

THE COLLAPSE OF THE BIPOLAR WORLD. WHITE HOUSE – KREMLIN RELATIONS BETWEEN 1985-1991 FROM REALISM PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The Cold War is a disputed and referencial chapter in the domain of international relations. The analysis of these relations between the two actors, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. reveal certain key moments of the conflict, and the intensification of the dialogue will affect the last stage of the Cold War (1985-1991), in which U.S.-Soviet relations will swing between confrontation and dialogue.

In a theoretical context, the international relations of the Cold War were mainly characterized by defensive realism or neorealism which its main thesis is that a bipolar system (in our case forged by American and Soviet blocks) provides and offers more guarantees of peace and balance of power than a multipolar world. Also, the Cold War period can be analyzed from other realist outlooks, such as classical realism or offensive realism, but our scientific approach will focus on the theoretical frame of defensive realism.

The period 1985-1991 or the last stage of the Cold War is an important landmark for the international relations, because the conflict will be carried in a different manner by U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.. What is very interesting to observe is that in the following period, both U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. will restore, deliberately or not, an epoch of detente, but which was known in the historiography as the end of the bipolar world (1985-1991) or the end of the Cold War. It is certain that in these final years of the East-West conflict, the U.S.-Soviet relations have never been so close to cooperation as at that time.

Keywords: Cold War, U.S.A., U.S.S.R., defensive realism, bipolar world, balance of power, global order, peace, international relations, cooperation

1. DELIMITATION OF CONCEPTUAL ELEMENTS AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

An extremely dangerous phenomena, by the magnitude of the actors involved, the **Cold War** configured **international relations** arena as a race for nuclear superiority and hegemony, and opposed for the first time in human history two powerful ideologies and truly global superpowers: **U.S.A.** and **U.S.S.R.**. In this sense, the Cold War and the confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States is the image of **bipolarity** in international relations. This paper aims

to present briefly the diplomatic relations between the two superpowers of the Cold War final years and its effects over the **bipolar system**, including its **collapse**.

The **bipolar world** and the end of the Cold War revealed the ability of the two superpowers to **cooperate** and maintained the **balance of power** of the international system. The implosion of the U.S.S.R. and the **collapse** of bipolarity generated the opposite: it strengthened U.S. predominance and then multiplying the centers of power. This **hypothesis** deals with forms of **power** system, emphasizes the efficiency of **bipolarity** and believes that U.S. **unipolarity** was just the transition to **multipolarity**. The U.S.-Soviet reconciliation reveals a shift from an offensive realistic approach to one type of **defensive realism**. The distinction made by John Mearsheimer between the offensive and **defensive realism** highlights the new climate of relations between Washington and Moscow (Mearsheimer, 2001).

The **global order** was treated as a zero sum game between the two superpowers. Diplomatic relations between the two countries put the tone between 1985-1991 on the essentiality of **balance of power** as it develops the realist school of international relations. Also, Kenneth Waltz, **neorealism** theorist, emphasized that balance of power prevents monopoly of power and believed that bipolarity of the Cold War opened the way for cooperation (Waltz, 2006). Finally, the common interests of the bipolar game provided by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. revealed their capacity to reconfigure the system created by their rivalry.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

US-Soviet Relations between 1985-1991 contextualized a period together with its end (the Cold War). This period signified the progress of bipolar system that no longer swung between extreme confrontation and **cooperation**. It was marked by collaborative behavior of the actors. Its end, that ended the Cold War bipolar system which neorealists consider a generator of equilibrium. Basically, bipolarity or **bipolar order** implies that relations between the two superpowers are crucial to the system and they dominate the international policy agenda (Miroiu, Ungureanu, 2006, 314).

Mearsheimer approached offensive realism perspective, considering that states are dominated by the interests of maximizing power, with the ultimate goal of hegemony. In his view, realism of status quo type is difficult to be distinguished in world politics (Mearsheimer, 2001, 20). Yet, he acknowledges that **bipolarity**, **balance of power** and nuclear weapons kept the **peace** between the two superpowers, and peace in Europe (Mearsheimer, 1990, 12). **Offensive realism** characterized the Cold War superpowers clash to ninth decade of the twentieth century. Before Mearsheimer, Hans Morgenthau, **classical realism** representative, argued that the desire for power is inherent in the states, and not as **offensive realism** appreciate, that the struggle for power is determined by the structure of the system (Morgenthau, 2013).

Regarding the **bipolar system**, Morgenthau believes that it is a challenge for competing superpowers. With the disappearance of a multipolar system flexibility, the two superpowers, which have already assigned their spheres of

influence, aimed to increase the power in terms of prestige, territory or natural resources by attracting other non-aligned countries in their range of influence (Morgenthau, 2013, 379). Thus, during the Cold War, the **struggle for power** was given into maximizing the influence of communism or democracy in the areas still non-aligned political to Washington and Moscow. A surprising feature that Morgenthau surprises is that in a bipolar system, the superpowers are likely to advance, to withdraw, to negotiate and maneuver (Morgenthau, 2013, 379). Developments on the **White House-Kremlin axis** at the end of the Cold War reflects accurately Morgenthau's vision of the bipolarity. The two superpowers were covered by the scope of negotiations for **cooperation**, but both, in their ego did not want to lose influence or diminish it.

Since 1985, the reality of the bipolar Cold War is more in support of **defensive realism**, because the United States and the Soviet Union focused at that time on maintaining the **balance of power**, a power generated by the system (a **bipolar** one) and not by human nature. From Waltz's view (Waltz, 2006, 273), the existence of two great powers consider that both will act to preserve the system. Although he issues the hypothesis of a Pax Americana progress in a Russian-American one, he also points out that the U.S. holds overall management burden while the U.S.S.R. has arranged its own sphere of influence. He also believes that the U.S.-Soviet bipolar world would not accept crises and war that the multipolar system from 1914 to 1939 has tolerated (Waltz, 2006, 278-279).

Neorealism argues that the reason that guided the Americans and Soviets during the **Cold War** was the concern regarding the balance of power. Even Gorbachev, after its first summit with Ronald Reagan in Geneva, said: „*The international situation today is characterized by a very important feature of we and the United States must take into account in our foreign policy. In the current situation is not just about the confrontation between the two social systems, but a choice between survival and mutual annihilation*” (Kissinger, 2007, 687). The choice for survival meant identifying a common foreign policy to maintain the balance of the international system, and to initiate **cooperation** between the superpowers. According to Waltz's logic, intense competition subordinate interest ideology, and the power advantage enjoyed by a state over its competitor determines the application of sophisticated strategies and analysis of minor risks (Waltz, 2006, 275).

For Robert Keohane, the hegemony **bipolar system** of the Cold War was not essential for the maintenance regimes based on mutual interest, but drew attention to the visibility of international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and GATT (Keohane, 2010, 275). He counted on that the role of institutions will increase and the collapse of the bipolar system allowed this. Moreover, he argues that the post-Cold emerging multipolarity is dangerous in lack of institutions with stabilizing effect (Keohane, 2010, 278). I believe that Keohane's innovation comes in when he emphasizes the role that institutions will gain in new international order. Of course, his view has historical basis, through examples of the first World War alliances. The logic of instrumental alliances will reappear because states are

aware of the imminence of conflict in a multipolar world and will build such structures.

US-Soviet relations during the Cold War constituted the international system of power in world politics. Thus, these relationships are analyzed from the perspective of the international system level, meaning that the two superpowers were interdependent units above which could not be identified a higher systemic level (Buzan, Little, 2009, 86). The fact that the central thesis of **reconciliation** between Washington-Moscow stood under the ideal of "*a world without nuclear weapons*" shows that the persistence of **the bipolar system** was guided by maintaining the **balance of power**, which was threatened by the superpowers nuclear potential.

The comparison between systems of power presented by Waltz, it is a good reason for bipolarity. Although they marked their spheres of influence and tried to expand power by engaging in proxy wars, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. were not faced with a direct confrontation to alter the system, and thus irreparably alter the **balance of power**. Instead, the multipolarity before the two World Wars could not prevent the outbreak of conflict and destruction of the balance of power. It can be invoked the Vietnam syndrome and the war in Afghanistan for the bipolar system alteration. However, Vietnam was a failure for the U.S., but not decisively to change the system, and in the case of U.S.S.R., Afghanistan has not been the main element of decay, but the multitude of internal and external factors that have embrittled the system to its **collapse**.

The **U.S.-Soviet rapprochement** at the end of the Cold War, the summits between the leaders of the two superpowers on nuclear deterrence provides foundation to Kenneth Waltz assertions on the concept of **bipolarity**. In those years, bipolarity played the White House and the Kremlin has acted not only in preserving the system, but also to optimize it. As previously mentioned, Waltz captures the logic of interest in this **bipolar system**. The reality of the early 80s has shown that U.S. has a power advantage by developing the Strategic Defense Initiative, and its interest was the economic upgrading of U.S.S.R. However, Gorbachev's different policy surprised not only America, but made it impossible for analysts and researchers to predict the end of the **bipolar** era. In this line, it is observed the changed attitude in Waltz's logic, because he stressed that power has become more balanced in the international system at the end of the ninth decade (Waltz, 2006, 276).

Returning to Mearsheimer, one of his statements (Mearsheimer, 2001): „*a conflict is likely in a multipolar world than in a bipolar*” shows why **realists** believe that maintaining the **balance of power** is essential **to preserve the security and the system**, and why Soviet-U.S. bipolar world has been successful in their logic. Eventually, the **consensus** that we meet in relations between the White House and the Kremlin is an argument that supports and verifies the **hypothesis** that the **bipolar system was effective in maintaining the balance of power in this period of reconciliation between the superpowers**. However, the principle of balance of power that **realists** promoted, could not be maintained by the

cooperation of the bipolar system , meaning that the success of diplomatic meetings failed to prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moreover, this cooperation and the role of an atypical leader for U.S.S.R. (Mikhail Gorbachev), who promoted reforms, rushed the end the Soviet colossus, and its dismantling has ended the bipolar era.

In fact, Morgenthau believes that **the characteristics of a bipolar system can be the causes of its collapse** (Morgenthau, 2013, 380): emerging countries like China will not want to feel pressured by the binomial US-Soviet desire to influence, but would like to enter the stage of international politics as participants active. However, one of the causes of the Soviet Union collapse and thus of bipolarity was the resistance of Moscow aligned states, but also those who refused their framing in this bipolar structure of influence.

Even Keohane's theory - *institutionalism* - applies in the **hypothesis** issued in approach. Even if the two superpowers were cooperating, U.S. dominance and U.S.R.R. decadence have been felt. U.S. superiority could not easily be invoked in relation with Moscow. In this sense, the second part of the hypothesis, which **emphasizes that the collapse of the bipolar system was quickly subdued by American unipolarity**, leaves the question: **where will America exercise its influence if it is the only global power?** Washington, like every power needed structures (institutions) in which to consolidate its superiority.

However, the theoretical approach of **realism** failed to anticipate the end of the Cold War, probably **because the level of cooperation achieved was claiming the logic of perfect balance imagined by realists.**

3. METHODOLOGY RESEARCH AND OBJECTIVES

The methodology of this paper is to achieve the objectives established from the analysis of this scientific approach, namely:

1. To describe the **bipolar** era as a form of **cooperation** which generates the persistence of **balance** in the **global distribution of power**;
2. To answer certain questions:
 - „*could have been the Soviet Union existence saved?*”;
 - „*was the Cold War the ideal frame for maintaining a balance of power to and preserving a peaceful international order by the superiority and influence of both powers?*”;
 - „*were the United States prepared to take on the role of unipolar player and prevailing actor?*”;
3. To approach both powers position by:
 - reconsidering the **new attitude of U.S.S.R.** since the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev;
 - analyzing the necessity of launching **the Strategic Defense Initiative**;
 - studying **summit politics**;
 - viewing the **role played by American presidents**, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush;

- observing **the powers involvement in the resolution of conflicts** that could disrupt the balance of the system or diminish their influence.

Thus, the originality of “*The Collapse of the Bipolar World. White House – Kremlin Relations between 1985-1991 From Realism Perspective*” paper is suggested by the balance of arguments regarding the equitable role played by the two superpowers of the Cold War scene and their joint influence on a future of a international system **more peaceful, more cooperative and opened to dialogue**. In this reaffirmation of an **ideal balance of power** between the highest world powers I consider representative the **neorealist approach** in international relations.

The **methods** used in the preparation of this paper are **cross methods** (discovery of the relations at a time) **longitudinal methods** (studying evolution in time) and **casuistic methods** (case study focused on the last years of the Cold War, a period marked by a collaboration between the two actors systemic).

The main method used is **inductive method of research** that has been consistently applied and supported both hypotheses and the objectives. According to the methodology, this approach follows the evolution of cause-effect relation between the main events on the international relations scene in the late 80s, and the possibility of predicting the effect by the two combatants before starting joint actions for system stability.

Generally, the paper argues that the **consequences of the bipolar system collapse, namely the U.S. unipolarist moment in the context of an emerging multipolarity, altered the concert of power and the collective security by the disappearance of the aggressor and the enemy already identified**. Also the scientific approach presents a case study that still reverberates as a paradigm of a necessary balance in the international system.

The chosen topic finds its motivation in the fact that the duel for supremacy between America and Soviet Union unleashed an atypical international conflict whose consequences are still noticeable, and an understanding and acknowledgement of the events between 1985-1991 offers us the possibility of a background image concerning the contemporary international relations. Although the Cold War was marked by many tensed moments, the conflict ended in a diplomatic manner, which left room for conciliation and negotiation between Moscow and Washington.

In compliance with these specifications, I believe that the Cold War should remain a reference point for research and academic debate, both to understand the neorealist perspective on international relations and to acknowledge the need for cooperation at systemic level, nuclear deterrence, respect for independence and for sovereignty. Both the inductive method and this approach argues for the existence of equilibrium in the systems` balance of power at the time.

4. REDEFINING INTERNATIONAL ORDER. DEFROST U.S. – SOVIET RELATIONS

„From Stettin in the Baltic, to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent”

These were the words of Winston Churchill, the British prim-minister during the Second World War. He sounded the alarm, at 5th March 1946, in the University of Fulton, Missouri, over what has become **the most profound ideological, politic, diplomatic conflict with relative military emphasis – the Cold War.**

As we previously emphasized, the Cold War is a disputed and referencial chapter in the domain of international relations, which represented the key element that guided the diplomacies and foreign affairs from White House and Kremlin between 1946-1991. The analysis of these relations between the two actors reveal certain key moments of the conflict, and the intensification of the dialogue will affect the last stage of the Cold War (1985-1991), in which U.S.-Soviet relations will swing between confrontation and dialogue. So, **the improvement of the hostilities among the U.S.A.- Soviet Union relations is to be correlated with two politic figures: Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.** A substantial part was played by the summits between the leaders of the two powers, which emphasized a conciliating position. George Kennan, an American diplomat and the representative of the containment policy, said: „*The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of United States general value as a nation among nations*”.

During the Cold War, the American-Soviet relations were not crystallized in one single direction. The entire period, the two superpowers swung between conciliant behavior and military threats. We therefore assisted throughout the Cold War to peaceful coexistence, to detente, to failed military interventions or to consistent crisis between the two combatants.

4.1. RONALD REAGAN VS. MIKHAIL GORBACHEV – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S.A. AND SOVIET UNION SUMMITS

The period 1985-1991 or the last stage of the Cold War is an important landmark for the international relations, because the conflict will be carried in a different manner by U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.. The Suez or Cuba crisis, the military failure of U.S.A. in Vietnam, the coercive attitude of U.S.S.R. towards Hungary and Cehoslovakia were already regarded as part of history, and the relations between Moscow and Washington needed a new impulse and a redefinition of their role in world politics. Reagan’s new leading position was to have an impact on the American-Soviet relations, but not in first mandate, in which the Sovietic omologues (the ancient Brejnev and the old Andropov and Cernenko) were dealing more with health problems than with America. So, until the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev to the government of Soviet empire, the second Cold War had represented a gray chapter in the history of international diplomatic relations.

What is very interesting to observe is that in the following period, both U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. will restore, deliberately or not, an epoch of detente, but which was known in the historiography as the end of the bipolar world (1985-1991) or the end of the Cold War. **It is certain that in these final years of the East-**

West conflict, the U.S.-Soviet relations have never been so close to cooperation as at that time.

The stability of Soviet and American relations will be valued more than anything else, and the year 1985 became a crucial point in the history of the Cold War (Gaddis, 2009, 285). The so-called second Cold War, which was triggered by the attack over Afghanistan, has reached its end, and this role play between East and West will have finished until 1991. The period before the last years of the Cold War will initiate what we consider to be the premises for reassessments of the relations between United States and Soviet Union. The reconfiguration of the American and Soviet relations was possible through a concord of foreign policy between the two actors. We can not appreciate whether this concord was willingly or it represented only an inappropriate context for the survival of the U.S.- Soviet binominal.

There are two strong reasons for which the Soviet Union could not win the Cold War: it was economically overcome by the United States, and its ideology dictated the nature of the political, economic and social organization. However, even if the Soviet Union did not have the chances to win the Cold War, surely it had the military means to guarantee that the United States will not win it, either (Gray, 2010, 234). From this premise forward, we notice that the U.S.-Soviet relations entered a new era, different from the era of collaborations between Krushchev and Eisenhower, Kennedy and Krushchev or Nixon and Brejnev. Reagan, as we know, came to the White House as a result of the U.S. complains towards Jimmy Carter and in his first mandate he restored the confidence to the American people and propelled America to win the Cold War. Gorbachev gained sufficient political experience till Brejnev's death, and the transient experience of Andropov and Cernenko, brought with them the disapproval of the old Soviet polity.

In this context, the U.S.-Soviet relations will involve a concret discussion of how to change the world political scene. Communism continues to crack. Besides U.S.S.R., the other socialist states in Eastern Europe were beginning to feel the wind of change. The capitalism led by U.S.A. seemed triumphant and a new world order was placed in debate. The end of the bipolar world will be certified by important phenomena in the Cold's War board. Returning to the dialogue Reagan-Gorbachev, we must specify that the first contacts between the two leaders concerned a dispute about nuclear weapons. Gorbachev knew about the SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative) launched by Reagan and because he was aware that Soviet Union is overcome by these inovative technologies, he discussed with Washington the necessity of peaceful cooperation and the restriction of nuclear weapons.

Reagan was elected for a second mandate in 1984, because the confidence that the people had in him was increasingly huge. This fact allowed him to initiate a dialogue with Mikhail Gorbachev, dialogue in which he had the upper hand. The Soviet leader was not afraid of Reagan's abilities and reputation and warned him that „*Star Wars*”(SDI) violates S.A.L.T. 1 Treaty. Gorbachev demanded Reagan to

reduce this initiative, otherwise they will not start negotiations for arms reduction (Vaisse, 2008, 290). The leader from Moscow wanted to reestablish the position of his country on the international stage. The winning move was the dismissal of Andrei Gromiko and his replacement as minister of foreign affairs with Eduard Shevardnadze.

A far more skillful politician than his predecessors, Gorbachev sought to reduce military costs, a measure strongly connected to the internal reforms, proclaiming that Soviet Union could lose its status as a superpower before year 2000. He was aware that U.S.A. will not seek to amplify its military costs, because of the growth of budget deficit (McCauley, 1999, 105). According to these ideas, Gorbachev was the one who requested a meeting with president Ronald Reagan. Although he met prim-minister Thatcher in London in 1984, he did not present any guarantee for the West.

Shevardnadze was a spiritual character, full of zest and charm. Together they revolutionized the foreign policy and gained an increasing popularity. The system Gorbachev-Shevardnadze represented the „*new political thinking*” of Moscow. **Their politic strategy was based on the next features** (McCauley, 1999, 105-106): the confrontation between superpowers was unproductive; military power can not ensure security; all countries are interdependent; common universal values, such as human rights or the disuse of military force to solve political issues should be the fundament of foreign affairs. Last, but not least, Gorbachev’s Soviet Union considered itself as a normal state which did not want to approach foreign policy from the perspective of classical communism ideology anymore.

At Cernenko’s funerals, George Bush, the U.S.A. Vicepresident, handed Mikhail Gorbachev a letter from the President of U.S.A., which contained a proposal for a meeting in America. The Soviet leader suggested that the meeting should take place in Moscow (McCauley, 1999, 107). Eventually, the two parts agreed to meet at Geneva in November 1985. Beginning with these negotiations they consolidated a trend called „*policy of summits*”, which was developed between Gorbachev and Reagan. The two leaders had remarked the efficiency of these top meetings.

The top meeting from Geneva was the first one since 1979 and established the basis of a solid American-Soviet dialogue. On the one hand, Reagan wanted to put his mark on the Cold War as a pacifist, and on the other hand, Gorbachev needed a success in foreign policy. However, the two leaders got stucked in the negotiations, because, as Reagan was afraid of the American and international reaction, refused to give up his defense project (Vaisse, 2010, 172-173). This *rendez vous* between the leaders of U.S.S.R. and U.S.A., although a non-efficient meeting, represented the crystallization of a special bond between Reagan and Gorbachev. They agreed that further meetings are absolutely necessary for settling the East-West conflict and for the establishment of a „*Common European house*”, as the Kremlin leader sustained. Also, a pre-agreement regarding the reduction with 50% of the nuclear arsenals was signed. At Geneva was initiated a first phase in the negotiations concerning the disarmament, which began in 1984.

The Geneva summit was like a cold shower for the relation Reagan-Gorbachev, or more appropriate explained, it was an exploratory meeting, which had as main purpose the analysis of the opening of the two leaders towards the ideal of a different world. The Kremlin leader had seen Reagan as a „*politic dinosaur*”, and the American leader was still perceiving Soviet Union as an „*evil empire*”, despising everything that is linked with communism (McCauley, 1999, 107). However, the American President did not have a repulsion towards Gorbachev.

Even if Reagan sustained that „*Star Wars*” is a defensive weapon, Gorbachev was afraid that U.S.A. is using the armaments race to weaken Soviet Union. As a result of this conception, he publically proposed in January 1986 that the two superpowers should commit themselves to save the world from nuclear weapons until the year 2000, expressing the ideal of a planet which did not use these kind of weapons (Gaddis, 2009, 290). Initially, the Soviet leader wanted this collaboration to be bilateral and other world states to adhere to this new plan meant to save the planet in time.

After Moscow`s proposal critics towards Reagan began to appear. He was considered a cynical due to his secret purpose. His perspective of eliminating nuclear weapons was considered to be just a cover for his efforts of sustaining the armaments race. The paradox? The president who had made so much for the evolution of American ammunition contributed to the loss of its legitimacy (Kissinger, 2007, 681). While Soviet Union was seeking to get back on track in the international relations at the end of the `80s, both through an internal reform and a new perspective on the foreign relations that differed from the Brejnev era, United States engaged themselves in military actions.

U.S.A. took advantage of their ascension during the last years and intervened in the conflicts in Libia in April 1986 by trying to assassinate Gaddafi, who was considered an accomplice to a bomb attack which had murdered an American military. C.I.A. supplied missiles to the Mujahideens; they were going to be used against Soviet helicopters, which determined Reagan to declare that U.S.A. will not respect the unratified agreement S.A.L.T. 2 anymore (McCauley, 1999, 109). Suddenly, an event that took place on 26th April 1986 was to predict the death of Soviet Union – the nuclear accident from Chernobyl. United States noticed the vulnerability of U.S.S.R., who for the moment tried to hide the terrible accident. The premises for a new summit Reagan-Gorbachev were shaped, and its importance lies in the changes occurred in the foreign policy since Geneva. The next reunion between Reagan and Gorbachev was hosted in Island at Reykjavik, on 10-12th October 1986. This second summit of the two actors reflected the continuity of cooperation and the disponibility for a constructive dialogue was obvious.

This summit in Reykjavik, although announced as a precursory meeting for a further conference, suggested new possibilities for the East-West encounters (Parish, 2002, 249). Gorbachev renounced to his previous objections and accepted „*the zero option*” proposed by Reagan, which implied to eliminate all middle-range missiles from Europe (Gaddis, 2009, 291). As they met again in Island, the

two leaders were already familiar one to each other and the Soviet Union could not be considered as having a tendentious behavior. Indeed, there was a sense of unconfidence and reticence from the behalf of both parts, even if Gorbachev continued to express himself with the same optimism as before. This fact was normal for the echo which the Cold War have had in the international relations.

At Reykjavik, in a tumultuous and full of emotions race, which lasted for 48 hours and which was armed with obstacles, Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to reduce all strategic forces with 50% in five years and to destroy all ballistic missiles in ten years (Kissinger, 2007, 682). Considering Soviet proposals and the target of a world without nuclear weapons generated by *the new political thinking* from Moscow, it seemed that the vision of the couple Gorbachev-Shevardnadze was prolific for a new international order. Just one thing from the Soviet objectives was unclear: cancellation of all nuclear armaments. Even after this last reunion of the superpowers, Reagan`s administration was shocked by a huge scandal, which resembles by name with Nixon`s *Watergate*: the *Irangate* affair.

This scandal which spotted the evolution of Reagan`s mandate was close to lead to the dismissal of the president. U.S.A. administration initiated a double policy, one which supposed selling weapons to Iran inspite of the embargo promulgated by the U.S. Congress in exchange of releasing hostages, and the second supposed that a part from the profits of these sales to be directed towards the support of the confidential military action called „*Contras*”, an action in Nicaragua which fought against the government (Vaisse, 2010, 173). The political chaos generated by *Irangate* could not remain insensitive to Gorbachev, who had the opportunity to gain leverage from the weaknesses of Reagan`s administration and to bring forward his ideal of a world without nuclear weapons, which had been designed together with Eduard Shevardnadze.

Therefore, in 1987 Gorbachev reminded his offer made in Reykjavik regarding middle-range weapons without connecting it with any deal proposed by SDI. U.S.A responded affirmative to this offer, with the condition that Soviet middle-ranged armanent should not be destined to Europe or Japan. This reconciliation reseted the discussion about short-range missiles, avoided at Reykjavik summit, and Gorbachev launched a new surprise proposing, discussing about their elimination („*the three zero*”). He also agreed to give up to all one hundred short-range weapons from Asia (Calvocoressi, 2000, 56).

The Soviets started to accept field inspections and negotiations regarding human rights issues, and Gorbachev said that he and Reagan are „*meant to cooperate*”. On the other hand, Reagan followed four objectives in his relation with Gorbachev: nuclear disarmament; the end of military confrontations in the Third World; establishment of a higher respect for human rights and the tear of iron curtain. Kremlin was convinced that both agreeing with this terms and the progresses made will be benefic for both parts, and this fact did not mean that U.S.S.R. had lost against U.S.A. In fact, zero-sum diplomacy was dancing its last waltz (McCauley, 1999, 110). The next waltz it was scheduled on American field, in Washington.

The third Reagan-Gorbachev summit, which took place in Washington, began at 7th December 1987 with the precise objective to regulate what the Soviet leader had proposed at the beginning of that year. This goal of eliminating middle-range missiles from Europe brought concerning thrills across the continent, especially in its Western part, the East continuing to remain stucked in his own communist handcuffs. Western leaders perceived the withdrawing of this nuclear weapons as a latent danger for them, because the Soviet army was to be protected against an American nuclear reply. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) was signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan after many preliminary encounters between the U.S. secretary of state, George Shultz, and his omologue, Eduard Shevardnadze.

This agreement known as INF was the first to restrict not only the growing of nuclear forces, but also the number of existing nuclear weapons (Parish, 2002, 285). Gorbachev became the favourite character of the democratic world, being considered very precious to world politics, and after this agreement signed in Washington, the European press unleashed the popularity phenomena of the Soviet leader, called „*gorbimania*”.

The treaty entered in force from June 1988. As a result of this treaty, U.S.S.R. was forced to destroy twice more missiles and launchers than N.A.T.O. (Calvocoressi, 2000, 56). This agreement created the context for a historic visit of Reagan in Moscow. Besides signing the final version of the pact, the two heads of state established personal and cordial relations.

Moreover, Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* changed the perception of the White House President, especially after the Kremlin's leader had decided in February 1988 to withdraw the Soviet troupes from Afghanistan (Nicolescu, 2010, 245). Reagan did not see Soviet Union as an „*empire of evil*” anymore and he put many hopes in Gorbachev's reforming talent. The Soviet leader wanted to solute all the conflicts which were still mantaining tensions among the two superpowers, and this treaty, sustained by the withdraw in Afghanistan, has given Gorbachev more popularity and credibility.

Although Gorbachev is not often seen as the main catalyst for the end of the Cold War and the falling of iron curtain, he stressed in his declaration towards the United Nations from 7th December 1988 (Gorbaciov, 1994, 217-218): „*Our ideal is an international states community, which will subdue its foreign policy to the principles of law (...) The democratization of international relations does not mean only to internationalize the solutions for problems, but also placing the individual in the middle of the international bounds. In this context, I wish to join the voice of my country to the eulogies chorus towards the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*”.

The normal course of the relations with U.S.A. and the conciliant behavior from Moscow suggested that with this leader, Soviets did not try to fool America. He actually militated for the change of this rooted system (Andrew, 1998, 442). As a result of some extremely positive external actions for the process of relaunching international cooperation, namely the discourses which tag him more as an Western

leader than Eastern, his summits with President Reagan, but also with Margaret Thatcher or François Mitterrand, the leader from Moscow became an indispensable partner for establishing a new world order and for changing the premises that guided the base of the U.S.-Soviet relations. Step by step, these relations became a binom for cooperation and dialogue.

4.2. THE END OF THE BIPOLAR WORLD AND ITS STABILITY PATTERN

Gorbachev`s first ideas after the meeting with Ronald Reagan in Geneve, as I stressed before: „*The international situation today is characterized by a very important feature.....a choice between survival and mutual annihilation*” (Kissinger, 2007, 687) **guided for years the Soviet-American relations and the foreign policy conducted by the two rulers**, and brought the Cold War to the end of 1988 and early 1989 to its chronicle and final phase.

The summits between the two superpowers have established general global cooperation, the international order was still in the Cold War phase and the relationship between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. was under **the revolutionary year 1989**. These revolutions that have changed the face of Europe and international relations were set up in parallel with the evolution of the dialogue between Mikhail Gorbachev and the newly elected U.S. President, George H.W. Bush. All of these bilateral meetings between American and Soviet commenced between Reagan and Gorbachev and continued by Bush and the Soviet leader, the reforms proposed by Moscow`s leader and **the dissatisfaction that existed among populations in the Central and Eastern Europe have been a sore point for Soviet Union**, and also **one of the elements that have rushed the end of the Cold War**. It is true that the dialogue between Moscow and Washington could not move to another purpose, but the cracks expressed in 1989 among European communist states not only have hastened the end of East-West conflict, **but ended the Soviet-American bipolarity by dismantling the Soviet Union and the entire communist system led by Moscow**.

Reagan`s lecture at Moscow University in May 1988 on the virtues of the market economy, determinated Gorbachev to recognize to the new leadership of the White House, George Bush that **both superpowers have to face a united and integrated European economy, a Japan who had become the center of world politics nor China has to be neglected** (Gaddis, 2009, 293-294). Bush was elected president after he served as a vice president during the Reagan's second term. He was very familiar with the Cold War and the relationship with the Soviet Union, meeting Gorbachev at Chernenko's funeral. When he took over the presidency, Bush had to deal with an early and difficult problem, namely to manage the huge popularity and achievements of Reagan, and then to succeed in the position he won. Although he would achieve success both internal and external, President Bush could not enjoy the same sympathy that Ronald Reagan had. But in his time, the Cold War recorded is end.

Bush believed that Reagan was too accommodating to Moscow and presented a difficulty in understanding the changes that had taken place in Soviet foreign policy. White House leader would change his mind after visiting in the summer of 1989 the Eastern and Western Europe, and between him and Gorbachev were prefigured epochal meeting (McCauley, 1999, 112). Gorbachev had before him a man much more hesitant and less spectacular than Reagan, but he continued the same policy promoted since 1985, convinced that it will succeed in ending the Cold War and to save the Soviet Union. **Ideological conflict with the U.S. will end, and the merit of Gorbachev will be one undisputed, but with what consequences? U.S.S.R.'s disappearance from the world map.**

This break in Soviet-American relations ended on May 11, 1989, when the new Secretary of State, James Baker and U.S. Ambassador in Moscow, Jack Matlock met in the capital of the U.S.S.R. with Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze. Talks aimed examining the prospects for creating new areas of interaction US-Soviet. resuming negotiations for nuclear and traditional weapons (Gorbacioy, 1994, 55). The meeting, which preceded Bush's visits to Europe, was a prolific one, as the new U.S. leader and his diplomacy chief had to strengthen their position in relation to the Soviet Union, as Reagan and Shultz proceeded.

Gorbachev emphasized at this meeting the problems in the Soviet society, where democratization was seen as a new form of chaos. Despite this, he was convinced that perestroika will be achieved even if dramatic situations must be overcome. U.S. Secretary expressed optimism about the Soviet reform, but warned Gorbachev that perestroika depends only on Moscow, and not the West (Gorbacioy, 1994, 58-59). The Soviet leader was aware that Baker had come to Moscow with his homework done, being constantly informed by Matlock and that one of its goals was to identify whether the new administration in the White House can enjoy positive relations with the Kremlin, as the previous one. Thus, Gorbachev assured continuity of the dialogue with the U.S., completely confident that it will succeed in achieving political and economic opening for U.S.S.R. and the Cold War will end by itself. Simultaneously, appeared more and more voices that gave perestroika as a failed attempt, where the U.S.S.R. would lose any par with the U.S.. What happens at the end of the ninth decade of the twentieth century was a veritable nightmare for Soviet . Even if Gorbachev had started strong domestic reforms and manifested an unprecedented openness to the West and to America, the calculations show a collapse of the Soviet Union.

Basically, although talks between Bush and Gorbachev began slowly with a slight hostility and apprehension of the U.S. President, they were always under the pressure of the events in the communist world. The collapse of communism and the acute crisis that deepened Soviet system were elements that have foreshadowed its implosion and the foreign policy during the period 1989-1991 from both key players in the Cold War was channeled to this direction. In this way, the relationship between Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush will reach a milestone in the history of mankind, an epochal one, according to some - Malta. Although this meeting was desired by both leaders, Shevardnadze suggested to Gorbachev

the importance of achieving adherence from Bush for his reform program (McCauley, 1999, 113). It was perhaps the meeting that Reagan deserved to have with Gorbachev, the two being the artisans of resuming the dialogue in Washington-Moscow axis.

Thus, on December 2 and 3, 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush met aboard the Soviet „*Maxim Gorky*”, near Malta. This was their first meeting as leaders of the two countries. Gorbachev advocated for enhancing dialogue due to the events that are perpetuated in Europe, a fact shared by Bush, both being visible connected to the significance of developments on the international scene (Gorbaciov, 1994, 78-79). In his memoirs, Gorbachev had to call this meeting with Bush, as a „*historic turning point*”. And reality do not contradict him.

Malta`s Summit, the first between Gorbachev and Bush came as a result of historical events, unprecedented in Europe. Communist regimes fell one by one, like a domino, and the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall, the symbol that separates the East from the West had fallen on 9 November 1989. European Communism disappeared after 45 years of torment, torture, economic involution and social insecurity. The meeting in Malta was truly fundamental for the changes that occurred on international arena. No wonder the Cold War may be defined in a phrase „*From Yalta to Malta*” allusion referring to these two geographical landmarks located thousands of miles away, which marked the history of East-West conflict by their results for the international order and balance of power.

In Malta, Gorbachev explained to Bush his vision of East-West conflict and the revolutions that had taken hold in Europe. He was of the opinion that no ideological confrontation for 45 years can not be justified and the Cold War methods suffered a defeat in strategic terms. **Gorbachev's conclusion was that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are doomed and condemned to dialogue, cooperation and coordination** (Gaddis, 2009, 318). Europe was very important for both fighters of the Cold War. It was the land that divided communist and democratic ideologies, and it was seen by America as a partner. Now Gorbachev's U.S.S.R. see things differently; the Soviet leader talked about Europe as a common house since 1986.

Finally, the meeting in Malta was explained plastically by Shevardnadze: „*The two major powers buried the Cold War deep in the Mediterranean*” (McCauley, 1999, 115). The year of 1990 meant for U.S.-Soviet relations another Summit in Washington and Camp David (May 30-June 3), where the two powers pledged to reduce by up to 50 percent of their stocks of chemical weapons by year 2000. Also on November 19, 1990, in Paris, the agreement of CFE (reduction of conventional forces in Europe) was signed between the two military-political blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact (Vaisse, 2010, 175). Europe and the two powers, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. walked to the last decade of the twentieth century being confident that they buried the hatchet conflict.

Between Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush was held a summit in Moscow on July 30 to 31, 1991, considered as the first meeting post-Cold War. It was the last high-level meeting for Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader so appreciated by the West, but already disliked in his own country. On July 30, 1991,

during a visit to Moscow, U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev signed the START 1 arms control Treaty (Gaddis, 2009, 326), but its importance was overshadowed by political events in the Soviet Union. At this meeting in Moscow, Bush was trying to stretch a hand to Gorbachev's, ruling against its political fall. But both external events and internal ones had reached an irreversible point. START Treaty would be the fourth and final meeting between Bush and Gorbachev, productive for interpersonal relationships between the two, as they had been with Reagan, but with a bitter taste for Gorbachev, whose end was near.

The *historical turning point* that he himself had been speaking took place, Europe followed the way to reforms and new regimes of emerging democracy and were oriented on what has become the European Union. Up to the last meeting Gorbachev-Bush, the international scene not only changed from the fall of the Iron Curtain and the dissolution of CAER and the Warsaw Pact, but was completely changed by a colossal event, that has remained in history as the true epilogue of the Cold War: the dismantling of the U.S.S.R. and the implosion of communism. U.S.-Soviet relations were close to an end, the world order is redefined, and Mikhail Gorbachev, this sui generis character for Moscow-Washington relations and for the Cold War was to assist almost helplessly at his own political downfall.

Thus, on August 18, 1991, Gorbachev have been cut all his communication links, and a delegation of KGB officers have announced that he is under house arrest (Gaddis, 2009, 326), while in Moscow a putsch was triggered. Gorbachev had been betrayed by his subordinates and the KGB, and was watching the progress almost incapable. The United States and the international community treated the coup as illegal and refused to have anything to do with the plotters. U.S. could not afford the risk of a renewed outbreak of the Cold War, which, de jure was not over.

Although the coup was to be a failure, and Gorbachev returned to the forefront of the Soviet Union, he lost his popularity dramatically losing also his dominant leadership in Moscow for Boris Yeltsin, the leader of the most powerful republics of the Soviet Union - Russian SFSR. Bush tried again to revive Gorbachev telling him that he needs to support its statements and initiatives on nuclear disarmament. This conversation between Bush-Gorbachev marked the end of uncertainty in the relations between the two and put back on the rail wagon with two seats of Soviet-American strategic cooperation (Graciov, 1995, 32).

On December 25, 1991 - two years after Ceausescu's execution, twelve years after the invasion of Afghanistan and seventy-four years after the Bolshevik Revolution - the last leader of the Soviet Union called U.S. President to wish him Merry Christmas, transferred to Yeltsin the codes needed to launch a nuclear attack and reached for the pen with which he signed the decree that formally ended the existence of the USSR The irony? I had no ink and so he had to borrow one from the team that transmitted live the event (Gaddis, 2009, 328). Then he stated (Gorbaciov, 1994, 278): „*The Cold War has ended, the insane arms race and the militarization of our country, which paralyzed our economy, distorted our thinking*

and undermined our moral. The threat of a world war no longer exist". The Warsaw Pact was dissolved on July 1, 1991 and the CMEA self-abolished the same year. One of the politico-military blocs of the Cold War gone, and the role of NATO existence seemed not to make sense, but the United States had won the Cold War and they needed to strengthen the position obtained from the East-West conflict.

The last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed dramatic upheavals in global politics. For the first time in history a non-Eurasian power has become not only the main arbiter of Eurasian power relations but also as the supreme power in the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union was the last step in the rapid rise of power from the Western Hemisphere - the United States - as one and in fact, the first truly global power (Brzezinski, 2000, 11).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The truth is that the Cold War was slowly reaching its outcome, and the detente accomplished by Reagan and Gorbachev was far more remarkable than the one from the `70s. The two leaders had a perfect collaboration and managed to finish the chessgame; they have cooperated interdependently in order to bring the Cold War to an end. Their demarches, namely the militarization initiated by Reagan, Gorbachev`s reforms and his efforts to optimize the relations between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., or the common attempt to destroy the nuclear forces laid at the genesis of **the improvement of the international climate.**

Ronald Reagan had a decisive contribution in America`s relaunching on the international relations arena and this fact allowed him to control the relations with Soviet Union, slowly removing the danger of replacing the supremacy of his country. His ascension was determined by the fact that President Reagan realized that America must fulfil again its desideratum – to be the main decider in world politics. He understood immediately the necessity of reestablishing U.S.`s international prestige, and his masterpiece written during his first mandate – Strategic Defense Initiative – represented the counter-balance that Washington needed after the military losses in Vietnam.

During his presidency he promoted a very coherent foreign policy doctrine, which was to find a common ground with the Soviet Union after a new type of leader has gained the power. Related to the typical pattern of Soviet leaders imposed by Moscow during the Cold War, these new atypical leader was Mikhail Gorbachev. Everything that happened between December 1987 and the summer of 1988, i.e., the enthusiasm welcoming of Gorbachev in Washington, the friendly and warm discussions with Ronald Reagan during the Red Square walks, the *gorbimania* launched by his actions, has enhanced the confidence of Kremlin`s leader in his abilities. History was to show us that the evolution of American and Soviet relations from confrontation to cooperation will burry the communist system so repressive in the Stalin`s, Krushchev`s and Brejnev`s era and so diseased and impossible to save in Gorbachev`s epoch.

Mikhail Gorbachev's full of vivacity arguments and discourses and his diplomatic enthusiasm concerning his relation with Ronald Reagan and with George Bush made him very popular in the West. He did not re-engage his country in a dialogue with only U.S.A., but with the entire international democratic society. What remains uncertain is if Gorbachev was aware that his entire reforming and promoting peaceful relations with Washington process will lead to the dissolution of Soviet empire and to the changing of international relations, shielded by the two actors since 1945.

Beyond these considerations, Gorbachev became the actor that the world and America needed in order to bring the Cold War to an end. The premises of an internal change granted the Soviet leader the confidence that he could have an essential contribution in redefining the relations with United States. This confidence will prove to be a realistic one, because with Gorbachev leading U.S.S.R, Kremlin will manage to step alongside America, which was led from 1989 by George Bush towards new political perspectives and the end of the Cold War.

United States of America was seen as the winner of the Cold War, who profit most from the unraveling of the Soviet Union and the implosion of communism. America's triumph was constituted by the effort of all American two-party administrations from Truman to Bush, and the failure of the Soviet Union represents probably the moment too late when Gorbachev came to power, and his reforms could not be implemented in a society traumatized by Stalinist communism.

Also, the revival of the idea of a united Europe under the auspices of the whole European Union is a consequence of the death of the Cold War and US-Soviet positive relations. Generating a compact power pole near at European level close to the U.S. determine global stability. Unfortunately, however, the Cold War has not left behind an international community capable of generating a spirit of cooperation in political, economic, military, social or nuclear. White House-Kremlin relations during the last years of the Cold War is an intangible evidence that international relations must advance the dynamic pace of collaboration, and regardless the centers of power transition, all ordinary people, as Gorbachev said, are those who make possible military, ideological and diplomatic conflicts, and they also brought down the Iron Curtain and ended the most notable and dangerous passage in the history of the twentieth century - the Cold War.

The **reconciliation between the White House and the Kremlin** has shown **the persistence of balance in the bipolar system**, guaranteed by the two superpowers, and **the collapse of bipolarity** has redefined **the order and distribution of power in the international system**, generating **U.S. dominance** in the context of **emerging multipolarity**. The **conciliatory** attitude of the U.S. relationship with U.S.S.R. in the last years of Cold War has transformed **the bipolarity of the international order in one with a conjugated interest to maintain peace and security, to stimulate nuclear disarmament and global cooperation**.

US-Soviet bipolarity turned into a superiority of American exceptionalism, but relations between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. at the end of the **Cold War bipolar system remains an example that can be functional and is more prolific for international cooperation**. The **international order** that followed the U.S.-Soviet relations has as its starting point the political developments since 1989 and the era called post-Cold War and post-Soviet Union.

The vacuum of power left by the collapse of the bipolar system had great consequences for the international system post-1991: disintegration of Yugoslavia and the birth of ethnic conflict the proliferation of terrorism, perpetuating outbreaks of conflict in the Middle East, increasing the role of international institutions, more and more countries have nuclear potential and the economic emergence of China, Brazil, India and Russia are elements that lead us to a regional multipolarity and international tension that causes totally different from the Cold War epoch.

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