

Document-Based Question: In what ways did President Reagan successfully achieve nuclear arms reduction?

Part I:

Short Answer Questions: Analyze the documents by answering the short answer questions following each document.

Document 1 – Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida

Speech in which President Reagan discusses morality issues in America such as abortion, health care, and the nuclear arms race. He specifically discusses the Soviet Union (USSR) and that country's difference from the United States.

So...I urge you to beware the temptation of pride-the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration's efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real and verifiable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and one day, with God's help, their total elimination.

-Ronald Reagan, 8 March 1983

- 1.) What country is the "evil empire"?
- 2.) What does President Reagan want to happen to nuclear weapons one day?

Document 2 – Speech to Parliament in the Royal Gallery at the Palace of Westminster in London, United Kingdom

President Reagan explains his anti-communist stance while encouraging the British to aid the worldwide struggle for freedom. (Definition: Ash heap = garbage pile)

I have discussed on other occasions, including my address on May 9th, the elements of Western policies toward the Soviet Union to safeguard our interests and protect the peace. What I am describing now is a plan and a hope for the long term-the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people. And that's why we must continue our efforts to strengthen NATO even as we move forward with our Zero-Option initiative in the negotiations on intermediate-range forces and our proposal for a one-third reduction in strategic ballistic missile warheads.

-Ronald Reagan, 1982

- 1.) What will lead to Marxism-Leninism being tossed onto the "ash heap" of history?
- 2.) Why does the president believe NATO needs to be strong?

Document 3 – Signing of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in Washington, DC

President Reagan's remarks to General Secretary Gorbachev and world press concerning the signing of the INF Treaty later that afternoon.

For the first time in history, the language of "arms control" was replaced by "arms reduction" -- in this case, the complete elimination of an entire class of U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles. Of course, this required a dramatic shift in thinking, and it took conventional wisdom some time to catch up. Reaction, to say the least, was mixed. To some the zero option was impossibly visionary and unrealistic; to others merely a propaganda ploy. Well, with patience, determination, and commitment, we've made this impossible vision a reality.

*-Ronald Reagan,
8 December 1987*

1.) In what ways was this treaty different from past nuclear arms treaties from other administrations?

Document 4 – National Security Decision Directive #75

Document signed by President Reagan outlining U.S. policy toward the USSR on defense, economics, foreign policy, and arms negotiations.

A. Functional

1. Military Strategy: The U.S. must modernize its military forces -- both nuclear and conventional -- so that Soviet leaders perceive that the U.S. is determined never to accept a second place or a deteriorating military posture. Soviet calculations of possible war outcomes under any contingency must always result in outcomes so unfavorable to the USSR that there would be no incentive for Soviet leaders to initiate an attack. The future strength of U.S. military capabilities must be assured. U.S. military technology advances must be exploited, while controls over transfer of military related/dual-use technology, products, and services must be tightened.

Sustaining steady, long-term growth in U.S. defense spending and capabilities -- both nuclear and conventional. This is the most important way of conveying to the Soviets U.S. resolve and political staying-power.

-signed by Ronald Reagan, 17 January 1983

1.) What must the U.S. do to its military forces to keep pace in the nuclear race with the USSR? Which forces are mentioned in this document?

2.) What is the most important way to show the resolve of the U.S. to the Soviets?

Document 5 – Letter President Reagan sent to President Brezhnev of the Soviet Union introducing the idea of the Zero Option for arms control.

Concerning intermediate-range nuclear forces, the agreement to begin talks on these systems on November 30 in Geneva marks an important beginning in dealing with the difficult issue of the military imbalance in these forces. We are ready to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union which we believe is straightforward and fair. We are prepared to cancel our plan to deploy Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles on the condition that the Soviet Union in turn dismantles all of its SS-20 missiles, retires and dismantles its SS-4, and SS-5 missiles, and desists from further deployments of these or comparable systems.

-Ronald Reagan, 24 August 1981

1.) What did the president suggest the U.S. and USSR do with their nuclear weapons (which became known as the Zero Option)?

Document 6 – Presidential Address on Defense: the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

Speech outlining the modernization of America's conventional and nuclear arsenal in which President Reagan initiates the development of a system to defend against Soviet nuclear missiles.

What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies... Tonight, consistent with our obligations of the ABM treaty and recognizing the need for closer consultation with our allies, I'm taking an important first step. I am directing a comprehensive and intensive effort to define a long-term research and development program to begin to achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles. This could pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate the weapons themselves. We seek neither military superiority nor political advantage. Our only purpose—one all people share—is to search for ways to reduce the danger of nuclear war.

-Ronald Reagan, 23 March 1983

- 1.) Why did the president feel the SDI program was necessary?
- 2.) What did the president see as the ultimate goal of SDI, other than protecting the U.S. from the USSR? What would happen to nuclear weapons in general?

Document 7 – Memoranda of Conversation, Geneva Summit: Second plenary meeting and second private meeting

Summit convened in Geneva, Switzerland, between President Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR to discuss nuclear arms control and better superpower relations. After the second plenary meeting, President Reagan suggested that he and the General Secretary take a walk, where they spoke privately.

If the U.S. embarks on SDI, the following will happen: (1) no reduction of offensive weapons; and (2) Soviet Union will respond. This response will not be a mirror image of your program, but a simpler, more effective system. What will happen if you put in your "seven layers" of defense in space and we put in ours? It will just destabilize the situation, generate mistrust, and waste resources. It will require automatization which will place important decisions in the hands of computers and political leaders will just be in bunkers with computers making the decisions. This could unleash an uncontrollable process. You haven't thought this through; it will be a waste of money, and also will cause more distrust and more weapons.

*-Mikhail Gorbachev as
prepared by Jack Matlock, 19 November 1985*

During their brief walk from the villa at Fleur d'Eau to the pool house, the President and General Secretary Gorbachev did not discuss substance, confining their conversation to the President's old movies. In the course of that conversation the President suggested to Mr. Gorbachev that he inform Mr. Arbatov that he had made not only grade-B movies, but also a few good ones. Gorbachev mentioned that he had recently seen "Kings' Row" and had liked it very much.

During the walk back to the villa Gorbachev noted that this would not be their last meeting. The President expressed the hope that their next meeting would take place on U.S. soil, and said that he would be pleased to accept an invitation to visit the Soviet Union in return. Gorbachev agreed and suggested that dates and modalities be worked out by their respective staffs.

- 1.) What do the Soviets fear about U.S. defense policy? Why?
- 2.) What did the two leaders really accomplish at the second private meeting?

Document 8 – Correspondence addressed to General Secretary Gorbachev from President Reagan in which expresses his hopes for the future based on the recently completed Geneva Summit.

First, I want you to know that I found our meetings of great value. We had agreed to speak frankly, and we did. As a result, I came away from the meeting with a better understanding of your attitudes. I hope you also understand mine a little better. Obviously there are many things on which we disagree, and disagree very fundamentally. But if I understand you correctly, you too are determined to take steps to see that our nations manage their relations in a peaceful fashion. If this is the case, then this is one point on which we are in total agreement -- and it is after all the most fundamental one of all.

-Ronald Reagan,
5 December 1985

- 1.) What did Ronald Reagan learn about the leader of the Soviet Union from their Geneva Summit?

Document 9 – In his *Memoirs*, Mikhail Gorbachev recounts the Geneva Summit and what he truly took away from those meetings.

As it seems to me now, something important happened to each of us on that day, in spite of everything. I think there had been two factors at work – responsibility and intuition. I did not have this impression after lunch, and in the evening we were still clinging to our antagonistic positions. But the ‘human factor’ had quietly come into action. We both sensed that we must maintain contact and try to avoid a break. Somewhere in the back of our minds a glimmer of hope emerged that we could still come to an agreement.

-Mikhail Gorbachev,
1996

- 1.) What two factors were at work in Geneva, according to Mr. Gorbachev?
- 2.) Why was this important for future meetings?

Document 10 – Excerpt from *The Downing Street Years* by Margaret Thatcher

Former Prime Minister of England Margaret Thatcher talks about her role in opening dialogue between the United States and Soviet Union in the 1980s.

The other point which emerged was the Soviets’ distrust of the Reagan Administration’s intentions in general and of their plans for a Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) in particular. I emphasized on more than one occasion that President Reagan could be trusted and that the last thing he would ever want was war. I spoke, as I had in

-Margaret Thatcher,
1993

- 1.) How did Prime Minister Thatcher help get the U.S. and USSR to meet and discuss nuclear arms control?

Document 11 – Excerpt from *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to Six Cold War Presidents* by Anatoly Dobrynin

Excerpt from biography of former Soviet Ambassador to the United States who was present at the Geneva Summit in 1985.

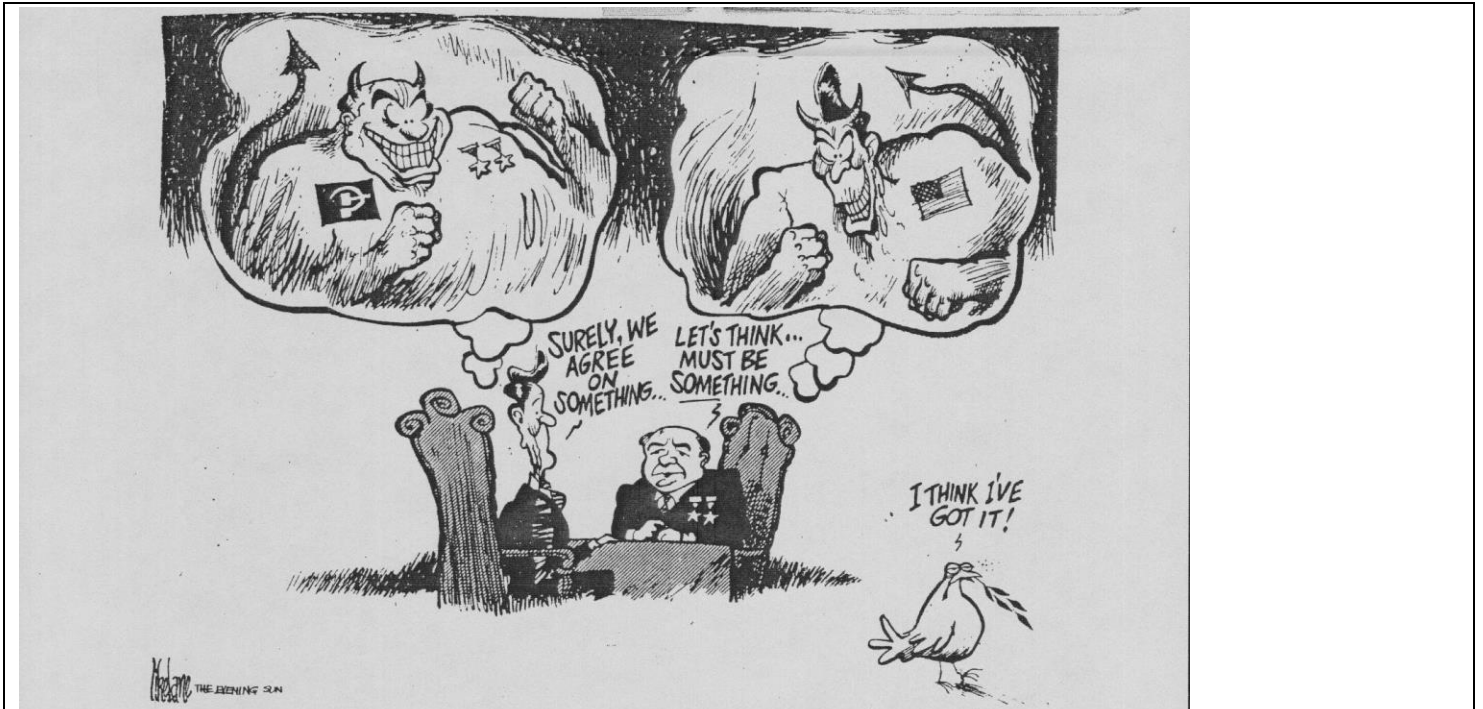
Coupled with the agreement to meet again and the final statement on nuclear war, this represented no small advance. Through the establishment of the first personal relationship with a Soviet leader during the five years of Reagan's presidency, a certain psychological barrier was overcome, first of all by Reagan himself with the realization that it was possible to do business directly with the Soviet leadership and the evil empire, after all. This laid foundations for further advances, although the relations themselves remained complex. The first Reagan-Gorbachev summit could therefore be considered a success. It was not a strategic breakthrough, but it did unquestionably yield a certain moral and political benefit and paved the way for the summits that followed. I got the impression, as I observed both leaders, that they had found ways of communicating with each other.

It may sound like a historical paradox, in particular for Reagan's admirers, but if the president had not abandoned his hostile stance toward the Soviet Union for a more constructive one during his second term, Gorbachev would not have been able to launch his reforms and his "new thinking." Quite the contrary, Gorbachev would have been forced to continue the conservative foreign and domestic policies of his predecessors in defense of the nation against America. And who knows how the world then would have developed?

-Anatoly Dobrynin, 2001

- 1.) What does Dobrynin believe to be the results of the first personal relationship between a president and Soviet leader?
- 2.) What did President Reagan do that made it possible for Gorbachev to initiate reforms in the USSR (and sign treaties such as the INF treaty)?

Document 12 – Political Cartoon from the Geneva Summit.



1.) What does this cartoon say about U.S. and USSR perceptions of each other?

Part II

Essay: Write an essay that answers the question in the box below. Your essay should have an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Your introduction should have a thesis statement. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence and quotes from the documents that support your topic sentence, plus use any facts or details from your prior knowledge. The conclusion should restate your thesis statement.

Honors: You should use at least 6 of the documents.

Academic: You will use at least 4 of the documents.

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