

Run that by me again

Mr. President

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I was astonished recently when I heard Mr. Obama tell a room full of young Russians that the Cold War ended by mutual agreement. Either he wanted to curry favor with his audience or he is incredibly ignorant of history. (I'm not sure which of those choices is worse.)

The Cold War was on big time through most of my childhood and a large slice of my adult life. I remember the Hungarian uprising and what the Soviet tanks did to those people. I remember the Russian effort to put missiles into Cuba and the long anxious days that followed until Khrushchev blinked. I remember the stories of the gulags that leaked out from under the Iron Curtain.

Listening to the President's speech in Moscow, you might come away with the impression that the Soviet Union was some sort of benign welfare state. It was a brutal state. There no freedom expression, no freedom of the press, no real freedom of any kind.

Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and the U.S. military ended the Cold War. Reagan and Thatcher stood stalwartly against the Soviets and called them out. Reagan started talking about Star Wars (the strategic missile defense initiative) and beefed up our military budget. The Soviet generals couldn't match it and their system began to implode as all socialist systems do.

Reagan went to the Berlin Wall and, against the wishes of his own state department, said "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" His call of freedom resonated and eventually, the German people took heart and, in some cases, tore the wall down with bare hands.

Eastern Europe saw its long awaited opportunity and the cat was out of the bag. The Baltic states declared their independence while we watched in amazement.

But this year, an American president went to Moscow and treated the Russian state as an equal.

Russia, in reality, is a dying state. Their death rates, especially among men, are terrible and the women aren't opting to have babies. Their prime minister has a puppet president in place and they continue to give aid and comfort to our adversaries, most notably, Iran.

Russia's brief period of press freedom is now being eroded and they are slipping back toward despotism. Neighboring free nations such as Georgia are in great danger as the Russian bear once again sharpens his claws.

I am amazed that the president's advisers don't seem to realize that the kind of speech he gave to those Russian students makes us look weak and you can bet that Russia's rulers now see us in just that way. I could start on his agreement on nuclear arms, including our delivery systems, but that's a whole other mess. Just thank God that nothing has been signed ...yet.

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