The Setting: 1980

- **Soviet Global Engagement**
  - Africa/Middle East
  - Latin America
  - Europe (peace offensive)
  - Asia (Cambodia, Afghanistan)

- **US Decline**
  - Iran hostages
  - Vietnam
  - Largest reduction in US military capabilities relative to USSR during Cold War [Gaddis]
  - weakened US presidency
  - weakened NATO
Reagan National Security Orientation

- Nixon/Kissinger/Carter Policy of Arms Control → US Decline
- USSR was now overextended
  - USSR had constraining domestic problems – economy, technology
  - USSR would not risk a real confrontation with US
  - Soviets afraid of toughness
    - other countries would respect new U.S. assertiveness
Reagan National Security Orientation

- Democracy was sweeping the developing world
  - tide of history favors western democracies & capitalism
    - (opposite Marxist-Leninist philosophy)
- Reagan Doctrine: reversing Soviet gains by "undermining" weak communist regimes outside E. Europe
  - US analogue to wars of national liberation -- major segments of society resist communist regime
  - support anti-communist insurgents to point were economic, political, social, governmental costs place heavy burden on USSR
Reagan National Security Orientation

- “Decade of Neglect” & “Window of Vulnerability”
- US could be resurgent with new defense investment
Policy Implementation

- Reinvesting in Defense
  - All forces
- Use of Force to Reestablish Reputation
- Covert Operations
- Arms Control
  - as political response to domestic & European peace movement
Reinvesting in Defense

- Defense Budget
  - $2.4 trillion ($600 million increase over Carter budget)
  - 1980-1985 longest sustained peacetime military budget buildup in 20th Century
  - Defense sector inflation hobbles real growth in defense capabilities
Reagan Defense Programs

- **Strategic Forces** (Defense Guidance 1982)
  - MX
  - Cruise Missiles
    - ALCM, SLCM, GLCM
  - B-1 & B2
  - Trident SSBN/SLBM
  - SDI & strategic defense
Reagan Defense Programs

• General Purpose Forces
  – Navy
    • Maritime strategy & 600 ship Navy
  – Army
    • New hi-tech force
      – M-1
      – Bradley fighting vehicle
Use of Force

- Grenada (1983) – warning to Soviets/Cubans
  - 6 day amphibious/air assault liberates Grenada
  - government factional infighting
  - US enters to rescue 53 US medical students
  - 6000 US troops (19 killed)
  - Cuban soldiers (>100 killed)
Use of Force

- **Libya (1986)**
  - NSA evidence of Libyan involvement in FRG bombing of US troops in night club
  - F-111s in UK & Navy carrier Aircraft raid Libya (punish & deter)
  - France refuses overflight

- **US Builds Persian Gulf Forces**
  - Air & naval bases (in Saudi Arabia; airbases 5x bigger than Saudi airforce)
  - Mine clearing in Gulf (Iran - Iraq War)
  - Vincennes accidental Shoot Down of Iranian airliner (1988)
Covert Operations

- **Nicaragua**
  - 1981-1990: US Builds up Contras

- **Afghanistan**
  - 1980-1990: aid to Mujahadeen to fight Soviets
Arms Control

- US & European "Peace Movement" & "Nuclear Freeze" Movement → Arms Control
  - Public Opinion Affects National Security Policy
    - US Admin. Aggressive tone seen as more dangerous than Soviet military buildup – US & European public opinion → peace movement
      - US domestic calls for US troops to leave Europe; 1/2 US defense budget goes to conventional defense of Europe
      - Many Europeans think NATO is an anachronism
    - Nuclear Winter Thesis
Arms Control

• **“0-0 Option” as Political Move**
  - Pershing II, GLCM (300 rvs) v. SS-20s (1400 rvs)
  - lessen domestic pressures against US deployments
    - 1/1984 Soviets walk out of negotiations; increases European anti-US feelings
    - 1987 the return/1988 Gorbachev accepts

• **START**
  - To weaken US Nuclear Freeze Movement
  - Goal of 50% reduction in SNF
  - Negotiations almost complete by 1989
END
Central America
Persian Gulf
INF Treaty

Soviet SS-20
U.S. Defense Budget

Department of Defense Projected Budget Through 2007

Billions of 2002 Dollars

U.S. Spending

$ billions (1992)

Year


back