



The Savvy Humanities

SIMPLIFYING MINDS, SHAPING THINKERS

CLASS 12 · POLITICAL SCIENCE · CBSE 2026-27 SYLLABUS

Part A — Contemporary World Politics · Chapter 1

The End of Bipolarity

24

pages of notes

6

marks of 80

13

board questions solved

41

key terms defined

What's inside

- What bipolarity actually meant, in exam wording
- The Soviet system's real strengths — not just its failures
- Five causes of disintegration, with the one NCERT calls immediate
- Gorbachev's reforms and why they ran out of his control
- The dates that carry marks — 1917, 1985, 1989, 1991
- Shock therapy set out feature by feature, then cost by cost
- Where the conflicts are — Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Yugoslavia
- India and Russia, and what each side actually gets

Aditi Ojha (Savvy Ma'am)

Founder & Educator, The Savvy Humanities. Class 12 CBSE boards: 95% Psychology, 95% Sociology, 97% Political Science. Teaching Humanities on YouTube since 2023.

Handwritten-style, for revision

Every page inside is handwritten-style with highlighting, boxes and a mind map — built to be read the night before, not skimmed.



Chapter at a Glance — Mind Map

The End of Bipolarity

Bipolarity

- Two superpowers after 1945
- USA and the Soviet Union
- NATO against Warsaw Pact
- Ideology, arms, allies

Why It Weakened

- Bureaucratic and authoritarian
- Party unaccountable, no dissent
- Technology and consumer goods lagged
- Arms race and Afghanistan drained it

The Collapse

- Berlin Wall falls, 1989
- Hardliners' coup, 1991
- Yeltsin leads the resistance
- December 1991 — USSR disbanded, CIS formed

Shock Therapy

- Total shift to capitalism, at once
- Privatisation, free trade, convertibility
- The largest garage sale in history
- Ruble collapsed, mafia rose

The Soviet System

- Born of the 1917 revolution
- One party, planned economy
- No unemployment, subsidised basics
- Sputnik and the space lead

Gorbachev

- General Secretary, 1985
- Perestroika — restructuring
- Glasnost — openness
- Reform released forces he could not hold

What It Changed

- Cold War confrontation ends
- US the sole superpower
- Capitalism the dominant model
- Fifteen new countries



What Bipolarity Was

Bipolarity

A world order in which international politics is dominated by **two superpowers of roughly equal strength**, with most other states drawn into an alliance with one or the other.

After the Second World War the two were the **United States** and the **Soviet Union**. Each led a military alliance — **NATO** on the Western side, the **Warsaw Pact** on the Soviet side — and each stood for a rival way of organising economy and society: **capitalism and liberal democracy** against **socialism and the planned economy**.

Aditi Ojha (Savvy Ma'am) says

Keep this section short in an answer. The Cold War itself is **not** an examinable chapter in the 2026-27 syllabus, so bipolarity here is the **starting condition**, not the subject. Two or three lines and move to the Soviet system, which is where the marks are.

The Soviet System

The Soviet system

The political and economic order established in the USSR after the **Socialist Revolution of 1917**, built on the ideals of socialism and the need for an **egalitarian society** — a **one-party state** led by the Communist Party, with a **planned economy** and **state ownership** of land and productive assets.

What it genuinely achieved

A good answer does not treat the Soviet system as a failure from the start. It was the world's **second most powerful country** after the war, and on its own terms it delivered things the West did not.

- **No unemployment.** The state guaranteed work.

**4 marks**

BOARD PATTERN

Explain any four factors that weakened the Soviet system.

Model answer

- **Bureaucratic and authoritarian rule.** The system became **stagnant**, with no democracy and no freedom of speech, and an administration too rigid to renew itself.
- **An unaccountable single party.** The **Communist Party** controlled every institution and answered to no one. There was no opposition, and ordinary people became **alienated** from a state that did not represent them.
- **Technology and consumer goods fell behind the West.** Quality lagged, shortages were routine, wages fell behind productivity, and the country came to **import foodgrains**.
- **The arms race and the cost of the bloc.** Matching American military spending and propping up the regimes of Eastern Europe drained resources the economy could not spare, and the **invasion of Afghanistan in 1979** deepened the drain in money and in morale.

Underlying all of these was the resentment of the **fifteen republics**, which increasingly felt that **Russia dominated them** and that their own identity counted for nothing.



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What the full chapter covers

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