



Cabinet of the Soviet Union



Historical Context of Cabinet

Since the 1917 March and October Revolutions that toppled the Tsarist regime in Russia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) has held the position of the world's foremost communist country. Following the Second World War, it emerged as the counterweight superpower to the global expansion of the United States. As Winston Churchill famously described, an "Iron Curtain" fell over Europe, and the Soviet Union not only led Eastern European countries into communism but also actively encouraged and assisted any nation willing to join us in the struggle against capitalism.

The establishment of the Soviet Union was marked by the profound changes brought about by the Bolshevik Revolution. Subsequent years saw significant reforms and diplomatic maneuvers defining various eras of the USSR. Following Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin transitioned the agrarian-based economy to an industrially focused planned economy, a shift whose negative consequences are still felt today. The post-World War II era witnessed the creation of NATO in 1949, prompting the Soviet Union to establish the Warsaw Pact as a counterpart to the capitalist alliance.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, First Secretary and Premier Nikita Khrushchev negotiated with the U.S., proposing the removal of Cuban nuclear missiles in exchange for the withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey. Internally, Khrushchev spearheaded a campaign of de-Stalinization. Under Leonid Brezhnev's leadership, the Soviet Union engaged in the Soviet Afghan War, with significant repercussions stemming from the focus on Soviet militarization in both the economy and the Middle East.

Now, we are confronted with the implications of this extensive history of the USSR and must examine the reforms and international policies that will define the legacy of Mikhail Gorbachev's government.

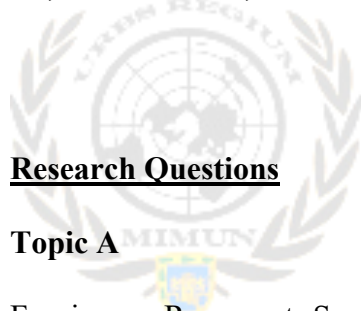
Context of the Central Theme

The USSR is currently undergoing a defining era of change. Just over four years ago, on March 11, 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the position of Secretary General. As our current leader, he wasted no time initiating crucial reforms. In the years leading up to 1985, former Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev had tightened the bureaucratic and economic grip of our Communist government. The conservative approach to the challenges faced by the Soviet Union, encompassing economic issues such as a lack of production incentives and censorship of media and individuals, had proven ineffective. Coupled with significant resources allocated to the intervention in Afghanistan, the actions of the Communist Party were perceived as outdated.

Faced with these challenges, the Soviet government appointed Comrade Gorbachev as the next Secretary General. Plans for restructuring (Perestroika) and improving transparency (Glasnost)

were swiftly introduced. This complete shift in the goals of the Communist Party sent ripples not only within the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact members but also resonated globally. A crackdown on corruption within the Communist Party ensued, and media outlets gained more independence to criticize Party actions. Economic restructuring allowed individual producers more flexibility in spending, and local governments, both within the USSR and in Communist countries of the East, gained increased autonomy. Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan, and aid was provided to stabilize the Afghan government.

The economic reforms aim to incentivize increased production and revitalize the stagnant Soviet economy. Simultaneously, efforts to curb corruption and decentralize power from a centralized to a localized bureaucracy aim to alleviate tensions accumulated during the conservative Brezhnev government. However, it's essential to note the downsides emerging: economic and political decentralization means a reduction in the Communist Party's steering power, and freedom to criticize the government can potentially spiral out of control. Moreover, this change has reverberated within the Soviet sphere of influence, with subversive anti-Communist groups gaining traction. In the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR), demonstrations in areas like Leipzig are on the rise. The mujahideen continue their war against the government of Afghanistan, and valuable resources are still being expended to support the Communist Party of Afghanistan. Striking the delicate balance of moving forward with these reforms while maintaining our status as a global superpower is now the primary tightrope that we, as the Cabinet, must navigate.



Research Questions

Topic A

Forging a Resurgent Soviet Era: Implementing Internal Reforms and Revitalizing the Communist Economy in the Face of Globalization.

- How has the Perestroika and the Glasnost as a combined effort of reform changed the USSR, both internally (political freedoms, information, economic prosperity) and externally (trade with other countries, international opinions)?
- How much should the Soviet Union continue to change while moving forward as a more prosperous nation? Should we reverse or further the loosening of centralized political and economic authority?
- How can we keep the USSR united and strong while this period of transparency and decentralization gives more power to other people? What can we, as a cabinet of the Soviet Government, do to prevent or reduce political instability?

Topic B

Securing the Soviet zone of influence: Fortifying Eastern Europe through Strategic Foreign Policy and Regional Security Measures to Safeguard the motherland's Interests against Western Liberal Influences.

- How is the USSR aiding and keeping relationships with our most important areas of influence? How do we ensure that our allies who border the West like the DDR keep a strong communist presence in the area?
- Will extending policies of decentralization of unstable areas quell insurrection movements or will it bolster them? How is the security of the Soviet area of influence going to be kept with these ongoing reforms in mind?
- What insurrection movements in Eastern Europe have gained traction? What tools do we have to combat and quell them without sparking further instability?

Topic C

The Afghan concern: keeping the Mujahideen within their borders to avoid the expansion of the Muslim nationalist feeling between the Soviet frontiers Republics

- What are the consequences of our withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan? Should our military presence in the region be reinstated or should we focus on other options?
- How can we prevent a domino effect of Muslim States and mujahideen influence in the Middle East, especially in and around our territory? What failures in the Communist government inside of Afghanistan lead to this?
- What are options in dealing with the Mujahideen and the surrounding area going forward? What actions could we explore to keep Soviet interest and influence in the area strong?

Character Research Questions

- What personal reasons (politics, ideas, life experience) drive your character to act during a time of crisis and changes? What are their priorities (power, influence, reform, ideals) in a time of uncertainty?
- How does the historical figure you're representing fit into your cabinet and into the whole historical event?

Discussion Questions

- What are practical and direct actions or topics I can discuss (related to my position) that could change the flow of the debate in a way that benefits the cabinet?
- What should be my areas of expertise and influence that the cabinet looks to me for?
- What are other cabinets and organizations doing in response to the problems my cabinet is facing? How could this affect the debate and our actions?

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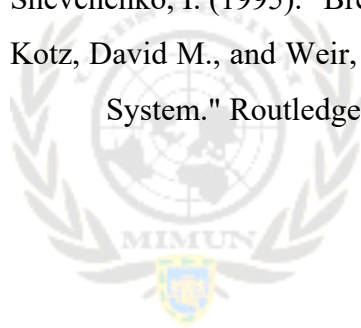
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