Stimulus Response Theory and Arms Races

Ch. 8 - What Causes War?
Notes By Denis Bašić
• **BIBLE : Exodus 21:23-25**
  23 "But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."

• **QUR’AN : 5:45**
  We ordained therein for them: “Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal.”
  But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) wrong-doers.
Stimulus Response Theory
Stimulus-Response Or Action-Reaction Theory

• The Stimulus-Response (Action-Reaction) Theory of international conflict suggests that a state's behavior depends on the actions directed against it by other states.

• The classic formulation of the stimulus-response theory is that the actions of any state tend to be similar in type and magnitude to the actions directed at it by others.

• The interaction pattern may be relatively stable or it may involve either the escalation or deescalation of conflict as states respond to each other's moves.
• Types of Dyadic (Bilateral) Interaction Patterns:

• 1. Reciprocity/Symmetry pattern - each state in conflict responds to the other with actions that are similar in type and magnitude. The response of each to the behavior of the other is proportionate to the preceding act of the other.

• 2. Escalation/fight pattern - each adversary in a conflict responds to the actions of the other with somewhat bolder, more hostile reactions. The behavior of the states becomes increasingly threatening and aggressive, creating a conflict spiral.

• 3. Asymmetrical escalation pattern - in a conflict between a pair of states, one of the states engages in escalation while the other is content to merely reciprocate. (Germany, WWI)

• 4. Deescalation pattern - each state in conflict reacts to the behavior of the other by responding with actions that are more cooperative and less hostile. This process can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. Instead of conflict spiral, there is peace spiral. (Gorbachev and USA)
Four Typical Conflict Interaction Patterns
(using a nine point hostility scale with 9 as maximum hostility)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>A’s hostility level</th>
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Asymmetrical escalation

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Deescalation

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When does the escalation/fight pattern replaces the Reciprocity/Symmetry pattern?

- Leng and Goodsell suggest that escalation occurs when one side in the conflict starts using a threat of military violence. In their analysis of five interstate conflicts between 1850 and 1965, they discover that conflicts are more likely to escalate when one adversary uses a threat of military violence. Threats of military violence may represent a kind of threshold. Once that threshold has been exceeded by one side, the symmetry process is replaced by the escalation process.
Why does one side decide to increase the level of hostility by using military threats in the first place?

- An answer consistent with our examination of the individual level of analysis is simply that individual leaders in one of the countries misperceive the level of hostility directed at them and thus respond at a higher level of hostility, even though they believe themselves to be returning it in a proportionate, reciprocal way.

- Another possibility is that the operational codes of leaders involved require a kind of "one-upmanship" response to the unfriendly behaviors of rival.
  - One-upmanship is the art or practice of successively outdoing a competitor.

- Are we coming to the conclusion that the war is caused by the misperceptions and inflated egos of leaders?
The classic formulation of the Stimulus-Response (or Action-Reaction) theory: violence begets violence and cooperation begets cooperation.

Along these lines, liberals have essentially argued that tough, militaristic actions by the United States led inevitably to rough, militaristic reactions by the former Soviet Union. Friendly, cooperative actions by the United States should lead to friendly, cooperative reactions by the U.S.S.R.

In their “Realist” (Conservative) Theory, conservatives maintain that the Soviets acted inversely rather than reciprocally. Cooperative actions by the United States produced only uncompromising, aggressive acts by the Soviet Union, while tough, strong actions by the United States were the most likely to produce cooperative actions by the U.S.S.R. The implication was that "bullying" the Soviets was the approach most likely to produce the desired results.

What secures peace? cooperation or Threat? examined on the US-Soviet relations
Whose Theory is right? The Liberal or Conservative One?

• Overwhelming evidence proves the **Stimulus Response (Liberal) Theory**, rather than the **Realist (Conservative) Theory** right.

• **LIBERAL - Russel Leng’s study** of the Berlin Blockade of 1948-1949, the Berlin Crisis of 1961, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 supports the liberal contention. The Soviets were far more likely to be accommodative in response to positive American acts than to American threats. The most effective American influence technique, however, used both “**carrot and stick**” - combining threats and positive inducements. (*sic! Carrot & Stick*)

• **LIBERAL - William Gamson and Andre Modigliani’s study** of interaction between the Western and Eastern Bloc nations during the Cold War period between 1946 and 1963 also supports the notion that cooperation begets cooperation and hostility and begets hostility. They conclude that belligerent activity of one side (it doesn't matter which) was most likely to generate belligerent activity by the other. Likewise, actions of accommodation were most likely to prompt a conciliatory response by the other.

• **LIBERAL - Jan Triska and David Finley**, two experts on Soviet foreign policy, discover pronounced patterns of reciprocity in Soviet-American relations throughout the Cold War period.
• LIBERAL - Ole Holsti also finds that during the Cuban Missile Crisis between the United States and the U.S.S.R. the level of hostility on each side was largely based on the other's hostility in the immediately preceding time period.

• LIBERAL - Goldstein and Freeman's analysis of U.S.-Soviet-Chinese relations from the period between 1948 and 1989, concludes that bilateral reciprocity is the norm in all three sides of the strategic triangle. Responses of all three "nations" to actions of the others are almost universally reciprocal in nature, though not necessarily completely symmetrical. The United States, the Soviets, and the Chinese each reciprocate each other's actions on a short-term basis. In none of the interaction patterns is there any evidence of inverse response. None of the superpowers showed any signs of opportunistically exploiting the cooperation of others. Nor did any of the three show signs of backing down when faced with hostility from the others. In sum, Goldstein and Freeman find no evidence of nations behaving the way conservatives hypothesize that they would.

• There is a lot more supporting evidence for the Stimulus Response Theory in studies examining the data from other countries and eras. They are intentionally left out from this consideration. Research them and use them in your papers and presentations.
What is A Greater Factor in a Country’s Expression of Hostility? Bureaucratic Inertia or Threat from Outside?

- There are three studies that might be used to challenge the validity of the Stimulus Response Model versus the Bureaucratic Inertia Model (hypothesizing that a nation's present policy is based primarily on its past policy, not current threat from abroad.)
- CONSERVATIVE - Raymond Tamer's study of NATO-Warsaw Pact interaction in the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and Duncan and Siverson's analysis of Sino-Indian interaction between 1959 and 1964 provide only modest support for either model, but conclude that of the two, the stimulus-response model is the weaker. Gordon Hilton's analysis of pre-World War I interaction shows that previous hostility expressed is the strongest factor in determining a country's subsequent expression of hostility.
- LIBERAL - Despite these dissenting studies, we seem to have rather uniform support for the stimulus-response theory of conflict. Not only does the evidence strongly support the proposition that the behavior of states conforms generally to the norm of reciprocity, it also strongly suggests that war is derived from the reaction of one state to the hostile and belligerent actions of an other.
• Let us recall that the Lebensraum Theory advocated that the cause of war is overcrowding caused by population growth.

• Also, let us recall that Lateral Pressure Theory advocates that actually population growth alone would not be sufficient to cause war. According to Choucri and North the root cause of international conflict is the combination of rapid population growth and technological growth, which increases the demand of resources within the state. The search for resources leads the state to undertake an expansionary process beyond its own borders. This process of external expansion, which Choucri and North call lateral pressure, may be manifested in a variety of ways - including the expansion of trade or the acquisition of colonies.

• This lateral pressure brings a state into conflict with other nations that are undergoing a similar process of growth and expansion. "Intersections" develop-areas where the lateral pressures of two or more nations overlap with each other, bringing competition and conflict. The more intense the competition between states, the greater the likelihood of war.
Lateral Pressure Theory combined with Stimulus-Response Theory

• Once lateral pressure has placed states in competition with each other, they begin to respond to the actions of their rivals. Choucri and North single out the formation of alliances and arms buildups as important actions that may cause reciprocal behaviors by the other side. Additionally, violence by one side will lead to violence by the other. War may be the result.

• The theory was tested using data for the six major European nations beginning in 1871 and ending with the outbreak World War I in 1914. Statistical analysis led Choucri and North to conclude that war (violence behavior) has a number of different roots and can be reached by following several different paths. One pattern seems particularly strong. Colonial expansion is stimulated by population growth and by technological advance. Colonial expansion generally leads to increased intensity of intersection as the national interests of various countries begin to conflict over colonial area.
Choucri and North’s Lateral Pressure Model
ARMS RACE
ARMS RACE

Common Elements in Definition

1. Arms races develop out of a conscious awareness by each nation of the dependence of its own arms policies on those of another nation. They result from external, competitive impulses. The arms buildups of two nations are simultaneous and interdependent.

2. Arms races consist of rapid increases in arms accumulation which constitute an "abnormal" rate of growth in military procurement.

3. Arms races are best thought of as occurring in times of peace; arms accumulations during war do not count.

4. The weapons involved in the arms race are designed to combat each other in some way. They are either similar (tanks versus tanks) or they are complementary (anti-tank weapons versus tanks).
ARMS RACE &
Stimulus Response Theory

• Several attempts have been undertaken to determine to what extent arms races are in fact propelled by an interactive, stimulus-response process.

• Lewis Richardson, who surmised that the rate of change in any nation's increase in arms was a function of several factors:
  • (1) the opponent's level of military strength,
  • (2) a state's own willingness to accumulate arms because of its opponent's strength and his fear of that strength,
  • (3) the negative factors of fatigue and cost involved in increasing one's arms levels, and
  • (4) the general level of grievance against the opponent - a kind of hostility or revenge factor.
Was US & Soviet Arms Accumulation after WWII influenced by an Action-Reaction Process?

- Although the military policies of other nations are not the only determinant of a state's decision to accumulate arms, Richardson's formula nevertheless suggests that the rate at which a state's arms procurement increases is to a large extent dependent on the actions of rivals. Richardson's own analysis of 19th- and 20th-century defense spending data concluded that military spending tended greatly to be a reciprocal process. Oddly enough, efforts to reproduce Richardson's findings have met with only meager success.

- However, a variety of studies suggest that, contrary to popular opinion, neither Soviet nor American arms accumulations in the post-World War II era can be characterized as an action-reaction phenomenon.

- Several statistical studies of the military buildups of the two superpowers and their allies in the post-World War II era suggest that bureaucratic momentum (as indicated by past levels of military spending) and other domestic processes (* which ones?) have a greater impact on a country's level of weapons spending than does the military expenditure of its rivals.
• Choucri and North investigated the arms races between various European states as part of their comprehensive analysis of the long-terms causes of World War I. They hypothesized that several factors might plausibly be related to a nation’s military expenditure decisions:

• 1. the general socioeconomic dynamics of population and technological growth;

• 2. bureaucratic momentum - a state's own military expenditures in the preceding time period;

• 3. a state's colonial expansion and its intersections with other nations' colonial interests;

• 4. the military expenditures of one's rivals.

• Hence, Choucri and North include in their analysis both internal and external factors. Their test produced interesting, but mixed, results.
Why Doesn’t Action-Reaction Model apply to Arms Races?

- Lloyd Jensen has suggested several reasons:
  
  1. severe **domestic pressures** emanating from the **military-industrial complex**.
  
  2. general **tendency of military programs to expand** in order to absorb whatever dollars are available. (post-Vietnam budget)
  
  3. **misperception** and **miscalculation** of the rival's capabilities and intentions.
  
  4. arms decisions **not** made on the basis of simple **bilateral relations only**, but on the basis of **third-party military threats** as well.
  
  5. lowered arms levels by rivals actually increase the incentive for a state to add to its military capabilities instead of the reverse.
Historical defense cuts
Defense budgets, fiscal years 1948-2012

Millions of FY2012 constant dollars

It might be added that a final reason why researchers have failed to validate an action-reaction process for arms races may be methodological. By concentrating on total yearly defense budgets, researchers may not be adequately capturing the arms race phenomenon that is taking place in the development and deployment of particular weapons systems.

If, for instance, the United States races with the U.S.S.R. in the buildup of atomic warheads and simultaneously reduces its troop levels, the overall effect on the defense budget is likely to be a net decrease - even though an intense race is taking place in particular sector of the total defense program. This actually happened in the 1950s as the United States rearranged its defense priorities in order to get "more bang for the buck."

Thus, Michael Don Ward, demonstrates that when data on actual military stockpiles are included in the arms race equation along with figures for defense expenditures, the U.S.-Soviet arms race appears much more reactive.
Arms Races & War In The Stimulus Response Theory

- **Hypothesis:** If it is true that nations* act toward others as they are treated, and if it is true that an arms buildup by one side is seen as a sign of hostility by rival states, then we can expect nations* to reciprocate this hostility with hostile actions of their own - not just with the accumulation of more weapons, but with other kinds of hostile actions as well. Thus, an arms buildup by one side should lead to increased hostility by the other.

- As we have seen, it is possible for this general conflict interaction to increase in intensity and "get out of hand." The conflict spiral might end in war.

- This, of course, leads to the conclusion that a rapid accumulation of arms might lead not to greater security for a country, but to increased hostile activity by rivals.

- This would seem to flatly contradict the ancient maxim attributed to the Roman military writer, Flavius Vegetius Renatus, "Si vis pacem, para bellum," if you desire peace, prepare (for) war.
HOW OFTEN ARMS RACES LEAD TO WAR AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES?

- In his classic article, Samuel Huntington draws attention to the obvious, namely, that while some arms races end in war, not all do. Huntington argues that there are **two danger points** that occur at the beginning of an arms race. **The first point** is the response of the challenged state to the initial increase in arms of the challenger. **The second point** is the reaction of the challenger (which has been initially successful in its goal) to the frantic and belated efforts of the challenged state to retrieve its former position.

- Huntington also concludes that **the likelihood of war increases just prior to a change in the military superiority**. At this point there would seem to be both great uncertainty and tremendous instability.

- **The good news** is that the probability of war varies inversely with the length of the arms race. Huntington contends that as an arms race continues, the interaction pattern between the states tends to become more predictable, more stable and regularized. A situation of "dynamic equilibrium" is produced. Each state continues to increase its arms, but the relative balance remains the same.
Quantitative vs. Qualitative arms races

• A **quantitative arms race** refers to the addition of larger numbers of men and weapons to one's military machine. In such an arms race superiority is likely—owing to unequal resources and determination. Thus, quantitative races tend to be settled one way or another. **Huntington** argues that quantitative races impose greater and greater burdens on those nations involved in them. Meanwhile, governments must mobilize popular support for the sacrifices required by an arms buildup, generating in the process suspicion, fear, and hostility toward the potential opponent.

• On the other hand, **qualitative arms races** - races involving decisions to introduce new weapons systems through technological innovation - involve less risk of war, according to Huntington. Unlike quantitative races, they do not necessarily increase arms budgets. They represent a competition of elite technicians in weapons laboratories, not a competition of masses, and therefore impose no great burden on the general public.
Table 6-3.
A Comparison of the Relationship Between Arms Races and Wars

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<tr>
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- From this table it seems obvious that many wars have not been preceded by arms buildups, and many arms races never end in war.
Relationship Between ARMS RACES and WAR:
Some Conclusions

• That arms races have been a preliminary to war is clear. The major wars of the past century - World Wars I and II - have each been preceded by arms races. But just as clearly, many wars have not been preceded by such mutual arms buildups, and many arms races never end in war.

• Just how many wars are preceded by arms races depends on the operational criteria one uses to determine their existence. We must conclude that while the final evidence is not yet in, it is likely that arms races play only a modest, subsidiary role in the general causation of war.

• As one analyst put it: "Disputes preceded by arms races do escalate to war more often than other disputes, but they do not overwhelmingly escalate to war." They are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the outbreak of hostilities. Nevertheless, it is probably true that arms races do make it somewhat more likely that a serious dispute will escalate to war.
Under What Circumstances Do Arms Races Lead To War?

• Since some arms races lead to war and some do not, it is appropriate that we ask (as Huntington did) what kind of arms races are most likely to lead to war and under what conditions.

• There has been some research on these topics, but the answers are far from clear. Several rival theses have been developed. Arms races lead to war:

  • (a) if the arms race leads to a change in the dyadic balance of power,

  • (b) if a "revolutionary" power is winning the arms race, rather than a "status quo" power,

  • (c) if the arms race is unable to attain an equilibrium.
Expected Utility Theory

- **Expected Utility Theory** advocates the seemingly obvious generalization that actors do not initiate serious disputes if they do not expect to gain something from doing so.

- Using the **Expected Utility Theory** to analyze a *nation’s motivation for war, James Morrow argues that arms races that simply lead to the continuous matching of a rival's capabilities do not alter the relative balance of capabilities and thus do not change either's calculations of the probability of success in war. Most arms races, however, result in neither continuous nor instantaneous equilibria. Different rates of arming result in temporary swings in the relative balance. **When a state holds a temporary military advantage, its calculations about probable success in war are favorably altered, and it is at this point that disputes are most likely to escalate to overt conflict.**

- The larger the swing in military superiority, the greater the likelihood of war. **Fighting a war becomes more attractive - at least momentarily, since this "window of opportunity" will most likely close later as the rival catches up. (Think of the ongoing Iran vs. US and Israel tensions.)**
Conservative (Realist) View on Arms Races-War Relationship

• Writers in the realist tradition argue that arms races are dangerous when they lead to a change in the relative balance of military power between rivals, but that this is not the complete story. What is most important is which states are being relatively advantaged or disadvantaged by this shift. Their presumption is that the most dangerous situation occurs if the shift in power is in favor of a revisionist state that is dissatisfied with the current international system and is to the detriment of a status quo state - an idea similar to the power transition theory, which we will discuss in Chapter 10.

• Wallace finds, however, that neither gains in the relative balance by revisionist states nor revisionist state and superiority in the balance is related to the outbreak of war.
In conclusion, a more fundamental question needs to be asked: Do arms races lead to war? Or do expectations of war lead to arms races?

It may be that men do not fight because they have arms, but rather they have arms because they believe it is necessary to fight.

These questions imply that arms races ought not to be considered as root causes of war, but rather as manifestations of other underlying causes of war.

Arms races do not cause war, per se, but rather increase the chance of war simply because they increase the amount of tension and hostility and the perceptions of threat that probably already exist between nations.

To be fair, of course, Stimulus-Response theory does not argue that arms races are root causes of war, only that they are part of an overall environment of reciprocated tension and hostility between nations and that they play a role in the more general conflict escalation process which leads to war.
Conservative (Realist) View of Security & Munich Analogy

- Conservative (Realist) view of security and international relations holds that security lies in military strength and that the best way to ensure peace is to prepare for war.

- Related to this notion is the belief that other nations will back down from the pursuit of their interests when faced with threats. Saber rattling will deter aggression and bring peace. Conversely, conciliatory acts will have the effect of leading one's rivals to believe that you will not defend your interests.

- Conservatives draw on the "Munich analogy" here, arguing that the appeasement policies of France and Britain in the 1930s merely whetted Hitler's appetite for more territory and convinced him the West would not fight. It is argued that a policy of threats backed up by strong actions would have kept Hitler in his place. Conservatives then generalize from this experience and apply “the lesson of Munich” - never appease an opponent - to international politics in general.

- Hillary Clinton’s use of the Munich Analogy.
Security Dilemma

• Robert Jervis suggests that the central theme of international relations is not evil, but tragedy. The tragedy revolves around what political scientists call the security dilemma.

• The dilemma is that in seeking to enhance its own security a nation* takes actions that unwittingly stimulate in its rival exactly the kind of behavior it wanted to prevent. Attempts to create greater security for oneself may, unfortunately, result in even less security.

• The defense policies of nations are interdependent; greater security for one nation may mean relatively less security for others. The problem, as Jervis puts it, is that "most means of self-protection simultaneously menace others."
Preemptive War

The French philosopher J. J. Rousseau long ago explained the tragic logic of preemptive war:

“It is quite true that it would be much better for all men to remain always at peace. But so long as there is no security for this, everyone, having no guarantee that he can avoid war, is anxious to begin it at the moment which suits his own interest and so forestall a neighbor . . . so that many wars, even offensive wars, are rather in their nature of unjust precautions for the protection of the assailant's own possessions than a device for seizing those of others.”

Cashman summarizes Rousseau’s view stating, “No state desires war, and none seeks territorial gains; the chief motivation is not self-aggrandizement, but fear.”
GRIT
GRADUATED AND RECIPROCATED INITIATIVES IN TENSION REDUCTION

• GRIT is a strategy proposed by Charles Osgood in connection with the hostility that existed between the United States and Soviet Union.

• His idea was that if war is the result of an reactive process that spirals upward, then it is necessary to intervene in some way in the conflict process to reverse the escalatory spiral.

• While the bad news is that aggression, violence, and hostility are reciprocated by others, the good news is that so are cooperative and conciliatory actions.

• All that is required is for one nation to take the initiative. Instead of returning an eye for an eye, it must turn its cheek and even act charitably toward its antagonist.

• Osgood suggests that unilateral actions, coupled with clear verbal statements, can be used to initiate a reciprocal deescalatory spiral. By communicating through deeds as well as words, states can learn mutual trust and can reduce the level of tension and hostility that exists between them.
The major problem in implementing GRIT seems to be in initiating the first move.

A policy based on GRIT requires a tad more flexibility and maneuverability in policy making than most governments can muster. (Problems with opposition)

GRIT may appear as a rather risky experiment based on an academic theory of international relations. (Clearly, leaders should not subject their citizens to dangerous experiments. However, all government policies are experiments based on implicit theories of how the world works.)
Kennedy Experiment

- The so-called "Kennedy experiment" began in June 1963 when President Kennedy announced a unilateral ending to nuclear tests in the atmosphere, stating that the United States would not resume such tests unless another nation did.
- The Soviet Union reciprocated. Khrushchev then took the next step a few days later by announcing a halt in the production of strategic bombers.
- A series of unilateral conciliatory moves ensued, leading to a number of arms control agreements. The deescalatory cycle ended when the Soviets resumed testing in response to nuclear testing by the French government.
Empirical Examination of GRIT

- In their study of U.S.-Soviet-Chinese interaction from 1948 to 1989, Goldstein and Freeman examine six cases of cooperative initiatives, one by each of the superpowers toward each of the others.

- They find that five of the six attempts were successful in creating cooperative bilateral reciprocity. (The one failure was Gorbachev's unilateral nuclear testing moratorium aimed at the Reagan administration.)

- In virtually all cases, the initiator had to overcome significant policy inertia in the target state. As a result, success in gaining reciprocal cooperation depended on the willingness of the initiator to persevere after initially disappointing responses.

- This suggested to Goldstein and Freeman that an "extended" GRIT policy (or EGRIT), in which the initiator makes sporadic (rather than continuous) unilateral gestures over an extended period of time might be the best policy to gain mutual cooperation.
Winning cooperation with the United States was not very easy for the Soviets. A number of Soviet unilateral undertakings were initiated without significant reciprocation:

- the Soviet nuclear test moratorium of July 1985;
- the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan in December 1988;
- Gorbachev's United Nations speech (December 1988) announcing a unilateral Soviet decision to cut the Soviet military by 500,000 troops over two years and to remove or destroy substantial numbers of tanks, artillery, and aircraft; and
- the May 1989 promise to unilaterally withdraw 500 nuclear weapons from Europe.

Until the end of 1989, according to Goldstein and Freeman, the Soviets seemed to be doing the initiating and the reciprocating, while the United States rarely initiated and reciprocated only weakly. Improvements in Soviet-American relations took place primarily because of Soviet willingness to persist in making concessions even though the American response had been meager. By the end of 1988 all the Soviets had to show for their efforts was the INF (intermediate range nuclear forces) agreement, a treaty made possible primarily by Soviet willingness to make significant substantive concession to the United States.
In the next two years (1989-1991) everything has changed. A series of spectacular events transformed U.S.-Soviet relations (and international relations in general) in a shockingly brief period of time.

The fall of “communism” in the six former Soviet bloc states in Eastern Europe in the last four months of 1989 was made possible by Gorbachev's willingness to abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine and allow peaceful transitions.

The unification of the two Germanies in October 1990 under Western terms, which maintained German membership in NATO, was also made possible by Soviet concessions.

These events were followed logically by the demise of the Warsaw Pact (and COMECON) in April 1991 and the process of removing all Soviet forces from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany.

In the meantime, according to Cashman, the Soviet Union had begun to transform itself from a one-party “communist” state to a fledgling democracy experimenting with market capitalism.
US-Soviet Relations & GRIT 3

• These events led to a virtual landslide of reciprocity by the West. The CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Treaty was signed by the NATO and WTO states in November 1990, and the Soviets and Americans signed the START (Strategic Arms Reduction) Treaty in July 1991. Numerous bilateral and multilateral trade and aid agreements were signed between the Soviets and Western states. Bilateral and multilateral summits proliferated.

• Then in September 1991, in the aftermath of the abortive coup that had attempted to remove Gorbachev from power, President Bush made a startling television speech. He announced a package of American unilateral actions, which included, among other things:
  • (a) the withdrawal of all U.S. tactical nuclear weapons from Europe,
  • (b) elimination of nuclear cruise missiles from certain types of naval vessels,
  • (c) the removal of U.S. bombers from alert status, and
  • (d) the termination of U.S. mobile ICBM programs.

• The president asserted that these steps would be implemented with or without reciprocation from the Soviets, but he challenged the Soviets to join the United States in taking equally bold and concrete steps. The American president had adopted the language and the strategy of GRIT!
The Soviet response to President Bush's speech was not long in coming. Approximately a week later, Gorbachev announced his own unilateral actions.

He directly reciprocated most of the American cuts and then went several steps further by once again suspending Soviet nuclear tests and by pledging that the Soviet strategic arsenal would be kept at a level of 1,000 warheads below the American arsenal.

He then proposed the two nations agree on a further 50% cut in strategic weapons.

Within months a second round of GRIT proposals was underway. In his State of the Union address in January 1992, President Bush presented a package that included unilateral defense initiatives (some old, some new) and challenged the new Russian government of Boris Yeltsin to reciprocate.

Yeltsin's reciprocation was virtually simultaneous. (The joint announcements had obviously been worked out in advance - a new twist on GRIT strategy.)
Super-GRIT = New Thinking

- **Goldstein and Freeman** conclude that the best strategy to induce cooperation might be a "super-GRIT" policy, which would essentially be a policy of permanent EGRIT (extended-GRIT) in which unilateral initiatives would be pursued at a level that could be sustained over a number of years.

- In fact, the authors argue that Soviet President **Gorbachev** followed just such a policy in his "new thinking" approach to foreign policy beginning in 1985. Unilateral concessions were made in order to induce cooperation from both the Chinese and the Americans.

- In their study of U.S.-Soviet interaction from 1948 to 1989, **Goldstein and Freeman** also state that Soviet-American relations returned at some point to their "steady state" of hostility - an effect the authors maintain is due to policy inertia in both states.

- How are the **U.S.-Russian relations now** that both countries are capitalist? If the differences in economic systems once used to be a problem, what affects the current relations between the two states?

- [Eastward expansion of NATO by Russia Today](#)
- [Gorbachev on NATO expansion to Eastern Europe](#)
- [Anne Applebaum & Stephen Cohen cross over NATO expansion](#)
**Realities Check: Where are the world's nuclear weapons?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total defense spending</td>
<td>$560 B</td>
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<td>Ground troops</td>
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<td>Nuclear warheads</td>
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