

4.3.1 TERMS (k)

Detente: The relaxation of international tensions, specifically between the Soviets and Americans in the 1970's.

Star Wars: Strategic Defence Initiative, U.S. plan to destroy Soviet satellites and missiles while in flight.

4.3.2 The Impact of Perestroika and Glasnost on the economic and social conditions of the Soviet Union (a)

- In 1985, **Mikhail Gorbachev** became the new Soviet leader.
- Younger, better educated and open minded compared to previous Soviet leaders, he realized that the threat to the USSR was economic collapse not invasion from the West.
- Years of maintaining a military presence in other parts of the world had drained the economy.
- The situation was made worse by the communist system of guaranteed employment and lack of incentives which did little to develop innovation, competence or hard work.
- To deal with this problem Gorbachev introduced reforms such as:

A. **PERESTROIKA:**

- The restructuring of the Soviet Union's **economy** to make it more productive by moving away from communism towards a free market.
- The introduction of perestroika resulted in dissatisfaction and frustration.
- Without government subsidies food and consumer goods became more expensive which was unpopular with people.
- By 1990, little headway had been made in establishing a freer market as hard line communists' resisted change which was unpopular with people who wanted change.
- Inflation, strikes led to poor working and living conditions and political instability in the Soviet Union by 1991.
- As the Soviet economy worsened so did social conditions: crime swept the country, health care unraveled, infant mortality rates rose and life expectancy declined, pollution levels created health hazards, alcoholism became the third most common cause of death.
- **Gorbachev introduced another reform:**

B. GLASNOST:

- **A policy of openness and increased freedom that removed censorship.**
- It was hoped that by opening communication it would lead to a better society.
- Glasnost resulted in Gorbachev's fall from power.
- With the freedom glasnost provided people who felt Gorbachev was not moving fast enough to bring changes to the USSR began to criticize him.
- At the same time old hard line communists opposed Gorbachev feeling he had already gone too far with reforms.
- Eventually these two different views would bring events to a climax in the Soviet Union that would result in Gorbachev's fall from power and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Thus ending the Cold War.

4.3.3 Impact of Gorbachev's Reforms on Eastern Europe, etc... (i)

- When Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union he introduced a number of reforms which had a significant impact.
- As mentioned in **outcome 4.3.2** Gorbachev's reforms of perestroika and glasnost brought about the end of Communism in Russia in 1991.
- However he also introduced a series of peace reforms in 1985 that would significantly impact Eastern Europe.

1. Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe:

- Until 1985 the typical Soviet-American approach to international security was to talk about peace while continuing to increase their nuclear stockpile of weapons.
- Gorbachev changed this in 1985 with a series of peace initiatives:
- He challenged the West to stop the arms race
- At the U.N. he announced a reduction in Soviet armed forces, including a substantial number in Eastern Europe.
- In 1988 the Soviets began withdrawing troops from Afghanistan.
- Arms talks that began with U.S. in 1986 led to agreements to destroy intermediate & short range nuclear missiles.
- In 1989 he had **FREE** elections in the Soviet Union.
- For the satellite states in Eastern Europe, events in the Soviet Union came to mean the destruction of the communist system.
- Eager to seize the opportunity, countries in Eastern Europe began to claim their independence after 40 years of Soviet control.
- Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland rejected communism and introduced democracy and capitalism.
- **Romania***, **Bulgaria***, and **Albania*** retained communism.
- **Yugoslavia*** rejected communism but plunged into civil war.
- *Each of these countries have either changed to democracy and capitalism or are in the process.

2. Re-Unification of Germany:

- The Berlin Wall symbolized the division of the world into opposing Cold War camps.
- On Nov.10 1989 the world watched as East and West Berliners using sledgehammers demolished this wall.
- This event more than any other signified the end of the Cold War.
- The division of Germany had always been a central issue of the Cold War.
- When Gorbachev withdrew Soviet support from the East German communist government, in 1985, hopes of reunification grew.
- East Germans demonstrated for reform and as discontent grew the hardline Communist leader was forced out of office for a more reform minded leader.
- This led to the fall of the Berlin Wall.
- The leader of West Germany, Helmut Kohl, proposed unification if East Germany held free elections.
- The East German government was lukewarm in its response however realizing they could no longer maintain power, free elections were held the next year.
- The East German people voted for a government that supported reunification.
- In July 1990 Kohl met with Gorbachev to remove Soviet objections to German reunification (Germany agreed to pay 9.5 billion to remove Soviet troops).
- On Sept. 12 the four nations that divided Germany at the end of WWII signed a reunification treaty.
- East and West Germany were reunited on Oct. 3 1990.

3. End of The Cold War:

- The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Eastern Europe led to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.
- The reunification of Germany in 1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ended the Cold War.
- It ended quietly rather than with nuclear holocaust as many had feared. However the new world order would bring new threats