

# Mikhail Gorbachev

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's crowning achievement is seen by the West as ending the Cold War without bloodshed, but he failed to prevent the break-up of the Soviet Union

■ **Mar 2, 1931:** **Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev** born into peasant family in southern Russian territory of Stavropol

■ **Mar 1985:** Becomes General Secretary of Communist Party after death of **Konstantin Chernenko**. Attempts to revive Soviet economy with policies of **glasnost** (openness) and **perestroika** (rebuilding)

■ **Nov 1985:** Gorbachev and U.S. President **Ronald Reagan** (inset) hold their first summit

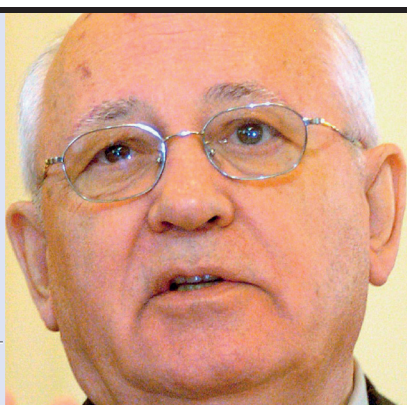
■ **Dec 1986:** **Andrei Sakharov** – father of dissident movement – released from exile after intervention by Gorbachev

■ **Dec 1987:** Gorbachev and Reagan sign first treaty to cut nuclear arsenals in Washington. All Soviet and U.S. intermediate-range missiles to be dismantled

■ **Feb 1989:** Nine-year Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ends

■ **Nov:** Popular revolutions oust communist governments in East Germany and Eastern Europe

■ **Dec:** Gorbachev and U.S. President **George H.W. Bush** hail end of Cold War



■ **Oct 1990:** East and West Germany united. Gorbachev is awarded Nobel Peace Prize for his extensive role in reunification

■ **Apr 1991:** Warsaw Pact of East European nations disbanded

■ **Jun:** **Boris Yeltsin** (inset) elected president of Russia

■ **Aug:** Coup by Communist Party hard-liners fails after mass protests led by Yeltsin. Gorbachev resigns as party leader

■ **Sep:** Soviet supreme legislature recognises independence of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

■ **Dec:** Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus proclaim Commonwealth of Independent States with no role for central authority or Gorbachev

■ **Dec 25, 1991:** Gorbachev resigns as president – Soviet Union formally dissolved following day

■ **Aug 30, 2022:** Gorbachev dies at age of 91

