

My thesis is a two-part analysis of Zbigniew Brzezinski's political theories and foreign policies. The first half examines Brzezinski's Soviet-centric ideas during his academic career from 1956 – 1976. I analyze how Brzezinski conceptualized the Soviet system through his models of totalitarianism and peaceful engagement. In the second half of my thesis, I analyze Brzezinski's years as National Security Advisor during the Carter administration from 1977-1981. Here, I examine how he implemented his ideas through Carter's human rights crusade against the USSR. Brzezinski's ideas relied on the "inevitable" – the inevitable rivalry between the USSR and US, the inevitable crumble of détente, and the inevitable totalitarian nature of the Soviet system. This interpretation of the Cold War gave the Polish-born intellect great confidence that he could pressure the Soviet Union into agreements that were favorable to the US without repercussion. While this negotiation strategy worked sometimes, Brzezinski's belief in the "inevitable" demonstrates a shortsightedness in his theories and policies.

