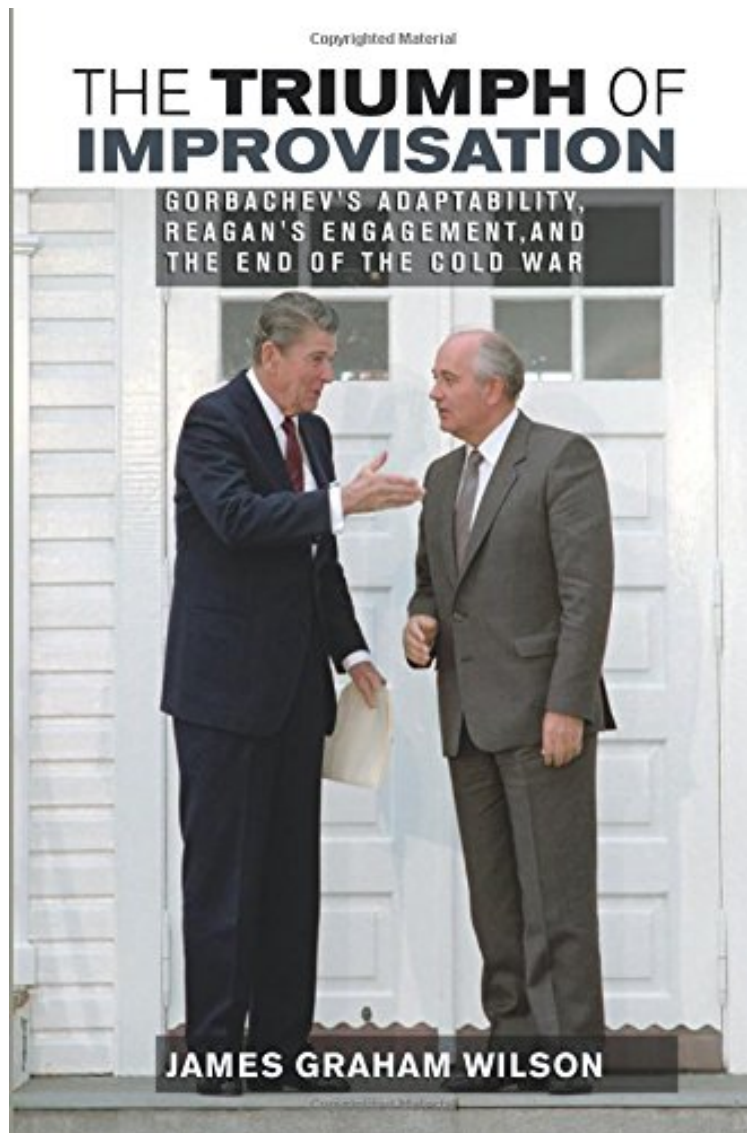


(Free) The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War

The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War

James Graham Wilson

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#737871 in Books Wilson James Graham 2015-01-20 2014-12-12Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x .70 x 6.131, .0 #File Name: 0801456835280 pagesTriumph of Improvisation Gorbachev s Adaptability Reagan s Engagement and the End of the Cold War | File size: 47.Mb

James Graham Wilson : The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold

War:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A good book if you want to understand the winning of the Cold War. By Daune Robinson I bought this book looking for something that made good use of newly released information on Reagan, Gorbachev and the Cold War that dominated the politics of my generation. I had read another book on this topic and was horribly disappointed - not so with this book. The author clearly did his research, and brought depth, breadth, and good insight to his telling of the long story of the Cold War. Modern popular interpretation of the end of the Cold War credits Ronald Reagan almost exclusively for the final results, but this author shows the contributions of many of Reagan's cabinet members, Gorbachev and his cohorts, and George Bush and his cabinet. The book spans politics, economics, military strategy, the influence of middle east strategy, and philosophical perspectives of all the players. By the time I was through I had a very clear picture of the many complexities, and while I may not understand all the intricate details I did find the author gave me a much broader understanding of what led to the end of the Soviet Union as the other major world power. This book did give a good explanation of the internal and external issues that led to Gorbachev's rise to power, and to the confluence of events that led to the amazing arms reduction agreements and the calming of Cold War tensions. The description of the severe economic problems facing the Soviet Union was fascinating and the impact of weapons buildup on those economic issues was made very clear by the author. I did take issue with some of the interpretations of Reagan's handling of his cabinet members, and his strategy in handling the Soviet Union in general. I'll admit to being a Reagan fan. That said, Mr. Wilson's perspective on Reagan and what he seemed to feel was essentially a rudderless leadership style is, in my opinion, flawed. He makes the case that Reagan didn't provide strong leadership. I would argue from reading this book that Reagan was an amazingly strong leader and that leadership, which included a cabinet full of widely diverse opinions and philosophies, was what enabled him and his staff to navigate the very uncertain waters of the Cold War and the rush to arms based on MAD. I think far too much credit was given to George Bush and his staff for the events already set in place, but I also think that Mr. Wilson did an excellent job of providing credit for the results to Gorbachev and his staff in easing tension and bringing calm to a tense world situation. Overall - an excellent book - well written, easy to follow, and something anyone who wants a good understanding of the Cold War and the relationship between communism and capitalism should read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great insight to two great leaders. By Marilyn DeLuna I always enjoy reading anything that has to do with our former President Ronald Reagan. His relationship with Gorbachev was amazing - two very strong-willed leaders who worked together with mutual respect. Enjoyed reading the history of what happened at that very important time in American history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By anonymous A balanced and insightful book about an important topic. The descriptions of the various personalities are entertaining.

In *The Triumph of Improvisation*, James Graham Wilson takes a long view of the end of the Cold War, from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 to Operation Desert Storm in January 1991. Drawing on deep archival research and recently declassified papers, Wilson argues that adaptation, improvisation, and engagement by individuals in positions of power ended the specter of a nuclear holocaust. Amid ambivalence and uncertainty, Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, George Shultz, George H. W. Bush, and a host of other actors engaged with adversaries and adapted to a rapidly changing international environment and information age in which global capitalism recovered as command economies failed. Eschewing the notion of a coherent grand strategy to end the Cold War, Wilson paints a vivid portrait of how leaders made choices; some made poor choices while others reacted prudently, imaginatively, and courageously to events they did not foresee. A book about the burdens of responsibility, the obstacles of domestic politics, and the human qualities of leadership, *The Triumph of Improvisation* concludes with a chapter describing how George H. W. Bush oversaw the construction of a new configuration of power after the fall of the Berlin Wall, one that resolved the fundamental components of the Cold War on Washington's terms.

"If John Kerry ever gets to spend a day back home, the US secretary of state might wish to meet James Graham Wilson, a young scholar in his department's Office of the Historian. Wilson's recent book, *The Triumph of Improvisation*, offers a fresh and valuable look at the end of the cold war."?Robert Zoellick, *The Financial Times* (July 18, 2014) "Wilson focuses on a quartet of actors, including George Shultz and George H. W. Bush along with Reagan and Gorbachev. His compact narrative ? just 204 pages of text ? proceeds in disciplined chronological order, which restrains the sort of sweeping and dubious generalizations that often mar other treatments of the Cold War's last decade."?Steven F. Hayward, *National* (May 19, 2014) "What is surprising is his thesis, which is original in its approach, that these men brought an end to the great Soviet-American rivalry through unscripted actions. In this and in other ways, including its provocative argument, *The Triumph of Improvisation* is a useful and welcome addition to the literature on the subject."?Joseph M. Siracusa, *American Historical* "Wilson's real contribution, and the part that scholars of this period will find most interesting, is his coverage of Reagan and Schultz. White House policy making during the Reagan years can be a difficult and puzzling process for historians to describe, but Wilson accomplishes it

with grace and impressive analysis as he chronicles the shift from confrontation to cooperation with the Soviet Union. This is an excellent book with the broad goal of explaining the end of the Cold War based on the actions of individual leaders. Wilson's lively prose and clear analysis of superpower relations will appeal to the general reader, and the illuminating sections on Reagan and Schultz will be of special interest to Cold War scholars."?Christopher Maynard, *Journal of American History*"Overall, *The Triumph of Improvisation* is a solid account of the culmination of the Cold War. . . . It is a well-researched and well-written piece that gives a solid account of the decisions and actions that led to the end of the decades-long conflict. Wilson's emphasis on the contributions of so many players and their willingness to try unconventional means make this book a worthwhile read, as many of these topics have not received the attention that they deserve."?Chris Booth, *H-War* (November 2015) "*The Triumph of Improvisation* is an important book. James Graham Wilson's research is both deep and broad?in a wide range of archival, online, and published sources from several different countries. Much of this material has not been tapped by previous scholars. The writing is accomplished, the narrative smooth, the organization effective, and the analysis sophisticated."?Robert J. McMahon, Ralph D. Mershon Distinguished Professor of History, The Ohio State University, author of *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia since World War II* "I can think of few if any books that so comprehensively describe White House policymaking toward the Soviets, with an eye toward Reagan's confounding leadership style, as *The Triumph of Improvisation*. James Graham Wilson's impressive archival work really shines through in his analysis of the Reagan years."?Jeffrey A. Engel, Southern Methodist University, author of *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush: The Making of a Global President*About the Author James Graham Wilson is a Historian at the U.S. Department of State.