

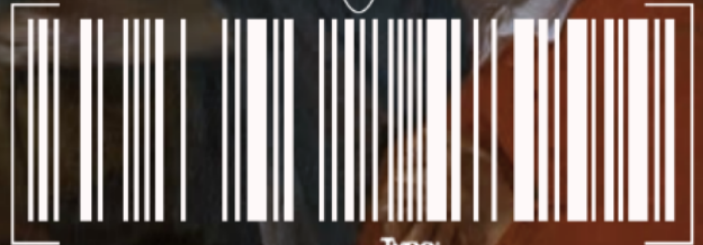
REVOLUTION

AUGUST COUP

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Mustafa Aslan

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ACADEMIC ASSISTANT
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Type:

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Anime Series

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Table of Contents

1. Welcoming Letters
 - 1.1. Letter From Secretary General
 - 1.2. Letter From Co-Under Secretary General
 - 1.3. Letter From Co-Under Secretary General
 - 1.4. Letter From Academic Assistant
2. Introduction to the Committee
3. Procedure of the Committee
 - 3.1. Structure of the Committee
 - 3.2. The crucial signature part of the committee
4. Soviets After the Second World War
 - 4.1. The Cold War
 - 4.2. Era of Stagnation
5. Gorbachev's Rise to Power, Perestroika and Glasnost
6. Nationalist Movements and Their Effects on Collapse of the USSR
7. Historical Background
 - 7.1. The Conspiracy Against Gorbachev
 - 7.2. Consequences of the Coup
8. End of Soviet Communism

1. Welcoming Letters

1.1. Letter From the Secretaries General

Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to AFMUN'26. As the Secretaries-General, we are truly pleased to see this conference once again bring together so many bright and motivated young individuals who believe in dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation.

First and foremost, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to our academic and organization teams. This conference would not have been possible without their dedication and commitment, and we are deeply grateful for the effort they have put in.

We are living in a time where it is almost impossible to ignore what is happening around the world. Many of us often find ourselves thinking that certain situations could have been handled differently, or questioning the decisions that were made. However, AFMUN is not only a place for reflection, but also a platform for initiative. Through our committees, you will have the opportunity to express your ideas, challenge perspectives, and engage in meaningful discussions. As young people in today's world, your voice is truly important.

We hope this conference will be both inspiring and memorable for all of you.

And as we say, a realm cannot endure without its sovereign.

Yours truly,

Kaan MUŞTU & Ömer Talha Demirel

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1.2. Letter From the Under Secretaries General

Dear Participants,

First and foremost, we would like to welcome you all to the AFMUN August Coup Committee.

As the Under Secretaries-General of this Committee,

we would like to thank the secretariat team that made the establishment of this committee possible, as well as our academic assistant, Egemen Ayyıldız, for his professional contributions.

As the two Under Secretaries-General, by combining our areas of expertise. Special and Crisis we have created a committee with procedures you won't easily encounter in other MUNs. While preparing the directives, you'll need to pay attention to many details that are often overlooked in crisis committees; in terms of procedure, you are part of a committee that will present you with countless possibilities and outcomes.

If you've never been part of a committee like this before, there's absolutely no need to worry; this guide was specifically designed to walk you through the process step by step.

Please use the contact information provided below for any additional questions.

Under Secretary General - Güney Deniz Ala
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Under Secretary General - Mustafa Aslan
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1.3. Letter From the Academic Assistant

Dear delegates,

It's my absolute honour to be a part of this prestigious conference. My name is Egemen Ayyıldız, and I'll be serving as your academic assistant through our committee. I want to start

my letter with overflowing thanks to my Co-USGs, Güney and Mustafa, for giving me the chance to participate in this conference. They were the best academic partner I could ever ask for.

Now, while there's no doubt that we'll have a fruitful time, there are some crucial points you need to lay stress on. The first one being the study guide of ours. It's absolutely vital to read the study guide with excellent care and understand it. It will be our cornerstone to run the committee so by that means, please read it thoroughly. Another point being your attitude, it will be decisively important for the execution of our committee. Our committee relies on your efforts and knowledge suitable for this topic.

Last but not least, please be very eager to contact me on any questions you may have. I wish you the best luck out there.

Egemen AYYILDIZ-Academic Assistant of CC
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2. Introduction to the Committee

Welcome all. You have stepped into a committee so unique it has no similarity to any other committee ever. It is interesting and fun but do not be intimidated by the look of it. This guide will be your best friend for the committee process so pay great attention to every word written below from now on.

The committee's topic revolves and evolves around the August Coup of 1991. It truly is one of the most crucial points of the 20th century. A group of conservative Soviet officials had the attempt to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev, the president, to preserve the Soviet Union and make his political and economic reforms come to an end. While the president was isolated in Crimea, the leaders of the coup declared a state of emergency. They assigned and deployed military forces into Moscow. While this was happening Boris Yeltsin and the Russian government, organized civilian and institutional resistance. This eventually led to a political state (the coup) that resulted in failure.

Delegates will represent real historical figures from the August Coup of 1991 including heads of state, ministers, military generals, intelligence officials, and political leaders. Each delegate's powers and responsibilities will correspond to their real-life position and authority during the crisis.

The procedure of this committee will be different than any other committee ever. We will dive into it deeply in the procedure section. Please read it thoroughly and study it well.

The cabinet will begin with a semi moderated caucus motion followed by either unmoderated, moderated or semi moderated caucus motions. During the semi moderated caucus' delegates will be responsible for leading one another, debating upon solutions to the current situation, future plans, task assignments and more. At least 1 out of 3 motions will have to be unmoderated caucus' in order to group up, act free and act with written directives. Directives will have consequences which will eventually decide the fate of the cabinet. During the moderated caucus' delegates will have more specific topics to discuss as official meetings. The words that come out of one's mouth during the moderated caucus' can and will be eligible for consequences because they count as official speeches that are accessible by the public and the media. After taking a moderated caucus, it will be obligatory to present an unmoderated caucus motion in which the consequence of the sentences said during the moderated caucus will be revealed.

The committee will end with what delegates come to as a result of their final cabinet directive. There will be no final document however the final directive will be written by the cabinet as a whole, which is expected to be detailed, precise and written knowingly of what it may result in.

3. Procedure of the Committee

Semi-moderated Caucus: Unlike moderated caucuses, delegates in a semi-moderated caucus are allowed to speak without the chair's permission, as long as they do not interrupt other cabinet members and treat each other with respect.

Unmoderated Caucus: In an unmoderated caucus, delegates are free to draft any kind of paper they want to achieve their goals, and support others.

Moderated Caucus: In a moderated caucus, delegates who wish to speak upon the topic raise their placards and they are chosen and moderated by the chairboard.

What is a Directive?

Crisis' are in order for specialized committees that replicate decision-making during a crisis. Individual delegates or members inside the committee provide directives to guide their actions and responses to the crisis. Delegates use directives to propose specific courses of action, tactics, or policies to handle the situation. Depending on the committee structure, and the course of actions currently happening in the committee, these directives can take many forms, such as **Individual, Joint, Committee, Intelligence, Top Secret Directive, and Press Release**.

Individual Directive:

When an action is within your character's authority or is achievable due to their abilities, you write personal commands To begin, there is a format for writing directives; so, you must state who is sending the directive and to whom it is being sent (from, to). Followed by the time and current date of the committee. Finally, the format of your directive and its title. That's all there is to it; this is the only format you need to know to write a directive. The only thing left is the content of your directive, and the way through which you compose it is fairly simple; You write it by answering the what, why, when, who, where, and, most crucially, how questions. You write the action you want to take by answering the WH questions and then elaborating and discussing it as much as possible to make your plan as thorough as feasible. Also, whenever possible, employ the future tense. On paper, a directive looks like this:

From: Menelaus

Personal Directive

Date:

1192BC May 3

To: Related Authorities
(Spartan Cabinet)

Capturing Tiryns

Time: 12.34

What: I will capture Tiryns with my 5,000 agoge men stationed on the Tiryns frontline. My soldiers will kill and destroy any enemy forces they come across, as well as any enemy

military bases. Women and children in the city will not be murdered unless they attack the soldiers.

To reduce noise, the 5,000 agoge soldiers will be divided into 50 groups, with 200 soldiers per group. Each group will have a commander, and the commanders will be the best warriors among their groups. They will be well-armed with their hoplons, xiphos, and dorus (Spartan agoge soldiers' shields, spearheads, and small swords). Each group will apply the doctrine properly to face the fewest casualties. If needed, 3 soldiers from each group will bring supplies to their own group from the frontlines, and these 3 soldiers will be picked randomly from the commanders. They will use the safest route and avoid the enemy. Our men will take the safe paths suggested by our spies.

Why: Tiryns plays a crucial role in the war, and it must be captured in order to cut the enemy's supply lines.

When: Soldiers will charge at 02.00 a.m. to catch the enemy off guard.

Who: I will be operating this attack, and if I fall during the war, my right-hand man, Analus, will take over. 5,000 agoge soldiers will assault the enemy.

Where: 2,500 of my soldiers will charge from the southeast frontline, and the other 2,500 will charge from the west to capture Tiryns.

How*: Soldiers will check and control their weapons before charging. They will pray, remember how brave they are, and then honour their nation and gods by demolishing the enemy. They will not disobey their commander's orders and apply the doctrine as they say. To avoid being affected by attrition, our soldiers will study their geographical situation as well as the enemy's to use in their favour. Soldiers will use an offensive phalanx formation when I order them to charge, and they will slaughter each enemy troop they face. They will use the offensive formation until they face a larger enemy force to quickly capture as many critical areas as possible. If they face a larger enemy force, to be exact, 1.5 times larger than them, they will quickly change to a defensive phalanx formation and wait for recruitment whilst defending themselves. Their priority will be killing the enemy rather than cutting supply lines. In mountain areas, they will use the highlands in their favour and quickly oppress the enemy to finish them. Once they reach the city, their priority will be killing the cabinet members of Tiryns. If possible, they will defenestrate them to entertain themselves. After the military bases and the city are captured, soldiers will go to the possible conflict areas to recruit other soldiers. Even though we sent spies before, our soldiers will be vigilant for any kind of trap. Their main objective is to capture the city, and for that purpose, they will sacrifice themselves without hesitation.

Joint Directive:

Directives written by more than one individual are considered joint directives. You write joint directives when you can only achieve your purpose in the directive by utilizing the authority of other cabinet members. Assume you are the commander of the army, and you want to take Warsaw. Yet you understand that conquering it without air superiority would be impossible, so you write a joint directive with the general of the air force. So it makes the "from:" part your name and the general of the air forces' name, and instead of a personal directive you write a Joint Directive. Everything else is the same.

Committee Directive:

A committee directive is written when you wish to use everyone's authority or when you are about to deliver your final directive (in most cases). Delegates frequently ask me, "How are we meant to write a committee directive with the other cabinet?" But that's just a common misunderstanding. You write the committee directive with your cabinet; the formal name is "Committee Directive," but it is basically a cabinet directive. So, simply writing a Committee Directive to the "from:" part will do.

Intelligence Directive:

You write intelligence directives when you want to acquire the necessary information about you or your country/cabinet. The format is exactly the same, except for the "WH Questions" part. For example:

From: Winston Churchill	Intelligence Directive	Date: 1942 May
3		

To: Crisis Team	Our Troop Counts	Time: 16.21
(The Great Britain Cabinet)		

How many troops does our country have? Do we possess any nuclear weapons? How many of our military factories are assigned to manufacture infantry weapons, and what kind of weapons are they producing?

Top Secret:

Top Secret directives are those that your chair is not allowed to read. You hand over your Top Secret directive to the admin. They are written precisely the same, but you must fold your

paper and write "TOP SECRET" on the back side of it. The major reason for writing a Top Secret Directive is treason, a diabolical strategy to crash one's own cabinet or to switch sides. For instance, if a person secretly kills his cabinet members and becomes the dictator, the winning condition changes and only that person wins, whereas the cabinet loses. But I don't recommend writing Top Secret Directives unless you're planning on writing a brilliant 10-page long directive, because failing to do so will backfire much worse. You will earn your cabinet's distrust, and you may die and be given an insignificant character. Furthermore, updates to the Top Secret Directives are only sent to the person who sent them, unless they directly affect the other cabinet members.

3.1 Structure of the committee

The cabinet will begin with a semi moderated caucus motion followed by either unmoderated, moderated or semi moderated caucus motions.

During the semi moderated caucus' delegates will be responsible for leading one another, debating upon solutions to the current situation, future plans, task assignments and more.

At least 1 out of 3 motions will have to be unmoderated caucus' in order to group up, act free and act with written directives.

Directives will have consequences which will eventually decide the fate of the cabinet.

During the moderated caucus' delegates will have more specific topics to discuss as official meetings.

3.2 The crucial signature part of the committee

The words that come out of one's mouth during the moderated caucus' can and will be eligible for consequences because they count as official speeches that are accessible by the public and the media. What we mean by this is that the crisis team members will serve and act as the public and media members. What you say will have consequences means that you should NEVER reveal your real plans during the moderated caucus'. What you need to do is mislead the media and the public. If you accidentally reveal important information, you will receive catastrophic results, if you successfully mislead the media and public, it will be easier for you to make your actual plans real. But the press and public are not naive so they might realise that you are trying to mislead them so if you wish to speak, speak with a plan, do not go into war with a stick in your hand.

After taking a moderated caucus, it will be obligatory to present an unmoderated caucus motion in which the consequence of the sentences said during the moderated caucus will be revealed.

4. Soviets After the Second World War

One of the many results of World War II was the development of the Soviets as one of the greatest military powers on the entire planet; precisely, one of two. Their now experienced forces gained most of Eastern Europe. They also took islands from Japan as well as success in Finland. These achievements were not without a cost; however, 20 million Soviet soldiers and citizens were wasted in the war; marking it as one of the heaviest losses of life of any of the combatant countries. Widespread destruction was also one of the outcomes of the war. The suffering and losses as the consequence of the war altered Soviet people in terms of emotions and sentiments. Soviet leaders then also tended to tailor their

policies in the postwar era. They observed the events that marked the end of World War II with more seriousness and solemnity in Russia than the holidays like Memorial Day and Veterans Day in the United States.

The Soviets gained approximately 65 billion dollars as their booty from the second World War. In April 2000, Russia announced it would return the first of some of the trophy art it took: a cache of old master drawings hidden for 50 years under the bed of a Red Army officer. They worked real hard to restore damaged treasures. One Russian collected 1.2 million fragments from ruined frescoes at a church in Novgorod and tried to reassemble them.

Now if we were to talk about their influence in Eastern Europe after World War II, it would be no lie to say they were in a pretty great situation. They extended their control into Eastern Europe taking over governments in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Only Greece and occupied Austria remained free. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, -the Baltic countries simply- were made into republics. Even Finland was partially controlled by the Soviets. The Communist Party was also a secure and strong phenomenon in Italy and France.

The occupation of Poland was a whole another story, they took a large portion for themselves and Poland got a big part of Germany. It was as if the entire country of Poland was slid across the earth to the west. Only after reunification Germany renounced their claim on the land that was theirs a long time ago. The Allies allowed Soviets to annex Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in a process that took place mostly at the outset of the war.

It was no surprise that they also extended their influence over Asia. Outer Mongolia became the first Communist regime outside the Soviet Union in 1945, when a soviet puppet government was in charge of the country. China became communist in 1949.

If we went back to the Motherland however, things were not so great. The war brought up famine, drought, epidemics and purges. In the famine, people ate the very grass we play upon today to keep themselves from starving. In 1959, for the ages 35 and over, there were only 54 men per 100 women, with a total number of 12.2 million men.

Immediately after the war, the Soviets began rebuilding their economy and then expanding it with control always being exerted exclusively from Moscow. They reinforced their influence they had over East Europe, gave a helping hand to the communists who became victorious in China, and looked for opportunities to expand its diffusion globally. This active and

interactive global policy was one of the reasons for the Cold War, which turned the USSR's previous mates, United States and United Kingdom, to foes. Within the Soviet Union, repressive measures continued in force; Stalin apparently was about to launch a new purge when he died in 1953.

In 1946, Andrey Zhdanov, who was a close associate and friend of Stalin, helped launch an ideological campaign to show socialism's superiority over capitalism in all fields. This campaign became known as the "Zhdanovshchina" (meaning the era of Zhdanov); it attacked writers, composers, economists, historians, and scientists whose work "manifested" Western influence. Although Zhdanov died in 1948, the cultural purge continued for several years afterward, securing Soviet intellectual development.

And the reconstruction after the second great war... It was no easy work. John Steinback, when he was describing Stalingrad in 1949, said: "Our windows looked out on acres of rubble, broken brick and concrete and pulverized plaster and in the wreckage the strange dark weeds that always seem to grow in destroyed places. During the time we were in Stalingrad we grew more and more fascinated with this expanse of ruin, for it was deserted. Underneath the rubble were cellars and holes, and in these holes people lived. Stalingrad was a large city, and it had apartment houses and many flats, and now there was none except for new ones on the outskirts, and its population was to live some place. It lives in the cellars of the buildings where the buildings once stood." Soviets acted with haste however, rebuilding quickly and rising to be one of the World's two superpowers with their moves in Eastern Europe, modernization of industry and claiming German factories and engineers as booty. The Five-year plan focused on the arm industry and heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods and agriculture.

Even though they were victorious in the war, their economy was an absolute disgrace. The struggles made it hard for them to compose their economy, yet alone roughly a quarter of the country's capital sources were destroyed. To help put together the economy again, they obtained limited credits from Britain and Sweden, but refused the helping hand given by the United States known as the "Marshall Plan". Instead, they forced Eastern European countries which they occupied to send them machinery and raw materials. The Soviet people bore much of the cost of rebuilding because the reconstruction program focused on heavy industry while ignoring agriculture and consumer goods. By Stalin's death in 1953, the steel production was twice as much compared to 1940. But the production of many consumer goods and foodstuffs was lower than it had been in the late 1920s.

And lastly we need to talk about the Red Army. They gained massive respect from society as a result of their performance in the Great Patriotic War (basically WWII's name in Russia); establishing a costly but effective and heroic defence of the motherland against Nazi soldiers. In the postwar era, the Soviet military maintained its positive image and budgetary support in good part because of incessant government propaganda about the need to defend the country against the capitalist West. By the end of WWII, the Red Army had 11.4 million officers and soldiers in order after the death of 7 million in the war. At this point, they were accepted as the most powerful military in the entire World. In 1946 the Red Army got redesigned as the Soviet Army, and from late 1940s to the late 1960s, they focused on adapting to the changed nature of warfare in the era of nuclear weapons and on achieving parity with the United States in strategic nuclear weapons.

4.1 The Cold War

The Cold War was at its peak in 1948-1953. In this period, Soviets tried to blockade the Western-held points of West Berlin and proved unsuccessful. The United States and its allies formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military command established to resist the Soviet presence in Europe. The Soviets exploded their first atomic warhead, putting an end to the American monopoly on that matter. Communist came to power in mainland China and the Soviet supported communist government of North Korea invaded US supported South Korea in 1950, beginning the Korean War that lasted until 1953. The tensions were relaxed nonetheless from 1953 to 1957, as a partly result of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's death in 1953. A unified military organization between Soviet countries was established with the Warsaw Pact in 1955; and West Germany was admitted to NATO in the same year. Another intense stage of the Cold War was in 1958-1962. The United States and the Soviets began developing intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in 1962, the Soviets secretly began installing missiles in Cuba, so they can launch nuclear attack against the USA. This marked the beginning of the Cuban missile crisis (1962), bringing World's largest powers to the brink of war before an agreement was signed to withdraw the missiles. Both superpowers then signed the Nuclear Test-ban Treaty of 1963, banning the nuclear weapon testing. But the crisis determined the Soviets, they didn't want to get humiliated by their military inferiority again. So, they began building up both conventional and strategic forces that the United States was forced to match for the next 25 years.

During the period, both the USA and USSR avoided direct military contact. The Soviets however, sent troops to preserve the communist rule in East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan. The US didn't wait in vain, they helped overthrow a left-wing government in Guatemala, supported an unsuccessful invasion of Cuba (Bay of Pigs Invasion), invaded the Dominican Republic and Grenada, and undertook a long and unsuccessful effort to prevent communist North Vietnam from bringing South Vietnam under its rule (the Vietnam War).

In the 1960s and 70s, the struggle between the Soviet and American blocs became the reason for a more complicated way of international relationships. The World was not divided into two halves, that clearly rivaled each other anymore. A major split happened in 1960 between China and the USSR which kept widening over years, shattering the unity of the communist bloc. In the meantime, Western Europe and Japan achieved great economic growth in the 1950s and 60s that reduced their dependence on the US. Smaller and less-powerful countries had more room to assert their independence and proved themselves resistant to cajoling in some cases.

The Cold War saw an ease in the 1970s, this case was proved with the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), that led to the SALT I and SALT II agreements which were signed in 1972 and 1979. Both superpowers set limits on their antiballistic missiles and on their strategic missiles capable of housing nuclear weapons. That was followed by a period of renewed Cold War tensions in the early 1980s as the two superpowers continued their massive arms buildup and competed for influence in the Third World. But the Cold War began to break down in the late 1980s with the Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev's administration. He let go of the totalitarian practices of the Soviet system and began to democratize the Soviet political system. When communist regimes in the Soviet-bloc countries of Eastern Europe collapsed in 1989-90, Gorbachev had little to show for it. The rise to power of democratic regimes in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia was then followed by unification of West and East Germany under NATO guidance against Soviet approval.

Gorbachev's internal reforms in fact weakened his own Communist Party and allowed power to shift to Russia and other constituent republics of the Soviet Union. On December 31, 1991, the Soviet Union officially collapsed and 15 countries came out from its previous lands: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania,

Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The Cold War has finally come to an end.

4.2 Era of Stagnation

A very important aspect we should understand is the era of stagnation in the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It was one of the reasons why the Cold War ended, and also one of the reasons why the USSR collapsed. In 1961, the period's president Nikita Khrushchev told a party congress that the USSR would achieve full communism in 20 years. Except Khrushchev was gone within three years, and was replaced with Leonid Brezhnev. He focused on market based, decentralized reforms that would set the market a little free. And he actually succeeded, the Soviet economy thrived for a time. In the 1970s, the Soviet economy lived its golden age after its gross national product grew by five percent since 1965. The next decade was a complete disaster however, it is often called by the economic term “stagnation”, meaning a long period of slow and negative growth. Historians differ on the reasons for this stagnation, nonetheless, whatever was the cause, all in all, 1970s were a dismal decade for the Soviet Union and its people. This left the USSR unprepared for the challenges to come.

Despite the market based reforms Brezhnev made, the Soviet economy in the 1970s was still a centralized government-controlled economy. Economist planners in Moscow formulated specific quotas, which were relayed and managed by bureaucrats at regional and local events. Five-year plans were also a thing; aiming to maximize economic growth and fix what needed. This system allowed near-zero flexibility. Ergo, as the economy grew, this centralized system proved problematic. To meet the needs of this economic management pattern, the number of bureaucrats and clerical workers increased much faster than the numbers of skilled workers responsible for production. The Soviet bureaucracy was too difficult and costly to maintain, it became too unwieldy and complex. In 1965 Soviet premier Alexei Kosygin proposed a series of reforms drafted by Evsei Liberman, a Ukrainian economist. Liberman suggested decentralising the economy and reintroducing profit as an incentive for work units. Some of these changes became effective in agriculture and light industry, but Liberman's reforms were never truly implemented. At any rate, these reforms stimulated the Soviet Economy, which enjoyed its best period between 1965 and 1972.

By the mid 1970s, things started to change. The Soviet economy began to suffer from low growth and contraction. Some of these problems were caused by international elements such as the US' abandonment of the gold standard in 1971, or the OPEC oil crisis that happened in 1973. But structural domestic problems overwhelmed the international ones. Years of massive military spending, shortfalls in natural resources, bureaucratic mismanagement and rising corruption took a toll on the Soviet economy. The Soviet's quick industrial and technological growth made them overlook the agricultural sector; by the 1970s, the agricultural sector was shrinking steadily, and by the 80s, Russia was not able to produce enough grain to feed their own people. Moscow relied on grain imports, most of them coming from Western countries. Moscow couldn't find any effective solution to end this scourge, major changes were definitely needed but there was not any idea on the table. The Kremlin's habit of micro-managing the economy meant new projects and policies were slow to be approved. The government's only significant economic reform of the early 1980s was a series of anti-corruption measures.

This economic calamity showed its impact on living standards. Soviet citizens' life conditions were never comparable with the Western countries' life conditions. And by the late 1970s, things got only worse. The Soviets valued machinery, industry and military assets over everyday consumer goods, as a consequence, there were dire shortages and long waiting periods just to get some basic needs. Only few people were able to afford cars and those who did needed to wait several years to get their hands on it. Electrical items like televisions, refrigerators or dishwashers were difficult to obtain. Consumer goods produced in the USSR like cars or clothes were notorious for their lack of durability and poor quality. Imported American or generally western goods were hard to find and even harder to buy because of their prices. Images of Soviet stores with long queues or near-empty shelves became a staple in the Western media. United States president Ronald Reagan frequently told jokes that ridiculed harsh economic conditions in the Soviet Union.

In April 1986, the Soviet economy took a further blow: the devastating accident at Chernobyl, Ukraine. Chernobyl was an important source of energy with its four-reactor plant; it could provide one-tenth of Ukraine's power needs. On April 26th, the plant rocked with a series of explosions, followed by a major fire. The accident's architect was the faulty design of the plant and human errors. A giant amount of radioactive material spread all over an area exceeding 100,000 square kilometers, mostly in Ukraine, Belarus and southern Russia. With

one of Chernobyl's cores in danger of a complete meltdown, the Kremlin now needed to assure no further damage was dealt. Scientists and engineers constructed a concrete sarcophagus with haste to prevent further escape of radioactivity. Most areas were contained, gigantic amounts of livestock were destroyed, and agricultural areas were cleared. Economic cost of Chernobyl is estimated around 20 billion roubles, a number the Soviets weren't able to afford back in 1980s.

Another burden on the Soviet economy was the USSR's protracted occupation of Afghanistan. Soviet troops entered the state in 1979 and continued their operations there until February 1989. During the occupation, an estimated number of 620,000 troops served in Afghanistan, with more than 100,000 there at any given time. West estimates a 50 billion USD spending to fund the war and help the Soviet regime established in Afghanistan to keep them on their feet. Even though this was approximately one-third of what the United States spent on the Vietnamese War (170 billion dollars), it was a drain on the terms. And the occupation of Afghanistan reignited the tensions with the west and was not cheap in human terms. Between 14,000 and 20,000 soldiers were killed in the struggle against Afghan mujahideen, may God rest their souls. In addition, Afghanistan became one of several conduits for illegal drugs and smuggled goods, which helped supply a thriving black market within the Soviet Union.

As we said, by the 1980s, many soviet economists and politicians agreed that the country demanded major reforms to kick start the economy again. As you can guess, this was no easy work. Every plan, every study to rework the economy would need to get accepted by the Communist Party, which as befits the name, consisted of communist hardliners. A reform agenda required skillful and dynamic leadership, a thing the Soviet politics lacked back in the time. Brezhnev was suffering from a series of life-threatening health issues, his reform-minded prime minister Alexei Kosygin also lost his prestige during the 1970s and was replaced by Nikolai Tikhonov, who had no interest in reforms. Tikhonov was a conservative, and when Brezhnev died in 1982, he was replaced with Yuri Andropov who was also a conservative. Yuri Andropov introduced measures to eliminate corruption but made no structural changes to the economy. Konstantin Chernenko was in office for just a year and achieved little, other than signing a trade agreement with China.

5. Gorbachev's Rise to Power, Perestroika and Glasnost

On 11 March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as the general secretary of the Communist Party. He was 54 years old back in the time, and recognized the immediate need for reforms and change. He then started a campaign for democratisation (glasnost) and modernization (perestroika). The efforts got a good response, we can say, both from most citizens and the Soviet bloc, and the Western bloc.

The elite groups of the state acknowledged that the Soviet economy was in big trouble when Brezhnev died in 1982. Due to his poor health, he couldn't do much to serve his country in his last few years; and Kosygin also died in 1980. Old men were the leading force of Politburo, and they were mostly Russian. The non-Russian representatives declined over time. Yury V. Andropov and then Konstantin Chernenko were in charge from 1982 to 1985, but they failed to solve critical problems. According to Andropov, the cause of the economic stagnation could be overcome with greater worker discipline and by cracking down on corruption. He didn't think the Soviet economic system was a part of the snowballing problems.

In 1985, the Communist Party launched perestroika (restructuring) under the rule of Gorbachev. His team differed from previous ones as they had more Russian mates in it. It is believed that Gorbachev too thought the backbone of the Soviet economic system was solid and it only needed minor enhancements. He thus established an economic policy that aimed to increase economic growth while increasing capital investment. Improving technological basis and promoting some structural economic changes was the purpose of his capital investments. His objective was pretty simple, getting the USSR toe to toe with western countries economically. This was a goal dating back to Peter the Great and his unleashing of the first wave of modernization and westernization. After two years Gorbachev rose to power, he realized deeper changes were necessary. In 1987-88 he passed reforms for establishing a semi-free economy, which fell short; it was nowhere near halfway through it. The contradictory reforms and the poorly structured semi-free market system brought chaos and cost great unpopularity to Gorbachev. Gorbachev's radical economists, headed by Grigory A. Yavlinsky, advised him that Western-style success required a true market economy. However,

Gorbachev never made the necessary changes to go from the command economy to mixed economy.

Glasnost was the second step of Gorbachev's reform efforts. He believed that the opening up of the political system, basically democratizing it, was the only way to overcome inertia in the political and bureaucratic apparatus, which had a big interest in maintaining the status quo. Additionally, he believed people's inclusion in the political process should be secured in order to develop economically. Another aspect of Glasnost was allowing the media more room for freedom. Editorials complaining of conditions and of the government's wrongdoing began to appear.

As economic and political circumstances were going only worse, Gorbachev focused on increasing his authority and his ability to make decisions. But he never got the power to establish those decisions. He became a constitutional dictator on paper, his policies were not put into practice. Yegor Ligachev was made head of the Central Committee Secretariat when he took office, one of two main centres of power with the Politburo. He became one of Gorbachev's opponents, making it difficult for him to use the party apparatus to implement his views on perestroika.

When dates showed summer of 1988, Gorbachev gained enough influence to break the chains that held him by the Central Committee Secretariat. He was now able to take the party out of the day-to-day running of the economy. This responsibility was to pass the local Soviets. With Gorbachev's precedence, a new parliament named the Congress of People's Deputies was formed in the Spring of 1989. This new body superseded the highest organ of state power, Supreme Soviet. The Congress elected a new Supreme Soviet, and Gorbachev, who had opted for an executive presidency modeled on the United States and French systems, became the Soviet president, with broad powers. This meant all the republics that constituted the USSR could adopt a similar type of presidency.

Gorbachev saw one more economic burden; the defence industry. It was approximately equal to 25 percent of the gross national product, and was wrecking the country. The overwhelming focus on the defence industry led to cuts in education, social services, and medical care. Thus, the huge spendings in the defence market in the Cold War years was one of the reasons for economic decline. Gorbachev wanted to change the country's foreign policy on that matter, so he traveled across the World and set up meetings to convince foreigners the USSR

was not an international threat anymore. His changes in foreign policy resulted in the democratization of eastern Europe and the End of the Cold War. On the other hand, Gorbachev's policies deprived the Soviet Union of ideological enemies, which in turn weakened the hold of Soviet ideology over the people.

The USSR's economic problems grew more great, rationing was introduced for some basic food products for the first time since Stalin, and calls for faster political reforms and decentralization began to increase even more. The nationality problem became a big burden for Gorbachev. The limited forces Soviets had were being used in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the Baltic States to suppress nationality problems, even though Gorbachev was never prepared to use force to regain the centre's control. The reemergence of Russian nationalism was another matter which tremendously weakened Gorbachev's leadership.

Gorbachev brought Boris Yeltsin to Moscow to run the city's party machine. But Yeltsin conflicted conservative members of the Politburo and was removed from his duty in Moscow in late 1987. He returned to public life as an elected deputy from Moscow to the Congress of People's Deputies in 1989. Yeltsin lost the elections for the Congress of People's deputies election of the Supreme Soviet as a standing parliament, since the Congress had an overwhelming communist majority. But this did not mark the end of Yeltsin's career, a Siberian deputy stepped down and Yeltsin had a national platform for the first time. He criticized Gorbachev, the Communist Party, corruption and the slow pace for economic reforms very harshly. He was then elected as the president of the Russian parliament despite his robust opposition to Gorbachev.

Gorbachev launched an all-union referendum about the future of the Soviet Union in March 1991. This referendum brought up some questions asked by Russia and several other republics. One of the Russian questions was were the voters in favour of a directly elected president. They were, and they chose Yeltsin. He used his newly gained position to develop radical economic reforms, demand Gorbachev's resignation, and to negotiate treaties with the Baltic republics, while acknowledging their rights of independence. Soviets efforts to prevent Baltic states' independence led to a bloody conflict in Vilnius in January 1991. Yeltsin called upon Russian troops to disobey any order which commands them to shoot unarmed civilians in the region.

Yeltsin's policies were reflecting the rise of Russian nationalism. Russians started to believe the Soviet system was working for its own political and economic interest at the cost of

Russia's expense. There were complaints rising, stating that Soviets had destroyed the Russian environment and mutilated Russia to back up their empire and poor republics. As a result, Yeltsin and his supporters demanded Russian control over its soil and resources. The Russian republic declared sovereignty in June 1990, establishing the primacy of Russian within the republic. This situation shattered Gorbachev's attempts to establish a Union of Sovereign Socialist Republics. Yeltsin wanted to go along with this vision of Gorbachev, but in reality, he wanted Russia to dominate the new union, replacing the former role of the Soviet Union. The Soviet parliament passed radical reform introducing the market economy, Yeltsin also cut the funding of a large number of Soviet agencies based on Russian soil. It was clear that Yeltsin wanted to get Russia free from the Soviet burden and disband the Soviets at the same time. In the last years of Gorbachev administration, the opinion which argues the Bolshevik Revolution and the establishment of the USSR were mistakes that had prevented Russia from walking the path Western did, and concluding in economic collapse gained great acceptance.

6. Nationalist Movements and Their Effects on Collapse of the USSR

According to some people, one of the key factors of the USSR's dissolution was the structure of the nation itself. There were 15 different states that committed themselves to the Soviet Union, with the existence of many other minorities who spoke different languages, followed different cultures and had different ethnicities. The problem with this situation is the overwhelming Russian majority often oppressed them, creating ethnic tensions for the minorities, especially for those living in Central Europe. It was hard for the minorities to understand that they were a part of the Union, since they were still getting discriminated against.

The nationalism movement started in the late 1980s and continued until 1990s, in Eastern Europe with the sole idea of bringing change in the regime for the better. The first country affected by this movement was Poland, and soon, it spread to other states of Europe. Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic States gaining independence played an important role in the weakening of the Soviet Union's geopolitical and political power.

There are also some strong other beliefs on why these states separated from the Union. According to some research, the Soviet attempt to invade Afghanistan played a serious role in that matter. The invasion of Afghanistan caused nothing but diseases and the death of almost 15,000 Soviet soldiers, encouraging the states on their path to independence. Now, we know the nationalist movement played a huge part in the collapse of the Union, it was not the only reason for it. Lack of freedom of speech and democracy, dominance of Russia over the discriminated minorities,, and economic and political breakdown were some of the many reasons why they collapsed.

It is important to mention that none of these changes would have been possible without the reforms brought up by Mikhail Gorbachev. When he was assigned as the leader of the Soviet Union during the mid 1980s, he created two important policies: "openness" and "restructuring", or "Perestroika" and "Glasnost" as we already know by now. These policies allowed activists and civilians to talk the worst about the regime of the Soviet Union. It is being guessed that Gorbachev gave those rights because he believed more rights would equal more political power. But giving those rights to people who have been tortured and arrested for speaking their mind, especially against government or policies, may not be the brightest idea. This was a huge opportunity for frustrated people of the USSR to speak against the government, and express their long oppressed feelings. For a population who has witnessed the wealth and power only for the politicians while average citizens were dying of starvation, these policies were big opportunities to speak out.

Additionally, these policies created an opportunity for minorities to speak about the discrimination they have been facing, and also gave them some power to announce their independence from the Union. Make no mistake, such independence and separation didn't mean that a few states were leaving the Union and forming their own countries, it meant that their social and economical status is in their own hands now. But it was a loss, politically and economically, for the USSR nonetheless.

4. Historical Background

1991 Soviet coup attempt, (August 19–21, 1991), an effort by Communist hard-liners to take control of the Soviet Union by detaining the President. Mikhail Gorbachev imprisoned. The

conspirators received minimal backing from the wider political and military community, and the coup fell apart within days. The coup attempt severely weakened Gorbachev's political position and hastened the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

4.1 The conspiracy against Gorbachev

The disintegration of the Soviet Union had been subtly evident for a while, but the decisive moment occurred at 4:50 pm on Sunday, August 18, 1991. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was at his dacha in the Foros resort of Crimea when four men reached out to him for a meeting. His main advisors included Valery Boldin, chief of staff; Oleg Baklanov, first deputy chairman of the U.S.S.R. defense council; Oleg Shenin, secretary of the CPSU Central Committee; and General Valentin Varennikov, head of the Soviet Army's ground forces. Accompanying them was KGB Gen. Yury Plekhanov, head of security for state and party officials. Their sudden arrival triggered Gorbachev's suspicions, and when he attempted to use the phone, it was out of order. They arrived to request, on behalf of the State Committee for the State of Emergency in the U.S.S.R., that Gorbachev sign a document announcing a state of emergency and handing authority to his vice president, Gennady Yanayev. They were surprised when Gorbachev declined and scolded them as traitorous extortionists. Gorbachev and his relatives were confined to their home by Gen. Igor Maltsev, the head of the Soviet Air Defense Forces. Both Gorbachev and his spouse, Raisa, later claimed that they had completely anticipated being murdered. Despite the disruption in external communication, Gorbachev managed to relay a message to Moscow, assuring them that he was in good health. Gorbachev's personal bodyguard stayed faithful during the incident, and they managed to create a basic receiver so the endangered president could understand what was occurring outside the dacha's walls. BBC and Voice of America transmissions informed Gorbachev about the coup's developments and the global response to it.

Shortly after 6:00 am Moscow time on August 19, TASS and Radio Moscow announced that Gorbachev was unable to fulfill his responsibilities due to "ill health," and that, per Article 127-7 of the Soviet constitution, Yanayev had taken on the presidential powers. Yanayev led a committee of eight members in an emergency situation. Other members included Baklanov; Vladimir Kryuchkov, head of the U.S.S.R. KGB; Premier Valentin Pavlov; Minister of

Internal Affairs Boris Pugo; Vasily Starodubtsev, leader of the Farmers' Union; Aleksandr Tizyakov, president of the U.S.S.R. Association of State Enterprises; and Defense Minister Marshal Dmitry Yazov. They promptly released Resolution No. 1, which prohibited strikes and protests and enforced media censorship. An address to the Soviet citizens asserted that "a life-threatening peril looms over our vast homeland."

The anticipated signing on August 20 of a new union treaty, which would have diminished central authority over the republics, seemed to clarify the timing of the coup. A strong criticism of the union treaty by Anatoly Lukyanov, head of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, was released by TASS on the morning of August 19. The Cabinet of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. convened later that morning, with the majority of ministers in favor of the coup. Every newspaper was prohibited except for nine.

Tanks emerged on the streets of Moscow, prompting the city's inhabitants to quickly try to persuade soldiers against following orders. Demonstrators started assembling near the White House and the Russian parliament building, and began constructing barricades. At 12:50 pm, the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin ascended on a tank outside the White House, denounced the coup, and urged an instant general strike. He subsequently released a presidential decree labeling the coup as unlawful and the conspirators as "criminals" and "traitors."

Russian authorities were to disregard the directives from the Emergency Committee. At 5:00 pm, Yanayev along with the other coup leaders conducted a press conference. Yanayev asserted that the nation had become "ungovernable" yet expressed hope that his "friend President Gorbachev" would one day come back to his position. Yanayev clarified that the president was "extremely fatigued" and was receiving "treatment in the southern region." He seemed noticeably anxious, and his hands shook throughout the presentation.

Yeltsin urged the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Aleksey II, to denounce the coup. The patriarch condemned Gorbachev's arrest and cursed those entangled in the scheme. At the same time, in Leningrad (currently St. Petersburg), Lieutenant. Gen. Viktor Samsonov proclaimed himself the head of the Leningrad State of Emergency Committee and imposed military authority over the city. Nonetheless, Leningrad's mayor, Anatoly Sobchak, flew back from Moscow with the help of KGB agents who were against the coup. Sobchak united the opposition and urged soldiers to surrender the officers who had assisted in organizing the coup. During this time, he gained Samsonov's trust, who assured that he would refrain from deploying troops in the city. In Moscow, several elite tank regiments deserted and established defensive positions near the White House.

On August 20, Yeltsin released a presidential decree proclaiming that he was assuming command of all military, KGB, and other forces within Russian territory. U.S. President George H.W. Bush called Yeltsin and guaranteed him that typical relations with Moscow would only be restored once Gorbachev was reinstated in power. That evening, clashes erupted between soldiers and protesters close to the White House, resulting in the deaths of three demonstrators.

The anticipated attack on the White House did not occur, and it was evident that the coup leaders' commands were not followed. Later, on August 21, the CPSU Secretariat requested a meeting between Gorbachev and Yanayev. The coup failed, and the conspirators were apprehended while attempting to escape. The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. restored Gorbachev and invalidated all decrees issued by the Emergency Committee. Yeltsin ordered that all businesses in Russia fall under the control of his administration.

4.2 Consequences of the coup

The coup did not succeed for various reasons. Military and KGB personnel refused to execute commands to assault the White House. The conspirators seemed to lack a backup strategy to handle Gorbachev's unwillingness to collaborate. The inability to detain Yeltsin prior to his arrival at the White House was significant, as he could gather backing from that location. Thousands of Muscovites gathered to support their democratically elected president, while Moscow police ignored the directives of the conspirators. The "gang of eight" failed to realize that democratization had made public opinion significant and that the populace would no longer passively comply with directives from above. The conspirators, mainly ethnic Russians, advocated for the military-industrial complex's interests.

On August 22, Gorbachev and his family came back to Moscow. Pugo shot his wife, but she wasn't killed, and then he took his own life. Subsequently, Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev, an advisor to Gorbachev and a former chief of the General Staff, took his own life, and Nikolay Kruchina, who served as the party's affairs administrator, also ended his life. Additional deaths occurred, and rumors spread that these suicides were, in fact, murders executed in revenge. Lukyanov, a companion of Gorbachev from their time as law students at Moscow State University, was named by Ivan Silayev, the premier of the Russian Republic, as the "main ideologue of the junta." Lukyanov rejected involvement but stepped down on August 26 and was quickly apprehended.

Yeltsin prohibited party organizations within all military units on Russian land, and Moscow marked the occasion with a large rally in front of the Russian parliament. The decline of the KGB was epitomized on the night of August 22, when a large statue of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the creator of the Soviet secret police, was knocked off its pedestal at Lubyanka Square in the heart of Moscow. That night, Gorbachev held a press conference where he disclosed that he still did not understand the CPSU was unchangeable by claiming he would cleanse the party of its “reactionary elements.” On August 24, Gorbachev stepped down as general secretary of the CPSU but remained in the party.

The coup represented the peak of a struggle between the traditional and emerging political, economic, and social systems that had begun after Gorbachev came to power in 1985. His reforms of perestroika and glasnost had initiated forces that were destined to clash eventually. Eduard Shevardnadze, Gorbachev's globally esteemed foreign minister, resigned in December 1990, stating that hard-liners were driving the nation toward authoritarianism. Aleksandr Yakovlev, a key figure in Gorbachev's reform initiative, resigned from the CPSU on August 16, 1991, stating that a “Stalinist faction within the party leadership was orchestrating a coup against the party and the state.” Indeed, tales of a forthcoming coup had circulated widely during the summer. These concerns seemed to be validated by a message in Sovetskaya Rossiya, the official newspaper of the Russian branch of the CPSU. It was an overt call for a coup and martial law, endorsed by two of the conspirators, Varennikov, Gen. Boris Gromov (the previous commander of Soviet troops in Afghanistan), along with eight others. Unfazed, Gorbachev responded to the open letter by taking a vacation.

The coup's failure resulted in the end of Soviet communism, but the CPSU's power had been declining since Gorbachev initiated reforms in 1985. The failure of the coup merely highlighted this decline by revealing the empty menace that the once-powerful Soviet apparatus had turned into. The CPSU encountered a yield of resentment and animosity due to its inability to create a contemporary, vibrant state and society. The significant economic downturn of the Soviet Union in the 1980s intensified ethnic conflicts and encouraged regionalism and nationalism. The coup, primarily aimed at stifling efforts to extend Russian sovereignty, hastened the dissolution of the Soviet empire.

8. End of Soviet Communism

The coup led to the downfall of Soviet communism, but the CPSU's influence was declining since Gorbachev's reforms in 1985. The coup obviously showed this decline by showcasing the hollow threat that the once-dominant Soviet apparat had become. The CPSU collected the results of their failures to establish a modern and dynamic society. The economic decline continuing since the 1980s had raised ethnic tensions and promoted regionalism and nationalism. The coup aimed at destroying the attempts for Russian sovereignty, hastened the Soviet breakup. Gorbachev, who had weakened the CPSU with his glasnost and perestroika reforms, now found his own influence totally lost by the last backlash against his efforts.

The period leading to the coup had two sides: attempts by the republics to gain more autonomy, and Gorbachev's attempts to keep the union together. There was blood dripping in many parts of the country. The attack made by Soviet Forces against the television station in Vilnius, Lithuania in 1991, resulted in the death of 14 civilians and 1 KGB officer. There were Special Purpose Police Units, known by the Russian acronym OMON, and the "black berets" of internal affairs among the used troops. These troops were under the command of Pugo, one of the coup's architects, and his deputy, Gromov, one of the signatories of the Sovetskaya Rossiya letter. Local commanders were "overreacting" according to Gorbachev, as he failed to condemn their behaviour. In the months before the coup, OMON was also active in Latvia as well as dozens of cities throughout the Soviet Union, and it quickly became notorious for their brutality.

On 17 March 1991, the first referendum was held in order to provide a public mandate for Gorbachev's desperate efforts to preserve the union, against the background of violence in the republics. About 76 percent of those who voted were supporting the idea of preserving the union, but the percentages were much lower where Yeltsin was popular. Voters in Ukraine gave Leonid Kravchuk their support to negotiate a new union treaty. On the other hand, Baltic states, Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia refused to hold the referendum at all. They conducted independence referendums instead. The three Baltic polls produced majorities who were in favour of independence. Georgians raised their voices to support their former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia to serve as the president of independent Georgia on May 26,

1991. The results were already determined in Armenia in their votes which were held three weeks after the coup. The all-union referendum had dramatically backfired, and the main victors were republics that either wished to weaken central power or to break with it entirely.

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