
Debating the End of the Soviet Union: An Analysis of Pakistani and Western Scholarship

Dr. Muhammad Ahmad¹, Dr. Adnan Tariq², Muhammad Shafi³

¹ Lecturer, Political Science Govt. Graduate College Township, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: ahmadsheikhlahore@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Institute of Global and Historical Studies, G.C. University, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: Dr.adnantariq@gcu.edu.pk

³ Associate Professor, Government Shalimar College, Lahore. Email: Shafiisahib@gmail.com

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Abstract

The collapse of the Soviet Union has generated one of the most extensive and rigorous historiographical debates in contemporary political and historical scholarship. No single explanation has achieved universal acceptance, and scholars continue to differ sharply regarding the relative importance of political, economic, ideological, technological, and international factors. This research paper systematically examines the principal interpretations advanced by Pakistani and Western intellectuals concerning the root causes of the Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991. It analyses a wide range of perspectives, including political, economic, strategic, ideological, and institutional explanations, while also evaluating Marxist, liberal, conservative, and revisionist approaches. The paper argues that the Soviet collapse cannot be adequately explained through a single, reductionist causal framework; rather, it resulted from the volatile interaction of deep structural weaknesses and immediate political contingencies. By comparing different regional schools of thought, this study highlights the profound complexity of the late-Soviet experience and demonstrates how distinctive intellectual traditions, geopolitical backgrounds, and ideological orientations shape historical interpretation.

Keywords: Soviet Union, Cold War, Historiography, Comparative Analysis, Pakistan-Western Scholarship, Marxist Analysis, Afghan War Thesis.

Introduction

The dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in December 1991 remains one of the most seismic and heavily debated turning points in modern global history. Within a matter of months, a highly centralized superpower vanished from the map, transforming the global geopolitical landscape, bringing an abrupt end to the bipolar era of the Cold War, and ushering in an era of unipolarity dominated by the United States. Despite the profound consequences of this historical rupture, historians, political scientists, and sociologists remain deeply divided over the fundamental drivers of the collapse. Was the demise of the Soviet state an inevitable consequence of systemic, long-term economic and political dysfunction? Or was it an accidental, highly contingent outcome accelerated by the miscalculated reform initiatives of its final leader, Mikhail Gorbachev? This interpretive polarization has yielded a vast and multi-layered historiographical corpus representing diverse ideological, methodological, and regional intellectual perspectives. This paper examines and contrastively analyzes these competing interpretations by comparing the intellectual outputs of Pakistani and Western academic and journalistic circles. Historically,

scholarly evaluation of the Soviet collapse has been heavily influenced by the geopolitical position and ideological predispositions of the observers. In Western academia, the discourse has often alternated between triumphalist liberal accounts that view the collapse as the natural verification of market capitalism and democratic pluralism, and revisionist structural accounts that emphasize institutional rigidities, agricultural stagnation, and ethnic nationalism. Conversely, in Pakistan, the intellectual response was uniquely bifurcated. The mainstream right-wing narrative conceived the collapse primarily through a geopolitical and religious prism, viewing the Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan as the central catalyst for its financial and military ruin. Meanwhile, the Pakistani left-wing intelligentsia, operating under severe psychological and ideological stress following the collapse of the socialist alternative, focused intensely on parsing the differences between genuine Marxist theory and the historical realities of Stalinist state bureaucracy.

Rather than advancing a single, mono-causal explanation, this study argues that the disintegration of the Soviet Union can only be comprehensively understood through a multi-dimensional framework that evaluates how long-term structural failures interacted dynamically with short-term political contingencies and external pressures. To map this analytical terrain, the discourse can be categorized into three dominant analytical configurations: the right-wing paradigm, the left-wing intellectual critiques, and purely academic institutionalist theories. By systematically evaluating these distinct interpretive traditions, this paper seeks to clarify how ideological frameworks and geopolitical positionalities dictate the construction of historical memory surrounding the end of the Soviet empire.

The Pakistani Right-Wing Paradigm and the Afghan War Thesis

The right-wing intellectual tradition in Pakistan approached the collapse of the Soviet Union with a high degree of ideological certainty and religious framing. For the mainstream Pakistani conservative mind, communism was perceived not merely as an alternative economic system, but as an explicitly atheist, existential rival to Islamic civilization. Consequently, the geopolitical realities of the late Cold War—specifically the 1979 Soviet intervention in neighboring Afghanistan—were viewed as a cosmic ideological clash. When the USSR ultimately dissolved in 1991, right-wing commentators and journalists swiftly formulated what can be termed the "Afghan War Thesis" of Soviet disintegration. According to this perspective, the primary, if not exclusive, driver of the Soviet collapse was its military defeat at the hands of the Afghan Mujahideen, heavily aided by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Western financial backing.

A prominent exponent of this school of thought is the influential conservative journalist and columnist Haroon-ur-Rasheed, whose writings in the Urdu press extensively sought to document and celebrate the mechanics of the Soviet defeat. In his seminal book *Fateh (The Conqueror)*, Rasheed (1991) constructs an expansive, highly emotional narrative focused on the collaboration between Afghan militant factions, the Pakistani military establishment, and the financial and hardware pipelines provided by the United States. Nominally written as a biography of General Akhtar Abdurrahman—the head of the ISI during the height of the Afghan jihad—the text operates fundamentally as an analytical argument for Pakistani exceptionalism in bringing down a global superpower. Rasheed (1991) advances the thesis that the strategic genius of General Abdurrahman, combined with the asymmetric warfare tactics of the Mujahideen, imposed an unsustainable military and financial occupation cost on the Soviet state, triggering a fatal domestic crisis within the Kremlin.

Rasheed reinforced this conceptual position in his subsequent book, *Shaheed (The Martyr)*, which further hagiographed the late General while detailing the strategic parameters of the proxy conflict (Rasheed, 1993). In this volume, the author argues that the Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan under the 1988 Geneva Accords was the exact moment the structural myth of Soviet invincibility was permanently shattered, thereby accelerating nationalist secession movements within the Soviet republics themselves (Rasheed, 1993). However, as contemporary academic

critics note, these texts are characterized by a highly emotional syntax and rhetorical hyperbole, lacking rigorous empirical grounding or engagement with the broader socio-economic variables of the late-Soviet state. Scholars have noted that such works often functioned as ideological projects aimed at institutional image-building for the Pakistani military, operating on the periphery of objective academic historiography.

Another notable contribution from the Pakistani conservative press was produced by Mustapha Kamal Pasha (1992), an academic and journalist who blended standard journalistic reporting with a structured geopolitical analysis. Pasha (1992) likewise positioned the Afghan jihad as the central pivot around which the modern world order rotated, arguing that the Soviet military apparatus was structurally incapable of sustaining a protracted counter-insurgency warfare model without triggering severe internal economic allocation crises. Similarly, Atta-ur-Rahman, a prominent analyst associated with the conservative daily newspaper *Nawa-e-Waqt*, compiled extensive commentaries on the unfolding collapse (Rahman, 1990). Interestingly, while Rahman's (1990) work relied heavily on reproducing translations and summaries of Western press analyses regarding the Soviet Union's internal vulnerabilities, his analytical conclusions remained firmly anchored to the absolute primacy of the Afghan conflict. Through these texts, the right-wing school in Pakistan institutionalized a powerful national myth: that the collapse of the Soviet superpower was achieved on the battlefields of the Hindu Kush, largely due to the strategic interventions of Pakistan.

The Left-Wing Intellectual Critique: Stalinism, Bureaucracy, and Ideological Deviation

The cataclysmic events of 1991 sent shockwaves through the global left, and the Pakistani left-wing intelligentsia was no exception. Faced with the sudden erasure of the world's premier socialist state and an aggressive wave of Western capitalist triumphalism, Pakistani Marxist and progressive intellectuals engaged in deep theoretical introspection. Rather than conceding that the collapse of the USSR represented the definitive failure of Marxist ideology, the Pakistani left sought to rescue socialist theory by executing a sharp analytical division between the genuine tenets of classical Marxism and the historical realities of the Soviet state apparatus. They argued that what collapsed in 1991 was not authentic communism, but a profoundly degenerated, bureaucratized state model that had long since abandoned its revolutionary foundations.

Zubair Rana, a notable progressive thinker, evaluated these historic transformations by asserting that the political and economic system collapsing in Moscow could not be structurally categorized as communism (Rana, 1994). Rana (1994) argued that the Soviet administrative state had become a highly ossified, bureaucratic mutation of socialism, a historical distortion for which the legacy of Joseph Stalin was primarily responsible. According to this view, the concentration of absolute state power within an unaccountable elite—the *nomenklatura*—stifled the democratic participation of the working class, thereby severing the dialectical link between the state and the masses (Rana, 1994). Consequently, Rana (1994) concluded that the collapse was an institutional failure of "bureaucratic socialism" rather than an inherent flaw in Marxist economic planning.

This perspective was strongly echoed by Farooq Suleharia (1992), another prominent intellectual voice from the left, who argued that Stalinism had effectively hijacked the original, democratic designs of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Suleharia (1992) maintained that by replacing genuine worker control with a top-down command structure, the Soviet state alienated its own population and generated systemic administrative mismanagement that eventually made the Union vulnerable to internal disintegration. Similarly, the celebrated left-wing intellectual Ahmad Bashir evaluated the global proclamation of the "death of communism" with sharp skepticism (Bashir, 1992). Bashir (1992) contended that the crisis was the direct result of the deeply flawed, authoritarian policies pursued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) rather than a failure of socialist ideals. In a compelling historical assessment, Bashir (1992) also advanced the argument that late-Imperial Russia, given its low level of industrial development and deeply entrenched agrarian

feudalism, was historically unsuited for a mature socialist experiment in 1917. The Bolshevik Revolution, he suggested, was an "atypical, premature entry" into history that lacked the robust proletarian civil society required to sustain a non-authoritarian worker state (Bashir, 1992).

A distinctly different and highly controversial perspective within the Pakistani left was articulated by Irfan Saeed (1993), who rejected the systemic critique of the Soviet elite and instead placed the entire onus of the collapse onto the shoulders of Mikhail Gorbachev. Saeed (1993) stood out for his robust defense of the traditional Soviet ruling apparatus, offering an analytical defense of Stalin's state-building while launching severe critiques against Leon Trotsky's theories of permanent revolution and internal critique. Saeed (1993) constructed a highly provocative thesis, arguing that the ascension of Gorbachev to the position of General Secretary in 1985 represented the practical implementation of a destabilizing "Trotskyite" deviation from the core state-preservation model. By introducing Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (restructuring), Gorbachev, in Saeed's (1993) view, actively dismantled the defensive ideological and institutional safeguards of the state, directly negating Marxist-Leninist principles of party vanguardism.

Furthermore, Saeed (1993) advanced an important socio-economic argument regarding the structural burdens of the late Soviet state. He asserted that the USSR functioned as the largest and most comprehensive welfare state the world had ever witnessed, providing universal healthcare, housing, employment, and education at immense state expense, completely sacrificing the concept of capital accumulation and profit margins (Saeed, 1993). This massive structural commitment to public welfare created an unsustainable financial burden that the state's economic base, choked by international blockades and heavy military spending, could no longer support. In Saeed's (1993) formulation, it was Gorbachev's sudden surrender to market mechanisms that caused this benevolent welfare architecture to implode.

From a Trotskyist and labor-oriented perspective, Farooq Tariq (1992), the leader of the Pakistan Labour Party, pointed the finger squarely at the rigid Stalinist bureaucracy and its total failure to adapt to changing post-industrial economic realities. Tariq (1992) observed that while the Soviet command economy had achieved spectacular successes up to the late 1960s in solving basic material needs—such as providing food, heavy industrial manufacturing, infrastructure, and basic housing—the Politburo proved completely incapable of transitioning into a high-technology, consumer-oriented economy by the 1970s. This view aligns closely with the theoretical frameworks developed by the internationally acclaimed Marxist theoretician Ted Grant. In his rigorous historical and economic analysis, Grant (1997) investigated the precise mechanisms of Soviet decline, noting that after 1965, the Soviet economic growth rate began a continuous downward trajectory, dropping below the growth rates of several advanced capitalist economies. Grant (1997) argued that once a command economy reaches a high level of modern complexity, it can no longer be efficiently directed by a centralized bureaucratic elite in Moscow without the oxygen of genuine workers' democracy. Without democratic feedback, the progressive character of the planned economy stagnated, leading to widespread corruption, logistical bottlenecks, and structural paralysis within the Politburo (Grant, 1997).

Mati-ul-Hasan Abidi (1992) similarly criticized the Stalinist state apparatus, interpreting the rapid collapse of socialist regimes across Eastern Europe and the Baltic region as the inevitable consequence of a deeply flawed model of state functioning. Abidi (1992) argued that a privileged, insulated ruling class had transformed the dynamic science of socialism into an unchallengeable state dogma solely to preserve their material advantages. This model assumed a totalitarian character that directly violated the emancipatory theories of Karl Marx (Abidi, 1992). When a state begins to systematically exploit and suppress the very human rights it was theoretically established to safeguard, its long-term survival becomes impossible. Thus, for Abidi (1992), the collapse of the Baltic and Eastern European satellite states was a historical vindication of classical Marxist theory against its totalitarian practitioners.

This institutional critique was further elaborated by Dr. Haroon Ahmad (1992), who concluded that the late USSR had ceased to be held together by ideological cohesion, relying instead almost exclusively on the coercive institutional power of the KGB and the structural inertia of the Politburo. With the passing of the old, highly motivated revolutionary generation, a new breed of technocrats and opportunists established their footing within these powerful institutions (Ahmad, 1992). Operating under a cynical application of Stalinist dogma, this new elite pushed genuine ideological commitment to the background, leading to a profound socio-political vacuum where society developed along abstract, alienated lines (Ahmad, 1992). Corroborating this perspective, Dr. M. Hasan (1993) placed the historical responsibility on the profound moral and systemic corruption of the late-Soviet managerial class, describing them as power-hungry technocrats who, in their scramble to extract personal privileges and material incentives, willingly sacrificed socialist objectives at the altar of their vested interests.

Crucially, Dr. Hasan (1993) argued that the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union must never be sweepingly equated with the definitive historical demise of communism as an ideology. It was a spectacular failure of a specific state configuration, not a failure of the core tenets of socialist economic planning (Hasan, 1993). Hasan (1993) emphasized that under its socialist program, the Soviet Union had successfully eliminated systemic poverty, structural unemployment, homelessness, and illiteracy, while largely shielding its population from the deep-seated social crises prevalent in the capitalist world. For Hasan (1993), the fatal flaw was the complete absence of authentic socialist democracy both within the wider Soviet society and inside the internal structures of the Politburo. This democratic deficit permanently stunted the healthy progression of the historical dialectical process, producing an unnatural institutional restraint that caused a terminal socio-political syndrome from which the USSR could not recover (Hasan, 1993).

Western Academic Discourses: Institutional Rigidity, Civil Society, and Structural Failure

In contrast to the predominantly ideological and geopolitical framing found in Pakistani intellectual circles, Western academia approached the disintegration of the Soviet Union through a diverse array of institutionalist, sociological, and macroeconomic lenses. While early Western popular discourse was marked by a distinct liberal triumphalism, serious academic historiography sought to dissect the complex internal dynamics of the Soviet system, focusing on the rise of a distinct urban civil society, demographic shifts, structural agricultural crises, and the explosive power of peripheral nationalism.

A seminal contribution to this discourse was made by the prominent American journalist and author Hedrick Smith. In his highly influential text, *The New Russians*, Smith (1990) advanced the thesis that the primary engine of the Soviet transformation was the gradual, organic emergence of a modern civil society within the boundaries of the totalitarian state. Smith (1990) argued that decades of heavy state investment in mass education, urbanization, and technical training had unintentionally produced a highly sophisticated, urbanized middle class. By the 1980s, this new social stratum had become deeply disillusioned with the rigid intellectual constraints, informational monopolies, and dictatorial administrative methods of the Communist Party (Smith, 1990). This class harbored a powerful desire for enhanced personal freedoms, intellectual autonomy, and access to modern consumer standards—aspirations that were structurally incompatible with the classical Soviet command model (Smith, 1990). When Gorbachev initiated Glasnost, it was this latent, highly motivated civil society that rushed into the political arena, permanently destabilizing the party's monopoly on power.

This sociological perspective was complemented by the profound historical analysis of Moshe Lewin. In his definitive work, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation*, Lewin (1988) highlighted a fundamental structural contradiction between a rapidly evolving society and an inherently static state apparatus. Lewin (1988) observed that during the 1917 October Revolution and the subsequent industrialization drives of the 1930s, the Bolshevik party operated

as a dynamic, hyper-modernizing force driving a highly conservative, agrarian, and slow-moving traditional society forward. However, by the late 20th century, this dynamic had completely inverted (Lewin, 1988). Due to decades of rapid industrialization and massive urbanization, Soviet society had transformed into a complex, fast-moving, and highly differentiated urban entity. Conversely, the central state apparatus, paralyzed by institutional inertia and an aging leadership cadre, had become structurally rigid and unable to comprehend or manage the complex socio-economic forces it had created (Lewin, 1988). When these social forces erupted in the late 1980s, the archaic state machinery found itself completely unable to adapt, leading to a catastrophic systemic implosion.

Concurrently, the French academic and historian Hélène Carrère d'Encausse achieved widespread recognition for her predictive focus on the explosive potential of peripheral ethnic nationalism. In her groundbreaking study, *Decline of an Empire: The Soviet Socialist Republics in Revolt*, Carrère d'Encausse (1979) argued that the Kremlin's official policy of creating a unified Homo Sovieticus (Soviet Man) had failed to erase the deep-seated historic, linguistic, and religious identities of the non-Russian nationalities inhabiting the satellite and constituent republics. She posited that the rise of local nationalist consciousness, particularly within the Baltic states and the Central Asian republics, represented an unstoppable undercurrent that would eventually shatter the centralized domination of Moscow (Carrère d'Encausse, 1979). When Gorbachev introduced his liberalizing reforms, the Politburo mistakenly believed that Perestroika and Glasnost would satisfy these local grievances and integrate them into a modernized federation. Instead, the relaxation of centralized coercion allowed local nationalist leaders to rapidly mobilize mass popular support, aggressively challenging the constitutional authority of the Kremlin and rendering the central government increasingly irrelevant (Carrère d'Encausse, 1979).

From a macroeconomic and geopolitical standpoint, the eminent British-American historian Paul Kennedy integrated the Soviet collapse into a broader historical theory of imperial decline. In his masterpiece, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Kennedy (1987) articulated his famous thesis of "imperial overstretch." Kennedy (1987) argued that the Soviet Union's economic growth had entered a period of terminal stagnation during the mid-1970s, a crisis intricately linked to a permanent breakdown in its agricultural sector. He asserted that the Soviet agricultural model, functioning on highly centralized socialist lines and forced collectivization, had permanently sacrificed individual economic incentives, leading to massive inefficiencies, systemic crop failures, and an expensive reliance on foreign grain imports (Kennedy, 1987). Furthermore, by maintaining an artificially subsidized pricing system, the state completely severed the natural mechanisms of demand and supply (Kennedy, 1987). Kennedy (1987) argued that the late-Soviet experience demonstrated that a highly centralized, command-style scientific socialism was structurally unworkable over the long term when forced to compete globally with dynamic market economies. When the Reagan administration initiated the Strategic Defense Initiative, the Kremlin attempted to match this high-technology arms race while its domestic economic base was actively shrinking, resulting in a structural bankruptcy that broke the back of the Soviet state (Kennedy, 1987).

Finally, the intellectual debate in the West is inextricably tied to Francis Fukuyama's highly contested "End of History" thesis. In his landmark text, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama (1992) interpreted the collapse of the Soviet bloc not merely as a geopolitical victory for the United States, but as the definitive global culmination of humanity's ideological evolution, marking the universal triumph of Western liberal democracy and market capitalism as the final form of human government. However, the nuances of Fukuyama's (1992) position are frequently misunderstood. In subsequent intellectual dialogues, including extensive exchanges with the Marxist intellectual Tariq Ali, Fukuyama clarified that his thesis did not simplistically proclaim the absolute structural impossibility of socialism (Fukuyama, 1992). Rather, he argued that any future viable iteration of socialism would have to operate within the baseline institutional

parameters of liberal democratic pluralism and market-responsive frameworks rather than through a centralized, authoritarian command state (Fukuyama, 1992). This Western academic consensus focused heavily on the systemic, institutional, and structural impossibilities of the Soviet model when juxtaposed with the rapid socio-technological evolution of the late-twentieth-century global order.

Synthesis and Comparative Analysis: Deconstructing the Monolithic State

When the various strands of Pakistani and Western scholarship are subjected to a comparative synthesis, a complex historiographical matrix emerges. It becomes evident that the divergent interpretations are heavily dictated by the regional, ideological, and institutional contexts of the scholars themselves. The mainstream Pakistani right-wing paradigm, which views the entire collapse as the direct geopolitical consequence of the Afghan jihad, represents a highly localized, emotionally charged narrative (Rasheed, 1991; Pasha, 1992). While it is undeniable that the economic and military strains of the Afghan war exacerbated the internal crisis of the Soviet state, the right-wing thesis fails to withstand rigorous academic scrutiny when advanced as a primary cause. The Soviet Union maintained a massive, sophisticated military apparatus consisting of over four million active personnel; at any single point during the conflict, the deployment in Afghanistan never exceeded 115,000 soldiers—roughly one to two percent of the total military capability. Over the course of an eleven-year engagement, the Soviet military suffered approximately 15,000 casualties. While politically devastating under Glasnost, these losses were statistically insufficient to single-handedly bankrupt or dismantle a global superpower. Thus, the Pakistani right-wing thesis operates more as a powerful geopolitical myth and an exercise in ideological self-validation than an objective, multi-causal historical analysis.

Conversely, the intellectual outputs of both the Pakistani left and Western academia offer far more robust, albeit structurally distinct, analytical models. The left-wing critique provides a valuable service to historiography by decoupling the abstract science of Marxist political economy from the specific administrative failures of the Stalinist state (Rana, 1994; Bashir, 1992). By identifying how the lack of internal party democracy and the rise of a corrupt, self-serving nomenklatura choked the dialectical progression of the command economy, the left successfully explains the internal alienation of the Soviet working class (Grant, 1997; Hasan, 1993). This lines up in an interesting way with Western sociological accounts, such as those of Hedrick Smith (1990) and Moshe Lewin (1988), which document the rise of an educated, urban civil society that found itself completely hemmed in by the archaic administrative methods of the party state. Where the Marxist left sees a "crisis of bureaucratic Stalinism," Western academia sees a "crisis of totalitarian institutional rigidity." Both schools of thought are essentially observing the same historical phenomenon: a profound, irreconcilable contradiction between a modern, dynamic society and an elite, monolithic state structure.

Therefore, a mature historical analysis must conclude that the core ideological infrastructure of socialism was not the primary driver of the mega-incident of 1991. The disintegration occurred fundamentally due to the hyper-centralized, monolithic architecture of the Soviet state. Ever since the consolidation of the Stalinist model in the 1930s, the Soviet authorities had systematically suppressed every domestic manifestation of political, economic, and regional pluralism, seeking instead to enforce an absolute, unyielding uniformity across every sphere of Soviet life. This monolithic character prevented the system from developing flexible, adaptive solutions to the highly complex problems generated by modern post-industrial technology, ethnic diversity, and shifting consumer expectations. When Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his ill-prepared, poorly calculated package of reforms, he attempted to inject elements of pluralism (Glasnost) into a structural framework that was explicitly designed to function only through total centralization. This triggered a violent systemic chain reaction. The sudden removal of centralized coercion did not revitalize the system; instead, it allowed all the long-suppressed structural contradictions,

peripheral nationalisms, and economic distortions to erupt simultaneously. The hyper-complex, historically accumulated late-Soviet society could no longer sustain the weight of its archaic state superstructure, causing the entire apparatus to cease to exist in 1991.

Conclusion

The extensive historiography surrounding the end of the Soviet Union demonstrates conclusively that no single, reductionist theory can adequately account for the collapse of the USSR. The dissolution was the historical product of a highly volatile, multi-dimensional matrix wherein long-term structural failures—including political authoritarianism, severe economic and agricultural stagnation, the suppression of peripheral nationalities, and a widening technological gap with the West—interacted dynamically with short-term political variables, external geopolitical pressures, and the highly destabilizing reform policies of Mikhail Gorbachev. The comparative evaluation of Pakistani and Western scholarship reveals how distinct intellectual traditions isolate and emphasize different aspects of this historical matrix to satisfy specific ideological and analytical goals. Pakistani conservative commentators prioritized the geopolitical and religious dimensions of the Afghan war, constructing a narrative of military triumph (Rasheed, 1991; Pasha, 1992). In contrast, the Pakistani progressive left focused heavily on diagnosing the institutional illnesses of Stalinist bureaucracy to rescue the theoretical validity of Marxism (Rana, 1994; Grant, 1997). Meanwhile, Western academia provided a highly detailed examination of institutional paralysis, macroeconomic trends, and the emergence of modern domestic social forces (Lewin, 1988; Kennedy, 1987).

Ultimately, this comparative analysis highlights the immense value of historiographical investigation in deciphering complex historical transformations. By recognizing that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a multi-causal process rather than an isolated political event, scholars can move beyond ideological triumphalism and reductionist myths. The end of the USSR serves as a powerful historical warning regarding the long-term instability of monolithic, hyper-centralized systems that fail to cultivate internal flexibility, democratic accountability, and pluralistic problem-solving mechanisms. Parsing the rich diversity of scholarly interpretations not only deepens our empirical understanding of the late-Cold War era but also underscores how the writing of history remains a dynamic arena where contemporary ideological convictions and historical memories are continuously contested and reformed.

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