END OF THE COLD WAR TIMELINE

1960s
USSR spending 20% of its annual budget on defence. Failed economic policies led to people starving. USSR has to import supplies from the West.

1961
Sino-Soviet split.

1967–1979
Détente – a period of easing in tensions between the US and USSR.

1979
Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

1980
Solidarity trade union established in Poland and quickly gains 10 million members.

1982
Solidarity banned in Poland.

1983
President Reagan announces Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

1985
Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the USSR and introduces policies of glasnost and perestroika.

1986
Chernobyl disaster almost bankrupts the USSR.

1988
Protests spread throughout Poland due to the further decline in the economy.

1989
Poland agrees to new elections with reduced influence for communists guaranteed. Solidarity legalised & formed coalition without the communists = anti-communist government.

1989
After the reintroduction of multi-party democracy, the border between Austria and Hungary opened and free movement allowed. Many fled from Hungary and East Germany to the West.

8th November 1989
After protests against hardline Honecker, Berlin Wall brought down and the border between East and West Germany was opened

November 1989
Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia.

December 1989
Romanian Revolution – communist leader Nicolae Ceausesecu is overthrown.

1990
Germany reunited.

1990–91
Former Soviet Republics of the USSR declare themselves independent (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Georgia).

1991
Russia declares itself a republic and Boris Yeltsin is elected as leader.

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