INTRODUCTION

Relationship between the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union's successor state, the Russian Federation have reached a turning point. The two great nuclear powers, whose rivalry had dominated international politics since the end of World War II are on the best of terms than they were at any time, since 1945. Historians of the twenty first century may well look back at the superpower relations during the Reagan-Bush administrations as not only the period when the global rivalry had changed in fundamental ways but also when the Cold War along with the former Soviet Union came to an end.

The entire global international system has undergone profound changes in recent years as a result of the end of the long standing confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, superpowers of two opposing systems, capitalism and communism. The end of the Cold War has created the opportunity for constructing a fundamentally new and cooperative relationship between the United States and Russia. The development of a positive U.S. Russian partnership not only promises to benefit the two countries, but will be important in dealing with the great challenges that confront humanity in the twenty first century.

The Years of a great transition, from renewed Cold War at the beginning of the 1980s through remarkable changes during the decade leading to the end of the Cold War by the beginning of the 1990s, are thus the theme of this study. The period of the Reagan-Bush and Gorbachev-Yeltsin administrations from 1981-1992 have been the focus of this work. This turning
point is a historic landmark in the long annals of their relationship. Yet, their relationship had significant continuity. The renewal of confrontation early in the 1980s and then the renaissance of detente in the second half of the 1980s, leading to the development of a new post-cold war relationship bore witness to a changing mix of elements of continuity and change in American-soviet relationship, even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The important question had been the relative weight of one or the other in the mix. Moreover, history is also the inescapable foundation for what is now occurring and will evolve. In that sense, an element of continuity with change is the visible face of the transformed relationship between the former ‘Cold Warriors’.

The U.S. and the Soviet Union were searching throughout the 1980s for a replacement for the detente of the 1970s. That relationship, after early promise had attenuated over the second half of the 1970s and collapsed in the aftermath of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the American reaction to that event at the close of the decade. During the 1980s, tension and diplomatic confrontation in the early years shifted gradually to a new relaxation of the tensions in the second half of the decade. In the U.S, under president Ronald Reagan, the shift was remarkable. Neither supporters nor critics of the administration, who saw Reagan's hardline of confrontation and isolation in 1981-1983, a rhetorical turn in 1984-85, and a new embrace of summitry and arms control negotiations from late 1985 through 1988, could have predicted the transformation.

President George Bush in his first year followed a more measured middle course, maintaining the renewed dialogue but acting with more
restraint in the pursuit of cooperation and arms control. However, by the end of 1989 that course had already turned, and cataclysmic changes in Eastern Europe and radical reforms in the Soviet Union itself led to a historical transformation in East-West relations in general and U.S.-Soviet relation in particular. These epochal changes seen in the light of the later unsuccessful Soviet hardline coup of August 1991, leading ultimately to the demise of the Soviet communist state, led to a revolutionary transformation in America's relationship with Soviet Union and its successor state, the Russian Federation.

Relationship between the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union had clearly constituted one of the central problems of American foreign policy and world politics. As a result of the coincidence of the cold war with the nuclear age, the superpower relationship had affected not only the lives of American and Soviet citizens, but also the lives of people around the globe. Thereafter, the ultimate fate of superpower relations shadowed the very future of our planet. Their differences in ideology, aims and interest had been key determinants of their respective foreign policies. In addition, conflicting perspectives and perceptions had accentuated those differences. Involvement of the rival powers in Europe, China and the Third World had further entangled their relations. And each had seen the other not only as harbouring hostile intentions but also as building military and other capabilities to support such aims.

It was in this manner that the United States came to regard the Soviet Union, as its principal adversary, both ideologically as well as in the geopolitical sphere. Commenting subsequently on the American perspective,
a Sovietologist remarked that "the United States has two Soviet problems. One is the real but manageable Soviet threat to our national security and international interest. The second, and increasingly more serious problem is Sovietophobia, or exaggerated fear of that Soviet threat".1

The American-Soviet relations were both extremely stable and highly volatile. They were stable in that they fluctuated between the well defined limits of cold war and detente. The Superpowers remained adversaries even in period of significant detente, and they remained partners in "disaster avoidance" even during periods of intense cold war. The precise mix may have changed, but it did so in fairly narrow boundaries. Detente could never become entente and this cold war was never allowed to become a hot war.

Although the superpower relationship was in a sense stable, the relative power and degree of assertiveness in each case continued to fluctuate considerably. For four decades the strategic competition between the United States and the former Soviet Union and the fear that this competition could erupt into nuclear war had dominated international politics. In this period the political relations between the Superpowers had shifted dramatically, from the cold war to detente to new cold war and finally to the ultimate demise of cold war rivalry. The balance of nuclear forces had changed as well, from a U.S. nuclear monopoly to U.S. superiority to a situation in which many quantitative measures favoured the Soviet Union.

Yet, even in a crisis no American or Soviet leader had resorted to the use of nuclear weapons. Though there were concern expressed that with

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growing acrimony — the dominant characteristic of superpower relations, and with the prospect of militarization of outer space, this nuclear stalemate could have been broken. At the same time, in the nuclear age they faced the imperative of coexistence. Adjusting to this fact had not been easy for either nation. Nonetheless, a detente in relations was reached in 1972. From 1975 through 1979 this detente gradually eroded until it collapsed in the wake of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and with American reaction following that event.

Since the late 1970s the world had witnessed two dramatic shift in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The first, began in the last years of the Carter Presidency, which led to the apparent death of superpower detente and brought about the return to the policies and rhetorics reminiscent of the 1950s. The second occurred following Reagan's electoral victory in 1984. It witnessed the germination of this 'entente cordial', between Washington and Moscow -- much to the surprise of those who only a few years previously had been predicting that an end to the antagonism was almost impossible to imagine.2 During the first half of the 1980s Reagan's political stances, based on conservative interpretation of superpower history was the dominating factor in the interaction between the two countries. In most of the second half of the decade, Gorbachev's initiatives based on his 'new thinking' were of primary importance. By the early 1990s, however, events rather than the choices of the leaders had come to control the relationship.

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To understand the elements of continuity and change in U.S.-Soviet relations during the Reagan-Bush administrations and the rise and fall of the second Cold War supposes a knowledge of the history of U.S.-Soviet relations and of the Cold War itself. The study would, therefore, make an effort first, to trace the U.S.-Soviet relations during the Reagan administration through various measures of U.S. Policy of confrontation, containment and reconciliation, highlighting the elements of continuity and changes during this historical era. Secondly, to explain why abruptly in the mid 1980s the conflict began to diminish between the two 'global rivals' and the world began to change. Thirdly, to examine the events and causes which brought about the improved U.S.-Soviet relations during the Reagan administration and the movement in the direction of establishing a security relationship based more on partnership than on confrontation during Bush Administration. It would be a study of analysis and evaluation of the compulsions and needs in this direction.

In this quest, some of the important areas, issues, and questions that the study would highlight are as follows:

- Is it true that Reagan’s unswerving commitment to building up United States as a military power and, confronting the Soviet politically, economically and militarily compelled the Soviet leadership to acknowledge the ‘bankruptcy’ of its past policies? Did it contribute to the rise to a more moderate leadership in the Kremlin and prompt a string of Soviet Concessions, from the INF treaty to the withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan, and better regards for human rights issues?
• Is it possible to attribute it to the forces that could be called the "Gorbachev revolution" leading to the "Reykjavik revolution" and beyond? What were the forces constituting Gorbachev's "New Thinking" leading to the "Gorbachev revolution" in both domestic and foreign policies?

• Was President Gorbachev de-ideologizing policies in the former Soviet Union or re-ideologizing it on a new basis? Were the Soviets replacing the value laden system of Marx and Lenin with the value neutral system of the balance of power or instead turning to a new set of values, those of enlightenment? Were they the product of a protracted and profound process of change within the former Soviet Union itself? The Study thus examines the views of other Sovietologists that the Soviet problems were compounded by the vacuum at the top of Soviet power structure.

• Are those critics supported by enough relevant facts who maintain that Reagan Administration deviated from its principled path to one of rapprochement with the Soviets? Was the concern of the realist genuine that if Gorbachev had been successful, the result could have been a stronger Soviet Union and thus an even greater threat to the United States?

• How far were the Bush Administration's critic correct that its handling of relations with the former Soviet Union in 1991 and early 1992 were characterized by "Conservatism" "slow-footedness" and "tightfistedness?" Whether the President was being short sighted or
realistic about what the United States could do to influence events in the republics would be closely examined.

- In the post cold war era, therefore, both the ends and means of American foreign and defense policies needed to be reassessed. What were America’s core national interests and goals in the post-cold war world? What kind of political and military commitments did the United States make to secure these interest and further these goals? How much fiscal resources of the U.S. could be devoted to defense and foreign assistance programmes?

- Some have questioned whether the U.S. should support Russia when the country has the potential to become an adversarial competitor. They contend that Russia has always been a hostile and expansionist power, periodically retreating from its offensive endeavours to consolidate strength, only to reemerge in search of new conquest. The question whether Russia will reemerge as a threat to the U.S. will be resolved only in the distant future, yet, in raising the above questions one is not assuming that the study may succeed in comprehending answers to all the questions, instead in comprehending answers to all the questions, they may be the guidelines to develop the present work.

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from the Second World War as the two new superpowers, an unprecedented and challenging role for each. But the attitudes the leaders of the two nations brought to this new role were far from symmetrical. Stalin's determination to use the unique
opportunity - the Axis power defeated, the European powers prostrated and the United States distant, uncertain and eager to return to normalcy - to expand and consolidate the area of Soviet control in Eastern Europe and Far East. This sequence of events confirmed the worst fears and biases of some American observers, confused others and launched the two powers on the intense and dangerous adversarial relationship known as the Cold War.  

'The fundamental underlying cause of the cold war was the belief in both the Soviet Union and the U.S. that confrontation was unavoidable, imposed by history. Soviet leaders believed that communism would ultimately triumph and that the Soviet Union was the "vanguard socialist communist state". They were predetermined that the Western "imperialist" powers were historically bound to pursue a hostile course against them. Americans for their part, along with other western leaders assumed that the Soviet Union was determined to enhance its power to pursue expansionist policies by all expedient means to achieve a Soviet led communist world. Each side thought that it was compelled by the very existence of the other to engage in zero-sum competition, and each saw the unfolding of the cold war as confirming its views.  

The traditional interpretation of the Cold War holds that "Russia's striving for power and influence far in excess of its reasonable security requirement was the primary source of the conflict", and at the same time that

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the western - and particularly American - failure to respond quickly to Stalin's moves was "an important secondary' causes. 5

The original American policy of "containment" was the response to what was perceived to be the Soviet threat in Europe. One of its aim was to contain the Soviet Union "horizontally", that is, to forestall a march of the Red Army into Western Europe. The effort at alliance building and restoration of Western European military capabilities was to produce the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which was followed by a long


On the origin and sources of the American-Soviet confrontation much debate continues. Some of them see the conflict rooted in the efforts by both countries to fill the power vacuums left by the second world war, see Arthur Schlesinger, "Some Lessons from the cold war", in Michael J. Hugon, ed., The End of the Cold War: Its meanings and Implications (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 53-62. John Lewis Gaddis, "The Cold War, The Long Peace, and the Future", Ibid., pp. 21-38 argues that initiatives such as the marshall plan and NATO saved Western Europe from Stalinism in the year after 1947. Walter LaFeber, "An End to which Cold War?", Ibid., pp. 13-20 on the other hand traces aspects of the struggle back to an earlier pattern of anticommunism and intervention in American Foreign Policy.

There are similar differences over the sources of the confrontation. John Mueller, "Quiet Cataclysm: Some After thoughts on World War III." ibid., pp. 39-52, interprets the Cold War as essentially an ideological battle that ended with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Mueller's views meets the argument of . Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", National Interest, vol. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3-18. John Lewis Gaddis echoes the Truman Doctrine in concluding that the cold War was really a battle between alternative way of life, between freedom and autocracy. Schlesinger sees it as a "Fundamental debate" between liberalism and Communism. Schlesinger and Gaddis agree that the moral intensity of the Cold War was resolved in the defeat of authoritarianism and the triumph of liberalism.

For others incidently, ideology had greater influence on American than on Soviet foreign policy, particularly the ideology of anticommunism, which tended to globalize the Cold War when linked to the strategy of containment in the third world, see, Ronald Steel, "The End and the Beginning", ibid., pp. 103-112. Raymond Garthoff, "Why did the Cold War Arise, and Why did it End?", ibid., pp. 127-136, while conceding an ideological dimension, also sees the Cold War in traditional, geostrategic terms. Alexei Filitov, "Victory in the Postwar Era: Despite the Cold War or Because of it?", ibid., pp. 77-86, has more or less supported Raymond Garthoff.
series of bilateral and multilateral security agreements by the Truman and Eisenhower Administration.

The second element had its roots in the fear that the communist parties in Western Europe would subvert their political allies, destroy all political opposition and undermine the western democracies and substitute systems modelled on the Soviet Union internally and allied with it internationally. The Marshall plan was meant to be the response to this seeming danger, an effort to strengthen the economic and social fabrics of European democracies and to reduce their internal vulnerability to "vertical" subversion. The U.S. offensive at home was expressed in a wave of anti-communism which was very effectively used to "scare the hell out of the Congress" so that it would grant long term economic (and military) aid to western Europe.6

To the United States policy makers these moves appeared to have been defensive in character. In addition to the defense arrangements with Western Europe, Moscow was troubled by two related developments in American Security Policy during Cold War. The first was what Soviets called U.S. "pactomania and capitalist encirclement". Second was the apparent U.S. willingness to develop the weapons and strategies, required to launch a "nuclear first strike" on the Soviet Union.7


Confronted by what it saw a real challenge to its position - at a time when its own economic situation was especially vulnerable - the U.S.S.R. responded by launching a political counter offensive. Both American and Soviet analyst point to the creation of the Marshall plan and the Cominform as the events that solidified the division of Europe into two hostile camps. Adam Ulan notes, "with the Marshall plan the "Cold War" assumed "character of position warfare". "Both sides became frozen in mutual unfriendliness". Moreover the creation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO or Warsaw Pact) in May 1955 was to counter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Ironically, these somewhat desperate actions not only failed to deter the United States but actually brought about legitimization of the original U.S. strategy. Moreover, by acting in this way the Soviet Union soon acquired the negative image of a powerful police state - imposing Stalinism upon the helpless nations of Eastern Europe while planning the destruction of western democracy. In this way, the insecure attempt of the Soviet Union to prevent the fulfillment of U.S. plans, was portrayed as part of a 'grand design' whose target was the 'great globe itself'.

For some twenty years - until well into the 1960s - there was a far reaching American foreign policy consensus that it was essential for the United States to contain, compete with, and under crisis conditions confront the Soviet Union. In spite of the controversy over the meaning of

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"containment", the common denominator of American policy throughout these Cold War years amounted to: (1) being prepared to fight and win a war if it came to that; (2) trying to stop what was commonly assumed to be the spread of communism; (3) insofar as a diminution of American-Soviet conflict was perceived to be possible, achieving it by bringing about an alternation of Soviet behaviour.

The Origin Of Detente

By the end of 1960s certain post 1945 Cold War assumptions had been shattered. First, by 1969 the U.S.S.R. had finally achieved nuclear parity, thus undermining the central prop of the United States original strategy of containment. Western Europe began to question the Cold War - with West Germany in particular, demanding a new opening to the East. Declining productivity, increased social spending and the costs of the conflict in South East Asia also made it increasingly difficult for the U.S. economy to sustain the heavy burden of the Cold War.

Finally, as a result of the Sino-Soviet split and the declining appeal of Communism along with the Soviet economic problems, the U.S.S.R. no longer appeared to be such a dangerous political challenge to capitalist world. By the end of the 1960s there were many who believed that the United States


had, of necessity, to move "beyond the Cold War". It fell to Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger to manage the change from one epoch - when the United States had literally been able to dominate world affairs and 'discipline' the USSR from a defined 'position of strength' - to another, when it was no longer capable of doing so. The strategy they advanced to effect this transition went under the formal title of Detente.

Detente did not involve a formal abandonment of containment. Nor was it meant to lead to an alteration in the basic structure of bipolarity. Rather it was hoped that it would help domesticate the Soviet Union and as a consequence make it easier for a United States in crisis to maintain global order. As Kissinger believed that due to growing contradictions within Stalinism and coupled with several new problems - economic stagnation, split with China and growing turbulence in Eastern Europe - the U.S.S.R. had tuned around to the view that its security would have been better served by developing a cooperative relationship with the United States.

Kissinger's objective was thus clear: to gain a Soviet acceptance of the status quo - in exchange for a U.S. agreement in the field of arms control supported by expanded economic relations between the capitalist world and the Soviet bloc. This in turn would be reinforced first, by a tacit U.S. promise not to exploit Soviet problems in Eastern Europe, and second, by the

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12 Two of the most influential 'realist' work in the anti-cold war genre of the 1960s were, Marshall D. Shulman, Beyond the Cold War (New Haven, C.T., 1966) and, Hans J. Morgenthau, A New Foreign Policy for the United States. (London, 1981), p. 73.


threat that if Moscow did continue to challenge international stability, Washington would feel free to exploit the full potential inherent in the new relationship with Peking. However, it was clear that the primary goal of the United States was to encourage Soviet support of, or at least passive acquiescence in the U.S. efforts to "finding an honorable exit from Vietnam" of American troops.  

An additional goal which Nixon and Kissinger sought to achieve was the creation of a "network of relations" referred by them as "Structure of peace" that would restraint Soviet behaviour. They hoped that by intensifying the involvement of the Soviet Union in the day-to-day politics and economics of an increasingly interdependent world, Soviet incentives to disturb the working of the international system would sharply decline. Finally, detente would permit the United States to reduce the increasingly heavy burden that the Cold War had imposed upon it by the late 1960s - but without this leading to an expansion of Soviet power, or of more international disturbance.

In the estimate of the Soviet leadership, on the other hand, detente was made possible by the recent increase in Soviet military power, in particular the attainment of nuclear retaliatory capability in the early 1960s and more important, the "clear achievement of strategic parity" by the late 1960s or early 1970s. Military parity forced the United States to treat the Soviet Union as an equal. The Soviets never believed that detente should effect

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17 Garthoff, n. 15, p. 37.
either Soviet domestic policy or Soviet support for revolutionary and socialist regimes abroad. According to Harry Gelman, the Soviets sought to achieve at least three goals in detente: First and foremost, they hoped to strengthen themselves against the perceived foreign policy threat from Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and sought to enlist US cooperation in their struggle against the Chinese. Second, the Soviet economy desperately needed an infusion of western, especially American technology. Third, they sought to place constraints on the increasingly expensive strategic-arms race with the United States.

**Collapse of Detente**

Despite the differing Soviet and American conceptions of the causes and purpose of detente, the two superpowers made several important achievements during detente's short tenure. Among the most significant was the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (AMB) treaty in May 1972, and the SALT I Agreement itself.

By the end of 1974, however, disillusionment about detente had taken roots both in Washington and in Moscow. The Soviet found that the U.S: (1) was not willing to transfer capital and technology on the scale that Moscow desired; (2) was not willing to side with the U.S.S.R. against China; (3) was more willing to intrude in Soviet internal matters; and (4) was reacting negatively to Soviet international effort to expand influence and power. On

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19 Gelman, n. 16, p. 52.
the American side, Washington was disappointed that the Soviets: (1) had proved unwilling to cease aiding Hanoi; (2) was proceeding with new modifications of strategic nuclear weapon system; (3) deployment of SS-20s in the European portion of Russia had increased Moscow's nuclear superiority in Europe; and (4) had shown little restraint in encouraging pro-Soviet changes in the Third World.20

According to Raymond Garthoff, neither side realised how detente interacted with the domestic politics of the other. The United States tried to interfere in Soviet domestic affairs, and the Soviets never fully understood the difficulties that could arise between the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. system.21 Soviet leaders were also wrong when they judged that the passivity of U.S. foreign policy would be long lived. The Nixon Doctrine was not destined to be a permanent reflection of U.S. foreign policy attitudes and when U.S. global activism rose to its traditional post war level, the Soviets thought that Washington was renegading on an implicit bargain. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, during the Carter presidency, acted as the catalyst in the renewal of the Cold War. Detente collapsed and hope for better American-Soviet relations and various negotiations virtually vanished as rhetorical charges and countercharges found concreteness in official American and Soviet policy.22

20 ibid., n. 16, p. 58.
21 See, Garthoff, n. 15, pp. 1068-89.
22 Dallin and Lapidus, n. 11, pp. 191-236.
The Reagan Administration came to office with a simple yet coherent theory of the world based almost entirely upon the conservative interpretation of Post War history. According to this view, during the Cold War a militarily powerful United States had been able to underwrite global stability. Therefore, Reagan Administration knew what it did not want—detente. Reagan believed that under detente the United States had unduly trusted the Soviets and had been betrayed, had relied on arms control and had been duped in the negotiations and had let American national, military, political and economic power slide while bemused with internationalism and detente, and above all, had lost its free enterprise spirit for standing tall in the world.

Thus, the coming of the Reagan administration in 1981 was an advocacy of resurgent America, committed to oppose not only Soviet expansion but communist regimes in general. It suggested a position indistinguishable from one of global containment to the "Reagan Doctrine" asserting America's moral responsibility for aiding popular insurgencies against communist dominations. The U.S. task - thus argued Reaganites - was clear: to seize the initiative and exploit it to the full.

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25 Garthoff, n. 15, p. 1010.

As such, in the early 1980s U.S.-Soviet relations hit one of the vortex points in the post war history of their relations. In the first term presidency of Reagan, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union remained unabated. The President had proclaimed the Soviet Union to be the "focus of evil in the modern world". It was believed that communism was well entrenched in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet troops were still engaged in fighting the Afghan people with the ulterior motive to turn that country into its protectorate. The Kremlin regime continued to be suspect in the estimate of President Reagan in regard to the violation of human rights. The President believed that the Soviets needed tightening of attitudes on the part of Washington.

Eight years later this picture had not only changed in many respects, it almost "resembled a movie run in reverse". Several conflicts that had divided the two powers for most of the twentieth century came to an end, rather suddenly. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union appeared to have drawn to a close. President Reagan had presided over the most dramatic improvement in United States relations with the Soviet Union - and the most solid progress in arms control - ever since the Cold War began. Since the Reykjavik Summit of October 1986, the avidly

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most conservative American President had emerged as a champion of nuclear disarmament measures. Above all, in a startling reversal of his personal views, Reagan affirmed that the Soviet leadership "no longer feel" an "obligation" to achieve "a one world communist state."

Mikhail Gorbachev And "New Thinking"

The changes introduced in Soviet Foreign Policy during the tenure of Gorbachev created the necessary climate for achieving favorable improvements in U.S. relations with the erstwhile Soviet Union and later with the new Russian Federation. Soviet "new thinking", introduced by Gorbachev, contended that nuclear weapons made the cost of war too excessive so that preservation of peace must be the primary objective of all nation. Moreover, the class struggle, cornerstone of Marxist thought, no longer took precedence as the central guiding concepts in foreign policy.

The Moscow leadership sought access to the global economy and moved toward warmer relations with democracies of western Europe. In the third world, Gorbachev participated in dialogue with the U.S. aimed at resolving regional conflicts. Thus, during the Gorbachev era, Soviet thinking and preferences for instruments to conduct foreign policy underwent transformation. The typical confrontational approach and tendency to rely on military force were abandoned in favour of promoting diplomatic cooperation as the desired modus operandi to manage relations among nations. As a

30 William Hyland, The Cold is Over (New York, 1990), p. 188.

31 See, Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World (Cambridge, 1987), and Mikhail Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Articles (Moscow, 1987). Also see, V. Kubalkova and A.A. Cruickshank, Thinking About Soviet New Thinking (Berkeley, 1989).
result of the dramatic changes witnessed during the tenure of Mikhail Gorbachev, former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, when asked about the "evil empire", responded, "No. 1 was talking about another time, another era".

The "New Thinking", coupled with the East-West Summit meetings, resulted in the signing of INF Treaty in December 1987. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and the Vietnamese decisions to withdraw troops from Cambodia also took place. The Soviet unilateral declaration to partially demobilise armed forces from Eastern Europe and the massive western response to rush relief to the earthquake victims in the former Soviet republic of Armenia were only but a few illustrations of a definite improvement in the superpower relations.

The Reagan years had been a history of tense and costly eight years of power struggle between the Communist world and the United States. In the eight years since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had destroyed detente, both the superpowers had changed. Both had come to realize that there was no alternative to some form of coexistence. Neither could defeat the other in a war or in an arms race. Neither could gain a decisive strategic advantage in the third world. Both were over extended at home and abroad, both were declining relative to the rest of the world's great powers. The era of their unquestioned domination of international politics was ending, and the post-war period was coming to a close. It was time to end the Cold War - "if only out of self preservation".


33 Hyland, n. 30, p. 189.
The advent of Bush Administration was not only a mandate to preserve 'Reaganism' but also of moving U.S.-Soviet relations "beyond containment". The democratic revolution in Eastern Europe in 1989 gave a formal burial to the Cold War by sweeping away the basic cause of the conflict: the Soviet European 'empire'. During the Moscow coup president Bush denounced the plotters as 'criminals' and insisted that Gorbachev be returned to power. Although the Soviet Union was on the verge of dissolution in December 1991, the Bush Administration continued to act as if some sort of central authority could be preserved and some sort of political role could be found for Gorbachev. When this proved impossible, and Gorbachev announced his resignation on 25th December, United States established full diplomatic relations with six of the republics of the former Soviet Union: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhastan and Kyrgyzstan, and later with the other republics when they demonstrated their commitment to democratic and economic reforms, minority rights guarantees, and international agreements that had been made by Moscow.

American-Soviet relations were on firmer ground in dealing with arms control issues, long the centre-piece of the super-power relations. Sweeping cuts in nuclear and conventional forces were announced, weapons modernization programmes were halted and defense spending was reduced sharply. Most strikingly, unilateralism-long dismissed by western establishment as dangerous and unrealistic, given the conditions prevailing during the Cold War-became fashionable, as both the United State and the erstwhile Soviet Union announced significant reduction in their respective
nuclear forces. Equally noteworthy were the various cooperative efforts directed at the safe transportation, dismantlement and safe storage of nuclear weapons and materials.

The nature of U.S.-Russian relation—the successor state of the former Soviet Union—was changing in fundamental ways. The two countries seemed to be moving in the direction of establishing a security relationship based more on partnership than confrontation.

**Boris Yeltsin And The New Chapter In U.S.-Russian Relations:**

As the first popularly elected president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin's statements and actions indicated that the new Russian leadership intended to perpetuate the peaceful policy orientation of the recent past. Although Boris Yeltsin's foreign policy seemed to be a continuation of the non-confrontational approach, his strategy also included fundamental domestic changes that had implications for U.S. policy.

While Gorbachev had condemned the stalinist model, he had believed that the communist party of the Soviet Union could be "reformed". Gorbachev had attempted to carry out reform in the context of the existing socialist system, which had created a certain ambiguity and perhaps suspicion in the U.S. regarding the intentions of the Soviet leadership. The Russian president Boris Yeltsin, in contrast, abandoned the socialist model altogether, and openly opted for capitalism, in the process eliminated the ideological ambiguity, leading to expansion of U.S.-Russian values and objectives. Boris

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Yeltsin had repeatedly made clear his commitment to fostering democratization of Russia and a freemarket economy-sacred values of the American tradition. As such, even though the Yeltsin period represented a continuation of the peaceful policies promulgated during the Gorbachev era, it could be regarded as a new chapter in U.S.-Russian relations.

Although cautious in responding to the dramatic changes in the former Soviet Union and Russia, especially during the Gorbachev period, U.S. administration now welcomed these changes and were ready to take advantage of new opportunities to improve bilateral relations. Secretary of state James Baker characterized the evolution in U.S. policy as moving "further than detente and even diplomatic cooperation" to "broad international partnership,". The Yeltsin leadership had characterized the transition as moving from detente under Gorbachev to "entente" involving wholesale abandonment of the notion that the U.S. or other western powers could be potential enemies of the new Russian Federation.

Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Boris Yeltsin's assumption of the presidency of the Russian federation, the Camp David Declaration was signed by presidents George Bush and Yeltsin, stating that relationship between the U.S. and Russia were based on "friendship and partnership". The bilateral strategic nuclear arms control agenda was finally completed with the signing of the START II Treaty in January 1993. At the vancouver summit, president Yeltsin referred to the U.S. as a "partner" and "friend".35 Yeltsin also affirmed at the UN that the western powers were the

"natural allies" for Russia. Moreover, Bush finally gave Yeltsin his full and unequivocal support, noting that the Russian leader was 'totally committed to democratic reform'.

Thus, on the official level both in Washington and Moscow, there existed mutual recognition of each others importance and desire to foster a strong and cooperative partnership. During the years of Gorbachev's 'new thinking', the Soviet Union embarked on a significant path of cooperative security policies that were decisive in contributing to the end of the Cold War. By the beginning of the 1990s cooperation began to become dominant over rivalry. Developments within the two countries had also been important to the relationship between them, but in the 1990s the nature of radical change in the former Soviet Union was critical. The transformation of the entire Soviet system through an incompletely controlled chain reaction of deep political, social, economic, and ideological changes is a historical phenomenon without parallel.

Actually, serious internal difficulties within the former Soviet union, as the old Union dissolved, and since then the and American reactions to these developments created complications. Even in the post-Soviet era, the relationship remained one with mixed positive and negative elements. Nevertheless, the new post-cold war, post Soviet situation held promise not only for a more stable long term relaxation of tensions between East and West, but even for moving beyond detente to an entente between the U.S. and Russia.

Moreover, the relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and its successor state, the Russian Federation, and the roles of each in the world, remained of special importance for the whole of world politics. With the end of more than four decades of cold war rivalry and the associated domination of the two powers, the nature of inter-relation had changed from the bipolarity of a political-military-ideological confrontation to a more complex multipolar political-economic security relationship.