

**CHAPTER**  
**19**  
**SECTION 3**

**Section Summary**  
**THE END OF THE COLD WAR**

**READING CHECK**

What country released American hostages early in Reagan's presidency?

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**VOCABULARY STRATEGY**

Find the word *contradicted* in the underlined sentence. Use context clues to help you figure out the meaning of *contradicted*.

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**READING SKILL**

**Sequence** What policies did Mikhail Gorbachev pursue in the Soviet Union before the collapse of communism?

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Under President Reagan, the United States worked to weaken communism and the Soviet Union by committing to the largest peacetime military buildup in U.S. history. Reagan proposed a program called the **Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)**. SDI would use lasers to destroy missiles aimed at the United States. Reagan also supported anticommunist rebellions worldwide. This included the **Contras**, anticommunist counterrevolutionaries in Nicaragua.

**Mikhail Gorbachev**, who became leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, pursued new reform policies. They were called *glasnost*, meaning a new openness, and *perestroika*, reforming the Soviet system. Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union improved. Eventually, both signed a nuclear arms pact. They also negotiated for a reduction of nuclear weapons. In 1991, communism collapsed and the Soviet Union split into 15 independent republics. The Cold War had ended.

In the Middle East, a truck bomb killed 241 United States Marines stationed in Lebanon. The United States also clashed with Libya, whose leader supported terrorist groups. On a positive note, all 52 American hostages held by Iran were released minutes into Reagan's presidency.

However, the **Iran-Contra affair** tarnished Reagan's second term. In 1985, the United States sold weapons to Iran in exchange for Iran's promise to pressure Lebanese terrorists to release American hostages. This contradicted the administration's policy of not negotiating with terrorists. Money from this sale was then used to fund Contras in Nicaragua, which violated a ban by Congress. Ultimately, several officials were convicted on charges from the scandal.

**Review Questions**

1. How did President Reagan weaken communism and the Soviet Union?

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2. Why did the Iran-Contra affair tarnish President Reagan's presidency?

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