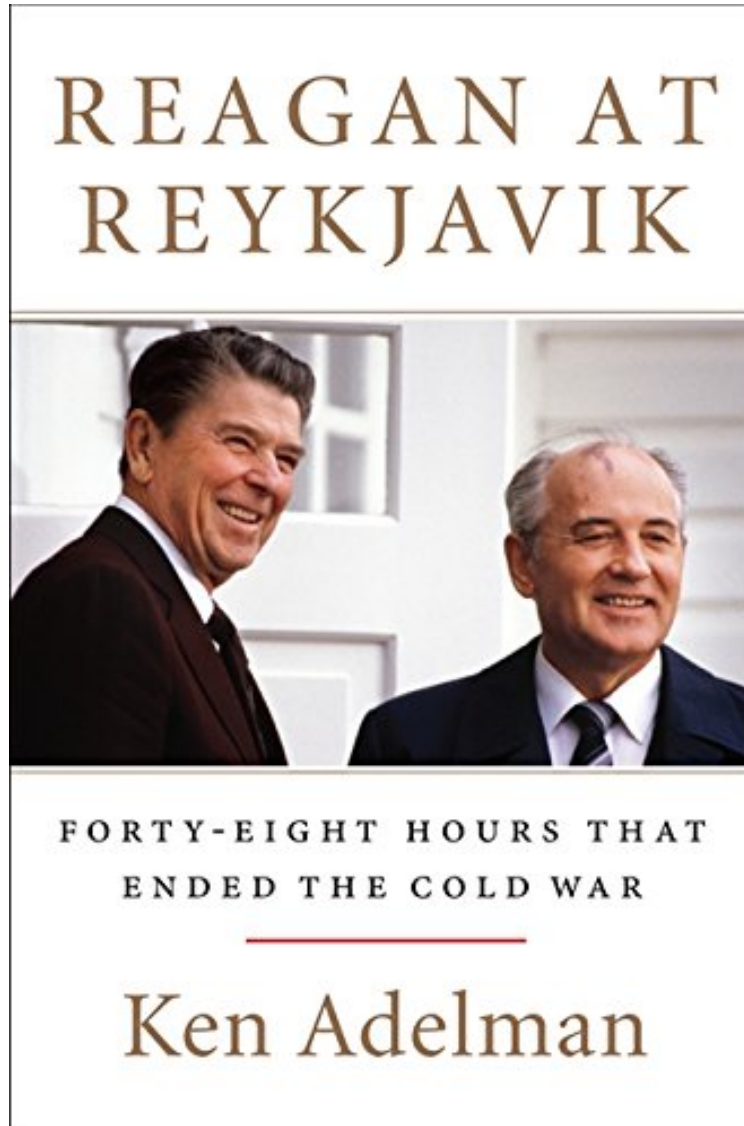


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## Reagan at Reykjavik: Forty-Eight Hours That Ended the Cold War

*Ken Adelman*

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**Ken Adelman : Reagan at Reykjavik: Forty-Eight Hours That Ended the Cold War** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Reagan at Reykjavik: Forty-Eight Hours That Ended the Cold War:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The author's tribute to Reagan's persistence By Wuxtra - Read All About It A good read, nicely written, chock-full of interesting details as witnessed by a man who was responsible for helping to negotiate arms-control issues with the Soviet Union. His theory is that the hard line taken by President

Reagan was responsible for a treaty to outlaw nuclear weapons, which may or may not be true. (One could argue that the result may have been the same no matter who was the U.S. President because of the inherent weakness of the Soviet system.) You would have to read several books or at least one written by a neutral historian to get a more balanced view of this issue — on the one hand, this; on the other hand, that. The final pages are really a hagiographic homage to Reagan, but Adelman does succeed in most of the book in adding touching and human details about the boss whom he served so well. A good addition to my bookshelf. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Inside History By Tonet Recently declassified notes and documents on both sides offer us an inside look on one of the most misunderstood, intense and difficult summits between world leaders Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. I found myself wishing that I had paid more attention during those days. And one day I will also go in a pilgrimage to the wooden house in Reykjavik, where a former Hollywood actor negotiated hard, came to the brink of unprecedented success, but stopped just short of agreement. In doing so, Ronald Reagan achieved success far beyond his dreams -- genuine friendship with his adversary, the demise of the 'Evil Empire,' and a world much safer from nuclear war. Great insight into a time when leaders cut through complexity and confusion with a clear vision and a steady resolve. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

The Human side of Geopolitics By Gustavo Coronel "Reagan at Reykjavik": The human side of geopolitics "Reagan at Reykjavik" by Ken Adelman. HarperCollins, NY, 2014 The title could have been, perhaps more properly: "Reagan and Gorbachev at Reykjavik" but the contents of the book more than compensate for this possible omission. It is a book about geopolitics with great emphasis on human psychology. What Carlyle said in his essay on History: "When the oak-tree is felled, the whole forest echoes with it; but a hundred acorns are planted silently by some unnoticed breeze" can probably be applied to the October 1986 weekend meeting of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev at Reykjavik. A meeting of the leaders of the most powerful countries on earth certainly does not classify as an "unnoticed breeze" but what made the weekend at Reykjavik a very unconventional and underestimated summit was the fact that the two leaders faced each other without a formal agenda, without large staffs and no protocol. Reagan called it "a private meeting". Gorbachev said, afterwards: "[Reykjavik was] a meeting between two leaders, talking directly over an extended period... a real conversation about key issues". Its lack of pomp belied its historical importance. The place was chosen because it was half way between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The meeting took place in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, in an isolated government house reputed to be haunted. It was proposed by Gorbachev and Reagan rapidly agreed. The Soviet Union and the U.S. were engaged in a cold war and, in addition to the great danger to the world this represented, their economies were suffering. In particular the Soviet Union could not sustain such massive expenditure much longer. Gorbachev wanted a breakthrough in reducing or, even better, reversing the arms race. Russia, says Adelman, was poorer than many of the countries it ruled over. Reagan's motivation was more idealistic than financial. He had a dream of ending the nuclear threat. But Gorbachev was also morally motivated. In their conversations with his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, he had agreed that "a change is needed... everything is rotten". It would in this frame of mind that the leaders would arrive at Reykjavik. Adelman describes the scenario and introduces the main actors in a very effective manner, including an account of the ways both Reagan and Gorbachev had arrived to the top of the political leadership in their countries. Both men, Adelman says, went to Reykjavik at the top of their powers. Reagan and Gorbachev were leaders difficult to classify. Reagan, said Kissinger, "was different. Not like the others. Sui generis. I cannot explain him". Although considered by many to be an intellectual lightweight, Adelman defines him as a man "of surprising depth and dexterity on the critical issues of his day". He, adds Adelman, "thought and intended in grand terms". But, equally important, as the book shows, he was a man of intense human qualities, including a great sense of humor and a warm personality. Gorbachev was also a leader sui generis. Reviled at home and revered abroad. He was a totally different kind of Soviet leader. Serge Schmemman, a Soviet specialist is quoted by Adelman describing Gorbachev as "smiling, charming, gregarious and complete with an elegant, educated and cultured wife". Although his record was far from perfect, says Adelman, mentioning the bloodsheds in Lithuania and Afghanistan, he deserved great credit for allowing a peaceful dissolution of the Soviet empire and for his performance at Reykjavik. What was discussed and accomplished in Reykjavik? Adelman lists several areas of negotiation: arms control on nuclear weapons, the Strategic Defense initiative, the ABM Treaty and nuclear testing. These were the "solid" components of the talks. A strategic component of the meeting was related to the ending of the cold war while a personal realm, that of Gorbachev and Reagan as two interacting human beings was a third aspect, probably the most important one. In the substantive component of arms reduction some dramatic breakthroughs were obtained: intermediate missiles were reduced to zero in Europe and Asia; a 50% reduction of strategic nuclear weapons was agreed as well as overall cuts in nuclear arms. In the more conceptual area of ending the cold war there is little doubt that the weekend at Reykjavik helped considerably. Gorbachev, quoted by Adelman, said: "Reykjavik marked a watershed "resulting in the the elimination of the cold war and removal of the world nuclear threat". Reagan called it "a major turning point". It is hard not to agree that the major ingredient at Reykjavik was the direct interaction of the two men, both defending with tenacity their point of views, both thinking of how history would evaluate their performances, deeply engaged in a discussion on the fate of humanity, trying to balance the short and long term effects of their decisions. This direct, face to face discussion of the two men makes up constitutes the most important part of the book, a true roller coaster of jubilations

and disappointments. Gorbachev said ten years later: “Truly Shakespearean passions ran under the thin veneer of polite and diplomatically restrained negotiation..... “Adelman excels in his treatment of these two men and of the supporting cast. He cannot hide his admiration for Reagan and treats Gorbachev with great respect, almost affection. It was Gorbachev who took the initiative for the meeting and the one who made the greatest concessions in order to reach agreement. The role played by Gorbachev’s adviser Sergei Akhromeyev was fundamental. Adelman developed a cordial relationship with this hero of the Soviet Union, whose life would end tragically, in circumstances that dampened his previous honorable service. There are moving episodes described in the book: The handwritten letter of farewell to the people of the United States, after he was diagnosed with Alzheimer (I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life). Akhromeyev’s suicide letter (I struggled until the end). Reagan’s disappointment after the meeting (telling Gorbachev: You could have said yes). Gorbachev’s touching the U.S. flag covering Reagan’s coffin. The day the Soviet Union died, in December 1991. Reagan’s famous words (Mr. Gorbachev, take down this wall). The deal breaker at the end of the meeting (“restrict SDI to the laboratory, requested Gorbachev. I can’t do it, answered Reagan). On the tenth anniversary of the meeting Ken Adelman went back to Reykjavik. Walking through the rooms of the old house, feeling nostalgic, listening in his mind to the voices of the men who shared with him those two days of 1986, he sent a postcard to Reagan, which the president, already well in his journey through the night of Alzheimer never got to read. It said: “I am in Reykjavik... thinking of the superb job you did that weekend. Of how well you served America and how very proud I was to serve you, Mr. President”.

The dramatic, first-hand account of the historic 1986 Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Iceland—the definitive weekend that was the key turning point in the Cold War—by President Reagan’s arms control director, Ken Adelman. In October 1986, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev met for a forty-eight-hour summit in Reykjavik, Iceland. Planned as a short, inconsequential gathering to outline future talks, the meeting quickly turned to major international issues, including the strategic defense initiative and the possibility of eliminating all nuclear weapons—negotiations that laid the groundwork for the most sweeping arms accord in history the following year. Scrupulously researched and based on now-declassified information, Reagan at Reykjavik tells the gripping tale of this weekend that changed the world. Filled with illustrative accounts of the private discussions between Reagan and his team, Ken Adelman provides an honest and up-close portrait of President Reagan at one of his finest and most challenging moments. Reagan at Reykjavik includes 16 pages of black-and-white photos and 11 illustrations.

“This is real history and brilliant analysis, a profound book that could only have been written decades after the Reykjavik weekend, which now can be measured by the outcome. With their large humanitarian vision, it is clear that Reagan Gorbachev helped make the world a much safer place.” (Bob Woodward) “The weekend meeting in Reykjavik between Reagan and Gorbachev in 1986 marked a significant turning point in the Cold War. Adelman, an active participant in the talks and a gifted writer, has provided a thoughtful account of that episode.” (Henry A. Kissinger) “A riveting history of one of the most important moments of the Cold War. Adelman has written a page-turning narrative that leaves us on the edge of our seats.” (Ken Burns) “Reagan at Reykjavik is a lively, important account of an historic weekend. On a barren island nation in the north Atlantic, the two great nuclear adversaries faced reality—and the world was changed.” (Tom Brokaw) “A fascinating, gripping and essential account of the definitive end-game moment of the Cold War, told by someone who had a front-row seat.” (Christopher Buckley) “With wonderful insight and color, Ken Adelman details the great drama of the Cold War’s most surprising summit. This book is deeply important in an era when Reagan’s art of principled negotiation needs reviving.” (Walter Isaacson) “Ken Adelman has written a genuinely fascinating book—vivid and personal, humorous, full of surprising new details. The book’s portrayals are all memorable, but most so when it comes to Ronald Reagan.” (James Fallows) “A knowledgeable, passionately engaged fly on the wall at one of the least heralded, most productive summits of the Cold War era.” (Ted Koppel) From the Back Cover A dramatic account of the historic 1986 Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Iceland—the turning point in the Cold War—by Ken Adelman, Reagan’s arms control director and a key player in that weekend’s world-changing events In October 1986, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev met for a forty-eight-hour summit in Reykjavik, Iceland. Planned as a short gathering to outline future talks, the meeting quickly turned to major international issues, including SDI (“Star Wars”) and the possibility of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Both men were at the height of their powers, and they had a rare opportunity to move toward peace. The meeting led to negotiations and concessions that neither side had predicted—and laid the groundwork for the most sweeping arms accord in history, adopted the following year, and the end of the Soviet Union a half decade later. From his position as a participant in these historic events, Ken Adelman is able to reveal the motivations, relationships, and conversations that led to the summit’s breakthroughs. His analysis as both a participant and historian provides an invaluable perspective on this uniquely significant episode. Scrupulously researched and based on now-declassified documents, Reagan at Reykjavik tells the gripping tale of the weekend that changed the world. Adelman provides an honest, laser-etched portrait of President Reagan at one of his finest and most challenging moments—and, indisputably, one of the most significant triumphs of his presidency. About the Author Ken Adelman was President Reagan’s arms control

director at Reykjavik during the 1986 superpower summit with Mikhail Gorbachev. Adelman accompanied Reagan to three superpower summits in all. He has also served as a U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and an assistant to the secretary of defense. After leaving government, he taught Shakespeare at Georgetown University and George Washington University, and National Security Studies at Johns Hopkins and Georgetown Universities. He is the author of several books, including *Shakespeare in Charge* and *The Defense Revolution*. He lives in Arlington, Virginia.