

Module 11: The End of the Cold War
Topic 1 Content: Collapse of the Soviet Union

Introduction



A year into President Reagan's second term as President, Mikhail Gorbachev became the last leader of the Soviet Union on March 11, 1985. Gorbachev saw how weakened the Soviet Union had become. Click **Start** to learn how the Soviet Union collapsed on December 12, 1991.

Module 11: The End of the Cold War
Topic 1 Content: Collapse of the Soviet Union

Instructions

Select *Glasnost* to begin your exploration of the struggles facing the Soviet Union.

GLASNOST

PERESTROIKA

NATIONALISM

COLLAPSE

Select Glasnost to begin your exploration of the struggles facing the Soviet Union.

Select Perestroika to continue your explorations of the struggles facing the Soviet Union.

Select Nationalism to continue your explorations of the struggles facing the Soviet Union.

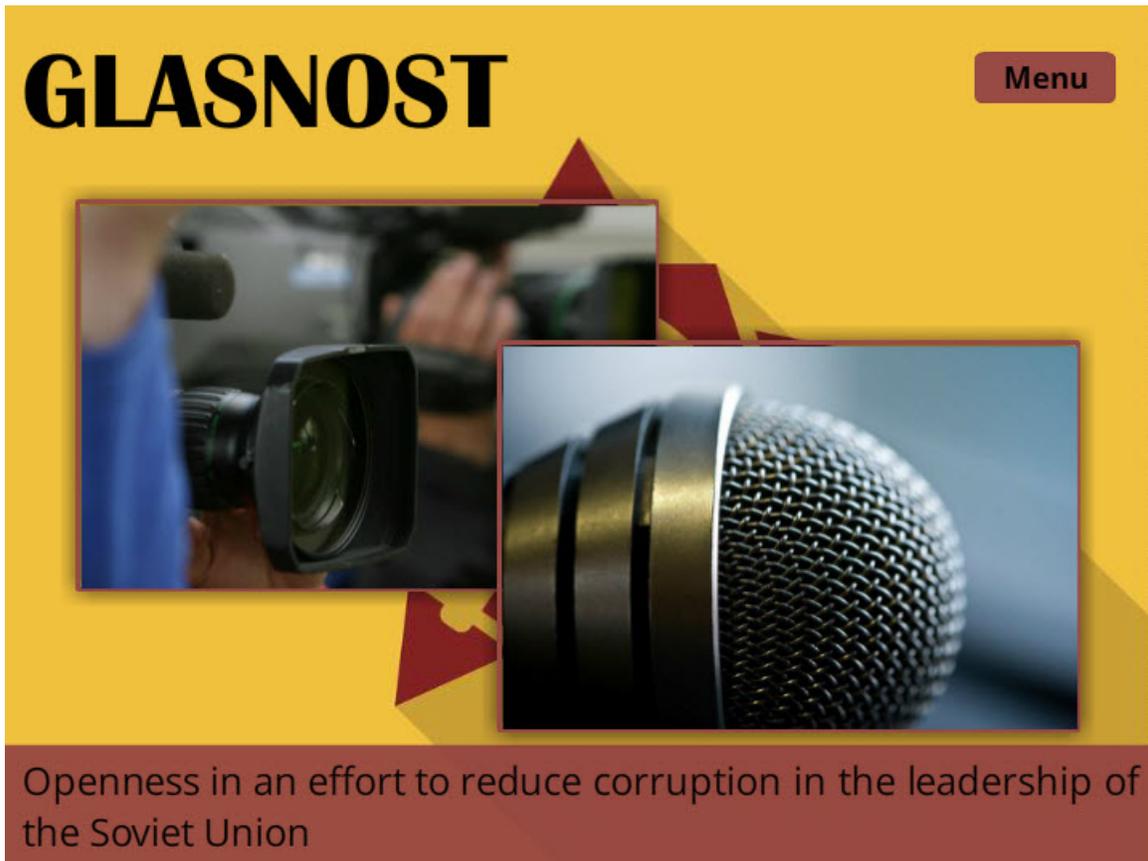
Select Collapse to learn about the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Module 11: The End of the Cold War
Topic 1 Content: Collapse of the Soviet Union

Glasnost

GLASNOST

Menu



Openness in an effort to reduce corruption in the leadership of the Soviet Union

Gorbachev instituted new changes to try to revive the economy of the Soviet Union. He instituted a policy of glasnost, which means openness, in an effort to reduce corruption in the leadership of the Soviet Union. This policy reduced censorship on the media and increased freedom of speech in the Soviet Union.

Module 11: The End of the Cold War
Topic 1 Content: Collapse of the Soviet Union

Perestroika

PERESTROIKA

Menu



Economic restructuring

Glasnost was coupled with a policy of perestroika, or economic restructuring. Perestroika gave greater freedom to the various Soviet ministries involved in controlling the economy and introduced a few market-based reforms, including some limited private ownership of businesses. These reforms began a series of fast-paced reforms aimed at switching from a command economy to a market economy.

Module 11: The End of the Cold War
Topic 1 Content: Collapse of the Soviet Union

Nationalism

NATIONALISM

Menu



Gorbachev could not stop the protestors because of his policy of glasnost.

The Soviet Union's collapse was also brought on by a rise in nationalism among the people in the Soviet Republics. The Soviet Union was composed of people from many different ethnic backgrounds, many of whom had been conquered by the Soviet Union. Even today, the Soviet Union remains one of the most ethnically diverse countries, with more than one hundred distinct ethnicities.

In 1987, the Baltic States were the first to begin agitating for independence. Gorbachev was caught in a tough spot because of his policy of glasnost. He could not crack down too hard on the protesters for fear of hurting his glasnost policy. Letting the protests continue only encouraged others to do the same. More Soviet Republics began to push for independence, including countries like Poland. These republics sought to return to their own individual cultures and to autonomy from the unified Soviet Union.

Module 11: The End of the Cold War
Topic 1 Content: Collapse of the Soviet Union

Collapse

COLLAPSE

Menu



The rising nationalism and failing economy officially collapsed the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991.

As communist governments across the globe began to waver and fall, most Americans were unaware of the internal issues of the Soviet Union at the time. As President Reagan increased American military resources, the Soviet Union sought to increase its own. The high expenses of this buildup caused debt and damaged the Soviet economy.

The centralized economic system of the Soviet Union was inefficient. The Soviet economic planners were unable to get reliable information as to what goods were needed. Thus the Soviet economy tended to over-produce items that were not needed and under-produce items that were needed. This centrally planned economy created an inefficient economic system. With rising nationalism and a failing economy, the Soviet Union officially collapsed on December 25, 1991, when Gorbachev transferred control of the government to the President of the Russian Federations, Boris Yeltsin.