CHAPTER IV
SUPERPOWER DISENGAGEMENT - THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW ERA

TRANSITION FROM HOSTILITY TO ACCOMMODATION

It became clear in June 1984, that any hope of defeating President Reagan in the forthcoming November election, had evaporated. Accordingly, the Soviet leadership began to change its strategy from hostility to an accommodating posture. In addition, the Soviet leadership were encouraged on the path of reconciliation by Reagan's pressure for a Summit meeting with Chernenko. In late June, Konstantin Chernenko, Andropov's aging successor, proposed new Soviet-American negotiations directed at preventing the militarization of outer space, including a moratorium on testing anti-satellite weapons.

In effect, a trend in American-Soviet relations towards accommodation was clearly underway by the summer in 1984. A major Soviet step towards breaking the diplomatic stalemate with United States was taken in September when Foreign Minister Gromyko conferred with President Reagan at the White House and with Secretary Shultz at the United Nations and later in Washington. The Gromyko-Shultz meeting in Geneva during 7-8 January

4 For a detailed analysis of Gromyko’s prominent role in Soviet Foreign Policy see, Time, 25 June 1984, pp. 22-27
1985, proved to be a decisive step in re-establishing American-Soviet diplomatic dialogue that had been broken off a year before. The Superpowers agreed to resume negotiations on reducing strategic nuclear arms and intermediate range missiles in Europe and to bring a third set of negotiations on "preventing an arms race in space". As a result of the conference, full scale negotiations were resumed in March 1985, and with it, the relationship returned full circle to the point of the Soviet 'walkout' in Geneva during the Fall of 1983. The diplomatic stalemate having been broken, the momentum towards a meeting at the summit gathered rapidly with Mikhail S. Gorbachev's accession to power as General Secretary. The new Soviet leader announced agreement "in principle" for a Summit meeting and the final agreement was reached on 3 July to meet in Geneva on 19-20 November 1985.

THE GENEVA SUMMIT

President Reagan faced a formidable adversary at Geneva. Gorbachev was believed to be tough, pragmatic, strong, intelligent and principled young leader who had established well integrated domestic and foreign policy goals. Above all, Gorbachev was coming with a will to negotiate and to

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8 New York Times Magazine, 3 March 1985, p. 44.
establish through diplomacy some form of modus vivendi in American-Soviet relations. By 1985, Reagan too was ready to meet and negotiate with Gorbachev. By early 1984, his administration had passed through the first phase of its declared negotiating strategy, having judged that the nations power, both economically and militarily was sufficiently strengthened. The Reagan administration believed that it was possible to negotiate effectively, perhaps even successfully, with the Soviets from "a position of strength". For the Soviet leader, the central issue on its declared agenda for Geneva was arms control, particularly SDI. For Reagan the declared central issue was regional instability followed by arms control, human rights and other bilateral issues.

**Impact on American-Soviet and International Relations**

Inspite of the continued differences, the Geneva Summit helped in the reestablishment of the superpower dialogue. It helped to restore net-work of accords in science, education, medicine and sports. Both leaders were able to take a careful and more complete measure of the other. The result was the apparent inclination of each to look at the positive side of the others positions and search for common grounds, despite known differences.

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As for the impact of the meeting on the international relations, both leaders believed that it had made the world "a more secure place." It was generally acknowledged that the establishment of dialogue between the superpowers gave hope for improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. An added factor was the reality of the mid 1980s when Soviet Union was thought to be at a "major turning point in its history", primarily because, it required "breathing space" in order to cope with its internal agenda.11

This reality carried with it a hope, giving renewed faith in power of diplomacy and negotiations. The dramatic improvement in the superpower relations which was reflected in the conclusion of the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty in December 1987 at the Washington Summit, narrowing down the differences on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), unprecedented Conventional force reduction announcement by Gorbachev at the United Nations in December 1988, solving of regional conflicts like Afghanistan, Angola-Namibia in Southern Africa, the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and unforeseen improvement in Soviet human rights record had strengthened the conviction that Geneva Summit of 1985 was a critical turning point in American-Soviet relations.

ARMS CONTROL

In spite of the intensification of the superpower ideological and geopolitical rivalry in the early 1980s, some channels of communication were kept open, such as regular private exchanges between the United States Secretary of State and Soviet ambassador in Washington. The United States and Soviet Union agreed in November 1984, through diplomatic channels, to enter into new negotiations on the whole range of issues of nuclear and space arms. Politically, this decision was a tangibly stabilizing element. The U.S.S.R. Ministry of Foreign Affairs championed the concept that, by moving ahead in arms control, the whole complex of bilateral relations could be salvaged and put back on a constructive track.12

The ultimately successful United States--U.S.S.R. Nuclear and Space Talks (NST) were launched in Geneva on 12 March 1985. While the Soviet negotiators sought to include SDI in the discussion so as to stall its progress, the United States wanted to legitimize SDI in an arms control framework. In July 1985, Soviet leader Gorbachev announced a five month unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing beginning on 6 August despite the fact that Reagan administration made it clear that it would not join.13

At the November 1985 Geneva Summit and in his January 1986 proposal for elimination of all INF and other nuclear armaments, General

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Secretary Gorbachev agreed to focus on reduction of land-based missiles. At the October 1986 Reykjavik Summit, the Soviets agreed to reduce warheads in Asia to zero, making elimination of INF complete. After maintaining for years the position that verification of an INF agreement should rely primarily on national technical means and that it was premature to deal with verification until agreement had been reached in details of specific reduction accords, the U.S.S.R. agreed in principle at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit to the U.S. concepts for verifying an INF accord, including an exchange of data, on site monitoring of destruction of missiles and monitoring of production facilities. Thus the way was paved for the historic Intermediate Range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty.

**THE INF TREATY**

On 8 December 1987 the most turbulent chapter in the history of 'East-West' arms control culminated with the televised signature, at the Washington Summit meeting, of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty. The INF Treaty provided for the destruction of all U.S.-Soviet ground missiles of 500-5500 Km range and prohibition of their future production. The unprecedented verification provisions allowed the monitoring of mutual compliance with considerable confidence. Supplementing verification by satellite imagery and other National Technical Means, the Treaty established a totally new procedure for on-site inspection of missile production plants, operating bases and support facilities.

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By signing the INF Treaty, the Soviets acquiesced in two very important precedent that promised to have major implications in the conventional-arms negotiations and in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) as well. First, Moscow agreed to "deep asymmetrical cuts in nuclear weapons" in Europe. That is, it consented to remove far more weapons than the United States. Second, the principle of "intrusive on-site inspections" was established by the Treaty. Although Moscow for decades had resisted such inspection as part of any arms control regime, they would now have to regard it as a rule, not the exception.¹⁶

Yet, for the Soviet Union too, the agreement marked the success of a long effort, begun in the late 1950s, to prevent deployment in Europe of land based medium-range U.S. Nuclear Missiles capable of a rapid destructive strike against vital targets in the Western U.S.S.R., ultimately including Moscow itself, while keeping U.S. strategic nuclear forces in reserve. The ultimately successful outcome of the INF talks after long, often dramatic negotiation, probably resulted more from the emergence of a conciliatory minded Soviet leadership than from a particular Western negotiating approach. Gorbachev's approach to the INF treaty suggested that the time was over when Western politicians could take refuge in far reaching arms control proposals, knowing there would be no risk that the Soviet leadership would ever accept them.¹⁷


With the INF Treaty Gorbachev added substance to what he had already announced as a "New Policy" during his visit to Paris in 1986. He had also given further credibility to his skill to satisfy Western expectations from public policy, as long as there was no substantial risk involved for Soviet interest. In agreeing to the INF Treaty Gorbachev could claim to have turned a major mistake of his predecessor into a maximum political advantage at minimal cost.\(^{18}\)

Without sacrificing anything of crucial importance for Soviet Security and defense, the INF Treaty stood as a significant example of Soviet responsiveness to western security and arms control concerns. The treaty in general, and its verification regime in particular, had laid the foundation for a new political atmosphere in Washington and in other western capitals. The way was paved for addressing fundamental U.S.-Soviet issues in such a way that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic missile (ABM) Treaty would be explicitly adhered to in its original meaning, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) would finally stop far from what it was originally meant to be -- thus preventing a costly competition in space weapons -- and consequently a substantial cut in offensive nuclear strategic weaponry would become possible.\(^{19}\)

The Washington Summit meeting in December 1987, ratified Gorbachev strategy. It secured a breather on SDI and Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) in that, both sides settled for an agreement to disagree while leaving the door open for a brighter arms control future through a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).


FAILURE IN START NEGOTIATIONS

Success of the INF Treaty, then in the ratification process, and the deadline for the Moscow Summit applied pressure on the arms control negotiators in Geneva and the leaders in Moscow and Washington to wrap up the START negotiations. The 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty had laid the foundation both in the sense of showing that agreement could be reached and in developing a joint approach to verification. Indeed, the verification methods of the INF Treaty were formulated with a view to the application to a later START accord. The contours of a treaty emerged during 1988, and many of the hurdles on the way to compromise were overcome.

By the time of the Moscow Summit both sides had worked out the main outlines of a strategic arms treaty, including the combined ceiling that would be set on warheads and Cruise missiles, limits that would be set on overheads on ballistic missiles and some general ideas about how to go about verifying a strategic arms treaty. “But filling in the blanks”, required “a lot of negotiations on highly technical issues, as well as a yet to be achieved breakthrough over the ‘Star wars’ testing”. Agreement was blocked by the failure to resolve a number of key issues including: interpretation of the ABM Treaty and agreement on the future research, testing, development, and deployment of space based ballistic missiles defenses; limits on mobile ICBMs; limits on Submarine-Launched Cruise Missiles (SLCMs); and verification provisions. In a realistic appraisal Shevardnadze confessed that, "these are many problems of a technical nature, but in principle it can be done".

CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

Just as important as the INF and the START negotiations, although greeted with far less fanfare, were the set of measures covering the actual operation of military forces in Europe that emerged from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) held in Stockholm in 1986. They "included provisions for the advance notification of all ground force exercises involving 13,000 or more troops or 300 or more tanks, for the dispatch of observers to exercises involving more than 17,000 troops, and for up to three short notice on-site inspections per year to ensure compliance with the first two provisions." 23

These measures set a precedent not only for on-site inspection but also for American-Soviet agreements on non-nuclear forces, which were in some respect more important than the two nuclear arsenals. Gorbachev dramatically announced in December 1988 at the United Nations, the reduction of Soviet armed forces by 500,000 over the next two years. The cuts included 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery tubes and 800 combat aircrafts. As part of these reduction, Moscow intended to withdraw a total of six tanks divisions from Eastern Europe, including four from East Germany. These were among the most highly trained troops in Soviet army. In addition, Gorbachev had pledged to remove and disband the only air assault brigade that was stationed in East Germany and the only assault battalion in Hungary. These reduction in offensive forces in Eastern Europe were clear evidence that "Gorbachev intended to restructure Warsaw pact deployments and strategy in order to support purely defensive aims." 24

24 McNamara, n.16, p. 120.
A month after the historic U.N. announcement of troops reduction, Gorbachev declared the Soviet plan “to reduce its defense spending by 14.2 per cent and cut the production of Soviet arms by 19.5 per cent. Similarly, other members of Warsaw Pact like East Germany announced a reduction of 10,000 active-duty troops from its total of 170,000; the destruction or conversion to civilian use of 600 of its 3000 tanks; the deactivation of 50 of 350 combat aircraft and the reduction of military spending by 10 per cent.”

The March 1989 Soviet proposal that opened the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) talks in Vienna was close to the opening NATO proposal. The Soviet called for initial cuts of both sides forces to equal levels. To achieve these levels, the Warsaw Pact had to reduce many weapon system much more drastically than would NATO. According to his “New Thinking”, Gorbachev had endorsed the idea of “Common Security”, which implied that one side could not be secure at the expense of the other. Thus, the futility of seeking advantage over the other and settle for a stable balance between them. The doctrine which governed the Soviet military forces was one of “defensive sufficiency”, which dictated deployments that were less threatening to the West.

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25 Ibid.


REGIONAL CONFLICTS

Like other great power conflicts of the past, the Cold War between the superpowers had great potential for East-West confrontation in the various regional “hot spots”. However, with the coming of Mikhail Gorbachev to power in Moscow, Soviet policy on various regional conflicts had changed radically. Gorbachev's foreign policy changes reflected a recognition of the general proposition that prolonged regional wars with no foreseeable conclusive military outcome had become a costly proposition for all concerned. Unilateral involvement in regional conflicts had proved to be politically and financially expensive for the Superpowers as well as exacerbating the regional conflict itself.

President Reagan had also emphasized the importance of solving regional conflicts so as to bring about a cordial superpower relations. At the 1985 Geneva Summit, regional problems were discussed and Reagan told Gorbachev that “Soviet fueled regional conflicts stood in the way of good superpower ties”. For most part of the Reagan period the conflicts in Afghanistan, Southern Africa and Cambodia had been a source of tension with the Soviet Union. However, by the end of his term in 1988 there was unprecedented superpower cooperation to solve most of these conflicts.

AFGHANISTAN

The Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan in February 1988, was not simply a tactical retreat from an over extended military position but marked a major shift in Soviet foreign policy in as much as, it repudiated the so called ‘Brezhnev Doctrine’, according to which once a communist government had been installed in a country, it must be kept in place at all costs. Moreover, the Soviet Union was ready not only to join the United States in guaranteeing the package of UN Agreements, emerging between Pakistan and the Soviet sponsored Kabul regime, but by committing itself directly and explicitly to a ten month withdrawal time-table, made it difficult for the Reagan administration not to accept the settlement “No longer insisting that Kabul alone should sign the key instrument governing the withdrawal, Moscow agreed to be a cosigner.” The Soviet leaders February 8 offer to begin Soviet troops withdrawal on May 15, was prompted also in part by UN pressure for dramatic gesture that would strengthen the dealers in both the United States and Pakistan.

However, the ‘end game’ was marked by visible dramatic struggles not only between Washington and Moscow but also between the superpowers and their clients. Resisting American direction, Zia-ul Haq expressed his unwillingness to sign the accords until an interim government had been formed in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Najibullah made a determined

30 Mandelbaum, n. 23, p. 20.
32 ibid., p. 55.
effort to get Moscow to break off the negotiations. Following more than three weeks of intensive consultation, the Geneva Accords were signed on 14 April. They entered into force on 15 May, and less than ten months later, the last Soviet soldier, the Commanding General walked across the border out of Afghanistan.

The significance of the Soviet withdrawal is hard to exaggerate. The conclusion of the Geneva Accord was the first instance of the world's two most powerful states becoming co-guarantors of an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Secretary-General of UN. Above all, it provided confirmation that much of the new foreign policy that Gorbachev had been erratically evolving was not just a jockeying for international advantage, but derived from genuine change in policy objectives.33

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The changes in the superpower relationship which helped to produce the peace epidemic of 1988 did not leave southern Africa untouched. On 22 December 1988 in New York, after a series of talks that began the previous May, Angola, Cuba and South Africa concluded an agreement on the withdrawal of 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola over a two year period, and on the Namibian independence process, in accordance with the framework established by ‘UN Security Council Resolution 435’, to start on 1 April 1989.34

34 Chas W. Freeman, “The Angola/Namibia Accords”, Foreign Affairs, vol. 68, n. 3 (1989), pp. 126-143

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The agreement for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola in return for a parallel South African withdrawal from that country and Namibia, although "regarded as an American diplomatic triumph, the settlement critically depended on Moscows new willingness to assess the political and economic cost of its regional involvement against its own economic needs". "The mounting cost of Soviet support for Angolas MPLA's government trapped in an unwinable Civil War" (estimated at $ U.S. 1 billion in 1988), the associated cost of supporting Cuba and its troops, and a desire to defuse the East-West confrontation in the region all appeared to have influenced the changes in the Soviet strategy. It was clear that Moscow's role in the peace process was the product of a major policy revision which sought political rather than military solution to Africa's widening conflict.

For the other superpower, the United States the settlement appeared to vindicate its much reviled doctrine of 'linkage'. This accepted the South African position that Namibian independence under 'UN Resolution 435' of 1978, should be linked to the withdrawal of Cuban troops in neighbouring Angola. The settlement was also seen "to justify Washington's refusal to recognize the MPLA government in Luanda and its decision, when the repeal of the Clark amendment took place, to supply Dr. Jonas Savimbi's rebel UNITA force with weapons despite the fact that South Africa was UNITA's other main source of aid and support".

Under the agreement, Cuba agreed to reduce its troops strength to 25,000 by 1 November 1989 -- the target date for Namibian election. After the treaties had been finally signed on 22 December 1988 the first batch of 1,500 Cuban troops left Luanda for Havana in January 1989, their departure monitored by a 70 strong international observers (United Nations Angolan Verification Mission or UNAVEM) under the auspices of the Security Council. Thus the agreement was secured due to the convergence of interests between the two superpower united in their desire to bring a costly and stalemate conflict to an end.38

**INDO-CHINA**

From shortly after the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea, now renamed Cambodia, in late 1978 until the end of 1987 the military and diplomatic positions of those involved in the conflict seemed deadlocked. “None of the parties to the Cambodian conflict could impose a decisive military solution, nor were they prepared to make the compromises needed to achieve a political settlement”.39 United States passed legislation explicitly barring Vietnam from all political, diplomatic and economic contacts. Hanoi thus came increasingly “to rely on trade with the Soviet block and on Soviet economic assistance to prop up its catastrophic economy, a reliance that Moscow increasingly came to see as unduly onerous.”40

38 Strategic Survey. 1988-89.

39 Newsweek (New York) 8 April 1988, pp. 24-46.

40 Michael Leifer, "South-East Asia", in Litwak and S. Wells, n. 37, p. 203.
Moreover, since Gorbachev became Soviet leader in 1985, he had overseen a reformation in the U.S.S.R.'s 'Far East' foreign policies, sparked by intensified efforts to further improve Sino-Soviet relations. This had required Moscow to play a more active role in solving the Cambodian conflict. In 1987 the Soviet Union signalled through diplomatic channels that it was encouraging Vietnam to pull out of Cambodia. Besides Soviet pressure and Hanoi's own analysis of military situation in Cambodia, there was far reaching reappraisal of its defense and foreign policies. In May 1988, its leadership decided to improve relations with its principal adversaries, the United States and China. The nascent changes in attitude towards the U.S. was reinforced and encouraged by changes in Washington's policies towards Vietnam. A number of U.S. Congressmen supported the normalization of relations with Vietnam, as dead bodies of U.S. servicemen killed during the Indo-China war were returned on the eve of the U.S. Presidential elections.

Talks held in December 1987 between the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea's (PRK's) Premier Hun Sen, and Prince Sihanouk were followed up in 1988, by further rounds in January, in November (with son Sann in attendance) and, at working group levels in December (with KPNLF and Khmer Rouge representatives also present). In May 1988 Vietnam pledged to pull out 50,000 troops from Cambodia by the end of 1988 and complete withdrawal by 1990, apparently at the urging of the Soviet Union. On 3 November 1988, the General Assembly of the United Nations called for the internationally supervised withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia and for the promotion of 'national reconciliation' under Prince Shihanouk.
Thus the superpower relations at the end of Reagan administration resulted in solving long outstanding regional disputes. After a long period when multilateral institutional solutions were largely ignored, 1988 witnessed a series of long standing regional conflicts being settled through peaceful international channels. The improvement in the superpower relations certainly played the most important role. Gorbachev's reshaping of Soviet international policy had been an important catalyst for change. Both United States and Soviet Union had shown a new capacity to work together in dealing with regional conflicts, rather than adopting adversarial position which had in the past tended to convert regional conflicts almost into wars by proxy between superpowers. This change had allowed the United Nations to work far more effectively for peace around the globe.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

GORBACHEV'S POLICIES

Up until the Gorbachev period the United State had one of the lowest levels of economic activity with Soviet Union of any major Western industrialized nation. Mikhail S. Gorbachev, when he came to power as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in March 1985, was determined to initiate major economic reforms in the stagnating, inefficient, and bureaucratic Soviet economy, especially in the

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sector of foreign economic relations with the West. Gorbachev viewed, as did his predecessors, foreign economic ties with the west as the critical factor to spur a scientific and 'technological revolution' that would stimulate the growth and development of a modern Soviet economy. Toward that end, until he resigned in December 1991, he initiated a vast array of policies and undertook bold initiatives to cement a strong Soviet-Western economies relationship.

A civil aviation agreement was initialed in November, soon after the Geneva summit of 1985, with the intention to restore Pan American and Aeroflot direct lines between the two countries. And on December 10, a direct civil air communication channel linking Khabarovsk and Anchorage, Alaska, under the tripartite north pacific agreement, was announced. The 'U.S.-U.S.S.R Trade and Economic Council' met in Moscow on December 9, with the United States delegation headed by Secretary of Commerce Malcom Baldrige, at this level for the first time since Afghanistan. Inspite of Gorbachev's demand for increased American-Soviet trade, the United States government was unable to increase the pace of the trade normalization process, either on 'most favoured nation' (MFN) trade status or credits. United States exports to Soviet Union remained only about 10% of Soviet imports from the non socialist world, and the Soviet Union's Exports to the United States were only 2% of its exports to non-socialist countries-on par


with Soviet exports to the Ivory coast. A significant development in the non
governmental action was a syndicated loan by four of the largest American
banks, lending the USSR $400 million at low interest, the first such
syndication since Afghanistan. In all, some steps were taken, but as
Gorbachev correctly emphasized, “the United States government had to do
more if economic ties were to flourish”.45

Even in the area of mutual economic interest insignificant progress
continued. The oil and gas technology licensing was placed on a case-by-case
review basis and the United States moved very slowly on loosening the
Western Coordinating Committee on Export Controls (COCOM) and
unilateral United States control. The United States reacted very negatively to
Soviet expression of interest in participating in the General Agreement on
Tariffs and Trade (GATT) multilateral trade negotiations. The only exception
to the cool American stance on trade was a decision, controversial within the
Reagan administration, to subsidized American grain sales to the Soviet
Union.

By March 1986, Gorbachev sought observer status in GATT. In April
1986, he initiated decrees to allow enterprises to deal more directly with
western companies to minimize Soviet ministerial red tape. A major
resolution of 13 January 1987, by the Soviet Council of Ministers stipulated
“that foreigner could own 49% equity in joint ventures”. It was a milestone,
allowing foreign ownership of Soviet property, “the first such decrees of its
sort since the October Revolution in 1917”.46

44 Raymond Garthoff, The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relation and the End of the Cold
War (Washington, D.C., 1994), P. 249.
45 ibid.
46 Deborah Anne Palmieri, “American-Russian Economic Relation in the Post-Cold War Era”, in
Sharyl Cross and Marina A. Oborotova, eds., The New Chapter in United States -Russian
Throughout 1987, Gorbachev spearheaded other key legislation including “Measures to Improve the Management of Foreign Economic Relation”, which created a new State Foreign Economic Commission to manage all Soviet foreign economic relations. Gorbachev simultaneously restructured Gosplan (the state planning commission), Gossnab (the state supply committee), the state committee for science and technology, the Ministry of finance, and the banking system, to enhance foreign economic activity and domestic reforms. Another key decree of the communist party of the Soviet Union and Council of ministers in October 1987 was “additional measures to improve Foreign Economic Activity under the new management conditions”, which provided for improved access by joint ventures to the Soviet domestic market and hard currency transfers among Soviet enterprises, which formerly had been forbidden”\footnote{ibid.}

As a major development in 1988, the ‘Soviet Bank for Foreign Trade’ was replaced by the ‘U.S.S.R. Bank for foreign economic affairs’. Moreover, the passage of the decree, “on further developing the foreign economic activity” of state, cooperative, and other public enterprises, associations and organizations permitted foreign majority ownership in Soviet joint ventures gave all Soviet foreign trade organizations the right to engage in import-export activities.\footnote{For background on Gorbachev and joint ventures, see Ronald D. Liebowitz, ed., \textit{Gorbachev’s New Thinking: Prospects for Joint Ventures} (Cambridge, MA, 1988).} Enterprises and cooperatives now had the authority to open foreign currency bank account.
Though trade relations had been low on the list of matters discussed in the various ministerial meetings, the United States did take steps in April to facilitate and expand trade. The new secretary of commerce, C. William Verity, Jr., had pushed for greater trade with the Soviet Union, and he was supported by Secretary Shultz and Secretary of the Treasury James Baker, overcoming some remaining reluctance from the Defence Department. As a result president Reagan approved some modest steps forward.

From 12-15 April 1988, a meeting of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council was held in Moscow. In a meeting with the delegation Gorbachev made a substantial statement on trade policy, envisaging a "window of hope" for Soviet-American relations and urged for more American trade and investment. In an effort to stimulate long-term commerce, two trade consortia were established. The American Trade consortium brought six major firms together including : Johnson and Johnson and Ford Motor company, joined by Mercator Corporation, a firm specializing in trade with the Soviet Union, who were interested in exploring joint ventures and investment in the Soviet Union. Occidental Petroleum announced a joint venture to build two petrochemical plants in Ukraine. In addition, joint working groups were established to explore the marketing possibilities of American equipment for medical, construction, food processing oil and gas, and consumer goods industries. Finally, there were discussions and plans for further contacts to familiarize Soviet agencies with legal aspects of investment and such adjuncts as insurance.49

49 See, Garthoff, n. 44, p. 345.
In brief, U.S. - Soviet economic relations in the post Geneva Summit period did not match the dramatic transformation of the superpower relations as in arms control, regional conflict resolution and human rights record. But that was understandable. Nearly half a century of trade barriers and legislative sanctions could not be realistically undone in just couple of years. More importantly, there was the positive sign of growing understanding and confidence in reaching out to each other, which promised to be the foundation on which future U.S.-Soviet economic relations would be built.

ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS

American-Soviet cooperation in the field of the environment was one of the most successful stories in the history of U.S.-Soviet relations. Even before the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev there was substantial progress in Soviet commitment to international environmental protection, though much of this progress could not be taken to its logical end. The Chernobyl industrial disaster in 1985 bought the Soviet people face to face with the reality of environmental degradation. In line with his new orientation towards domestic reforms- 'glasnost and Perestroika', a new ministry of 'Environmental protection' was formed. The Chernobyl disaster significantly advanced two opposite process taking place in the Soviet Union: The first was the country's opening to the world through Gorbachev’s promotion of cooperation in the international arena, and between the United States and Soviet Union in particular. The accident helped force the pace of foreign policy reassessment that was replacing the traditional Soviet view of a

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50 See, Barbara Jancar-Webster, "New Directions in U.S. Environmental Relations With Russia", in Cross and Oborotova, n. 46, pp. 114-116.
dichotomous world with “new thinking”, or ‘novae Myshlenie’. The Chernobyl accident provided a terrifying example of the country’s need for international environmental cooperation to help restructure the Soviet economy.\(^{51}\)

Gorbachev was the first head of state to place Arctic cooperation on his foreign policy agenda, and signed the multilateral environment agreement. Further, the Soviets also played a major role in the 1985 Vienna convention for the protection of the Ozone layer. The affiliated 1987 Montreal protocol on substance that depleted the Ozone Layer was one international environmental document for which Gorbachev’s negotiators could claim major responsibility.\(^{52}\) On the bilateral level, U.S.-Soviet environmental cooperation in 1987, saw the initiation of new projects and activities, which culminated in the addition of new programme categories in the 1990 memorandum. Much less publicized but extremely important was the inclusion of environmental protection and, in particular, cooperation on climate change in the joint summit statement made by President Reagan and Gorbachev during the latter's visit to the United States in December, 1987. V.A. Troitskaya, one of the three Soviet scientists to testify at a congressional hearing in 1987, called the climate programme among those that “transcend U.S.-Soviet politics”.\(^{53}\)

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\(^{53}\) See, Webster, n. 50, p. 118.
The 1987 Washington summit joint statement also gave official commitment on the part of both countries to cooperation in the Arctic. This commitment found symbolic expression in the proposal for an international park on both sides of the Bering strait. For the first time Siberian peoples from the far North were allowed to visit their relatives in Alaska and Canada. The Circumpolar Conference came into being. Transnational industrial interest in the Arctic also grew. The gas pipeline from Siberia to western Europe was completed, "enabling Germany, France, and Italy to import up to 30% of their natural gas needs from Siberia." In the face of uncertainties in the middle East, American oil companies began to look toward Siberia and possible joint ventures. As more information was published about nuclear contamination of the Arctic, under Gorbachev the future of Siberia began to be integrated into the future of the Arctic as a whole.

Furthermore, the Gorbachev period saw increased US-Soviet agreements in cooperation among environmental professionals and scientists in both the public and private spheres. The 1972 agreement to facilitate contacts and communications between citizens and environmental organizations came to life. Before Gorbachev, the Sierra club was able to make only one visit to Moscow in 1977.

Impressive as these gains were, cooperation under the agreement remained strictly based on the specific interests and concerns raised by the individual countries. It made no attempt to address the mountain of

For a discussion of the problems and prospects surrounding the Arctic see, *The Age of the Arctic: Hot conflicts and Cold Realities: "studies in polar Reasearch." (Cambridge, 1989)*.
environmental problems in the Soviet Union that were being aired in the
Soviet and world press. As Gorbachev's own concept inferred,
"environmental interests remained intrinsically bound up with security
interests". This position dictated a continued "selective Soviet involvement
in global environmental affairs". 56

A simultaneous process was the rising public concern within the Soviet
Union and Eastern Europe over environmental issues. After the Chernobyl
disaster environmental group proliferated all over the Soviet Union. Many of
these groups used the environmental theme to address their hidden agendas of
national independence. Georgians, Armenians, Ukrainians, and especially,
the Baltic peoples were quick to establish nationally oriented environmental
organization. In the European section of the Soviet Union, "environmentalism
became the symbol for a passionate accusation of the regime for social
negligence and economic gigantomania." 57

The difference between United States and the Soviet experience of
'environmentally conscious record of industrialization' was that United
States, to a greater extent was able to maintain its "momentum to contain
environmental degradation" and in some areas even to reverse it. 58 Despite
all his efforts, and a population mobilized for environmental action,

56 Webster, n. 50, p. 118.
57 ibid., p. 119.
58 The Clinton administration agreed to investigate complaints that the states were violating the
civil rights of blacks by perpetuating industrial pollution in their neighbourhoods. Black in
Louisiana and Mississippi contend that state decisions involving the location of Wastes treatment
plants have exposed them unfairly to more toxic pollution than whites. See, John H. Cushman,
Jr., "United States to weigh Blacks' complaints about pollution", New York Times, 19 November
Gorbachev was unable to influence the downturn in his country's environmental situation after the mid 1980s. According to the UNCED report “environmental conditions deteriorated at a more rapid rate under his leadership than in the previous ten years”.\textsuperscript{59} As the 1980s came to an end, environmental issues, as in their own right, “were swamped by the rising tide of nationalism, economic decay, and political polarization that in August 1991 swept away the Soviet Union”.\textsuperscript{60}

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

Since Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in 1985, considerable improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations had occurred in the field of arms control, regional conflicts and cultural exchange. But the most remarkable revolution had been in the area of human rights. For decades the topic could barely be discussed in meetings between American and Soviet officials. During the last four years of the Reagan administration however, the Soviet had done a complete reversal. Not only had the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze willingly discussed human rights at the opening of every session with his American counterpart, but also “the Soviets and Americans had established working groups of middle level officials, sent judges, prosecutors, and psychiatrists on fact finding missions and had achieved a healthy, nonpolemic dialogue on the most fundamental issues that had divided the two societies”\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} Webster, n. 50, p. 120.

\textsuperscript{60} ibid., p. 121.

Gorbachev's liberalization programme focused on domestic reform which required both an absence of tension with the United States and better access to Western technology. For these and other reasons, the Kremlin had addressed positively most of the major human rights grievance on the American agenda, and that the vast majority of individual cases cited by American human rights campaigners had been resolved under Gorbachev. Soviet officialdom had become unexpectedly responsive to American suggestions for systemic change and few cases of human rights violation came to limelight.  

For President Reagan human rights was the primary item on US-Soviet agenda for the Geneva Summit in 1985 because for him, "fulfillment of human rights was indissolubly linked with the achievement of peace and security". Since differences over regional conflicts and arms control, especially on reduction of strategic weapons was not likely to be narrowed, "his priority interest was placed on the idea of human rights and expanding human contacts as a necessary corollary". But soon Reagan realized, that since 1985 under the leadership of Gorbachev, the Soviet record on human rights had moved far more closer to acceptable western standards than those of other Warsaw Pact countries.

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This became apparent soon after working groups on human rights were established between the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the State Department, beginning with the Shultz-Shevardnadze talks in Moscow in April 1987. In April 1987, at the beginning of the Jewish holiday of ‘Passover’, Shultz became the first Secretary of State to attend a Easter in Moscow in which some 50 prominent Jewish “refuseniks” and their families were invited. Within 18 months almost all of those “refuseniks” were issued their long sought exit visas. Natan (formerly Anatoly) Sharansky, the Jewish leader sentenced for treason was allowed to go to live in Israel. Yuri Orlov, who had been jailed after organizing the Helsinki Watch Committee in Moscow was living in the United States. The well known physicist and human rights activist Andry Sakharov was released from exile.

Jewish emigration had been relaxed, “enabling 18,965 Jew to leave 1988 compared with 8155 in 1987 and 914 in 1986. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry's list of ‘refuseniks’ dropped from 11,000 to 2,697 by the end of 1988, with no evidence that new applicants had been refused”. Soviet Jews were also allowed to visit relatives in United States and Israel. More than 10,000 visited Israel during 1988, and it was estimated that nearly four thousand Jews left Soviet Union in 1989. The human rights record had improved in other spheres as well. By the end of the Reagan period, only one person remained on the list of “divided spouses” Soviet citizens married to American and denied exit visas. And the list of political, religious, and psychiatric prisoners compiled by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, better known as the ‘Helsinki Commission’, had dwindled dramatically, from 863 shortly before Gorbachev came to power in 1985 to 135.

66 Shilpler, n. 61, p. 168.
Soviet specialists had visited United States to study parliamentary procedures, criminal codes, jury trials, and judicial structure so as to help in the structural reforms. Such efforts represented a healthy tendency to move the interaction away from the politically charged level into a professional dimension. Plans for revision of Soviet legal code had been made so as to eliminate restrictions on a wide variety of political and other activities. 'Catch all laws' which prohibited "anti Soviet behaviour" and had been used in the past to prosecute dissidents were to be eliminated. Furthermore, "the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice as regards the interpretation" and implementation of agreements on human rights would be accepted as binding". 67 Under the proposed reforms, it was planned that defense lawyers would be involved from the time of arrest where the defendant was either a minor or was psychologically disturbed. In November 1988 the American psychiatric Association, the National institute of mental health, and the State Department won an extraordinary concession from Soviet authorities, "who agreed to permit a delegation of American psychiatrists to visit psychiatric hospitals and patients of the American's choice during a mission in February and March 1989". 68

A few concrete Soviet steps had been taken to address some of the abuses. "An appeal process had been established by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet to allow patients to challenge their incarceration". A law was envisaged "that would make it much more difficult to send individuals to psychiatric wards and would be a crime to commit a sane person to an insane

67 McNamara, n. 16, p. 125.
68 Shipler, n. 61, p. 176.
asylum". And the most notorious mental institutions that were under the ministry of Internal Affairs had been transferred to the Health Ministry, thereby removing them from direct and obvious police control. Over six hundred political prisoners had been released in the last two years of the Reagan administration, and the "Soviets had made a public commitment to eliminate the brutal practice of subjecting dissidents to psychological ‘treatment’.""70

The Moscow superpower summit discussed the possibility of establishing a forum which, through regular meetings, “would bring together participants from across the range of their two societies”. Steps were taken to “establish the exchange of information and establish contacts between legislative bodies of both countries in addition to holding discussions between persons from a wide range of profession directly involved in human rights matters and between representatives of non governmental organizations”."71 On the domestic front, restrictions on the study and practice of religion were eased. Over 100,000 Bibles were imported for sale to Soviet citizens, and in the fall of 1988 Moscow ended the Soviet ban on the teaching of Hebrew."72 

At the United Nations in 1988, Gorbachev pledged to incorporate those laws in the Soviet code that guaranteed freedom of expression and complete


70 McNamara, n. 16, p. 125.

71 Washington Post, 2 June 1988, p. A 29. The Soviet draft and the final accepted statement are reproduced in this source.

freedom from religious persecution. He added that the law prohibiting emigration of a person with knowledge of state secret would be modified to include “strictly warranted time limitations”.73

Thus by the end of the Reagan period, though the Soviet continued to live under the weight of great many onerous restrictions and prohibitions, the initial steps to reduce those restrictions had been significant and contrasted sharply with the former Soviet disregard for the issue of human rights. Acknowledging Moscow’s progress, the Reagan administration, in one of its final acts, approved U.S. participation in a human rights conference to be held in Moscow in 1991. For the Reagan administration the linkage between human rights, Perestroika and “new thinking” in Soviet foreign policy, that had brought improvement in US-Soviet relations, was firm and inescapable. Human rights was the first cause. In his first administration, Reagan publicly held Moscow in contempt as an “evil empire”, ready to be consigned to the "ash heap of history", and relegated the human rights issue to a low priority. Eight years later he had made peace with this "evil empire", encouraged the success of its reformist leaders, and openly professed “that human rights was the principle of salvation for all humanity, including the Soviet Union”.74

In brief, by the end of the Reagan Presidency, the Superpowers had come a long way since the dark ages of September 1983 when in the aftermath of the Korean airliner shootdown, relations had plummeted to a low reminiscent of the cold war. Building on the positive turn around initiated by Chernenko in 1984 and encouraged by the favourable reception of the Reagan administration, General Secretary Gorbachev accelerated the pace of accommodation. Four summits, along with multiple conferences at the

73 McNamara, n. 16, p. 126.
74 Whelan, n. 63, p. 123.
ministerial level, succeeded in reconstituting the superpower dialogue and in rebuilding the diplomatic framework of the relationship. Initiatives by both sides were gradually translated into concrete agreements. A high point, the penultimate, was reached with the signing of the INF Treaty at the Washington summit in December 1987 and agreement to intensify negotiations on the gravest problem in the relationship and ultimate goal, the reduction of long-range strategic weapons by fifty percent. Moreover, regional problems, bilateral issues and human rights - were managed with some satisfaction for both sides. Perhaps the tone and substance of this improving relationship was best expressed in the joint statement adopted at conclusion of the Washington Summit which said in part:

"The two leaders recognised the special responsibility of the Soviet Union and the United States to search for realistic ways to prevent confrontation and to promote a more sustainable and stable relationship between their countries. To this end, they agreed to intensify dialogue to encourage emerging trends towards constructive cooperation in all areas of their relations".75