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The framework for defeating a totalitarian ideology has five components and applies to the defeat of future totalitarian ideologies. First, identify ideological inconsistencies that are vulnerable to subversion. Second, form an effective alliance with those aligned to defeat the ideology against those that embrace the ideology. Third, undermine the ideology by exposing the inconsistencies to subvert its legitimacy. Fourth, provide an alternative system to replace the existing one. Fifth, and finally, develop a sense of confidence within the people that the alternative system is delivering what it promises.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**HOW TO DEFEAT A TOTALITARIAN IDEOLOGY:  
THE LESSONS OF THE FALL OF COMMUNISM**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** How to Defeat of a Totalitarian Ideology: The Lessons of the Fall of Communism

**Author:** Major Matthew D. Utley, United States Army

**Thesis:** Analysis of the fall of the Soviet Union, and the Communist ideology with which it became synonymous, provides the historical basis for developing an analytic framework for defeating future totalitarian ideologies.

**Discussion:** An alliance defeats a totalitarian ideology when the ideology loses momentum and an alternative system becomes available. The United States, and its allies, worked to halt the momentum of Communism through the strategy of containment and presented an alternative in the form of capitalist democracy. The Soviet Union, a totalitarian government, sought to control all aspects of the lives of its subjects in pursuit of a classless state – the Communist version of utopia. The absolute control of a totalitarian state is incompatible with human nature. To overcome the incompatibility, the Soviets maintained absolute control through extreme levels of coercion that produced incredible levels of human suffering. Thus, Communism, and other totalitarian ideologies, inevitably burn themselves out. However, the rest of the world should concern itself with ending the totalitarian ideology as quickly as possible to limit the resulting human suffering.

The US's effort to halt the momentum of Communism sought to identify fissures that made the Soviet system vulnerable to subversion, determined the need for allied partners, and worked with its partners to frustrate the Soviet system. The US and its partners presented an alternative system to the Soviets – democracy – while they exposed the Communist system's economic and military shortcomings. The arms race exhausted the capacity of the Soviet economy. Once Communism became obviously inadequate, Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to reform Communism to preserve Communist rule. Inadvertently, Gorbachev's reforms ushered in the fall of Communism, and the Soviet Union. The speed of the fall of the Soviet Union demonstrated not only the fragility of the Communist ideology but the need for the new system to earn the confidence of its subjects. After Gorbachev's adoption of democratic socialism and Boris Yeltsin's adoption of the capitalist free markets, the Russian people needed to see social conditions improving from the terrible conditions brought about by decades of Communism.

Communism in the Soviet Union provides an excellent case study for the process to defeat a totalitarian ideology. Communism had become synonymous with the Soviet Union. Thus, the fate of Communism rested with the fate of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the West could defeat the Soviet Union by defeating the totalitarian ideology of Communism.

**Conclusion:** Analysis of the defeat of the totalitarian ideology of Communism suggests five components. Further research will examine if this framework applies to the defeat of future totalitarian ideologies. The five components of this framework are first, identify ideological inconsistencies that are vulnerable to subversion. Second, form an effective alliance with those aligned to defeat the ideology against those that embrace the ideology. Third, undermine the ideology by exposing the inconsistencies to subvert its legitimacy. Fourth, provide an alternative system to replace the existing one. Fifth, and finally, develop a sense of confidence within the people that the alternative system is delivering what it promises.



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## *Preface*

This study of totalitarianism is the first step in a long-term effort to determine how to defeat an ideology. I began with the question, “How do you kill an idea?” Specifically, how do you kill the idea that underlies the al’ Qaida networks and the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant? That idea is totalitarian Islamism. Through an abstract line of thinking, I developed a mental model for defeating an idea. I chose to test that model against as a historical precedent, the defeat of the totalitarian ideology of Communism. This case study of the defeat of Communism provides a historical basis for it the analytic framework and methodology for action. I intend the paper not to recount the history of the fall of the Communism, but to use that history to guide the development of a methodology for defeating current and future totalitarian threats. As with any framework or methodology, there are limits to its application. The current totalitarian threat is totalitarian Islamism, but it is nearly a certainty that totalitarian ideologies will continue when my children study the al’ Qaida networks and the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant as a regrettable time in our history, not as a current event. The perennial quest for utopia is admirable in its goals, but loathsome in its application. For the result of the quest for utopia is totalitarianism. Any effort dedicated to preventing the next wave of human suffering caused by the pursuit of utopia is worthwhile. But, just as human effort cannot achieve a perfect society, human effort cannot prevent the pursuit of a perfect society. Thus, the task of all decent men and women is to diminish the damage done by the pursuit of a perfect society.

I must thank Doctor Douglas E. Streusand for the time, patience, guidance, and wisdom he has both shown me and imparted in me. Without his mentorship, this work would be woefully incomplete, and more than likely, a box left unchecked on my lifelong to-do list. He has provided direction, correction, and clarity that would have been otherwise absent. Thank you.

I would be remiss if I omitted a gracious thank you to my peers, mentors, friends, and family who have endured many conversations that have challenged my thinking and provided valuable insight. Thank you.

Most of all, this would not be possible without the incredible support I continually receive from my wife, Ginn, and two sons, W. Barnes and M. Borders. Without their support and understanding, this would still be an idea in my head, not a framework in the cold light of day. Ginn, you exceed all expectations I have ever dreamt of for a best friend, wife, and mother of our children. Thank you. Boys, the world can be as great as you make it, chase your dreams every day.

Any shortcomings of this work are mine alone.

## **Introduction**

*"We have not defeated the idea. We do not even understand the idea,"*<sup>1</sup> – Major General Mike Nagata, Commander, US Special Operations Command - Central

This paper aims to analyze of the fall of Communism in order to inform future efforts to defeat other totalitarian ideologies. To accomplish that end, a case study of the fall of Communism provides the historical basis for the framework to defeat future totalitarian threats. This paper categorizes the major causes of the defeat of Communism to form the proposed framework. Furthermore, this study will emphasize the benefits of the indirect approach to defeating a totalitarian ideology. As B. H. Liddell Hart describes the kinetic version of the indirect approach, it seeks to weaken, or evade, the enemy's defenses prior to delivering a decisive blow from an unexpected direction.<sup>2</sup> This study emphasizes the informational equivalent of the indirect approach with a framework that requires a significant understanding of the ideology.

What is more, Major General Nagata highlighted the lack of a broad basis of understanding the ideology that is Sunni Totalitarian Islamism. To understand the current totalitarian ideology, this case study of Communism provides insight into the pursuit of a utopian society that yields a totalitarian state. Aspirants of a utopian society seek an ideal world where all things are equal and the people live in harmony. The pursuit of a utopian society results in a totalitarian state because the leaders must control every aspect of society in order to suppress man's competitive nature and achieve equality. Creating a perfect society requires perfecting human nature. Totalitarian systems seek to control every aspect of the society in order to bring about utopia. The totalitarian system requires its subjects to forfeit their individualism to pursue

utopia. When the subjects fail forfeit their individualism, the totalitarian system uses extreme levels of coercion in the continued pursuit of utopia. Thus, totalitarian societies are fundamentally in conflict with human nature. The totalitarian system of implementing Communism set the stage for Communism's inevitable defeat.

Therefore, the analysis will answer the following research questions:

- How and why did Communism fail (or lose its mass appeal)?
- Does the fall of Communism fit the model for defeating a totalitarian ideology?

## **How to Defeat a Totalitarian Ideology: The Lessons of the Fall of Communism**

*“[T]he superiority of the indirect over the direct approach ... Conversion is achieved more easily and rapidly by unsuspected infiltration of a different idea ... that turns the flank of instinctive opposition... As in war, the aim is to weaken resistance before attempting to overcome it....”<sup>3</sup> – B. H. Liddell Hart*

### **Case Study: The Fall of the Communism**

A case study of the fall of the Soviet Union provides the historical basis for the framework to defeat future totalitarian threats. The fall of the Soviet Union provides an excellent example because it embodied a totalitarian ideology, and the grand strategies for containing and defeating the Soviet Union have been declassified. What is more, because the Soviet Union and Communism became synonymous, it was possible to defeat Communism by defeating the Soviet Union. That is, the struggle against the Marxist ideology became a struggle against the Soviet state. The dependent relationship between Communism and the Soviet Union provides a clearly defined and observable end to a totalitarian ideology.

### **The Communist Ideology: The Setup for Inevitable Defeat**

*“Marxism is only an episode - one of the many mistakes we have made in the perennial and dangerous struggle for building a better and freer world.”<sup>4</sup> -Karl Popper*

As several scholars of Marxism, notably Robert C. Tucker, have argued, Marx's view of history mirrored Christianity's. He labeled his version of the Garden of Eden primitive

Communism, a society without private property or inequality. The division of labor was his original sin. History, driven by changes in the means of production that led to increasing exploitation of the workers, would bring humankind to redemption. The culminating point would come when capitalist exploitation produced revolutionary class-consciousness among the workers and provoked a socialist revolution. After the establishment of socialist regime and the elimination of private property and inequality, the socialist regime would atrophy and humanity would have returned to Communism, or paradise. Marx regarded this evolution as inevitable, but uncontrollable. Socialist revolution could occur only when exploitation produced revolutionary awareness, and thus would happen only in the most advanced industrial countries.<sup>5</sup>

Marx asserted that the cause of human misery was private property. The possession of private property made a society class aware as some had more property than others. Marx sought to remove class distinction by abolishing the source of class awareness – private property. Thus, in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx states, “the theory of Communism may be summed up in a single sentence: abolition of private property.”<sup>6</sup> Marx intended to abolish all private property to remove the source of human suffering in the pursuit of a classless state. Abolishing private property would remove the tangible artifacts of inequality and curb man’s competitive pursuit of private property. Therefore, removing the artifacts of an unequal society, and curbing man’s competitive desires would create a state of equality. The equal, classless state is the Communist version of utopia.<sup>7</sup> The tragedy of the perennial pursuit of utopia is the enormous levels of human tragedy that occur along the way.

Karl Marx produced the theory of Communism; Vladimir Lenin studied the theories and implemented Communism in the Soviet Union. Lenin agreed with Marx’s belief that Communism was the inevitable course of history. However, Lenin believed in the possibility of

accelerating the course of history. Lenin did not want to wait for natural social change, but rather he implemented Communism to accelerate social change. Lenin, and his successors, forced the Soviet people to accept Communism. Implementing Communism required three things: first, strict adherence to their ideology, second, isolation of the Soviet people, and third, coercion of their people. Like the three legs of a stool, the Kremlin used ideology, isolation, and coercion to prop up the Soviet efforts to overcome the free will of the Soviet subjects.

Strict adherence to the Communist ideology was the first leg of the Soviet stool. The Communist ideology is on par with the ideological commitments of religions. Although Communism is not a religion, the commitment to, and belief in, the ideology requires a similar level of commitment. Just as many religions require its followers to “have faith” in some foundational truths, Communism required its citizens to believe that Communism was fundamentally superior to democracy, even if the evidence indicated otherwise. Further, Communism required an air of righteous superiority. According to the Soviets, Communism was the superior form of government and time would demonstrate the superiority of the Communist system over the capitalist. The Soviets gained control of the Communist brand when Soviet policy fashioned the 3<sup>rd</sup> Communist International. Lenin broke from the Second Communist International by rejecting pacifism and nationalism and called for transnational class warfare.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Communism required the people to submit to the absolute authority of the Kremlin to achieve the promises of the Communist ideology – the classless state. The Soviets required strict adherence to the Communist ideology to uphold the illusion of Communist superiority.

Isolation of the Soviet people is the second leg of the Soviet stool. Upholding the illusion of Communist superiority was virtually impossible without exerting absolute power and without isolation. Karl Marx vilified the capitalist bourgeoisie as the enemy of equality because the

workers did not control the means of production, leaving the workers divided and subject to the tyranny of the managing class. To overcome the oppression of the working class, Marx wanted the workers to control the means of production. Once the workers controlled the means of production, their ownership of the process would make them superior to the capitalist who divided their labor and oppressed the working class. If the capitalist are the enemy of equality and the Communist are the champions of equality then the Soviet system required the working class conditions under Communism to be better than under capitalism, or it required that the Kremlin control the narrative. The Kremlin chose to control the narrative through isolation. Winston Churchill in his Iron Curtain speech stated, "...an [I]ron [C]urtain has descended across the continent...and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow."<sup>9</sup> NSC-68, the United States strategy to contain the Soviet Union, stated, "...the [I]ron [C]urtain, the isolation, the autarchy of the society whose end is absolute power..." demonstrated one of the essential methods required to implement Communism in the Soviet Union.<sup>10</sup> Preventing the exposure of the Communist system as inferior to capitalism required isolating the Soviet Union from the progress of the non-Soviet countries.

Coercion was the third leg of the Soviet stool. The Kremlin's means of achieving the classless state required absolute power. They required absolute power to persuade the Soviet people that the Communist ideology was superior to capitalism and absolute power to isolate them from the non-Communist world. When the ideology and isolation proved to be insufficient, the Kremlin used fear and terror to reshape the society towards Communism and to quell the spread of counter-Communist sentiments. To achieve an effective level of fear, the Soviet Union employed Secret Police, suppressed free speech, and murdered its own citizens. NSC-68 states

that, the Soviet system rules “through force, fear, and favor” to hold the Union together.<sup>11</sup> The Soviet system relied on fear and terror to achieve the absolute power the Kremlin required to uphold the illusion of the Communist state.

To summarizing the methods the Soviets used to uphold the Communist illusion, the Kremlin required unquestioning adherence to the Communist ideology, isolation to prevent exposing the inferiority of Communism compared to capitalism and when the isolation and ideology proved to be insufficient, the Kremlin used extreme levels of coercion to prevent widespread dissent. Removing, or undermining, any leg of three legs of the Soviet stool would attack the core of the ideology and signal the end of the illusion of Communism.

### **Containing Communism**

Although hindsight supports the perspective of the inevitable defeat of the totalitarian system in the Soviet Union, that inevitability was not apparent in the 1950s. Circa 1950, “the spread of Communism to the rest of the world seemed only a matter of time.”<sup>12</sup> Contributing to this sentiment was the series of victories the Communist experienced. Following the victory of World War II, the Allies conceded effective control of Eastern Europe to the Soviets, who established Communist governments throughout the region. The decline in power of Germany, Japan, France, and Britain, combined with the development of the Soviet Union and the United States, produced a shift in the global balance of power.<sup>13</sup> Further, while the long-running world powers were decreasing in strength, the Soviets were gaining in strength. The Soviets rapidly grew their economic and military power, while they gained territory in Eastern Europe, and while China successfully completed a Communist revolution. The resulting two world powers,

United States and the Soviet Union, held opposing approaches to governing and economic progress. The Soviet Union endeavored to “impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world.”<sup>14</sup> While the United States endeavored to “assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.”<sup>15</sup> The United States, and the Truman Doctrine, recognized the Soviet Union as an ideological and geopolitical adversary.

Organizing the alliance to contain Communism began in 1947, under President Truman, when the United States “abandon[ed] the customary aversion to foreign alliances [and] took over Britain’s role of containing any power that threatened international equilibrium.”<sup>16</sup> The Truman Doctrine, as it is now known, changed the approach to United States foreign policy from removing the United States from regional conflicts towards intervening in regional affairs.<sup>17</sup> In 1950, the United States strategy to contain Communism acknowledged the requirement for “a healthy international community.”<sup>18</sup> Further, the National Security Council stated, “it was, and continues to be, cardinal in this policy that we possess superior overall power in ourselves or in dependable coordination with other like-minded nations.”<sup>19</sup> The United States understood the importance of a healthy international alliance, capable of influencing the economic and military elements of the Soviet Union.<sup>20</sup>

To maintain the free society, the United States intended to contain the Soviet Union and recruited the support of its allied partners. The United States leveraged the newly formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization to contain the Soviet Union’s spread to the west, and worked in the Pacific to contain Soviet expansion to the east. Highlighting the need for global partnerships to contain the Soviet expansion, in 1950 NSC-68 stated, “[i]t is only by developing the moral and material strength of the free world that the Soviet regime will become convinced of the falsity of its assumptions and that the pre-conditions for a workable agreement can be created.”<sup>21</sup> Further,

NSC-68 stated, “[t]he Kremlin regards the United States as the only major threat to the achievement of its fundamental design.”<sup>22</sup> Since the Kremlin viewed the United States, and their Allies, as a threat to their existence, the Allied partners could compel the Soviet Union to act in a way that would drive the Soviets to confront a dilemma. NSC-68 stated, “...it might be possible to create a situation which will induce the Soviet Union to accommodate itself, with or without the conscious abandonment of its design to the coexistence on tolerable terms with the non-Soviet world ... such a development would be a triumph for the idea of freedom and democracy.”<sup>23</sup> Since the Soviet Union viewed the United States, and its Allies, as a threat to the Soviet system, the Allies were capable of slowing or reversing the political, military, and economic rise of the Soviet Union that would undercut the Communist ideology.

In summary, the United States deliberately emphasized the importance of the alliance in NSC-68, when it stated, “...the policies designed to develop a healthy international community are more than ever a necessary to our own strength.”<sup>24</sup> The United States used this international strength to frustrate the Soviet system.

The United States and its allies had to contain the Communist expansion if they wanted to “assure the vitality and integrity of the free society”.<sup>25</sup> Success in containing the Soviet Union in the 1950s came in three forms: the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the establishment of an independent West Germany, and the intervention in Korea. These actions checked the expansion of the Communist ideology but were not ends in and of themselves.

In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev, the first Secretary following Stalin’s death, delivered what is now his “secret speech” to the twentieth congress. In this speech, Khrushchev highlighted a series of crimes Stalin committed against the ruling elite of the Soviet Union, undermined the legitimacy of Stalin’s thirty years of power. Richard Pipes in *Communism: A History* states, “[a]s

a result of those revelations, Stalin promptly turned into a non-person.”<sup>26</sup> The magnitude of the speech, and the level in which it frustrated the Soviet system is captured by Furet when he opines “Khrushchev’s “secret speech”...may be the most important text in the history of Communism.”<sup>27</sup> The importance of the speech and the effect of Stalin becoming a non-person was that it created the first cracks in the foundation of the Communist ideology.

The de-Stalinization period also begged the ideological question if the Soviet Union was a Marxist State. A Marxist state removes the human political condition from society.<sup>28</sup> The de-Stalinization period and the political fight for succession showed thirty years of strict Communist rule was ineffective at removing the politics from society. As Pipes stated, “there were only two possible solutions, neither acceptable: either Marx materialist theory was wrong and history was, after all, determined by politics and politicians, or else the Soviet Union was not a Marxist State.”<sup>29</sup> However, that question was not asked in 1956, in part due to the fear and terror the Communist party ruled with.

The challenges the satellite states faced after Stalin’s death, as Furet highlights, “...by opening the door to denunciation of past “errors”, they weakened the dictatorships of their affiliated parties in their respective countries.”<sup>30</sup> The timing and effects of de-Stalinization undermined the victories the Communist won in the early 1950s.

While the United States was containing the expansion of the Soviet Union in the 1950s, that same expansion was not only a strength but also a weakness. Increasingly, the Soviet satellite states drained the Soviet economy, as they required more subsidies and grants to prop up the newly formed Communist governments than they provided in economic power.<sup>31</sup> Further, the Communist satellite states were five of six years old when the Soviet system began to weaken following Stalin’s death.<sup>32</sup> If the period following Stalin’s death cracked the foundation of the

well-established Soviet Union, then it shook the foundation of legitimacy for the newly established Communist satellites.

With regard to foreign policy, Stalin's heirs had to decide whether to maintain Stalin's confrontational style of foreign policy or to reevaluate. Stalin's heirs decided to abandon his approach and adopt "peaceful coexistence" as their new foreign policy. This new strategy of peaceful coexistence was not a change in Soviet intentions but it inadvertently brought many challenges to light. First, it continued to delegitimize the previous thirty years of Stalin's rule, by departing from his foreign policies. Second, as Pipes states, it is arguing for peaceful coexistence with socialist, "which Lenin viewed as Communist's worst enemy." What is more, the combination of contradicting both Lenin and Stalin, with one policy change, further eroded the legitimacy of the Kremlin's rule. Third, and finally, peaceful coexistence undermined the isolation that the Soviets require to maintain the myth of the Soviet system.<sup>33</sup> Isolation was one of the fundamental requirements for upholding the illusion of Communism. Richard Pipes says it best, "it turned out Stalin was right: the system could survive only if it kept its people, including the highest officials, fully insulated from the external world."<sup>34</sup>

As the de-Stalinization period called into question the legitimacy of the totalitarian ruler, and the policy of "peaceful coexistence" was antithetical to the isolation of the Soviet people. The coercion the Soviets ruled with, the third leg of the stool, was also unsustainable once the voices of the oppressed were heard. The very nature of the relationship between the Kremlin and its subjects was the greatest vulnerability, as assessed by the National Security Council.<sup>35</sup> The Soviet Union maintained fear and terror within the hearts and minds of their people in pursuit of absolute control. When adherence to the ideology and the isolation of the population was

insufficient to prevent dissent, the Kremlin used fear and terror to uphold the illusion of Communism.

After decades of suppressing inconsistencies with the Communist ideology, easing the strict isolation of the Soviet people, and the relaxation of the fear and terror it became clear in 1985 that “the regime confronted a dilemma: it could either continue stifling all opinion and slowly suffocate the country or it could release it and risk a destructive explosion.”<sup>36</sup>

In the 1980’s “living standards of ordinary citizens fell below even the low minimal norms set by the state...nearly one-half of the Soviet population earned less than ten dollars a month.”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, government corruption was rampant, drunkenness endemic, and stealing from the state was widespread. In fact, the Soviet people openly accepted the saying “if you do not steal from the government you are stealing from your family.”<sup>38</sup> The Soviet system was no longer able to provide what it promised. Francois Furet captured the Soviet problem well when he wrote, “the Kremlin’s margin for maneuver shrank even as its power grew.”<sup>39</sup>

The summation of factors: de-Stalinization, oppression of Soviet people, containment of Communism, and the adoption of “peaceful coexistence” placed the Soviet Union in a genuine dilemma “that could not be solved with force.”<sup>40</sup> As the 1983 Reagan Grand Strategy intended, the United States, its Allies, and the course of events in the Soviet Union forced the Soviets to accommodate themselves. All sectors of public life suffered. The Soviet Union had to reform to keep Communism viable.<sup>41</sup> To reform Communism, Mikhail Gorbachev sought to induce Communism with particles of capitalism. This involved two things: free speech and incentives for superior performance.<sup>42</sup> Making these reforms undermined the ideology, isolation, and fear required to uphold the illusion of Communism. As Furet states in *The Passing of an Illusion*, “what wrecked Communism was the questioning of its two fundamental passions – fear and

belief. The reduction of fear called into question the foundations of the beliefs, for in freeing people's mind it forced the leaders to revert to the use of terror."<sup>43</sup> In the fall of 1988, the realization that reforms to Communism were futile and its downfall inevitable, it became apparent; the Soviets had to abandon Communism.

### **Gorbachev Attempts Reforms**

To this point, the United States efforts focused on stopping the momentum of Communism and exposing the inconsistencies in the ideology. However, halting the momentum of Communism alone did not bring about the changes the United State sought in the Soviet system. To change the Soviet system an alternative had to be present for the Soviets to adopt in place of Communism. The alternative the United States desired for the Soviets was, at worst, reform their behavior to acceptable international standards, and at best, abandon Communism. NSC-68 stated, "the idea of slavery can only be overcome by the timely and persistent demonstration of the superiority of the idea of freedom."<sup>44</sup> NSDD-75, the Reagan Grand Strategy of 1983, stated, "[United States] policies should seek wherever possible to encourage Soviet allies to distance themselves from Moscow in foreign policy and to move toward democratization domestically."<sup>45</sup> The United States direct economic and military efforts came to a culminating point in the mid-1980s when it became inevitable the Soviets would have to attempt to reform Communism to keep it viable. Since the commitment to reforms to Communism came from an accepted Communist leader, not from an outsider, the Soviets accepted the legitimacy of the reforms.

As an example of halting the momentum of Communism but not having an alternative, de-Stalinization did not ruin Communism in the 1950's in part because, as Furet writes "[t]he events of 1956 demonstrate the inability of Khrushchev and his friends to redefine any alternative policy."<sup>46</sup> De-Stalinization, among other factors, undermined Communism in Russia but Communism continued to exist, in part because there was no alternative produced by a legitimate authority. That is until Mikhail Gorbachev became the First Secretary of the Politburo in 1985. Given the task of reforming Communism, but blocked at each turn by the Russian elite, Gorbachev and his advisors "concluded that Communism was unreformable and took steps to transform the [Soviet Union] to a democratic socialist state."<sup>47</sup> Gorbachev intended to keep the Communist Party in power; however, his reforms inadvertently set a course for the fall of Communism.

The United States began messaging the alternative form of governance to the Communist people dating back to at least 1950. The National Security Council began sowing seeds of freedom towards the Russian People through the thought that "the idea of freedom is the most contagious idea in history, more contagious than the idea of submission to authority."<sup>48</sup> Freedom was the centerpiece of the alternative to the "slavery" of Communism. Furthermore, the National Security Council, in 1983, continued to press for an alternative to Communism to be "a more pluralistic political and economic system."<sup>49</sup> The United States grand strategy went on to state "United States policy must have an ideological thrust which clearly affirms the superiority of the United States and Western values of individual dignity and freedom, a free press, free trade unions...political democracy over the repressive feature of Soviet Communism."<sup>50</sup> Frustrating the Soviet system, and presenting an alternative, took decades and many steps however; a few incidents prove particularly useful to demonstrate the United States foreign policy.

A few high-level Soviet leaders visited western countries, in particular Boris Yeltsin's visit in 1989, went along way to erode "whatever still remained of his Communist faith..." which demonstrated the power of the alternative to Communism – freedom.<sup>51</sup>

The combined effects of demonstrating the superiority of freedom and the overall relaxation of the Communist government, concerning ideology, isolation, and coercion gave rise to internal dissidence.<sup>52</sup> Relaxing the hold on the Soviet people, who legitimately questioned the foundation of the ideology, and with the social conditions at record lows, the conditions were set for an alternative to take hold.<sup>53</sup> Gorbachev "ended the political monopoly of the Communist party by authorizing the convocation of a Congress of People's Deputies, a number of whose representatives were directly chosen by the citizens."<sup>54</sup> With the ideology of Communism undermined and with an alternative system in motion the Soviet people had to develop confidence that the democratic socialist reforms would deliver on its promises and that it was not merely an extension of Communism.

### **Russia Develops Confidence**

During the 1980's, Communism's demise was apparent, so much so the Communist elite lost faith. The free world outpaced the Soviet Union "in every field of endeavor – except military expenditures and alcohol consumption."<sup>55</sup> The Soviet people observed a gap in what Communism promised and what actually occurred. Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms of a democratic socialist state offered to remedy the gap between what Communism promised and what Communism provided, while living up to the promises of the new socialist state.

For Russia, the speed of change, the fall of Communist ideology, came at such “dizzying speeds” it aided the accumulation of momentum required to allow people to develop a level of confidence in the system. Satellite country after satellite country declared independence from Moscow, and finally the declaration of Russia as a Sovereign state occurred in December 1991. Boris Yeltsin, and the democratic socialist state gained momentum, “outlawed the Communist party... [and] proclaimed democracy and the free market”.<sup>56</sup> As Pipes states, “once the Communist party lost its political monopoly, the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a foregone conclusion.”<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, after the Berlin Wall fell “the speed at which these events unfolded revealed the extreme fragility of an empire that seemed to be indestructible.”<sup>58</sup>

The grand strategy exposed the ideology as flawed in a manner that if “the quest for perfect social equality that had driven utopian community since antiquities ever resumes, it will not take the form of Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>59</sup> The grand strategy defeated the idea of Communism in the Soviet Union.

### **How to Defeat a Totalitarian Ideology: A Framework**

To defeat a totalitarian ideology, an effective alliance against the ideology must contain the totalitarian’s momentum and then provide an alternative. The course of history has demonstrated that a direct assault on an ideology meets “stubborn resistance” and makes it harder to convince the ideologues that their ideology is flawed. The indirect approach, the one that “weakens resistance before attempting to overcome it...[and]...draws[s] the other party out of his defences[,]” has an easier time defeating the natural opposition to the alternative system.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, employing the indirect approach to defeat a totalitarian ideology is critical to the success of any strategy with the same objective.

Employing the indirect approach to defeat the Soviet Union, the United States had two principle objectives: contain the Communist's momentum and set the conditions for a suitable alternative. Accomplishing these two principles objectives required a series of subordinate steps. Containing Communist momentum, via the indirect approach, required the identification of ideological inconsistencies, formation of an effective alliance against the ideology, and exposing the ideological inconsistencies to undermine the ideology. The importance of exposing the inconsistencies and undermining the ideology is that it weakened the enemy's defenses prior to overcoming him. To overcome the Soviet Union, it was not enough for the United States, and its Allies, to expose the ideological inconsistencies of Communism; a viable alternative had to be available. Setting the conditions for the Soviet Union to adopt an alternative to Communism required the presence of a feasible, acceptable, and suitable alternative. In the Soviet Union, the alternative to Communism was a democratic socialist state. Once adopted, the Russian people had to develop confidence that the alternative was remedying the issues of its predecessor and was not merely an extension of Communism. Therefore, there were five requirements to defeat a totalitarian ideology: identify ideological inconsistencies, form an effective alliance, undermine the ideology by exposing the inconsistencies, provide an alternative, and develop confidence in the new ideology.

### **Identify the Inconsistencies:**

Ideology, isolation, and coercion – the requirements for upholding the illusion of Communism provides a structure for thinking about the ideological inconsistencies of Communism. First, Communist ideology was in conflict with human nature, was divided between what Marx envisioned and Lenin implemented and was economically inferior to capitalism. Second, the isolation required by the Kremlin was antithetical to the expansion the Soviet Union sought. Third, the levels of coercion required to suppress opposition and maintain order created a pressure cooker-like environment where the longer the pressure built, the tighter the seal had to be. These issues drove a wedge between the Kremlin and the Soviet People. Further, the United States would leverage these issues to identify a say-do gap within the Soviet system to undermine Communism.

The first requirement for upholding the illusion of Communism and the first category of inconsistencies is the ideology. The Communist ideology was in conflict with human nature, divided between what Marx envisioned and Lenin implemented, and was economically inferior to capitalism.

Communism is irreconcilably conflicted with human nature. The roots of the conflict between utopia and human nature stretch across history, back at least as far as Plato and demonstrate the core of human nature is the desire for possessions. Whether a society measures wealth in materials possessions such as ownership of a cars, homes, planes, or of ownership of cows, sheep, or camels, societies have long sought and continue to seek possessions as a measure of societal status. The chase for societal status is what Communism sought to remove by creating a classless state, thus, Communist sought to abolish private property.

In Plato's discussion on social equality, he opined the ideal society is one in which the individual submits to society, or dissolves into society. In *Communism: A History*, Richard Pipes

writes that “the dissolution of the individual in the community... [means] no private property.”<sup>61</sup> Contrasting Plato’s view, Aristotle argued holding private property is not the hindrance to equality, but rather it is man’s desires for possessions. Aristotle stated, “It is not possessions but the desires of mankind which requires to be equalized.”<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the French philosopher Etienne-Gabriel Morelly, in his 1755 work, *le Code de la Nature* states “the only vice which I know in the universe is *avarice*... the desire for possessions.”<sup>63</sup> Morelly went on to state that man’s desire for possession is the root of all other vices.<sup>64</sup> The early philosophers identify what holds true today: humankind is competitive, the competition creates inequality, therefore, to create equality the state must abolish private property or change humankind’s competitive nature. Karl Marx and his Communist chose to abolish private property and thereby setup an inevitable conflict between human nature and the state. Communism would have to change human nature to reconcile this conflict.

Furthermore, the Communist ideology was inconsistent because there was an ideological divide between what Marx envisioned and Lenin implemented. To bring about the Communist state, Marx envisioned socialist revolutions, fueled by class-awareness that would coalesce into a social state. Once established, the social state could then progress to become a Communist state.<sup>65</sup> Lenin, however, did not. Lenin attempted to accelerate history and skipped the socialist revolution by establishing a Communist state. Further, although Marx envisioned a time when the Communist government would allow the society to govern itself, Lenin did not. The visionary, Marx, and the implementer, Lenin, held different views on significant ideological issues on how to start and end the Communist state. These fundamental differences were vulnerable to subversion.

What is more, Marx sought fair compensation for workers, whereas Lenin provided equal compensation for workers. Under Lenin and his successors, the hard worker and the free rider received equal compensation for different levels of work. With equal compensation, the Soviet Union had limited means to incentivize increased production rates, without resorting to coercion. The limited means the Soviet Union had to increase worker productivity would become an economic vulnerability as the Soviet Union expanded its satellite states and as it entered an arms race with the United States.

The Communist ideology was economically inferior to capitalism. Marx viewed the competitive, ever-evolving nature of the capitalist society as the enemy of the working class.<sup>66</sup> Marx's disdain of competition set a course for the competitive, and free, markets of capitalism to outpace the Communist system. Further, Marx believed that workers would work harder because they controlled the means of production and therefore received fair compensation for their labors.<sup>67</sup> Marx relies on an individual's sense of ownership to motivate the level of production.

Marx did not account for free riders. Every society is composed of "givers" and "takers". Some give more to the society than they take, while others take more than they give. To achieve societal equality, and a classless state, the Soviet system must remedy the disparity between those that give and those that take. The free riders frustrate the hard workers. The Soviet system compensated the free rider and the hard worker equally. Equal pay for unequal work exacerbated the hard worker's feeling of inequality, placing him in a dilemma. The hard worker had three choices: one, he could become a free rider, or two, he could accept equal pay for unequal work, or three, he could become frustrated by equal pay for less work. Either of the three options had dangerous implications for Soviet economic power.

Further, the expansion of Communism could be an excellent case study of diminishing returns. During the Soviet Union's expansion, the income they derived from their satellite states declined as the costs associated with propping up newly formed Communist governments grew.<sup>68</sup> As long as the Soviet Union expanded to states that were not net contributors to Soviet economic strength, the Soviets were destined for an economic dilemma.

The second requirement for upholding the illusion of Communism and the second category of inconsistencies is isolation. The Kremlin isolated the Soviet people from the outside world but this isolation was antithetical to the expansion the Soviets sought. The challenge of isolating their people while they expanded was insurmountable. The Kremlin's intended the isolation to avoid sowing seeds of dissent by preventing the Soviet people from asking questions about the success of the capitalist world compared to the Soviet system. Said differently, it was easier for the Soviet people to accept the Kremlin's message if the people did not have conflicting evidence. The National Security Council stated, "the Soviet monolith is held together by the [I]ron [C]urtain around it...not any force of natural cohesion."<sup>69</sup> The Iron Curtain, and the isolation it represented, confronted a dilemma when the Soviet Union began expanding its satellite states.

The third category of Communist inconsistencies is the coercion by which the Kremlin ruled. As the National Security Council assessed, the relationship between the Kremlin and the Soviet people was the greatest vulnerability. The oppression of the free will of Soviet citizens, with fear and terror, would unravel when the Kremlin was not able to deliver on the promises it made to its people. The pressure cooker-like environment, created by the decades of extreme coercion, required a tighter and tighter seal to keep in the building pressure. Once the first crack appeared, the Soviet people released the pressure at an astounding pace.

The Soviet requirements to uphold the illusion of Communism drove a wedge between the Kremlin and the Soviet People. Further, these issues identified a say-do gap within the Soviet system that the United States, and its Allies, would leverage to undermine Communism. Finally, the ideology, isolation, and coercion provided the blueprint for focusing efforts to frustrate the Soviet system. To frustrate the Soviet system the United States worked with their allies, designed a grand strategy, and applied pressure to the Soviet vulnerabilities. The pursuit of utopia is not evil, in and of itself. The coercion used pursuing utopia was the true evil.

### **Form an Effective Alliance**

Before the United States could expose the inconsistencies of the Communist ideology, the United States had to ensure it could sufficiently compel the Soviets to act. To accomplish this, the United States assembled an alliance against the Soviet Union and its Communist ideology. To determine the effectiveness of the alliance, answering three questions is helpful. The three-questions are, first, was the alliance capable of influencing the military and economic aspects of the Soviet system? Second, did the alliance agree on a plan to achieve the desired objectives with regard to the Soviet system? Third, did the Soviet Union view the alliance as a legitimate adversary? Ensuring affirmative answers to each of these questions provided the United States an alliance capable of affecting change in the Soviet system.

Answering the first question, was the alliance capable of influencing the military and economic aspects of the Soviet system, shows the United States had an alliance capable of affecting the changes it endeavored to make. To frustrate the Soviet system, the United States and its allies had to challenge directly the economic and military arenas in order to affect

indirectly the political and social arenas. The National Security Council analyzed that a large gap existed between the potential power of the Soviet Union and the United States, and thus the United States had the economic and military potential to outpace the Soviets. Specifically, the comparative economic power of the United States to the Soviet economy was four to one.<sup>70</sup> The United States had a larger economy, with more room to increase output than the Soviets, which allowed the United States to maintain the advantage in an economic and military cold war.

Answering the second question, did the alliance agree on the plan to achieve the desired objectives with regard to the Soviet system, identifies that American leadership was able to reach a consensus and hold the alliance together. But, it also identifies that the strength of a broad alliance is also a weakness. As the National Security Council stated, “while it is a general source of strength to us that our relations with our allies are conducted on a basis of persuasion and consent rather than compulsion and capitulation, it is also evident that dissent among us can become a vulnerability.”<sup>71</sup> American leadership to maintain the unity of the alliance was, and continued to be, critical to the effort to contain and defeat Communism. American leadership kept the alliance unified based on the superiority of the idea of freedom over.

Finally, the third question asks does the Soviet Union perceive the alliance as a formidable adversary. The importance of the Soviet Union viewing the alliance against it as a formidable adversary is a matter of leverage. A formidable adversary has more leverage to compel action than a lesser foe and the United States and Allies needed to be in a position to compel the Soviet Union to act in a manner that was decisive. In 1950 the National Security Council estimated, “...[the United States is] the only power which could release forces in the free and Soviet worlds which could destroy [the Soviet Union].”<sup>72</sup> The Alliance against the

Soviets and their Communist ideology was capable of causing the Soviets to act because the Soviets viewed the Alliance as an existential threat.

In summary, the United States required, and possessed, an effective alliance to defeat the Soviet Union and the Communist ideology that the Union embodied. The alliance was capable of influencing directly the economic and military aspects of the Soviet system, achieved consensus on the plan, and was a legitimate adversary to the Communist ideology.

### **Undermine the Ideology by Exposing the Inconsistencies**

Bringing about the fall of the Soviet Union required exposing the Communist ideology as inconsistent in order to undermine its legitimacy. Exposing the ideological inconsistencies was the equivalent of the indirect approach's desire to remove the defenses prior to overcoming him. However, exposing the inconsistencies would not end the Soviet Union by itself, a legitimate Communist leaders would have to admit there was a problem with Communism. Like a pressure cooker, once the Communist leaders admitted the ideology was flawed, the pressure that had built in the Soviet Union found an outlet and the crack in the ideology grew.

To undermine the ideology of Communism, the United States and its Allies, attacked the previously identified ideological inconsistencies along three lines of effort: the ideological conflict with human nature, the economically inferiority of Communism to capitalism, and the differing views of Marx's theories and Lenin's implementation.

The first line of effort to pressure the Communist ideology was demonstrating the Communist ideology was inconsistent with human nature. The Soviet Union, like all totalitarian governments, required the complete subordination of the people to the authority of the Soviet

system. As previously discussed, the complete subordination of a societies individual free will is irreconcilably conflicted with human nature. As Aristotle and Morelly identified, the fundamental desire of humanity is to obtain possessions. Marxist Communism is “the abolishment of private property”.<sup>73</sup> The discrepancy between what men wanted and what Communism required was the underlying ideological inconsistency that the United States directed all of its other efforts towards to expose the illusion of Communism. The United States grand strategy to defeat the Soviet Union striped away the elements that enabled the Kremlin to hide the irreconcilable conflict between the Communist ideology and human nature. Meaning, as long as the Kremlin could provide for the needs of the people, they could avoid serious questions about the inadequacies of Communism. Once the Kremlin was unable to provide for the people, the questions of inadequacy were harder and harder to avoid.

The second line of effort to pressure the Communist ideology, focused on demonstrating that Communism was inferior to capitalism through the decline of the Soviet economic system. The Soviet economy was critical to the Kremlin’s ability to uphold the illusion of Communism. The United States frustrated the Soviet economic system primarily through the arms race, but also through the build-up of anti-Communist groups in the Third World.<sup>74</sup> In the Nobel lecture series, Richard Pipes proposed that the foundation of terror and intimidation that the Soviet Union ruled with “meant that the Communist...could not afford to let it decline to the ranks of a second-rate power without risking its own demise.”<sup>75</sup> To this end, the Soviets had to maintain a first-rate military capability and correspondingly invested heavily in military spending to keep pace with the United States. Both the National Security Council and post-Cold War analysis indicated the Soviets were spending twenty-five to forty percent of their National income on military spending.<sup>76</sup> Further, the United States had four times greater economic strength than the

Soviet Union. What is more, the Soviets operated their economy at nearly full production capacity, while the United States remained below production capacity.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the capitalist economy of the United States possessed the ability to outpace and outlast the Soviets for decades.

To this end, the Soviets would continue unsustainable levels of military spending for thirty years. In *Communism: A History*, Pipes concludes "... [military spending] severely drained the nation's economic resources, contributing ultimately to its downfall."<sup>78</sup> Draining the Soviet's economy allowed the Soviet people to see fissures within the Communist ideology that the Kremlin would have covered up during healthier economic times. Year after year of continual Soviet decline brought social conditions to a critical low. The prolonged decline in social conditions, and the Kremlin's inability to continue to provide what it promised, contributed to the deep-seated social unrest that haunted the Kremlin once the Soviets gave the people a voice in the government.

The third line of effort to pressure the Communist ideology highlighted Marx's and Lenin's differences on key points that transformed into large problems for the Soviet Union. First, Marx envisioned the creation of a Communist state from a socialist state that grew out of smaller socialist revolutions.<sup>79</sup> Lenin skipped the socialist revolution and moved straight to a Communist state. Second, Marx envisioned a time when the Communist government would wither away, allowing the society to govern itself. Lenin did not intend to remove the Soviets from the government.

These two different points of view created shockwaves that came in the form of the battle for succession from Stalin and the de-Stalinization period that would follow. First, when Lenin skipped the socialist state and preceded directly to the Communist state, he failed to remove the

human political condition from the Soviet government. The death of Joseph Stalin, in 1953, demonstrated the existence of the human political condition and began the slow decay of the Soviet system. As Marx claimed, the perfect order of a Communist state extinguishes the human political condition. Thus, the political battles for succession to Stalin exposed the lack of the perfect order and demonstrated that the human political condition was vibrant in the Communist government, thereby exposing the falsities of the Communist government.<sup>80</sup> François Furet, in *The Passing of an Illusion*, echoes this sentiment stating "...one of the charms of totalitarianism is that it represents a perfect order. The very existence of the battle of succession made waves."<sup>81</sup> Furet goes on to say, "the first casualty in the battle for succession to Stalin was the Soviet mythology."<sup>82</sup> This battle for succession cracked the foundation, but Nikita Khrushchev's "secret speech" began the period of de-Stalinization.

Second, Lenin did not intend for the Soviets to fade away from the government. Nor did Lenin ever intended for the Soviets people to rule themselves, and his predecessors followed suit. Lenin chose to maintain absolute control over every aspect of Soviet life, vice progressing the society to a point where equality was the governing force, not coercion. The lack of social progress towards equality fundamentally conflicted with the theory Marx prescribed.

The death of Stalin, the battle for succession, and the de-Stalinization period exposed the "...paradox of a system allegedly inscribed in the laws of social development, yet so dependent on a single person that when he dies the system lost something essential."<sup>83</sup> The transition of power from Stalin to his successor could have been a move to a new Communist era but rather it marked the beginning of a long end.<sup>84</sup> Although the United States and its Allies did not cause the aftermath of the death of Stalin, they certainly benefitted from the exposure of the falsities of

Communism, as stated by Furet “[t]he capitol year in the history of Communism has two consequences: the bloc began to disintegrate, and its unifying myth lost its credibility.”<sup>85</sup>

The second leg of the stool is isolation. The Soviet Union required the isolation of its people to uphold the illusion of Communism but that isolation conflicted with the goals of Soviet expansion and was unsustainable once de-Stalinization exposed the falsities of Communism. Winston Churchill accurately described the isolation as the iron curtain, and the totalitarian ideology required absolute authority over the people subject to its rule.<sup>86</sup> Undermining the isolation of the Soviet Union came in two parts, first, the expansion of Communism, and second, the adoption of “peaceful coexistence” as the approach to Soviet foreign policy. Although the expansion of Communism was a strength for the ideology, it was antithetical to the requirement of isolation for implementing Communism. The paradox of Communist expansion is that, on one hand, expansion gives the appearance of having the superior ideology; while on the other hand, the expansion exposes the ideology to questions of its legitimacy by non-institutionalized people. Specifically, in the 1950s, -60s, and -70s there were groups of middle-aged people in Soviet satellite states that knew life before Communism, whereas the same was not true in the Soviet Union. In similar fashion, “peaceful coexistence” inadvertently opened the door between segments of the Soviet population and the outside world. Overtime, the loosening of the isolation of the Soviet Union exposed the inadequacies of the Communist ideology compared to the free world.

The third leg, coercion, was also unsustainable once the voices of the oppressed were out. As the Kremlin relaxed the fear and terror it used, the deeply repressed questions of the ideology arose. Once the people began challenging the inadequacies, the Kremlin could not stop them without resorting back to coercion. The information campaign of the United States, championing

“... superiority of U.S. and Western values of individual dignity and freedom, a free press, free trade unions, free enterprise, and political democracy over the repressive features of Soviet Communism[,]” exposed an alternative to the oppressive Soviet regime.<sup>87</sup>

The United States, and its Allies, executed a full-scale effort to “foster a fundamental change in the Soviet system. A change towards which the frustration of the [Soviet] design is the first and perhaps the most important step.”<sup>88</sup> This effort attacked the requirements of the Kremlin to uphold the illusion of Communism: adherence to the ideology, isolation from the non-Communist world, and coercion. The United States designed this effort to “assure the integrity and vitality of the free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.”<sup>89</sup> As the strategy for containing the Soviet Union stated, “the idea of slavery can only be overcome by the timely and persistent demonstration of the superiority of the idea of freedom.”<sup>90</sup> Further, the National Security Council framed the conflict in terms of a global battle between freedom and slavery. Whereas the “defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere.”<sup>91</sup> The two superpowers were polarized in their approaches to governing their people, the United States sought to expose the worth of the individual and the benefits of freedom over the absolute authority required by the Soviet Union.

Exposing the inconsistencies in the Communist ideology began with the battle of succession to Stalin, but became inevitable in the 1980’s. With the economic, military, political, and social conditions at an all-time low, the Politburo tasked Gorbachev with reforming Communism. Since the alternative to the absolute authority the Kremlin ruled with would be some level of loosening of the noose, controlling the release of the built-up pressure would turn out to be impossible for the Kremlin to control.

## **Provide an Alternative**

To defeat Communism, an alternative form of governance needed to take the place of the totalitarian rule. Providing an alternative began by ensuring the new form of governance addressed the problems Communism created. What is more, the alternative to Communism must also be feasible, acceptable, and suitable in the eyes of the people. A continuation of the Communist rule under a different name would not defeat the totalitarian ideology, and would not remedy the grievances in the eyes of the Soviet people. The presence of a viable alternative provides the off ramp required to usher in the end of the totalitarian ideology.

In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev had no choice but to reform Communism in order to keep it viable. His decision to become a democratic socialist state inadvertently signaled the end of Marxist-Leninist Communism.

## **Develop Confidence**

The Soviet people endured decades of totalitarian rule and the requisite isolation, oppression, and terror. The Russian alternative to Communism, democratic socialism, needed to separate itself from any perceptions it was an extension of Communism, and quickly develop the confidence of the Russian people. Developing confidence began by delivering what the alternative promises. The alternative faced much skepticism from the Russian society but the speed of change in the world and the rapid fall of the Soviet Union cushioned any early blows to democratic socialism. Communism was defeated because the say-do gap became intolerable. Thus, the alternative needed to overcome the skeptics by closing the say-do gap.

## **Conclusion**

To defeat a totalitarian ideology, you must stop its momentum and then provide an alternative. The Soviet Union began losing momentum when Stalin died, but took decades to be contained and then forced into a position where Gorbachev had no option but to reform Communism, and the Soviet Union. Just as the indirect approach strips away the enemies defenses prior to the decisive flanking maneuver, the erosion of the Soviet Union stripped away the defenses the Kremlin used to uphold the illusion of Communism. With the defenses removed, and upholding the illusion no longer sustainable, the political, military, economic, and social conditions required an alternative. There are few doubts that the Soviet Union contributed greatly to its own downfall, however, the concerted effort from the United States and their allies to bring about the frustrations in the Soviet system accelerated the decline the totalitarian society. “Communism ultimately was defeated by its inability to refashion human nature.”<sup>92</sup> However, the grand strategy identified the inconsistencies, formed an effective alliance, exposed the inconsistencies, provided an alternative, and developed confidence ushering the Marxist-Leninist ideology to decline.

When confronting the next totalitarian ideology, a grand strategy would benefit from following the five steps to defeating a totalitarian ideology: identify the ideological inconsistencies, form an effective alliance, undermined the ideology by exposing the inconsistencies, provide an alternative, and develop confidence.

## **NOTES**

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- <sup>1</sup> Elliot Jager. *Maj. Gen. Nagata: To Defeat ISIS, Must Understand Its Appeal*. (Newsmax. December 29, 2014. Accessed March 13, 2016.) <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/ISIS-islamists-experts-appeal/2014/12/29/id/615320/>.
- <sup>2</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, (United States: BN Publishing, (1941) 2008), 7.
- <sup>3</sup> Hart, *Strategy*, 7.
- <sup>4</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), vii.
- <sup>5</sup> Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*. (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), 22.
- <sup>6</sup> Karl Marx. *The Communist Manifesto*. ed. Frederic L. Bender (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 56.
- <sup>7</sup> Marx viewed the division of labor as the means for the Capitalist Bourgeoisie to oppress the working class. Marx theorized that removing the division of labor and allowing the workers to control the means of production would remedy the inequalities produced by a capitalist economy.
- <sup>8</sup> “Third International: Association of Political Parties.” 2016. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Third-International>.
- <sup>9</sup> Winston Churchill, *‘Iron Curtain’ Transcript*. (1946. Accessed January 8, 2016.) [http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/winston\\_churchill-ironcurtain.html](http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/winston_churchill-ironcurtain.html).
- <sup>10</sup> National Security Council. *NSC 68 United States Objectives and Programs for National Security: A Report to the President Pursuant to the President’s Directive of January 31, 1950*. Washington, D.C.: National Security Council, 1950, 8. [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 22,23.
- <sup>12</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 77.
- <sup>13</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 4.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>16</sup> Richard Pipes. *Communism, the Vanquished Spectre*. (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1994), 52.
- <sup>17</sup> The Truman Doctrine, “Milestones: 1945–1952 - Office of the Historian.” 2016. Accessed April 28, 2016. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>.
- <sup>18</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 21.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>26</sup> Richard Pipes. *Communism: A History*. New York: Modern Library, 2001, 78.
- <sup>27</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 446.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.
- <sup>29</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 78.
- <sup>30</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 446.
- <sup>31</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 81.
- <sup>32</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 444,445.
- <sup>33</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 80.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.
- <sup>35</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 15.
- <sup>36</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 85.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.
- <sup>38</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 82.
- <sup>39</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 452.
- <sup>40</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 84.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.
- <sup>42</sup> Pipes, *Vanquished Spectre*, 36.
- <sup>43</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 446.
- <sup>44</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 11.
- <sup>45</sup> National Security Council, *NSDD-75*, 4.
- <sup>46</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 463.

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- <sup>47</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 85.
- <sup>48</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 8,11.
- <sup>49</sup> National Security Council, *NSDD-75*, 1.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>51</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 80.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 85, 86.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, preface.
- <sup>60</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, p. 7
- <sup>61</sup> Pipes, *A History*, x.
- <sup>62</sup> “The Internet Classics Archive | Politics by Aristotle.” 350 BCE. Accessed May 9, 2016. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.2.two.html>, quoted in Richard Pipes, *Communism: A History*. New York: Modern Library, 2001, 4.
- <sup>63</sup> Etienne-Gabriel Morelly, 1755. “Code de La Nature.” <http://www.taieb.net/auteurs/Morelly/Code.html>, quoted in Richard Pipes, *Communism: A History*. New York: Modern Library, 2001, 8.
- <sup>64</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 8.
- <sup>65</sup> Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 62-65.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-65.
- <sup>68</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 81.
- <sup>69</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 15.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.
- <sup>73</sup> Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 56.
- <sup>74</sup> Francis H. Marlo, “The Historiography of the End of the Cold War”, in Streusand, Douglas E., Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H. Marlo. *The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 5.
- <sup>75</sup> Pipes, *Communism: the Vanquished Spectre*, 33.
- <sup>76</sup> Pipes. *A History*, 81; Pipes, *Vanquished Spectre*, 35.; National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 26.
- <sup>77</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 16.
- <sup>78</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 81.
- <sup>79</sup> Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, p.62-65
- <sup>80</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 440.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 451; Pipes, *A History*, 78.
- <sup>85</sup> Furet, *Passing of an Illusion*, 483.
- <sup>86</sup> Churchill, ‘*Iron Curtain*’, [http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/winston\\_churchill-ironcurtain.html](http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/winston_churchill-ironcurtain.html).
- <sup>87</sup> National Security Council, *NSDD-75*, 3.
- <sup>88</sup> National Security Council, *NSC-68*, 9.
- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.
- <sup>92</sup> Pipes, *A History*, 149.

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