

## Victory

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and for rapid political and economic development in eastern Europe as well as a correspondingly excessive devaluation of U.S. dominance. These ideas and assumptions were perhaps understandable at the time, but later events have shown them to be substantially misplaced. This is not really a fault of the writers—even Francis Fukuyama was wrong when he predicted that we were at the “end of history.”

Except for a few of the historical essays in *The State of Germany*, which remain topical, these books retain only limited value, and that only insofar as they show how academics tried to understand the upheavals of 1989 as they were occurring. In times of extraordinary change, it would seem that political analysts and academics are condemned to the frustration of rapid obsolescence of many of their products.

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Schweizer, Peter. *Victory*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994. 284pp. \$22

Peter Schweizer's account of the Reagan administration's strategy to discombobulate the Soviet Union in the 1980s presents a quandary for both the reader and this reviewer.

The major events Schweizer cites are essentially matters of public record, and he has interviewed the right administration sources. Yet the interpretation he places on these is remarkable. We are asked to accept that the administration

coordinated support for the Afghan rebels, Solidarity in Poland, denial of technical support to Soviet industry, and aggressive defense buildups, all in a comprehensive strategy to roll back Soviet political power on every front.

Schweizer's conclusions are based on his interviews with John Poindexter, Richard Allen, Fred C. Ikle, Robert McFarlane, Edwin Meese, William Clark, George Shultz, Casper Weinberger, other figures from the former administration, and on several National Security Decision Directives. While Schweizer's style is that of a contemporary journalist and not a historian, he does tell a striking story of orchestrated strategy, policy, and action.

According to Schweizer, Ronald Reagan entered the presidency in January 1981 with a deep, visceral conviction that the Soviet political and economic system could not and should not survive. For a number of economic and political reasons, the Soviet Union was already tottering in 1981, although not much of the Western world had noticed. Reagan and his foreign policy advisors decided to press and stress the Soviet Union in all possible ways.

On the industrial technology front, when Reagan took office the Soviet Union was well behind and without funds to acquire the new advances. To rectify this, the Soviets planned to build two great pipelines from their gas fields to Europe, then to sell gas to Europe's energy-hungry economy for hard currency. The technology to extract and recover the gas, as well as the hundreds of miles of large pipe, were to come from the West. The administration undertook a vigorous application and

extension of the U.S. export control laws to cripple these projects. Only one pipeline was eventually built, and it was late, because of serious transmission and pumping problems. Simultaneously, Reagan's people persuaded Saudi Arabia to lower the price of crude oil and expand production, thus saturating the market and reducing the value of Soviet oil and gas exports. Consequently, this attempt by the Soviets to purchase critical modern technology was frustrated.

On the political front, the Soviets were becoming mired in the war in Afghanistan, and Poland's Solidarity movement was threatening the cohesiveness of Eastern Europe. For both symbolic and practical reasons, the Soviets needed to bring these situations under control. William Casey, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, became the peripatetic point man of the U.S. response. The Saudis agreed to supply cash and weapons to the mujahedin and the Pakistanis to give them training and logistical support. The United States undertook to supply cash, intelligence on Soviet targets in Afghanistan, and Stinger anti-air missiles. As a result, well armed mujahedin began to operate with telling effect throughout Afghanistan.

For its part, Solidarity received financial assistance and the tools of "information warfare" (in the form of public relations). Various techniques were used to funnel money into Poland. Offset presses, desktop publishing systems, photocopiers, and fax machines were smuggled into the country, with the evident cooperation of shipping companies and bordering nations. With this support, Solidarity remained alive

and became an above-ground movement, openly challenging the regime.

On the defense front, the Reagan administration embraced the Strategic Defense Initiative, which gave the Soviets serious heartburn because they could not match that technology. Their only counter would have been to build enough nuclear missiles to overwhelm the American strategic defense system; to do so, however, would have been ruinously expensive for a Soviet economy already strained by defense to the breaking point.

In retrospect, the Soviet Union was in serious decline by the 1980s, which raises an important question that the author leaves unanswered. Was Reagan's strategy the key to victory, as Schweizer asserts, or was it just international gamesmanship? Pressuring the Soviet Union on all fronts was a high-risk strategy. Had a more traditional leader than Gorbachev arrived on the scene, the Soviet reaction might have been violent. Today's practitioners of strategy and policy may think that the most important question that Schweizer leaves unanswered is: Would the game be worth the risk again?

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Dawson, Joseph G., III, ed. *Commanders in Chief: Presidential Leadership in Modern Wars*. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1993. 226pp. \$12.95

The president's roles as chief spokesman for foreign policy and the commander in chief in war has long fascinated the American public. In *Commanders In*