

The collapse of the soviet union politics essay



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The Soviet Union, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), is a vast alliance of 15 different countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. USSR was founded in 1924 after the end of the monarchy of the czar. It was a constitutionally socialist state. It had a single-party political system that was dominated by the communist party. USSR was once one of the world's superpowers. But in a twist of time, the Soviet Union was dissolved. Some think that this can be averted while some believe that it was inevitable. However, the collapse of the USSR cannot be explained by a simple yes-or-no answer. So what did really cause the fall of the mighty Soviet Union in just a period of 6 years? A very complex situation and many factors such as economic problems, Soviet Union leadership and differences in the ideologies led to the dissolution of the USSR. This paper explains the projected leading factors that paved way for the collapse of the USSR, and answer whether the collapse could be prevented or that it is inevitable.

The USSR was a global superpower in terms of the military capabilities it possessed. The time was turning; the characterization of being called a superpower shifted from military and defense capabilities to economic stability and power. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev, a communist reformer, was appointed as the Soviet leader. His major reforms such as the famous Glastnost and Perestroika led to the disorientation of the USSR. James Graham stated that Gorbachev's major reforms allowed the problems of the Soviet to be revealed and become known to the public.

The collapse of the USSR is an extremely extensive topic. Many different factors contributed to this historical event. Some of the major factors of the USSR collapse will be discussed briefly here:

The USSR is a vast territory. The difficulties in governance, control and monitoring is very hard to accomplish.

The geographical considerations are important aspects for effective governance – political and economical. The Soviet Union was the world's largest state consisting of 15 countries. It also had the world's largest border, having 60000 kilometers (37, 000 mi). According to Robert Buddan, Geography defines territory and territory is the very definition of a state. Analyzing the situation using common sense, the larger the territory, the more difficult for a government to monitor and govern the territory. Imagine 15 countries being monitored and governed by only 1 leader, it is undeniably hard. On the other hand, Curzon claimed that the size of USSR is not to be blamed for its collapse. There are always different sides of the story, understanding both sides widens the area of knowledge and makes it easier to make a stand.

The ideologies of USSR are combinations of different types such as nationalism, socialism, and communism.

The Soviet had a diverse combination of ideologies that made it hard to reconcile them into one dominant ideology. Gorbachev implemented structural reforms that led to the opposition of most of the popular movements in the union. Some wanted to replace the system of the Soviet into a liberal democratic system. Some wanted independence from the

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national republics. Some wanted the restoration of the old Soviet ways. This difference in ideologies was a very big problem then. Although Gorbachev tried to reconcile the union, in the end, he cannot make the union members to arrive into an ultimate compromise. This failure of uniting the conflicting ideologies led to the disintegration of the members of the Soviet.

There is an elderly form of leadership in the soviet.

Gorbachev succeeded three previous Soviet leaders in just three years. He was the first young leader that the Soviet appointed. For a long long time, the Soviet lack flexibility because of the limited use of their elderly leaders. Because of the lack of flexibility of these elderly leaders, the inability to adapt to the ever-changing world and to adapt new and different approaches on the foreign and domestic policies was very evident.

The Soviet command economy and the Western market economy were competing because of the economic policies that were implemented by Gorbachev.

Gorbachev implemented new economic policies that he believed will be able to improve the living conditions and the working productivity of the Soviet. Kenneth S. Deffeyes argued in *Beyond Oil* that the Reagan administration encouraged Saudi Arabia to lower the price of oil to the point where the Soviets could not make a profit from selling their oil, so that the USSR's hard currency reserves became depleted. The Soviet economy was apparently crumbling down.

The US foreign policies forced the Soviet to allot their wealth on defense – such as the Star Wars program and the Afghan war.

The wrong allotment of the wealth of the Soviet caused the Union to be burdened some more. Furthermore, it was reported that the reason behind the bankruptcy and collapse of the Soviet was due to the massive military spending during the 1970's.

The Soviet was blinded by their former military power (Afghanistan).

Anthony Arnold compares Soviet Union with a sick old man and Afghanistan as the pebble which this exhausted sick man stumbled on and fell. Rameen Moshref argued that according to Arnold, the Soviet Empire stood on three pillars: Military, KGB, and Communist party, and argues that the Afghan War ate into these pillars thus weakening them to the point of break-down.

The corruption and bureaucracy in the government was rampant.

Rameen Moshref quoted that “ At the eve of Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the rotting effects of absolute centralism and autocratic power on the national psychology [Stalinistic, old school philosophy] had resulted in corruption, non discipline, irresponsibility, and grassroots apathy, the same problems which had plagued Peter the Great's administration before the Swedish War in 1700.” It was because the high officials think highly of themselves; they did what they can to be able to get money from the government. Corruption was rampant because of the kind of government that was ruling the country. This will lead to the disorientation of the country and eventually, its collapse.

The lack of honest information, secrecy and propaganda led to the disorientation of the union members eventually, breaking up of the union.

Lack of transparency in the government, secrecy and propaganda were rampant in the Soviet. When Gorbachev was appointed as the head of the state, he implemented the Glastnost which promoted openness, transparency and honesty. There was freedom of speech in the USSR. However, many radicals or hardliners was not in favor with this kind of system. Furthermore, the liberal press was allowed to grow and flourish in the USSR. But, in 1989, Glastnost broke free totally from his masters; it was used against its creator, Gorbachev. And as it grew, piece by piece the truth behind the Soviet was revealed to its people. The Soviet people became more and more angry because of what they are learning. Thus, government and people was at war which led to the dissociation of the government, then led to the collapse.

The Soviet Union kept its existence out of this world. They had many enemies but no allies.

The Soviet long before isolated themselves from the world. They didn't bother their international relations. What matters to them is their weapons. They built a massive army that eventually lost its foot hold. Cohen argued that the US attempted to isolate and contain Russia. The international and domestic policies that were implemented by Gorbachev opened the Soviet to the world that led to more weakening practices. Eventually, the Soviet was disoriented in many aspects that led to their demise.

Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (reconstruction): most famous policies of Gorbachev

The Glasnost policy is the opening of the Soviet to transparency, honesty and freedom in the Soviet. It angered many radicals which led to a separation of ideals which is large. Furthermore, the Glasnost re-examined the history of the state and changed the very course of its history. Glasnost allowed the facts to be presented to the people. This information led to the anger of the masses.

The Perestroika is an economic reform policy that Gorbachev implemented. The Soviet was experiencing two decades of economic stagnation, and Gorbachev saw that. He acted with the use of Perestroika. However, his insistence on slow gradual economic reforms annulled any positive effects that the reforms might have had. Graham said " This reluctance to introduce meaningful free market reforms to the Soviet economy lost Gorbachev the support of the people."

Those are the major issues that led to the dissociation of the Soviet Union. It can be observed that these are no simple things. The Soviet Union was in a state that was already reached its limits. It was not Gorbachev's fault that the state collapsed. He even made reforms to repair and refresh the government but these all failed because the Soviet is in a " state" where it is not inevitable to collapse. The collapse of the Soviet Society is inevitable because its basics are crude and not fitted in a world like ours. Its views on things are not the way things should be. Figuratively, the Soviet is living in a world of fantasy. They did not want other countries to share in their pains.

They want to be isolated however, it is not a plausible thing to do. Thus, the collapse of the Soviet Union is definitely inevitable, it cannot be stopped or averted.