

Historical Committee

Dissolution of the Soviet Union



2025

President:

Isabel Acosta Ramelli

Vice president:

Elisa Fajardo Yepes

Index

1. Letters from the Chair	3
1.1. Letter from the President	3
1.2. Letter from the Vice President	4
2. Introduction to the committee	5
2.1. History	5
2.2. Purpose	5
2.3. Relevant information	5
3. Topic: The Dissolution of the Soviet Union	6
3.1 Introduction to the Topic	6
3.2 Background	7
3.3 Context	7
3.3.1 Key Terms	
3.3.2 Conflicting Ideas	
3.3.3 The Big Three and Soviet Power	
3.3.4 The League of Nations	11
3.4 Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, The Last Soviet Leader	11
3.5 The Fall of the Russian Empire	

3.6 Repercussions of the Dissolution	15
3.7 Resolutions	16
3.8 Information for Debate	18
3.8.1 Issues to be addressed	18
3.8.2 Key Political Blocks	22
3.9 Expectations for Debate	23
4. Useful Resources	24
5. QARMAS	24
6. Bibliography	25

1. Letters from the Chair

1.1. *Letter from the President*

Dearest Delegates,

I am sincerely honored to welcome you to The Columbus School COSMUN 2025. It is with great enthusiasm that both Elisa and I welcome you to this year's Extraordinary Historical Committee. First and foremost, I would like to thank you for taking part in such a different committee and taking the opportunity to try something new.

MUNs are far more than an extracurricular activity, acting as a tool to teach leadership, commitment, time management, quick thinking, social skills, and more. In like manner, it prepares us for the future that is to come and how to look at global problems with a critical point of view. Beyond that, they offer the chance to face ourselves with opposing points of view, and contrasting ideals that will challenge intellectual perspectives.

Among the importance of developing a general consciousness of the current events in the world, it is crucial to understand phenomena that have taken place throughout history, such as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which may be a leading example of success to some, or a perfect example of failure to others. Many of the reasons countries are the way they are today are all thanks to the Soviets and their organization of a country upheld by a dictatorship and extreme laws of order. If one looks further, the law, civil rights, and more have all been influenced by this event.

This committee is designed to bring new experiences and an outlook on the way diplomacy can work. Therefore, challenging you in aspects like quick thinking, diplomatic relations, strategizing, historical understanding/analysis, including many more. Thus, making for a committee that will be in constant debate and creativity.

For both Vice President Elisa and I, this committee is truly special, and we hope that you enjoy the upcoming three days to the fullest amount. If you need help or guidance, let us know and we will help you with any doubts you might have. I am eager to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Isabel Acosta

1.2. Letter from the Vice President

Esteemed Delegates,

It is with much excitement and honor that I welcome you all to the extraordinary historical committee of COSMUN 2025. I can say with utmost certainty that being chosen to be president alongside Isabel, your president, has been a great honor, responsibility, and challenge that will surely not pass for granted as we prepare for what will be sure to be one of the greatest model UN's of the Columbus School.

I would first like to thank all of you for signing up for this committee, as it could not possibly have been an easy choice considering the sheer size and history that carries out this one great historical event. It is safe to say that the dissolution of the Soviet Union has, in some way, affected each and every one of us up to this day. I say this not to discourage or scare you out from participating in our committee, but to motivate and rile up the passion that this historical committee needs and deserves.

I have no doubt in my mind that this particular committee will bring about creative solutions, problem-solving, crisis aversions, and memories that will last. This will all ensue due to the great skills that all the delegates who sign up for COSMUN have, despite their experience in the topic and the number of Models who attended. Our shared human experience allows us to grow together and foster a sense of community that will play a huge part in the resolution or complete dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Most importantly, I would like to remind you all that both I and your president will be available at all times during these weeks leading up to COSMUN and, of course, during the three days we will spend together. Don't be afraid to use your resources, including the Chair, as it will help you succeed in the debate as well as ask questions and learn from your mistakes. Be sure to not get discouraged by the intimidation of public debating as at the end of the day if you are well-prepared and simply speak, it doesn't have to be right, you will have succeeded in the goal of COSMUN. Once again, thank you all for being here, and best of luck.

Sincerely,

Elisa Fajardo

2. Introduction to the committee

2.1. *History*

A Historical Committee is still a committee, with delegates who represent countries, or representatives of a country, debating around a topic and reaching a solution, through a resolution. It allows for an enjoyable experience for those who like learning about the past and approaching issues in different ways, such as the outcome of the event (World War I and those that can be changed by this committee. The possibilities of the topics that can be touched upon in the historical committees are almost endless, as you can deal with the most pressing issues of our past. These committees are opportunities to learn more about a certain event, especially considering that there is usually more information about topics of the past than contemporary ones, as more books, articles, movies, and many more resources have been developed. You can even utilize past doings and quotes to create a more realistic position. A way to observe this

committee would be as a simulation since it is like reliving what happened, which is why it is very important to acknowledge in which period you are set in, so the committee has a correct timeline, hence it is better to focus on what a specific situation, where actual negotiations happened, that way it will be easier and more realistic since it can be based on the past events.

As for this specific committee we will be focusing on the events of 1991, starting the debate during the early months of this year, most notably before the failed coup attempt, all the way towards the beginning of 1992, letting the delegates try to maintain or dissolve the USSR.

2.2. Purpose

A Historical Committee is dedicated to collecting, researching, interpreting, strategizing, and preserving historical information. Accordingly, helping future generations understand their heritage. Throughout this committee, delegates have the opportunity to analyze past events and look forward to the future, as the repercussions of those events have or are happening. Therefore, depending on what delegates are visualizing in the present, and considering their position in the committee, they are allowed to change what happened in the past, to obtain a better position for their delegation or for generating a better outcome in the future.

2.3. Relevant information

Being a historical committee, there is a wide variety of possibilities when referring to topics, however, this council will be focused on the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The point of the committee is to overcome the current challenges such as social, economic, military, and more to organize the European Union and the independence of the soviet countries. Meaning that the

delegates will act as representatives within the National Assembly, encompassing both radical and non-radical sides, within those who support a monarchical rule, and those who don't. Throughout the time of the committee, the economic, military, geographic, and above all social sectors of the Soviet Union will need to be revised. Where all representatives must come to an agreement for each sector, and specifically dictate how each will look after their countries; sovereignty. However, adding to the committee's challenge, it will be discussed through various crises, simulating the actual situation Europe was facing at the time.

3. Topic: The dissolution of the Soviet Union

3.1 Introduction to the Topic

Foremost, it is important to note what the Soviet Union actually was and what its connotation resembled among the international community. The Soviet Union was perceived as a symbol of power, and dominance, and a potent example of an idealized communist society. The Soviet Union, former northern Eurasian empire (1917/22–1991) stretched from the Baltic and Black seas to the Pacific Ocean and, in its final years, consisted of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (S.S.R.'s): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (now Belarus), Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya (now Kyrgyzstan), Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (now Moldova), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The capital was Moscow, then and now the capital of Russia. It was formed from the remnants of the Russian Empire following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. As a communist state, the Soviet Union was built on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, with a centralized, authoritarian government and a planned economy. It encompassed a vast territory spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, consisting of 15 Soviet socialist republics (SSRs) at the time of its collapse.

The Soviet Union was seen as a symbol of communist ideology and an alternative model to Western capitalism, it wielded significant global political, economic, and military influence, engaging in an intense ideological and geopolitical rivalry with the United States and NATO countries throughout the Cold War period.

The dissolution of this superpower in 1991 was a seismic event that reshaped the global balance of power and had far-reaching political, economic, and social consequences within the former soviet territories and internationally. Understanding the factors that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union is crucial to comprehending the profound changes that followed.

3.2 Background

Before the great Soviet Union arose, Russia was a vast, multi-ethnic empire ruled by the Romanov dynasty, which had been in power since the 17th century. The Russian Empire was an autocratic, feudal society with a rigid social hierarchy that left a great social gap between its citizens that had been the cause of conflict for many years beforehand. The Tsarist regime, led by the last Tsar, Nicholas II, was characterized by absolute monarchical rule. The Tsar held all political power and was considered the divinely ordained ruler of the empire. This system of government was known as Tsarism or Tsarist autocracy. During this autocracy, Russian society was predominantly agrarian, with the majority of the population consisting of peasant farms. This peasantry lived in a state of near serfdom, with limited personal freedoms and obligations to the landowning nobility. The Russian economy was largely underdeveloped, compared to its European and Asian counterparts; relying heavily on agriculture and natural resource extraction. Industrialization was limited, and the country lagged behind the more advanced societies and economics of Western Europe, making it have a premeditated disadvantage when it came to superiority over others. The tsarist regime faced growing discontent and unrest among the

population, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Factors contributing to this unrest included; Dissatisfaction with the autocratic rule and lack of political representation, economic hardships, and inequality, especially among the peasantry and urban working class, the emergence of revolutionary and nationalist movements such as the Marxist-inspired social democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), and most critically, Russian involvement in World war I, which exacerbated economic and social problems and led to significant military losses.

These growing tensions culminated in two major revolutionary events before the Bolshevik Revolution; The 1905 Revolution and the February Revolution of 1917. The 1905 Revolution was a series of protests and uprisings that challenged the Tsarist regime, leading to some limited political reforms, such as the establishment of the State Duma, a type of new parliament. Similarly, The February Revolution of 1917, which occurred during World War I, overthrew the Tsarist regime and established a provisional government, setting the stage for the Bolshevik Revolution later that year.

The Romanov dynasty, which ascended to the throne in 1613, solidified the concept of Tsarist autocracy. Tsars like Peter the Great and Catherine the Great implemented sweeping reforms, modernizing Russia and expanding its territories. Peter the Great, for instance, established a new capital, St. Petersburg, and introduced Western European customs and technologies. Catherine the Great, an enlightened despot, patronized the arts and sciences but also expanded Russian territory through wars and diplomacy. The 19th century witnessed a period of both progress and decline for the Russian Empire. While industrialization and economic growth occurred, social and political tensions also increased. The serfdom system, which bound millions of peasants to the land, was a major source of discontent. Tsar Alexander

II's emancipation of the serfs in 1861 was a significant reform, but it failed to address the underlying problems of poverty and inequality.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were marked by revolutionary movements and social unrest. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, led by Vladimir Lenin, overthrew the Tsarist regime and established the Soviet Union. The last Tsar, Nicholas II, and his family were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918, bringing an end to centuries of Romanov rule. The Tsarist era, while marked by periods of grandeur and progress, ultimately succumbed to the forces of modernization, social change, and revolution. The autocratic nature of the Tsarist regime stifled political dissent and limited individual freedoms. The Bolshevik Revolution, which overthrew the Tsarist regime, was rooted in Marxist ideology, which emphasized class struggle and the eventual triumph of the proletariat. This ideology provided the intellectual framework for the Soviet Union's political and economic system. The Soviet Union's command economy, while initially successful in industrializing the nation, eventually became increasingly inefficient and unable to keep pace with Western capitalist economies. This economic stagnation was a major factor in the Soviet Union's decline. The Soviet Union's multi-ethnic nature, inherited from the Tsarist Empire, led to tensions among different nationalities. These tensions, coupled with economic hardship and political repression, fueled separatist movements and ultimately contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse.

3.3 Context

3.3.1 Key Terms

1. Perestroika (Restructuring): A series of political and economic reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s, aimed at revitalizing the Soviet Union.

2. Glasnost (Openness): A policy of increased transparency and openness in the soviet government and society, implemented by Gorbachev as part of his reforms.
3. CPSU: The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the sole ruling political party in the Soviet Union, which held a monopoly on power.
4. RSFSR: Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the largest and most populous of the 15 soviet republics, which eventually became the Russian Federation.
5. COMECON: Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the economic organization of the Soviet Union and its ether bloc allies, which was dissolved in 1991
6. SALT: Strategic Arms Limitation talks, the series of bilateral agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union to limit their strategic nuclear weapons
7. START: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the series of agreements between the US and the Soviet Union/Russia to reduce and limit their strategic offensive arms
8. Nationalist movements: The growing demands for independence and autonomy from the constituent republics of the Soviet Union, such as the Baltic States, Ukraine, and the Caucasus region.
9. CSCE: Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the organization that played a role in the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union
10. OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the successor organization to the CSE, which continues to play a role in European security and cooperation.
11. KGB: Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, The Soviet Union's powerful state security and intelligence agency.

12. Economic stagnation: The inability of the Soviet command economy to keep pace with the technological and economic advancements of the West, leading to shortages, inefficiencies, and a lack of consumer goods.
13. Weakening of the communist party: The loss of legitimacy and monopoly on power of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as a result of the political and economic failures of the Soviet system.
14. Arms race: the intense military and technological competition between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, which placed a significant strain on the Soviet economy.
15. Satellite States: The countries of Eastern Europe that were under the political, economic, and military control of the Soviet Union after World War II.
16. Failed coup attempt: The attempted coup by hardline communist leaders in August 1991, ultimately accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union.
17. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): The organization was formed in 1991 by 11 of the 15 former Soviet republics, as an attempt to maintain some level of cooperation and coordination after the dissolution of the USSR.
18. Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev: A pivotal figure in the history of the Soviet Union and the events leading to its dissolution.

3.3.2 Conflicting Ideas: The Fight Against Communism

After the death of Russian leader, Joseph Stalin, in 1953, his predecessor Nikita Krushev made a secret speech in 1956. After Stalin's death in 1953, he was succeeded by Georgi Malenkov, and then Nikita Khrushchev. In 1956, Khrushchev (as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party) made a secret speech to the Congress condemning

Stalin's regime and dictatorial rule. Shortly thereafter, he began to implement a series of reforms known as the thaw. These reforms included transforming Soviet foreign policy to that of "peaceful cooperation" with the West, destroying the GULAG system, and releasing thousands of political prisoners who had been incarcerated under Stalin. "Destalinization" continued after Khrushchev became prime minister in 1958. Despite these reforms, anti-communist uprisings and general anti-government dissent in the Republics were strongly and violently suppressed. Massive revolts in East Germany and Hungary concerned Communist Party leaders, who were interested in slowing down the processes that promoted political liberalization. SSR leaders and writers who advocated nationalism and independence for their countries were arrested and imprisoned for up to 15 years.

In 1964, Leonid Brezhnev succeeded Khrushchev as prime minister of the Soviet Union, where he canceled multiple "thaw" reforms and decided to decentralize the government based on his personal interests. He hoped to increase the growth of nationalism in the republics, particularly in Ukraine. In 1968, Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia in hopes of suppressing independence movements under the regime of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which gave communist countries intervention rights in foreign affairs of communist countries and governments whose policies threatened the communist goals. At the beginning of the 1970s, the U.S.S.R and the United States of America began negotiating the nuclear arms race, where they signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-I) in 1972 (Brezhnev and Nixon) and SALT-II (Brezhnev and Carter) in 1979. SALT-I also included the Anti-Ballistic Missiles Treaty (ABM). Both of these treaties aimed to limit the amounts of nuclear weapons that each of these nations could possess, and how they could be used in the given case the trigger was pulled. Regardless, both of these countries worked tirelessly to find loopholes among their given

limitations; the U.S.S.R. focused on developing larger missiles while the U.S. focused on more accurate missiles for specific targets. Consequently, this prompted the need to evaluate the Treaty, where the new terms of SALT-II set specific numeric limits on each type of missile. It was signed in 1979 but was never ratified by the U.S. Senate, though both sides voluntarily complied with its terms with aims to diminish the possibility of mutually assured destruction. The US Senate was stagnant in ratifying the treaty, as they considered that it would threaten their security because the debate of SALT-II coincided with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, leading to mistrust among parties and the US immediately took the treaty off the table to prevent vulnerability towards a potential soviet invasion.

Regardless, since the end of WWII, the Soviet Union had used Afghanistan as a strategic buffer zone between itself and the U.S.-aligned Pakistan and the Persian Gulf and finally invaded the country in 1979, which as a result, solidified its military position and provided them with access to trade and oil routes. Nonetheless, the Afghan government had been recently overthrown by two leftist parties aligned with the ideas proposed by the Soviet Union. These leftist parties imposed military and social reforms that were extremely unpopular in the country's Muslim urban and tribal populations, leading them to form rebellion groups referred to as mujahideen. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan with the aim to stop both the mujahideen uprisings and the internal power struggle. The war quickly dissolved, and mutated into a stalemate for almost a decade; more than 100,000 Soviet troops occupied urban areas and large towns, crushing the mujahideen who were engaging in guerrilla war tactics, hiding out in the vast mountainous countryside and escaping Soviet attacks. The United States backed the rebels and supplied them with missiles and protection against such to stop the Soviet bombardment of rural areas that the Soviets believed to be mujahedeen strongholds. This was an unwise decision, as

the Soviet economy was already hanging by a thread, and most of their reservoirs were gone during the war against the Muslims, leaving their economy weakened and discredited by the international community. In addition to the United States pulling out of SALT-II, the United Nations condemned the war.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary and recognized the dire economic and political situation that the Soviet Union faced at this time, leading him to pledge a reform of the economy and attempt to modernize the government. He signed a peace treaty with Afghanistan, promising to remove all Soviet troops by February 1989. The end of the Soviet-Afghan war left the country's infrastructure in ruins, over a million Afghans dead, and more than three million Afghani refugees displaced in surrounding countries.

Gorbachev implemented two government changes, known as Glasnost and Perestroika. Glasnost's reforms increased free expression and government transparency, which marked a significant departure from his predecessors' policies. Anti-Soviet protesters and nationalist groups in the republics used the opportunity to protest and rally support for their independence campaigns. Perestroika entailed reorganizing and modernizing the Soviet economy, eliminating government control over industries, and permitting partial privatization. However, the quick implementation of Glasnost and Perestroika came as a surprise to U.S.S.R. residents, who were unclear of how to act in the absence of stringent government controls and oversight, resulting in even more social upheaval. The Soviet Socialist Republics used their new reforms towards freedom to expand pre-existing independence movements. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania were the first to demand freedom in 1989. Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia quickly followed. In 1990, the Communist Party voted to end one-party rule, opening the government to direct political opposition, and the newly created legislative body, the Russian Soviet Federated

Socialist Republic voted to officially leave the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and declare Russian sovereignty. The independent RSFSR (now Russia) held elections, and Boris Yeltsin became the first popularly elected president.

In a final effort to keep the Soviet Union together, CPSU hardliners launched a coup in August 1991, capturing Gorbachev and instructing the military to suppress all protests. The coup failed because the military declined to engage in violent acts against its own people. Russia replaced the now-irrelevant Soviet Union in the United Nations and assumed its Security Council seat. Gorbachev handed over his leadership to Yeltsin, who completely dismantled the CPSU and officially dissolved the Soviet Union on December 24, 1991.

3.3.3 The Big Three and Soviet Power

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been working together for some time when the United States entered the war in 1941. Roosevelt was a firm believer that Britain's victory would greatly benefit the United States, yet Churchill believed that such a victory would not occur unless America played a role in assistance. In 1940, both countries decided to form an alliance whilst maintaining neutrality over the conflict, yet the following year they met off the coast of Newfoundland to begin planning, in sweeping terms, the postwar world. Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin was a late addition to the Big Three. On New Year's Day 1942, representatives of all three nations signed the United Nations Declaration, pledging to join hands to defeat the Axis powers.

Regardless, politics and historical conflict between the three nations made their alliance difficult, as this made Stalin deeply suspicious of his other two colleagues. He knew his capitalist allies would likely oppose any attempt to expand Soviet influence in Eastern Europe when the war ended. Stalin also complained about the Allied failure to establish a second front in Western

Europe before June 1944. He argued that this front would reduce pressure on the Soviet Union because it would force Hitler to transfer forces from Russia to meet the Anglo-American invasion. Furthermore, as the Allied powers began to plan the post-war era, their relations tensed. During their Yalta Conference in February of 1945, the Allies were closing in on Germany on both the East and the West. Among their resolutions, was also the fate of Poland, which was then taken by the Soviet Troops, and was now invading Berlin. Stalin demanded that part of Poland be transferred to the Soviet Union and that a Soviet-friendly communist government in the city of Lublin control the remainder of the country. He also insisted that each of the Soviet Union's satellite republics in Eastern Europe receive separate votes in the newly created United Nations, even though these countries were controlled by Moscow. This alarmed Roosevelt and Churchill, but they were powerless to force Stalin to guarantee a democratic and independent Poland. Stalin's armies already occupied most of the region, and the Western allies could not force them out without fighting the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Roosevelt hoped to have Stalin's help in finishing off Japan.

Germany invaded the Soviet Union and Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, resulting in an alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. After WWII, both of these countries remained as two leading, international powers, and both of them competed to be the most powerful nation worldwide. Nonetheless, following the defeat of the Axis powers, the contrasting political views between the Soviets and the Americans resulted in the Cold War, which led to a silent race for military power, an era of espionage, wars over the spread of communism, and a build-up of nuclear arms that threatened global annihilation.

Roosevelt sought long-lasting peace in the post-war order, relations with the Soviet Union tensed his vision and imposed a threat to the international community; ever since the

Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, in which the Russian monarchy transformed into Soviet forces, the spread of communism beyond Russia remained a persistent fear throughout the twentieth century. The Soviets tried to infiltrate target nations to advance their influence over global power and aimed to claim territory in Europe following Germany's defeat fed into the belief that the USSR intended to expand communism across Europe.

By 1947 the United States began to establish policies that aimed to contain Soviet Global power, which later became a defining element for foreign policies during Harry Truman's office. Later, what was the "Truman Doctrine" was established, which was an open promise of US support to any country threatened by the Soviet Union. This promise lasted throughout Truman's time in office and continued in the administrations that followed. This resulted in the Domino Theory, which states that one country that fails at communism will lead its neighboring countries to fall as well. Ultimately, the laws of this theory led the United States into wars in Korea, Vietnam, and other Cold War conflicts.

Mutual efforts to undermine the tensions between The Soviet Union and The United States resulted in severe cases of espionage and data leaks, which aimed to reduce the influence of society-led communism in Europe. Although another global war appeared to be inevitable, the build-up of nuclear weapons in both the United States and the Soviet Union helped to keep the Cold War from turning "hot." The knowledge that each of the involved nations held a stockpile of nuclear weapons created a military doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction, which ultimately prevented the nations involved in the Cold War from stirring up another war. The Cold War featured moments of increased tension but stopped short of all-out warfare between the superpowers. Conflicts connected to the Cold War, such as wars in Korea and Vietnam, proved devastating to military forces on both sides. These conflicts also disrupted the balance of power

in several regions across the globe, and led to the weakening of the Soviet Union to the extent of its Dissolution.

3.3.4 The League of Nations

From 1934 until 1939, the Soviet Union belonged to the League of Nations, but after invading Finland, it was kicked out. The United Nations had already supplanted the League of Nations by the time the Soviet Union started to undergo internal strife and ultimately disintegrated in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Internal reasons, such as political persecution, economic stagnation, and rising nationalistic feelings within the individual republics, were the main causes of the Soviet Union's disintegration. The fall of the Soviet Union was also influenced by the conclusion of the Cold War and the shifting geopolitical environment.

Although the League of Nations had no direct role in the fall of the Soviet Union, its incapacity to stop World War II and its inefficiency as a global peacekeeping force made clear the need for a stronger and more capable international institution. As a result, the United Nations was established in 1945 and would go on to have a major influence on the global order that emerged after the Cold War.

3.4 Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, The Last Soviet Leader

George H.W. Bush did not automatically follow the policy imposed by Ronald Reagan in dealing with Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. Instead, he ordered a strategic policy re-evaluation in order to establish his own plan and methods for dealing with the Soviet Union and arms control, which after WWII had left behind a reign of violence and imposed a threat to international peace in Eastern Europe. However, things quickly altered in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the subsequent toppling of

Communist authority in Eastern Europe were the results of Gorbachev's decision to remove the Soviet yoke from the countries of Eastern Europe. The United States' attitude was reactive, even though Bush backed these independence movements. Bush decided to let things develop naturally, being cautious not to take any action that would weaken Gorbachev's position. After finishing the strategic assessment and considering the developments in Europe, Bush, and Gorbachev met in Malta at the beginning of December 1989. They talked about the swift changes in Eastern Europe and set the stage for concluding the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty and the START discussions. Bush supported Gorbachev's reform initiatives in the hopes that the Soviet leader would be successful in transforming the USSR into a market-oriented economy and a democratic regime.

Gorbachev started a democratic process that undermined Communist rule and aided in the fall of the Soviet Union when he decided to permit multi-party elections and establish a presidential administration. Gorbachev had to contend with competing internal political influences after the May 1990 elections. While the hard-line Communist leadership sought to derail Gorbachev's reform agenda, Boris Yeltsin and the pluralist movement promoted democratization and swift economic reforms. As the gap between Gorbachev and Yeltsin widened, the Bush administration decided to focus mostly on Gorbachev because they saw him as the more trustworthy partner and because he made several concessions that benefited the United States. Plans moved forward with signing the START contract. Gorbachev consented to German reunification once Red Army forces left East Germany, and he also accepted when a unified Germany joined NATO. The Soviet Union and the United States collaborated diplomatically to thwart Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Gorbachev's office kept getting worse. Gorbachev and the Communist party were under pressure to hold onto power in order to

preserve the Soviet Union as a result of further challenges to Moscow's authority. The Baltic States and the Caucasus wanted independence from Moscow following the fall of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Violence broke out in Latvia and Lithuania in January 1991. Bush vehemently denounced the Soviet tanks' intervention to quell the democratic revolutions.

In light of the Soviet Union's unrest, the US contemplated three possibilities by 1991. The government might keep backing Gorbachev to save the Soviet Union from collapsing. On the other hand, the United States might start backing Yeltsin and the Republic's leaders and offer assistance for a controlled reorganization or perhaps the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Additionally, they may provide Gorbachev with conditional backing, leveraging money and assistance in exchange for more drastic and swift political and economic reforms. Gorbachev started more extensive reforms of the Soviet political and economic structure in 1987–1988 after these surface-level adjustments failed to produce noticeable effects. A significant Cultural Revolution occurred under his new policy of *glasnost*, or “openness,” which allowed the press and broadcasting to be unprecedently candid in their reporting and criticism, greatly expanded freedoms of expression and information, and ultimately led to the government's complete repudiation of the nation's legacy of Stalinist totalitarian rule. The first limited attempts to democratize the Soviet political system were made during Gorbachev's *perestroika* (“restructuring”) strategy; in certain elections for party and government positions, multicandidate races and the secret ballot were used. Even these small-scale economic changes faced strong opposition from party and government bureaucrats, who were loath to give up control over the country's economic affairs. *Perestroika* also saw the introduction of certain limited free-market processes into the Soviet economy.

Gorbachev was the primary catalyst for a sequence of events in late 1989 and early 1990 that changed Europe's political landscape and signaled the start of the Cold War's conclusion. He had taken advantage of every chance to express his support for reforming communists in the Soviet-bloc countries of Eastern Europe during 1989, and Gorbachev implicitly agreed with their overthrow when communist regimes in those nations fell like dominoes in the latter part of that year. Gorbachev consented to the gradual departure of Soviet forces from East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia when democratically elected non-communist governments took power in those nations in late 1989 and early 1990. By the summer of 1990, he had consented to the reunification of East and West Germany and even to the possibility that the reunified country might join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Soviet Union's long-standing adversary. Gorbachev won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 for his remarkable contributions to international affairs.

3.5 The Fall of the Union of Soviets Socialists Republic

The great and traumatic collapse of the Soviet Union, one of the most significant geopolitical events of the 20th century, was, as stated before, the result of a complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors that has been brewing for years. The process that led to the dissolution of the USSR can be traced back to the reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. Gorbachev's ascension to power in 1985 marked a turning point in soviet history, faced with the stagnation and inefficiencies of the soviet command economy, as well as growing social and political unrest, Gorbachev introduced the policies of Perestroika and Glasnost, These reforms were intended to revitalize the soviet system and make it more responsive to the needs of the people. Nevertheless, Gorbachev's reforms had unintended

consequences that ultimately contributed to the downfall of the Soviet Union. By allowing greater freedom of expression and loosening the Communists Party's grip on power, Gorbachev inadvertently unleashed the nationalist and pro-independence movements in the various soviet republics, the Baltic States, Ukraine, and the Caucasus regions, in particular, began demanding greater autonomy and eventually, outright independence from the Soviet Union. These nationalist movements and declarations of independence grew and several soviet republics including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and others formally declared their independence from the USSR.

This growing nationalist sentiment was fueled by the economic stagnation and decline that had plagued the Soviet command economy for years. The strain of the arms race with the United States and the costly intervention in Afghanistan had further exacerbated the economic problems, leading to shortages, inefficiencies, and a lack of consumer goods. The Soviet people, long accustomed to the promises of a better life under communism, were increasingly disillusioned with the government's inability to deliver on those promises. The weakening of the Communist Party's authority also played a crucial role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. As Gorbachev's reforms eroded the party's monopoly on power, the foundations of the Soviet political system began to crumble.

This was further compounded by the failed coup attempt in August 1991, when a group of extreme communist leaders tried to reverse the reforms and maintain the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1991, a group of hardline communist leaders, including members of the KGB (the Soviet Security Service) and the military, became increasingly concerned about the pace of Gorbachev's reforms and the growing nationalist movements in the Soviet republics. Fearing that the Soviet Union was on the verge of disintegration, they decided to take drastic action to

maintain the integrity of the USSR. On August 19, 1991, the coup plotters, calling themselves the “State Committee for the State of Emergency,” launched their attempt to seize power. They placed Gorbachev under house arrest at his vacation home in Crimea and declared a state of emergency, imposing martial law and curfews in major cities. The coup leaders sought to reverse the reforms of Perestroika and Glasnost and to reassert the authority of the Communist Party and the central government over the increasingly independent-minded republics. However, the coup attempt was met with widespread public resistance, particularly in Moscow, where thousands of people took to the streets to defend the democratically elected government. Led by the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, the people of Moscow erected barricades and confronted the tanks and troops sent to enforce the coup. The coup plotters, faced with this determined public opposition and the refusal of key military and security forces to support their actions, were unable to consolidate their control. After just three days, the coup attempt collapsed, and the coup leaders were arrested. Gorbachev was released from house arrest and returned to Moscow, but his authority and that of the Soviet government had been irreparably damaged. The failed coup attempt further weakened the Communist Party's grip on power and accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the republics seized the opportunity to formally declare their independence. The events of the August 1991 coup attempt marked a pivotal moment in the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The public's defiant resistance to the coup plotters demonstrated the depth of the population's desire for democratic reforms and independence from the Soviet system. The failure of the coup also dealt a devastating blow to the legitimacy and authority of the Communist Party, paving the way for the final dissolution of the USSR in the following months.

In these short months following the failed attempt of the coup and the complete dissolution of the USSR, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), which had been the

sole ruling party for decades, was also dissolving. In August 1991, the CPSU was suspended by the Soviet government, and in November 1991, it was formally banned by the Russian government. The dissolution of the CPSU, which had been the backbone of the Soviet political system, further contributed to the collapse of the USSR. In December 1991, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus convened in Belavezhskaya Pushcha, Belarus, and signed the Belavezha Accords, formally dissolving the Soviet Union. The accords established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a loose confederation of the former Soviet republics, replacing the USSR. The signing of the Belavezha Accords marked the official end of the Soviet Union as a political entity, with Gorbachev resigning as the President of the USSR on December 25, 1991.

Shortly after this painstaking event, Gorbachev resigned as the president of the Soviet Union, and the soviet flag was lowered for the last time over the Kremlin on December 25, 1991. The 15 soviet states Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, became independent states, forming the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a loose confederation.

3.6 Repercussions of the Dissolution

Following December 25, 1991, this moment in global history was marked with a watershed of repercussions that reverberated across political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Politically, the collapse resulted in the emergence of 15 independent republics, each grappling with the challenges of establishing their own governance and national identities. This newfound independence fueled a surge in nationalism, as fatuous ethnic groups sought to assert their rights and cultural heritage, often leading to conflicts and tensions within and between the

newly formed states. The political landscape became incredibly fragmented, with some nations experiencing instability and civil unrest as they struggled to navigate the transition from a centralized soviet system to independent governance. Economically, the transition proved to be a daunting task, former soviet republics were thrust into the complexities of moving from a centrally planned economy to market-orientated systems. This shift frequently resulted in significant economic turmoil, characterized by hyperinflation, unemployment, and the privatization of state assets, which frequently benefitted a small elite while leaving large segments of the population in poverty. The rapid pace of privatization led to the rise of oligarchs, creating stark wealth disparities and fostering corruption, as many citizens found their living standards declining precipitously. Socially, the dissolution has profound implications for the populace, with many individuals facing displacement due to ethnic conflicts and economic hardships. The legacy of the soviet era, marked by a sense of collective identity, began to come around as people sought to reconnect with their national and ethnic roots. This revival of nationalism often clashed with the remnants of Soviet identity, leading to societal tensions and unrest. On the international stage, the dissolution of the USSR significantly altered global power dynamics. The end of the Cold War ushered in a unipolar world dominated by the United States, shifting alliances and influencing international relations in profound ways. Former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact countries sought closer ties with the West, resulting in NATO's eastward expansion, which further exacerbated tensions with Russia and raised security concerns in the region. The presence of nuclear weapons in several former soviet states also posed a significant proliferation risk, prompting international efforts to mitigate potential threats.

Additionally, the power vacuum left, but the soviet collapse continued to regional conflicts, particularly in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where ethnic rivalries and territorial

disputes became pronounced. Culturally, the dissolution spurred a revival of national cultures and identities, as many republics sought to reclaim their languages, traditions, and historical narratives that had been suppressed during the Soviet era. This cultural renaissance, however, was often accompanied by a decline in the societal identity that had been promoted for decades. Leading to a complex interplay between nostalgia for the past and expectations for a new national future. All in all, the repercussions of the dissolution of the Soviet Union were multifaceted and continue to influence the political, economic, and social landscapes of the former society states and the broader international community. The legacy of this monumental event remains a critical factor in shaping contemporary global relations and regional dynamics, underscoring the profound and lasting impact of the Soviet Union's collapse on the world stage.

3.7 Information for the Debate

To maintain global safety, the representatives must deliberate on the implications of the Soviet Union's dissolution; they face a complex landscape filled with both opportunities and challenges that will shape the future of the region and its global standing. Central to this discussion is the need to navigate the delicate balance between managing the aspirations of newly independent republics and maintaining stability amidst rising nationalism and potential conflicts. The representatives must determine whether to advocate for a unified approach to governance that promotes cooperation among the former soviet states or to support the autonomy of individual nations, allowing them to forge their paths free from external interference. One critical aspect of this debate is convincing both domestic populations and international powers of the viability of new governance structures. The representatives must articulate a vision of democratic governance that respects the sovereignty of each republic while fostering collaboration of shared challenges, such as economic instability and security threats. Presenting a

cohesive narrative emphasizing the benefits of regional cooperation could help assuage the fears of fragmentation and chaos, thereby garnering support from foreign powers concerned about the potential for unrest in the post soviet space.

However, the representatives must also confront the reality of rising nationalistic sentiments and the potential for civil unrest. As various ethnic groups within the former soviet republics strike to assert their identities and rights, the risk of conflict looms larger. The call for the establishment of National Guard units or local militias may resonate with populations seeking security and representation. Yet, the representatives must weigh this against the dangers of arming factions that could lead to further violence and instability. Historical precedents demonstrate that empowering local militias can sometimes spiral into armed conflict, undermining the very stability these forces are meant to ensure. Moreover, the debate must address the practicality of military solutions in the absence of sufficient resources. Many of the newly independent states are grappling with economic challenges, and the financial burden of maintaining a standing army or hiring mercenaries could exacerbate existing hardships. The representatives need to consider alternative approaches that focus on diplomacy, economic cooperation, and conflict resolution, rather than solely on military might. This could involve establishing regional security frameworks that promote dialogue and collaboration among former Soviet states, thereby reducing the reliance on armed forces.

The Assembly and its deputies will need to engage in a nuanced analysis of these issues, taking into account the historical context of the Soviet Union's collapse and the diverse aspirations of its former republics. A comprehensive strategy that prioritizes dialogue, mutual respect, and shared interests will be essential in fostering a stable and prosperous post-Soviet landscape. By addressing the root causes of unrest and promoting inclusive governance, the

representatives can work towards a future that honors the aspirations of the people while ensuring regional stability.

Ultimately, the fate of the possible former Soviet republics hinges on the ability of their leaders to navigate this complex terrain with foresight and wisdom. By embracing the principles of cooperation, respect for sovereignty, and commitment to peace, the representatives can help forge a new era in which the legacy of the Soviet Union is transformed into a foundation for collaboration and growth among independent nations.

3.8 Expectations for Debate

This committee is vastly different from any other committees, in any Model United Nations. This will be a completely different topic to those COSMUN has had in the past, and although the style of the committee is similar to the National Constituent Assembly differs greatly from any other “convention” committee held in previous years. As such, it will challenge you to debate differently than customary. Within the debate, one will have to negotiate, have private lobby sessions, use maps, economics, etc. The idea for this committee is to reevaluate the final consensus of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, where delegates are expected to debate the consequences that the Dissolution left and reevaluate some of the treaties that were signed during this period. The debate will take place in 1991, when the dissolution took place, and it is expected for the delegates to reevaluate the conditions for which the fall of the Soviet Union took place. The end goal is for all countries involved to have better conditions, reevaluate the now-Russian government and their military conditions, as well as give the former Soviet Countries to gain their sovereignty (if desired). However, it is of the utmost importance that each delegate comes with an open mindset, eagerness, and excitement to take part in the debate.

4. Useful Resources

4.1 QARMAS

- What was your representative's position on the matter?
- How did his/her country support or oppose the Dissolution?
- What was the aftermath of the dissolution regarding your delegation?
- What was their political position?
- What treaties or agreements was your delegation involved in?
- What was the general consensus that your delegation faced upon the dissolution?
- What was the response of your country to the discussions held that led to the dissolution?
- Was your delegation in favor or against the dissolution of the Soviet Union?

5. Bibliography

Works Cited

“The Collapse of the Soviet Union.” U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian. history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/collapse-soviet-union. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“Mikhail Gorbachev.” Encyclopaedia Britannica. www.britannica.com/biography/Mikhail-Gorbachev#ref340044. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“Russian Empire.” Encyclopaedia Britannica. www.britannica.com/place/Russian-Empire#:~:text=The%20abdication%20of%20

Nicholas%20II, and%20its%20 ruling%20 Romanov%20 dynasty.&text=The%20empire%20 had%20its%20 genesis, was%20elected%20tsar%20in%201613. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“The Big Three.” The National WWII Museum.
www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/big-three. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“The Fall of the Soviet Union.” UNC Center for European Studies.
europe.unc.edu/iron-curtain/history/the-fall-of-the-soviet-union/. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?” Encyclopaedia Britannica.
www.britannica.com/story/why-did-the-soviet-union-collapse. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“Timeline: The Collapse of the Soviet Union.” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1 Oct. 2021.
www.rferl.org/a/soviet-union-collapse-timeline/31487661.html. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“Consequences of the Collapse of the Soviet Union.” Norwich University Online.
online.norwich.edu/online/about/resource-library/consequences-collapse-soviet-union#:~:text=The%20Soviet%20Union's%20collapse%20not,corruption%20within%20the%20Russian%20government. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“The Collapse of the Soviet Union.” Encyclopaedia Britannica.
www.britannica.com/event/the-collapse-of-the-Soviet-Union/Aftermath-of-the-coup. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“Russian Revolution.” History.com.

www.history.com/topics/european-history/russian-revolution. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.

“History of the Soviet Union.” History.com.

www.history.com/topics/european-history/history-of-the-soviet-union. Accessed 23 Nov. 2024.