**PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY****Biography**

Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of the Soviet Union from 1985 until 1991. His attempts at reform led to the end of the Cold War, but also inadvertently caused the decline of power of the Communist Party and led to the Soviet Union's collapse. He enacted the Law of Cooperatives in 1987, permitting the private ownership of businesses in some industries for the first time since the 1920s. Gorbachev also extended greater individual freedoms to those living under the Russian communist system. In particular, he allowed freedom of speech, the suppression of which had long been a Soviet method of maintaining control. Under his leadership, the Soviet Union loosened its control over Eastern Europe, improved trade and relations with the West, and began to introduce democratic elements into the political process.

What is Mr. Gorbachev's profession? (circle your answer or answers)

- A. Politician
- B. Business professional
- C. Activist
- D. Professor

Answers:
A- Mr. Gorbachev is a Politician.

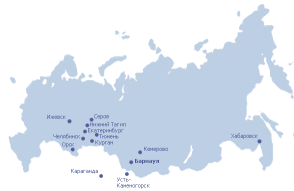
Vocabulary

Communism: The official system of the Soviet Union under which a single authoritarian party controlled government owned industry

What is the political system of the United States? Who owns industries and corporations in our system?



1.



2.



3.

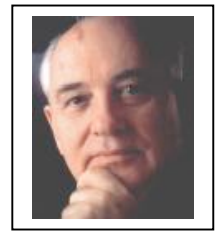


4.

Can you identify the images above?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Answers:
1. World Map 2. Russia 3. Russian Flag 4. Flag of the former Soviet Union

**POST-VISIT ACTIVITY**

What is the capital of Russia? Can you find it on this map? Do you know any of the countries that border Russia? If not, use an atlas at your school to name some of them.

The Cold War, a period of constant tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union (the country today known as Russia), lasted from the end of WWII until the fall of communism in the Soviet Union in 1991. Hostilities between the two countries were dubbed the “Cold War” because direct, armed conflict between the superpowers never occurred. The war was primarily fought by intelligence agencies such as the American CIA and the Soviet KGB. The rival nations often intervened in the politics of other regions, viewing political philosophy as the battleground that determined each nation’s security. Mutual distrust and suspicion characterized the Cold War; the foreign policies of both the United States and the Soviet Union were dominated by Cold War concerns. These tensions increased the likelihood of war in third world regions, a situation that many believed likely to lead to nuclear war. The “arms race,” a competition between the factions to build up supplies of nuclear and chemical weapons, gave way to disarmament treaties following the end of the Cold War.

New Vocabulary

Communism: An egalitarian social and political system that has no state, no social classes, and denies rights to private property; it has repeatedly led to harsh, authoritarian governments

Third World: A term for developing countries (countries with low average incomes compared to the world average) that were not aligned with either the communist or non-communist factions in the Cold War

Can you name some countries that are “developing” nations? In what regions are they often found?

How is the American stance on nuclear weapons different today than during the Cold War period?
