

United states history
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United States History/Explain how Reagan successfully negotiated with what he initially called the evil empire

Ronald Reagan believed that the Soviet Union was “ the evil empire.” He was extremely anti-communist. Reagan took office with strong beliefs against negotiating with Soviet Union, but ended up negotiating with them in the end. Reagan not only negotiated, but successfully negotiated with Soviet Union. Several factors in the successful negotiating were Reagan’s massive armament buildup, the willingness to open a dialogue with the Russians, and Mikhail Gorbachev’s appointment as general secretary of the Communist party on March 11, 1985. These three factors helped Reagan negotiate successfully with the Soviet Unions.

During the 1970’s, the Soviet Union had a policy of large military expenditures. The armament buildup concerned Reagan. When Regan took office, he felt the Americans were woefully unprepared for outright war with Russia. This led to Reagan requesting and receiving money to reinforce America’s military and defense systems. One of the most controversial expenditure proposals was the SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative). Reagan believed that ground and space based systems could create a defense shield protecting America from nuclear missile attacks. Critics dubbed this proposal “ Star Wars”, doubting the technology was possible.

With the actual and possible buildup of arms, the Soviet Union began to become nervous about actual warfare breaking out. This made the Russians reach out and be willing to negotiate with the Americans. When America had appeared weak, the Russians would have been more comfortable in starting an actual war, without negotiating. However, once the Russians realized that

they could lose a war with the United States, negotiating became a more viable option.

Reagan became more willing to negotiate with the Soviet Union after Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the communist party. While in office, Reagan had to deal with the Russians, not just a set of ideals spouted during the campaign trail. The Russians became more real to him. The reports of financial and economic problems for the average Russian made Reagan soften his stance against the Russians. Reagan did not want to concede American position to the Soviet Union, but he realized that the problems occurring within the communist country could be a starting point for negotiations. This willingness to negotiate helped Reagan to begin successful negotiations.

The final factor in successful negotiations with the Soviet Union during Reagan's term was the succession of a communist leader that was willing to negotiate. Mikhail Gorbachev was open to openness and reform, which is called glasnost and perestroika in Russian. As a result Gorbachev agreed to meet Reagan in four summits worldwide. Reagan believed that if he could persuade the Soviets to allow more democracy and free speech, this would lead to reform and the end of Communism. Short term concessions led to nuclear disarmament. Long term effects were the collapse of communism. Reagan successfully negotiated with the Russians. These factors were US armament buildup, the US willingness to negotiate, and Gorbachev's appointment as the communist leader. These factors helped the Americans and Soviet Union to come through the 80's without war or nuclear fallout.