ON A RAINY AND UNUSUALLY COLD JUNE afternoon in 1990, seven Soviet ZIL limousines turned onto Summit Avenue, the elegant boulevard in St. Paul where Gilded Age capitalists like James J. Hill built their homes. The motorcade stopped suddenly about a block before the governor’s residence. Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev emerged, surrounded by frantic security personnel, and walked hand-in-hand toward the excited crowds standing behind snow fences. People cheered wildly, including some who had come to angrily demand Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian independence. The Gorbachevs shared handshakes and greetings and eventually made their way on foot to the mansion, where their hosts, Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich and his wife, Lola, welcomed them to a formal luncheon.1

The Gorbachevs arrived in Minnesota on June 3, 1990, immediately after a summit meeting with President George H. W. Bush in Washington. Their visit was the focal point for a variety of Minnesota hopes and dreams. Governor Perpich had invited them with the hope of bolstering his standing as a politician of international stature and, thereby, securing his reelection in November. Corporate leaders competed for an opportunity to meet Gorbachev in hopes of being first in line if the Soviet Union became a major trading partner and investment opportunity. Savoring the end of more than four decades of Cold War tension, thousands of ordinary Minnesotans clogged the motorcade route to cheer the people who had given them a reason to believe that a more peaceful world was possible. Some well-wishers may have read Gorbachev’s book Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World, in which he identified nuclear weapons, the environment, and poverty as global problems that could only be solved by cooperation between nations. Meanwhile, Raisa Gorbachev, whom the Soviet leader acknowledged as his intellectual and political partner, encouraged Minnesotans to hope that former enemies could approach each other with warm-hearted sincerity and well-meaning curiosity.2

Many Minnesotans also felt optimistic about their state and believed that Minnesota ranked high on such measures as good government, civic activism, and corporate philanthropy. In boldly inviting Gorbachev, Governor Perpich was acting out of a common feeling that Minnesota was an above-average place that could—and should—play a significant role on the national and international stage. After all, Minnesota had contributed disproportionately to national politics in recent decades. Two Minnesota senators had become vice president, and both went on to become the Democratic nominee for president (Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale); a third played a decisive role in bringing down the presidency of Lyndon Johnson (Eugene McCarthy). Minnesotans were still proud of the national recognition the
state had achieved when a 1973 Time magazine cover story proclaimed Minnesota to be the “the state that works.”

In the summer of 1990, many Minnesotans also had reasons to feel upbeat about unfolding events in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was five years into what he called “perestroika,” a remarkable attempt to restructure his nation’s political system, economy, and foreign policy. He had effectively ended the Communist system by allowing contested elections and a free press. He had begun introducing market reforms into the economy. He had completely withdrawn Soviet combat troops from Afghanistan. He had facilitated the end of Communist rule in Eastern Europe by making it clear that the Soviet military would not intervene to maintain the status quo. As a result, popular uprisings swept through the Warsaw Pact nations, and the Berlin Wall was dismantled. He had also met five times with Ronald Reagan and negotiated significant nuclear arms reduction treaties. Just a few months after his visit to Minnesota, Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

But there were other, more problematic, sides to the unfolding drama in the Soviet Union. Its economy was on a downward spiral and its political situation was increasingly unstable. General Secretary Gorbachev’s ruling Communist Party was deeply divided. Gorbachev led the reformist wing of party activists who, by this time, were socialists in roughly the same sense that European social democrats were socialists. The bulk of the party elite in the army, the ministries, and the KGB were entrenched conservatives who wanted to stop his reforms. By repeatedly trying to win conservatives to his side, he lost the allegiance of liberal-minded intellectuals and party members, many of whom turned to Boris
Yeltsin, who was elected chairman of the Russian Republic’s legislature on the day Gorbachev left for the summit. The conservatives, meanwhile, responded by preparing the coup that fatally destabilized the Soviet Union in August 1991.

**Gorbachev most likely agreed to the visit because several Minnesota-based corporations had long done business in the Soviet Union.**

Gorbachev’s biggest challenge in the summer of 1990 was holding together the union’s 15 republics. Democratization had opened the door for parties favoring national independence to win elections in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the three Baltic republics. (Lithuania had declared independence in March 1990.) Nationalist sentiment was also growing in Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova. To preserve the Soviet Union, Gorbachev proposed a more decentralized federation in which the republics would gain power at the expense of the central government in Moscow. He even supported the creation of a legal process by which republics could seek independence. He resisted pressure from conservatives who wanted to crack down militarily on Lithuania but did try to force the Lithuanians to back off by suspending oil deliveries in April.

In sum, Gorbachev left behind big problems when he boarded his Aeroflot jet for North America. After a brief stop in Ottawa to meet Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Gorbachev and his entourage arrived in Washington on May 30 for a three-day conclave with President Bush. Although the summit did not achieve a major breakthrough in nuclear arms reduction as hoped, it was marked by much good feeling on both sides. In the end, Bush agreed to a trade document conditioned on the promised reform of Soviet emigration laws, and Gorbachev allowed Bush to announce they were “in full agreement” that the admission of the new, unified Germany into NATO was “a matter for the Germans to decide.” Before the summit, Bush had surprised many by rejecting sanctions against the Soviet Union in retaliation for its Lithuanian policy. At the meeting, he warned Gorbachev—but only privately—that use of force in the Baltics would have negative consequences.

Although Gorbachev was beginning to lose popular support at home, he was a famous and extremely popular public figure in the United States. Even before launching his world-changing reforms, he had impressed many with his charm and intelligence. Only 54 when he came to power, Gorbachev was much more vigorous and photogenic than the staid Soviet leaders who had preceded him. In a Gallup Poll published just before the summit, 68 percent of Americans said their overall opinion of Gorbachev was very or mostly favorable, while 21 percent were mostly or very unfavorable, and 11 percent had no opinion. At about the same time, a Washington Post/ABC News poll reported a 73 percent positive response for Gorbachev.

During the summit, Gorbachev’s face appeared on the cover of *Time*, which ran a lengthy and remarkably upbeat interview with him. The Soviet leader said that in spite of all the difficulties, he was “an optimist” who continued to believe that he could succeed in “making good on the potential of the socialist idea.” He argued that several developments in the 1980s had led people to “regain hope for a better future.” He noted that the “bankruptcy of militarism had become more obvious,” that humanity had begun to think seriously in ecological terms, that people from different cultures were increasingly aware of their “interests in common,” and that the Soviet Union and other Communist countries had chosen the path of democracy.

**IN THE MONTHS BEFORE the Washington summit, the media speculated that the Gorbachevs might also tour the United States, as Nikita Khrushchev had done in 1959. Khrushchev’s visit to Iowa was the only time a Soviet leader had been anywhere in the country other than the East Coast or California. Gorbachev wanted to visit Ronald Reagan and George Schultz in California, but he also needed to return quickly to Moscow to prepare for the upcoming Communist Party congress. Just a few weeks before the summit, the Gorbachevs decided to stop briefly in Minnesota on their way to the West Coast.**

Gorbachev most likely agreed to the visit because several Minnesota-based corporations—especially the computer firm, Control Data Corporation—had long done business in the Soviet Union. When the corporation’s officials learned that Gorbachev was interested in a post-summit tour, they passed the word to Perpich, who had worked for Control Data between his two terms as governor. Albert Eisele, who had been...
a consultant for Control Data and, earlier, was Vice President Walter Mondale’s press secretary, drafted the governor’s letter inviting the Gorbachevs. Former Control Data CEO Robert Price personally delivered the letter to the Soviet embassy on February 26, 1990. In the letter, Perpich noted that many Minnesota-based companies had significant economic ties to the Soviet Union. He singled out Control Data but also mentioned the agriculturally based firms Cargill, General Mills, Land O’ Lakes, and Pillsbury; the high-tech manufacturers Honeywell and 3M; and the Radisson Hotels. The Minnesota business community, Perpich asserted, "enthusiastically supports this invitation."11

Not until May 15, only two weeks before the summit was to begin, did the governor’s office announce that the Gorbachevs would visit the Twin Cities. The couple’s last-minute travel plans aggravated Washington officials in charge of protocol and security, who feared that journeys to Minnesota and San Francisco would be poorly planned and lead to embarrassment. On the other hand, the “official” part of Gorbachev’s trip would begin and end in the nation’s capital, and Washington had little control over what Gorbachev did before or after.12

On May 21, Governor Perpich asked Roger Parkinson, publisher of the *Star Tribune*, the state’s largest newspaper, to form the Operations Committee, a group of business leaders who would plan the visit and raise private money to cover expenses. The committee included executives, some of whom were CEOs, from Control Data, Honeywell, Pillsbury, IBM, AT&T, and local financial, medical, communications, and public relations firms. On May 24, the committee became a nonprofit corporation called Gorbachev Visit, with full-time, if very temporary, staff. For example, the treasurer of Cowles Media, the parent company of the *Star Tribune*, was reassigned to work full time as business manager. The committee hired Paul Ridgeway, an experienced event planner, to coordinate logistics.13

Parkinson’s decision to lead the planning team provoked criticism from various quarters, including
Some *Star Tribune* journalists were also embarrassed by what they perceived as the “boosterism” of their newspaper’s coverage. Jay Weiner, president of the reporters’ union, was quoted as saying that the paper’s relation to the event was “really kind of small-town” and not what a big-city newspaper should be doing. In an internal memo, a veteran correspondent worried that the unfolding coverage was “so overdone” that the writers were coming across as a “bunch of overzealous, cheerleading, provincial juveniles rather than as serious professional journalists with some sense of maturity, judgment and perspective.”

Although Perpich had invited Gorbachev primarily to build Minnesota’s business ties to the Soviet Union, the state’s “briefing kit” for visiting journalists suggested that the visit flowed naturally from the fact that Minnesotans had participated in a remarkable amount of “citizen diplomacy” and cultural exchanges in the 1980s. The Twin Cities and Duluth, for example, had sister-city relationships with the Soviet cities Novosibirsk and Petrozavodsk, respectively. The local nonprofit CONNECT US/USSR had organized 35 exchange programs linking Minnesotans and Soviets around common interests, from bicycling to chemical-dependency counseling. Minnesota colleges sent students to the Soviet Union, and the Minneapolis Children’s Theatre Company had toured two productions there. In 1986 a joint cast of Minnesota and Soviet youth performed the play *Peace Child* for two nights at the University of Minnesota’s Northrop Auditorium, melding cultural exchange with citizen diplomacy for disarmament.

Perhaps with all of this in mind, Perpich told reporters that planners were actively considering a public event where average Minnesotans could see Gorbachev. He envisioned the Soviet leader making a major speech at an outdoor rally or participating in an ecumenical prayer service at St. Paul’s Catholic cathedral. But in the end, the schedule reflected the political needs of the governor, the corporate interests of the Operations Committee, and Gorbachev’s desire to foster business ties and see American agriculture first hand.

Even apart from the Gorbachevs’ spontaneous improvisations, the official itinerary was so overloaded that there was little hope of it being followed. The couple was scheduled to arrive at the Minneapolis airport at 1:25 p.m. and be greeted by a host of elected officials. Their motorcade would then proceed to the governor’s residence for a luncheon. Next, the Gorbachevs would tour the two cities en route to the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Minneapolis, where Mikhail would address a meeting of business leaders while Raisa went to visit a “typical American family.” At about 6:00 p.m., the Gorbachevs would reunite and drive to a family farm near Farmington, 25 miles south of Minneapolis. After a brief tour, they would make a final stop at Control Data Corpora-
While corporations were buying space, citizens were expressing themselves in letters to the editor and also in a student essay contest. The *Pioneer Press* received 5,000 entries (in just five days) for the contest on the theme of “What would you say to Gorbachev if you had two minutes?” The paper published nine entries from elementary and secondary students who addressed Gorbachev as a person who shared their concerns about peace, freedom, and the environment. The winning essay thanked Gorbachev for “renewing hope in a dusky world.”

The University of Minnesota’s student-run newspaper also actively covered the story. Two days before the visit, the *Minnesota Daily* printed a letter to Gorbachev co-authored by the officers of the campus Republican and Democratic clubs. They told Gorbachev that, “due in large part to your leadership from the other side of the world,” they...
When the Gorbachevs arrived in Minneapolis on June 3, it was rainy, windy, and, at 48 degrees, unseasonably cold. The plane was a bit late, but rather than rush to their limousine, the Gorbachevs first met the official welcoming party of politicians and then walked up to the cheering crowd for more greetings. When the motorcade finally approached the governor’s mansion, the couple stopped the car and interacted with the crowds, first on one side of the street and then the other. As if to make up for the lack of public appearances, they did this two more times after their luncheon.

Thousands of Minnesotans came out to see and welcome the Gorbachevs, but the crowds also included a small number of protestors, some of whom had traveled from as far as Chicago and St. Louis. Most were Latvians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians holding national flags and signs. They were joined by Eritrean refugees protesting Soviet aid to Ethiopia; Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian immigrants protesting Soviet policy in Asia; and Muslim students protesting the Afghanistan war. There was also a man in coat and tails and a false mustache, who told a reporter, “I am the ghost of Neville Chamberlain. In 1938, Chamberlain made a deal with Hitler. In 1990 Perpich is making a deal with Gorbachev.”

Groups representing Baltic peoples had also placed pro-independence advertisements in that day’s newspapers. The Lithuanian World Community from Cincinnati ran an ad titled “Mr. Gorbachev, you’re no Joseph Stalin,” which praised Gorbachev for his “heroic pursuit of democracy and freedom” and asked him to reverse Stalin’s illegal annexation of Lithuania. A few Baltic protestors in the crowd chanted “Gorby go home” and compared him with Hitler. The Gorbachevs impressed many by their willingness to approach and greet critics as well as supporters. Several reporters wrote that some Baltic protestors were swept up in the excitement and began cheering as Gorbachev came toward them.

At about 2:30 the Gorbachevs entered the governor’s mansion for lunch. Almost half of the 50 guests were Soviet officials, including Alexander Bessmertnikh, the new ambassador to the U.S., and several of Gorbachev’s key advisors, among them Anatoly Chernyaev, Evgenii Primakov, and Stanislav Shatalin. Members of the Perpich family, British publisher Robert Maxwell, Minnesota corporate leaders close to the governor, U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock, and other Washington officials, including Dr. Condoleezza Rice, then a little-known National Security Council staff member, rounded

The state Department of Transportation was planting thousands of petunias and marigolds and posting a number of welcoming signs in Russian along the motorcade route, struggling occasionally with the Cyrillic alphabet.
out the party. Minnesota's two U.S. senators, Rudy Boschwitz and David Durenberger, both Republicans, were conspicuously absent. Boschwitz had trveled with the Gorbachevs from Washington, but Durenberger had to settle for greeting the Gorbachevs on the lawn as they left the mansion.26

The guests were served a special “midwestern” gourmet meal paid for by Pillsbury and General Mills and planned by a team that included the governor’s chef and the staff of Goodfellow’s restaurant. Following the za- kuski (hors d’oeuvres) were walleye pike (from Canada), veal medallions (from Wisconsin) with “Minnesota morel sauce,” and “wild rice corn compote.” The organizers passed over Minnesota’s fledging wineries and served California wines.27

Although the luncheon was closed to the media, reporters were admitted briefly for a press conference, at which Robert Maxwell announced that he would donate $50 million to help create a private research institution to be called the Gorbachev-Maxwell Institute of Technology. The gift was contingent on Perpich raising matching funds. The governor had apparently been pursuing this idea for some time and had received a positive response from Maxwell the week before the event. On May 25 Perpich asked Gorbachev in a letter if he would accept the “honor” of having the institute named for him. In a brief speech, Maxwell praised Gorbachev for his role in ending the Cold War and predicted that the world’s scientists would now redirect their talents “from military invention to peaceful imagination.” The press, apparently surprised by this announcement, reported it favorably and uncritically. No reporter seemed to notice that Maxwell had not actually written a check.28

Following the luncheon—and two more forays into the Summit Avenue crowds—the Gorbachevs briefly toured the area of the St. Paul cathedral and Minnesota state capitol and then proceeded to the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Minneapolis. The hotel was the local flagship of the Carlson Companies, which at that time was building the Radisson Slavanskaya Hotel in Moscow, the first American-operated hotel in the Soviet Union.
she left downtown Minneapolis to visit a family on the city’s south side. The Soviet advance team had sought a typical American family, and Jon Cranney, director of the Children’s Theatre Company, proposed the Karen and Steve Watson family because their 13-year-old daughter, Lisa, had traveled to the Soviet Union with the company in 1989. Karen, a nurse, and Steve, an elementary-school arts teacher, had four children; Lisa was the oldest.

Raisa Gorbachev frequently accompanied her husband on official and unofficial trips. Fashionable, well-informed, outspoken, and clearly influential, she was a striking departure from the wives of earlier Soviet leaders. As a result, she became a celebrity in her own right and the subject of extensive media coverage, including a *Time* magazine cover story in 1988. Like her husband, she thrived on travel, and their journeys abroad, especially to Western Europe, had clearly influenced their political thinking. But this was an unprecedented opportunity for the woman who had earned the Soviet equivalent of a PhD in sociology to interact with average Americans and learn about their lives. As her motorcade neared the Watsons’ neighborhood, she asked to stop at a small commercial mall at Forty-Sixth Street and Nicollet Avenue. First, Gorbachev entered Pepito’s Nicollet Deli and chatted with the staff and customers. Then she went into Snyder’s Drug Store on the corner, and after browsing and questioning the staff about their jobs, bought some Nintendo gum dispensers for her grandchildren and macadamia nuts for herself.

At the Radisson event, hosted by Dwayne Andreas, CEO of agribusiness giant Archer Daniels Midland, Mikhail Gorbachev addressed 145 business leaders. Although Perpich wanted to promote Minnesota businesses, the majority of the invited guests were trade-association executives and leaders of Fortune 500 companies based elsewhere, such as Chase Manhattan Bank, Coca-Cola, and Occidental Petroleum. There was intense competition for invitations, especially from Minnesota business leaders. When some guests, including CEOs from Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, Anheuser-Busch, and American Express, decided at the last moment not to attend, they were replaced by Minnesotans.

Gorbachev urged his listeners to trade with and invest in the Soviet Union, suggesting that the best opportunities would come to companies that jumped in early. He acknowledged the difficulties faced in doing business in a society that did not have a market-oriented commercial system or even a convertible currency. Gorbachev asked for patience as these problems were being solved, assuring the audience, “You will not lose your money in the Soviet Union—I would like to dispel those fears.” Business leaders quoted in press reports seemed genuinely impressed with Gorbachev, at least with his candor, but many noted that structural barriers to doing business in the Soviet Union remained high.

Meanwhile, Raisa Gorbachev was practicing a different kind of diplomacy with comparable success. Accompanied by Lola Perpich, she left downtown Minneapolis to visit a family on the city’s south side. The Soviet advance team had sought a typical American family, and Jon Cranney, director of the Children’s Theatre Company, proposed the Karen and Steve Watson family because their 13-year-old daughter, Lisa, had traveled to the Soviet Union with the company in 1989. Karen, a nurse, and Steve, an elementary-school arts teacher, had four children; Lisa was the oldest.

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An estimated 7,500 cheering people were waiting outside when the motorcade arrived at the Watsons’ home. Raisa Gorbachev first walked to the crowd to exchange greetings, paying special attention to a group of schoolchildren who held a banner welcoming her in Russian. Once inside the home, she sat around a table with the family members and asked them detailed questions about their lives, especially family finances. The Watsons told her that they stretched their budget by shopping at “garage sales,” a term that seemed to leave the Russians somewhat perplexed. Press accounts make clear that Gorbachev’s attention was most closely focused on Karen Watson. Gorbachev asked how she managed four children and a part-time job without a babushka around to supply childcare. The visit was scheduled for just 20 minutes but lasted twice as long because Gorbachev ignored aides trying to keep her on schedule. Finally, gifts were exchanged, and when Gorbachev emerged, she asked the schoolchildren if she could take their banner home with her.

By all accounts, Raisa Gorbachev’s visit with the Watsons was marked by genuine warmth on both sides.

The Gorbachevs then drove to the airport, made their farewells, and flew to San Francisco, where they enjoyed a warm reunion with the Reagans. Mikhail Gorbachev also spoke to a jammed auditorium at Stanford University, lunched with business and civic leaders, and held a brief but ground-breaking meeting with South Korean president Roh Tae Woo.

POST-VISIT MEDIA ANALYSES were very positive, and not just in the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press. The Economist (London) favorably compared Minnesota (“where it was cold and wet, and the organization impec-cable”) to San Francisco (“where it was warm and sunny, and the organization a shambles”). Some stories in the international media suggested that the visit had been a political victory for Governor Perpich, a tremendous public-relations victory for Minnesota and its urban center, and a significant economic opening for the state’s businesses. “Savoring the afterglow of a world-class visit” was the headline in the New York Times. In Britain, The Guardian story was titled “The Man Who Put Minnesota on the Map,” referring to Perpich.

Minnesota business leaders apparently believed that they had benefited, because they made good on their open-ended pledges to cover the bills. In July Roger Parkinson announced that the Operating Committee had spent $586,000 in addition to in-kind contributions valued
Maxwell Institute was so vague. As it turned out, the institute had much bigger problems. In 1990 Robert Maxwell’s media empire was financially overextended, and, outside of Minnesota, rumors circulated about improper business practices. Then, on November 6, 1991, Maxwell unexpectedly died after falling into the Atlantic Ocean from the deck of his luxury yacht. He was 68, and although there was speculation about suicide and even murder, his death was ruled an accident. His publishing company, under the leadership of his sons, declared bankruptcy in 1992.38

There would be no Gorbachev-Maxwell Institute.

Besides the institute, Governor Perpich had hoped that the Gorbachev visit would position Minnesota-based companies to become major players in the Soviet economy. Instead, the Soviet Union fragmented into its 15 republics at the end of 1991, forcing Gorbachev to resign. The new government of Russia, the largest of the former republics, followed the advice of neoliberal advisors from the West and attempted an abrupt transition to a market economy by means of “shock therapy,” a policy of radical price deregulation and privatization. This led to massive inflation, economic depression, and gangster capitalism. As a result, few U.S. businesses were able to generate profitable opportunities in Russia in the 1990s. Today, Minnesota’s trade with former Soviet republics remains negligible. The state typically exports more to Malaysia than to Russia.39

The one company that seemed to benefit directly from the Gorbachev visit was Control Data. After the visit, the firm planned a joint venture to build computers in the Soviet Union for Soviet and East European use. Unfortunately, joint ventures with the Soviet Union were about to become as obsolete as Control Data’s mainframe computers, which were rapidly being eclipsed by microcomputer technology. By 1990, Control Data was already diversifying and moving increasingly into computer services. The remnants of its computer hardware division would be sold in 1999.40

The Carlson Companies’ Radisson Hotel chain was another Minnesota-based pioneer in the emerging Russian market—and one of the first to learn how lawless the business cli-
mate of the new Russia could be. The Radisson Slavanskaya Hotel and Business Center in Moscow was a joint venture, brokered by H. R. Haldeman—formerly Richard M. Nixon’s chief of staff—involving Intourist, the Soviet tourist agency, American entrepreneur Paul Tatum, and the Carlson Companies. When the hotel opened in 1991 it was immediately profitable, quickly becoming the accommodation of choice for western business travelers and American officials. (President Bill Clinton stayed there during the 1994 summit with Boris Yeltsin.) The hotel’s financial success led to tensions among its partners, however. When the Soviet Union dissolved, the Moscow city government took over the Soviet share (50 percent) and tried to push Tatum (who owned 40 percent) out of the deal and out of the hotel, where he lived. Radisson, which owned 10 percent and managed the hotel, also fell out with Tatum and in 1994 sued to end their partnership. The hotel, meanwhile, increasingly became a hangout for the new, mafia-like biznesmen and their conspicuously armed bodyguards who dominated Moscow in the early years of Russian capitalism. The fight for control climaxed in November 1996 when Tatum was shot down in an apparent contract murder while walking from the hotel to the nearby metro station with two bodyguards. There had already been about 450 contract killings in Russia that year, most of them unsolved, but Tatum was the first western executive to die as a result of doing business in Russia.41

WHAT ABOUT THE HOPES and dreams of the thousands who stood in the cold and rain to see the man and woman they hoped would continue to use their power to create a more peaceful world? With the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Baltic and Ukrainian protestors did achieve their goal: except for a few unfortunate incidents, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine attained independence without large-scale violence.

The end of the Cold War did not, however, end tensions between the U.S. and Russia, and world politics became more, rather than less, conflicted. There was no “peace dividend” in the United States, and the hoped-for new global order based on multilateralism did not materialize. In his January 1992 State of the Union message, President Bush triumphantly declared that “by the grace of God, America won the Cold War,” and was now “the undisputed leader of the age.” Subsequently, the
Clinton and George W. Bush administrations alienated Russia by aggressively pursuing NATO expansion in eastern and central Europe, with Bush even admitting Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, thereby violating promises made by the previous two presidents. In 2002 the United States and Russia did sign a nuclear arms reduction treaty, but, unlike earlier treaties, this agreement did not guarantee permanent reductions and left each country with more than enough warheads to destroy all human life.

In 2008 Russia, under Vladimir Putin, invaded Georgia, motivated in part by the Bush administration’s insistence that this former republic, too, be admitted to NATO.43

IT SEEMED TO MANY on that June day in 1990 that the United States and the Soviet Union, bitter adversaries for so long, could come together and lead the world toward nuclear disarmament and environmental sustainability. It also appeared that Minnesota, by warmly welcoming Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev, could play a major role in fostering international cooperation. In retrospect, it is clear that the intoxicating dreams that fueled the emotional bonds between the Gorbachevs and the Perpichs and between the Gorbachevs and the crowds had no chance of becoming realities. Nevertheless, Minnesota’s ambitions and hopes for change were, for seven hours at least, a powerful force.44

Notes
This article is dedicated to Theofanis G. Stavrou, who has taught Russian history at the University of Minnesota since 1962. Research was supported by a faculty research grant from Saint Mary’s University. The authors are grateful to Debbie Miller at the Minnesota Historical Society library and Scott Kuzma at the Iron Range Research Center in Chisholm for assisting with sources, and Philip Bush, John Sayer, and Russell Doty for sharing ideas and reading drafts.


2. Harper and Row published the English translation of Perestroika in hardcover in 1987 and an expanded paperback version in 1988. Although his ideas continued to evolve, Gorbachev had already abandoned the idea of inevitable conflict between the two superpowers and called for multilateral action to confront global problems; see p. 123.

When Tom Brokaw asked Mikhail Gorbachev during a 1987 interview on NBC what issues he discussed with his wife, Gorbachev responded, “We discuss everything.” To Brokaw’s follow-up question, “Including Soviet affairs, on the highest levels?” Gorbachev responded: “I think I have answered your question in toto. We discuss everything.” See Archie Brown, The Gorbachev Factor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 35.


4. For the best overview of Gorbachev’s reform initiatives, see Brown, Gorbachev Factor.


7. Oberdorfer, The Turn, 428; Pavel Palazchenko, My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 192; Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), 223–24, 227; Raymond Garthoff, The Great Transition (Washington: Brookings, 1994), 424, 427; Matlock, Autopsy, 381. Just over a month later, Gorbachev met with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and publically agreed that a unified Germany could be part of NATO.


9. Time, June 4, 1990, p. 27. Despite the cover date, the issue was on the newstands in time for the summit, which began on May 30.


15. Jim Walsh, “Parkinson’s Disease,” City Pages, June 6, 1990, p. 4; “Re: Gorby-
mania,” memo to JK and TJM from FWright, May 29, 1990, Parkinson papers.


17. Star Tribune, May 17, 1990, p. 1A, May 25, 1990, p. 1A. As late as May 25, the advance team was investigating the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis and the St. Paul Cathedral as possible tour stops; “Advance Schedule/Itinerary” file, Parkinson papers.

18. “Schedule of Visit of President and Mrs. Gorbachev to Minneapolis-St. Paul,” Parkinson papers.


20. Pioneer Press, June 3, 1990, p. 5G. At the bottom of the ad was an English translation: “Today a new world is emerging, and we must look for new ways for its future development.”


23. Star Tribune, May 30, 1990, p. 5B; Pioneer Press, May 25, 1990, p. 1A. The revised billboards also caused a small stir, as some local Russian-language specialists noted that the last line was written incorrectly: “Na zdorove” instead of “Za zdorove.” The liquor distributor said he would not change it again.


In his memoir, Gorbachev’s translator observed that there was little that Gor-

bachev enjoyed more than mingling with the crowds. The Baltic protestors did not upset him because they “seemed good

natured and there were almost no hostile

calls or chanting of slogans”; Palazchenko, My Years with Gorbachev, 194.

26. Guest list, Official Visit Records, Perpich papers. U.S. chief of protocol Joseph Reed, who traveled with the Gor-

bachev, criticized the exclusion of the sena-
tors; Newsweek, June 18, 1990, p. 18.


39. After the end of the Soviet Union, Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev created the Gorbachev Foundation as a vehicle for continuing their political advocacy. Raisa Gor-

bachev died in 1999 at age 67. Mikhail Gorbachev continues to lead the founda-


In 2007, Minnesota exports to Russia jumped from the typical level of $32 million in 2006 to $217 million, apparently due to a one-time sale of transportation equipment. In 2008, the total returned to normal. Even the 2007 amount represented only 1.3 per-


41. The most complete account can be found in Erin Arverlund and Maria Atana-