



# **The Collapse of the Soviet Union and the End of the Cold War**

HCC

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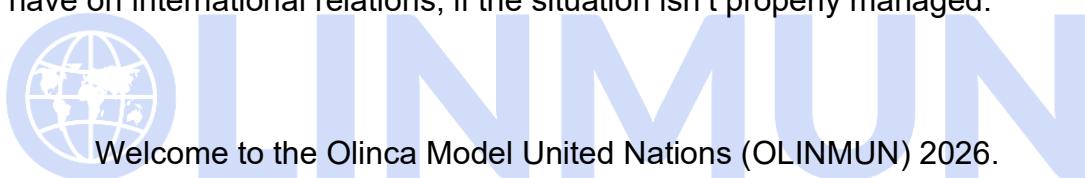


## I. INTRODUCTION

**Dear delegates of the Historical Crisis Committee (HCC),**

During this debate, you will discuss the current topic: **The Collapse of the Soviet Union and the End of the Cold War.**

The failed 1991 August coup in the central Moscow government led to the dissolution of the USSR and the formation of 15 new nations. The purpose of the historical committee is to discuss the effects that the collapse of the Soviet Union has had both in the region and newly established countries. It is crucial to identify the challenges of establishing a stable government, and provide support to these countries through diplomatic cooperation. Furthermore, it is of paramount importance to note the consequences of the Cold War for the countries involved and the lasting economic and diplomatic effects it could have on international relations, if the situation isn't properly managed.



Yours sincerely,

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Head of Committee of HCC

**Natalia Gандарillas Galván**

Chair of HCC

**Aitana Buendía Hernández**

Moderator of HCC

**Pamela Capetillo Iniestra**

Deputy Chair of HCC

**NOTE: We highly recommend you thoroughly read the following document and the Conference Handbooks since they will provide an overview of the topics discussed and will allow you to acquire crucial information about the rules of procedure.**

## II. OVERVIEW

### A. COMMITTEE'S BACKGROUND

The Historical Crisis Committee (HCC) is a specialized Model United Nations (MUN) format focused on the simulation of complex moments of historical instability in real time. Unlike current-staged committees, delegates are supposed to support their delegations' posture in the time being discussed with the information available during the chosen time period. Decisions made by delegates can alter the course of events, often diverging from the events of actual history, this encourages a deeper understanding of causation and effect.

**This debate will take place on February 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 1992.**



## III. THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

When George H.W. Bush became president in 1989, instead of continuing Ronald Reagan's policy towards the USSR, he ordered a strategic review to design his own approach. Meanwhile, Eastern Europe changed rapidly: Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms weakened Soviet control, triggering democratic movements that culminated in the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the collapse of communist regimes across the region. While Bush supported these changes, he remained cautious so as not to destabilize or undermine Gorbachev's leadership.

In December 1989, Bush and Gorbachev met at the Malta Summit, which laid the foundations for completing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and discussing changes in the political landscape of Europe. Bush expressed support for Gorbachev's political and economic reforms, which introduced multiparty elections and the new Soviet

president. However, these reforms fueled internal tensions within the USSR, as figures such as Boris Yeltsin and the broader pluralist movement pushed for faster reforms, while hard-line Communist elites opposed Gorbachev's agenda.

The US chose to work primarily with Gorbachev, whom it regarded as a more stable and open to agreement person, an approach favorable to Washington's interests. This strategy initially yielded significant results: START negotiations advanced, Gorbachev accepted German reunification with NATO, and the US and USSR cooperated during the Gulf War. Despite these achievements, internal instability within the USSR continued to grow. Following the collapse of communist control in Eastern Europe, republics such as the Baltic states and regions in Caucasus increasingly demanded independence. In 1991, violence erupted in Lithuania and Latvia, prompting the US under Bush to condemn the use of Soviet military force.



By 1991, the US faced three main options: continue full support for Gorbachev, shift backing towards Yeltsin and the republics, or maintain support for Gorbachev while demanding deeper reforms. Bush adopted a mixed strategy, preserving arms control cooperation while expanding communication with Yeltsin. START was officially signed in July 1991. However, the failed August 1991 coup carried out by Communist hardliners proved decisive, as it fatally weakened Gorbachev's authority and empowered Yeltsin. In its aftermath, republics including Ukraine, declared independence, making the survival of the USSR impossible.

The US' priorities shifted towards preventing nuclear catastrophe, limiting ethnic violence, and supporting stable political transitions. In September 1991, US Secretary of State James Baker outlined five principles guiding US relations with the new republics: democracy, self-determination, respect for borders, rule of law, protection of minority rights, and respect for international law. In December 1991, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus signed the Belovezha Accords, formally dissolving the USSR and creating the

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On December 25, Gorbachev resigned, and the Soviet flag was replaced by the Russian one, with Yeltsin as president. The transition was unexpectedly peaceful.

Western countries, including the US, quickly recognized the newly formed independent states and shifted toward political, economic, and nuclear security. Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, the US helped the former USSR dismantle nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons across the former USSR. International institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), also played a key role in supporting Russia's economic transition. The collapse of Soviet communism exposed long-suppressed nationalism within the fifteen republics. Although the USSR had been formally organized as a multinational federation, power had been highly centralized in Moscow. After its dissolution, ethnic and territorial disputes rapidly escalated, particularly in Baltic states, the Caucasus, and regions such as Nagorno-Karabakh. The failed August coup and Ukraine's overwhelming vote for independence that the USSR could not survive. Ultimately, the collapse of the USSR left unresolved territorial disputes and newly independent states navigating political and economic uncertainty, permanently reshaping Eurasia and global politics.

## IV. KEY POINTS FOR DEBATE

1. Outcomes of Soviet collapse
  - a. Effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union on other countries in the region.
  - b. Recognition of newly established independent governments, and challenges faced by these.
  - c. Long-term consequences for social stability in the region.
2. Role of Western Powers
  - a. International involvement in reforms and NATO negotiation.
  - b. Western support for newly independent states.
3. Independence movements and territorial issues

- a. Border disputes and ethnic conflicts
- b. Formation and limits of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
- 4. Nuclear weapons and security concerns
  - a. Responsibility for nuclear arsenal spread across new countries.
  - b. Need to prevent increase and ensure safe dismantling of nuclear weapons.
- 5. Changes in global power dynamics
  - a. Transition from two superpower system to the United States as a sole superpower.
  - b. Redefinition of NATO and European security structures
  - c. Impact on Cold War alliances and on-aligned states
- 6. Economic reconstruction
  - a. Transition from a centrally planned economy to market based systems
  - b. Role of Western financial assistance (IMF, World Bank, etc.)
- 7. Humanitarian and social impacts of the collapse
  - a. Impact in minority rights and ethnic tension
  - b. Refugees and forced displacement
  - c. Risk of reemergence of authoritarianism caused by instability

## IV. ANNEXES

### A. LIST OF COUNTRIES

- 1. Armenia
- 2. Azerbaijan
- 3. Belarus
- 4. Canada
- 5. China
- 6. Estonia
- 7. France

8. Georgia
9. Germany
10. Hungary
11. Italy
12. Kazakhstan
13. Kyrgyzstan
14. Latvia
15. Lithuania
16. Moldova
17. Poland
18. Russian Federation
19. Tajikistan
20. Turkmenistan
21. Ukraine
22. United Kingdom
23. United States of America
24. Uzbekistan



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