

Week 14 — The End of the Cold War

The late-cold war arms race

1. Détente
 - Easing of the cold war tensions after Cuban Missile Crisis esp. by 70's
 - Treaties:
 - Partial Test Ban Treaty:
 - * No atmospheric nuclear testing
 - Outer Space Treaty:
 - * No nukes in outer space or moon
 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation:
 - * No one else gets nukes, US and Russia can't give out more nukes
 - Strategic Arms Limitation Talks:
 - * Agree on number and types of weapons to be used/deployed
 - Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty:
 - * Limit both countries to one ABM site per country
 - Biological Weapons Convention:
 - * No biological weapons can be used or produced (no verification so Russia violated)
 - These are more realistic as opposed to idealistic
 - *My opinion on deterrence: I think we should be keeping nuclear weapons ready to use. I highly doubt we'll use them and I don't think that the nukes are the sole reason for nations not wanting to fight, but instead, it's the connection with other nations that make it a very dangerous game to play. I think it's very easy for tensions to escalate when a nation being attacked has nukes themselves, but ally nations who also have nukes. By deciding to launch nukes, the launching nation has the potential of starting another world war or a big interconnected war between many nations with extremely devastating weaponry.*
2. Ronald Reagan's Cold War II
 - Ends Détente for domestic and international reasons
 - Pushes for more weapons because he says USA has fallen behind USSR in terms of nuclear weapons
3. Overkill?
 - So many different weapons and a lot of firepower that the US can destroy USSR several times over
4. European nuclear tensions
 - Low warning time due to fast missiles developed by US, USSR is a little worried
 - Pershing II missiles can be first strike weapons
 - USSR is not confident in their command and control because of old and sick leaders
5. Systema Perimetr ("Dead Hand")
 1. If under attack, generals have command of bombs
 2. They can issue "dead hand" command to hardened bunker
 3. If soldiers in bunker lose contact with Moscow, then they assume it's blown up and send missile into atmosphere where it can talk to the other missiles
 4. The radio missile can then signal ALL other ICBM's across the country to launch
 - They keep it secret
 - They don't believe in deterrence
6. Anti-nuclear weapons sentiment rises
 - Late 1980's there is an anti-nuclear movements in the USA and in Europe because they were hosts of the missiles and would therefore be targeted by USSR
 - Soviets are scared that Reagan would actually send his missile and destroy the USSR
 - Project RYaN: they seek evidence of nuclear war by USA, it's conspiracy theory heavy
7. Strategic Defense Initiative
 - Teller tells Reagan about the radiation x-ray laser that can destroy missiles
 - Reagan now deploys Strategic Defense Initiative in the hopes that it would stop the whole nuclear

- issue
- Criticisms:
 1. Not sure if it'll work/work effectively
 2. Overhyped by Teller and other Livermore scientists
 3. Even if it did work, no guarantee that it would work perfectly (would not be hard to fool—put a weather balloon in space and it'll shoot at that instead of a missile)
- *What if instead of feeling like you need to have a bomb to be a worthy nation, we can make a good defense system and spread that to other nations instead? This way they can't be bullied but nuclear powers.*
- 8. War Scares
 - September 1983: Soviet early warning computers report incoming nuclear attack—duty officer (Stanislav Petrov) declines to report it to the command chain
 - *If he went through the motions and reported to the chain of command, would it have started the “dead hand” system?*
- 9. Nuclear winter
 - Smoke released by bombing would cover sun and cool down planet causing famines
 - Explicitly political: if true, then nuclear weapons a doomsday device no matter what—suicidal
 - *Was this used by the anti-nuclear weapon movements?*
- 10. Road to Reykjavik
 - Gorbachev wants to tamp down nuclear forces because they can't keep up arms race while also trying to reform USSR economy
 - *Well aside from getting rid of the nukes in USA and Russia, that doesn't mean that the other nations would right? Like there are plenty of other nations that are a nuclear power now so by having the USA and Russia remove their nukes, then that would make them vulnerable to other nuclear powers right? Or was the idea that the other nations would follow suit?*
- 11. USSR collapses
 - Within Russia, Gorbachev caught between reformer and hard-liners; coup attempt by hard-liners narrowly overturned; Soviet Union is dissolved in late 1991—Cold War Over

Beyond the Cold War

1. The post-soviet republics
 - Four-states that broke off from Soviet Union still had nuclear weapons on their soil
 - Ukraine: they agree to give up their weapons if the other countries decide to defend it

Nukes by numbers