Organizing Questions
During and after the viewing of this video, students will:
- identify some key ideas in the book, *From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia*;
- identify countries and geographic regions;
- identify key events and individuals in U.S.–Russia and U.S.–Soviet relations;
- analyze theories/explanations for the current confrontation between Russia and the U.S.; and
- discuss the role of diplomacy in international relations.

Materials
- Handout 1, *Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle*, pp. 4–5, 30 copies
- Handout 2, *Map Activity*, p. 6, 30 copies
- Handout 4, *Guiding Questions*, p. 8, 30 copies
- Projection 1, *Book Summary*, p. 9
- Projection 2, *Key Players*, p. 10
- Teacher Information, *Video Transcript*, pp. 11–14, 10 copies
- Answer Key 1, *Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle*, p. 15
- Answer Key 2, *Map Activity*, p. 16
- Answer Key 3, *Soviet Union Map*, p. 17

“From Cold War to Hot Peace” video, online at [https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/cold-war-hot-peace](https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/cold-war-hot-peace)
Equipment

- Computer with Internet access and speakers
- Computer projector

Teacher Preparation

Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.


2. Review “From Cold War to Hot Peace” video. Teacher Information, *Video Transcript*, can be used as a reference.

3. Set up and test computer, projector, speakers, and video before starting the lesson. Confirm that you are able to play the video with adequate audio volume.

4. Prior to the lesson, assign students Handout 1, *Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle*, Handout 2, *Map Activity*, and Handout 3, *Soviet Union Map*, for homework. These handouts are intended to familiarize students with the terminology and place names that Professor McFaul uses in his lecture.

Procedures

1. Mention to students that they will be watching a video, “From Cold War to Hot Peace,” featuring Professor Michael McFaul, Director and Senior Fellow of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, and former U.S. Ambassador to Russia (2012–2014). His talk is based on his book *From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia*, which was published in 2018.

2. Set the context for the video, “From Cold War to Hot Peace,” by displaying Projection 1, *Book Summary*, and asking students to comment on key events, themes, and/or concepts that stand out in the summary.

3. Display Projection 2, *Key Players*, to help familiarize students with individuals mentioned in the talk.

4. Review vocabulary and geography activities that students were assigned for homework using Answer Key 1, *Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle*, Answer Key 2, *Map Activity*, and Answer Key 3, *Soviet Union Map*.

5. Distribute one copy of Handout 4, *Guiding Questions*, to each student. Inform students that they will now listen to Ambassador Michael McFaul discussing his book *From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia*. Have students read through the questions on Handout 4. Instruct students to keep in mind the questions on the handout as they view the video. Play and project the video “From Cold War to Hot Peace.”

6. After viewing the video, have students get into small groups. Instruct students to work together in their small groups to answer questions on Handout 4. If time is limited, assign each group five of the 15 questions from the handout.
Optional: Distribute one copy of Teacher Information, Video Transcript, to each group.

7. When students are finished answering the questions on Handout 4, lead a classroom discussion on Ambassador McFaul’s talk by having students share their responses to the questions on Handout 4.

Optional Activities

- Obtain a copy of From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia and write a book review.
- Research and describe in your own words how to become a diplomat.
- Write about which country you would want to be an ambassador to and why? What would your top three priorities be?
- Compare what you learned from this lecture to information on the topic in your U.S. world history textbook.
- Find one article on current U.S.–Russia relations. Does one of the theories that Professor McFaul mentions in his talk apply?
- Design a political cartoons that represents something the Professor McFaul describes.
- Research and write about one of the following:
  - proxy wars
  - sanctions
  - color revolutions
  - nuclear arms races
  - soft power
  - Republics of the Soviet Union
VOCABULARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Use clues to complete the crossword puzzle

Crossword Clues

ACROSS

3. Any of various related revolutionary movements that developed in several societies in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans during the early 2000s, mostly using nonviolent resistance.

9. A competition for supremacy in nuclear warfare between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their respective allies during the Cold War.

12. A war instigated by a major power which does not itself become involved.

14. Involving or participated in by more than two nations or parties.

15. The ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union during the second half of the 20th century.

16. A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.

17. An economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.

DOWN

1. A narrative composed from personal experience.

2. The war that was fought mainly in Europe and Asia from 1939 to 1945.

4. The policy, practice, or advocacy of extending the power and dominion of a nation especially by direct territorial acquisitions or by gaining indirect control over the political or economic life of other areas.

5. Tending or disposed to maintain existing views, conditions, or institutions.

6. Not bound by authoritarianism, orthodoxy, or traditional forms.

8. A formal act whereby a state proclaims its sovereignty over territory hitherto outside its domain; the addition of an area or region to a country, state, etc.

10. The conduct by government officials of negotiations and other relations between nations.

11. A system in which goods are owned in common and are available to all as needed; a theory advocating elimination of private property; a doctrine based on revolutionary Marxian socialism and Marxism-Leninism that was the official ideology of the Soviet Union.

13. A government in which one person possesses unlimited power.
**Map Activity**

Identify the following countries or regions on the map. These are mentioned in the lecture by Professor Michael McFaul.

Afghanistan, Angola, Crimea, Georgia, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Korean Peninsula, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Vietnam

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/A_large_blank_world_map_with_oceans_marked_in_blue.PNG

1. _________________________   7. __________________________
2. _________________________   8. __________________________
3. _________________________   9. __________________________
4. _________________________   10. _________________________
5. _________________________   11. _________________________
6. _________________________   12. _________________________
SOVIET UNION MAP

Shade in the countries and regions that made up the Soviet Union

Identify the 15 countries (i.e., Soviet Socialist Republics) in the map that made up the Soviet Union

1. _________________________  9. __________________________
2. _________________________  10. _________________________
3. _________________________  11. _________________________
4. _________________________  12. _________________________
5. _________________________  13. _________________________
6. _________________________  14. _________________________
7. _________________________  15. _________________________
8. _________________________
GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What does Ambassador McFaul say his book is about?
2. When and how did McFaul get interested in the Soviet Union?
3. What worries did McFaul have to say about Ronald Reagan?
4. As a young college student, what strategy did McFaul think would help reduce tensions between the United States and Russia?
5. Why does McFaul describe the late 1980s and early 1990s as a “euphoric period” and “fantastic time” for those interested in U.S.–Soviet or U.S.–Russia relations?
6. What does McFaul say is the “good news” from the Cold War that’s over?
7. What does McFaul say is the “bad news” in the current era of U.S.–Russia relations?
8. How does McFaul describe the ideological struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War?
9. How does McFaul describe the current ideological struggle between the United States and Russia?
10. Why does McFaul describe the Cold War as a “hot war”?
11. Why does McFaul describe current U.S.–Russia relations as “hot peace”?
12. What destabilizing tactics does McFaul say characterize the current struggle between the United States and Russia?
13. What three theories does McFaul offer as to how and why U.S.–Russia relations have grown so confrontational over the past 30 years?
14. What does McFaul say is the “substory” in his book?
15. How does McFaul describe his time as ambassador to Russia? What parts of the job did he really enjoy?
Book Summary

Book Summary of *From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia* from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

In 2008, when Michael McFaul was asked to leave his perch at Stanford and join an unlikely presidential campaign, he had no idea that he would find himself at the beating heart of one of today’s most contentious and consequential international relationships. As President Barack Obama’s adviser on Russian affairs, McFaul helped craft the United States’ policy known as “reset” that fostered new and unprecedented collaboration between the two countries. And then, as U.S. ambassador to Russia from 2012 to 2014, he had a front-row seat when this fleeting, hopeful moment crumbled with Vladimir Putin’s return to the presidency. This riveting inside account combines history and memoir to tell the full story of U.S.–Russia relations from the fall of the Soviet Union to the new rise of the hostile, paranoid Russian president. From the first days of McFaul’s ambassadorship, the Kremlin actively sought to discredit and undermine him, hassling him with tactics that included dispatching protesters to his front gates, slandering him on state media, and tightly surveilling him, his staff, and his family. *From Cold War to Hot Peace* is an essential account of the most consequential global confrontation of our time.

Source: https://www.hmhbooks.com/shop/books/From-Cold-War-to-Hot-Peace/9780544716247
Key Players

Vladimir Putin—Russian politician and former intelligence officer who is serving as the current president of Russia since 2012, previously being in the office from 1999 until 2008. He was also prime minister from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012.

Barack Obama—an American politician and attorney who served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017.

Ronald Reagan—an American politician who served as the 40th president of the United States from 1981 to 1989 and became a highly influential voice of modern conservatism.

Mikhail Gorbachev—a Russian and former Soviet politician. The eighth and last leader of the Soviet Union, he was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985 until 1991.

Boris Yeltsin—a Russian and former Soviet politician who served as the first President of Russia from 1991 to 1999.

Donald Trump—an American media personality and businessman who served as the 45th president of the United States from 2017 to 2021.
On-screen text:
From Cold War to Hot Peace
a discussion with Michael McFaul

On-screen text:
Michael McFaul
Director, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University

Michael McFaul: Hey, everybody, my name is Michael McFaul. I’m a professor here of Political Science at Stanford University. Last year, I just wrote a book, which I’m happy to talk about today. It’s called From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia. It’s a quasi-memoir. I was the U.S. ambassador in Putin’s Russia from 2012 to 2014. Before that, I worked three years at the White House for President Obama from 2009 to 2012. And this is partially a book about my experiences in the government, but it’s bigger than that. It’s not just about me. It’s really a book about U.S.–Soviet relations and U.S.–Russia relations for the last 30 or 40 years.

The book starts with me in high school. I grew up in Montana. I went to Bozeman Senior High in Bozeman, Montana. And back then—this is a long time ago, 1979, 1980, and I graduated in ’81—I joined the debate team in high school, and the topic was about U.S. trade policy towards other countries. And we, my debate partner and I, developed a case about how to increase trade with the Soviet Union. My debate partner, by the way, is now Senator Steve Daines from Montana. So we were a pretty good team, by the way. But it was from that time that I got interested in the Soviet Union. And this was at the height of the Cold War. Tensions were really, really high between our two countries. And back then, I was scared that our president, our newly elected president, Ronald Reagan at the time, was going to get us into a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union.

So when I arrived here at Stanford—and this is all in the book, so please read the book—when I arrived here at Stanford as a 17-year-old kid, freshman, I registered for first-year Russian and PoliSci 35, How Nations Deal With Each Other, animated by the belief that if we could just communicate more with our counterparts in the Soviet Union, we could reduce tensions. And then the next several years were a fantastic time if you’re interested in U.S.–Soviet or U.S.–Russia relations, because relations improved dramatically. The Soviet Union eventually even collapsed in 1991. And it felt like the United States and Russia were going to become partners, some would even say allies, in the world. Because back then, the people of Russia and their leaders—then under Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, initially, the last leader of the Soviet Union, and then Boris Yeltsin, the first leader of independent Russia—claimed that they wanted to join the West and be close to the United States and develop democracy and capitalism. And I was living in and out of Russia and the Soviet Union at the time and it was a really euphoric period. It felt like the world was—finally the Cold War had ended, and our former enemy was becoming our friend.

Fast forward to today and it didn’t work out. Today, we’re back in a very confrontational relationship with Russia under Vladimir Putin. I call my book From Cold War to Hot Peace because I want to echo that it’s a little bit like the Cold War but it’s somewhat different. Let me give you a few examples.

So the good news from the Cold War that’s over now is we do not have a nuclear arms race in terms of the number of nuclear weapons. Back when I first got interested in the Soviet Union, we were developing tens of thousands of, peaking I think at 30,000 or 40,000, nuclear weapons
pointed at each other. The good news today in the “hot peace” period is we’re now down to
1550. We’ve gone way down. By the way, you can still blow up the world with 1500 weapons.
We have some work to do to reduce that. But that’s the good news.

The bad news in our current era, your era, is that we have a qualitative nuclear arms race right
now that in many ways I think is more destabilizing than the old Cold War, some new weapons
that can do real damage, especially to people like me who live on the coasts. They have a new
weapon, for instance, a nuclear weapon. It’s a torpedo that travels hundreds of miles through
the ocean and then blows up right before it gets to the coast, designed to flood the coast and kill
millions of people. So good news, bad news? Better today than the Cold War? It’s somewhere in
between.

Another example. During the Cold War, there was an ideological struggle between the Soviet
Union and communism on the one hand, and the United States and [what] we used to call “the
free world” on the other hand, between democracy and autocracy, communism and capitalism.
Thankfully, that ideological struggle is over.

But there is a new ideological struggle today. At least Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia,
believes there is. He is trying to propagate a set of ideas, conservative, national, anti-multilateral
ideas against what he calls the decadent liberal West. That’s us. And he is now investing
resources into that to try to win allies. And after a period of years where nobody was noticing,
he now has allies in countries like Hungary, Italy, and some would even say here in our country
in the United States. So, better off, worse off? Somewhere in between.

The means of fighting these two different episodes. During the Cold War, it actually wasn’t
cold. I think that’s a really bad term. It was a hot war. Millions of people around the world
died when we were fighting proxy wars between the Soviets and the Americans in places like
Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Angola, and lots of people died there, tragically, including lots of
Americans, by the way. So the good news is we’re not fighting proxy wars all over the world to
combat and contain communism.

The bad news is that there are some new tactics in the “hot peace” fight that are pretty
destabilizing. One is annexation. For decades, there has been no annexation of territory between
countries in Europe. That changed in 2014 when Vladimir Putin, the leader of Russia, annexed
a piece of Ukraine—it’s called Crimea—for the first time since 1945. You have to go all the way
back to World War II to find a time of annexation. Second, sanctions. The United States today
has more Russians on its sanctions list than at any time in our history during the Cold War,
and likewise the Russians have more Americans on their sanctions list than any time during
the Cold War. I know. I’m one of them. I can’t travel to Russia because of this confrontation
we’re in today. And finally, in 2016, we saw another new tactic in the fight in the “hot peace”
when Vladimir Putin, through a multi-prong campaign, interfered in our elections here in the
United States of America, and tried to swing the vote towards president—then candidate, now
President Trump. Whether he did or not, is debated amongst academics, but that he tried to do
so is unprecedented. That’s something new in our current era.

So, my book tries to explain why. What happened between that euphoric moment that I talked
about when I was a young man studying at Moscow State University in 1991, and our current
confrontation? And I walk through what we would call theories, you might call explanations,
and let me just summarize them now and then encourage you to read the book and come to
your own conclusions.

So, one theory is that great powers always clash. They rise. They fall. They annex territory. If you
look at a map of Europe and you fast forward for 1000 years of history—I use one of those when
I teach in my own courses here at Stanford—what do you see? You see countries getting bigger, countries getting smaller, territory moving. And one explanation is that it’s the same old, same old. Soviet Union was weak, collapsed, a weak Russia took over. But now, Russia is back. Russia has a lot of power to do things. And that, you know, whether good or bad, same old, same old. That’s one theory.

There’s a second theory that I try to wrestle with all these theories in my book, which says, “No, it’s about America.” The United States did this. We took advantage of Russia when Russia was weak. And we told them they had to develop markets and capitalism, and then we expanded NATO in Eastern Europe, that Russians saw as threatening. Then we bombed Serbia in 1999. We invaded Iraq in 2003. We sponsored color revolutions in Georgia, a country near Russia, and in Ukraine, another country near Russia in 2003, 2004. And finally, Russia just had to push back on American imperialism. That’s a second explanation for our current confrontation.

And a third one is about domestic politics inside Russia. And that explanation says that this is really about Putin and his internal struggles as a president, and he needed a new enemy to help solidify his electoral base inside his country. I happen to think all three of these explanations have some validity. But I think the third one is probably the most important one, and I try to spell that out in my book.

Right as I arrived as the U.S. ambassador, there was new elections in Russia, parliamentary vote, falsified in kind of normal Russian ways, 5, 6, 7 percent. We didn’t think any big deal when I was working at the White House. This is kind of a normal Russian mode. But this is now December 2011. A lot of Russians this time around had a different view. They didn’t like the fact that their votes were stolen. They documented it. They found out that they were—in part, by the way, by using Facebook and Twitter and something called VKontakte, an equivalent of Facebook in Russia. And they documented with their smartphones that this falsification was happening, and they spun it around the Internet. And finally, people say, “I don’t want my vote stolen anymore.” First 50 people came out, 500, eventually 200,000 people came out on the streets to demand free and fair elections.

But you know, you get 200,000 people together, they stirred themselves up. And by the end of some of those demonstrations, they were yelling, “We need a Russia without Putin.” And Putin got nervous about that, in my view, and needed a new argument to mobilize his voters and to marginalize those opposition people. And that’s where we, the Americans, came in. America, Obama, and me as the new U.S. ambassador in Russia. And then he tried to explain to his people that, no, these are not—these people are being funded by the Americans, and funded by me, personally, by the way. That’s what Vladimir Putin described on television, as I arrived as the new U.S. ambassador. And so, the explanation I tease out in the book, I won’t go into all the details today, because I want you to read the book, is that those domestic political considerations where Putin needed an external enemy to solidify his power at home, that ended a period of cooperation that preceded him. And that’s what I try to explain in the book as a whole.

Now, there’s a substory through the whole book. In fact, some people just read the substory. My mother is not interested in that theoretical stuff. She’s interested in a different story that’s in the book. What is it like to be the U.S. ambassador in Russia? What is diplomacy about? What does it mean? And I was new to this. I was an accidental ambassador. I was appointed by President Obama because he didn’t want me to leave the government. And so I do in the book, in detail, just talk about kind of the mechanics of diplomacy.

And the punchline of that is I loved being the U.S. ambassador. If you ever get a chance, do it. It’s a fantastic job. And it’s a fantastic job for a number of reasons. One, just doing diplomacy
and interacting with the Russian government to try to achieve outcomes that were good for the American people, I really enjoyed that. Remember, I had studied Russian as a kid. I had lived there. I’d studied there. I’d lived in Russia six or seven years of my life. So, to be back, this time as the ambassador living in a giant ambassador’s house, by the way. It’s called Spaso House. Look it up, Google it and do a virtual tour. It’s a fantastic place. I really loved that part of the job.

But there are other parts of the job that I also liked that I didn’t do as an advisor to the president back at the White House. It was my job to interact with Russian society. And so I got to do a lot of things that don’t normally happen for me here at Stanford. I got to go to, you know, the Bolshoi Theatre and sit in the front-row seats, and watch the Nutcracker, that was a special event, and representing my country, showing that we were acknowledging the incredible Russian culture.

I also got to bring American cultural and sporting and business leaders to Russia, and to showcase what we in America can do. So I hosted one time the NBA. I had two dozen NBA players at my house, some were Russian, by the way, talking about how great the NBA was. And for my kids at the time, who were big football—basketball fans, that was one of the best events we ever had at Spaso House.

I also had lots of musicians come. And to highlight what we Americans do, and more than anything, I would say, when we’re talking about culture, especially music, music bound people together, Russians and Americans, in ways that I was surprised by, concerts that we had when people would get up and dance. We had one group come from my home state of Montana, country western band. And in Montana, when you go listen to a country western band, you dance. You don’t just sit on your hands. And that was not so diplomatic, by the way. Traditionally, I guess ambassadors are not supposed to dance. But when they did, it was a bringing together of Russians and Americans that was truly special. And so that’s the other theme of the book, just what is the kind of ins and outs practically of being a diplomat.

So I hope you look at the book, skip the theory if you just want to get to the other parts, and I look forward to finding and discussing it with you on my various social media platforms. Once you have read the book, find me on Twitter, @McFaul, @M-C-F-A-U-L. Hit me with your questions. And I promise to the best of my abilities, I’ll answer your questions about my book, again, called From Cold War to Hot Peace: A U.S. Ambassador in Putin’s Russia.
VOCABULARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1. M
2. E
3. M
4. O
5. I
6. W
7. C L L
8. P
9. N A T O I D E A
10. N B W R N
11. S E A I N
13. D R A I L
14. I C V L I I A
15. P R O X Y W A R A S T
16. L M T U M I
17. O M U L T I L A T E R A L C O L D W A R
18. M U V O N
19. A N D E M O C R A C Y
20. C I R
21. Y S C A P I T A L I S M
22. M C
23. Y

ANSWER KEY 1
MAP ACTIVITY

Identify the following countries or regions on the map. These are mentioned in the lecture by Professor Michael McFaul.

Afghanistan, Angola, Crimea, Georgia, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Korean Peninsula, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Vietnam

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/A_large_blank_world_map_with_oceans_marked_in_blue.PNG

1. Afghanistan
2. Angola
3. Crimea
4. Georgia
5. Hungary
6. Iraq
7. Italy
8. Korean Peninsula
9. Russia
10. Serbia
11. Ukraine
12. Vietnam
Shade in the countries and regions that made up the Soviet Union

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/A_large_blank_world_map_with_oceans_marked_in_blue.PNG

Identify the 15 countries (i.e., Soviet Socialist Republics) in the map that made up the Soviet Union

1. Armenia
2. Azerbaijan
3. Belarus
4. Estonia
5. Georgia
6. Kazakhstan
7. Kyrgyzstan
8. Latvia
9. Lithuania
10. Moldova
11. Russia
12. Tajikistan
13. Turkmenistan
14. Ukraine
15. Uzbekistan