

# Robert mcfarlane and the fall of the soviet regime essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Robert “ Bud” Carl McFarlane graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1959 (Timburg 213) and served in the Marine Corps throughout the 60s and 70s. He had participated in the White House Fellows program and eventually became involved in the White House legislative office. He quitted his Marine Corps career and entered politics after gaining expertise in foreign policy, which was not needed or useful in advancing his military career. (Timburg 253) After Ronald Reagan was elected president in the 1980s, his political profession took off, as Reagan chose close advisors who matched his conservative political views.

McFarlane, having served in the military for 20 years and fought in Vietnam, he would logically be anti-Communist due to his background. Robert McFarlane’s expertise in foreign affairs and his anti-Soviet passion allowed America to take a more aggressive military and political stance against Communism during the 1980s. McFarlane initially played several more minor roles under Reagan’s administration and started implementing his political ideas.

He started his political career under Reagan as Counselor to the Department of State, which assisted then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig in foreign affairs. As Reagan’s foreign policy had been following Carter’s for the first year, people such as McFarlane and Haig wished to change that status quo. However, McFarlane initially could not obtain a comprehensive foreign policy toward Soviet-friendly Nicaragua in this time period because Haig was not interested in doing more, and he claims that if they had done things differently, they would have avoided problems in the future.

Haig, on the other hand, wanted to invade Cuba, which was against McFarlane's ideas since he did not believe it was a priority. (McFarlane 178) This showed the lack of coherence and efficiency within the cabinet, and was eventually changed, with McFarlane appointed Deputy of National Security Advisor by Clark, the National Security Advisor. (McFarlane 189) " The first year had been one of drift, of reacting to events. (McFarlane 193)

After he moved his office into the White House, McFarlane eventually contributed to forming tactics that put pressure on the soviets politically, economically, and socially. " I seized the moment. ' But you do have a foreign policy, Mr. President,' I spoke up. The attention in the room shifted to me in a solid wave.... ' It has five components,' I began. ' The first is to strengthen our economic base... essential to underwriting our foreign aid program and to restore the defense foundation of your policy...

Number two is to restore our defenses so as to deter attack, ... Number three is to restore the strength of alliances... Number four is to advance the peace process in the Middle East by mediating between Israel and her Arab neighbors... Number five is to foster accelerated growth in developing countries... " (McFarlane 193-194) Some of these ideas later became essential as the White House shifted from being reactive to changes in the world to proactive of executing stress on communism.

The Crisis Pre-Planning Group, or CPPG, served to anticipate the consequences of a crisis (McFarlane 195) America's economy and public confidence would be more stable if reports are conducted. For Reagan, this could also be used to reduce the bluffs that the enemies might conduct, and

comprehensive measures for the cabinet could be used. McFarlane's quote also shows that during this time period, foreign and military policies could not be differentiated from one another.

Besides this, McFarlane later became more famous for his role in the Strategic Defense Initiative. In late 1983, McFarlane rose to become the National Security Advisor, and had much more power over defense issues and could effectively influence the president's military policies. McFarlane's efforts during this time period were primarily focused on continuing the Strategic Defense Initiative, or SDI program, as hinted by Timburg in "The Nightingale's Song" on page 365: "To McFarlane, if not to Reagan, SDI stood to be "the sting of the century".

The Soviets were put in a dire situation because of this: if they started their own program of a similar weight, the already weakened Soviet economy could go bankrupt. If the Soviets refuse to develop a similar system, then the US would eventually have this formidable ace up their sleeves. This system would evidently fulfill McFarlane's goals of demonstrating aggression to the Soviets, and number two of his foreign policy list mentioned previously.

However, there could be possible Soviet aggression between the time the US announced the SDI program and when it was ready, since the idea of "Mutual Assured Destruction", or the complete annihilation of both parties, would cease to exist if SDI was complete. (Parrington; McFarlane 228)

Advances in computing technology for the past few decades would have made this "star wars" that was previously science fiction a possible reality.

The program would also logically be supported by the public, since who doesn't want to be protected from nuclear missiles?

Also, which politician would like to ruin his or her political career by voicing against it? (McFarlane 234) McFarlane's involvement in the Iran-Contra Affair hindered possible areas of Soviet expansionism. According to the "Reagan Doctrine", it was necessary of the US to take an active role in stopping communism throughout the world. The officials involved sought to "kill two birds with one stone": By smuggling arms to Iran, US hostages could be traded back, and the money gained from the sales could also fund the Contras in Nicaragua, which the US government was also forbidden to do.

Both these goals can also be traced anti-communist incentives: The US could implicitly fight the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and could also prolong the Iran-Iraq war, which would "grind down both Gulf powers and magnify U. S. influence". (Wawro 403) Therefore, McFarlane in this case achieved his goal of blocking the Soviets before they could possibly influence Iran and jeopardize US oil supplies and subsequently our upper hand in international politics.

The 1980s was an era of purposeful stress designed for the Soviets to collapse. Eventually, the Reagan and his cabinet caused enough military, economic, and political pressure, along with Gorbachev's social reforms, to dissolve the "evil empire" peacefully. McFarlane and many other foreign policy and military advisors have ensured that the USSR be met with aggression from all fields, and subsequently exhausted the last breath of Russian Communism.