testings and generalisable theory. Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter, 'The Role of General Theory in Comparative-historical sociology' in *American Journal of Sociology* 97.1, 1991, pp. 1–30.

<sup>15</sup> Arguments made by Kiser and Hechter, 'The Role of General Theory' and other positivist general theorists.

must be very sensitive to this danger. The student must scrupulously follow up sources, examine who wrote what and for what purpose so as to identify, as much as possible, the political and ideological colourings of the evidence. As should be clear from the sources used in this study, using memoirs or other forms of self-serving literature is not inherently problematic. Provided such material is cross-referenced and the scholar is aware of the limitations of the source, excellent use can be made of such pieces of history. Historical sociology is the attempt to use history to shed light on present circumstances, but it is also about making connections between social events that occurred in history. The difference between the historical sociologist and the historian lies primarily at the level of theoretical self-consciousness. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses. The student using the method advocated here must always show a sensitivity to the possible weakness of historical sources, as well as to the strength that such knowledge can lend.

Finally, the problem of verifiability exists. In social science, one of the thorniest issues is the question of the verification of claims. The desire for robust scientific claims in international relations led to the growth of behaviouralism in the 1960s and helps to explain why quantitative methods are so prominent in North America today.<sup>16</sup> Despite the efforts of quantitative scholars, their claims are often banal and, when scrutinised carefully, no more compelling than more traditional approaches.<sup>17</sup> How robust can verification ever be in social science? How robust should it be? What, indeed, does it really mean to be 'robust'? Social science sets itself apart from other means of studying social life through its theoretical self-reflection and self-consciousness. Despite this, most social science explanations lie on reasonably shaky epistemological ground. But is this a profound problem? In short, no. This thesis echoes the words of Hedley Bull who argued that studies of international relations should be scientific in the sense 'of being a coherent, precise, and orderly body of knowledge, and in the sense of

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<sup>16</sup> On behaviouralism and its appeal see generally Klaus Knorr and James Rosenau (eds.), *Contending Approaches to International Politics* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969. See especially Morton Kaplan, 'The New Great Debate: Traditionalism versus Science in International Relations', pp. 39–62 and J. David Singer, 'The Incomplete Theorist: Insight Without Evidence' pp. 62–86.

<sup>17</sup> For a particularly absurd example of the quantitative approach see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, 'The End of the Cold War: Predicting an Emergent Property' in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*

being consistent with the *philosophical foundations* of modern science.’<sup>18</sup> Explanations can, up to a point, be reasonably verified. The key lies in what kind of explanation has been sought and what kind produced. As mentioned above, the kind of explanation advocated here refers to specific instances and eschews generalisable explanatory theory. We must demand that explanations be falsifiable in a Popperian sense,<sup>19</sup> and scientific in a Bullian sense. Verification of the mathematical social scientific sort is as undesirable as it is unhelpful

While this research could suffer from the potential problems outlined here, it does not invalidate either its method or its conclusions. This thesis has sought to buttress itself against the problems inherent in its method. It has justified the selection of the major social structures—the Soviet state and the Soviet international confrontation—in reasonable terms and has demonstrated a sensitivity to the limits of history and historical sociological method. This is not a thesis which is uncontestable. The point of the thesis is to contribute to the ongoing debate about the Cold War and its demise and the nature of world politics in a broader sense. The study set out to rethink the way in which the current international order has been produced by creating a different historical narrative through the utilisation of a theoretical device which casts new light on the relationship between international and domestic orders. The test for the ‘robustness’ or soundness of its theory, the validity of its claims and the accuracy of its conclusions will be shown not through pseudo-scientific testing, but in the heat of intellectual debate about the period under question. It is in that field that the real evaluations will be made.

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42.2, 1998, pp. 131–55. Here Bueno de Mesquita argues that, with the right quantitative method, the rise and fall of the Cold War was predictable in 1948 based on data sets available at the time.

<sup>18</sup> Hedley Bull, ‘International Theory: The Case for Classical Approach’ in *World Politics* 18.3, 1966, pp. 361–88; p. 375, italics added.

<sup>19</sup> Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* Second Edition, London: Hutchinson, 1972, [orig. 1934].

### 7.3 FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The research in this thesis stands on the shoulders of the many historians, policy-makers, IR scholars and journalists who have written about and critically examined this period, and, in so doing, has opened new avenues for research. The first and most obvious area of research that this study suggests is further micro level research into the development of the Soviet state. The Soviet Union was a peculiar beast, different in many ways from other modern states. Further research on this theme would entail examining three things. First, the development of the changing values of the ruling elite and the relationship between the social development of Soviet society and the absence of commensurate change in the structures of the state. Second, the examination of the forms of political rule and third, a careful study of the development of state institutions and their relationship to shifts in world politics.

The second broad area of research would be a set of micro level historical sociological analyses of the Cold War as the second phase of a longer-run confrontation between antagonistic socio-economic systems. What the Cold War was and how it functioned and influenced world politics is far from settled. This thesis has begun some work which reinforces what might be described as an inter-systemic view. Further systematic studies are, however, required to examine, for example, intervention in third world regimes, the support of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements and the interaction of nationalism and Cold War in third world revolutions. Such research could help to shed light, not only on the dynamics of the Cold War, but also on the structural features of world politics in the post-war period.

Third, the theoretical and empirical study of the state must be continued. This thesis has set out one approach, but more consideration of precisely what states are and how they function is needed in IR. Specifically, studies should examine other instances in which the shape of states affects international politics and the ways in which international politics influences the shape of states and the lives of people. Related to this, a further substantiation of an historical sociological method within IR can only benefit the study of world politics. It is a sound method for the analysis of complex large-scale events such as revolutions,

wars, state breakdown, and globalisation which are of fundamental importance to the world. It is an approach which enriches the analysis of international life by underlining contingency, emphasising the analytical importance of historicisation and stressing the notion of world politics as a social process. This form of analysis can give IR a more socially grounded and historically sensitive view of the world it is trying to understand. This is a task that, in the context of globalisation, is of manifest importance. Understanding the international realm as a social one shaped by complex structures, forces and ideas that have developed over time can develop the study of world politics in five ways. First, it can provide a view of the state that is both socially and historically grounded and of clear analytic utility. Second, it can lead us away from mono-causal, reductionist logic and towards a multi-dimensional framework for explanation. Third, it can help us reconceive our notions of the international and the domestic realms. Specifically, it can provide a better way of conceiving of the international system, its constituents and dynamics in an increasingly complex world. Fourth, by underlining social structures and their contingency, it can provide a more open analytic stance for the analysis of the international social realm. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, this view equips us with the artillery for a critical scrutiny of the given in both our discipline and our world, a task that is of the utmost importance. The research in this thesis has begun to flesh out this promise, but far more is needed if historical sociology is to fulfil its potential in IR.

## **7.4 CONCLUSION**

Brodsky's eloquent declaration that he belongs to the Russian language demonstrates the problems of the communist project located, as it was, in an era of nationalism. Nationalism is itself not natural or inherent—that much is clear—but it had and still has a far more effective political resonance than Soviet communism ever did. Indeed, Stalin's attempts to place himself in the lineage of powerful Russian leaders such as Peter the Great, the appropriation of the Tsarist appearances of the Red Army and even the use of the colour red, all demonstrate that the Soviets understood the potency of nationalism. It also draws out the

concern with the lack of permanency inherent in all social structures. But our concern is not with nationalism as such, but with the social mechanisms which mediate the relations between state and citizen, between rulers and ruled. Precisely how the state manages this relationship is of central importance to its function and durability.

The thesis has shown that the Soviet Union's inability to exist outside of the conditions of international confrontation was fatal. In contrast, the existence of the USA and other Western states was not entirely structured by the strictures of the Cold War competition. The truth of this claim is demonstrated by the end of the Cold War and exposes a large hole in the internalists' account. There is no scope in their view for an America that was not determined by its instrumental commitments to capitalism and its consequent Cold War. The Soviet Union was a system of domination clinging to the burnished husk of a nineteenth century ideology, which, when its leaders tried to update it, was destroyed by forces it could no longer compete with, nor contain. The functional institutions failed and the larger Soviet state structures were outmoded, outperformed and simply anachronistic. More importantly, these failed structures fragmented the CPSU and caused the elites to act to preserve their interests in ways which undermined the ability of the Soviet state to reproduce itself.

The Cold War's demise was aided by the dynamism of global capitalism. But due credit must be given to the raft of leaders who, within the structures of global capitalism and an ossifying international communism, took it upon themselves to move beyond this frigid system. Gorbachev and his aides succeeded in moving the Soviet Union away from the rigidities of its past and towards a set of structures more conducive to the aspirations of the people they ruled. Yet, in so doing, they loosened the mechanisms with which the state, as a system of domination, had been able to function. To understand how and why this occurred, the thesis has shown that one must look back over the twentieth century to come to terms with what the Soviet Union was, as both an idea and as a system of rule. The thesis has shown that the Cold War, and world politics more broadly, must be understood in these larger historical terms. IR tends to focus too much on the small-scale and the immediate. This study of the Soviet collapse and the end of the Cold War shows one way of bringing the larger-scale

of historical and sociological understanding into explanations of international life.



## APPENDIX I

### CHRONOLOGY OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

#### 1972

May 26 ABM treaty and Interim Agreement signed in Moscow.

#### 1975

Jul 30–Aug 1 Helsinki 'Final Act' concluded under CSCE aegis.

#### 1979

Dec 25 Soviet troops invade Afghanistan.

#### 1980

Jan 4 United States imposes a raft of embargoes on the USSR in response to the invasion of Afghanistan. These include a grain embargo, the cessation of commercial flights between the two states and the suspension of the delivery of oil drilling equipment.

Aug 14–17 'Solidarity' labour union movement founded, in Gdansk, Poland after a prolonged period of industrial unrest.

Oct 21 Gorbachev elected to full membership of the Politburo.

Nov 4 Ronald Reagan elected president.

#### 1981

Apr 24 Reagan lifts the grain embargo on the USSR.

Oct 2 US announces its decision to deploy MX missiles.

Dec 13 Martial Law declared in Poland by PM Gen. Jaruzelski. Solidarity banned after its attempts to conduct a national referendum with the aim of unseating the government.

#### 1982

Jun 8 Reagan's speech to British parliamentarians in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords in which he calls for a

'crusade for freedom' and claims that Marxism-Leninism is on its way to the ash heap of history.

- Jun 25 George Shultz replaces Gen. Alexander Haig as Secretary of State.
- Nov 10 Leonid Brezhnev dies.

## 1983

- Feb 15 Reagan's first meeting as president with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin at the White House.
- Mar 8 Reagan's speech to evangelicals in which he describes the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire'.
- Mar 23 In a televised address on national security Reagan calls on scientists to begin work to make nuclear weapons obsolete with a ballistic missile defence system, hence starting SDI.
- Jun 15 Andropov speech to CPSU policy plenum suggesting the need to reconsider nuclear policy.
- Aug 31–Sep 1 KAL 007 shot down by Soviet fighters after straying into Soviet airspace in what was known to be a 'radar hole'.
- Oct 22–23 Across Europe over 2 million people march to protest against US deployment of intermediate range nuclear forces in Europe.
- Oct 25 US invades Grenada ostensibly to rescue American medical students.
- Nov 2–11 US and NATO conduct their most extensive military exercise—'Exercise Able Archer'—which tests command and communication procedures of nuclear war systems.
- Nov 14 Cruise and Pershing II missiles are deployed in Britain. On 23, Nov they are deployed in Italy and Germany.
- Nov 24 Andropov announces the Soviet withdrawal from arms limitation negotiations and military counter-measures to Cruise and Pershing II missile deployment.
- Dec 8 Soviet negotiators withdraw from START negotiations in Geneva with no date set for the resumption of talks.

Dec 15 Soviet negotiators withdraw from conventional force negotiations in Vienna with no date set for the resumption of talks.

## 1984

Jan 16 Reagan's 'Ivan and Anya' speech in which he calls for renewed dialogue between the powers on arms limitations.

Feb 9 Yuri Andropov dies.

Feb 13 Konstantin Chernenko appointed General Secretary of the CPSU. Elected to Presidium of Supreme Soviet on 11 April.

May 8 Soviet Union announces that it will boycott the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Jun-Aug Series of arms limitations offers exchanged between Moscow and Washington, with little substantive result.

Aug 11 Ad-libbed voice check by Reagan in which the following is broadcast 'I have just signed legislation outlawing Russia forever, the bombing begins in five minutes.'

Sept 28 Reagan meets Gromyko at the White House, it is his first meeting with a Soviet government official since taking office.

Nov 6 Reagan re-elected president.

Dec 18 Gorbachev's Westminster Address where what, comes to be known as 'new political thinking', is flagged publicly for the first time although in very vague terms.

## 1985

Jan 7-8 INF and START negotiations recommence in Geneva.

Mar 10 Konstantin Chernenko dies.

Mar 11 Gorbachev elected General Secretary of the CPSU by Politburo.

Apr 7 *Pravda* interview with Gorbachev which discusses the need for improved Soviet-US relations. Here he also announces a moratorium on the deployment of intermediate range missiles and proposes a freeze on

strategic offensive arms and space weapons research, testing and deployment.

- Apr 23 Central Committee Plenum articulates for the first time a broad and vague reform program and approves a resolution for economic reform.
- Apr 26 Warsaw Pact Summit renews the pact for another twenty years.
- May 1 US announces an agreement with the USSR to hold regular meetings to discuss regional issues.
- Jul 1 Romanov removed from Politburo. Shevardnadze becomes a full member of the Politburo and Yeltsin joins Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU.
- Jul 2 Gromyko retired from Foreign Ministry. He is replaced by Eduard Shevardnadze.
- Jul 29 USSR announces moratorium on nuclear testing. This is instituted on Aug 6, the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.
- Shultz and Shevardnadze meet for the first time in Helsinki at a conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Helsinki accords.
- Sep 27 Shevardnadze delivers a letter from Gorbachev to Reagan in Washington offering an agreement for both states to cut their long range nuclear arsenals by 50%.
- Nikolai Ryzhkov takes over from Vladimir Tikhonov as Prime Minister (Chairman of the Council of Ministers).
- Oct 3 In his first trip abroad as General Secretary, Gorbachev flags 'reasonable sufficiency' as a new Soviet strategic armaments doctrine in Paris and makes his first mention of a rejection of ideology in Soviet foreign policy.
- Nov 18–21 Reagan-Gorbachev meeting in Geneva. No substantial agreements are reached, but after a series of scripted 'spontaneous' private meetings they agree to hold two further summits.
- Dec 24 Yeltsin replaces Grishin as First Secretary of the Moscow Party Committee.

## 1986

- Jan 15 A Soviet TV broadcaster reads a speech from Gorbachev and the Politburo which proposes that the US and USSR remove INF missiles from Europe, that nuclear weapons be eliminated world-wide by 2000, and announces that the Soviets are prolonging their moratorium on nuclear testing.
- Feb 18 Yeltsin becomes a candidate member of the Politburo.
- Feb 25–Mar 6 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU, in which both new thinking and the new direction in foreign policy are articulated in more detail and the basis of the economic reform programme is set down. Gorbachev describes Afghanistan as a 'bleeding wound'.
- Mar 7 US orders the USSR to reduce the size of its mission at the UN due to 'wrongful acts' emanating from the mission.
- Mar 14 Two US Navy ships deliberately enter Soviet water in the Crimea.
- US Navy exercises in the Gulf of Sidra off Libya result in minor skirmishes with Libyan aircraft and boats.
- Mar–Apr Clashes between Russian and Yakut students in Yakutia.
- Apr 15 US bombing of Tripoli.
- Apr 26 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster.
- Apr 29 Commercial air travel between the USSR and US resumes after being halted due to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.
- May 14 Gorbachev speaks publicly about Chernobyl for the first time.
- May 23 Shevardnadze holds a meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss and develop the ideas of 'New Thinking'.
- May 27 Reagan announces that the US will not abide by SALT II limits anymore.
- Jul 28 Gorbachev announces troop withdrawals from Afghanistan and Mongolia, although the numbers from Afghanistan are low.

- Jul 31 Gorbachev refers, for the first time, to a *perestroika* of the political system in a speech at Khabarovsk.
- Aug 23 Arrest of Gennadi Zakharov for espionage in New York.
- Aug 30 Arrest of Nicholas Daniloff for espionage in Moscow.
- Sep 29 Daniloff released and flies back to the US.
- Sep 30 Zakharov released and flies back to the USSR.
- Oct 11–12 Reykjavik Summit. Gorbachev tables a raft of cuts and Reagan and Gorbachev propose the wholesale scrapping of ballistic nuclear missiles. No agreement is reached as Gorbachev insists that the US must limit its SDI development to the laboratory.
- Nov 3 The Beirut weekly *Al Shiraa* claims that the US has been selling arms to Iran in return for hostage releases.
- Nov 25 Edwin Meese holds a press conference announcing the discovery of a document linking Oliver North to the diversion of arms sales funds to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.
- Nov 27 Rajiv Ghandi and Gorbachev sign the Delhi declaration on the principles for a non-violent and nuclear weapon-free world.
- Dec 16 Gorbachev allows Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner, to return to Moscow from internal exile. They return on 23 December.
- Dec 16–18 Riots in Alma Ata and other cities in Kazakhstan due to the replacement of Dinmukhamed Kunayev as First Secretary of the Kazakhstan Communist Party.

## 1987

- Jan 15 US lifts an embargo on mine drilling equipment to the USSR.
- Jan 20 Soviet jamming of the BBC ends.
- Jan 26 Central Committee Plenum at which Gorbachev describes Soviet economic and social conditions as in 'crisis' and proposes *demokratisatsiia*, in the form of multi-candidate elections and non-Party appointments to senior posts, as a solution. He describes the condition of Soviet Union not as 'developed socialism' but 'developing socialism'.

- Feb 28 Gorbachev offers Reagan an INF package that is not linked to SDI restraints.
- May 23 Soviet jamming of Voice of America ends.
- May 28 Mathias Rust lands a light aircraft in Red Square, leading to a wholesale reorganisation of senior military officers along Gorbachev lines; most notably the sacking of Defence Minister Sokolov on May 30.
- May 28–9 Warsaw Pact shifts its military doctrine to one of strategic defence. The Pact renounces the first use of nuclear weapons, any further territorial claims, and declares that no state is seen as an enemy.
- Jun 12 NATO formally accepts the elimination of all INFs in Europe.
- Jun 25–6 CPSU Central Committee Plenum at which economic reform is linked to democratization. Alexander Yakovlev elected to Politburo.
- Jun 28–30 USSR Supreme Soviet adopts the State Law on Enterprises.
- Jul 23 Gorbachev announces plans to eliminate Soviet nuclear weapons in Asia as well as in Europe.
- Jul 25–7 Crimean Tartar protests in Moscow demanding their return to the lands Stalin had expelled them from. Followed by large and violent demonstrations in Uzbekistan in early August.
- Aug 23 Demonstrations in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn to mark the anniversary of the Molotov-von Ribbentrop pact.
- Sep 10 Yeltsin and Ligachev clash in the Politburo.
- Oct Movement to claim Nagorno-Karabakh for Armenia from Azerbaijan gathers force in a series of demonstrations and clashes through the month.
- Oct 19 'Black Monday' US stock market crash.
- Oct 21 Gorbachev and Yeltsin clash at a Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee.
- Nov 1 Demonstrations in Minsk to commemorate Stalin-era executions.

- Nov 5 Caspar Weinberger resigns as US Secretary of Defence. He is replaced by Frank Carlucci; Colin Powell becomes NSC adviser.
- Nov 11 Yeltsin is removed, on Gorbachev's insistence, by Moscow Party from his post as First Secretary after repeated criticism of Gorbachev and Ligachev.
- Dec 7–8 Washington Summit. The INF Treaty, eliminating medium and short-range missiles, is signed.

## 1988

- Jan 1 State Law on Enterprises comes into effect.
- Feb 8 On Soviet television, Gorbachev announces the date for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.
- Feb 13 Further rioting in Nagorno Karabakh.
- Feb 18 Yeltsin is removed from the Politburo.
- Feb 24 Demonstration in Tallinn to mark the seventieth anniversary of Estonian independence from Russian empire.
- Mar 13 Publication of Nina Andreyeva's 'I Cannot Betray My Principles' in *Sovetskaiia Rossiya*.
- Mar 16 In a speech to the Yugoslav Federal Assembly Gorbachev officially rejects interventionism in Eastern Europe and emphasises the legitimacy of separate forms of socialist development.
- Apr 14 US, USSR and Afghanistan and Pakistan's foreign ministers sign Geneva accords regarding the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- May 15 First large scale withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.
- May 27 The 'Theses' for the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Conference are published. They call for democratisation, human rights, and the rule of law.
- May 29– Jun 2 Moscow Summit. INF Treaty Ratification papers are signed by Reagan and Gorbachev.



- Jun 9 Foreign travel requirements for Soviet citizens are simplified.
- Jun 14 Demonstrations in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn to commemorate the mass deportations of 1941.
- Jun 28–1 Jul 19<sup>th</sup> Party Conference of the CPSU. Gorbachev proposes wholesale political reform along democratic lines involving a presidential system, a new parliament—the Congress of People’s Deputies—an increase in power to local Soviets and the removal of the party and state from economic management.
- Jul 7 Ukrainian Helsinki Union makes a declaration calling for the restoration of Ukrainian statehood.
- Jul 12 Supreme Soviet of Nagorno Karabakh votes to secede from Azerbaijan and to change the region’s name to Artsakh.
- Jul 23 Mass protests in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn against the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states during World War II.
- Aug 19 Programme of the Estonian People’s Front published in an Estonian newspaper.
- Sep 8 Programme of the Latvian People’s Front published in a Latvian newspaper.
- Sep 30 Gorbachev reorganises the Politburo. Gromyko retires from the presidency.
- Oct 1 Gorbachev is elected unanimously as head of the Supreme Soviet and becomes president of the USSR.
- Oct 12 Sajudis Program published in a Lithuanian newspaper.
- Nov 8 George Bush elected president.
- Nov 16 Estonian Supreme Soviet declares its sovereignty.
- Nov 22 Anti-Armenian riots in Baku.
- Nov 26 USSR Supreme Soviet rejects Estonian sovereignty claims.
- Dec 7 Gorbachev’s speech to the UN. He makes three major points: he renounces the use of force in foreign policy; consigns the Russian revolution to history and embraces ‘universal human values’; and announces huge cuts in

Soviet conventional forces—500,000 troops out of Eastern Europe.

Armenian earthquake kills 25,000 and displaces over 500,000.

Dec 22 Agreements between Angola, South Africa and Cuba on the removal of Cuban troops from Angola. The documents regarding the independence of Namibia are signed at the UN.

## 1989

Jan 6 After pressure from the USSR, Vietnam announces the withdrawal of all of its forces from Cambodia.

Jan 15–21 Ongoing demonstrations in Prague commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the suicide of Jan Palach.

Jan 18 Estonian Supreme Soviet makes Estonian its national language.

Jan 19 PUWP (Polish Communist party) announces that it is willing to enter round-table talks with Solidarity with the aim of lifting the union's ban.

Jan 20 George Bush inaugurated as president.

Feb 1 Latvian declared the official language of Latvia.

Feb 11 Independent political groups are legalised in Hungary.

Feb 13 Bush orders a 'pause' in diplomatic relations with the USSR so that a strategic review of Soviet-American relations—NSR-3—can be prepared.

Feb 15 The last Soviet troops leave Afghanistan.

Feb 24 The Estonian flag is hoisted in Tallinn on the pre-war independence day.

Mar 26 Elections to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies. 1500 of the 2250 seats are free for open elections for the first time resulting in a wholesale rejection of party favourites.

Apr 7 Gorbachev announces a cessation in the production of weapon grade plutonium in the USSR.

- Apr 9                    Unauthorized demonstrations in Tbilisi by informal groups pursuing independence. Troops are used to clear demonstrators resulting in 16 deaths.
- Apr 25                   74 members of the CPSU Central Committee are removed by Gorbachev.
- Soviet troops begin to leave Hungary.
- May 2                    Hungary begins to open its border with Austria.
- May 15–19               Gorbachev visits Beijing for the first Sino-Soviet summit since the early 1960s.
- May 12–24               Bush sets out his view of relations with the USSR in a series of university commencement addresses. The first is at Texas A&M on the 12<sup>th</sup> where he describes Soviet-American relations as ‘beyond containment’. They conclude at the Coast Guard Academy on the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- May 16                   The *Washington Post* reports that the Soviets have ended their supply of weapons to Nicaragua.
- May 18                   Lithuania declares its sovereignty.
- May 25                   Congress of People’s Deputies opens, Gorbachev elected as Chairman.
- May 29                   Bush announces at Nato HQ in Brussels the basis of the CFE treaty cuts.
- Jun 3–15                 Ethnic rioting in Uzbekistan results in many deaths.
- Jun 4                     Polish Elections to the Upper and Lower House. The Communists are thoroughly routed and Solidarity wins handsome victories.
- Jul 6                     Gorbachev speech to Council of Europe in Strasbourg where he articulates the idea of the ‘Common European Home’.
- Jul 7                     Gorbachev speech in Bucharest to Warsaw Pact leaders accepting the reforms in Hungary and Poland.
- Jul 9–13                 Bush visits Poland and Hungary to great popular acclaim from both populations.
- Jul 10–4                 Miners’ strike in Kuzbass, Siberia over wages, conditions and shortages of consumer goods. These are followed by strikes in Donbass, Ukraine.

- Jul 29 Latvia declares its sovereignty.
- Aug 20 Jaruzelski calls on Solidarity, led by Mazowiecki in parliament, to form a coalition government. Gorbachev urges hard-line communists in Poland to accept. The nomination is approved on 24 August by 378 votes to 4 with 41 abstentions.
- Aug 22 The Lithuanian Parliament declares the Soviet annexation of 1939 illegal.
- Aug 23 Hungarian foreign minister Gyula Horn ignores the 1968 treaty requiring Hungary to prevent East Germans fleeing to West Germany via its borders. The decision is announced on 10 September.
- Aug 31 Moldavian Supreme Soviet makes Moldovan the official language and also reverts from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet.
- Sep 4 General strike in Azerbaijan to demand reassertion of control over Nagorno Karabakh.
- Sep 23 Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet makes Azeri the official language and reaffirms its right to secede from the USSR.
- Oct 7 Hungarian Socialist Workers Party officially abandons Marxism-Leninism and re-forms as the Hungarian Socialist Party.
- Oct 9 Local communist leaders in Leipzig refuse to attack marchers in the street.
- Oct 18 Egon Krenz leads politburo battle which forces Honecker to resign. Krenz is named as the new leader.
- Oct 23 Hungary declares itself a republic (as opposed to a 'people's republic').
- Oct 25 In Helsinki, Gorbachev declares that the USSR has no right to interfere in the affairs of Eastern Europe.
- Oct 25 Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov states that the Brezhnev doctrine dead and that it has been replaced by the 'Sinatra Doctrine'. This is confirmed by Warsaw Pact leaders in a communiqué issued following their meeting of 26–27 October.

- Oct 31 Krenz visits Moscow and declares his support for *perestroika*.
- Nov 4 More than half a million protesters march in East Berlin demanding democratisation and the removal of the Berlin wall.
- Nov 9 The Berlin Wall is opened as the East German government allows its citizens to travel without permission after several days of confusion within the ruling party.
- Nov 17–24 Escalating protests in East Germany demonstrating for freedom and against police brutality, culminates in a 350,000 strong demonstration on the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Nov 19 Georgian Supreme Soviet declares its sovereignty.
- Nov 28 Kohl plan for reunification is presented.
- Nov 29–Dec 1 Gorbachev visits Italy and establishes formal diplomatic ties with the Vatican, symbolically ending Soviet hostility towards institutionalised religion.
- Dec 2–3 Malta Summit. Gorbachev tells Bush that the USSR no longer regards the USA as an enemy. They conclude a secret compact on the Baltics in which Bush agrees not to push for Baltic independence so long as the Soviets do not use force to crush any claims.
- Dec 3 The entire East German Politburo resigns.
- Dec 4 Warsaw Pact leaders meet in Moscow. All members except Romania denounce the 1968 Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia.
- Dec 5 A new Czechoslovak cabinet is formed with a majority of non-Communists.
- Dec 6 Egon Krenz resigns as leader of East Germany, replaced by reformist Gregor Gysi.
- Dec 9 GDR Communist Party backs confederation with FRG.
- Dec 10 Czechoslovak communist leader Husak resigns.
- Dec 12 Second Congress of People's Deputies meets. Gorbachev refuses to countenance discussion of the removal of Article 6 of the Constitution.

- Dec 20 Lithuanian Communist Party breaks off relations with the CPSU.
- Dec 22 The National Salvation Front proclaims itself the provisional government in Romania.
- Dec 25 Nicolae Ceaucescu executed in the Romanian upheaval.
- Dec 28–9 Alexander Dubcek is made head of the Czechoslovak Parliament and Vaclav Havel is inaugurated as president of Czechoslovakia.

## 1990

- Jan 11 Gorbachev visits Lithuania to try to placate the independence movements.
- Jan 13 Anti-Armenian pogroms in Baku.
- Jan 20 After repeated disturbances in Baku, a state of emergency is declared; troops enter the city, they are fired upon and return fire—83 people are killed.
- Feb 3 Demonstrations in Moscow demanding an end to the CPSU monopoly on power.
- Feb 5 Central Committee Plenum. Gorbachev proposes that the Party abandons its 'leading role', accepts a multi-party system and adopts 'socialism'. The proposals are accepted on 7 Feb.
- Feb 13 In Ottawa, American, Soviet, British and French representatives agree to the 'two-plus-four' format for negotiations regarding Germany's future. Negotiations between FRG and DDR on reunification begin.
- Feb 24 Sajudis wins a majority in the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet.
- Mar 4 First competitive elections in RSFSR, Ukraine and Byelorussia for local councils and republican parliaments.
- Mar 14 Article 6 of Soviet Constitution, which guarantees the leading role of the Party, is amended to rescind this role.
- Mar 12 The Lithuanian Parliament votes unanimously to 're-establish' its independence, Vyautas Landsbergis is appointed president.

- Mar 15 Gorbachev elected as the first executive President of the USSR at the Third Congress of People's Deputies.
- Mar 18 Free elections in East Germany. Voters back a conservative alliance linked to Kohl's CDP, the reformed communist party wins only 16% of the vote.
- Apr 3 The law on succession from the Union is adopted in the USSR.
- Apr 11 The Estonian Parliament ends conscription into the Soviet army for Estonian citizens.
- May 1 Anti-Gorbachev demonstration at the May Day parade in Moscow.
- May 4 Latvian parliament declares itself independent from the USSR.
- May 24 Soviet PM Ryzhkov triggers a buyers' panic when he announces economic reforms which will triple the price of bread and other staples as of 1 July.
- May 29 Yeltsin elected as head of the Supreme Soviet of RSFSR.
- May 30–Jun 2 Bush-Gorbachev Summit in Washington.
- Jun 8 Supreme Soviet of Russia declares that the laws of the RSFSR take precedence over Soviet Union laws.
- Jun 12 USSR Supreme Soviet passes a press freedom law.
- Jun 19–23 The Russian Communist Party holds its first congress. Ivan Polozkov is elected as first secretary.
- Jun 29 Lithuanian legislature suspends its declaration of independence from the USSR.
- Jul 2–13 28<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU. The newly appointed Politburo has no role in the governing of the country.
- Jul 6 FRG and GDR begin negotiations on a final political settlement for reunification.
- Jul 12 Yelstin gives up his membership of the CPSU.
- Jul 15–16 Gorbachev assents to a reunified Germany within NATO after talks with Kohl over aid and financial support.

- Gorbachev issues a decree ending CPSU control of media and broadcasting.
- Jul 16 Ukraine Supreme Soviet declares its sovereignty.
- Jul 20 The '500 Day Programme' for the RSFSR to shift to a market economy is published.
- Jul 23 Leonid Kravchuk is elected as chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet.
- Jul 27 Byelorussian Supreme Soviet declares its sovereignty.
- Aug 1 Gorbachev and Yeltsin cooperate to develop an economic reform program to be headed by Stanislav Shatalin.
- Aug 2 Iraq invades Kuwait.
- Aug 3 Baker and Shevardnadze issue a joint Soviet-American statement calling for an arms embargo on Iraq.
- Aug 9 USSR Council of Ministers legalises private ownership of businesses and the sale of labour.
- Aug 22 Turkmenistan declares its sovereignty.
- Aug 25 Tajikistan declares its sovereignty.
- Abkhaz ASSR declares its independence from Georgia.
- Sep 2 Ethnic Russians declare a 'Dniester Soviet Republic' and attempt to secede from Moldavia.
- Sep 9 Helsinki meeting between Bush and Gorbachev on the Persian Gulf crisis. A secret agreement is made to link Soviet support for UN action with a broader commitment from the Americans to help resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute.
- Sep 12 '2-plus-4' Treaty signed in Moscow ending the rights of the UK, US, France and the USSR in Germany.
- Sep 20 South Ossetia Supreme Soviet declares its independence from Georgia.
- Sep 24 Supreme Soviet grants Gorbachev executive powers to rule by decree during the transition to a market economy.
- Oct 1 USSR Supreme Soviet passes legislation on freedom of worship.



- Oct 3 German reunification.
- Oct 9 USSR Supreme Soviet passes legislation to establish a multi-party political system.
- Oct 20 DemRossiya holds its first congress in Moscow.
- Oct 24 USSR Supreme Soviet issues legislation which asserts its supremacy over recent claims of sovereignty.
- Oct 25 Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet declares its sovereignty.
- Oct 27 Saparmurad Niyazov elected unopposed as president of Turkmenistan.
- Oct 28 Askar Akayev elected as president of Kyrgyzstan.
- Oct 30 Kyrgyzstan Supreme Soviet declares its sovereignty.
- Nov 7 Assassination attempt on Gorbachev in Red Square during Revolution Day celebrations.
- Nov 17 Gorbachev proposes a radical restructuring of the Soviet government.
- Nov 19 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty is signed in Paris between Nato and the Warsaw Pact. It commits the Soviets to a 70% reduction in conventional forces stationed west of the Urals.
- Nov 29 UN Security Council passes Resolution 678 authorising the use of force against Iraq; China abstains, Yemen and Cuba vote against.
- Dec 2 Gorbachev begins a move to the right to try to shore up his position. He installs ex-military conservatives to key positions, including Boris Pugo who replaces Bakatin as the Minister of Internal Affairs.
- Dec 17 Gorbachev asks the Congress of People's Deputies for greater executive powers to strengthen government and stabilise society.
- Dec 20 Shevardnadze resigns as foreign minister, and stays on as an interim foreign minister until February.
- Dec 23 Gorbachev receives most of the new powers he had requested and Gennadi Yanayev is made Vice President of Russia.

Dec 24 The Fourth Congress of People's Deputies resolves to create a new Union treaty.

Dec 25 Ryzhkov has a heart attack.

## 1991

Jan 2 Soviet troops on the streets of Vilnius.

Soviet 'Black Beret' troops seize the main newspaper publishing plant in Riga, Latvia.

Jan 7 Soviet paratroopers are dispatched to the Baltic states, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and parts of the Ukraine to enforce central rule.

Jan 10 Gorbachev appeals, with no response, for a reinstatement of the Soviet Constitution in Lithuania.

Jan 11–13 Soviet troops in Vilnius are involved in several skirmishes. They shoot several people on Jan 11, and open fire on demonstrators on Jan 13, killing fifteen.

Jan 14 Yeltsin flies to Tallinn and signs a 'mutual support pact' with the three Baltic states.

Jan 15 Bessmertnykh is appointed as the new foreign minister.

Jan 17 Gulf War begins.

Jan 20 Soviet troops kill four Latvians in Riga in an attempt to quell demonstrations and secessionism.

Jan 30 Gorbachev is severely criticised at a CPSU Central Committee Plenum.

Feb Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Armenia, Moldova and Georgia announce that they are not going to participate in the new Union treaty referendum, but will allow their citizens who wish to vote to participate.

Feb 9 Referendum on independence in Lithuania yields a 90% vote in favour of independence.

Feb 23 Ground forces engage in the Gulf War, it is concluded five days later.

Mar 1 Coal miners strike in Donbass, Ukraine.

- Mar 3 Referenda on independence in Estonia and Latvia result in 78% and 74% in favour.
- Mar 17 Referendum on new Union Treaty. Result: yes 76.4%; no 21.7%; spoiled 1.9%. In Russia, the referendum has an extra question about the creation of a Russian presidency (passes with 69.85% of the vote), and in Moscow it has a further question regarding the creation of a mayor (passes with 85% of the vote).
- Mar 28 Mass demonstration in Moscow in favour of Yeltsin as the head of Russia. Troops try to prevent it, but fail.
- Mar 31 Warsaw Pact officially ceases to exist.
- Apr 1 Retail prices raised in the USSR.
- Apr 4 The RSFSR Supreme Soviet gives Yeltsin sweeping powers.
- Apr 9 Georgia declares its independence.
- Apr 23 9 plus 1 agreement over the new Union treaty reached.
- May 20 USSR Supreme Soviet passes a law on the right to travel and emigrate.
- Jun 12 Yeltsin is elected as the first democratic president of Russia. Results: Boris Yeltsin 57.3%; Nikolai Ryzhkov (Gorbachev's choice) 16.85%; Vladimir Zhirinovskiy 7.81%; Aman-Geldy Tuleyev 6.81%; A. Makashov 3.74%; Vadim Bakatin 3.42%.
- Gavril Popov elected Mayor of Moscow.
- Jun 14 The CFE agreement is formally ratified in Vienna.
- Jun 17 Several senior government officials address the Supreme Soviet with a range of complaints about Gorbachev.
- Jun 20 Yeltsin meets Bush at the White House in his capacity as president of the RSFSR.
- Jun 30 The last Soviet troops leave Czechoslovakia.
- Jul 10 Yeltsin is sworn in as Russian president, he receives the blessing of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- Jul 17 START I treaty concluded in London.

- Jul 20 Yeltsin issues a decree which forbids any political activity in all state institutions.
- Jul 29–Aug 1 Moscow summit. Bush and Gorbachev sign the START I treaty.
- Aug 18–21 Attempted coup to overthrow Gorbachev and to prevent the signing of new Union Treaty, which had been scheduled to be signed by Yeltsin and Gorbachev on Aug 20. The coup is led by Vice President Yanayev, PM Pavlov, KGB chief Kryuchkov, Defence Minister Yazov, Minister of Internal Affairs Pugo, and Supreme Soviet Chairman Lukyanov.
- Aug 20 Estonia declares its independence.
- Aug 22 Latvia declares its independence.
- Aug 24 Gorbachev resigns as General Secretary of the CPSU and suspends the activities of the party.  
Ukraine declares its independence.
- Aug 25 Byelorussia declares its independence.
- Aug 27 Moldavia declares its independence and changes its name to Moldova.
- Aug 28 Kazakhstan and Tajikistan declare their independence.  
Leadership of the RSFSR announces that it is establishing control over the USSR State Bank and the USSR Foreign Trade Bank.
- Aug 29 The Russian Supreme Soviet bans all CPSU activities by a vote of 283–29.
- Aug 30 Azerbaijan declares its independence.
- Aug 31 Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan declare their independence.
- Sep 2 America recognises the independence of the Baltic states.
- Sep 6 The provisional Soviet executive body—the Soviet State Council—recognises the independence of the Baltic states and supports their membership of the UN and CSCE.  
Georgia breaks all ties with the USSR.

Leningrad's name is changed back to St. Petersburg after a vote in favour by its residents.

- Sep 23                    Armenia declares its independence.
- Oct 11                    USSR State Council restructures and renames the KGB.
- Oct 19                    The Treaty on an Economic Community of Sovereign States is signed by eight republics.
- Oct 26                    Turkmenistan declares its independence.
- Nov 4                     The USSR State Council, at the urging of Republic leaders, abolishes all the USSR ministries except for defence, foreign affairs, railways, electric power and nuclear power.
- Nov 6                     Yeltsin issues a decree banning the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party and nationalises their property.
- Nov 15                    Yeltsin issues a series of decrees taking control of virtually all financial and economic activity in the RSFSR.
- Nov 22                    The RSFSR Supreme Soviet takes over control of the USSR State Bank.
- Nov 27                    The new Draft Union Treaty is published.
- Dec 1                     Ukraine referendum on independence. 90.32% vote in favour, with Kravchuk as president.
- Dec 2                     Yeltsin recognises Ukrainian independence.
- Dec 3                     Supreme Soviet of the USSR approves the draft Union treaty.
- Dec 8                     Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevitch meet in Belovezh, Byelorussia and declare USSR a non-entity and agree to form the CIS.
- Dec 10                    Supreme Soviets of Byelorussia and Ukraine ratify Belovezh Agreement.
- Dec 12                    Supreme Soviet of RSFSR ratifies Belovezh Agreement.
- Dec 13                    Central Asian States (Armenia, Azerbaijan Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) approve the initiative for a CIS and agree to join.
- Dec 17                    Gorbachev announces that, at the end of the year, the USSR and its governmental structures will cease to exist.

- Dec 21 The heads of the eleven newly independent states (Russian Federation, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) meet in Alma-Ata, where they support Belozevh accord and formally establish the CIS.
- Dec 25 Gorbachev resigns as president of the USSR.
- Dec 26 The Russian flag alone flies over the Kremlin.  
Yelstin takes over Gorbachev's office in Staraya Plashad.
- Dec 31 Midnight The USSR ceases to exist.

## APPENDIX II

### Work-time Equivalents of Consumer Goods, March 1982

(Hours unless stated)

	Washington	Moscow	Munich	Paris	London
Std weekly basket of household goods 3.5 people	16.3	46.8	20.4	19.4	22.5
<u>Food (minutes)</u>					
White Bread loaf	16	17	27	28	25
Rice 1kg	16	54	10	15	15
Frozen chicken	16	185	24	28	31
White sugar 1kg	9	58	10	9	11
Fresh milk 1ltr	6	22	7	8	9
<u>Drink (minutes)</u>					
Red wine 1 ltr	28	238	13	20	76
Beer 1 ltr	11	16	8	7	18
Ground coffee 500 gms	62	1231	85	48	114
Tea 500 gms	10	53	10	17	5
Vodka 0.7 ltr	61	452	74	107	131
<u>Cosmetics (minutes)</u>					
Soap	4	20	6	7	5
2 toilet rolls	7	32	5	13	10
Aspirin	5	246	64	21	9
Clothes washing powder 1kg	16	65	11	24	20
<u>Transport (minutes)</u>					
Petrol 10 litres	32	185	61	87	85
Taxi fare 3 kms	21	37	35	27	52
Bus fare 3kms	7	3	8	9	11
Train fare 60 miles	104	258	86	87	119
Small car (months)	5	53	6	8	11
Subway fare 3km	7	3	8	9	11
<u>Clothing</u>					
T-shirt (mins)	19	185	50	53	66
Pair of jeans	3	46	7	6	6
Men's shoes pair	8	25	5	7	7
Men's suit 2 piece	25	109	15	13	22
<u>Consumer Durables</u>					
Small fridge	44	155	42	53	40
Washing machine	47	165	96	56	81
Colour TV	65	701	143	106	132
<u>Housing and Services</u>					
Monthly subsidised rent 50 msq.	51	12	24	39	28
1 month gas (mins)	290	39	125	95	568
1 month water (mins)	32	123	37	95	97
Family medical insurance	22	0	33	0	0
Hotel Room	21	8	19	26	36

This is an illustrative selection of a much wider set of goods and services. Source: Keith Bush, 'Retail Prices in Moscow and Four Western Cities in March 1982' in Leonard Schapiro and Joseph Godson (ed.), *The Soviet Worker: From Lenin to Andropov* Second Edition, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984, pp. 292-319.

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