

*The Secretariat of the Fifteenth Annual  
Virginia International Crisis  
Simulation Presents:*

**1980-1991: The Fall of the KGB  
of the Soviet Union**

*Chaired by Anup Myneni*

VICS XV

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to VICS XV here at the University of Virginia. My name is Anup Myneni and I am a second year history major from Yorktown, Virginia. Like many of you, I have been involved in MUN for a long time and am excited to be serving as your chair in the upcoming conference.

As you know, the time frame of this committee is the period between 1980 and 1991, which was among the most eventful and, of course, final eras of the Soviet Union's very existence. During this time, the Soviet Union faced a great deal of pressure not only from the western bloc nations but also from within its own borders and its satellite states. In this committee, delegates (or rather, members of the KGB) will be faced with many of the conflicts which emerged during the 1980s and threatened the security of the Soviet Union. Much of the work done in committee will revolve around responses to these conflicts and the impact they have on the political and social situation of the USSR. However, as this committee is a simulation of the KGB and not just any Soviet political body, the actions undertaken regarding the situations that emerge will come directly from the decisions and debates of the committee. Similarly, the consequences and backlashes of these actions will also become challenges for the members of the committee.

In this background guide you will find some information about the state of affairs in the USSR in the time we are dealing with and some background information on the three topics we will be discussing and debating. Since the 1980s were a very pivotal time for the USSR and there were a number of factors which contributed to the fall of the KGB and the Soviet Union itself, we will be simulating and considering a number of the key issues of the time to keep things as real as possible. Also, we will not be considering each issue separately but rather will be dealing with multiple issues at the same time. This is also to keep things as real as possible but also to keep things interesting and lively. Our committee will be faced paced and dynamic, so make sure to read through the guide and research well before we begin. While position papers are not required, I highly recommend you write one as it will give me some background into how you plan to approach the issues at hand. If you choose to write one, please email it to me at [am2ef@virginia.edu](mailto:am2ef@virginia.edu) prior to the start of the conference.

I wish you all the best in the upcoming months and I look forward to seeing you here in Charlottesville in March.

Sincerely,

Anup Myneni

## KGB History and Identity

In 1954, the police forces in the USSR were rearranged and centralized to form the Organization of the Committee for State Security, or KGB as it is commonly called. This body served as the as the successor to a group of state security forces which traced their existence back to the Cheka during the beginning of the Russian Revolution.<sup>1</sup> Originally, the KGB was recognized by the central government as



solely a committee controlled by the Council of Ministers, but this would come to change. An increase in power allowed the KGB to become the powerful organization it would be remembered as even after the fall of the USSR.

In 1978, the KGB was reorganized in a way which allowed the KGB to conduct operations and use spies both domestically and abroad without the direct oversight of the Council of Ministers.<sup>2</sup> The KGB was controlled by the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union rather than the ministers themselves. As a result,

<sup>1</sup> "KGB," The History Channel, <http://www.history.com/encyclopedia.do?vendorId=FWNE.fw..kg026800.a#FWNE.fw..kg026800.a> (2006).

<sup>2</sup> John Pike, "KGB: Organization of the Committee for State Security," Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/russia/kgb/su0514.htm> (November 26, 1997).

the Soviet Union adopted the political goals and policies of the political leaders of the party, as opposed to those of the official government heads from this time until the collapse of the USSR in 1991. In this committee, the distinction between the Soviet regime and the Communist Party may be extremely important at times, as the KGB must promote the preservation of the Communist Party in the face of regime liberalization and change.

The KGB's organizational structure was similar in many ways to other state agencies, but also differed in some important ways. The central KGB office directly oversaw KGB committees in all fourteen republics (not including Russia).<sup>3</sup> The KGB committees in each individual republic is responsible for the control of intelligence and espionage duties within its borders and must report to the central KGB. Russia did not have a separate KGB organization, but was rather under the jurisdiction of the central KGB. Additionally, the KGB maintained a large number of departments in many government agencies, institutions, and factories. These departments were charged with monitoring the political climate in their respective sectors and monitored regulations.

Additionally, the KGB's operations were divided up into several directorates including (but not limited to) the following:<sup>4</sup>

**-First Chief Directorate:** responsible for gathering intelligence on foreign operations and covert intelligence; involved in sabotage and reconnaissance missions.

<sup>3</sup> Pike, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> John Pike, "KGB: Functions and Internal Organization," Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/russia/kgb/su0515.htm> (November 26, 1997).

**-Second Chief Directorate:** responsible for controlling the political climate within the USSR

**-Third Chief Directorate:** involved in controlling politics within the Soviet military as well as counterintelligence

**-Fourth Chief Directorate:** involved in transportation security within the USSR

**-Fifth Chief Directorate:** charged with maintaining internal stability as well as the elimination of political dissent within the USSR

**-Seventh Directorate:** responsible for surveillance of persons of interest and foreigners

**-Eighth Directorate:** responsible for monitoring foreign communications

**-Ninth Directorate:** in charge of protecting Soviet leaders

**-Sixteenth Directorate:** in charge of state communications including television and telephones.

The KGB has been widely recognized as one of the most successful intelligence organization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although the official statutes governing the KGB were not published, the KGB was given four tasks which appeared in government documents (citation):

- Counterintelligence on foreign nations
- Investigating crimes within the USSR
- The protection of the borders
- The protection of state information

In addition to these four tasks, the KGB was also charged with managing and eliminating internal and external threats to the party as well as to control the

political climate in the USSR to prevent the development of new dissent. The KGB was also known to supervise the political loyalty of leaders and suppress anti-Soviet sentiments. All of the tasks of the KGB as mentioned above are areas which the KGB can manipulate and control in our historical simulation.

### **Background: Economic Context and Changes**

The 1980s were the final decade of the very existence of the Soviet Union. During this time period, internal dissent due to social and economic discontent within the USSR was on the rise, spawning political movement towards more relaxed government policies. At the same time, the USSR found itself involved in a number of conflicts both abroad and in its own republics. Some of the most important of these conflicts, which will be important for the

Throughout the 1970s, in order to maintain its status as a world power and keep up with the United States, the USSR committed much of its financial strength towards maintaining the Soviet military and arms programs. As a result of this, the USSR did not direct necessary funds and attention towards the growth of the Soviet economy, leading to economic stagnation. Between 1966 and 1970, the growth rate of the Soviet economy was estimated to be roughly 5.3 percent. During the 1970s, however, the Soviet economy's inability to produce led to the falling growth rates. Between 1970 and 1974, the Soviet Union experienced a lower 3.7 percent growth rate and, after 1975, this figure had shrunk to roughly 2.6 percent.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the

<sup>5</sup> Frank Smitha, "The Soviet Union Disintegrates," *Macrohistory and World Report*, <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch33.htm> (2002).

growth rate in the Western world continued to be higher than 6 percent. The changes in economic fortunes had a real impact on conditions within the USSR, including the health of the Soviet people, as illustrated by the increase in the mortality rate from the 1960s to 1980s.

This period of economic stagnation continued into the 1980s, which left conditions in the USSR ripe for political change and redirection. Following the death of Brezhnev in 1982, Yuri Andropov became the political leader of the Communist Party. Andropov, in order to counter what was seen as stagnation under Brezhnev, attempted to increase productivity and decrease waste by launching a very serious campaign against corruption and alcoholism. Through this, Andropov believed he could remove limitations on economic growth in the USSR. However, Andropov died after barely more than one year in office and his policies were nowhere near as effective as he had hoped. Andropov was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko, whose style of governance mirrored that of Andropov. The similarity between these two leaders manifested itself even in the duration of their leadership as Chernenko died after roughly a year in office.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the head of the Communist Party and sought to increase reform in the Soviet Union in response to internal demands. Part of Gorbachev's reform effort included the reduction of military costs as part of the overall spending of the USSR. Gorbachev's ability to reduce military spending was largely tied with his attempts to reduce tensions between the US and USSR. Gorbachev worked with US President Ronald Reagan to eliminate the risk of conflict between the two nations. During the 1980s, there was also a public movement

to reduce trade barriers and permit the importation of more goods from foreign countries. Much of this pressure came as the result of the growing influence of the Western world on the culture of the USSR. As technology increased, the barriers for communication naturally fell, allowing many citizens of the USSR to get a glimpse



into life in the west. May 1988 saw what was perhaps the largest measure taken by the Soviet government to radically change the political system which had ruled over the USSR for decades.<sup>6</sup> This month saw the enacting of the Law of Cooperatives by Gorbachev, which allowed for the private ownership of the means of production in the USSR. During the latter half of the 1980s, it became increasingly clear that the Soviet Union may no longer exist for many more years.

### **Background: Political Conflicts**

Perhaps the most important aspect of the 1980s in the Soviet Union was the increase in dissatisfaction with the Soviet system of governance. Throughout the 80s, a growing movement towards political liberalization increased reform in the USSR, shifting policy sentiments from traditional hard line control to more open policies

<sup>6</sup> Smitha, 2002.

increasingly comparable to the western world. This was seen not only in Russia, but also in a very strong and visible manner in other republics and in satellite republics such as Poland. During the last years of the Soviet Union, nations such as Lithuania sought to relieve themselves of foreign influence. Movements such as Polish Solidarity and Lithuanian Independence, which will be discussed later in this guide, required fast and effective action on the part of the KGB. You may notice that these events seem to pertain to the history of the final years of the Soviet Union itself. As the key intelligence body for the USSR, the KGB was profoundly impacted by these developments, especially the rise of republic opposition to the direction of the central government and the increasing liberalization of Soviet policy. The key to this committee is not just understanding how these events played out but also what the USSR can do to prevent opposition to the Communist structure from forming and to advance the goals of the KGB.

### The Task of the Committee

The focus of this committee will be to confront and manage the security of the Soviet government by reducing potential threats from both inside and outside the country. It will be the job of this committee to ensure that ALL threats to the Communist Party, whether they stem from internal dissent to international conflicts, are mitigated. The committee will also simultaneously have to address the changing nature of the government structure and policy changes enacted by Soviet party leaders between 1980 and 1991. Actions taken by the committee to counteract party measures which threaten to weaken the KGB must be extremely careful in the way they are executed.

The following sections of this background guide are dedicated to outlining the conflicts that the KGB committee will be faced with. Committee members should be prepared to address these issues and provide guidance as to how the KGB should react to the events between 1980 and 1991. It is highly recommended that all delegates thus research each of the following issues thoroughly.

### Topic One: The War in Afghanistan

For as far back as 1919, the Soviet Union has played a large role in shaping the nation of Afghanistan. For decades, economic advisers from the USSR have helped to guide policy within Afghanistan and Soviet engineers have built many of the roads in the country.<sup>7</sup> Following a violent military coup in 1978 and the rise of a short



lived and unpopular communist regime, Afghanistan found itself plunged into civil war. In this conflict, it is estimated that 5,000 people were killed, including 100 Soviet citizens.<sup>8</sup> As Afghanistan's military and political structures were significantly

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Yahya Nawroz and Lester W. Grau, "The Soviet War in Afghanistan: History and Harbinger of Future War?," Foreign Military Studies Office, [https://www.ciaonet.org/cbr/cbr00/video/cbr\\_ctd/cbr\\_ctd\\_52.html](https://www.ciaonet.org/cbr/cbr00/video/cbr_ctd/cbr_ctd_52.html) (December 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Nawroz, 2006.

weakened by these events, an opportunity presented itself for the USSR to extend its control over Afghanistan as part of a greater overall movement to extend Soviet power throughout the Middle East.

In the beginning months of 1979, the government called upon the KGB to collect intelligence on the situation in Afghanistan and to become involved in the politics of the Afghanistan Armed Forces.<sup>9</sup> It was believed that the infiltration of the Afghani government and the creation of forces favorable to the USSR in Afghanistan would allow Soviet forces to gain control of the country easier. On Christmas Eve in 1979, Soviet force entered Afghanistan, knocking out military communications in the country and stopped a military response from occurring. With months of KGB intelligence and political meddling in Afghanistan, Soviet leaders believed that Soviet forces would easily overtake Afghani forces and install a puppet regime.<sup>10</sup> In 1979, Babrak Karmal, was installed by the Soviet Union as the new President of Afghanistan.

As the 1980s have begun, however, the KGB began to realize that the KGB's takeover of Afghanistan may not be as easy as expected. Resistance to the Soviet presence in the country by the general population had been much higher than anticipated. On February 23, 1980, this fact became very apparent in a symbolic night during which residents of Kabul climbed

<sup>9</sup> Nawroz, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> "The KGB in Afghanistan." Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=CDE50D78-CB01-8B7A-D4E5A68856CA3CD9&sort=Collection&item=The%20Mitrokhin%20Archive](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=CDE50D78-CB01-8B7A-D4E5A68856CA3CD9&sort=Collection&item=The%20Mitrokhin%20Archive) (February 2002).

onto their rooftops in unison to show public solidarity against the Soviet occupation.<sup>11</sup> This open defiance of the mission of the USSR is particularly troubling to the KGB, as it is indicative of the failure of its political efforts in Afghanistan.

The KGB has several tasks in our committee. First, with intelligence that develops regarding the regime of Karmal, they must try to build a base of support within the Soviet regime that is strong and reduce the risk of insurrection. As the invasion of Afghanistan has been treated in many western bloc countries as open aggression on the Soviet front, suppressing ideological opposition within the USSR from dissenters will also be key. Both of these issues may play a large part in our crises in committee. It is suggested that you familiarize yourself with issues related to the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan, particularly those related to intelligence and internal dissent, as this information will very likely be helpful.

### Topic Two: Pressure on the KGB from



### Poland and Lithuania

During the 1980s, dissent against Soviet controlled puppet regimes in countries throughout Eastern Europe began

<sup>11</sup> Nawroz, 2006.

to rise and organize into strong movements which threaten to liberalize and even overturn communist rule. Two countries we will be focusing on this committee, Poland and Lithuania, were home to such movements (the Solidarity movement in Poland led by Lech Walesa and the Sajudis movement in Lithuania). Both of these movements as threats to the USSR were taken very seriously by the KGB, who were, historically, unable to overcome them. For this committee, it is important that all committee members focus on the KGB's response to the growth of these movements and find ways to stop them.

### *Polish Situation*

At the end of the Second World War, the USSR had a strong grip on the new People's Republic of Poland, a communist state set up under the tutelage of Soviet leaders. From 1949 to the 1980s, the Soviet government controlled the political atmosphere in Poland, putting down attempts at liberalization in the 1950s and 1970s. At the beginning of 1980, it appeared that a threat to the stability of the communist government of Poland was taking shape. On August 14, 1980, an estimated 17,000 workers shut down operations at the Lenin Shipyard in the city of Gdansk to protest the rising price of food and discontent with the Polish regime.<sup>12</sup> This isolated incident quickly became a much larger national issue as at least 20 other groups of workers began their own protests as well.

By September of 1980, these groups of workers had set into motion the creation of a

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Donovan, "Poland: Solidarity- The Movement that Changed the World." Radio Free Europe, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1060898.html> (August 24, 2005).

new trade union known as the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union or Solidarity. By the start of 1982, the Solidarity movement had grown to include a whopping 9 million people.<sup>13</sup> Although the government of Poland denounced the Solidarity movement and outlawed the trade union's existence, many Soviet and KGB officials continued to be alarmed by the threat posed by the Solidarity movement. It was believed that, without proper management of the labor union, the solidarity movement may undermine the communist regime in Poland and, in turn, the international power of the USSR itself.

### *Situation in Lithuania*

Even after Gorbachev came into power in the mid 1980s and promised a campaign of reform, Lithuanian nationals demanded increased liberalization of their country. In 1987, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania, Petras Gristevicius passed away, leaving the conservative Ringaudas Songaila in his place. In response, Lithuanian progressives and intellectuals formed a group known as the Lithuanian Reconstruction Movement (or the Sajudis Movement).

By October of 1988, Algirdas Brazauskas became the new First Secretary of the Communist Party and brought with him a willingness to cooperate with the Sajudis.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Donovan, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> "The Move Towards Independence, 1987-1991," Country Data, <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-8286.html>.



During the late 1980s, it became apparent that the Lithuanians were slowly attempting to declare themselves fully sovereign in their country and would begin to reject the influence of the Soviet Union. It will be the job of the committee to collect intelligence about the Sajudis and undertake serious efforts to reaffirm the role of the USSR in Lithuania.

### *Role of the KGB*

The KGB must be careful to conduct their relations with Poland and Lithuania as the regimes of both of these countries in the period between 1981 and 1991 historically became hostile to the USSR. On one hand, the KGB must ensure that communication is clear and successful between the central organization and Polish and Lithuanian KGB agencies. This is key because of the need to spy on opposition groups and movement leads, as well as to conduct espionage to hamper their operations. On the other hand, the KGB must be careful not to communicate too much with the republic level organizations because of the threat of internal subversion and counterintelligence. For example, one of the most widely known intelligence agents operating in Poland, Adam Hodycz, later admitted he had supplied opposition to the USSR in Poland with information since 1978.<sup>15</sup> According to many sources after the fall of the USSR, this was not an isolated incident. Also, the USSR must be careful to ensure that the revolutions in these countries do not overflow into other Soviet Republics or, worse yet, flow into the core of the USSR itself.

### **Topic Three: KGB vs. Gorbachev**

<sup>15</sup> Simon Araloff, "The Guardians of Europe: Polish Secret Service Protects the Borders of the European Union," *Axis Information and Analysis*. <http://www.axisglobe.com/polish113.htm> (May 24, 2005).

As mentioned earlier in this guide, Mikhail Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1985. As early as 1984, the KGB leadership saw promise in Gorbachev at a time when many of the Soviet leaders of the previous decade were becoming too old for public service. Gorbachev, who would come to establish his reputation as a great reformer, set his focus on establishing greater economic success in the USSR. By the mid 1980s, it was clear that the economic growth of the USSR had slowed down dramatically and lagged behind the west. Gorbachev hoped to use political reforms to turn this trend around and make the USSR more competitive in the global economy. Under the period of Perestroika, however, Gorbachev's reforms were not strong enough to pull up the economy of the USSR. The weak economy persisted even after Gorbachev's attempt to cut spending on arms development and the military, which he hoped would increase investment and productivity in the commercial sector. Gorbachev's relationship with the KGB has historically been very positive. Although he retooled many government agencies, he left the structure of the KGB largely intact in the early years of his regime.<sup>16</sup> General Secretary Gorbachev also has had a history of using the KGB to a high extent for the purposes of intelligence gathering.

1991 marked a very important year for the KGB even before the USSR was officially declared dissolved at the end of the year. Vladimir A. Kryuchkov, who was appointed head of the KGB in 1988, began a plot to overthrow the Gorbachev regime.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Interview with Oleg Gordievsky: How the KGB Helps Gorbachev," *Time Magazine*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9179,969528,00.html> (March 5, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Martin Ebon, *KGB: Death and Rebirth* (Praeger: Westbury, CT, 1994). p.11.

During the beginning of his service as KGB head he had been a proponent of increasing the connection between the KGB and the regime, even going so far as to suggest the establishment of an oversight committee in parliament.<sup>18</sup> However, as the fall approached, Kryuchkov's rhetoric changed, emphasizing the need to preserve the order of the USSR and spreading of threats to the very existence of the Soviet Union. Historically, this rhetoric escalated and Kyuchkov and his followers began to assert that Gorbechev was not fit as a leader due to his reforms.<sup>19</sup> On July 5, 1991, he famously declared "any politician who opposes the 1980 model of the USSR is undoubtedly an Agent of Influence. Right up to the country's President, who launched perestroika."<sup>20</sup> This, historically, led to the August Coup in the fall of 1991 which was rather unsuccessful, although it greatly diminished the prestige of Gorbachev.

### **Western Communications and Additional Events**

Another issue which will be presented to the KGB leadership is the role that communications and relations with the west may have on public opinion within the United States. For example, the media broadcast into the USSR from the nations of the Western Bloc is believed to have played a significant part in the movement towards liberalization in the USSR. While this issue is not contained to any particular year or time frame, it will be incorporated throughout the committee. Even before 1980, the regime had announced to the people of the Soviet Union that restrictions on media, including certain books and

periodicals, would be reduced, allowing for the freer transmission of information and ideas. During the years leading up to 1985, this was not actually done and the government in 1988 once again asserted it's plans to open up Russia to Western Communications. By 1988, the regime has planned to allow the transmission of ideological radio programs, including Radio Liberty, a propagandistic program transmitted from western Germany. However, it is clear that some of these programs may constitute a threat to the stability of the Communist Party in Russia. For this reason, radio jamming devices have been set up by the KGB to prevent ideological campaigns being launched through radio broadcasts, especially those of Radio Free America. The American government has discovered this usage of jamming and has condemned the Soviet regime for its continued usage despite Soviet declarations to the contrary.

Also, committee members are strongly encouraged to read up on the events during the final years (1989-1991) of the Soviet Union, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, as these events may have an impact on the way previously described events may be tackled by the KGB.

### **Delegate Information and Structure**

Before coming to the first committee session, delegates should familiarize themselves with parliamentary procedure if they have not already done so. In committee, members will be responsible for the creation of directives which will serve essentially as orders for KGB operations to be carried out regarding the topics we are discussing at the time. The committee as a body will vote on these directives. To keep things moving along and interactive, the effects of these directives and the movements of opposing political leaders (in

<sup>18</sup> Ebon 13

<sup>19</sup> Ebon 17

<sup>20</sup> Ebon 20

the case of internal conflict) and enemy forces (such as the Afghani soldiers or agitators in Poland or Lithuania) will be relayed to the committee. This way, delegates will see the real time effects of their actions and will be continually confronted with new challenges throughout the committee in the form of new crises related to the three main topics.

As far as research goes, make sure to familiarize yourself with some of the background of the KGB and the three main topics which we will be discussing in committee. Your own analysis of these issues will play a key part in the committee, as you are expected to respond to crises and political events as the KGB did before the fall of the USSR. You may find, during the course of your research that information on the fall of the KGB is limited on the internet. If so, I would advise you to use JSTOR as well as your college library, as a larger number of books and scholarly articles exist on the topic of KGB reactions to the above situations. For a list of some internet sources, please see the works cited list below.

### Other Info

Throughout the course of the MUN conference, the key issues facing the Soviet Union and the KGB as described previously will play large roles in the course of the simulation. Between the first committee session and the last, these issues and their impact on both the public and the KGB will be simulated in the time period between 1980 and 1991. As such, it is important and in the best interest of each and every delegate to research these events and the nature of their impact on the KGB. As stated above in the introduction letter, position papers are not required, although I highly encourage you to submit one as it will give you a chance to show how much

you know about the situation of the KGB and how you plan to fix its problems. While the events in committee will not exactly mirror the events which happened historically, it will be very important to know what actually happened. If you have any questions about anything contained within this background guide or Good luck and see you in March.

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