

Time-warp

Perspectives on the Cold War



Bill Robins
24 June 2025

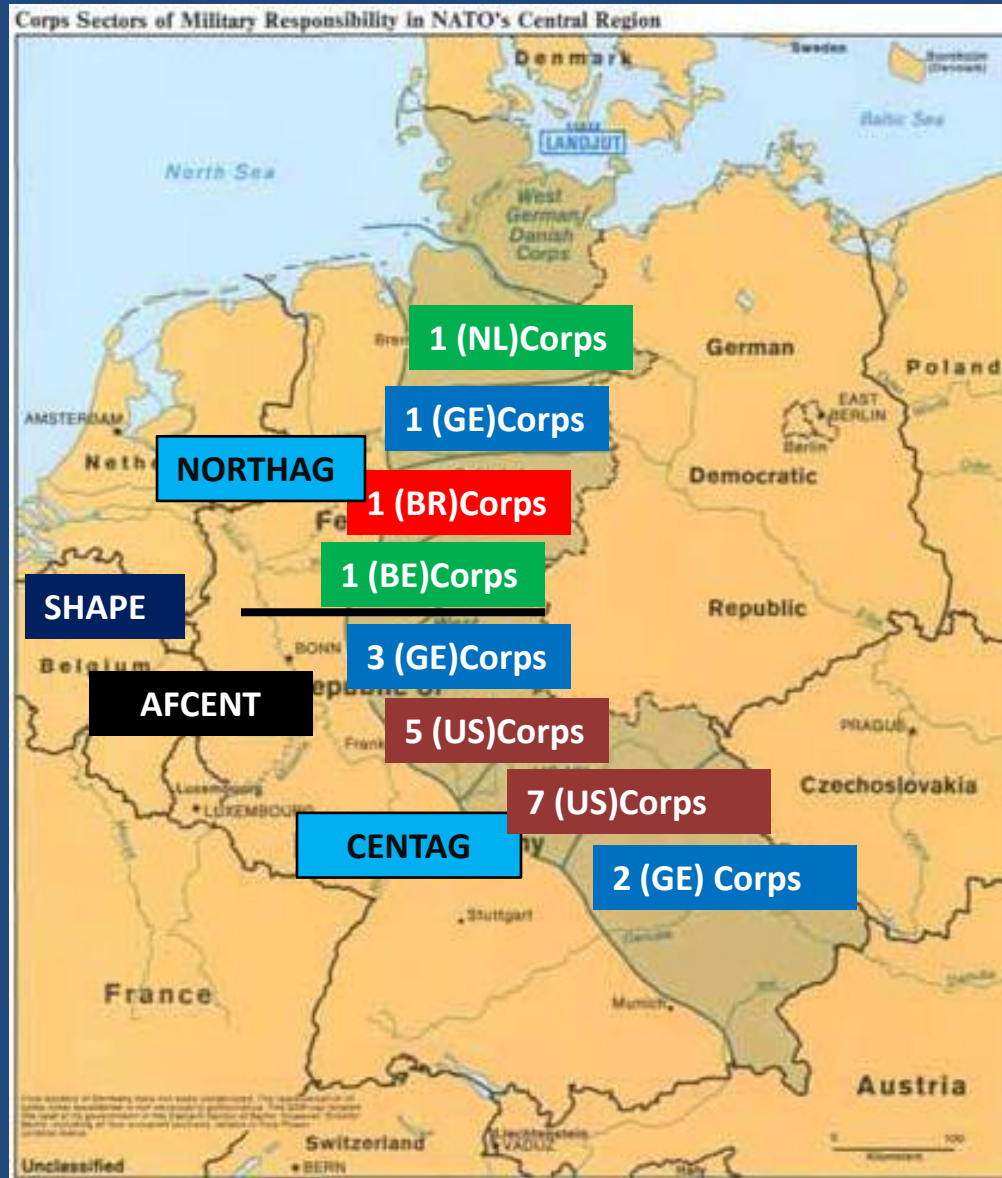
Norway 1962



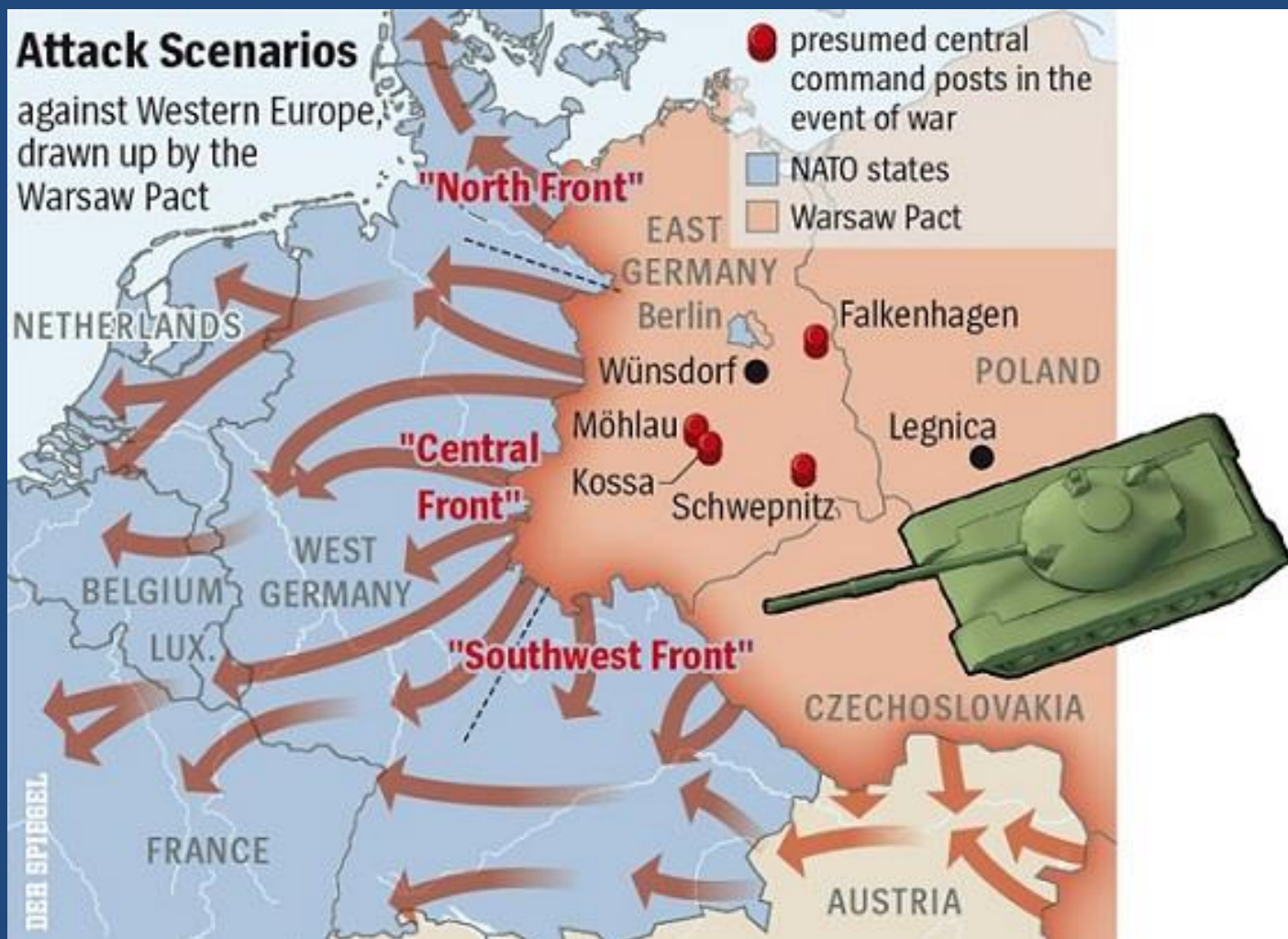
Germany 1960-1990



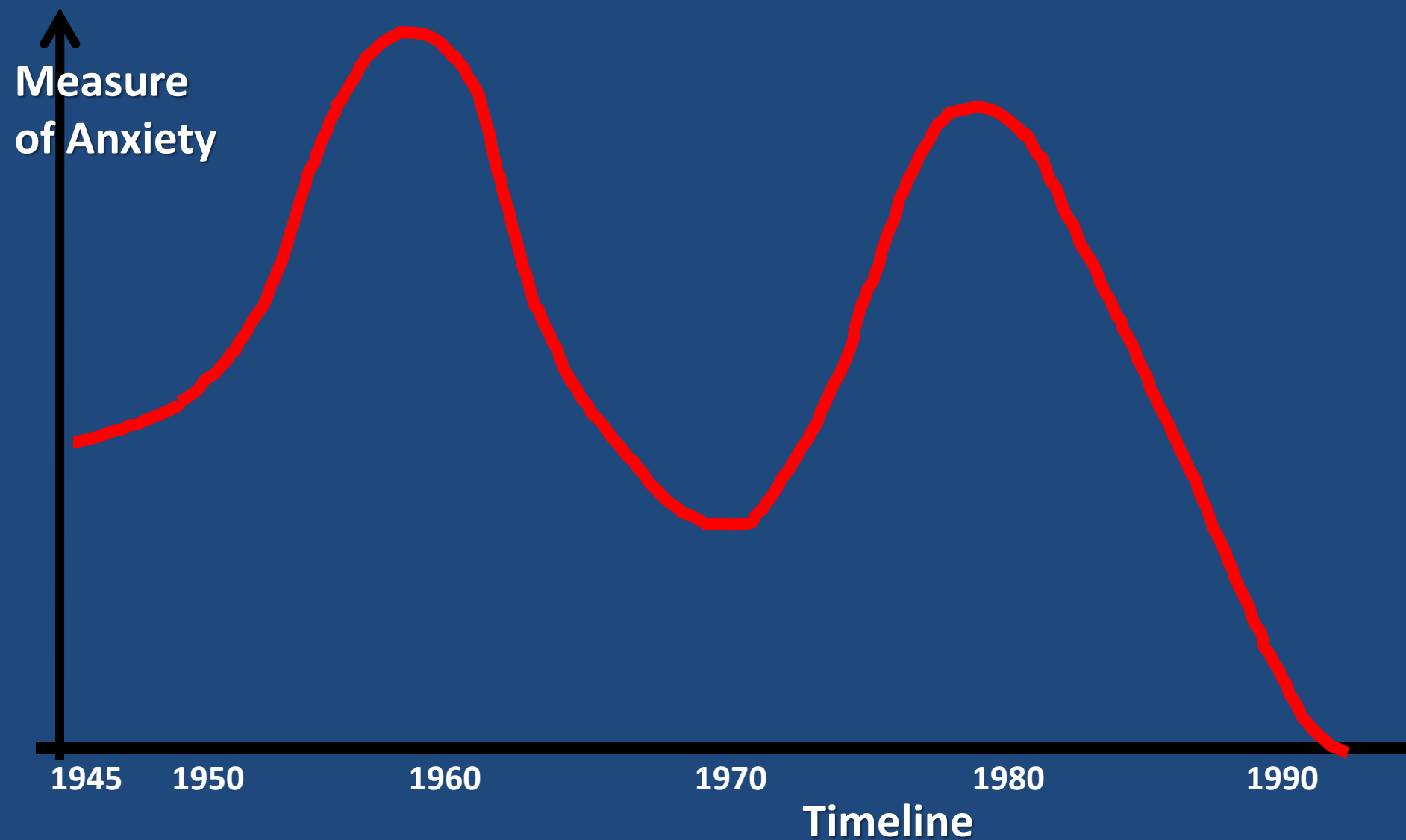
ALLIED FORCES CENTRAL EUROPE (AFCENT)



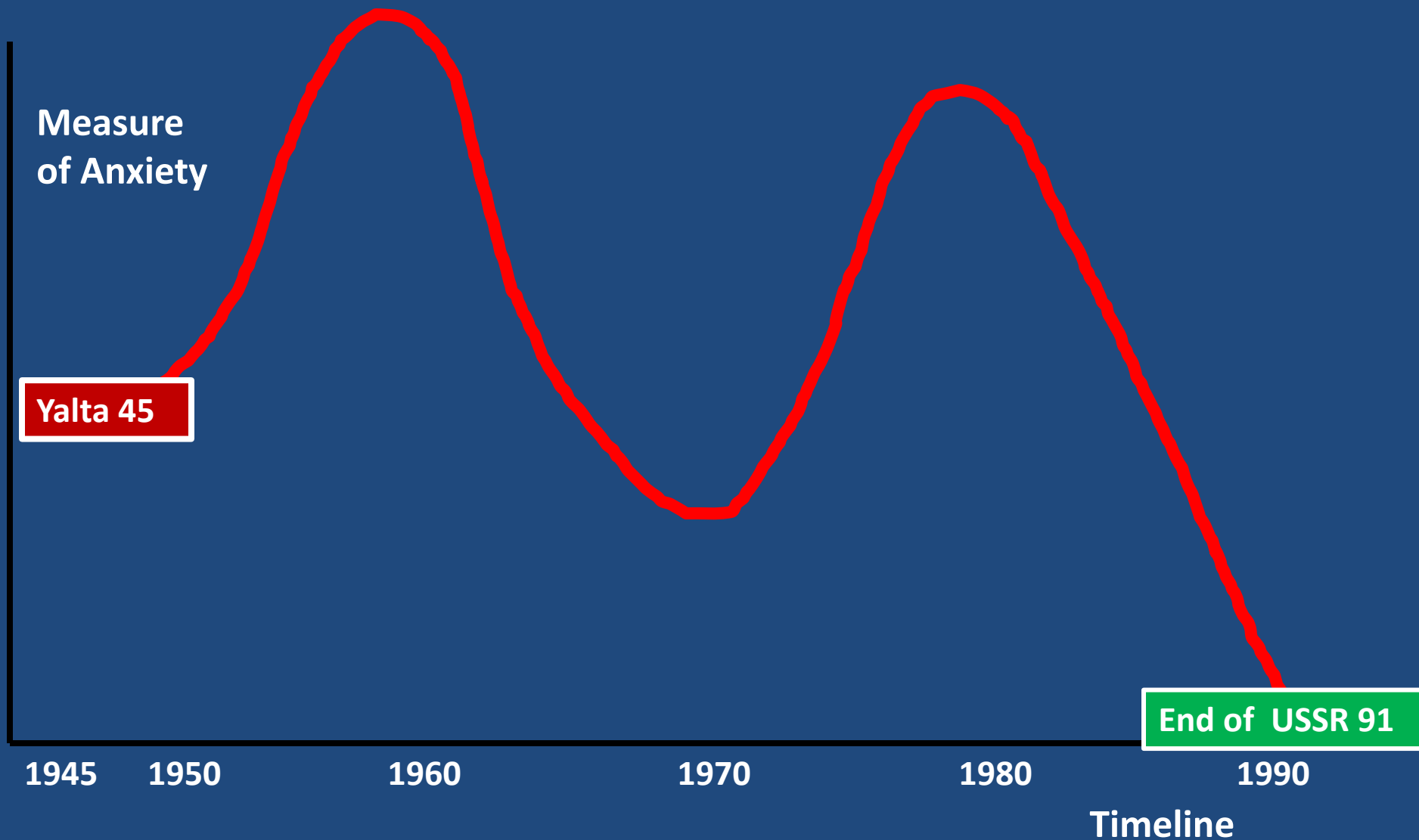
Attack Scenarios for Warsaw Pact



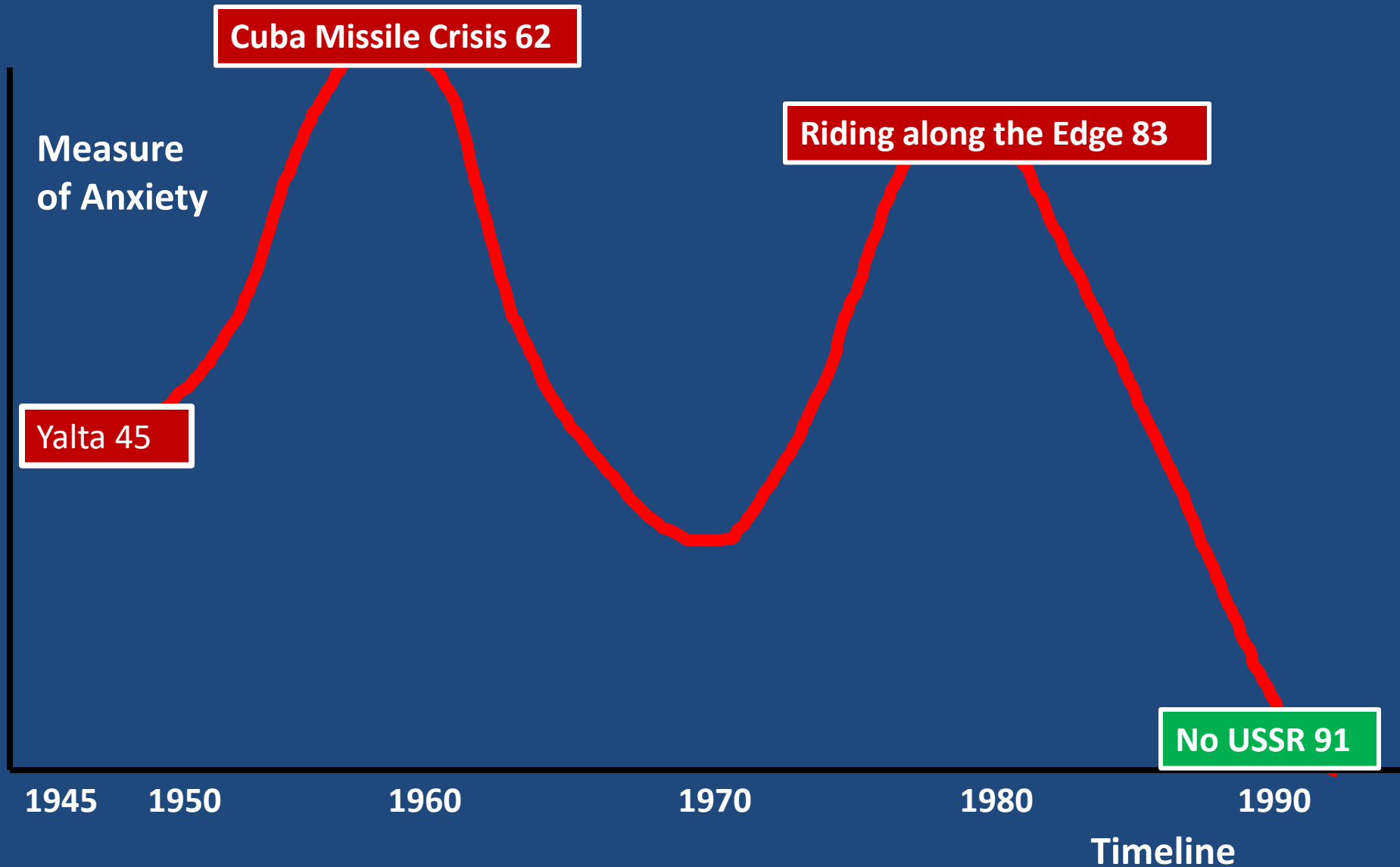
THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



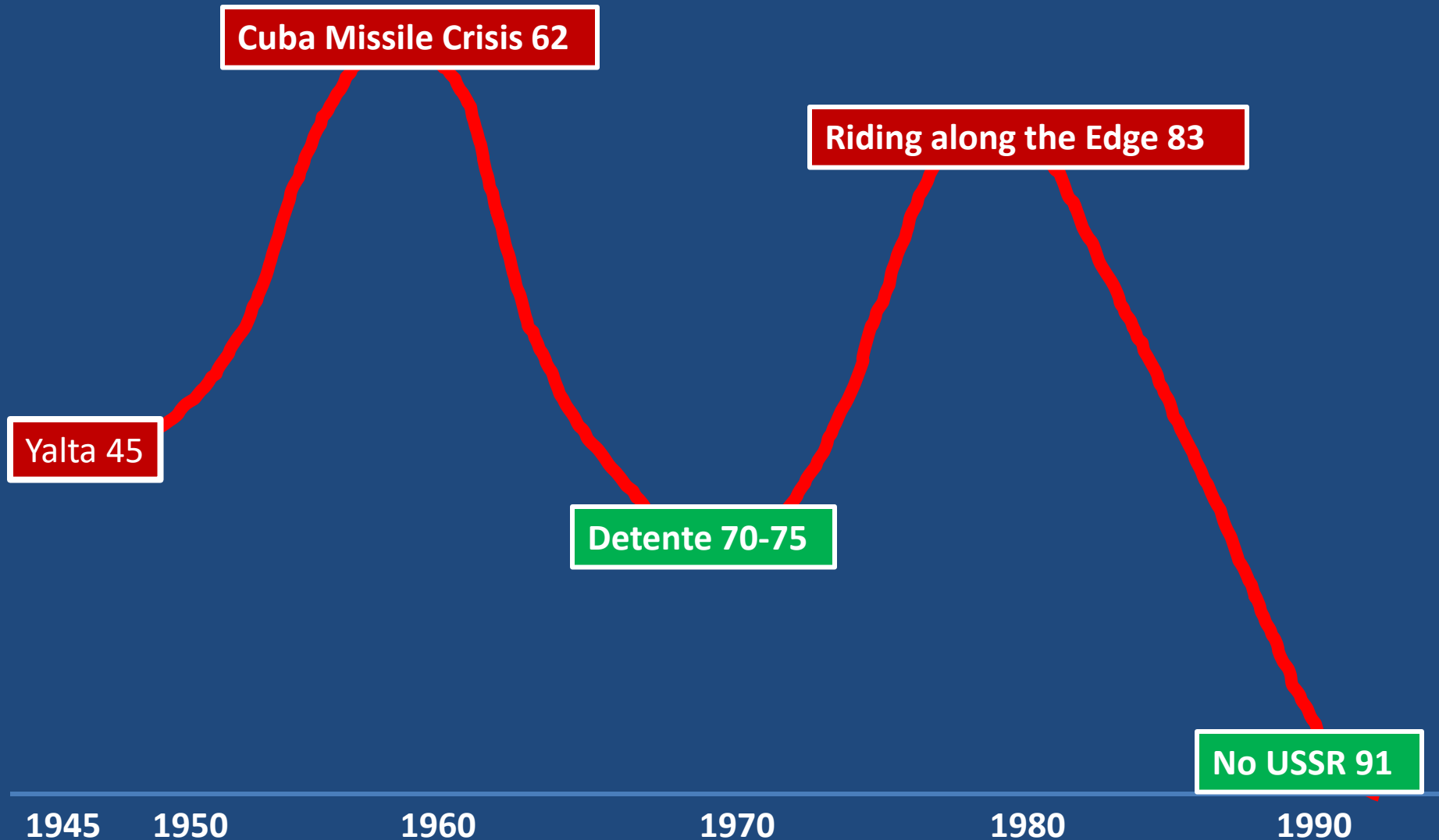
THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



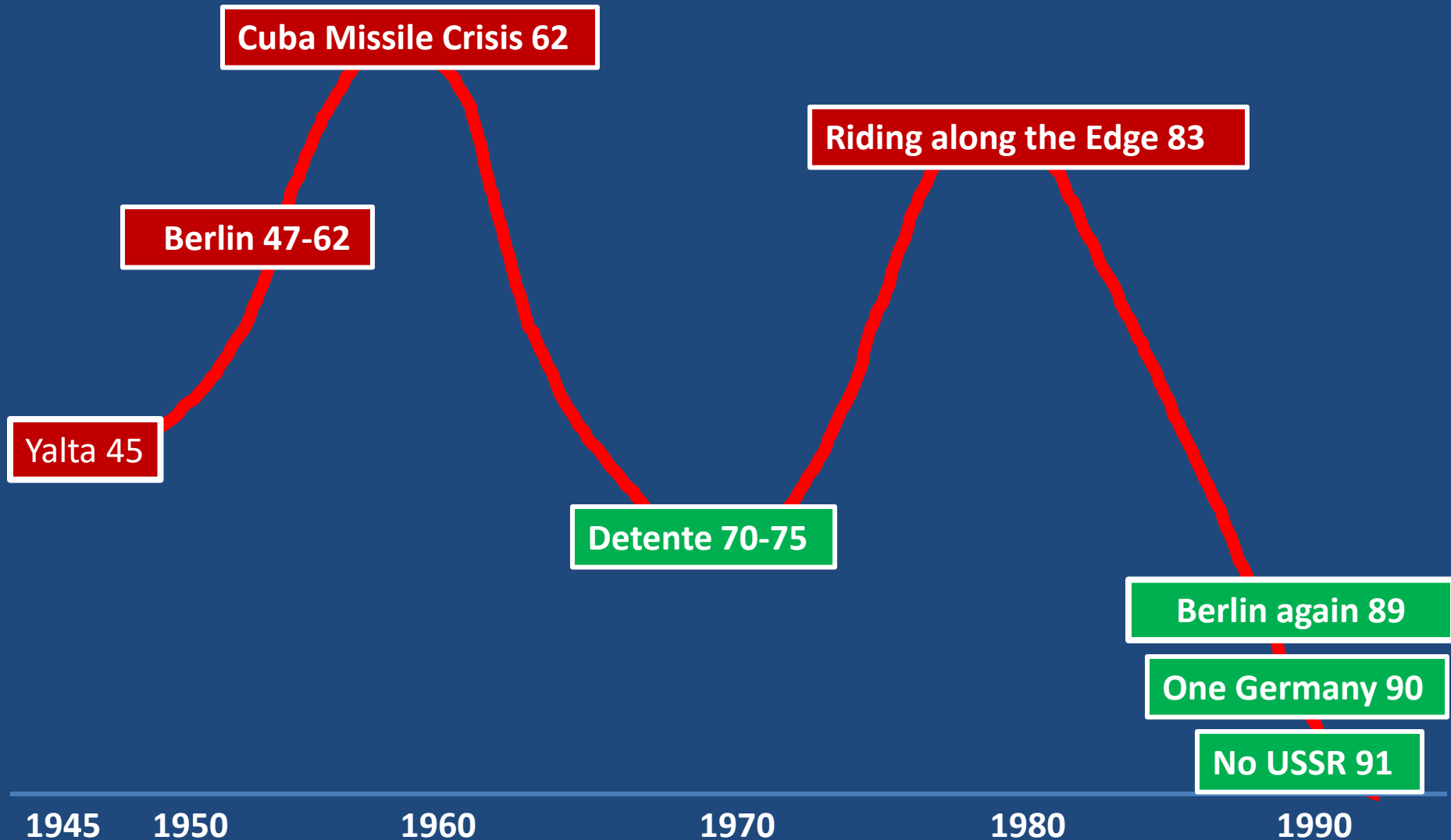
THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



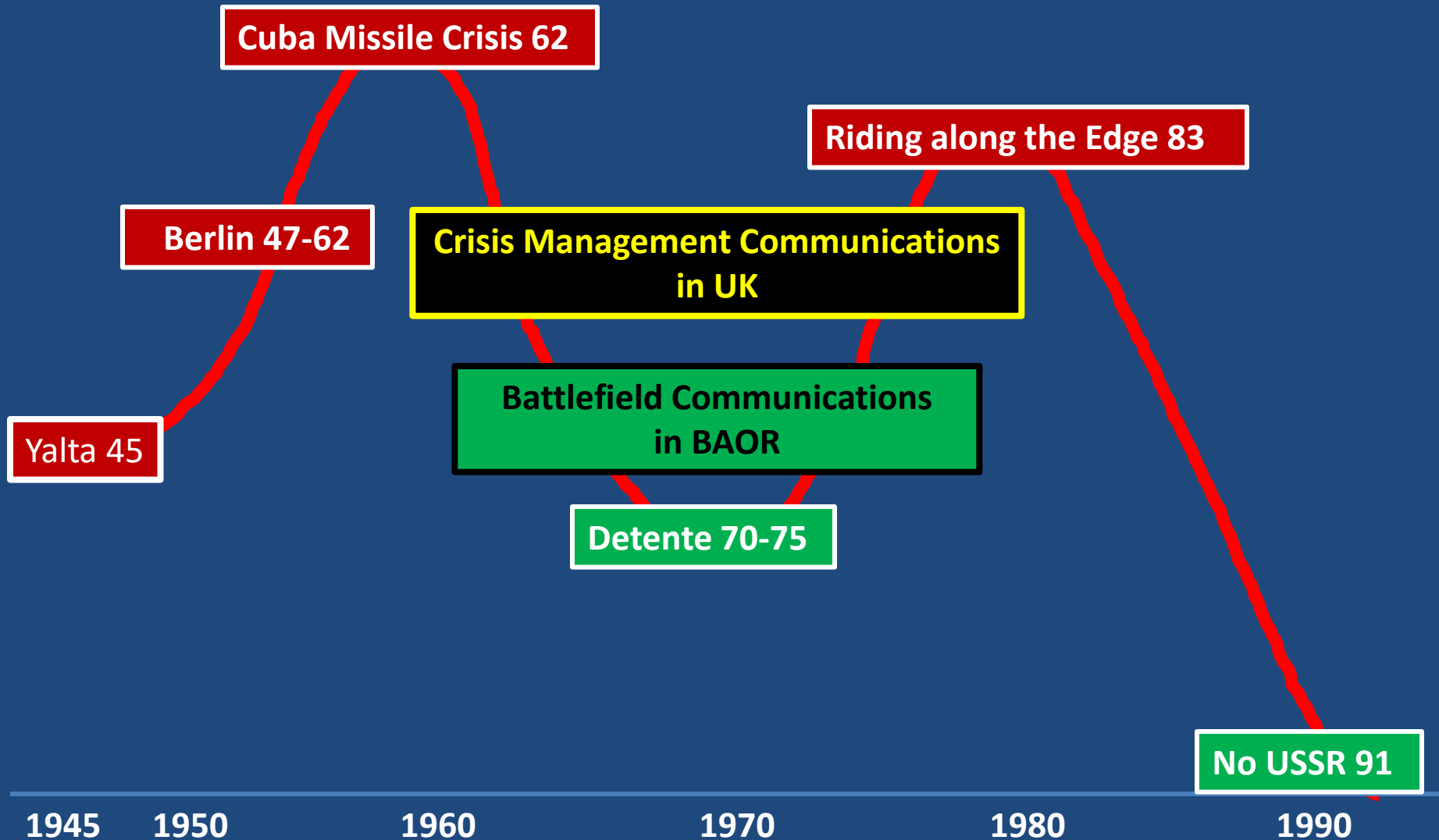
THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



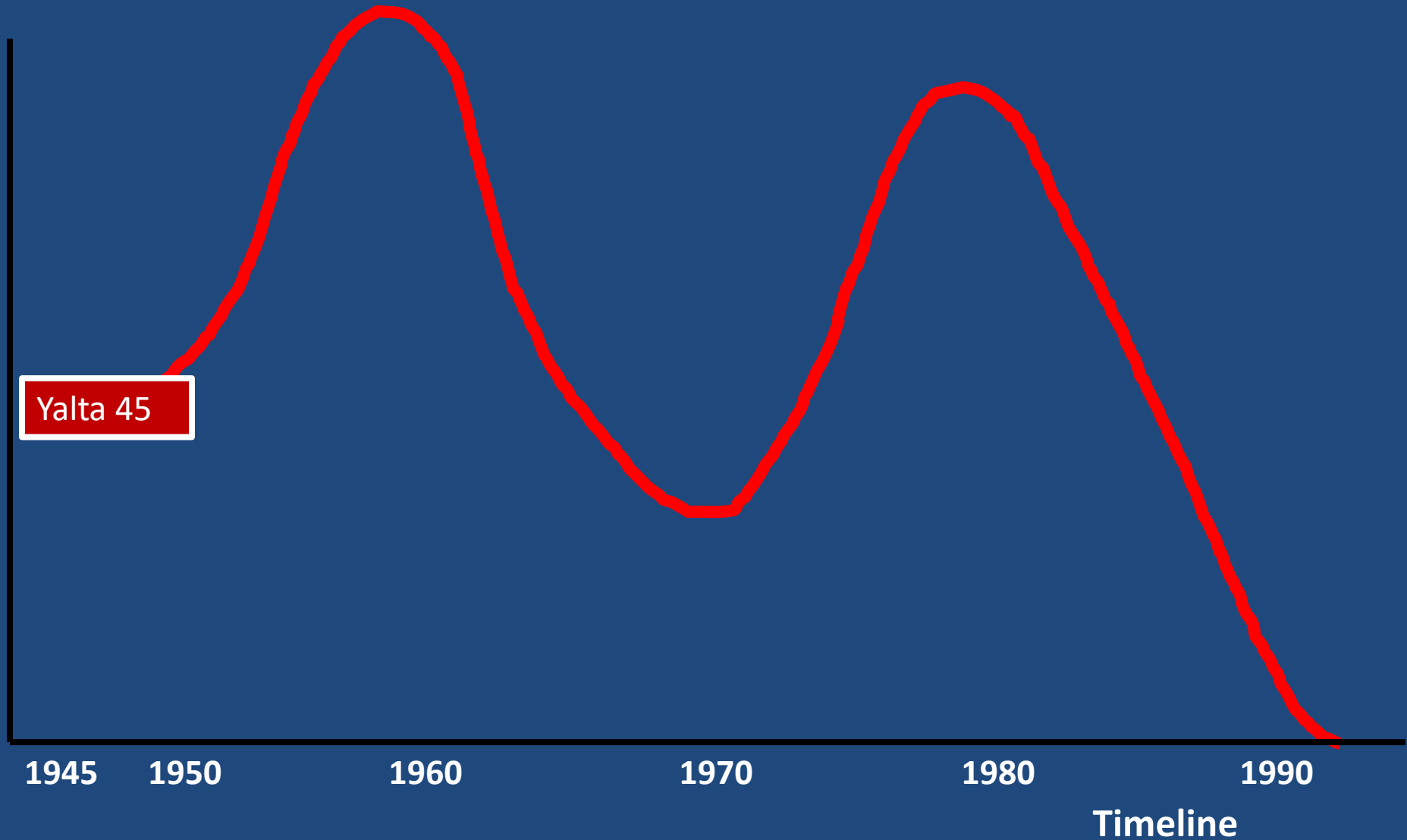
THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



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THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



Yalta Conference February 1945



Stalingrad 1942



Winter 1942, Stalingrad

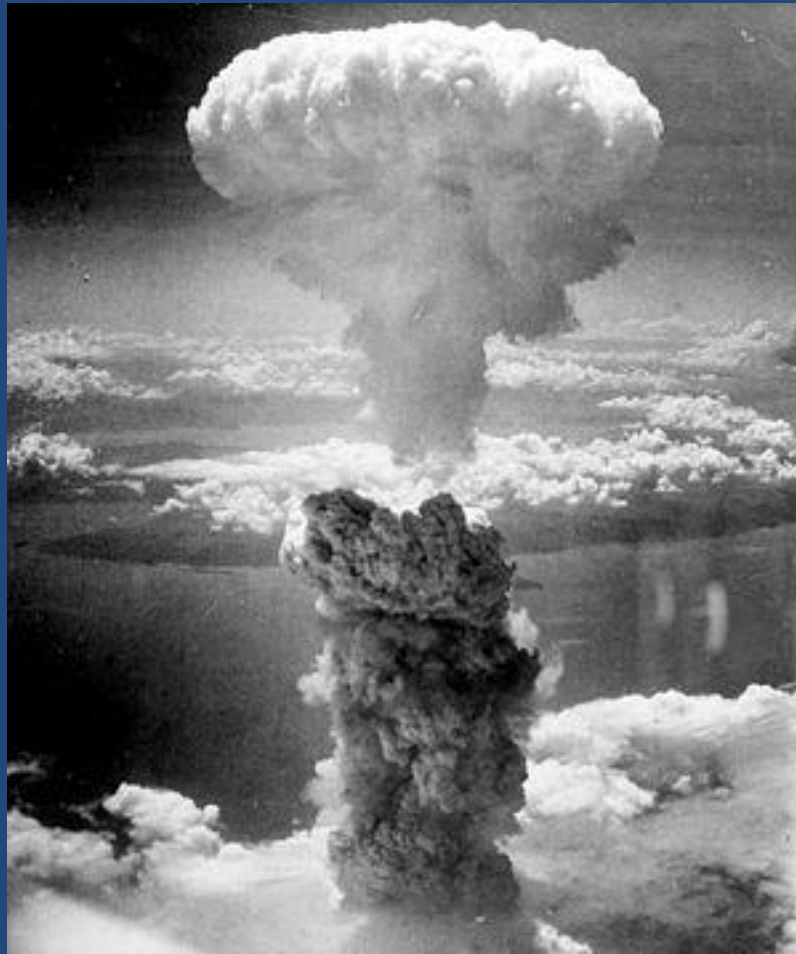
Russia's Buffer States 1946 -1990



Hiroshima 6 August 1945



Nagasaki 9 August 1945



Two Great Powers after 1945



Harry S Truman



Joseph Stalin

USA

Prevent hostile dominance
anywhere in the world

Export democracy

Support the fight against Communism

Soviet Union (USSR)

Guarantee **Russian** security

Export “socialism”

Support the fight against Capitalism

George Kennan: Minister Counsellor at the US Moscow Embassy
Author of the “Long Telegram”
February 1947



Kennan's Long Telegram February 1946

"CONTAINMENT"

The USSR:

- Perceives itself at **perpetual war** with capitalism
- Views "socialism" and democracy as **incompatible**

So:

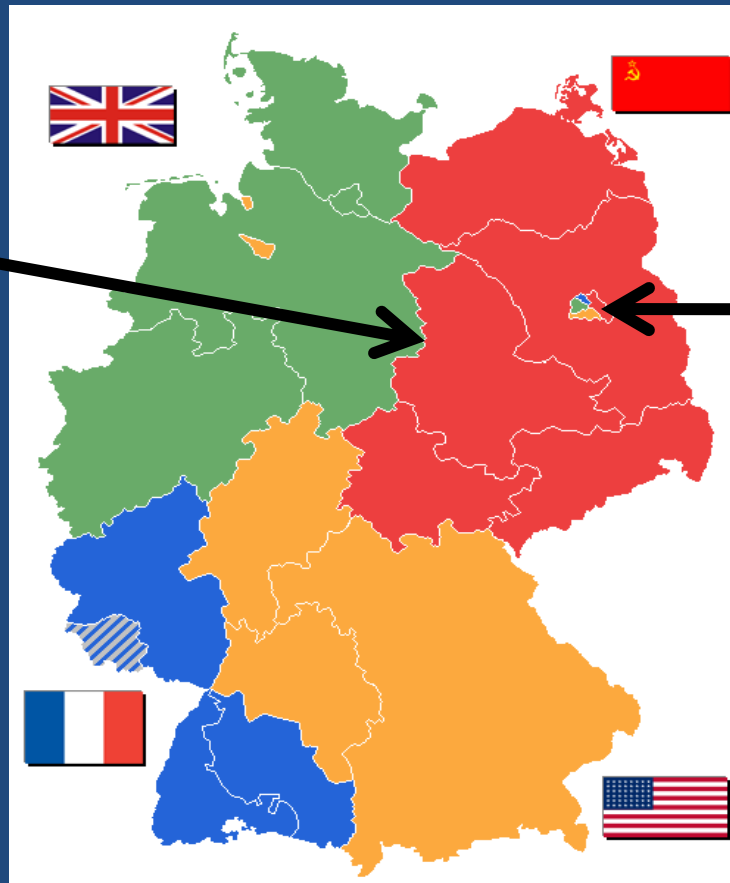
"United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be long-term, patient but firm and vigilant CONTAINMENT of Russian expansive tendencies"

24 April 1945: US Army and Red Army meet on the Elbe River



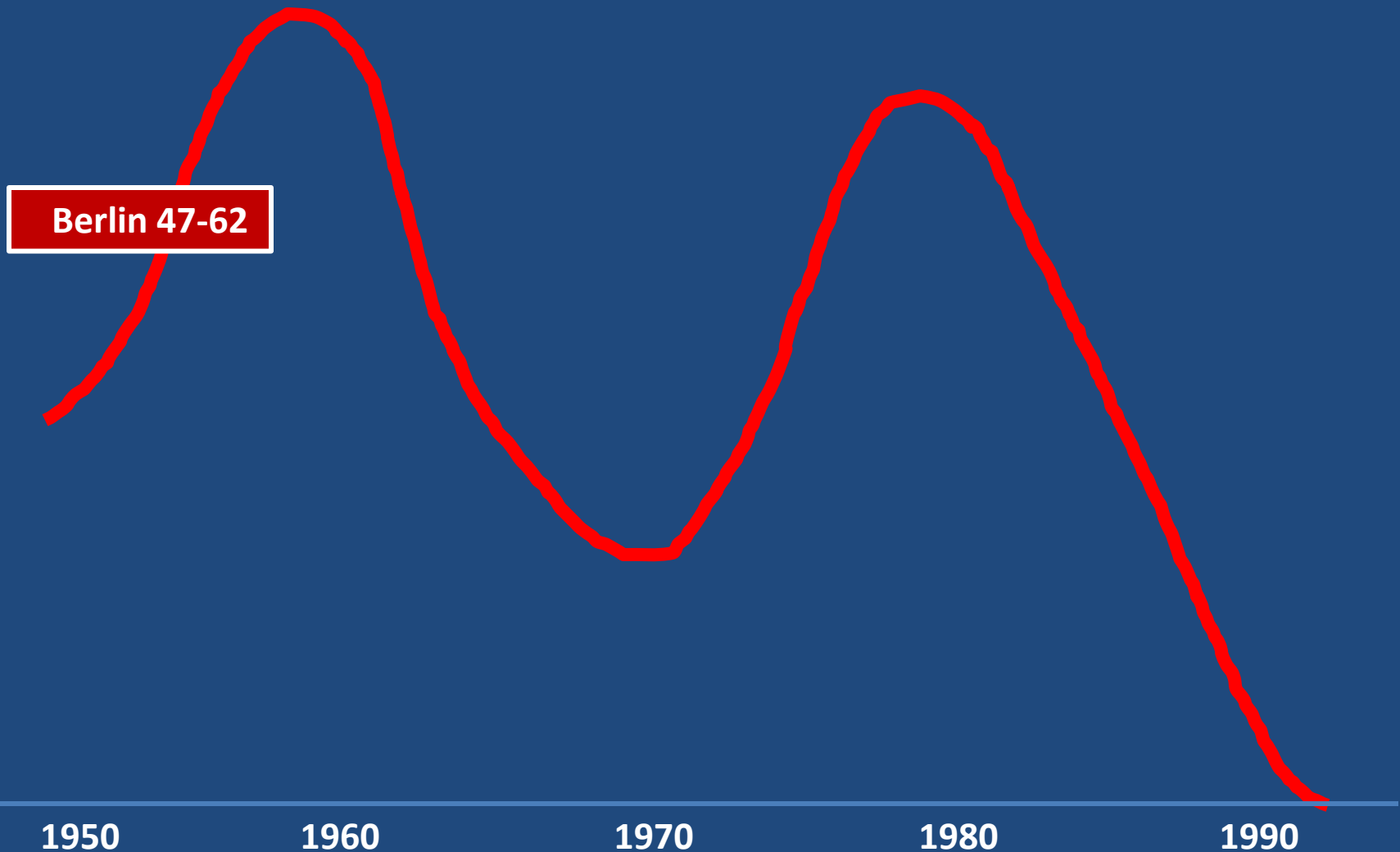
The Zoning of Germany 1945

Boundaries
drawn
roughly where
troops
reached in
1945



Berlin: a
focus for
tension

THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



Reichstag, Berlin May 1945



East and West Berlin: seeds of tension

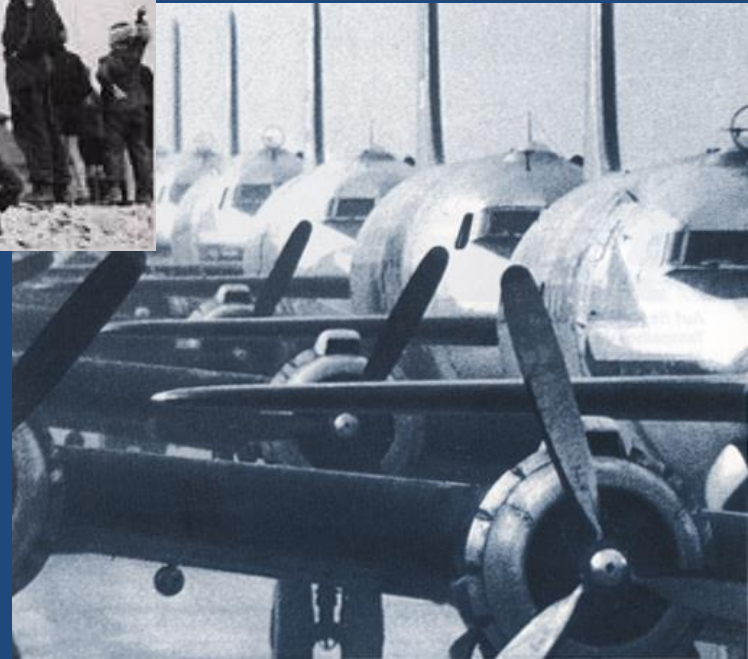


“When I want the West to squeal, all I do is squeeze West Berlin”,
Khrushchev 1961

Air Corridors to West Berlin



The Berlin Airlift June 1948-May 1949



1949: German Democratic Republic (East) and the Federal Republic of Germany (West)



The German Democratic Republic (GDR)



Stasi (State Security Ministry) HQ

180 km of files,
35 million index cards

17 million population
81,000 secret police
1.5 million informers

*Federal Archive Commission
Investigator examining files
1998*



US 18th Infantry drive through GDR to Berlin August 1961



Newly arrived armored personnel carriers take part in the parade through West Berlin welcoming the 1st Battle Group, 18th Infantry, here last Sunday. Thousands of Berliners lined the streets to cheer the leaders of the convoy during their two-hour parade through the city. This was one of the biggest single troop movements over the lifeline into Berlin since 1945.

—US Army Photo by Spi Labram

Just before the Wall goes up, Conrad Schumann
escapes to the West: 13 August 1961



Building the Wall 15 August 1961



Bernauer Strasse Berlin 17 August 1961



Berlin Wall September 1961



The Inner German Border (IGB)



The 900 mile long Inner German Border 1980



High metal fences, barbed wire, alarms, anti-vehicle ditches, watchtowers, automatic booby traps , minefields and patrols

Successful escapes

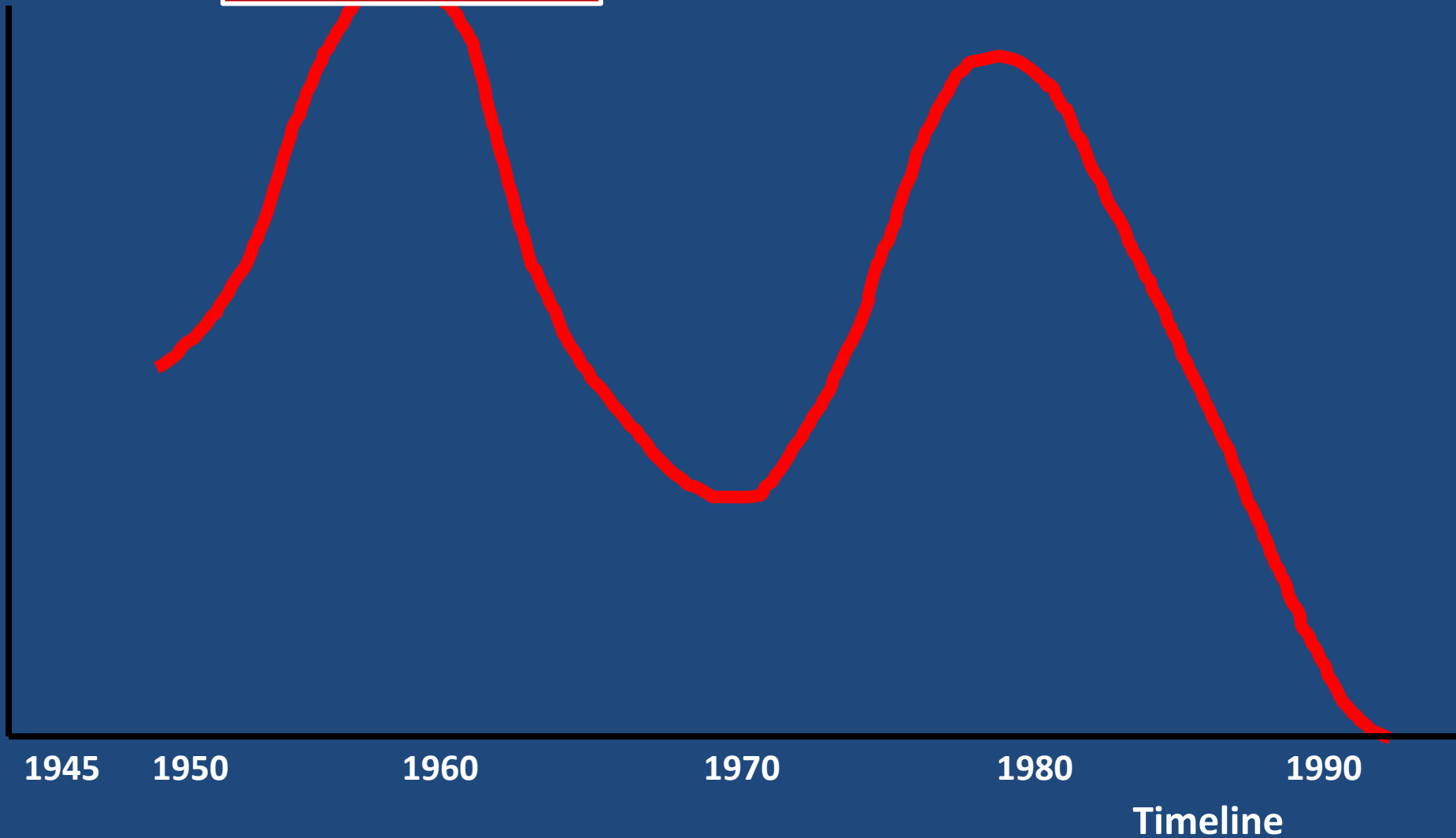


Michael Urban / Reuters file



THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER

Cuba Missile Crisis 62



Castro entering Havana, Cuba 1959



Bay of Pigs Defeat for Cuban Mercenaries and CIA April 1961



SS-4 Medium Range Ballistic Missile

Red Square May Day Parade, early 1960s



14 Oct 62: Lockheed U2



Cuban Missile Launch Site Oct 62



Missile threat from Cuba 1962



Turkey and USSR 1962



Cuban Missile Crisis 1962



More missiles on the way to Cuba

October 1962



Cuban Missile Crisis

Monday 22 October 1962



Cuba Blockade 1962: US frigate intercepting Merchant Ship



Anti-Submarine Frigate in Action



USS Randolph CTG and Soviet Foxtrot Class B-59



Submarine Flotilla Chief of Staff
Vasily Archipov



Damaged Foxtrot Class Submarine B59

25 Oct 62



25 Oct 62: B52 Nuclear Bomber



Black Saturday 27 October 1962



In Florida



Kennedy and McNamara 27 October 1962



Ambassador Dobrynin and President Kennedy November 1962



General Curtis LeMay USAF



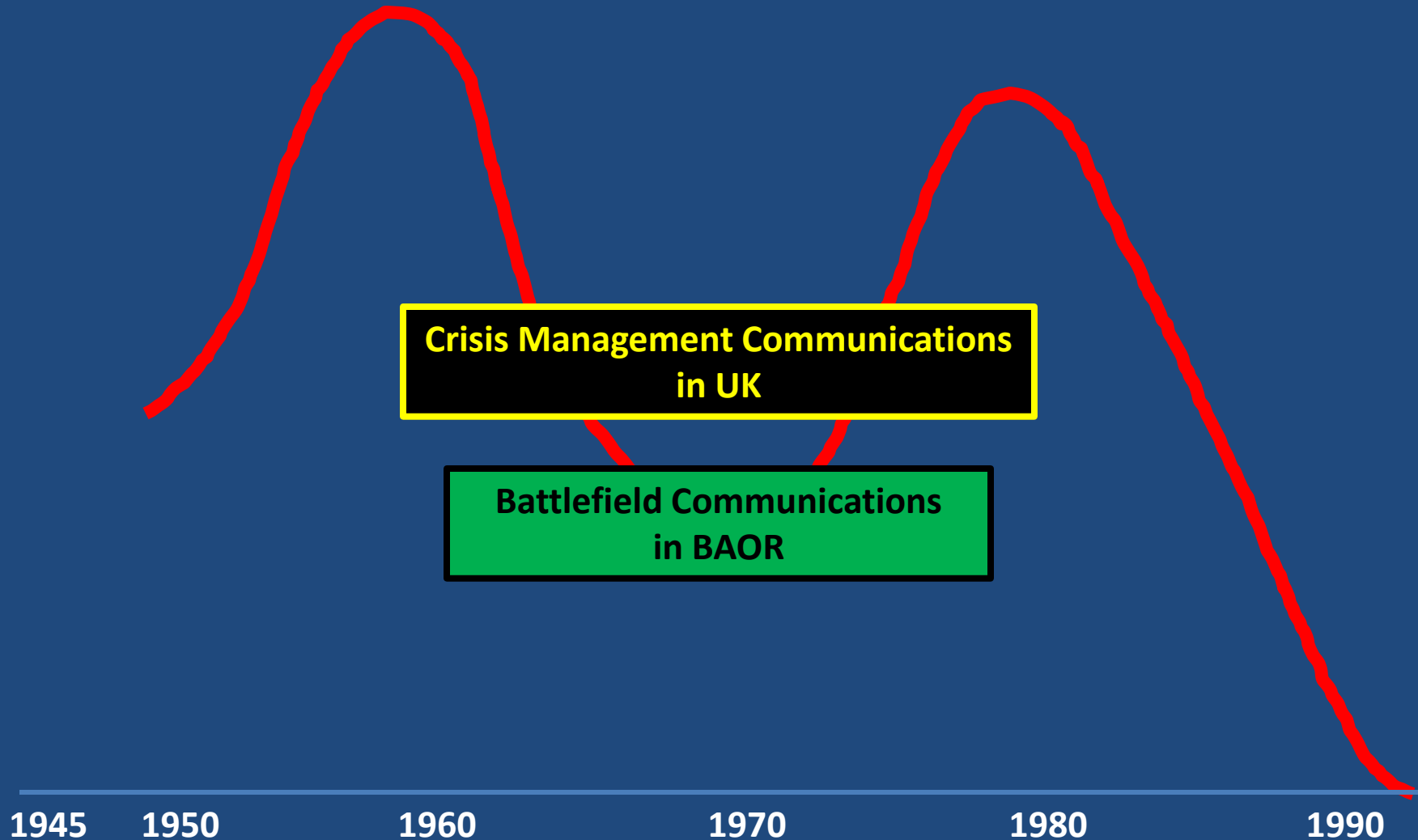
“Cuba was the greatest defeat in US history”

Dean Acheson, Former US Secretary of State



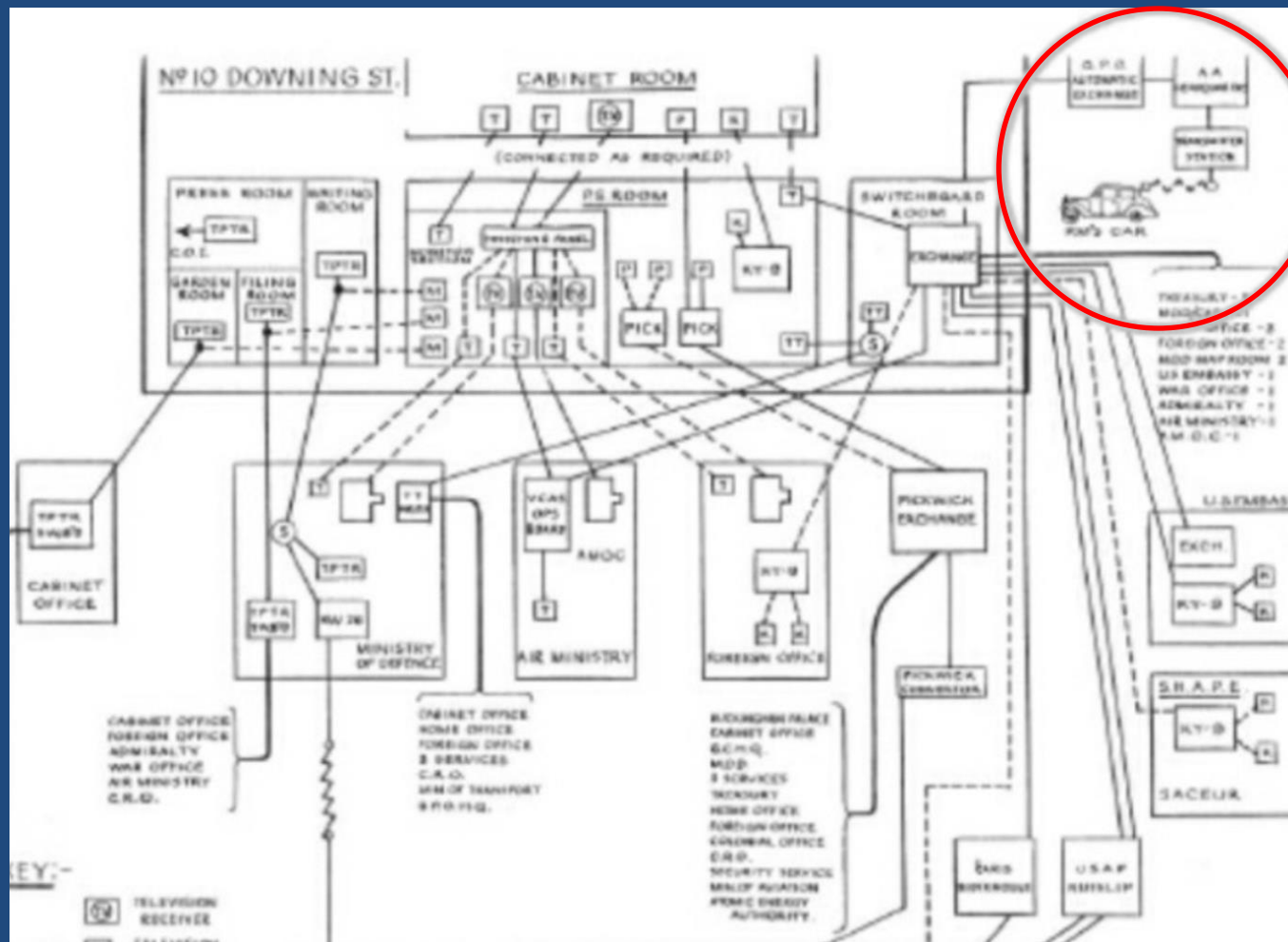
“Pure dumb luck!”

THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



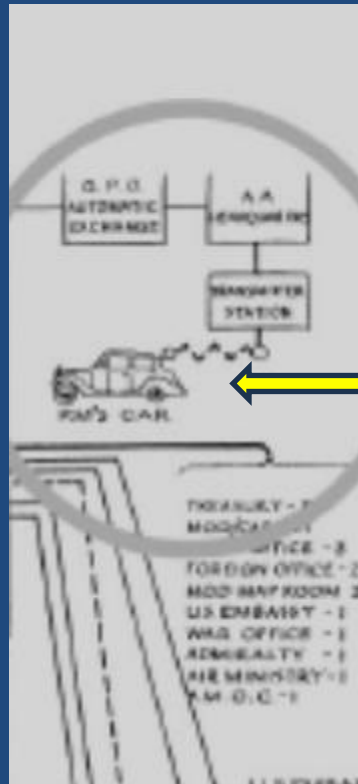
UK GOVERNMENT CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS

EARLY 1960s



UK GOVERNMENT CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS EARLY 1960s

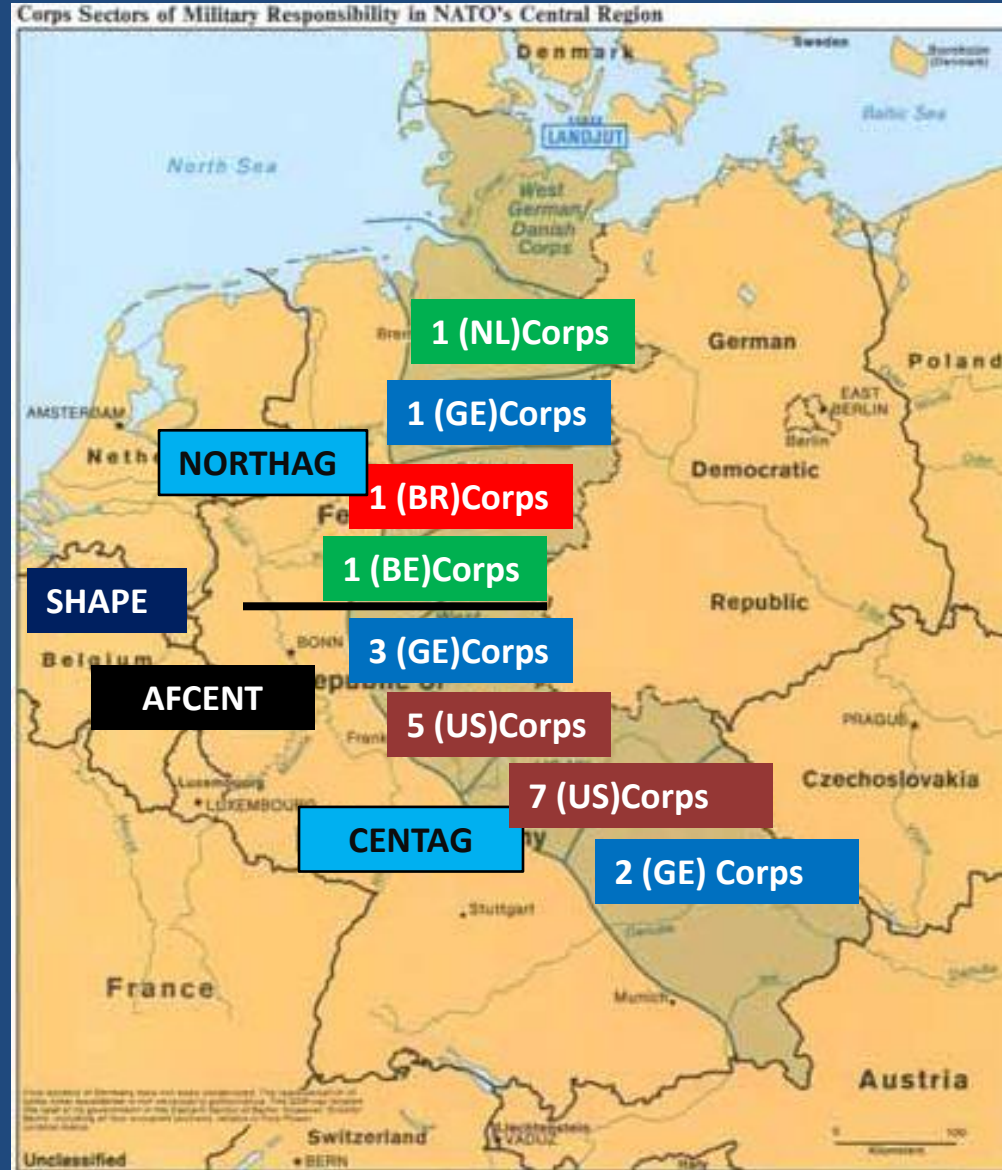
THE SHARP END



UK Crisis Management Communications during the Cuban Missile Crisis



ALLIED FORCES CENTRAL EUROPE (AFCENT) October 1962



1(BR) Corps: one of the many Designs for Battle



**Soviet 3rd
Shock Army**

Zeitgeist: the Flavour of BAOR Signals



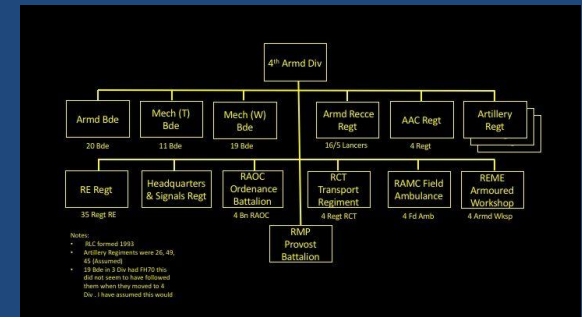
ZEITGEIST - SPIRIT OF THE TIMES
by Robert M. Brown

1(BR) Corps Communications 1946-1985

1946-1967: Hierarchical CNR and Radio Relay

- “Owned” by corps, divisional and brigade HQs
- Tricky to move and maintain communications
- High EW signature
- Fragile

Armoured Division Hierarchy



1967-1985: Bruin

- Cobbled together with COTS until Ptarmigan could be fielded
- First battlefield Fax and first field subscriber dialled telephone system
- Teleprinter network with auto message routing

Bruin Radio Relay 1975

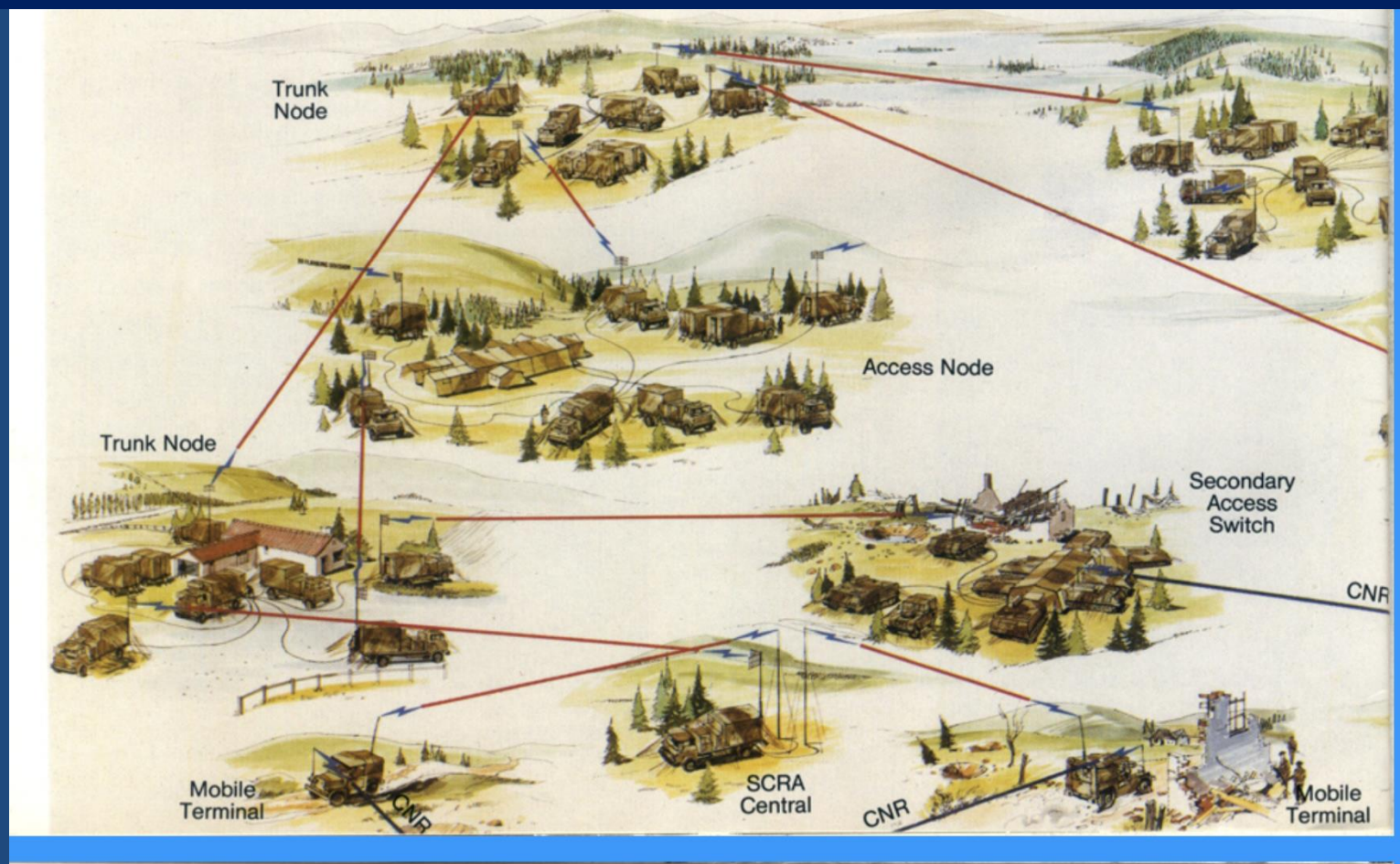


*Images by kind permission of the
Royal Signals Museum*

Ptarmigan 1985-1995

Packet switching: the forerunner of TCP-IP and the Internet

Single Channel Radio Access (SCRA): the forerunner of mobile networks



Ptarmigan and Wavell in the 1980s

Ptarmigan FV439 1985

SCRA



Wavell Battlefield C2

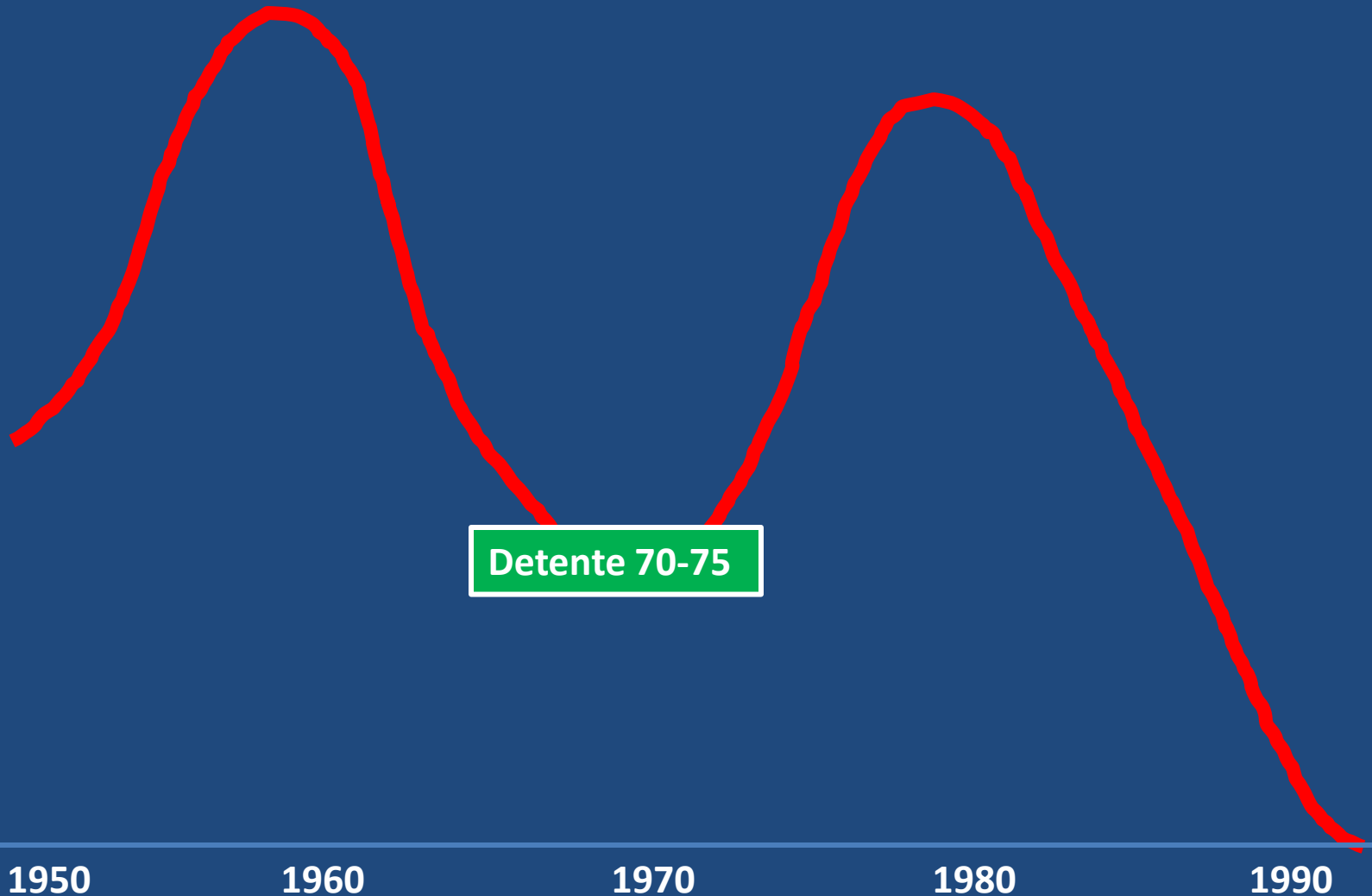
*Images by kind permission of
the Royal Signals Museum*



Ptarmigan Farewell: 22 Signal Regiment July 2002?



THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



Detente 1970-75

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT 1) 1972

Helsinki Accords 1975

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

SALT 1: Ford and Brezhnev sign in 1974



Thread 2 of Detente 1970-75

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks 1 (SALT 1)

1972-4

Limits on Anti Ballistic Missiles (ABMs)

So commitment to Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)

Helsinki Final Act 1975: CSCE

Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe



Thread 3 of Detente 1970-75

The Helsinki Accords 1975

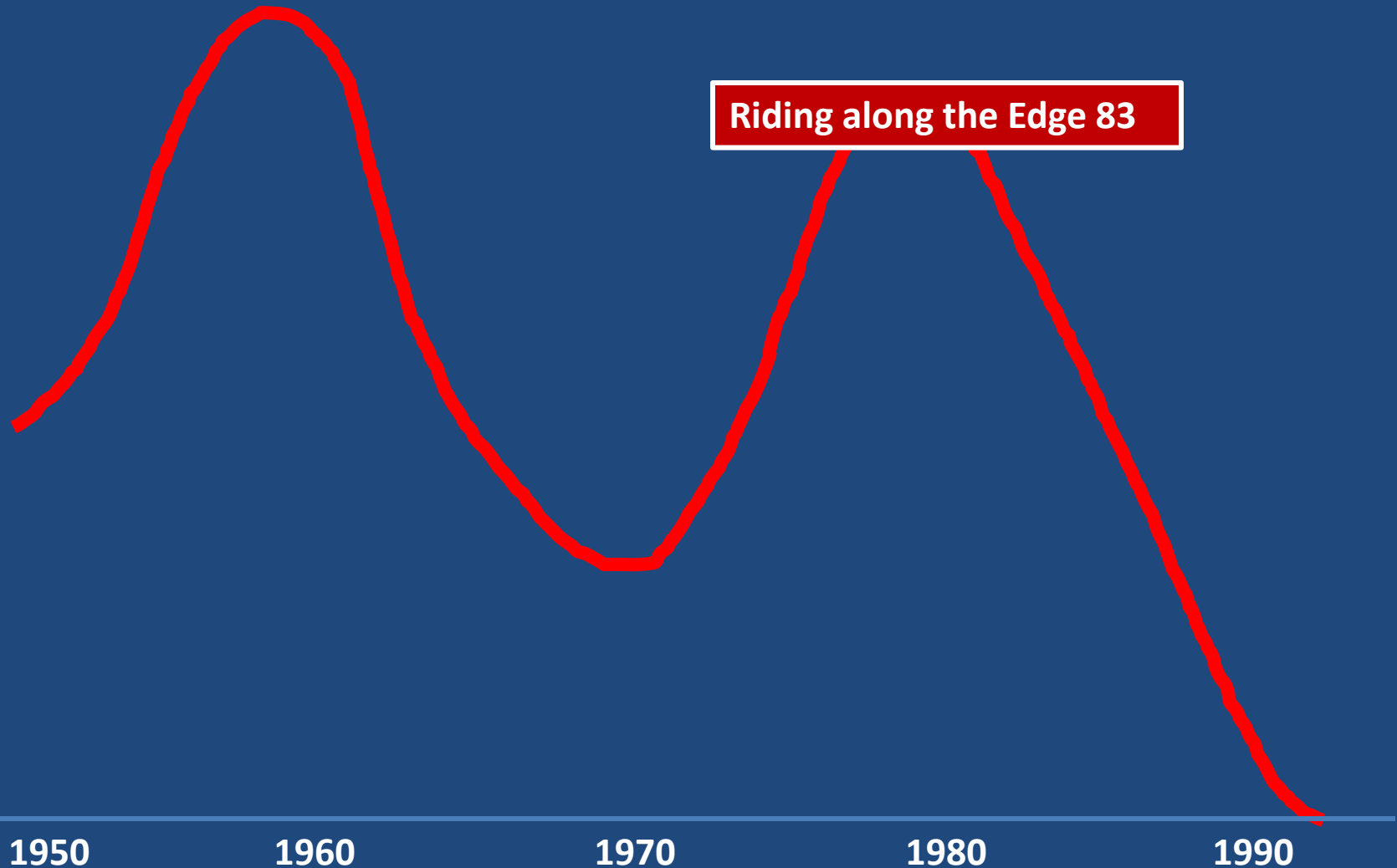
Existing European Borders “inviolable”

Recognition of human rights in ALL European nations

Planted seeds to crack the Soviet concrete in 1989

“A massive Soviet own goal”

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Ronald Reagan US President 1981-89

“Detente is a one-way street, being used by USSR to pursue its own ends”

NSDD 75

Reverse Soviet expansion

Show USSR that West is Best

US Defence Budget

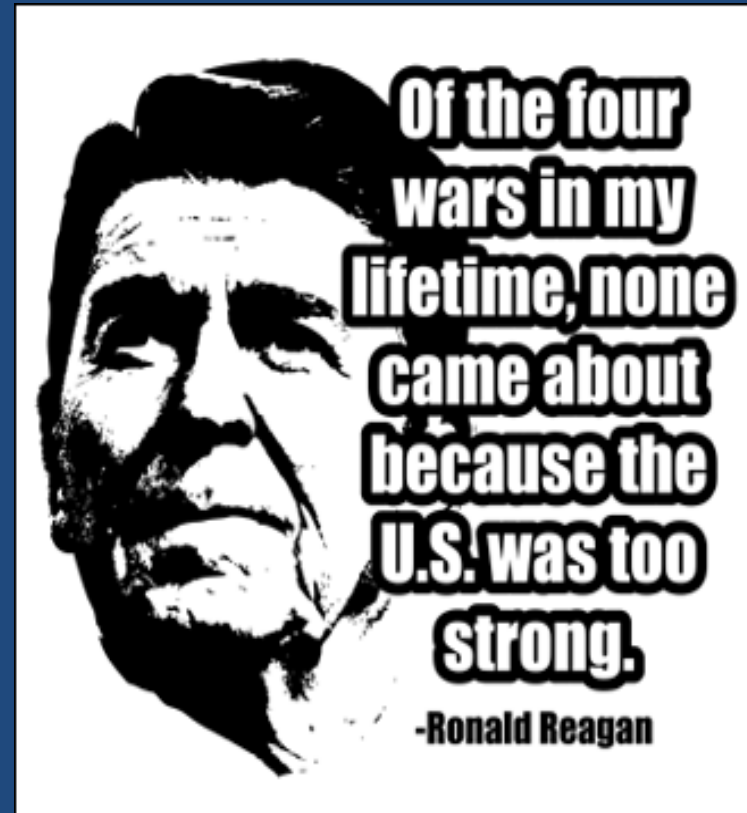
1981 \$200 Bn

1989 \$2,700 Bn

US Debt

1981 \$1.0 Tr

1989 \$2.5 Tr



NATO Testing of USSR 1981-5



Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov
Duty Commander Soviet Air Defence

26 September 1983



1980



2004

Surveillance Satellites



Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)





Soviet Air and Missile Defence Control Suite



Exercise Able Archer November 1983



Indicators seen by Warsaw Pact

- Nuclear Release drills
- Increased US/UK comms traffic
- US bases worldwide alert
- Armour moving East



Topol Missiles moving to battle stations November 1983



ICBM Silo



Defusing Able Archer

Oleg Gordievsky

KGB Resident in London
MI6 agent



In Service

In Exile

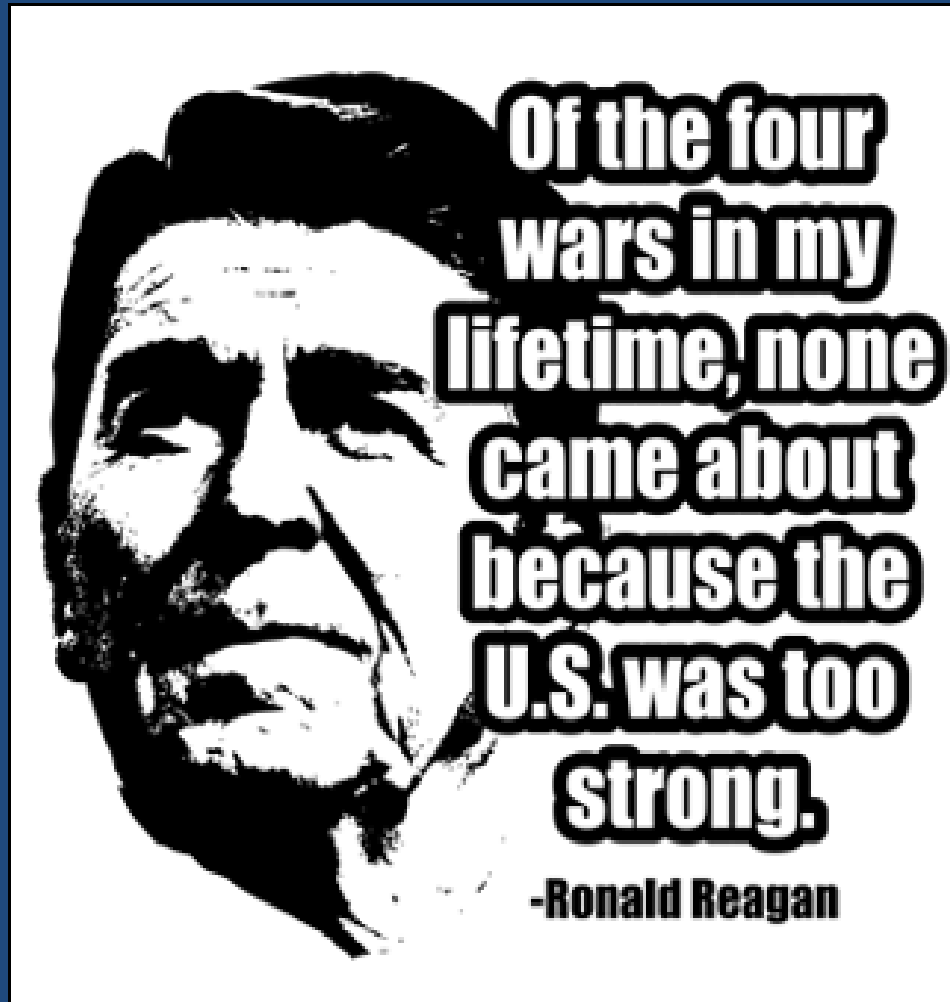


John Scarlett

Gordievsky's Handler
Later Head of MI6

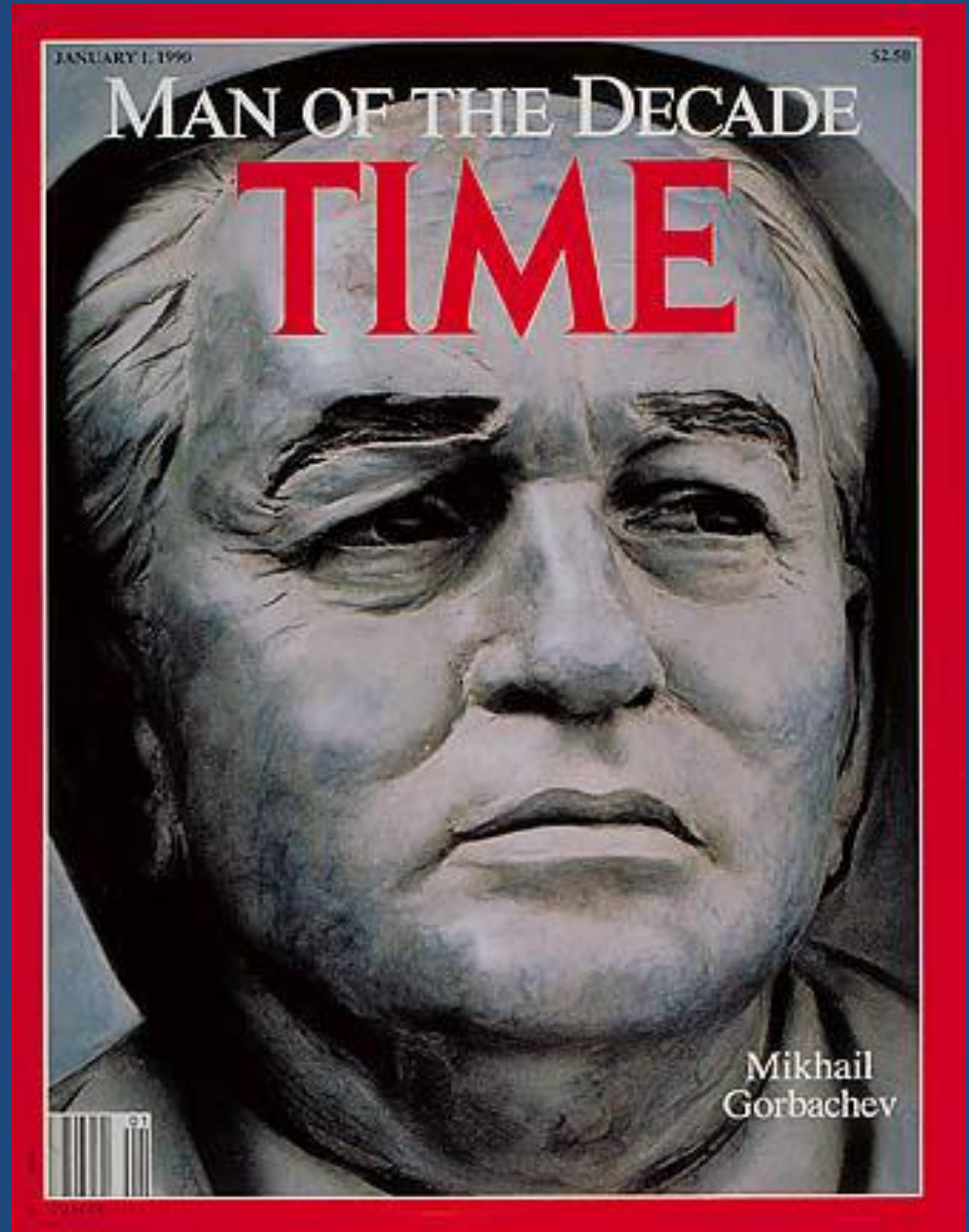


Ronald Reagan US President 1981-89



Mikhail Gorbachev

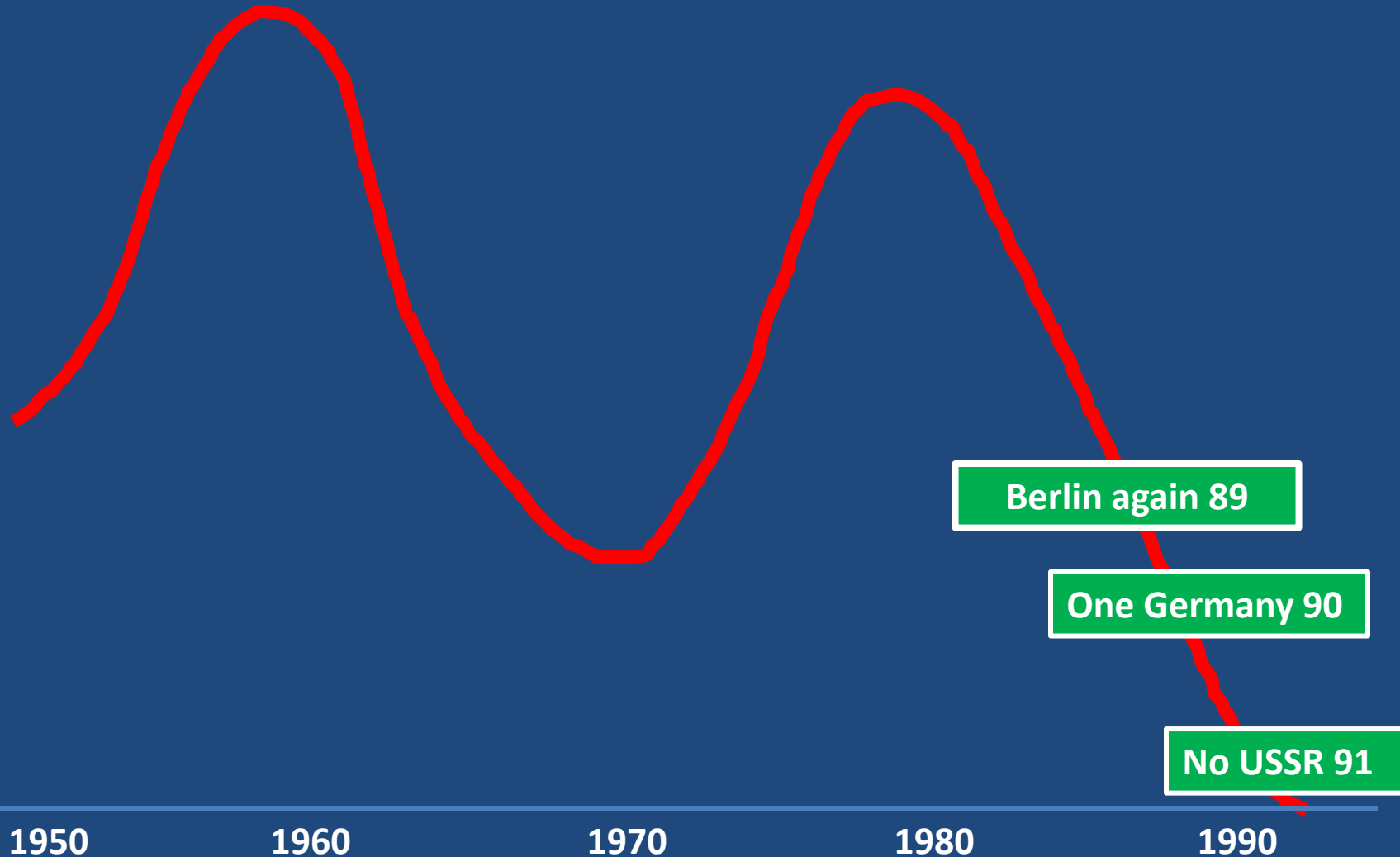
General Secretary
of the
Communist Party
of the
Soviet Union
1985-91



Reagan and Gorbachev in USA



THE COLD WAR: A SIMPLE TENSOMETER



Cutting through the Iron Curtain Hungary/Austria May 1989



July 1989: Gorbachev addresses Council of Europe



October 1989: GDR Anniversary Celebrations



East Germans climbing into the West German Embassy in Prague, September 1989



Trabants and Wartburgs into Austria September 1989



9 October 1989: the Leipzig Miracle

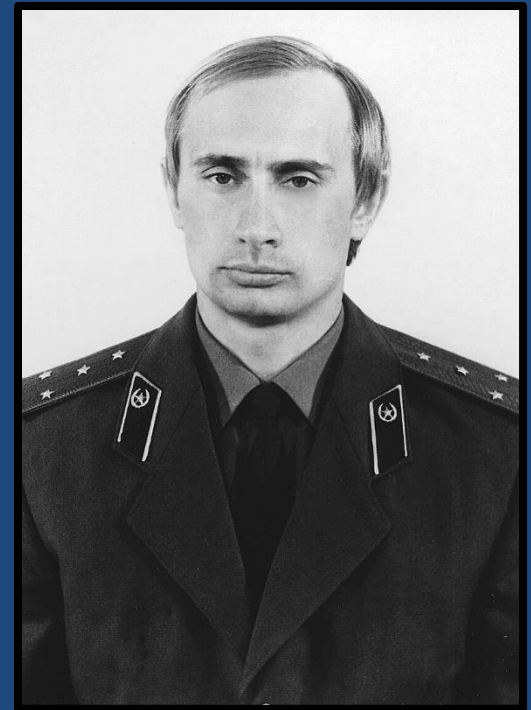


Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1989-1127-003
Foto: Cohlbeck, Friedrich | 27. November 1989

Soviet loss of grip on Eastern Europe Autumn 1989

**“The greatest geopolitical
catastrophe of the 20th
Century”**

Lt Col Vladimir Putin
Dresden KGB



9 November 1989
GDR Politburo briefer Gunther Schabowski under pressure



9 November 1989

Daniel Johnson's question to Gunther Schabowski



“What will happen to the Berlin Wall now?”

Berlin 9 November 1989





The End of the Soviet Union: 25 December 1991

Mikhail Gorbachev hands over to Boris Yeltsin



THE END

