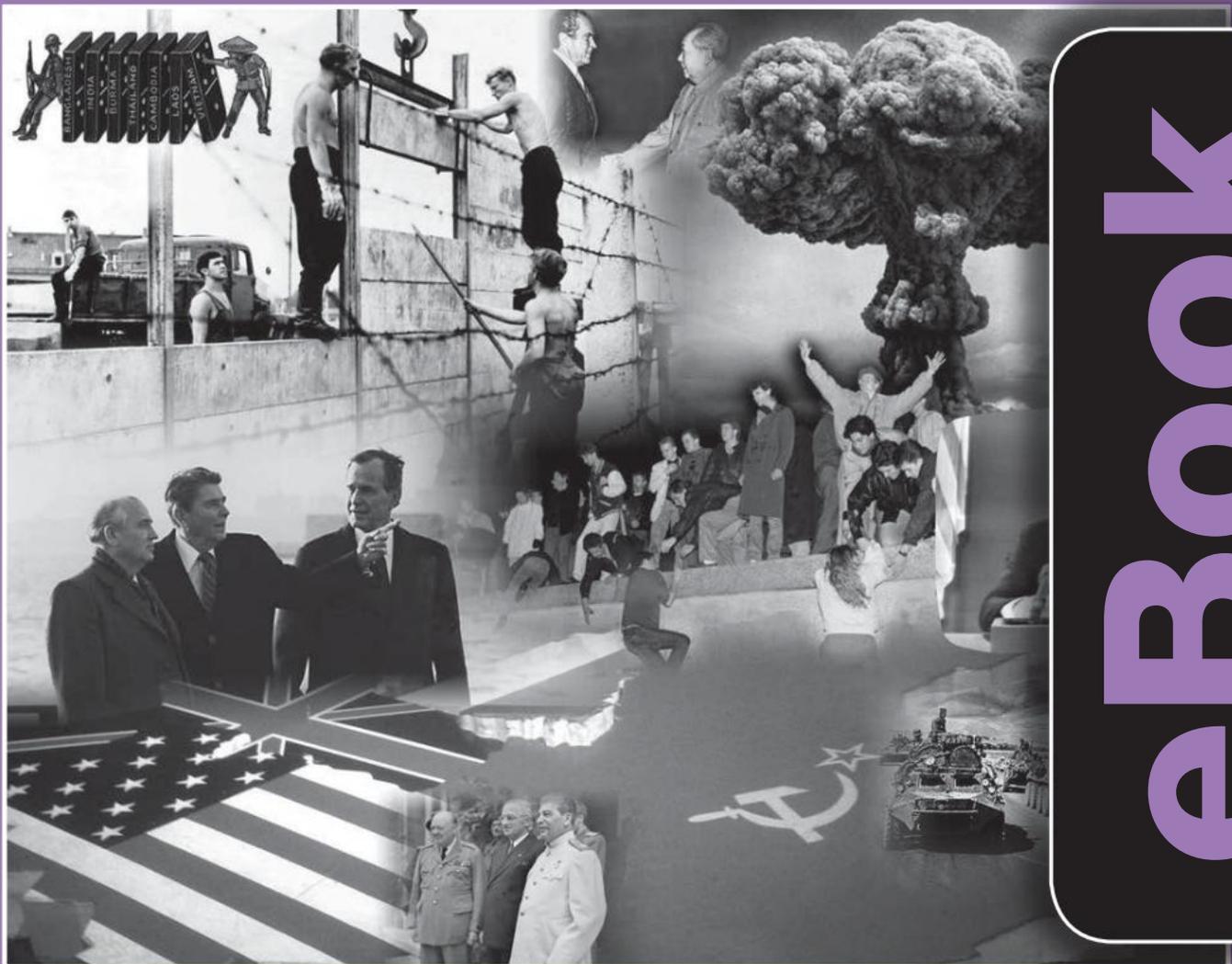


THE COLD WAR 1945-1991

by Ken Webb

Here it is: the factual detail, the historiography, revision exercises and advice on how to write responses on the Cold War 1945-1991.



eBook

*"Everything you wanted to know about the Cold War 1945-1991,
but were afraid to ask."*

THE COLD WAR 1945-1991

by Ken Webb M.A. (Oxon), C.Ed

*“Everything you wanted to know about
the Cold War 1945-1991, but were afraid to ask.”*

www.kenwebb.com.au

1st Edition

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About the author

Ken Webb was educated in the United Kingdom and graduated from the University of Oxford. He taught in several state schools before moving to Pymble Ladies' College where he taught Modern, Ancient and Extension History. In March 2008, he moved to Ravenswood School for Girls where he also taught the International Baccalaureate course in History. He is a member of the Independent Schools Examination Committee for Modern History. He frequently lectures and runs workshops for Year 12 and teacher groups in Sydney and Regional NSW. In addition to his own work, Ken Webb has contributed to colleagues' work and to newspapers and periodicals. He has also been a consultant on various history video documentaries. In 2012, Ken Webb was a NSW winner of the "National Excellence in Teaching" award.

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"**The Cold War 1945-1991**" is one of fifteen titles in the "Everything you wanted to know about... but were afraid to ask" series *written specifically* for the new NSW Modern and Ancient History syllabuses commencing 2018-19. Other titles in this series include:

- The Decline and Fall of the Romanov Dynasty
- World War I
- Power and Authority in the Modern World 1919-1946
- Russia and the Soviet Union 1917-1941
- Conflict in Europe 1935-1945
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First Edition Published 2019 by
 © Get Smart Education Pty Ltd
 PO Box 684 Mona Vale NSW 1660
 Tel: 0425 235 442 Fax: 9012 0988

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ISBN 9780648363910

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 Printed by Razer Graphix

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Foreword

This book has been written with the HSC specifically in mind:

- it strictly follows the format of the Modern History syllabus;
- its content has been designed with the type of questions in mind which might be asked in the HSC;
- the advice given for responding to questions on “The Cold War 1945-1991” is the result of years of teaching and studying this period, and marking the HSC.

It is hoped that this book will provide students with:

- solid historical information, but not too much that students will drown in an excess of the written word as can happen with some works;
- enough historiographical information to supplement student arguments – how many students have the time to go off and read LaFeber, Horowitz, Kennan and John Lewis Gaddis etc for themselves? (Indeed, how much time do teachers have to do this?)
- a chance to frequently consolidate information;
- some of the techniques required for writing effective essays.

THE COLD WAR 1945-1991: A NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as the world’s undisputed leading powers. They had fought as allies against Hitler, but their wartime cooperation and unity soon turned to suspicion and distrust. Ideology and power politics brought them into frequent conflict.

The United States and the Soviet Union never came into direct physical conflict. The contest between these two nations was indirect and became known as cold war. After 1945 they created opposing military and political groupings, competed in an arms race and the space race, and interfered in the Third World. At first, they clashed in Europe which became divided by the “iron curtain” into communist Eastern Europe and non-communist Western Europe. War became a possibility over Berlin in 1948-49. The cold war then spread to Asia. In 1949 China became communist and a year later war broke out following communist North Korea’s invasion of South Korea.

In the 1950s, Soviet leader Khrushchev talked of peaceful coexistence but by the early 1960s, the cold war had become more dangerous and more widespread and crises between the superpowers occurred from Berlin to Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 took the world to the brink of nuclear war. The United States became embroiled in the Vietnam War.

President Nixon’s détente policy led to an improvement in relations with major agreements achieved over Berlin, the Arms Race and outer space. Top-level meetings between Soviet and American leaders became common. However, by the early 1980s détente had collapsed. A more dangerous arms race brought back the worst days of cold war suspicion and mistrust. President Reagan called the Soviet Union “an evil empire”. Soviet leader Gorbachev’s attempts after 1985 to reform his nation let loose forces he could not control and by 1989 the Soviet Union had lost control of Eastern Europe. By 1991, the Soviet Union itself had disintegrated. The cold war was over.

Chapter 1:

1945 Conferences and the emergence of the superpowers

Introduction

The period of world history between 1945 and 1991 was dominated by the rivalry and competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, at no time did these two powers ever become involved in direct military confrontation. On several occasions crises arose which took the US and the USSR to the brink of war, but on each occasion they managed to pull back from open conflict.

This was cold war:

“A great power conflict marked by distrust, suspicion and rivalry but which managed to avoid a descent into ‘hot war’.”

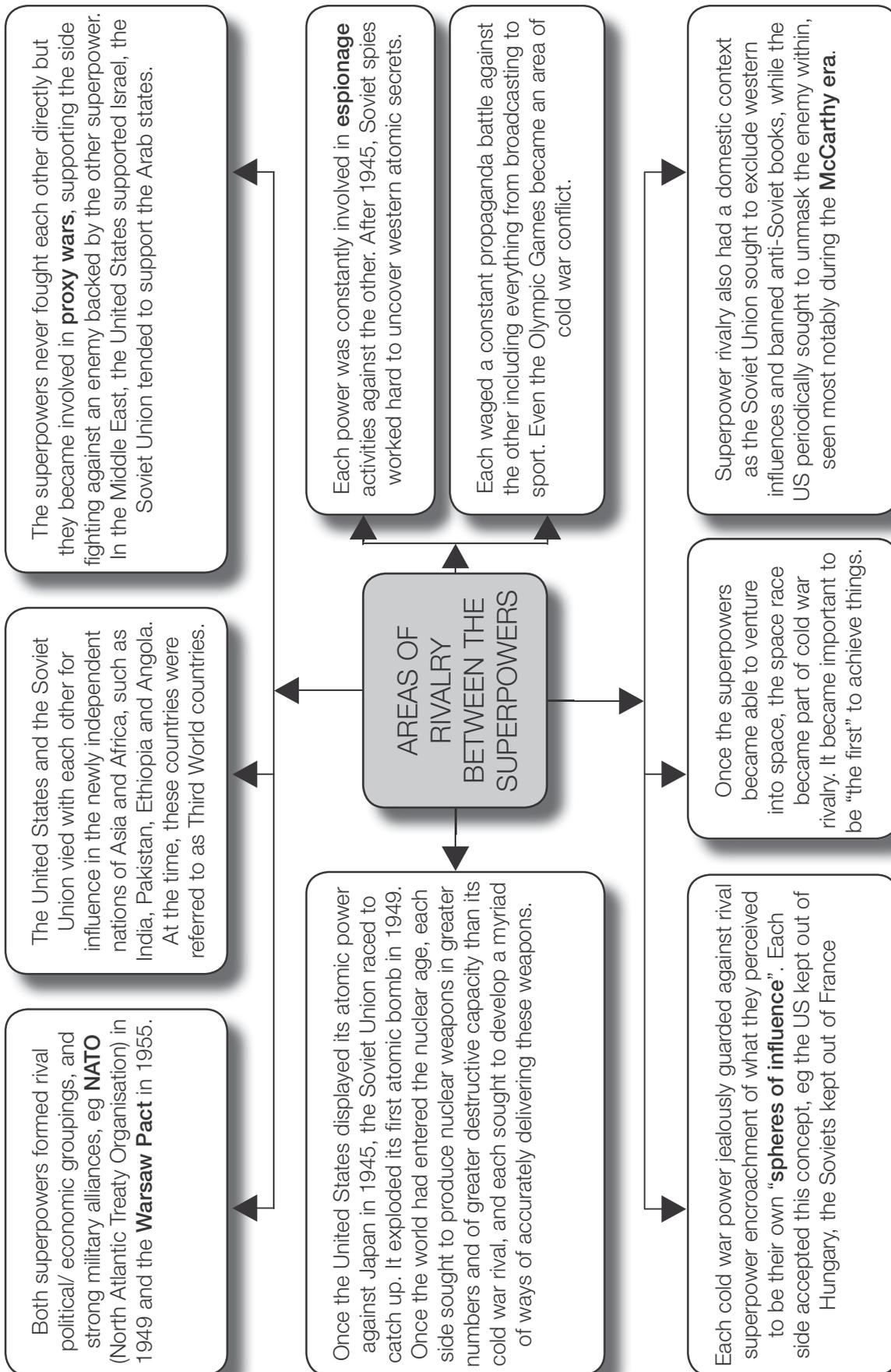
The cold war became desperately crucial to the history of the world because by the 1960s, and arguably earlier, if any superpower crisis had led to war, it could well have been a nuclear war that had the potential to destroy the planet. During this period the two superpowers became major rivals in all areas of endeavour. The nature of this rivalry is summarised in Figure 1.1.

Why did the United States and the Soviet Union end up in a long-term cold war situation? Looking back the cold war seems to have an air of inevitability about it. However, it must be remembered American and Russian soldiers had fought as allies during World War II, and as they embraced in Berlin in mid-1945 there was no immediate sign that relations would deteriorate so badly and so quickly.

Explanations for the nature and development of cold war conflict will be examined in Chapters 2 and 3. Historians still disagree on what the cold war actually was and why it began. The purpose of this chapter is to:

- briefly examine east-west relations during World War II and the emergence of the superpowers;
- describe the lead up to the 1945 conferences;
- outline the results of the 1945 conferences.

Figure 1.1:
Areas of Rivalry Between the Superpowers



The emergence of the superpowers: US-Soviet relations during WWII

Before the Battle of Stalingrad

At the beginning of the 20th century, the United States had arguably become the number one power in the world.

- A century of economic growth, westward expansion and massive immigration had cemented the US position in the pecking order of nations.
- Though its military strength was not yet fully developed, its wealth and economic potential could not be matched.

On the other hand, Russia was a backward nation, still living in “the middle ages” in many ways.

- It had been humiliated by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5.
- By the late 1920s, Russia/ Soviet Union remained a weak, underdeveloped power.
 - Years of war, revolution and civil war had ensured this.
- However, Stalin’s massive program of modernisation and industrialisation had transformed the nation. By the late 1930s, the Soviet Union was arguably the second major nation in the world, despite its attempts to strangle itself. ¹

Soviet military action between 1939 and 1941 seemed little different to that of Nazi Germany as far as western observers were concerned.

- Poland, Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Bessarabia had all fallen victim to the Soviet Red Army.
- How could the United States ever trust a man like Stalin?

Only days after the launching of Operation **Barbarossa** which saw Hitler hurl three million troops against the Russians, some influential Americans seemed to relish the Nazi-Soviet conflict. Senator Harry Truman said at the time:

“...If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I do not want Hitler victorious under any circumstances.” ²

This was not a good way to start off a possible US-Soviet wartime partnership!

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill saw things in a different light. Churchill was well known for his detestation of communism but once the Soviet Union was at war with the Nazis, Stalin had become an ally to be helped. Churchill stated his position on the day of the German attack on the Soviet Union:

“...If Hitler invaded Hell I would at least make a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.” ³

¹ In the 1930s, Stalin was responsible for a terror campaign against his own people which saw the leadership of the Communist Party decimated, millions dead and tens of millions sent to labour camps. In 1937, the purge of the Red Army had effectively destroyed the Soviet Union’s military leadership.

² New York Times, 24 June, 1941

³ Quoted in: Langworth, R, Churchill by Himself, Ebury Press, 2008

The German invasion came as a shock to Stalin and within months western Russia had been decimated, with land, livestock, tanks and aircraft destroyed, and millions of men killed or taken prisoner. The Soviet Union was desperate.

- As a result, in the year and a half before the Battle of Stalingrad, Moscow's role in the US-Soviet relationship was very much that of a suppliant, seeking alms from its betters.
- Indeed throughout 1941 and 1942, Stalin was constantly seeking western material assistance and demanding that the allies open a second front against the Germans in France.

The United States eventually extended **Lend-Lease** aid to the Soviet Union in September 1941. A credit of \$1000 million was granted to Moscow which was to be repaid over a ten year period commencing five years after the end of the war. During the war, almost 20 million tons of supplies were shipped to Russia via Lend-Lease. The United States eventually entered the European war in December 1941 when Hitler declared war on America.

As the Russian people and army continued to suffer unbelievable hardship and yet managed to keep going, there was a propaganda revolution taking place in the west. The Russians were no longer Asiatic revolutionaries seeking to destroy freedom and god. They were now dedicated patriots suffering alongside American boys fighting for freedom. Stalin was no longer the butcher of millions but Uncle Joe, an inspiration to his people.

For all their efforts fighting the common enemy, strains between America and the Soviets appeared early on.

- In May 1942 Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov visited London and Washington. He said that the Soviet Union was in desperate need of a second front as the **Wehrmacht** was continuing to maul the Red Army.
 - United States President Roosevelt said that a second front would have to wait.
- This delay was received bitterly by the Soviets.
 - Stalin began to think "was the west in fact hoping that Hitler could weaken the Soviet Union so that it would have less influence in post-war Europe?"
 - Stalin chided America for being scared to fight German soldiers.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States feared that the other might enter into a separate peace with Germany. In his memoirs, published in 1970, former Soviet leader, Khrushchev states that Stalin had become so desperate that he *"tried to make a very secret approach to Hitler"*. Khrushchev says that Stalin was willing to give Hitler the territory Germany occupied in the Ukraine, Byelorussia and part of the Russian Federation. *"There was never any answer from Hitler."*

For almost 18 months the picture remained unremittingly bleak for Russia.

After the Battle of Stalingrad

On 31 January 1943, Von Paulus, the German commander at Stalingrad, surrendered. The Soviet Union's victory at the Battle of Stalingrad had a major impact on the state of US-Soviet relations. Stalingrad gave the Russians a sense of pride and confidence in the future. There was still a long way to go, but victory was now seen as simply a matter of time. Russian losses continued to be astronomical but the Germans were now being pushed back. No longer was the Soviet Union a suppliant begging for help. Stalin more and more began to look toward the post-war situation.

After Stalingrad, the Soviet Red Army slowly but surely pushed the German army back to Berlin. The course of the Soviet military advance was of great significance for future superpower relations.

- It showed a definite linking of political to military objectives.

- Stalin did not simply wish to drive on to Berlin.
- After the war, he wanted Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary under his influence. It thus made good political sense to send the Soviet Red Army into these countries and occupy their territory.

Stalin had a problem with Poland.

- Poland had a significant indigenous underground resistance and a government in exile based in London.
 - Both could pose problems for subsequent Soviet control of the country.
- In August 1944 as Soviet forces approached Warsaw, Polish underground forces rose against the Germans.
 - Stalin ordered his forces to halt and allowed the Germans to systematically slaughter the Poles.
 - The Red Army later entered the city and installed his own puppet government.

With his forces in control of the country, he had very little to fear from the London government-in-exile.

Russian military success and civilian morale were lauded in the west. However, the second front in France was still slow in coming, a situation that heightened Russian suspicions. Logistics explained the west's caution in invading France. Each side was viewing the war differently. America had not been touched physically by the war, Pearl Harbour apart. The US was thus fighting for the Atlantic Charter, democracy and a fair and just future. The Soviet Union was fighting for survival against a fanatical enemy who viewed the Russian people as sub-humans useful only as slaves. The country had been attacked three times in 30 years. Stalin thus sought security, at any cost! These divergent standpoints go a long way to explain why the wartime conferences spent so much time on the issue of Poland. ⁴

When the war finally ended in May 1945, the world was a far different place than it had been in 1939. The fundamental change was the appearance of the United States and the Soviet Union as the only real superpowers in the world.

- The United States emerged from the war the most powerful economic and military power in the history of the world.
 - It had played a major role in the defeat of Germany and Japan.
 - Its land was untouched by the war (apart from Pearl Harbour).
 - It was the only power in the world that had an atomic bomb. ⁵
- The Soviet Union was clearly the number two power in the world.
 - The war had left it in a far worse state than the United States.
 - However, the Red Army had borne the brunt of the fighting against Hitler and was justly proud of its enormous achievements.
 - The Soviet Red Army now occupied all of Eastern Europe.
- Britain, though victorious, had been reduced to a second ranking power.
 - From now on, it would follow the lead of its American cousin.
- France's second rate status was ensured following its humiliating surrender in 1940.
 - Future colonial wars would weaken France for many years to come.

⁴ For the west, Poland was a symbol of freedom, freedom that had been destroyed by Hitler. For Stalin, it was all about security. Twice in thirty years, Germany had invaded Russia via Poland.

⁵ The Manhattan Project had succeeded in producing an atomic bomb. The dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 finally brought the Pacific War to an end.

Exercise 1.1

Answer the following questions:

1	Why did some Americans relish the prospect of a Nazi-Soviet war?	
2	What was Churchill's reaction to the German invasion of Russia?	
3	What did Stalin want from the Western allies?	
4	How did the Americans help the Soviet Union?	
5	What was the turning point in the US-Soviet relationship?	
6	How did the Soviet Union's dealings with the west change from 1943 onwards?	
7	Why did Stalin send his forces into Bulgaria and Romania?	
8	Why did Stalin refuse to help anti-Nazi Polish resistance forces?	
9	What made the United States the number one superpower in 1945?	
10	What ensured the Soviet Union its status as the world's number two superpower?	

The 1945 Conferences

In 1945, two major conferences between the major allied powers were held which were to determine the fate of Europe for decades to come. These were the Conferences at Yalta (January/February) and at Potsdam (July). The details of both conferences are presented in Figures 1.2 and 1.3. However, before Yalta, there had been other conferences between the powers.

The Casablanca Conference: January 1943

- In January 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Casablanca in Morocco.
- By this stage the war was slowly turning the allied way.

- Rommel had been defeated at El Alamein, the Russians were victorious at Stalingrad, the Japanese advance had been halted.
- The principal decision made at Casablanca was to demand the unconditional surrender of Germany as the only acceptable conclusion to the war in Europe. This had a twofold impact.
 - It indicated to the Russians that the western allies had no intention of seeking a separate peace with Hitler. It was hoped this might mollify the Russians over the failure to open a second front in France.
 - Stalin made a gesture to build confidence between the allies by dissolving the Comintern.⁶

The Tehran Conference: November 1943

The first conference between the Big Three was held in the Iranian capital of Tehran in November 1943. Despite the common aim of defeating Hitler, each of the major participants, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, came with specific objectives in mind.

- Roosevelt wanted to establish a personal relationship with Stalin and avoid any possible dissension.
 - He believed he could work with the Soviet leader.
 - Roosevelt also had the war with Japan in mind and hoped that Russian military assistance in the Pacific might be forthcoming.
- Churchill had few illusions about Stalin.
 - Churchill's sense of history told him that after the destruction of Hitler, there would be a vacuum of power in central and eastern Europe. He wanted to avoid the vacuum being filled by the Red Army.
 - Consequently, Churchill wanted any second front to be launched in the Balkans, possibly linking up with Tito's Yugoslav partisans. Churchill hoped that this would forestall the Soviet takeover of eastern Europe.
- Stalin had two main concerns.
 - Firstly, he desperately needed some military relief on the eastern front. Thus, the opening of a second front in France was Stalin's prime aim.
 - However, Stalin was already eyeing the future. He wanted the formal recognition of the Curzon Line, the proposed Soviet-Polish border suggested in 1919 which had become a reality after the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939. This would have the effect of pushing the Soviet Union's frontier westwards.

The Tehran Conference produced three main results.

- 1 The western allies agreed to open a second front in France by May 1944.
- 2 Stalin promised to fight Japan after Germany had been defeated.
- 3 Verbal acceptance was given to the Curzon Line and the idea was put forward that Poland's border with Germany be moved westward.

If a post-war Poland gained German lands in the west this would inevitably earn Poland the long-term enmity of Germany. In such a situation, Stalin knew that Poland would 'need' Russia.

⁶ The Comintern (Communist International) had been formed in 1919 to promote communist revolution in the west.

When Franklin Roosevelt returned to the United States he spoke in a radio broadcast as follows:

“...I got along fine with Marshall Stalin...I believe that we are going to get along very well with him and the Russian people very well indeed...”

In his biography of Stalin, Isaac Deutscher explains that for Stalin “Tehran” had been a supreme triumph

*“...Europe had now been militarily divided in two; and behind the military division there loomed the social and political cleavage. Against a vastly different social background, an old dream about Russian diplomacy, the dream about bringing the Balkans under Russian influence, was coming true...”*⁷

The Stalin-Benes meeting: December 1943

Only a few weeks after Tehran, Stalin met with ex-Czechoslovak president and leading Czech exile, Eduard Benes. Benes and Stalin signed a Treaty of Friendship in December 1943. This laid down that communists would hold the key jobs in a post-war Czechoslovak government. The Czech communist leader, Gottwald, must have been happy with this arrangement as in the 1935 election the Communists had received only 10% of the vote.

This episode of wartime diplomacy is significant for two main reasons.

- Firstly, it showed Stalin already making specific arrangements for his takeover of eastern Europe.
- Secondly, Stalin must have felt that if he could achieve such a favourable result from what was considered to be a thriving pre-war democracy which had been attacked by Germany, how easy would it be for him to gain influence over those countries which had been allies of Nazi Germany?

The Churchill-Stalin meeting – October 1944

Towards the end of 1944, the Red Army was moving deep into Eastern Europe. Even if Roosevelt could not see what was happening, Churchill could. Stalin was carving out a Soviet ‘sphere of influence’ in the vacuum left by Hitler’s decline. With this in mind, Churchill met with Stalin in October 1944 in Moscow.

- It was here that Stalin and Churchill struck their “Balkan Bargain”.
- Percentage figures were bounded around indicating the degree of influence each power should exercise in particular countries after the war.
 - Romania was seen as 90% Soviet
 - Greece 90% British
 - Yugoslavia and Hungary 50-50
 - Bulgaria 75% Soviet.
- British concern was concentrated on those countries on the Mediterranean. The Americans refused to sanction the idea of ‘spheres of influence’ but that was exactly what was developing.

⁷ Deutscher, I, Stalin, Pelican, London, 1966, p 494

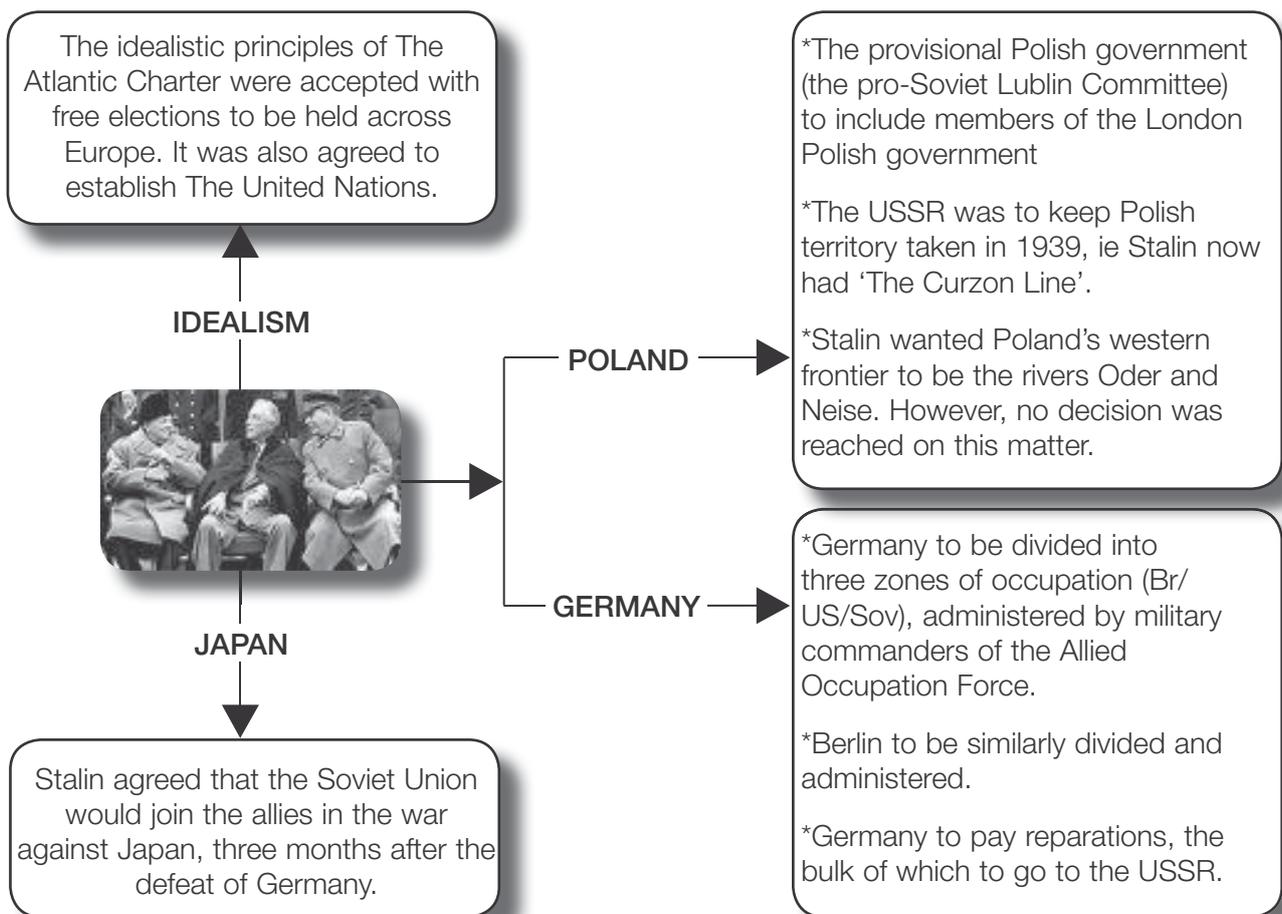
During 1944, post-war Germany became an issue of prime concern. The European Advisory Commission was established by the allies that drew up plans for 'zones of occupation'. This was to be modified at Yalta to allow France to play a role. Early in 1945, a similar plan was worked out for Austria.

The Yalta Conference – January/ February 1945

Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin met together for a second time at Yalta in the Crimea. Yalta marks the high point of allied cooperation during the war. From now on, suspicion between east and west was to increase sharply, especially after the death of Roosevelt in April 1945. The decisions made at Yalta effectively laid the basis of post-war Europe and provided the basis of east-west relations for forty years.

When Roosevelt arrived at Yalta he was a sick man. Some historians have suggested that this coloured his dealings with Stalin and have blamed him in effect for handing over half of Europe to the Russians. However, in the face of military reality, it is hard to see how else the western allies could have operated at Yalta. Roosevelt genuinely believed that he could work with Stalin after the war and did not see Stalin as an imperialist. Indeed it was Churchill with whom Roosevelt clashed on the issue of imperialism, calling for Britain to grant self-determination to its colonies.

Figure 1.2: The key decisions made at the Yalta Conference.

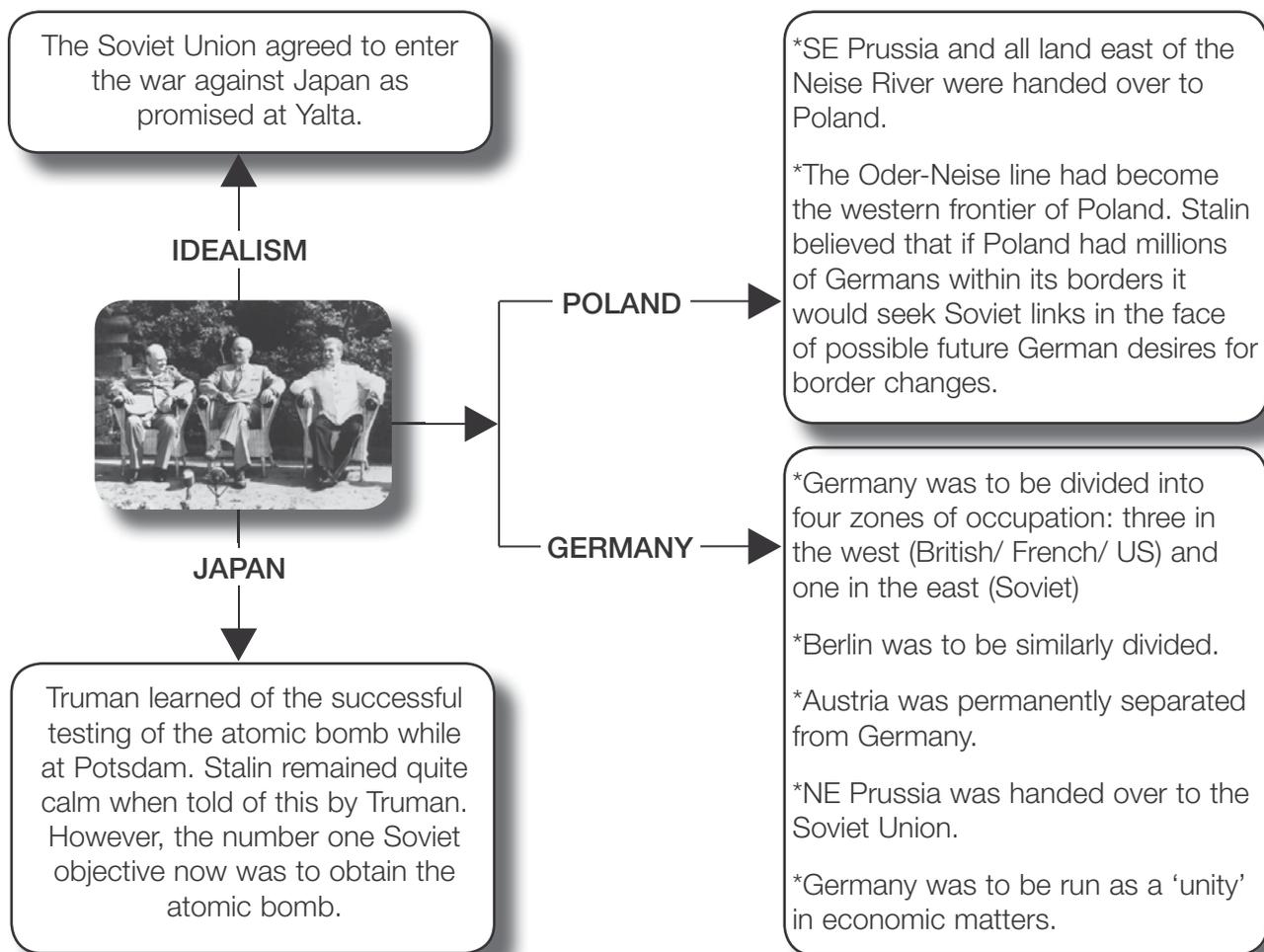


The Potsdam Conference: July 1945

The allies next met at Potsdam, near Berlin. The US was now represented by Harry Truman, the USSR by Stalin and Britain was represented at first by Churchill. However, having lost the post-war election, Churchill was replaced by Clement Attlee. The situation had changed dramatically since Yalta.

- Hitler was dead; Germany had been defeated.
- President Roosevelt had died (April) and been replaced by the no-nonsense Harry Truman. Truman famously said: *"I'm tired of babying the Soviets."*
- Truman quickly ended Lend-Lease assistance to the Soviet Union, an indication of the hard line he intended taking towards Stalin.
- Stalin reneged on Yalta by excluding democrats from the Polish Lublin government and by setting up pro-communist governments across Red Army-occupied Eastern Europe.
- Territory east of the Oder-Neise line had been given over to Poland and so five million Germans were now forced to live under Polish rule.
- Arguably of greatest significance was the fact the Americans were on the brink of having atomic weapons.

Figure 1.3: The key decisions made at the Potsdam Conference.



Exercise 1.2

Match the decisions made with the conferences at which those decisions were made. Some conferences may be referred to more than once.

1	Stalin and Churchill placed percentage values on their respective interests in various east European countries.	
2	Germany was divided into four zones of occupation: British, French, American and Soviet.	
3	Roosevelt and Churchill demanded the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.	
4	The Oder-Neise Line becomes the accepted western frontier of Poland.	
5	The principles of the Atlantic Charter were accepted.	
6	The Curzon Line becomes the accepted frontier between Poland and the Soviet Union.	
7	Roosevelt initially sought the help of the Soviet Union in the war against Japan.	
8	It was agreed that communists would hold key posts in a post-war Czechoslovak government.	
9	Truman revealed to Stalin that the United States had a weapon of massive destructive power.	
10	The western allies agreed to open a second front in France by May 1944.	

Exercise 1.3

Answer the following questions in the first person.

1. President Roosevelt, what is your opinion of Marshal Stalin?




2. President Truman, what is your opinion of Marshal Stalin?




3. Mr Churchill, what is your opinion of Marshal Stalin?



4. Marshal Stalin, what have been your objectives at the Wartime conferences?



5. Why might Clement Attlee have been at a major disadvantage when he replaced Churchill at the Potsdam Conference?



6. A wartime conference montage: name the conferences.

- (A) _____ (B) _____
 (C) _____ (D) _____



What do the historians have to say about the 1945 Conferences and the emergence of the superpowers?

1. Charles L Mee Jr: Meeting at Potsdam

Mee discusses the permanent division of Germany which had effectively been arranged at Potsdam. He makes the point that the Potsdam Conference was seen by many to be a failure because, though it called for a united Germany, division was the result. Mee counters this by arguing that neither the Soviets nor the Americans deserve the criticism that has been apportioned them over this issue. He suggests that both Stalin and Truman approached the issue of Germany in a totally realistic manner; neither wanted a united Germany.

*"...Reparations split Germany consciously and intentionally, realistically and definitively. The political agreements for a united Germany were never more than high-sounding sentiments, understood as such by both Truman and Stalin, which served handily in the emerging conflict between Russia and America to provide grounds for mutual recrimination."*⁸

2. Walter LaFeber: America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1975

LaFeber also discusses the issue of Germany's division that occupied much of the discussion time at Potsdam. He says that Truman and Secretary of State, Byrnes, offered Stalin a deal. Stalin could have the Oder-Neise line; the Soviet Union could take reparations from their zone of occupation but have only twenty five per cent of the reparations from the western half of the country. The US would hold on to Germany's industrial heartland and methodically rebuild its shattered economy.

*"...Of course there was one other implication. An economic division of Germany could lead to a political division of Germany. The deal laid the basis for an Eastern and a Western Germany."*⁹

3. President Ronald Reagan: Statement on the 40th Anniversary of Yalta

Ronald Reagan was unambiguous when he spoke about the Yalta Conference in early 1985. He recognised the role that Yalta had played in dividing Europe and arguably was the first president to openly describe the injustice of Yalta and announce America's wish to change the agreement. After 1945, the US had accepted, be it reluctantly, the division of Europe into communist and non-communist which Yalta had brought about. Reagan challenged this.

*"...There is one boundary which Yalta symbolizes that can never be made legitimate, and that is the dividing line between freedom and repression. I do not hesitate to say that we wish to undo this boundary. In so doing, we seek no military advantage for ourselves or for the Western alliance. We do not deny any nation's legitimate interest in security. But protecting the security of one nation by robbing another of its national independence and national traditions is not legitimate. In the long run, it is not even secure."*¹⁰

8 Mee, Jr, C L M, Meeting at Potsdam, Dell, New York, 1975, p 227

9 LaFeber, W, America, Russia and the Cold War 1945-75, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1967, p 26

10 President Ronald Reagan, Statement on the 40th Anniversary of Yalta, 5th February, 1985

Chapter 2:

Emerging differences between the superpowers

Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the defeat of Nazi Germany, there was a brief moment of hope that US-Soviet relations could develop in a positive direction.

Press photographers were happy to snap American and Russian soldiers sharing cigarettes, laughing and drinking together. However, this surface bonhomie was very short-lived. Within a short time, serious differences began to appear between the superpowers. These differences were of two main kinds.



1. There were specific policy issues which were the direct result of the war and the series of conferences which took place at the time.
2. On a deeper level, there were more fundamental differences. Would it ever be possible for the United States and the Soviet Union to establish a working relationship again? Were they doomed to a future of rivalry, suspicion and mistrust?

This in turn leads us to a consideration of the nature of the rivalry that was to develop. In Chapter 1 the concept of Cold War was introduced and a summary of the different aspects of Cold War rivalry was given. In this chapter, the possible true nature of that rivalry will be examined.

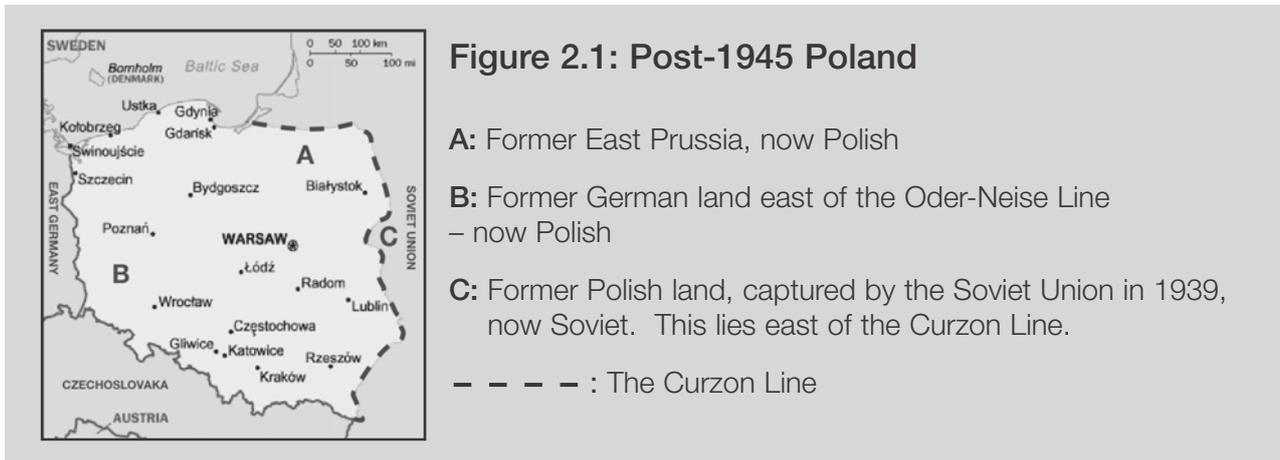
The immediate emerging differences

(i) Poland

Poland had a special place in western thinking. Hitler's invasion of Poland had been the immediate cause of the outbreak of World War II. Britain and France had earlier (March 1939) promised to assist Poland if attacked by Germany and then proceeded to do nothing. During the war, Poland's lands and people were decimated, and its Jewish population almost eradicated. Its officer corps had been massacred by the Soviet Red Army at Katyn in 1940. The fate of Poland weighed on the western conscience. However, for Stalin, sentiment and bad conscience were irrelevant. For Stalin future security was everything.

- To prevent the possibility of another invasion of Russia, Stalin intended establishing a "friendly" regime in Poland.
 - To this end, a pro-Soviet group of Poles known as the Lublin regime was set up to take control after the war.
 - As mentioned in Chapter One, Stalin allowed the Germans to destroy Polish resistance partisans in August 1944. This would remove another potential source of Polish independence.

- The US and Britain backed a Polish government in exile based in London.
 - Stalin had promised to allow some of this government to participate in post-war arrangements but he reneged on this.
- Stalin further angered the west with his insistence on the Curzon Line for the Soviet Union's western frontier, and the Oder-Neise Line for Poland's western border with Germany.

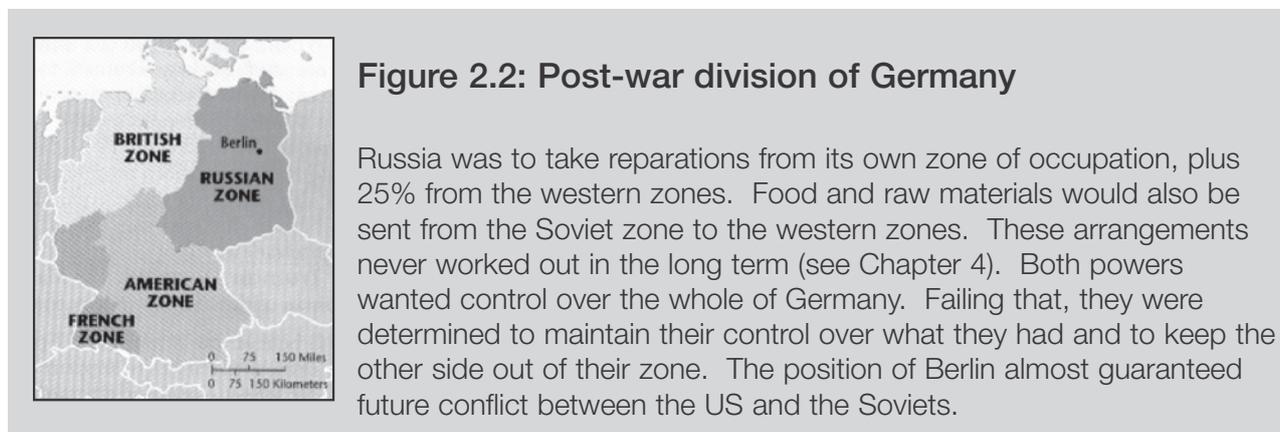


(ii) Germany

The post-war arrangements for Germany were described in Chapter One. Those arrangements resulted from lengthy fractious discussions which highlighted the fundamental differences in approach to Germany.

- The Soviet Union had wanted to keep Germany united so that it could take its share of potential reparations from the wealthier west. Stalin's view was that its country had suffered most and deserved compensation.
- The Americans were determined to keep Stalin out of western Germany.

By the time of Potsdam, the four power occupation of Germany had been worked out with Britain, France and the US each controlling a western zone, while the Soviets controlled the eastern zone. An Allied Control Council was to coordinate economic policy for the whole country. Berlin, situated inside the Soviet zone, was to be administered by allied commanders in the four zones. Access to the western zones of Berlin from the western zones of Germany was to be by means of ill-defined air corridors, road and rail links.



(iii) Iran

Iran proved to be the cause of further strain in relations between the Soviet Union and the western powers. Iran had been occupied by Soviet and British forces during the war. The Shah of Iran had been pro-German and it was deemed important to have Iran in friendly hands so that a supply line to Russia could be secured and Iranian oil would not fall into German hands.

- It had been agreed that occupation forces would leave Iran within six months of the end of the war.
- Soviet troops refused to leave and indeed the Soviets attempted to set up a pro-Soviet puppet regime in northern Iran.
- The Iranians took the issue to the United Nations and Soviet forces left Iran. However, when Iranian troops moved into northern Iran, Soviet troops massed on the border.
- The British then moved troops to the Iraq-Iran border and the Soviet troops withdrew. Iranian forces then retook the north.

(iv) Turkey

At Yalta and Potsdam, Stalin had expressed his dissatisfaction with Turkish control of the 'straits'.¹ The straits are Russia's only outlet to the Mediterranean. In 1936, the Straits had come under Turkish sovereignty. Stalin wanted them returned to international control. He wanted to build a Soviet base in the Dardanelles, and wanted the return of former tsarist lands in the area. At Potsdam Stalin said he would be happy with a naval base at Alexandroupolis in Greece. US President Truman would have none of this, especially when Greece became a key cold war theatre (see Chapter 3) and he sent an aircraft carrier to Istanbul to make his point. The issue gradually died away.

(v) Creation of the "iron curtain"

In March 1946, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered his famous "iron curtain" speech. The term "iron curtain" referred to the frontier line across Europe which separated eastern communist states from western non-communist states. As time went on, the iron curtain "on the ground" would comprise electrified fences, watch towers and mine-fields. Churchill was decriing the fact that Europe had been cut in two, and that Eastern Europe now lived under the control of the Soviet Red Army. Churchill stated:

*"...From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe... all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence, but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure, of control from Moscow."*²

Churchill had used the term "iron curtain" before in a telegram to President Truman in May 1945. Nazi propaganda chief Goebbels had predicted that an iron curtain would divide Europe following the Yalta Conference.

¹ The straits are those waterways linking the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. They comprise the Dardanelles (where Anzac troops fought in 1915), the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus.

² Winston Churchill, at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, 5th March 1946

- Within months of the end of World War II, pro-Soviet regimes had been established in Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.
- The former Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had become fully incorporated into the Soviet Union. ³
- Yugoslavia and Albania soon had communist governments. ⁴
- The eastern zone of Germany was of course under Soviet control. ⁵
- Czechoslovakia finally succumbed to communist control in 1948. The “loss” of Czechoslovakia was felt in the west.
 - Czechoslovakia had been the leading east European democracy before the war.
 - There also still lingered a feeling of guilt in the west for the way Czechoslovakia had been deserted at the time of the 1938 Munich Conference. ⁶

As Stalin consolidated his control over the countries of Eastern Europe, the US ensured its dominance over non-communist Western Europe. This included not only overt measures such as The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and NATO,⁷ but also secret, undercover activities such as interfering with elections held in Italy and France.

(vi) Other areas of disagreement

In the immediate aftermath of the war, there were many other issues over which the superpowers found themselves at odds. These included:

- Soviet opposition to the Baruch Plan.
 - This was a US idea to stem the development of nuclear weapons by placing weapons and research under United Nations control.
 - With the UN under virtual US control, the Soviets believed the Baruch Plan would merely perpetuate the American dominance in the area of atomic weapons.
- President Truman's approach towards the Soviet Union was hard-line.
 - As a novice on the international scene, Truman believed he had to act tough and prove himself. His aggressive stance towards the Soviets harmed relations.
 - Revisionist historians of the 1960s and 1970s have suggested that Truman was to blame for the deterioration of US-Soviet relations.
- Civil war was raging in Greece between socialist revolutionaries and pro-western royalist forces. The situation in Greece would become the spark for the establishment of the Truman Doctrine (see Chapter Three).

3 These areas had been invaded by Soviet troops in 1940 following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939.

4 Though communist, Yugoslavia and Albania remained independent of Soviet control. Indeed relations between these two countries and the Soviet Union deteriorated greatly in the years to come.

5 It would become the German Democratic Republic (DDR) or East Germany in 1949 (see Chapter 4).

6 Czechoslovakia had been forced to hand over to Hitler the Sudetenland region. In March 1939, the west stood by as Hitler took over the rest of the country. See Chapter 4

7 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Exercise 2.1

Read each statement below. Circle the correct alternative answer provided on the right.

1	Stalin was quite happy for members of the exile Polish government in London to be a part of the Lublin regime	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Stalin accepted the Curzon Line and the Oder-Neise Line with a degree of reluctance.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The Americans were eager to keep Soviet forces out of the western half of Germany.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	Berlin was situated inside the Soviet zone of occupation.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	After the war, it was decided to divide Iran into zones of occupation similar to the manner of Germany's division.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	Truman was determined not to give in to Stalin's demands over the issue of the Straits.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	By the time of the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948, the iron curtain had become a reality.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	The Soviet Union admired the apparent selflessness of the American Baruch Plan.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Truman's inexperience in foreign affairs made it easy for Stalin to take advantage of the American president.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Historians have always agreed that Stalin deserves the blame for the worsening of US-Soviet relations.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

The more “fundamental” differences between the superpowers

(1) The cold war as an ideological conflict

The traditional view of the cold war and its origins argues that it came about because of the diametrically opposed ideological views of the United States and the Soviet Union.

- The United States had always stood for democracy, individual freedom and its constitution had sought to limit the power of government over the people.
 - It had entered World War I in 1917, it believed, ‘on the side of democracy’. After the war President Wilson had hoped to spread his vision of liberal democracy through the League of Nations.

- The United States had fought Hitler and Hirohito in defence of freedom, democracy and human rights.
- Thus, when Stalin took over Eastern Europe after 1945, the United States stood up to him on the basis of their ideological beliefs. Its purpose was the preservation of western democratic freedoms against the ideological onslaught of eastern communism.
- Since November 1917, the Soviet Union believed in the inevitable advance and victory of communism.
 - The revolution would see the proletariat (working class) winning the class struggle. Capitalism would end and eventually the state would wither away and an ideal communist utopia would eventuate.
 - Lenin and Trotsky dreamed of revolutions occurring across the world that would follow the example set by Russia.
 - Communist revolutions did occur in Germany and Hungary after World War I but they were quickly defeated.
 - With the Soviet Union the only communist nation, Stalin followed a policy of 'socialism in one country'.
 - However, when the defeat of Hitler left Eastern Europe under Soviet control, here was Stalin's opportunity to spread communism beyond the Soviet Union's borders.

(2) The Cold War as a traditional great power conflict

The alternative view of the development of the Cold War is that the post-war conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was nothing more than traditional great power rivalry. The US and the USSR were two giant global powers whose economic, political and strategic interests clashed.

- The prime concern of the United States was the maintenance of its economic and military dominance.
 - It sought to control markets and to ensure food and raw material trade links. It sought military and political dominance around the world in order to maintain its national self-interest.
 - For these reasons the US sought to keep 'democratic' regimes in power either by military/ political backing (The Truman Doctrine and NATO), or by economic assistance (The Marshall Plan).⁸
 - In order to maintain its superpower position, the United States was prepared to back not only democratic regimes such as Britain and France, but corrupt regimes like South Vietnam, and brutal military dictatorships in Latin America.
- After 1945, the Soviet Union gradually dominated the countries of Eastern Europe. However, this was not out of a desire to spread communism. Rather, Stalin had two essentially nationalistic aims in mind.
 - Firstly, he sought national security. His country had been invaded from the west on three occasions in 27 years.⁹ A line of buffer states in the east between the west and his own country would provide a line of defence between the Soviet Union and any possible future invader.

⁸ See Chapter 3.

⁹ Germany in 1914, the allied intervention in the Civil War in 1918-1919, and Germany again in 1941.

What do the historians have to say about the Emerging differences between the superpowers?

1. Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy in America

The French writer de Tocqueville wrote about US-Russian relations during the first half of the nineteenth century before Karl Marx had even thought about the Communist Manifesto.¹⁰ De Tocqueville believed that due to the sheer size and influence both countries would therefore inevitably wield, the United States and Russia were destined to dominate the globe. If one accepts de Tocqueville's view, then any future US-Russian rivalry would suggest that it would be in terms of great power rivalry.

"...There are, at the present time, two great nations in the world which seem to tend towards the same end, although they started from different points: I allude to the Russians and the Americans. All other nations seemed to have reached their natural limits, and only to be charged with the maintenance of their power; but these are still in the act of growth.... Their starting point is different, and their course are not the same; yet each of them seems to be marked out by the will of heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe..."¹¹

2. Geoffrey Barraclough: An Introduction to Contemporary History

Barraclough suggests that by the first decade of the 20th century, tensions between Russia and America had already appeared. President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-09) said the Russians were "utterly insincere and treacherous; they have no conceptions of truth... and no regard for others." Such views fitted well with traditional western European attacks on the 'Asiatic despotism of the tsars' which were common in the 19th century. Those verbal attacks were no less virulent than those hurled against the Soviet regime in the 1940s and 1950s. The main area of contention was China. The United States supported the notion of the 'Open Door', i.e. opposition to the creation of spheres of influence in the Far East and equal access for all nations to trade and commerce. This clashed with the tsarist aim of creating its own sphere of influence in China and of its ambitious territorial aim of dominating Manchuria and perhaps Korea.

Barraclough suggests that the origins of the Cold War lie not in ideological conflict but in this great power rivalry. Barraclough argues that this growing clash in the northern Pacific:

"...began a conflict of interests which was eventually to spread to Europe, to south east Asia and to the Middle East, until in the end, it divided the world into two hostile camps. What today we too easily simplify as an ideological conflict – the so-called 'cold war' – had its origins in the new power constellation which began to take shape at the beginning of the 20th century..."¹²

3. John Lewis Gaddis: We Now Know – Rethinking Cold War History

John Lewis Gaddis chooses to view both the United States and the Soviet Union after 1945 as "imperial powers", though, as he says, neither power would have accepted such a label at the time. He suggests that imperial powers did not need to behave like 19th century European nations with gunboats and conflicts with indigenous peoples. "Informal empires "had long existed alongside more "formal" empires. Gaddis suggests that the US and the USSR were as close as any great powers had become to controlling the destinies of half the world as de Tocqueville had foreseen.

"...And surely American and Soviet influence, throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century, was at least as ubiquitous as that of any earlier empire the world had ever seen..."¹³

¹⁰ Karl Marx wrote The Communist Manifesto in 1848. It became the 'bible' of future communists.

¹¹ De Tocqueville, Alexis, Democracy in America, 1835

¹² Barraclough, G, An Introduction to Contemporary History, Penguin, London, 1968, p 110

¹³ Gaddis, J L, We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War, OUP, Oxford, 1997, p 27

4. Maybe it is an ideological conflict?

Consider these two statements which appeared shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917. The first comes from the American Secretary of State in the administration of President Woodrow Wilson; the second is the “mission statement” of the Communist International (the Comintern), created by the Bolsheviks in 1919.

(1) *“...the existing regime in Russia is based upon the negation of every principle of honor and good faith, and every usage and convention, underlying the whole structure of international law; the negation, in short, of every principle upon which it is possible to base harmonious and trustful relations, whether of nations or of individuals....In the view of (the US) government, there cannot be any common ground upon which it can stand with a power whose conceptions of international relations are so entirely alien to its own, so utterly repugnant to its moral sense...”*¹⁴

(2) *“...An international brotherhood of workers committed to overthrow capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in all countries. The ideal is an international Soviet republic pledged to the destruction of class society and the introduction of socialism as the first stage of a Communist World Society...”*¹⁵

These two statements would tend to suggest that there was an unbridgeable ideological chasm between the United States and the Soviet Union. This ideological divide came into sharp focus after 1945 due to the Soviet Union’s elevation to superpower status at the same time as the eclipse of the old European powers and Japan.

5. Ian Buruma: Year Zero – A History of 1945

Buruma suggests that the onset of the Cold War was almost a deliberate tactic of Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov. In this analysis, he leans on the memoir of the future US Secretary of States, John Foster Dulles. Molotov realised that the Communists were strong in France, and in China simmering civil war could soon erupt. During the foreign minister conference of September 1945 in London, involving the US, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China, Molotov sought to humiliate the French and the Chinese, and implicate the US in that humiliation. Buruma describe the various tactics Molotov employed. Eventually, Molotov demanded that the foreign ministers conference could only continue without the French and the Chinese. US Secretary of State, Byrnes, refused to agree. The conference was abandoned.

*“...To Dulles, this was the moment of truth. It marked ‘the end of an epoch... It marked the ending of any pretence by Soviet Communists that they were our friends...’*¹⁶

¹⁴ US Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby, speaking in 1920

¹⁵ The Communist International, 1919

¹⁶ Buruma, I, Year Zero: A history of 1945, Atlantic Books, London, 2013, p 329

Chapter 3:

The Truman Doctrine and its consequences

Introduction

On 12 March 1947, President Harry Truman addressed the American Congress and enunciated what was to become known as “The Truman Doctrine”. The Truman Doctrine was to bring about a revolution in the foreign policy of the United States. Ever since independence, it had been a cardinal principle of American foreign policy to avoid entanglements and commitments beyond the Americas. At the end of the 18th century, America’s first president, George Washington, told his countrymen that:

*“...The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is... to have with them as little political connection as possible...”*¹

This attitude was reiterated by the presidents who followed Washington. In 1823, President Monroe stated that:

*“...In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so...”*²

Throughout the 19th century, the United States was preoccupied with domestic matters. The continent was gradually settled, thanks in part to massive immigration, and new states were created. This process of settling the continent was referred to as Manifest Destiny. Between 1861 and 1865, the country tore itself apart in its bloody civil war. After 1865, the nation concentrated on developing its vast resources. Involvement in World War I was the exception rather than the rule and had arguably been forced upon the US by German actions.³ However, after the war, the United States resorted to its traditional isolationist stance. Nazi and Japanese aggressive actions eventually forced the US into the Second World War. However, after 1945, the US did not return to isolationism, and the clearest sign of this was The Truman Doctrine. Truman’s speech raises various issues:

- Why did the US feel it had to revolutionise its foreign policy?
- What influences determined Truman’s decision?
- What was the essence of the Truman Doctrine?
- Was the Truman Doctrine the cause or the result of the Cold War?
- What were the consequences of the Truman Doctrine?

1 President George Washington in his Farewell Address, 17 September 1797

2 President Monroe announcing The Monroe Doctrine in 1823. The corollary of US non-involvement in European affairs was the American demand for European non-involvement in the Americas.

3 German unrestricted submarine warfare from February 1917 led to the sinking of American shipping in the Atlantic. President Wilson was left with little alternative than to declare war on Germany.

Figure 3.1: Background to the announcement of the Truman Doctrine

Throughout 1945 and 1946, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were steadily deteriorating. There were disagreements over Poland, Germany, Iran, Turkey and the issue of atomic weapons. Truman's abrasive approach to foreign affairs angered the Soviets. Each accused the other of bad faith and of reneging on decisions agreed to at Yalta and Potsdam.

However, sensationalist talk at the time of a possible Third World War was well off the mark. The US had quickly demobilized much of its army, its atomic arsenal was extremely limited and the American people would not countenance another war. The Soviet Red Army had also demobilised and though Red Army numbers were significant, the state of the Soviet economy precluded any military confrontation with the United States.

However, Churchill's "iron curtain" speech had focused attention on the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe. There were calls in the west that a line had to be drawn, that the apparent Soviet expansion in Europe had to be halted.

It was the situation in Greece which brought things to a head. Civil War between communist and royalist forces had continued intermittently since 1944. British forces backed the royalist government. However, in early 1947, Britain announced that it could no longer keep going in Greece. This was the result of a severe winter, economic disaster and imperial problems as far a field as Palestine and India.

There was a real danger that Greece (and also Turkey) might soon fall under communist control. This would give the Soviet Union domination of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Straits and possibly enable it to wield influence in the future over the Suez Canal and Middle East oil. Faced with this strategic threat, the US rushed to replace the British.

The result was Truman's speech to Congress and the
TRUMAN DOCTRINE

Influences on President Truman

Harry Truman had been thrust into the position of President following the death of Franklin Roosevelt on 12 April 1945. Truman had been a senator from Missouri. He had been the Democratic Party's compromise candidate for Vice-President in the 1944 election.

- Truman had little foreign policy experience and had been very much kept in the dark on foreign policy matters by Roosevelt.
- He was a religious, provincial politician who tended to see the world in *Manichaeian* terms.⁴
- Truman received contradictory advice from various quarters.
 - Some advisors such as Henry Morgenthau (Secretary of the Treasury), George Marshall (later Secretary of State) and Henry Stimson (Secretary of War) urged Truman to follow a cooperative line with the Soviet Union.
 - However, due to his inexperience and his desire to 'prove himself', Truman veered towards the more hard line approach of others.

What follows is a summary of the advice Truman received from such men, both before and after the announcement of the Truman Doctrine.

George Kennan had been stationed in the US embassy in Moscow since 1944. He argued for a strong line to be taken against the Soviet Union. He expressed his views forcefully in the famous "Long Telegram" of February 1946 that he sent to the US State Department. In the Long Telegram Kennan argued:



...We have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the United States there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure.....

...This political force has complete power of disposition over energies of one of world's greatest peoples and resources of world's richest national territory, and is borne along by deep and powerful currents of Russian nationalism...⁵

In addressing the future of US-Soviet relations, Kennan was approaching the matter in both ideological and great power rivalry terms. He saw the Soviet Union as a threat both to the American way of life and the power of the United States.

Clark M Clifford was Special Counsel to the President between 1946 and 1950.

In this role, Clifford echoed the hard line approach for which Kennan was arguing. In what has become known as "The Clifford Memorandum", Clifford argued:

*"...The main deterrent to Soviet attack on the United States, or to attack on areas of the world which are vital to our security, will be the military power of this country... Therefore, in order to maintain our strength at a level which will be effective in restraining the Soviet Union, the United States must be prepared to wage atomic and biological warfare..."*⁶



⁴ Truman saw the world as a contest between good and evil. The United States was clearly a force of righteousness; any power that was in opposition to it must be evil. Such a view perhaps places Truman in a bad light as naïve and unworldly. It should be pointed out here that history has been kinder to Truman, whose Cold War conduct proved to be more effective than contemporary opinion often gave him credit.

⁵ Taken from George Kennan's "Long Telegram", 22 February 1946.

⁶ Taken from Clark M Clifford's memorandum to President Truman, 1946

During Truman’s first administration, **Dean Acheson** was Undersecretary of State. ⁷ Acheson at first sought a conciliatory policy with the Soviet Union.



However, as Soviet power exerted itself over Eastern Europe, Acheson changed his views and became a keen “Cold War warrior”.

It was Acheson who was largely responsible for the wording of Truman’s speech to Congress on 12 March 1947. Acheson used his skills to persuade Truman’s Republican opponents to accept Truman’s plan for Greece. To Republican Senator Vandenberg he argued:

“...Like apples in a barrel infected by a rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would also carry infection to Africa, through Asia Minor and Egypt and to Europe through Italy and France...” ⁸

Acheson’s comparison of communist power as a disease which would infect neighbouring countries was a foretaste of the ideas behind the “Domino Theory” which would do so much to embroil the United States in the Vietnam War. ⁹

Exercise 3.1

Answer the following questions

1	What had been the traditional basis of US foreign policy since independence?	
2	What was happening to US-Soviet relations in 1945 and 1946?	
3	What was happening in Greece between 1944 and 1947?	
4	Why was Britain unable to maintain its presence in Greece in 1947?	
5	Why was Greece seen as important?	
6	How extensive was Truman’s foreign policy background?	
7	What was the nature of the Soviet threat as seen through George Kennan’s eyes?	
8	What was Clark Clifford’s advice to Truman?	
9	Who was Dean Acheson?	
10	How did Acheson argue for a hard line approach towards the Soviet Union?	

⁷ He became Secretary of State in the second Truman administration, 1949-53.

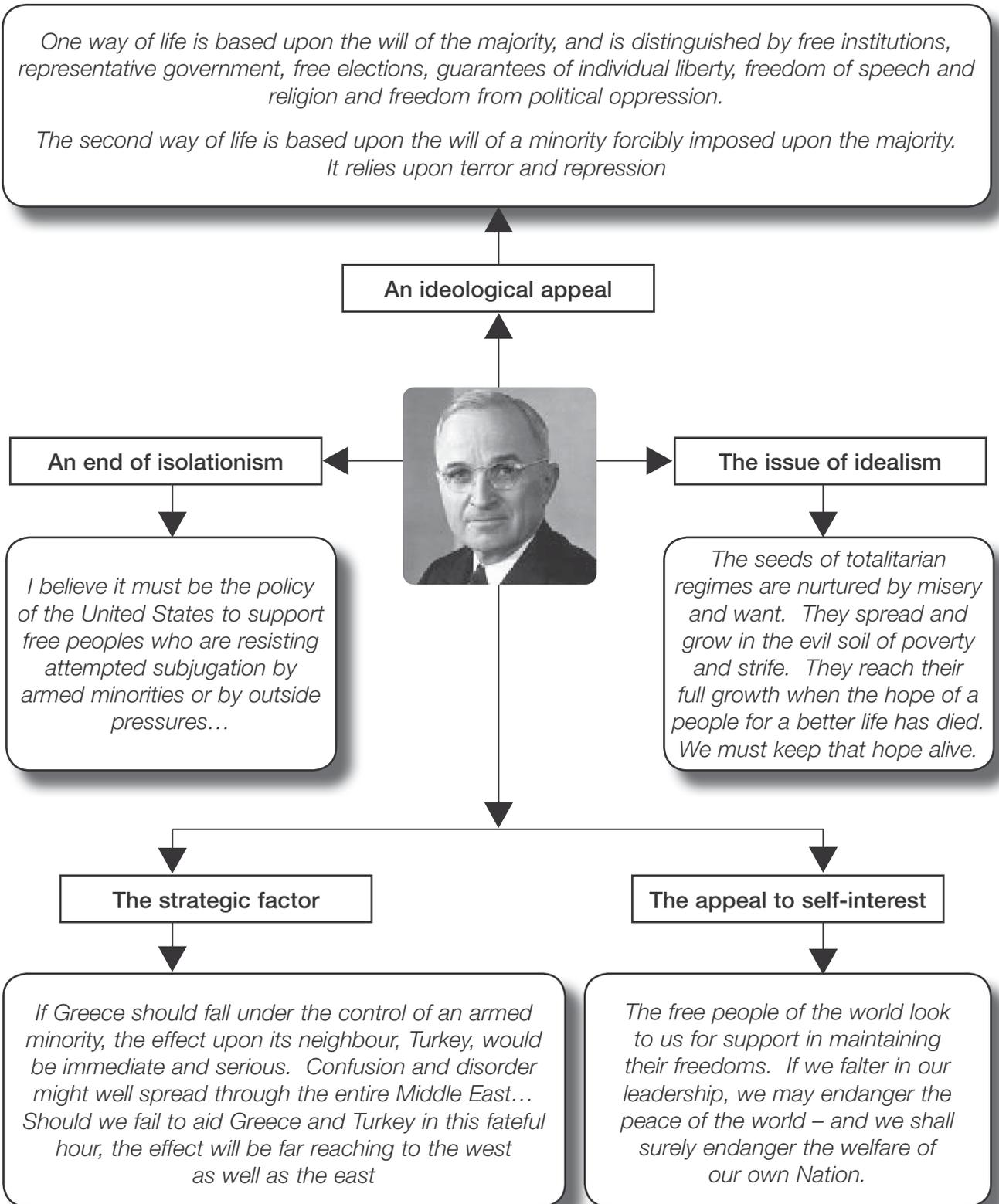
⁸ Acheson to Vandenberg and others senators, 27 February, 1947

⁹ See Chapter 5

What was the essence of the Truman Doctrine? Figure 3.2 summarises the key elements.

Figure 3.2:

WHAT WAS TRUMAN ACTUALLY SAYING IN THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE SPEECH?



What were the consequences of the Truman Doctrine?

1. The Truman Doctrine is arguably the most important document in the history of American foreign policy. It finally reversed a century and a half of ingrained isolationist thinking and committed the United States to a global role on which it has never turned its back since.

2. The scope of the Truman Doctrine was quite breathtaking. Consider the significance of what Truman actually said:

"...I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.." ¹⁰

The United States was announcing that it was willing to become involved in any conflict in any part of the world in which it perceived communist aggression.

3. Truman had drawn a line in the sand. At first that line was Churchill's 'iron curtain'. Communism would not be allowed to extend its power and influence beyond where it had already planted itself. In Europe this had particular significance:

- The United States (and its western allies) would use all means at its disposal to prevent Soviet penetration of Western Europe. There would be no succumbing to Soviet military or political power in the western half of Germany, Italy or France.
- However, it also meant that the United States and its allies had no intention of crossing the iron curtain to 'liberate' those nations which had already succumbed to communism.

4. Hence was born the policy of containment – the active involvement of the United States in preventing the spread of communism across the world. Containment would appear in various guises in the decades to come but its fundamental premise would remain the bedrock of American foreign policy and its stance vis-à-vis the Soviet Union for over forty years.

5. The enunciation of the Truman Doctrine raises one of the key areas of Cold War historical debate:

- Was the Truman Doctrine a response to Soviet aggression and so in essence a defensive strategy? This is the line that the likes of Kennan and Clifford argued.
- Or was it an unnecessarily provocative act which forced the Soviet Union on to the defensive and in effect "caused" the Cold War?

One of Stalin's Politburo members, Zhdanov, said at the time:

"...The United States proclaimed a new, frankly predatory and expansionist course. The purpose of this new, frankly expansionist course is to establish the world supremacy of American imperialism." ¹¹

The "jury is still out" in this discussion.

6. In the immediate short term, the Truman Doctrine "saved" Greece and Turkey from a communist takeover. Greece was granted \$250 million and Turkey \$150 million. Most of this aid went to building up the Greek and Turkish defence forces. Both became NATO members in 1952.

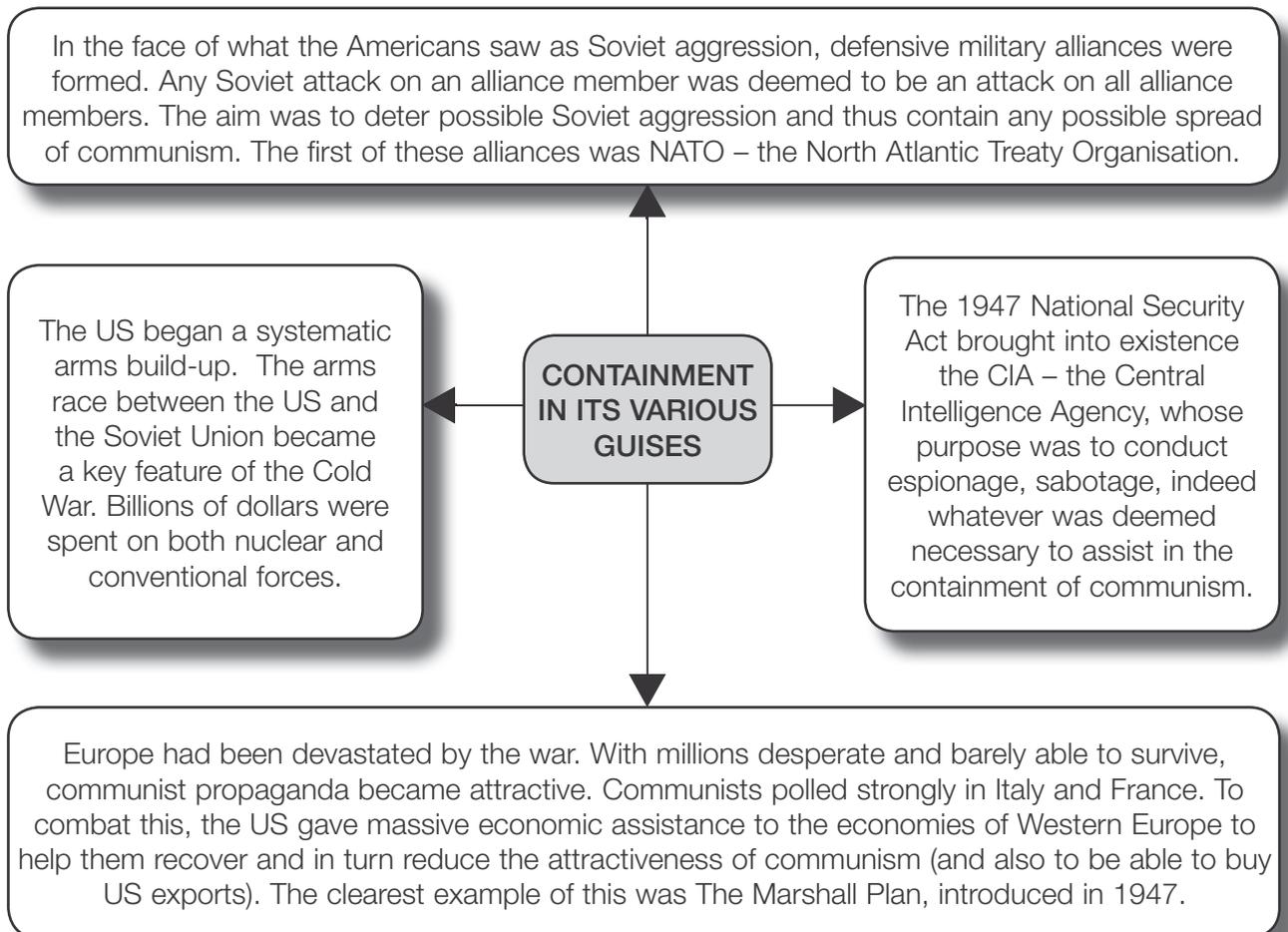
7. In the medium to longer term, the Truman Doctrine led to the further development of containment in a range of areas. This point is summarised in Figure 3.3.

8. The impact of the Truman Doctrine was soon seen in the various Cold War conflicts which came to dominate Cold War history. In the longer term, the containment policy of the Truman Doctrine was the predominant factor which saw the United States become involved in:

¹⁰ President Truman speaking to Congress on 12 March 1947

¹¹ Zhdanov was a particularly unpleasant example of Stalinist rule. He was the brutal party boss of Leningrad after the murder of Kirov in 1934, was a key player in the terror of the 1930s, and orchestrated the cultural purges of the late 1940s. He died of heart failure in 1948 though rumours at the time suggested that Stalin might have ordered his death.

FIGURE 3.3:



- The Berlin Blockade and Airlift: 1948-49
- The Korean War: 1950-53
- Support for the Nationalist Chinese regime in Taiwan
- Support for a revitalised Japan
- Support of the French in Indochina: 1950-54
- Support of Israel in the Middle East
- The arms race and the space race
- American opposition to the Castro regime in Cuba after 1959
- The Vietnam War of the 1960s and 1970s
- Support of the Mujahedeen fighting Soviet forces in Afghanistan and of the Contras fighting the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua in the 1980s
- Support given any regime, no matter how despicable, if it was seen as being anti-communist, eg the Apartheid regime in South Africa and a whole raft of military dictatorships in Latin America.

George Kennan summed up American policy after the Truman Doctrine in his famous “Mr X article” in the magazine *Foreign Affairs*. Kennan stated:

2. David Horowitz: *From Yalta to Vietnam*

Horowitz explains how the simplistic nature of the Truman Doctrine left no room for subtlety or a middle ground in American foreign policy. For Truman, argues Horowitz, the world is divided into two types of people: communists and anti-communists. Truman's Manichaeian way of viewing the world left no room for a middle ground and no tolerance of critics, no matter how reasoned their criticisms. The status quo must be maintained and anything that upset this status quo must be opposed.

"...(Thus for Truman) Those who oppose the Doctrine, ipso facto must be Communists, and conversely because Communists oppose the Doctrine, ipso facto, it must be good." ¹⁶

3. Isaac Deutscher: *Stalin*

Deutscher argues that there is a tragic paradox about the Truman Doctrine. Its aim had been to counter what was believed to be Soviet expansionary designs on Western Europe. However, those designs did not exist. However, by announcing the Truman Doctrine, those designs now entered the realms of possibility. Stalin viewed the Truman Doctrine as a virtual declaration of (cold) war. With the US atomic monopoly still intact, Stalin's only possible response was to build up Soviet conventional forces. Any threat of an atomic attack on the Soviet Union was thus staved off by an implied counter-threat of a Soviet attack on Western Europe.

"...Thus the bogey the West had invoked to justify the Truman Doctrine – the Red hordes threatening Europe – assumed some reality; but it did so only in consequence of the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine." ¹⁷

4. Oleg V Khlevniuk: *Stalin*

Khlevniuk has had the advantage of being able to research the Soviet archives in recent times. However, the explanation he provides for the worsening of east-west relations differs little to that provided by many earlier western historians. He refers to the American atomic monopoly, the US reluctance to have the Soviet Union share in the occupation of Japan and issues over Germany. He concludes that the growing conflict between the US and the Soviet Union after 1945 was the result of:

"...the utter incompatibility of their systems, their competing desires to expand their spheres of influence, mutual grievances dating to the pre-war years and a shared need for a common enemy..." ¹⁸

¹⁶ Horowitz, D, *From Yalta to Vietnam: American Foreign Policy in the Cold War*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967, pp 98-9

¹⁷ Deutscher, I, *Stalin*, Pelican, London, 1966, p 569

¹⁸ Khlevniuk, O V, *Stalin*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2015, p 266

Chapter 4:

Impact of the early crises: the Berlin blockade and airlift, China becoming communist in 1949 and the Korean War

Introduction

The late 1940s saw a deepening of tension in the Cold War between the communist east and the non-communist west. There were already many reasons why tensions were on the rise. In Chapter 2, it was explained that there were the deep ideological differences between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was further explained that these ideological differences might have been hiding more traditional great power rivalries. In Chapters 1 and 2, it was also shown that there were differences on more specific issues. Some of these included disagreements over Poland and Germany.

Roosevelt's conciliatory approach to the Soviet Union had been replaced by Truman's more aggressive stance. This also increased tensions between the superpowers. The American atomic monopoly certainly would have emboldened Truman and made the Soviets nervous. The enunciation of the Truman Doctrine was seen in Soviet quarters as a virtual Cold War declaration of war.

Adding to the tensions between east and west was the introduction of **The Marshall Plan** in June 1947. The Americans feared that Europe's poverty and slow economic recovery might reinforce the electoral attraction of local Communist Parties. The Communists had polled well in French and Italian polls. A poor Europe would also find it difficult to purchase American exports. With these concerns in mind, US Secretary of State Marshall launched the European Recovery Program, or Marshall Plan on 5 June 1947.

- This was essentially a European self-assist program that would be financed by the Americans.
- The original idea had been for all European countries to benefit. However, fears of western influence in the east, demands for detailed economic information from eastern governments and Stalin's innate suspicion combined to ensure the Plan would be western in nature.
- Under the guidance of Paul Hoffman, the plan distributed over \$13 billion worth of aid over the next four years.
- Economically the plan was a dramatic success:
 - trade grew;
 - European financial stability was reestablished;
 - there were rapid increases in western European industrial and agricultural growth rates.

Stalin's refusal to join the Plan meant that post-war Europe would be divided not only politically but economically. The Soviet Union responded with the Molotov Plan which was to provide Soviet aid for eastern bloc countries. This was the first of several moves to more fully integrate eastern Europe:

- On 5 October 1948, the Soviet Union established the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform). This was a modern day version of the earlier Comintern. Its aim was to tie European Communist Parties more closely to Moscow.

- In January 1949, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecom) was created. The purpose of this was to tie eastern European economies to that of the Soviet Union.

It was against this background of suspicion, distrust and division that the first great crisis of the Cold War developed. The issue was Berlin.

The Berlin Blockade and Airlift

(1) The post-war organisation of Germany and Berlin

The post-war occupation of Germany had been worked out at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. The country was divided into four occupation zones (Figure 4.1). There were to be three western zones: British, American and French, and the Soviet zone in the east. The capital, Berlin, was situated in the eastern Soviet zone. It too was divided into four zones of occupation (Figure 4.2): British, French, American (West Berlin) and Soviet (East Berlin).¹

Figure 4.1



Figure 4.2



The three western zones which constituted West Berlin were thus surrounded by communist territory on all sides. In order to reach West Berlin, it was necessary to cross the Soviet zone of occupation. Clearly, West Berlin was in a vulnerable position. It would be very easy for Soviet authorities to cut off West Berlin from Western Germany if they so chose.

(2) Tension builds over Berlin

Throughout 1947 and the first half of 1948, east-west relations in Germany steadily deteriorated.

- In January 1947, the British and American zones of western Germany combined to become a single BiZone.
 - This was done to coordinate Anglo-American economic policy.
 - The decision was made without reference to the Soviet Union.
- The Soviets were further angered when the US announced it was going to introduce a new currency into the western zones. The Soviet commander in Germany, Marshall Sokolovsky, walked out of the Allied Control Council in anger.
 - This effectively marked the end of allied cooperation in Germany.
- The new currency – the Deutschmark (equal to 10 old Reichmarks) was introduced

¹ There was no wall dividing Berlin. The Berlin Wall was not constructed until 1961.

in June 1948.² Stalin made it clear that he would not allow the new currency into the eastern zone. To have done so, would have meant a lessening of Soviet economic control.

- Stalin was not only angered by western unilateral actions over the German economy. The presence of the west in Berlin was deeply embarrassing:
 - Western troops were allowed to cross the Soviet zone
 - West Berlin's prosperity contrasted sharply with the social deprivation and ailing economy of East Berlin.
- As east-west relations worsened, the Soviet authorities began to make life increasingly difficult for West Berlin residents.
 - In late March 1948, new regulations were introduced which greatly slowed the passage of traffic into West Berlin.
 - On 18 June all passenger traffic into West Berlin was stopped and there were cuts to electrical power supplies to the west.

Finally, on 24 June 1948, Soviet authorities closed down all rail, road and canal links between West Berlin and the western zones of Germany. West Berlin had been blockaded by Soviet forces. There were thousands of allied troops in West Berlin, as well as two million West Berliners. What was the west to do?

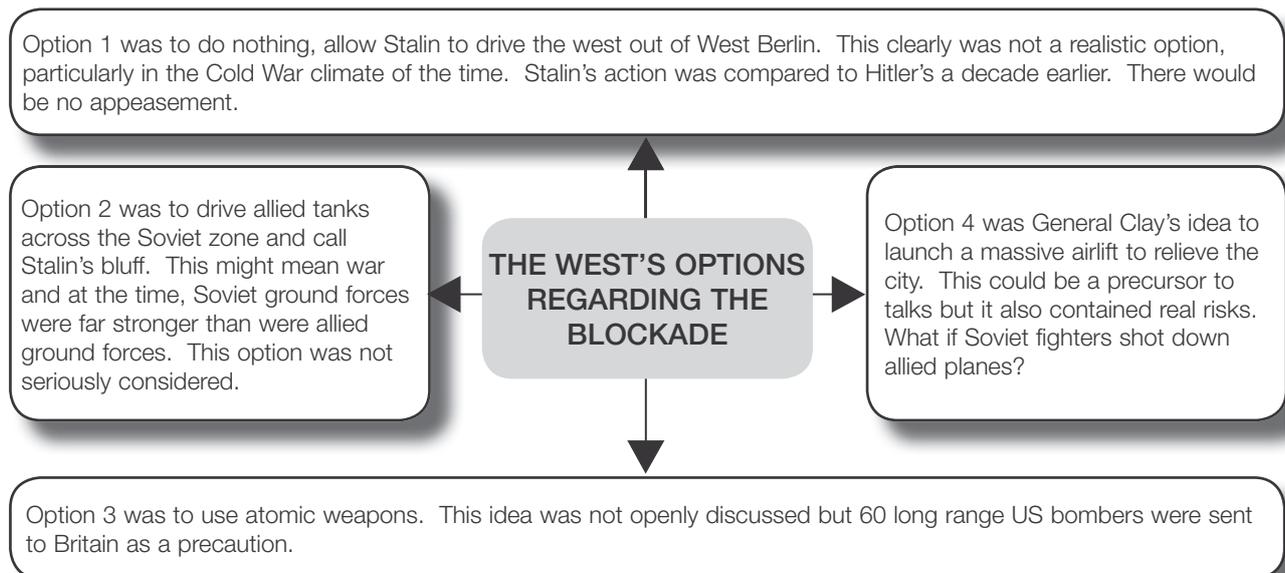
(3) The western response to the Berlin Blockade

The United States Military governor in West Berlin at the time of the blockade saw that the Soviet actions had a significance which went well beyond Berlin. He said at the time:

"...When Berlin falls, Western Germany will be next... If we withdraw our position in Berlin... Europe is threatened... Communism will run rampant..."

The west had several options; these are summarised in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3



² German banknotes were becoming worthless, as was the case after WWI. Germans began to talk of the "dictatorship of the cigarette" as it was becoming a key medium of exchange.

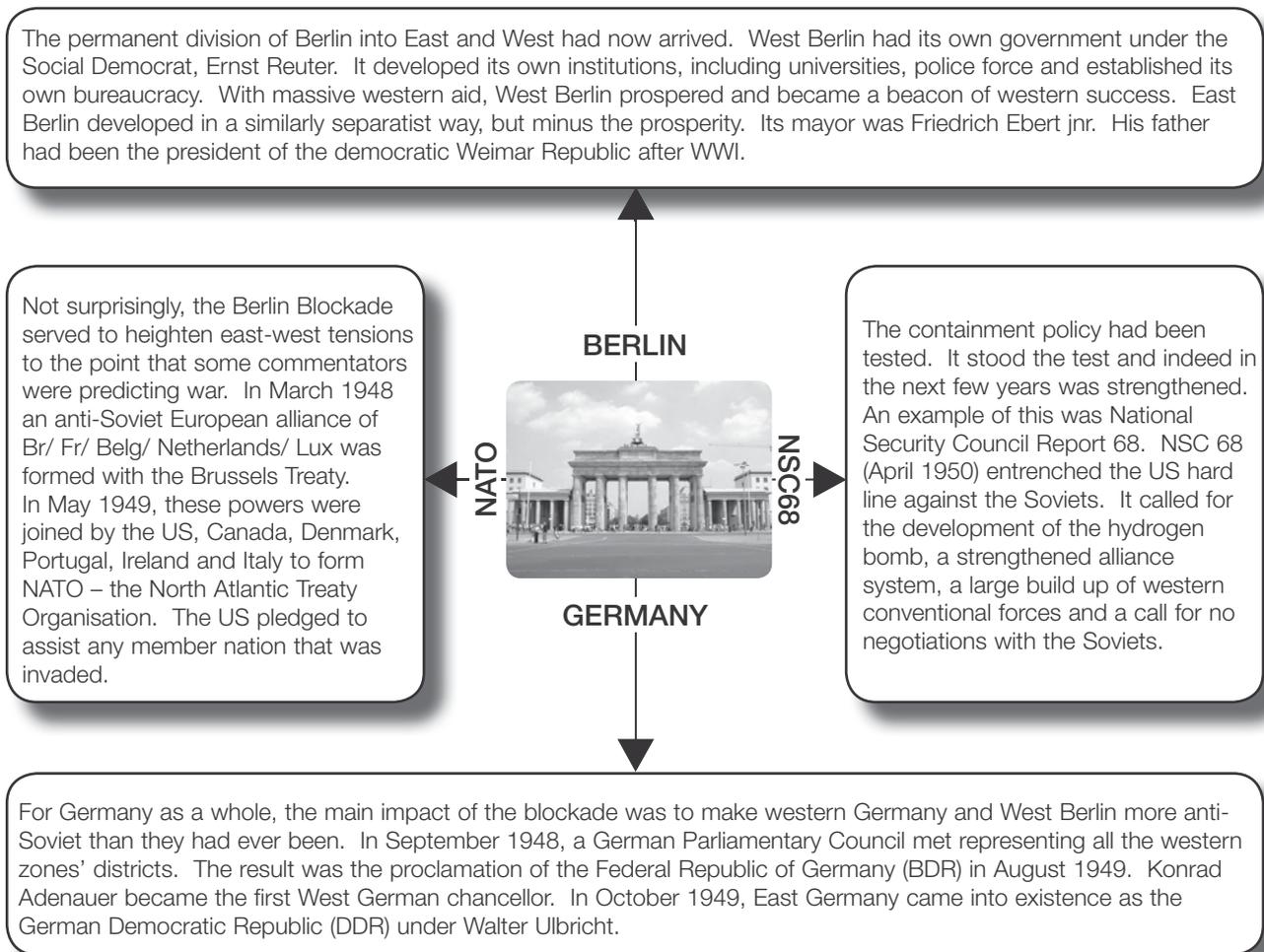
Clay's idea was accepted and so allied planes began "Operation Vittles". The population of West Berlin was about 2.4 million. It was estimated that to keep West Berlin going with food/medical and energy supplies over 4000 tons of supplies a day would have to be flown in.

(4) The Berlin Airlift:

Allied planes flew non-stop into Berlin's Tempelhof Airport from June 1948 to September 1949. At times planes were landing at 30 second intervals with ground crew running alongside slowing planes, taking cargo being thrown off. If a plane could not land, it flew straight back to western Germany to start again. On one day in April 1949, over 13 000 tons of supplies were landed. There were accidents and 79 pilots died. However, considering the primitive state of air navigation (compared to the 21st century), the airlift was a masterpiece of logistics. Stalin lifted the blockade on 12 May, 1949, but the allies continued flights at a lesser intensity for another four months to build up a backlog of supplies for the city in case the blockade was reinstated. The Berlin Airlift was not without its sense of irony:

- The airlift's success was partly due to Soviet air traffic controllers who continued working as part of the Four Powers air control body.
- The radio beacon guiding allied planes was in the Soviet zone. It was allowed to continue functioning.

Figure 4.4: The results of the Berlin blockade and airlift



Exercise 4.1

Place the events listed in the box below in the correct chronological order.

- Introduction of the Deutschmark into the western zones
- The allies finally call off the airlift
- Stalin calls off the blockade of Berlin
- The creation of the Anglo-American BiZone
- The establishment of West Germany (BRD ³)
- Soviets introduce regulations slowing traffic into West Berlin
- The introduction of National Security Council Paper NSC68
- Stalin imposes a blockade on West Berlin
- The establishment of East Germany (DDR ⁴)
- The allies launch Operation Vittles

1st event	
2nd event	
3rd event	
4th event	
5th event	
6th event	
7th event	
8th event	
9th event	
10th event	

³ BRD: Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany)

⁴ DDR: Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)

China becomes a communist state: October 1949

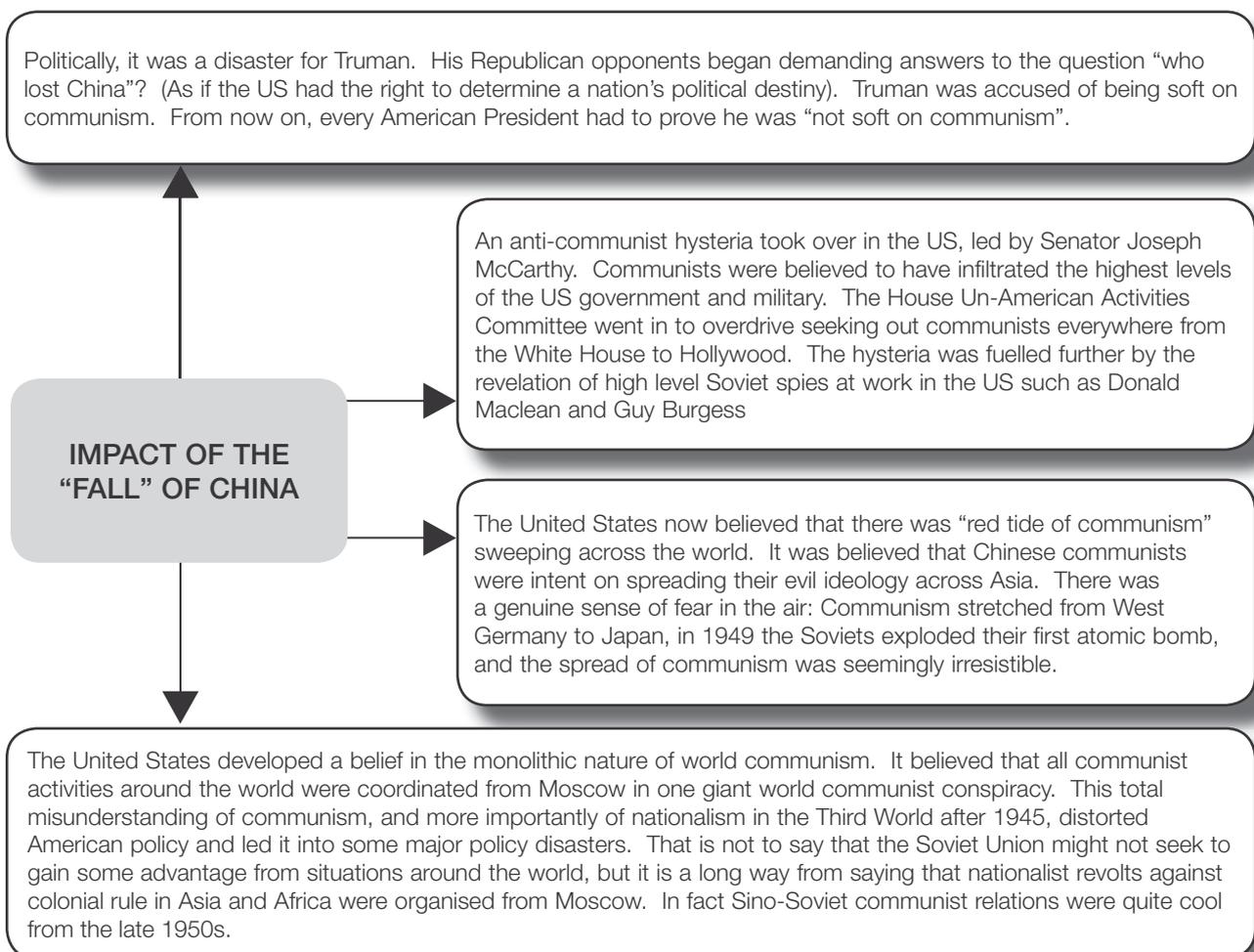
In October 1949, Mao Zedong's Communist Party took power in China.

- China had experienced almost continuous civil war since the late 1920s. In 1927, the Nationalist Chinese leader, Jiang Jieshi ⁵ turned on his Communist allies. By 1934, the Communists were close to extinction.
- The “Long March” of 1934-35 led to the Communists reestablishing themselves in Yan'an province. By now Mao Zedong had gained control of the party and was developing his ideas of guerrilla warfare.
- Nationalist-Communist conflict ended temporarily when both sides agreed to fight the invading Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-45.
- However, civil war bubbled under the surface. Nationalist forces were accused of avoiding major conflicts with the Japanese while the Communists gained much support for their willingness to fight behind the Japanese lines.

Following the defeat of Japan in WWII, civil war broke again in earnest in 1946. Mao's better-led forces gradually overcame the disorganized and corrupt Nationalist forces of Jiang Jieshi who, in 1949, was driven from mainland China to the island of Formosa (Taiwan).

The “fall of China to communism” had a dramatic effect on the Cold War. This is summarised in Figure 4.5.

FIGURE 4.5:



⁵ In the old “Wade-Giles” method of Chinese spelling, Jiang Jieshi is Chiang Kai-Shek.

The Korean War: 1950-53

Background to war

China had been “lost”, nothing could be done about that. However, when Communist North Korea invaded non-Communist South Korea in June 1950, the American containment policy was to get its first real test outside of Europe.

Korea had been under the control of Japan between 1910 and 1945. Following Japan’s defeat in WWII, the Korean peninsula was occupied by Soviet and American troops. Attempts at unifying the two occupied halves of Korea came to nothing and the country became divided at the 38th parallel. North Korea was under the control of the Communist leader Kim Il Sung, while South Korea was under the American backed Syngman Rhee. In 1948, the formal division of Korea was achieved with the creation of the “Republic of Korea” (South) and the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea (North). Syngman Rhee’s regime was far from democratic but in American eyes it had the virtue of being non-communist. By mid-1949, both Soviet and American forces had left the country.

In June 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel and thus began an invasion of South Korea. Several explanations have been suggested for the Northern invasion of the South.

- Kim Il Sung was acting unilaterally with no prompting from the Soviet Union. Kim believed that a rapid surprise attack would bring victory over the South and allow him to unite the country under Communist rule.
- American commentators, who saw the hand of Moscow in everything, argued that Kim was acting under orders from Stalin, and this was part of a general Communist push for power. This was unlikely as the Soviet Union was already stretched economically and its absence from the United Nations would mean it could not influence proceedings there.

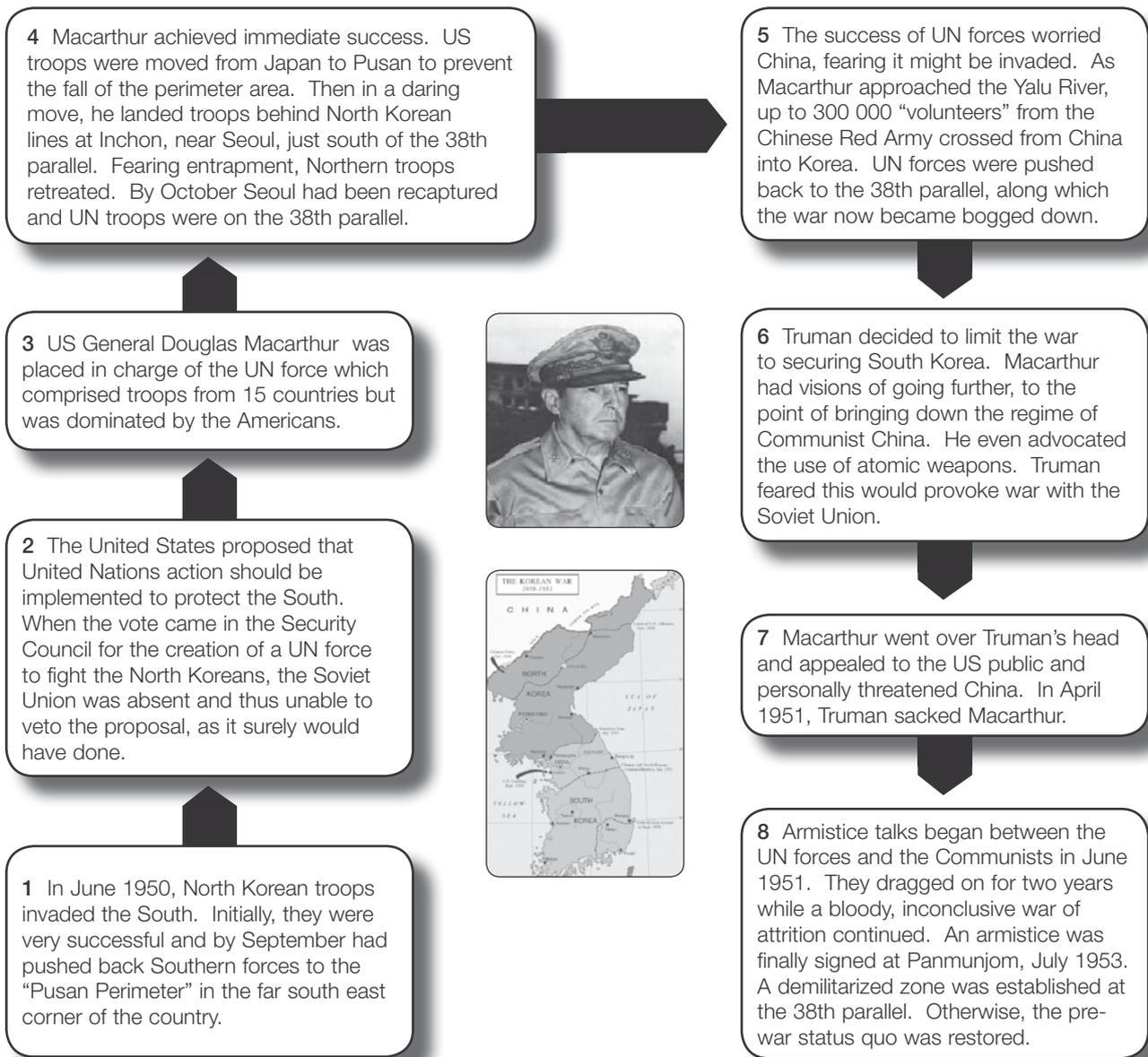
The US decision to quickly respond to the Northern invasion can also be seen in various ways.

- If the Truman Doctrine was to mean anything, the Northern attack could not be allowed to go unanswered. Entering the war against the North was therefore “containment in action”. The initial US goal was set at pushing the North Koreans back to the 38th parallel.
- Truman had his own motives.
 - In his memoirs he saw the invasion in a wider world context. ⁶
 - Having “lost” China, Truman had to act to ensure that he did not “lose” Korea.
- Revisionist historian David Horowitz suggests that the conflict was a civil war. It was only US intervention which made it a Cold War conflict.

The Americans decided to enter the conflict and support the South (under the flag of the United Nations – see below). It is interesting to note that as recently as January 1950, Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, had stated that Okinawa, Japan and the Philippines were in an “American sphere of influence”. However, in his speech he had specifically omitted mention of South Korea.

⁶ Truman later stated: “I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall, Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores.” (Presidential Memoirs, Vol II)

FIGURE 4.6: THE COURSE OF THE KOREAN WAR



The results of the Korean War

The Korean War is often called “the forgotten war” in some western countries. One Australian cartoon from 1951 ⁷ shows an old “digger” talking to a young soldier. When informed that the soldier had been in Korea, the old man replies: “Korea? Where’s that then?” However, the consequences for those fighting and the Korean people were enormous.

- Over three million people died in the conflict, many of them civilians. Over five million Koreans were left homeless. Much of South Korea’s infrastructure had been destroyed and North Korea had been devastated by indiscriminate American bombing.
- In recent years, evidence has come to light that American forces used biological weapons against North Korean and Chinese forces between January and March 1952.
- Korea was to remain permanently divided at the 38th parallel. The demilitarized zone between North and South is still one of the most dangerous places on earth. ⁸

⁷ Australia was one of the 15 nations of the UN force. Over 300 Australians died in Korea.

⁸ An even greater tragedy is the fate of the North Korean people who have had to live under the megalomaniacal regimes of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong-un.

Korea also had a major impact on the wider issue of the Cold War.

- Containment had again been tested and proven a viable policy. The spread of communism had been halted. The United States now reinforced its policy of containment in the Asian theatre.
 - Guarantees were now given to the Nationalist Chinese regime on the island of Formosa.
 - The Americans decided to build up the strength of Japan. As memories of Pearl Harbour receded into the background, a strong Japan was seen as a useful Cold War ally.
 - The US decided to finance up to 80% of French war costs in their campaign against the Vietminh in Indochina. The Vietminh leader, Ho Chi Minh, was seen as a communist puppet of Moscow.
- Relations between the US and Communist China, which were poor following the Communist takeover in 1949, now sunk into deep freeze. It would be twenty years before Sino-American relations improved.⁹
- US defence expenditure was increased dramatically. This involved not only conventional forces but also the development of missile systems and the stockpiling of atomic weapons.
- As part of its containment policy in the wake of the Korean War, the US assisted in the build-up of a network of anti-communist alliances around the world. NATO had been formed in 1949 It was followed by:
 - ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) in 1951.
 - SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organisation in 1954)
 - CENTO (Central Treaty Organisation in 1955).

Exercise 4.2

Answer the following questions.

1	Why was 1949 seen as a bad year in Cold War terms for the United States?	
2	What was Kim Il Sung's motive in invading South Korea in June 1950?	
3	How was Kim's motive interpreted by the Americans?	
4	Why was it possible for the US to fight under the flag of the UN in the Korean War?	

⁹ See Focus of Study (2).

5	How was Macarthur able to force the retreat of the North Koreans?	
6	Why did the Chinese enter the Korean War?	
7	What was Macarthur's attitude to the Chinese intervention in the war? What happened to him?	
8	What was the result of the Korean War for the Koreans?	
9	Why might the US be able to argue that the Korean War had been a success?	
10	List three longer term results of the Korean War for the wider Cold War.	

What do the historians have to say about Impact of the early crises: the Berlin blockade and airlift, China becoming communist in 1949 and the Korean War?

1. Mark Arnold-Forster: *The Siege of Berlin*

Arnold-Forster makes the point that arguably the most significant result of the airlift which saved West Berlin, was the massive disparities in living standards and freedoms which developed between West and East Berlin. Thanks to Marshall Aid, the strength of the Deutschmark and West German efforts to support West Berlin, the standard of life in the west far exceeded anything that the east could manage. Things became so bad for the East Berliners that the people rose up in revolt against the communist authorities in June 1953. The authorities responded by shooting dead protesting strikers.

*"...The years between 1949 and 1953 were a period during which the contrast between West Berlin's prosperity and East Berlin's continuing poverty became more obvious month by month... What was worse from the East German government's point of view was that the contrasts could not be concealed... (and there was no chance of compromise between West and East Berlin for) You cannot parley with people who shoot strikers dead..."*¹⁰

2. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler: *US-China Relations Since World War II*

Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler highlight the point that US officials believed in the monolithic nature of worldwide communist activity. They argue that administration officials, the military and the people

¹⁰ Arnold-Forster, M, *The Siege of Berlin*, Collins, London, 1979, pp 111, 112, 119

around Senator Joe McCarthy saw Moscow's hand in everything. To support this they quote Assistant Secretary of State, Dean Rusk from 1951.

*"...The peace and security of China are being sacrificed to the ambitions of a Communist conspiracy. China has been driven by foreign masters into an adventure of foreign aggression... The Peiping (Beijing) regime may be a colonial, Russian government... It is not the government of China..."*¹¹

3. George F Kennan: Memoirs 1950-1963

Kennan provides an insider's view of the thinking at the highest levels of the State Department and the Truman administration at the time of the Korean War. Kennan was certainly no soft touch when it came to the issue of Soviet power. However, he viewed Korea in a rational, unemotional manner. He did not believe that the Soviet Union was involved in a vast conspiracy. The Soviet regime of the early 1950s was not the Nazi regime of the late 1930s.

*"...They (leading US officials) viewed the Soviet leaders as absorbed with the pursuit of something called a "grand design"- a design for the early destruction of American power and for world conquest... In vain I pleaded with people to recognize... that the Russians were not like that; that they were weaker than we supposed, that they had many internal problems of their own... that they had no grand design..."*¹²

4. M L Dockrill and M F Hopkins: The Cold War

Dockrill and Hopkins comment on the impact of the crises in Asia on internal US politics. The "loss" of China and the failure to break the stalemate in the Korean War caused frustration in US political circles and led to a search for 'scapegoats' to blame for US policy failures since 1949. This anticommunist crusade, they argue:

*"...poisoned American politics in the late 1940s and the 1950s and made it extremely difficult for successive administrations to formulate a coherent foreign policy..."*¹³

11 Hoobler, D and T, US-China Relations Since World War II, Franklin Watts, New York, 1981, p 34

12 Kennan, G F, Memoirs 1950-1963, Hutchinson, London, 1973, p 92

13 Dockrill, M L , and Hopkins, M F, The Cold War, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2006, p 55

ADVICE ON WRITING ESSAYS

(These comments should be re-read when approaching the sections called ESSAYS 1, ESSAYS 2, ESSAYS 3 and ESSAYS 4.)

Introduction to essay writing

People who have been marking the HSC for a few years can read an essay and with little hesitation can say “that’s a ‘B’ level answer, 16/ 25, or that’s a ‘mid-A’ range answer, 23/ 25, or this is ‘D’ answer, 8/ 25. HSC markers do occasionally disagree about answers but once they share their disagreements, the value of the essay becomes clear. It is one of the comforting things about how Modern History is marked at the HSC, that the legendary level of accuracy is almost scientific.

The reason for this is that essay writing is both a literary and a scientific skill. There is no mystery in writing a good essay. Certainly some people are better writers than others: they might have a wider vocabulary, they might know more, they might have a better turn of phrase, and they might understand the issues more clearly. However, everyone can come to terms with the basics and write a reasonable essay.

So what makes for a successful essay?

1. Answer the question. This sounds almost trite and an insult to the intelligence, but the majority of responses presented in the HSC which score poorly, do so because they do not answer the question. Failing to answer the question can be done in a variety of ways. In summary it can happen because:

a. A student fails to address the issues presented in the question, ie he or she decides to write about something else. For example in the essay:

How important were Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev in bringing about the end of the Cold War?

A student decides to argue that:

- Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev had nothing to do with bringing about the end of the Cold War;
- it was the result of Reagan’s hardline policies with which the Soviet Union tried to compete but proved unable to do, which in turn took the Soviet system to breaking point.

A nice line of argument, but it is not answering the question. The student could argue the ‘Reagan’ line, but above all he needs to deal with the issue of Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev, even if it is to show that they were not important. He cannot simply ignore the focus of the question because he wants to write about something else.

- he could argue that yes, the Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev were important in bringing about the end of the Cold War, and show why this is so, and then argue “but of course other factors were also of importance such as.....”
 - as a rule of thumb: if you are going to pursue this style of argument, make sure that about half of your essay deals with the subject of the question, in this case Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev.

b. A student writes about the issues presented in the question, but instead of providing an argument to answer the question, they simply ‘narrate’ or ‘tell a story’. For example in the essay:

How important were Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev in bringing about the end of the Cold War?

A student fails to present an argument, instead she simply narrates:

- she might describe the main aspects of Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev;
- she might even go on to show some of the results of Soviet policies under Gorbachev.

This is all relevant, factual detail but she is merely telling a story and not presenting an argument which is showing how important Soviet attitudes and policies were in bringing about the end of the Cold War.

c. A student does not really understand the question and has so little factual detail they are unable to sustain even a narrative response.

d. A student does understand the question and attempts an argument but has so little factual detail that the argument cannot be sustained.

'c' and 'd' can only be fixed up with solid work and revision on the part of the student; 'a' and 'b' can be learned.

2. Provide an argument in your introduction which will form the basis of the essay. The introduction is the most important paragraph of the essay; if it is written properly it should leave the marker in no doubt what is going to come up in the essay. So what does a good introduction involve?

a. Avoid the dramatic 'setting the scene' method. For example in the essay:

How important were Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev in bringing about the end of the Cold War?

A student should avoid opening like this:

- After over 65 grim years of despotism when a careless word could send an unsuspecting citizen to a freezing Gulag in the Arctic, the Soviet people could at last begin to breathe the fresh air of freedom. At long last the Soviet people could express their true feelings and the deadweight of state control was gradually being weakened. A human face was appearing on the body of Soviet communism.

b. Avoid providing lots of factual detail in the introduction. Introduce the broad areas you will discuss, but leave the detail to the body of the essay. For example in the essay:

How important were Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev in bringing about the end of the Cold War?

This is not a good introduction:

- Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union in March 1985 following the death of party leader Chernenko. Gorbachev introduced the policies of glasnost and perestroika, and attempted to improve relations with the United States whose President, Ronald Reagan, had followed a tough line with the Soviet Union since become president in 1981. Under the policy of glasnost, Gorbachev allowed.....

c. Be careful with length. Three lines is not an introduction, no argument can be properly introduced in such a small space. However, a page and half is too long. With average sized writing, 6-8 lines should be enough to present the argument of the essay.

d. Present an argument in your introduction. There is no 'right' answer to a Modern History essay question; the right answer is the argument which you have presented, logically

developed and backed up with detailed factual evidence. For example, for the essay:

How important were Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev in bringing about the end of the Cold War?

A student might try to argue:

- Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev were fundamental in bringing about the end of the Cold War. Gorbachev unleashed forces which he could not control. Glasnost and perestroika created demands for greater change, demands which soon spread into Soviet controlled Eastern Europe. As challenges to Soviet power both at home and abroad grew, Gorbachev was faced with the choice of giving in to those challenges or of using force to crush them. Gorbachev's temperament and the Soviet Union's internal decay made such a choice unlikely. By 1991 communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had collapsed. The Cold War was over.

3. Provide your essay with a structure. Your introduction should show where the essay will lead, eg the above introduction might lead to the following structure:

- some points about the policies of glasnost and perestroika and the impact of this inside the Soviet Union and how they spurred calls for change in Eastern Europe; give specific examples.
- the growing realisation of the true weakness of the Soviet Union, perhaps bring in John Lewis Gaddis' ideas here;
- some detail of the events of 1989 will be needed from the unrest in East Germany to the fall of Ceausescu, and Gorbachev's unwillingness to use force to deal with this (as had Brezhnev over Czechoslovakia in 1968);
- the growing challenges to the Communist Party's power inside the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's weakening position and the rise of Yeltsin;
- the attempted coup in August 1991, Yeltsin's role and the collapse of the Soviet Union;
- conclusion: Gorbachev had introduced glasnost and perestroika to strengthen the Soviet Union. Instead, he only succeeded in revealing the fundamental weaknesses of the regime and releasing forces which he could not control, both at home and in Eastern Europe. With the collapse of communism, the *raison d'être* for the Cold War had disappeared.

(NB: this is only one of a hundred ways of dealing with this question)

4. Structure paragraphs carefully. Some simple rules:

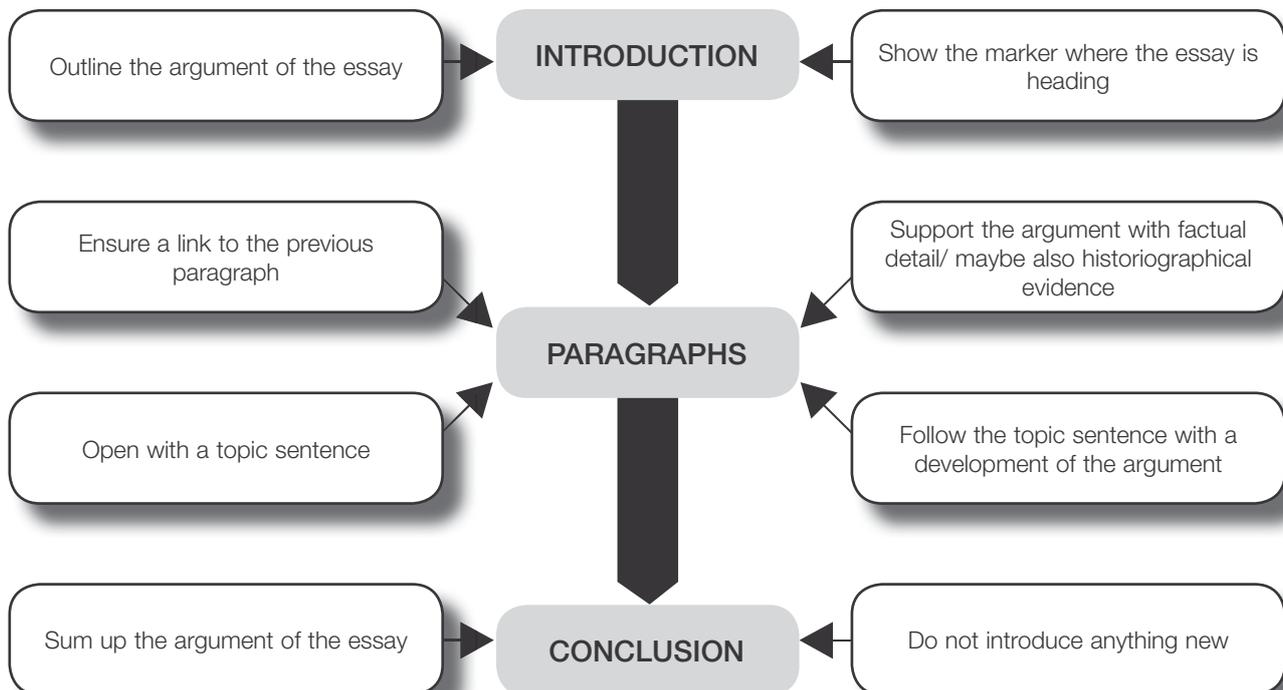
- open with a topic sentence which outlines what the paragraph is going to be about;
- develop the argument presented in the topic sentence;
- support the argument with specific factual detail;
- if appropriate, support the detail with historiographical evidence;
- link your paragraphs – this can be achieved easily with certain stock phrases, eg:
 - “not only was ‘x’ of significance but ‘y’ also had an impact....”
 - “in addition to “a and b”, “c and d” were also to benefit from.....”
 - “in contrast to “e”, “f” reacted quite differently....”

NB: Do not open paragraphs with historiography. The aim should be for the student to show the marker what he knows. Therefore, open with your ideas, back it up with factual detail and then, if appropriate, back up your idea with what a historian has said:

- argument>detail>(maybe) historians' ideas;
- do not name drop for the sake of it – markers are not fooled or impressed by having lots of historians' dropped into an essay when their books have almost certainly never been looked at;
- fewer historians mentioned is better than lots.

NB: Do not quote, paraphrase! This shows that you understand what the historian is saying; giving a three line quotation merely shows you have remembered a three line quotation, whereas paraphrasing the historian's view in your own words shows that you have understood what you are writing. The occasional pithy quote of just a few words can be effective.

The diagram below sums up some of the main ideas that have been discussed in this section.



ESSAYS 1:

Responding to HSC questions on the Origins of the Cold War 1945-53

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the first section of the syllabus: Origins of the Cold War 1945-53. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

“Account for the growing differences between the superpowers after 1945.”

“Account” questions expect students to provide an argument to explain “why” developments have occurred. Thus, it is not enough to simply narrate a series of events from the end of World War II onwards. Having said this, it is crucial that students be able to provide solid, factual detail to back up any argument they present. This question does not provide an “end date”. It is up to the student to make a judgment about how far the essay should go. Students should be guided by their familiarity with the syllabus. This aspect of the syllabus comes in the section “Origins of the Cold War 1945-53” and so any response should go no further than this. The suggested response below will go no further than about 1947.

The US and the Soviet Union had been allies in the struggle against Nazism. However, when the common enemy had been defeated, the deep-rooted differences between the two powers resurfaced. On the surface these differences seemed ideological but they were also a matter of great power rivalry. Against this background, specific differences emerged relating to the legacy of the war.

- A brief paragraph about the war is in order:
 - US disgust at the Soviet occupation of Poland and the Baltic states at the beginning of the war
 - the Nazi invasion/ US lend-Lease assistance and admiration for the Soviet efforts
 - apparent joy at their joint success in 1945
- However, the pre-1941 ideological differences began to reappear. In this section it might be appropriate to make comments about the nature of the ensuing Cold War:
 - brief mention of Bolshevism/ its aims/ the Comintern
 - US response to Bolshevism/ allied intervention in the Civil War/ perhaps mention of US domestic response to the communist threat
- Discussion of the fundamental nature of the superpower conflict:
 - is it an ideological struggle?
 - is it a great power struggle?
- Bring in the more specific issues for discussion. Of prime importance was Europe, and more specifically, Germany:

- refer to western anger at the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe – give some details
- reference here to Churchill's iron curtain speech
 - the division of Germany and the division of Berlin, and the difficulties that this entailed.
- The issues of Poland was a matter of concern:
 - make reference to the symbolic importance of Poland
 - the rival governments of Poland, backed by east and west
 - also refer to issues of the Curzon Line and the Oder-Neise Line
- Outside of Europe there were other areas of concern:
 - the issue of Turkey
 - the issue of Iran
 - the matter of nuclear weapons
 - the growing crisis in Greece
 - Truman's brusque way of dealing with the Soviet

The growing differences between the superpowers had deep-rooted causes stretching back to before the war. The essence of these differences was partly ideological and partly about great power rivalry. However, the war created more specific issues that divided the powers in areas ranging from Germany to Poland to Iran.

Essay No 2

“Assess the impact of the Truman Doctrine on the development of the Cold War in the period to 1953.”

“Assess” questions expect students to make a judgment about the issue indicated in the question, in this case ‘The Truman Doctrine’. Under no circumstances ignore the issue stated by saying “it was of no importance, what was important was” Such an approach is inviting a very poor mark. Common sense suggests a starting point in 1947 when the Truman Doctrine was enunciated and clearly the question expects students to stop in 1953. Adhere to these limits for the sake of relevance. Students will receive no credit for irrelevant material.

In March 1947, President Truman announced the Truman Doctrine to the US Congress. The Doctrine contained the principle of containment. It was to be of the utmost fundamental importance after its introduction as it proved to be the basis of US foreign policy for the next forty years. In the period to 1953, the Truman Doctrine was to have a major impact on events in Europe and Asia, and in the general conduct of the Cold War. It ensured a period of continuing antagonism with the Soviet Union.

- Some background will be needed on the Truman Doctrine, though do not get carried away with too much narrative:
 - brief mention of Greece and Britain's weak state;
 - explain what Truman said in March 1947;
 - explain the principle of containment;
 - make the point that containment meant preventing the spread of communism, it did not mean removing it from areas of which it was already in control.
- Though Greece was the first example of containment, it was in Germany, and more

specifically Berlin that the policy of containment was really put to the test:

- provide some brief background on the division of Germany and of Berlin – be careful to avoid the narrative trap;
- give some detail of developments in Berlin in 1948 and illustrate how the Soviet Union was tightening the screws in West Berlin;
- discuss Truman's options for dealing with the blockade imposed by Stalin;
- some detail on the western response and the effectiveness of the airlift;
- comment on the success of the airlift and Stalin's backdown.
- Bring in the issue of Korea to show that the Truman Doctrine was not restricted to Europe alone:
 - give some brief background on the Korean War – division of the country in 1945/ rival regimes;
 - briefly describe the actions of North Korea;
 - introduce Truman's response on the basis of the Truman Doctrine;
 - some details of the Korean War would be appropriate here, including the involvement of China.
- The Truman Doctrine also manifested itself in other ways. The containment of communism was to be achieved not only by means of specific military action (Korea) and dramatic intervention (Berlin). The Doctrine also envisaged this occurring in other ways:
 - forming alliances against communist expansionism, eg NATO
 - strengthen US defences, eg NSC-68
 - the development of atomic forces, eg development of the H-bomb;
 - the rapid expansion of spy agencies such as the CIA;
 - the provision of massive economic aid (eg The Marshall Plan) to assist countries in difficulty (ie Western Europe) which would reduce the attraction of communism.

The Truman Doctrine was of fundamental importance to the development of the Cold War in the period to 1953. It provided the foundation on which US foreign policy would be based. Preventing the spread of communism became the prime mission of US foreign policy from Europe to Asia, and affected US policies in a wide range of areas.

Possible HSC-style questions on the section of the syllabus: “Origins of the Cold War 1945-53”

1. Account for the growing differences between the superpowers after 1945.
2. Assess the impact of the Truman Doctrine on the development of the Cold War in the period to 1953.
3. Evaluate the importance of the Berlin Blockade on the development of the Cold War.
4. How important was the issue of ideology as a cause of the Cold War in the period to 1953?
5. To what extent was the influence of the ideologies of communism and capitalism responsible for the origins of the Cold War?
6. Assess the impact of the early crises between the United States and the Soviet Union on the development of the Cold War. In your answer refer to any TWO of the following: the Berlin Blockade, China becoming communist in 1949 and the Korean War.

Chapter 5:

Policy of containment, domino theory and the emergence of peaceful co-existence

Introduction

The policy of **containment** continued to dominate US foreign policy throughout the administration of President Eisenhower (1953-61).¹ However, containment continued to grow, almost tentacle-like in its global spread. By 1953, the policy of containment had been tested over Berlin and Korea. Throughout the 1950s, it would have an impact in regions stretching from South East Asia, to Iran, to Central Africa, to Latin America and back to Berlin. Containment also took on new forms. The new US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, championed the policy of *brinkmanship*, taking issues and crises to the limit of the possible use of nuclear weapons. The rapid advances in *nuclear and missile technology* added a frightening element to the Cold War.² Eisenhower modified the containment policy by adding a regional flavour to it. In 1957, he announced what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, a “Truman Doctrine for the Middle East”.³

From the mid-1950s, Asian affairs played a growing role in the American containment policy. In 1954, Eisenhower articulated what was to become known as the **domino theory**. This was the idea that if one state “fell” to communism, others would fall in turn. Referring to the situation in Indochina, President Eisenhower stated in 1954:

*“...Finally you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the “falling domino” principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly... When we come to the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the (Malay) Peninsula, and Indonesia..”*⁴

Eisenhower’s domino theory was contradictory from the start. Within two sentences he refers to events as a “certainty” while at the same time being only a “possible sequence of events”. However, contradictory or not, the domino theory was to have a major impact on American policy in Indochina.⁵

In the early months of the Eisenhower administration, there were some hopeful signs for an improvement in US-Soviet relations. Stalin’s death in March 1953 left open the possibility of a less rigid Soviet leadership and the ending of the Korean War removed the most obvious symptom of east-west tension. The rise of Nikita Khrushchev and his tentative moves towards deStalinisation, gave hope for better relations as he pressed for **peaceful co-existence**. By 1959, the new Soviet leader was wooing the American people in their own country!

1 Truman did not stand for re-election in 1952. The Democrat candidate was Adlai Stevenson; he was defeated by the Republican candidate, America’s WWII hero, Dwight D Eisenhower.

2 The development of the arms race and the space will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

3 The Middle East aspect of the Cold War will be dealt with in Chapter 9.

4 President Eisenhower speaking at a press conference, 7 April, 1954.

5 Issues regarding Indochina will be dealt with in Chapter 9.

The continuation and extension of containment

The *first months* of the Eisenhower era provided great possibilities for a significant improvement in US-Soviet relations.

- Here was a new president, loved by his people and respected by the Russians as a key player in the struggle against fascism in WWII.
- Eisenhower's dramatic trip to Korea at the end of 1952 inspired many and helped to bring the bloody conflict to an end in July 1953.
- Stalin's death presented the hope of a thaw in relations as a new collective leadership in Moscow under Malenkov took over.
- In April 1953, Malenkov formally proposed talks on Korea and cuts in troop numbers in Europe.

The *American response was not promising* and betrayed the hard line approach that Dulles and Eisenhower would pursue throughout the decade. Eisenhower said he would agree to talks if Moscow allowed elections in Eastern Europe, a reunited Germany and an end to Soviet involvement in Malaya and Indochina. Stalin or no Stalin, the Soviets would not be pushed around. Dulles' threat of a massive arms build-up was met with Malenkov's announcement that the Soviet Union had its own hydrogen bomb.

The Eisenhower administration showed its commitment to containment early on with its involvement in *Iran*.

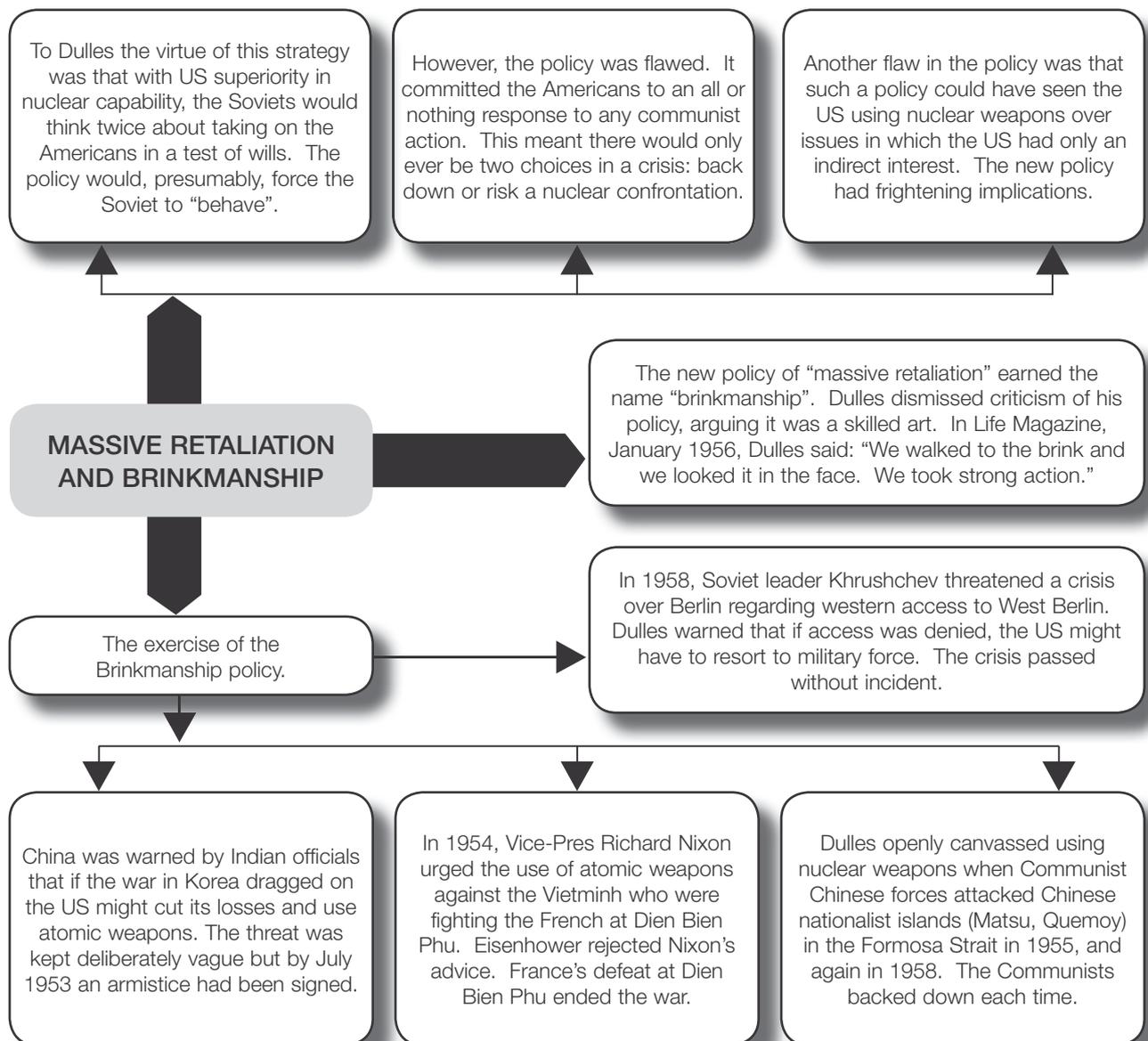
- An Iranian nationalist movement, headed by Dr Mohammed Mossadegh, was becoming increasingly influential. Mossadegh had followed General Razmara after the latter's assassination in 1951.
- Under Mossadegh, relations with Britain (the key western player in the region) deteriorated as the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was nationalised.
- It was believed in Washington and London that Mossadegh was moving into "the Soviet orbit" and there were rumours of a Soviet loan. The US cut all aid to Iran.
- In August 1953 following a coup, Mossadegh was arrested, the Shah of Iran was reinstated to power, and a pro-western CIA-supported regime took power.⁶

This would be one of many episodes of *CIA involvement* against governments perceived to be unfriendly to the United States. This involvement might involve destabilising "unfriendly" regimes, murdering "difficult" figures, falsifying election results or organising or sponsoring coups and replacing them with more compliant regimes.

The new Eisenhower administration introduced a '*new look*' to US defence policy. Expenditure on conventional forces was reduced while more reliance was to be placed on nuclear forces. This new policy is explained in Figure 5.1.

⁶ The Shah would remain in power as an American friend until the Islamic Revolution of February 1979 which brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power.

Figure 5.1: Massive retaliation and brinkmanship



As was mentioned in Chapter 4, part of the containment policy was the development of anti-communist alliances around the world. By 1955, NATO had expanded to include Greece, Turkey and West Germany. The Soviet Union responded with a series of bi-lateral defence treaties with its Eastern European allies. In May 1955, these were replaced with the establishment of the eastern alliance bloc called the Warsaw Pact.

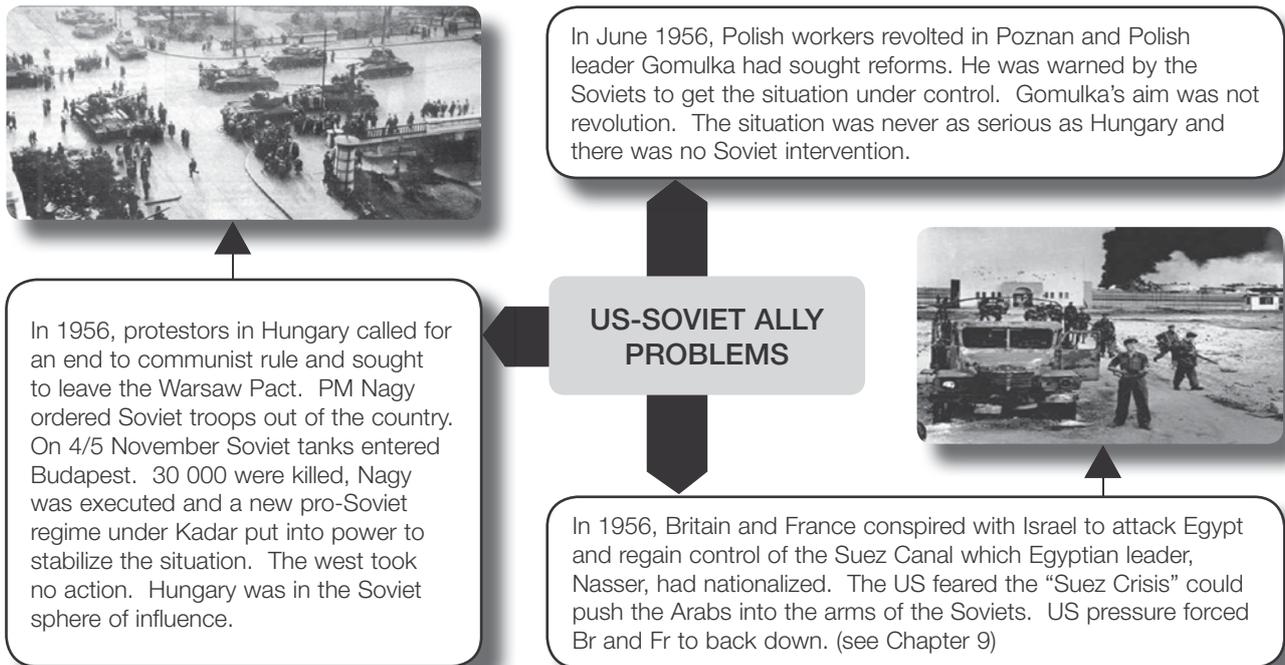
Cold War treaty arrangements now stretched well beyond Europe.

- SEATO was formed in 1954 comprising Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines and the United States.
 - This alliance was not very effective. India and Indonesia refused to join and Pakistan left in 1973.
 - It came to an end in 1977.
- The Middle East was covered by the Bagdad Pact of 1955 signed by Turkey, Iraq, Britain, Pakistan and Iran.

- Its aim was to provide “regional stability”. Dulles said at the time: “Now the purpose of the pact is not in any way to disrupt the Arab world... (but) to create a solid band of resistance against the Soviet Union.”
- The more militant Arab states opposed the Pact (or CENTO) as it became known. Following a revolution in 1958, Iraq left the pact.

Both the US and the Soviet Union had problems with its allies. For Moscow the main problems concerned Poland and Hungary; for the Americans the problem lay with France and Britain.

Figure 5.2: US-Soviet ally problems



Both the United States and the Soviet Union were deeply embarrassed by the events of 1956. The use of brutal oppression by Soviet forces in Hungary was hardly a good advertisement for the solidarity of international communism. If there had been any before, there was now no doubt that the Soviet Union's East European allies were in the Warsaw Pact on sufferance. Anglo-French action in the Middle East looked like old fashioned European imperialism. America's allies behaving in this manner did not say much for the alleged western commitment to freedom and democratic human rights.

Exercise 5.1

Read each statement below. Circle the correct alternative answer provided on the right.

1	The policy of containment was pursued less keenly during the administration of President Eisenhower.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	The death of Stalin raised enormous hopes for an improvement in east-west relations.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The domino theory suggested that the Americans saw communism like a disease that could spread.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

4	The Iran crisis showed the Americans willing to use brute force and subversion in its pursuit of containment.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	The Soviet Union intervened in its allies' affairs only when invited to help them out of difficulties.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	John Foster Dulles feared the use of nuclear weapons and worked hard to avoid possible nuclear confrontations.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	The US reliance on brinkmanship in the 1950s introduced a strong degree of inflexibility to US defence policy.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Eisenhower was as eager as Nixon to consider the use of nuclear weapons in Indochina in 1954.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Dulles could argue with some justice that his policy of brinkmanship had worked throughout the 1950s.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	The United States was happy to back the Anglo-French policies in the Suez Crisis in 1956.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

The Eisenhower Doctrine

Fearing that Britain and France's failure over Suez in 1956 ⁷ might enable the Soviet Union to play a more dominant role in the Middle East region, the United States responded with The Eisenhower Doctrine of January 1957. The *Eisenhower Doctrine* at its simplest level was a Truman Doctrine for the Middle East.

The president saw his doctrine has having three elements.

1. The United States would give economic assistance to all new nations in the area in order for them to keep their independence.
2. The United States would give military assistance if required.
3. "...it would in the third place authorize such assistance and cooperation to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism." ⁸

The United States soon had a chance to implement the Eisenhower Doctrine against a background of an increasingly radicalized Arab world. Egyptian President Nasser was still enjoying the afterglow of Suez and keenly sought the leadership of Arab nationalism. ⁹ In 1958 Egypt and Syria combined (temporarily) to form the United Arab Republic. In the same year King Faisal of Iraq was assassinated in a military coup led by Brigadier Abdel Karim Kassem. In Lebanon, President Chamoun's pro-western regime faced major unrest which in July 1958 necessitated the sending of 14 000 marines to the country. The Americans stayed until November by which time the situation had calmed.

United States and Counter-insurgency

The United States' willingness to intervene militarily where it thought its interests were threatened was also in evidence in Latin America. In the same way the US had been willing to intervene in Iran,

⁷ The Cold War and the Middle East, including the 1956 Suez Crisis, will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 9.

⁸ President Eisenhower to the American Congress, 5 January, 1957.

⁹ Until the United States put pressure on Britain and France to leave the Suez area, Nasser was facing humiliation. However, the eventual humiliation of Britain and France left Nasser looking like an Arab hero who had faced down aggressive western imperialists.

so too it behaved in the central American republic of Guatemala.

- In 1951, Arbenz-Guzman was elected President of Guatemala. His leftish policies included the nationalisation without compensation of the powerful American United Fruit Company in 1953.
- Dulles tried to isolate Guatemala at the 10th Inter-American Conference in Venezuela in March 1954.
- A CIA organised coup led to Arbenz's overthrow in June and the installation of a "more reliable regime".

When Eisenhower was told of the CIA plan, his comment was: *"I want all of you to be damn good and sure you succeed."*

The United States' often secret counter-insurgency policies were gaining an increasing prominence in the 1950s.¹⁰ Considered to be "the new wave" in the American defence effort, the counter-insurgency program was already acknowledged as having altered in a major way – and secretly – the course of events in Iran, Guatemala, South East Asia and Central Africa. Iran and Guatemala have already been dealt with. The growing overt and covert support to the Diem regime in South Vietnam laid the basis for full-scale US intervention in that country in the 1960s (see Chapter 9).

At the end of Eisenhower's term as president, *Central Africa* now became a focus for US attention. The Congo gained independence from Belgium in June 1960.

- The new prime minister, Lumumba, was a nationalist who sought "positive neutrality". He soon found himself facing a mutiny and the province of Katanga seceded.
- Lumumba appealed for United Nations assistance against the Belgian-backed Katangan secessionists.
- Concerned that the UN forces were not dealing with the secessionists, Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for help.
 - The Soviets were keen to oblige and sent him arms supplies and 1000 Soviet technicians.
- The CIA organized a coup which led to Lumumba's assassination after he had also sought Soviet assistance.
 - Joseph Kasavubu was put into power, dependent on the west.

Army leader, General Mobutu (pictured), took control of the country in September 1960.

- The Soviet advisors were ordered home and Lumumba was later assassinated in Katanga
- Mobutu consolidated his power in a second coup in November 1965.
- He proved to be "safely pro-western" and remained in power until 1997. Mobutu was befriended by several US presidents.



However, once the war Cold War came to an end in the early 1990s, he fell out of favour. The lack of Cold War rivalry meant the US had no need of a corrupt and despotic African dictator.¹¹

¹⁰ Counter-insurgency: action taken by a government to counter the activities of rebels, guerrillas, etc

¹¹ Mobutu was arguably one of the most corrupt national leaders of the 20th century.

Peaceful Co-existence

The 1950s was indeed a dangerous time in US-Soviet relations. Both sides had nuclear weapons, the Cold War had become global and the brinkmanship policy of Dulles and Eisenhower created the real possibility of nuclear conflict.



However, this was also the period of “peaceful co-existence”. The man who emerged as the successor to Stalin was Nikita Khrushchev (pictured). In his bid for power in the post-Stalin era, Khrushchev attacked the record of Stalin in his “Secret Speech” to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956. Within his own country, Khrushchev brought in a policy of “deStalinsation”. The worst elements of Stalinist rule were removed (though it must be remembered that the Soviet Union remained a Communist Dictatorship). The prison camps were opened up and some of the works of banned authors were now allowed to be read.

In the field of foreign affairs, Khrushchev endeavoured to improve relations with the United States. In a speech to the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Khrushchev extolled the virtues of his idea of peaceful co-existence. He said that this Soviet approach to international relations was:

*“...not a tactical move but a fundamental principle of Soviet foreign policy... Is there a single reason why a socialist state should want to unleash aggressive war? Do we have classes or groups that are interested in war as a means of enrichment? We do not... perhaps we do not have enough territory or natural wealth, perhaps we lack sources of raw materials or markets for our goods? No, we have sufficient of all those and to spare. Why then should we want war? We do not want it..”*¹²

Khrushchev won the post-Stalin struggle for power inside the Soviet Communist Party. However, no Soviet leader would ever wield the enormous power over party and nation that Stalin had acquired. Throughout the 1950s, both before Khrushchev’s success and after, the practice of peaceful co-existence brought about significant improvements in east-west relations despite the existence of other ongoing tensions. These are summarised in Figure 5.3.

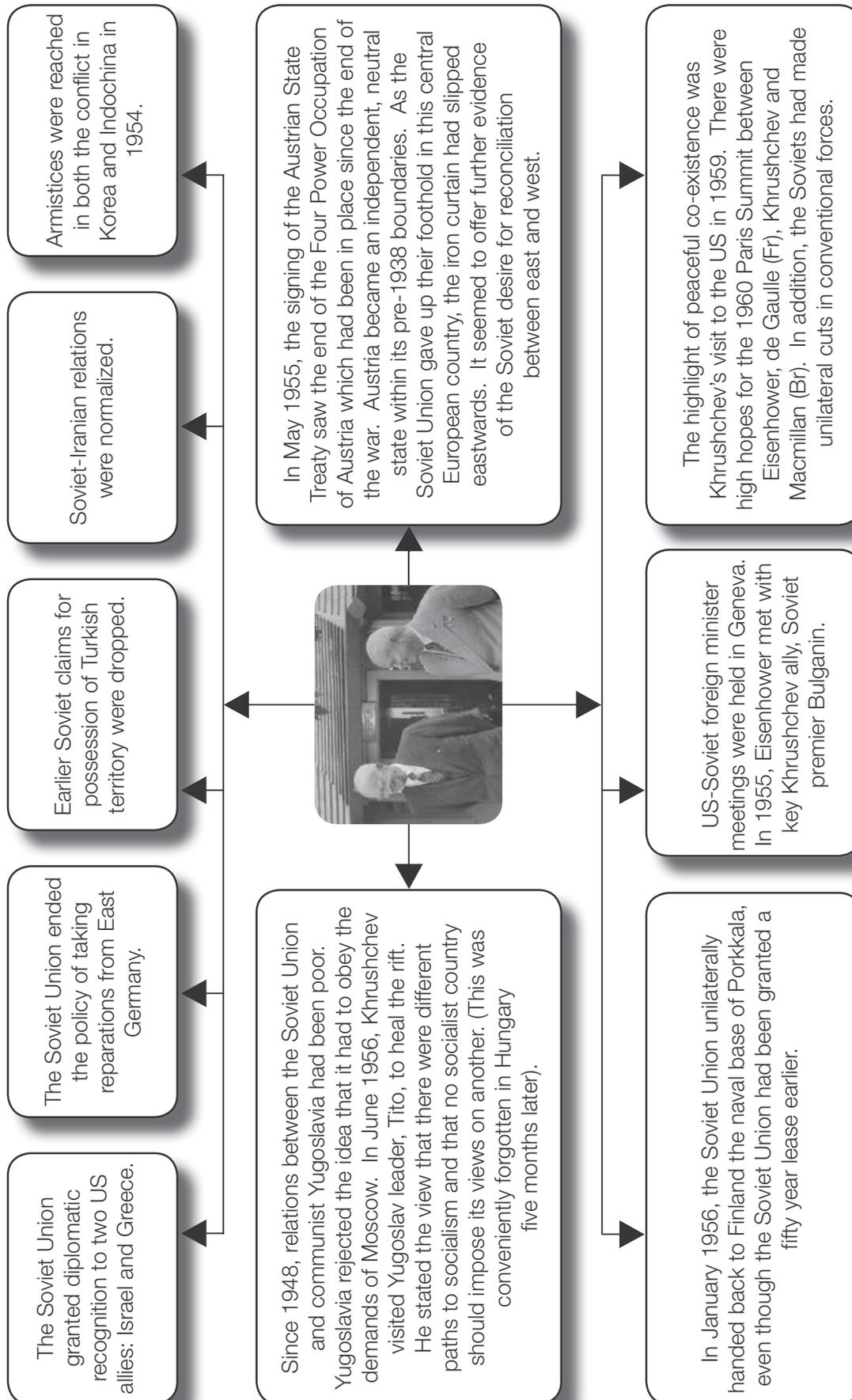
The U2 Incident and the end of Peaceful Co-existence

Any hope of using Khrushchev’s American visit and his calls for peaceful co-existence as the basis for a prolonged period of improved US-Soviet relations disappeared in May 1960. On 1 May, an American U2 spy plane was shot down 2000 kms inside Soviet territory. The U2 was a high altitude photo-reconnaissance plane. Its pilot, Gary Powers, was captured.

Khrushchev attacked Eisenhower over the incident. The American president accepted the Soviet leader’s charges and took full responsibility for the presence of the U2 over Soviet territory but he refused to offer an apology as demanded by Khrushchev. Relations quickly nose-dived. The Paris Summit Conference collapsed, Khrushchev’s invitation to Eisenhower to visit the Soviet Union was withdrawn and Khrushchev declared there could be no high-level talks until Eisenhower left the White House. In October, Khrushchev delivered his famous “UN shoe speech”, during which he took off his shoe and banged the rostrum in anger at the proceedings. The incident made amusing viewing but on a more serious level, it highlighted how rapidly east-west relations had plummeted.

¹² Nikita Khrushchev, Report to the 20th Party Congress, 14 February, 1956

FIGURE 5.3: THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PERIOD OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE



U2 flights over the Soviet Union were nothing new. Espionage between the powers had long been accepted as part of the “Cold War game”. Why then did Khrushchev turn the incident into such a major issue?

- It is possible that Khrushchev faced pressure from Soviet hardliners who had been angered by the occurrence of U2 flights. He had to be seen to be doing something. (This brings out the point that Khrushchev’s position was not like that of Stalin’s).
- It is possible that the growing rift between the Soviet Union and Communist China could have played a part. Khrushchev might have been trying to assert his leadership of the worldwide communist movement. ¹³

Exercise 5.2

Match the description given on the left with the personality listed in the box below.

1	I was a popular Iranian leader who was overthrown in a CIA-sponsored coup.	
2	I won the post-Stalin struggle for power and sought peaceful co-existence	
3	I eventually gained control of the Congo and was a US friend during the Cold War.	
4	I was President Eisenhower’s vice-president.	
5	I was Soviet premier in the 1950s and an ally of Khrushchev.	
6	I was President of Egypt who nationalised the Suez Canal.	
7	I was a leading figure in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956	
8	I lost out in the post-Stalin struggle for power in the Soviet Union.	
9	I was the hard line Secretary of State in the 1950s.	
10	I was Truman’s successor as the US president.	

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV	DWIGHT EISENHOWER
GEORGY MALENKOV	JOHN FOSTER DULLES
NASSER	IMRE NAGY
MOHAMMED MOSSADEGH	MOBUTU
RICHARD NIXON	BULGANIN

¹³ The issue of the Sino-Soviet split will be dealt with in Chapter 9.

What do the historians have to say about the Policy of containment, domino theory and the emergence of peaceful co-existence?

1. Thomas G Paterson: *Meeting the Communist Threat*

Paterson argues that the Eisenhower Doctrine was a total failure. He suggests that the reason for this was that Eisenhower and Dulles, obsessed as they were with the perceived communist threat, failed to see that the issues and conflicts raging in the Middle East had little if anything to do with international communism. The conflicts of the Middle East were essentially matters of personality and rivalries of a domestic nature.

*“...After the Lebanese intervention, the Eisenhower Doctrine would seldom be heard from again... The Eisenhower Doctrine contested rather than engaged Arab nationalists... it did not thwart “international Communism”, because such a thing had never visited the Middle East in the first place...”*¹⁴

2. Martin McCauley: *The Soviet Union Since 1917*

McCauley considers the issue of peaceful co-existence within the context of communist ideological concerns. Lenin had argued that conflict between the socialist and the capitalist camps was inevitable. However, the arrival of the atomic, and then the hydrogen bomb, changed this thinking. Malenkov first argued that war was not inevitable, and Khrushchev pushed this line by calling for peaceful co-existence at the 20th Party Congress. Mutually advantageous cooperation was possible and the idea of nuclear war was inadmissible. However:

*“...In the Soviet mind peaceful co-existence was a temporary policy, one which ultimately will be superseded by the era of socialism. Hence the element of competition was still there, seen as a form of historic contest on a world scale between capitalism and socialism...”*¹⁵

3. John Lewis Gaddis: *We now know*

Gaddis paints an interesting, yet frightening picture of Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev. Some people at the time thought Khrushchev had an alcohol problem; most historians would now debunk this idea. However, Gaddis argues that in some ways, Khrushchev behaved as if he did. His intoxicant was not alcohol but missiles. Following his success over Hungary and Sputnik¹⁶, Khrushchev, says Gaddis, went on a missile “binge”, which would last to the end of the decade.

*“...As his missile-dependency deepened, Khrushchev began to act much as alcoholics tend to: his moods swung wildly between expansive amiability and boorish belligerence, he often acted on impulse, he became increasingly desperate as time went on. And he definitely failed the test of any good chess player, which is to think ahead.”*¹⁷

(Time for some totally unimportant trivia: If Khrushchev had a mood swing problem, Eisenhower possibly had a totally different issue to deal with. Eisenhower was addicted to golf! In 2008, Golf Digest Magazine examined Eisenhower’s daily activities as President of the United States. It discovered that he spent over 1000 days playing golf – almost one day in three. In 1958 – the year of a major Berlin crisis – he spent 194 days on the golf course. Way to go Ike, that’s how to run the country in the age of brinkmanship.)¹⁸

¹⁴ Paterson, T G, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan*, OUP, New York, 1988, p 189

¹⁵ McCauley, M, *The Soviet Union Since 1917*, Longman, Harlow, 1981, pp 198-9

¹⁶ See Chapter 6

¹⁷ Gaddis, J L, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, OUP, Oxford, 1997, p 240

¹⁸ From, Phillip Coorey, *Too much exercise is Abbott forming*, Sydney Morning Herald, 29 March 2010, page 11

Chapter 6:

Superpower rivalry: the arms race and space race

Introduction

Great power rivalry was nothing new. It has existed in the ancient world between Rome and Carthage, in the 16th century between England and Spain, and in the early 20th century between France and Germany. What made the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States different was that technology had intervened to make that rivalry much more deadly. By the late 1950s, east and west had developed unbelievably powerful weapons and were in fact developing the means to deliver those weapons. In 1957, Cold War rivalry entered the realms of outer space following the Russian launch of the world's first man-made satellite, Sputnik. Space rivalry would remain predominantly a matter of national prestige; the arms race offered the potential to destroy the planet.

The Arms Race

During World War II, allied powers were concerned that Nazi Germany might be developing its own atomic weapons. German military technology had proven itself over and over again, and by 1944 it had gone one stage further with the development of the V1 and V2 rockets. The United States responded with the Manhattan Project, which ultimately succeeded in developing the atomic bomb.

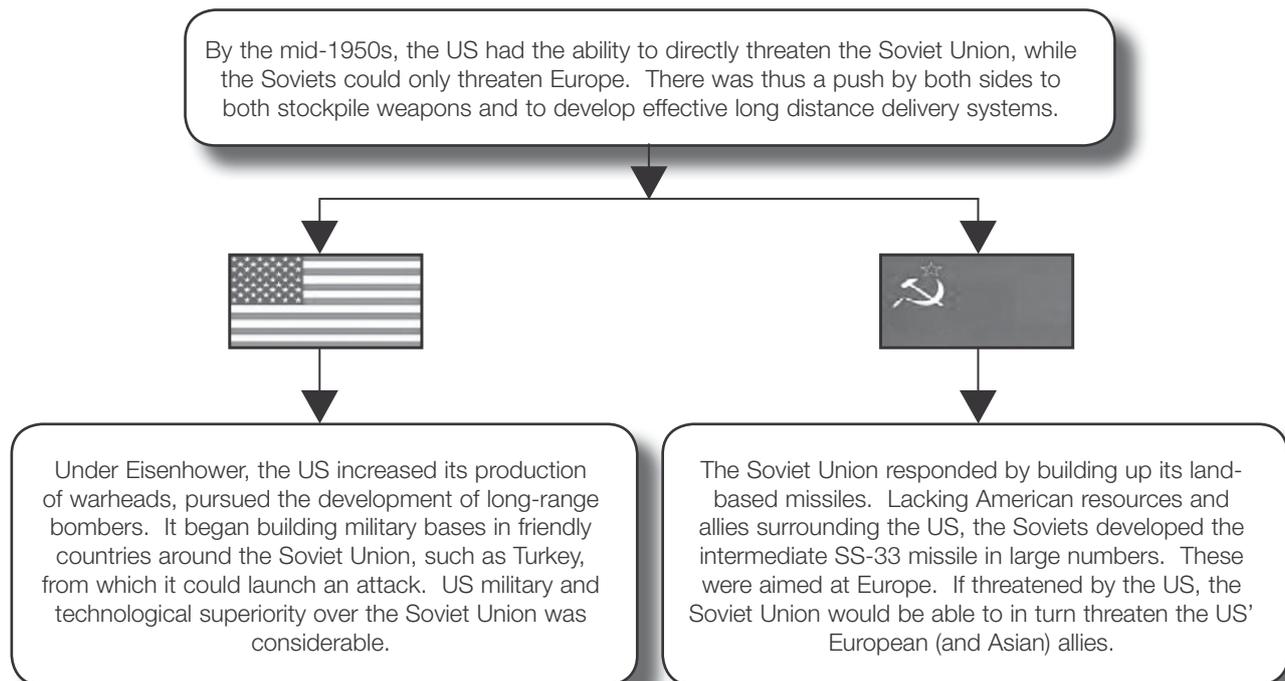
- On 6 August 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. On 9 August a plutonium bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrendered a week later. ¹
- At this time, the United States had a nuclear monopoly.
- By 1948, the US had a stockpile of about 100 atomic bombs. They were all stored inside the US and could only be delivered by B29 bombers.
- The Soviet Union made the acquisition of its own atomic bomb a key priority. It was achieved in 1949.
- By 1953, both the US and the Soviets had developed the much more powerful hydrogen bomb. ² By this time, the US had also started building its giant, powerful, long distance B52 bomber aircraft.

By 1954, under President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, the United States had adopted the policy of “massive retaliation”. Any Soviet attack on the US or one of its allies would be met with massive nuclear retaliation. The logic behind this policy was that the Soviets would always be too scared to risk a war. Such a policy was deemed more economical than the development of large conventional forces which were also unpopular with the electorate.

¹ It has been argued by some historians that the dropping of the atomic bomb was not needed to defeat Japan and that it had been used to intimidate the Soviet Union.

² In 1957, Britain exploded its first hydrogen bomb.

Figure 6.1



With each year that passed, the impression grew that the world was becoming a more and more dangerous place. Backed by its enormous economic strength and deep fear of Communist Russia, the United States developed steadily more powerful and sophisticated weapons.

- In January 1954, the United States showed off its first nuclear-powered submarine, the Nautilus.
- The US developed its first ICBMs – inter-continental ballistic missiles. Armed with a nuclear warhead, these missiles were capable of reaching targets on the other side of the world.
 - The long-range Atlas model had a range of 6000 kms.
 - The Thor and Jupiter missiles had a smaller range of 2400 miles. These were based in Italy and Turkey.
- By the late 1950s, the US had developed the Minuteman missile. This missile stored fuel in its own engines.
 - Minuteman missiles were smaller than other missiles, could be activated within a minute.³
 - As they were small they could be stored underground and protected from enemy attack.
- By 1960, the US had the Polaris submarine which was capable of launching missiles while still submerged.
 - These became known as SLBMs – submarine launched ballistic missiles.
 - Polaris submarines could get very close to the Soviet Union and as a result the range and accuracy of these missiles were greatly increased.
- By the early 1960s, the US had a nuclear “triad” system of long-range bombers, ICBMs and SLBMs.



³ Atlas missiles often took an hour to get ready.

The Soviet Union was never able to match the Americans.

- To deal with this clear inequality, the Soviets tried to make the west feel nervous about its great strength.
 - It boasted about its ever increasing economic growth
 - It made much of its technological progress such as Sputnik. ⁴
 - Events such as the Moscow Air Show in 1955 were used to present Soviet power.
- Soviet propaganda worked too well because it created the impression in some American quarters that the Soviets did indeed have real strength to rival the Americans.
- One of the abiding phrases of the 1950s arms race was the term “missile gap”, the mistaken belief that the Soviets had more missiles than the US and so posed a grave danger to the United States.
- US intelligence circles would have known the true state of Soviet nuclear forces because for years it had used U2 spy planes which could fly over the Soviet Union and learn the true state of Soviet defences.
 - Indeed, President Eisenhower refused to be panicked into a massive arms build-up.
 - At the time of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis ⁵, the US vastly outnumbered the Soviet Union in ICBMs and SLBMs, as well as having a vast superiority in long-range bombers.

The nuclear arms race was not restricted to the Soviet Union and the United States. Britain's progress has already been mentioned. In 1963 France acquired nuclear weapons. In 1964, Communist China exploded its first atomic bomb.

The US policy of ‘massive retaliation’ was often criticised for denying the US a means of dealing flexibly with crises as they arose. In May 1962, this policy was replaced by the ‘Flexible Response Doctrine’. The US also accepted the notion of ‘assured destruction’, the belief that even if attacked first, its superiority would inflict overwhelming damage on its enemy. However, by the late 1960s Soviet nuclear forces had steadily grown, not to the point of exceeding US strength, but they had become strong enough to inflict substantial damage on the United States. Strategists now began to talk about MAD – mutually assured destruction. The balance of power had become a balance of terror.

Technological innovation continued apace.

- By 1968, the Soviets had developed their own SLBMs.
- In 1966, the Americans introduced the Multiple Reentry Vehicle (MRV); the Soviets responded in kind a year later.
- In 1970, the US had developed the MRV further with MIRVs – multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles.
 - A MIRV was a missile that could carry multiple nuclear warheads. As the missile approached its target, each warhead could be fired at separate targets.
 - The Soviets had their own MIRVs by 1975.

In 1967, US Defence Secretary McNamara initiated development of the ABM – antiballistic missile system. The aim of an ABM was to stop enemy missiles before they could reach their target. By 1972, both the US and the Soviets had developed the capacity to build ABMs. This was a frightening development as the belief began to grow in some quarters that a nuclear war could be won. This would have been the end of MAD.

⁴ See the following section “The Space Race”.

⁵ See Chapter 7

During the late 1970s, MX ICBMs were developed. These were missiles on mobile launchers which could be constantly moved around and thus avoid being able to be pinpointed in an attack. There were major arms developments during the 1980s under President Reagan. These will be dealt with in Chapter 12.

Exercise 6.1

Place the events listed in the box below in the correct chronological order.

- Soviet development of SLBMs
- Both the US and the Soviet Union have developed the hydrogen bomb
- Development of ICBMs
- The US atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- The Soviets have developed MIRVs
- Both the US and the Soviets have ABM capacity
- US development of the Minuteman missile
- The Soviet Union explodes its first atomic bomb
- Soviet development of the SS-33
- US development of the Polaris submarine

1st event	
2nd event	
3rd event	
4th event	
5th event	
6th event	
7th event	
8th event	
9th event	
10th event	

The Space Race

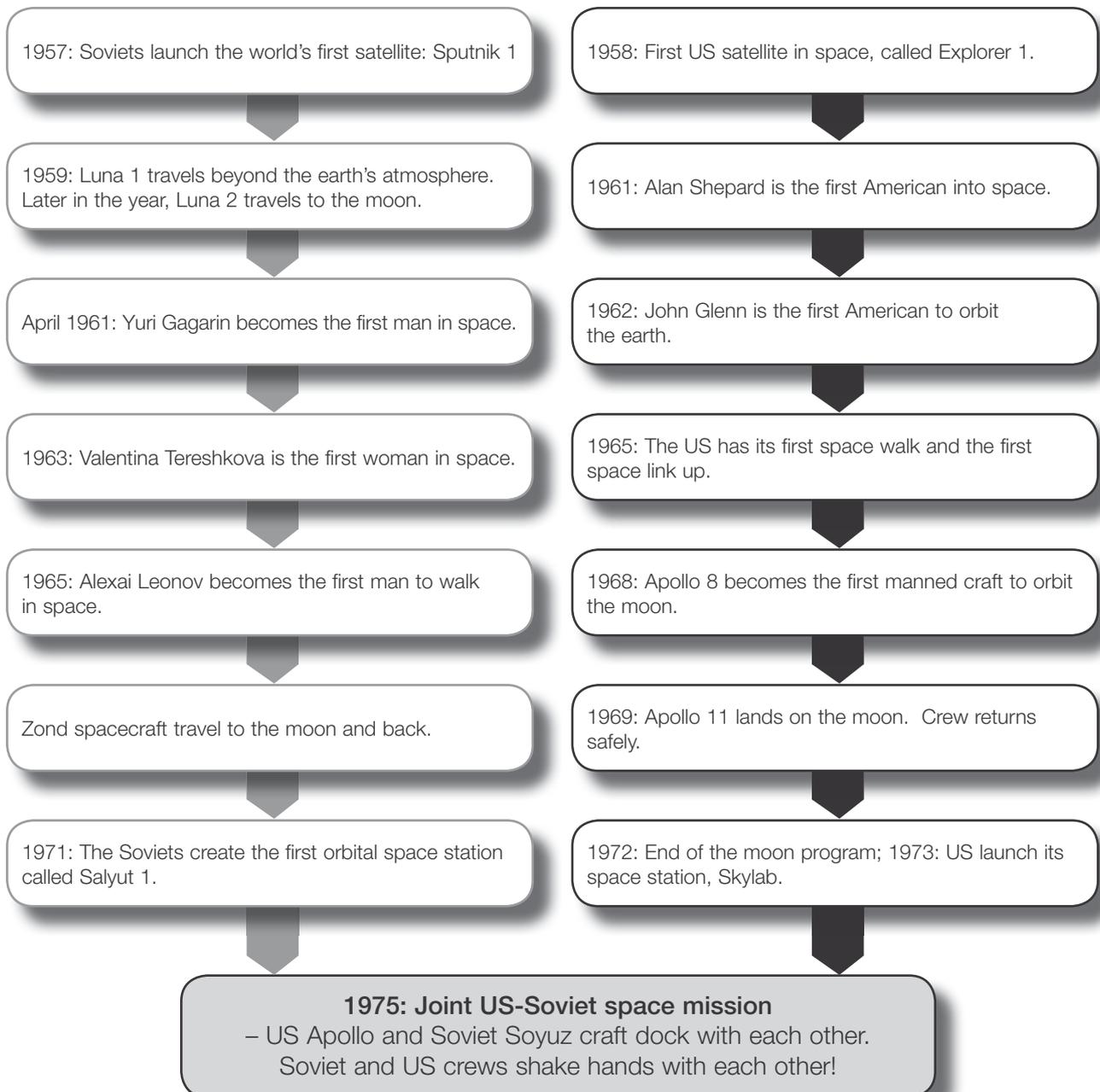
In the early 21st century, Americans and Russians regularly work together on the International Space Station. Indeed, the American Space Agency, NASA, announced in March 2010 that for the foreseeable future, US astronauts heading to the International Space Station would be taken in Russian spacecraft. Today US-Russian space cooperation is taken for granted. However, it was not always like that. For several decades, the “space race”, as US-Soviet competition in outer space became known, was a notable feature of the Cold War.

It was the Soviet Union which at first led the space race. In October 1957, the Soviets launched Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite. It was the size of a football, transmitted a weak signal and had a short life. However, the impact of Sputnik was profound. The United States was thrown into a state of panic and sharp self-questioning:

- How on earth could the Soviet Union do such a thing when it is the US that is supposed to be the world's technological leader?
- The launch of Sputnik was a massive propaganda coup for the Soviets, and in turn a great humiliation for the United States.
- The US began to fear the possible military implications of Soviet success in outer space.

The launch of Sputnik sparked the space race of the next twenty years. For a decade, the Soviets remained ahead, scoring first after first. However, once President Kennedy in 1961 committed the US to landing a man on the moon, the Soviets could not keep pace with the level of US funding.

Figure 6.2





YURI GAGARIN



JOHN GLENN

Exercise 6.2

Match the term/ phrase on the left with the term/ phrase listed on the right.

1	Yuri Gagarin		
2	John Glenn		First space walker
3	Salyut 1		First US satellite
4	Explorer 1		First space station
5	Apollo 8		First man in space
6	Zond spacecraft		First manned moon landing
7	Alexai Leonov		First American in space
8	Apollo 11		First spacecraft to the moon and back
9	Skylab		First US space station
10	Alan Shepard		First American to orbit the earth
			First manned craft to orbit the moon

What do the historians have to say about The Arms Race and the Space Race?

1. John Lewis Gaddis: *We Now Know*

Gaddis comments on the reality of the Soviet missile arsenal that it allegedly had in the late 1950s. He describes an exchange between Soviet leader Khrushchev and US media tycoon William Randolph Hearst Jr. Khrushchev boasted to Hearst Jr that the Soviets could launch 10 or 20 Sputniks, simply by replacing ICBM rocket warheads with the necessary instruments. Gaddis remarks that Khrushchev's boast was a giant exaggeration. The huge Soviet Semyorka ICBM was so unreliable that Khrushchev skipped production and moved on to more sophisticated models.

*"...As a result, throughout the entire Eisenhower administration the Soviet Union's total arsenal of functional ICBMs would consist of four unprotected and highly visible Semyorkas based at a single, swampy site south of Archangel. All the rest were imaginary."*⁶

6 Gaddis, J L, *We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War*, OUP, Oxford, 1997, p 240

2. David Horowitz: *From Yalta to Vietnam*

Horowitz suggests that the launching of Sputnik 1 had a major impact on US thinking and attitudes at the time. US policy makers had come to a belief that world policy could be decided in Washington. After all, Life Magazine editor, Henry Luce had earlier announced in 1941 the coming of “The American Century”. Sputnik popped the American bubble. Senator Lyndon Johnson stated: “We have got to admit frankly that the Soviets have beaten us at our own game – daring, scientific advances in the atomic age.” The Soviet Union was a viable nation with an advanced technological base. Horowitz argues that:

*“...Recognition of this reality caused a weakening of American confidence, and initiated the first steps of an agonizing reappraisal of the assumptions and the direction of American policies.”*⁷

3. George F Kennan: *Memoirs 1950-1963*

Kennan makes the point that the successful launching of Sputnik came only a month after the Soviets’ first successful testing of its first ICBM. These events captured people’s imagination and, in Kennan’s view, destroyed any chance of nuclear disarmament. Many Americans, including government figures, now believed that there existed a “Russian superiority over the west in the development of such missiles.”

*“...It caused western alarmists... to demand immediately the subordination of all other national interests to the launching of expensive crash programs to outdo the Russians in this competition. It gave effective arguments to the various enthusiasts for nuclear armament in the American military-industrial complex.”*⁸

⁷ Horowitz, D, *From Yalta to Vietnam*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967, p 301

⁸ Kennan, G F, *Memoirs 1950-1963*, Hutchinson, London, 1973, p 240

Chapter 7:

Nature and impact of crises: Berlin Wall 1961, Cuba 1962, Czechoslovakia 1968

Introduction

Throughout most of the 1960s, the Cold War remained tense. US-Soviet rivalry was apparent in the Middle East, Central Africa, the Caribbean, South East Asia and of course Europe. All the elements of the Cold War referred to in Chapter 1 continued apace. There was a continuing arms build-up, proxy wars from Vietnam to the Middle East, more spy scandals were uncovered and the propaganda war continued. Both the US and the Soviet Union found it necessary to take firm action in its sphere of influence to maintain its control.

This chapter will focus on three specific Cold War crises in the period to 1968.

- **Berlin** was the epitome of Cold War intrigue and danger. War had almost broken out in 1948-49 during the Berlin blockade. The city was the focus of a major crisis in 1958. It remained a centre of espionage, favoured by as the location for many Cold War novels and movies. The existence of West Berlin remained a sore point for the Soviets as the prosperity in the West so clearly overshadowed the dourness of the East.
 - In 1961, the communists built a wall to permanently divide the city. The Berlin Wall remained in place for twenty eight years and became the quintessential icon of the Cold War.
- **Cuba** had long been considered part of the US sphere of influence. ¹ The US had long controlled much of the Cuban economy and had bankrolled many of its corrupt dictatorial leaders. Havana was seen as an American playground. Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution changed all this. As Castro moved into the Soviet orbit, the destruction of his regime became a key US foreign policy objective.
 - When it was discovered that the Soviets had installed offensive missiles on the island in 1962, the world was brought to the very brink of nuclear war.
- The Yalta Conference and Soviet actions after 1945 had firmly placed the countries of Eastern Europe under Soviet control. Communist control of **Czechoslovakia** became complete in 1948. For twenty years, it was to all intents and purposes a loyal and pliable client state. However, in early 1968 the reforming government of Alexander Dubcek released forces that the Soviets feared could destabilise the entire Soviet eastern bloc.
 - In August 1968, Soviet tanks entered Czechoslovakia 'to restore order' much in the manner of Hungary in 1956. As with Hungary, the west took no action.

The Berlin Wall: 1961

The Berlin Wall 'came down' in November 1989. For twenty eight years it stood as the most enduring symbol of the Cold War and the division of Europe. To the west it epitomised the bankruptcy of communism. For decades Berlin was the centre of east-west espionage, the setting of John Le Carré novels and the place where the Americans and the Soviets exchanged their spies. For post-Cold War generations, it is difficult to grasp the potency of 'the wall' as a symbol.

¹ As long ago as 1823, The Monroe Doctrine had warned European powers not to interfere in the western hemisphere.

In January 1961, the US had a new president the young John Kennedy. Kennedy was a firm believer in containment, much in the mould of Truman and Eisenhower. Kennedy made this clear right from the start of his presidency.

*“...We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty...”*²

This meant that he saw things in global terms. Thus, Berlin was not some isolated city in northern Europe; it was not a tiresome hangover from World War II but was fundamental to US policy. When Khrushchev began to increase pressure on Berlin and started talking in terms of handing jurisdiction of the city to East Germany, Kennedy took the issue very seriously.

*“...it (Berlin) has now become, as never before, the great testing place of western courage and will, a focal point where our solemn commitments, stretching back over the years since 1945, and Soviet ambitions now meet in basic confrontation...”*³

The imposed regimes of Eastern Europe were clearly unpopular. Economic inefficiency and low standards of living were endemic. East Germany was in a worse condition than other East European countries.

- Poles and Czechs had no choice, they had to try and make a go of it in their communist country. East Germans did not have the same commitments. Millions had sought refuge in West Berlin and even those who stayed in the east of the city knew that they had the option to go.
- In his Memoirs, Khrushchev stated he was acutely aware of the inferiority of the DDR and the need to stem the flow of refugees to the west. More and more East Germans tried to flee to the West and so in effect, East Germany was bleeding.
- In 1960 the death of DDR President, Wilhelm Pieck, brought Walter Ulbricht to power. With Soviet support, he began to tighten up in Berlin.
 - In September 1960, West Germans entering East Berlin were now forced to have a permit.
 - Bans were placed on the Evangelical Church which was seen as being particularly opposed to the eastern regime.

Though Ulbricht had stated on 15 June 1961: *“...Nobody has the intention to build a wall...”* within two months the city had been permanently divided.

² President Kennedy speaking at his inauguration, 20 January 1961

³ President Kennedy, radio broadcast, 25 July 1961

Figure 7.1

When construction began on 13 August, the West was taken totally by surprise and took no action. By the end of August the wall stretched right through the city.



It would eventually boast a full array of barbed wire, gun emplacements, watchtowers and mines. Houses close to it on Bernauer Strasse were boarded up. Other houses were pulled down. The original stone was gradually replaced with reinforced concrete. There were places for specially trained attack dogs, attached to 100 metre lengths of rope.

It seems strange that the West did nothing. Troops could have kept crossing and prevented construction. It was suggested at the time that allied forces even 'bivouac' there. However, there was no western protest until 17 August. It seemed that East Berlin had been written off by the West.

Some time later, an East German army officer, Major Siegfried Behr defected. He told western intelligence that on 12 August, 20 Soviet and 7 East German divisions had been put on full alert, and remained so until 24 August, to deal with the expected rising. However, the East Germans remained cowed.

Western reaction to the Wall

Kennedy was criticized at the time for allowing the wall to go up. His disastrous performance over the Bay of Pigs invasion, ⁴ his poor performance at the Vienna summit with Khrushchev and now the Berlin Wall, convinced many that Kennedy was simply not up to the job.

However, it was clear that the containment line had been drawn at the Brandenburg Gate, not east of it. Kennedy's concern was not East Berlin, but West Berlin and the access routes to it across East Germany. On the plus side for the west, the wall was a massive propaganda gift. The East German authorities described the wall as protection from western attack. This fooled nobody. In the years to come, West Berlin was to be developed as a showcase for western liberty and economic prosperity.

- In June 1963, Kennedy visited Berlin. He referred to the pride a person had in ancient times at being able to say "Civis Romanus sum".
 - The boast now, Kennedy suggested was: "Ich bin ein Berliner."
- However, the US went no further. Kennedy took the advice of George Kennan not to overreact to the wall.
 - Kennan argued that the purpose of the wall, from Khrushchev's position, was as much to avoid confrontation as to create it.
 - It was an attempt to bandage the DDR's wound by stopping the flow of refugees.
 - Khrushchev was also under pressure because of the worsening Sino-Soviet split ⁵

Between 1961 and 1989, over eighty people died trying to escape East Berlin. Many ingenious methods were attempted included tunneling, pulley systems constructed to reach houses on the western side, hot air balloons, hiding in car petrol tanks and swimming across the River Spree.

⁴ See the next section of this chapter on Cuba

⁵ See Chapter 9

What do the historians have to say about The Berlin Wall 1961?

1. Terence Prittie: *The Velvet Chancellors*

Writing in the late 1970s, Prittie argues that there were many Germans who were not that unhappy with the construction of the wall. West Berlin mayor, Willy Brandt, now believed that as the west had written off East Berlin, it would strengthen and safeguard West Berlin. Prosperous West Germany was happy for East Germans to be penned inside the DDR and not be a drain on their economy (as they became after reunification in 1990). Perhaps the real winner was East Germany. East Germany became a viable state.

*“...Its population did not only have to accept a communist society; it had to get down to work... The DDR has since become the workshop of the Soviet Bloc and has been allowed to raise its living standards faster than in other satellite states. The East Germans have developed a pride in their own achievements, and even in their own state.”*⁶

2. Walter LaFeber: *America, Russia and the Cold War 1945-75*

LaFeber makes the point that Kennedy saw the whole issue of Berlin as a global issue not a localized one. He shows that Kennedy accepted the advice of Dean Acheson (Truman’s former Secretary of State) that Berlin was a simple test of wills. Accepting the worldwide nature of the communist threat, Kennedy stepped up defence spending, even before the wall went up.

*“...That city (Berlin) and Saigon (South Vietnam) were, in this crucial sense, alike. Kennedy, like Eisenhower, defined the communist threat in global terms.”*⁷

Cuba 1962

In October 1962 the world was taken to the brink of nuclear war over the issue of Soviet nuclear missiles having been placed in Cuba. American U2 spy planes detected the build-up of missile bases in Cuba, placing Kennedy in a most unenviable situation:

- Should he acquiesce, do nothing and simply accept what had happened?
- Or should he stand firm and demand their removal, risking a direct US-Soviet confrontation?

Background:

- Cuba had long been an American sphere of influence ever since the Spanish-American War of 1898. The economy was dominated by US firms, it was a favourite haunt of US Mafia crime bosses and a place for Americans to have fun.
- Since 1952, Cuba had been ruled by the corrupt, dictatorial regime of Batista, which was strongly backed by Washington. Rich Americans and a few rich Cubans prospered; the rural masses wallowed in poverty.
- In January 1959, Batista was overthrown in a revolution led by Fidel Castro. Castro was not at first a communist but a strong Cuban nationalist. His aim was to reclaim Cuba, which he set about doing by nationalising many US-owned enterprises and driving out the Mafia.

⁶ Prittie, T, *The Velvet Chancellors*, Muller, London, 1979, p 107

⁷ LaFeber, W, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-75*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1976, p 220

- These actions angered the US. It responded by refusing to buy Cuban sugar. Facing economic ruin, Castro turned to the Soviet Union which was only too happy to buy Cuban sugar, provide economic assistance and get a foothold in America's backyard.
- In April 1961, a CIA-backed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs was launched to remove Castro. It was a disaster. Kennedy had inherited the plan from Eisenhower but refused to involve the US directly by providing air cover for the rebels. His reputation suffered greatly due to this failure.
- Over the next 18 months, Cuba moved more closely to the Soviet Union economically, ideologically and militarily.
- In August and September 1962, the Soviet Union placed SAM missiles, Ilyushin bombers and thousands of Soviet technicians in Cuba.
- In October U2 flights discovered evidence of these installations.

Why did Khrushchev do it?

- The placement of missiles in Cuba can be seen as a defensive move.
 - Cuba had already been attacked once at the Bay of Pigs.
 - The US was attempting to strangle the Cuban economy.
 - It is now well known that the CIA was investigating various methods of assassinating Castro during the 1960s.
- However, this view of Khrushchev's behaviour is at best superficial.
 - Khrushchev later wrote in his Memoirs that he feared losing Cuba. This would have destroyed Soviet prestige in Latin America and weakened it elsewhere.
 - Thus, by secretly installing missiles in Cuba, the US would be presented with a fait accompli, Cuba would be safe and the Soviets' reputation for protecting its allies would have been ensured.
- Khrushchev was under increasing pressure at home.
 - He had had little success over Berlin, Russia was falling behind in the arms race and there were continuing problems with China.
 - He needed a success. Having missiles in Cuba close to US cities would have gone some way to equalising the balance of power.

CIA maps of the time indicated the range of the various Soviet missiles in Cuba and which US cities could be targeted.

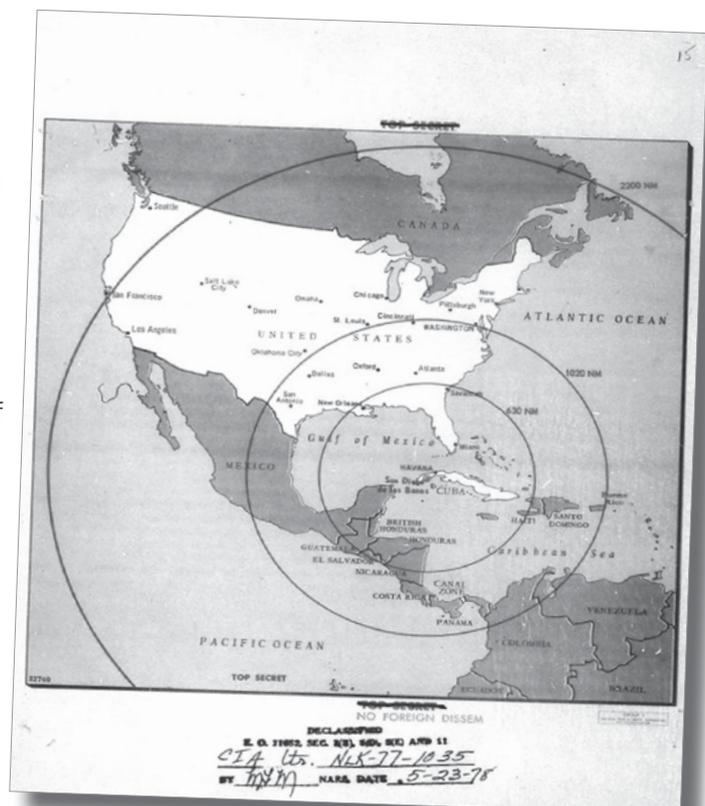


Figure 7.2: The course of the Cuban missile crisis

Kennedy conferred with his advisors on the best possible US response to the presence of the missiles. He used the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. The missiles could not be allowed to stay. Weakness on Kennedy's part would be political suicide and it could potentially wreck the western alliance.

Kennedy's advisors were divided on what should be the American response to the missile presence. "The Hawks" wanted to bomb the bases. This would cause Soviet casualties and would have resulted in a possible Soviet response. Robert Kennedy opposed this line, arguing he did not want his brother to be a Tojo (the Japanese leader who ordered the bombing of Pearl Harbour without warning in 1941).

Under Secretary of State George Ball argued for a naval blockade around Cuba. This would be referred to as a quarantine. No vessels would be allowed to reach Cuba, including Soviet missile carrying craft. Ball argued this would give the Soviets the chance to withdraw without having to suffer any unacceptable humiliation.

On 22 October Kennedy spoke on nationwide television: "We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of world-wide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth – but neither will we shrink from the risk at any time it must be faced."

Both sides made military preparations. The Soviets began preparing 24 launch pads with MRBMs with a 1600 km range, and 16 launch pads with a 2400-3200 km range. The US readied 156 ICBMs, put Polaris submarines to sea and 100 000 troops were gathered in Florida 'just in case'. A 3300 km quarantine circle was placed around Cuba.

23 Oct: Khrushchev attacked the US move and said that the Soviets would not back down.
24-25 Oct: Several Soviet ships turned back.
26 Oct: Khrushchev sent Kennedy a conciliatory letter suggesting a way out of the crisis.
27 Oct: A second more aggressive letter was sent.
28 Oct: Robert Kennedy advised his brother to ignore the second letter and reply to the first.

After thirteen agonizing days, the crisis was over.

Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles. The US made a pledge not to invade Cuba. The world moved away from abyss of nuclear war. It was clearly a US victory but Kennedy's actions had allowed Khrushchev to withdraw without being totally humiliated.

The results of the Cuban Missile Crisis

The most obvious result of the Cuban Missile Crisis was that the world was saved from nuclear annihilation. Each leader was magnanimous and eager to praise the behaviour of his adversary. Kennedy stated that Khrushchev had acted like a statesman. Khrushchev in his Memoirs was even more effusive in describing Kennedy's handling of the affair:

*"...He didn't let himself become frightened, nor did he become reckless. He didn't overestimate America's might, and he left himself a way out of the crisis. He showed real wisdom and statesmanship..."*⁸

The missile crisis was of both major short-term and long-term significance:

1. Kennedy's immediate political situation improved dramatically.
 - a. He was hailed as a far-sighted statesman.
 - b. The Kennedy legend was off and running long before his assassination.
2. Khrushchev's political fortunes went into reverse.
 - a. Though his esteem rose in the west, inside the Soviet Union he was increasingly being seen as reckless.
 - b. His failures over Cuba, Berlin, Sino-Soviet relations and agriculture, culminated in his overthrow in October 1964 when he was replaced by Leonid Brezhnev.
3. Cuba was removed as a source of tension.
 - a. The US-Soviet agreement meant there would be no more Bay of Pigs invasions.
 - b. However, this did not stop US pressure on Cuba (still present in 2019). The bizarre attempts to murder Castro continued.
4. Kennedy's determination over Cuba meant that any future Soviet pressure on Berlin was unlikely.
5. Kennedy had entered the presidency as a firm supporter of the policy of containment. Cuba had proven the wisdom of containment.
 - a. The line had been drawn at the spread of communist expansionism and America had shown that it would act.
 - b. Support for containment was unquestioned in both political and public circles in the United States.
 - c. A "cold war consensus" prevailed, a belief that the US must stand up to communism wherever it raised its head.
 - d. This belief was a key factor which would make it possible for Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, to escalate the war in Vietnam.
6. For all their crowing about the future security of Cuba, the Soviets knew that they had suffered a massive humiliation.
 - a. The main aim of Soviet policy now was that there would be 'no more Cubas'.
 - b. The Soviet Union sought to achieve nuclear parity with the United States so that they could never be blackmailed again.

6 Krushchev, N, Khrushchev Remembers, Andre Deutsch, London, 1971, p 500

- c. Throughout the 1960s, the Soviets pursued a massive military build-up. By 1970, the Soviet Union had not managed to equal the US in nuclear capability, but they had built up sufficiently to prevent America being able to humiliate them as had happened in 1962.
7. The major irony of the Cuban Missile Crisis was that it made possible a major improvement in US-Soviet relations.
- a. The Soviet achievement of nuclear parity was a key factor that made possible détente.⁹
- b. It brought home to both sides the dangers of nuclear confrontation. In June 1963, Kennedy stated:
- “...Let us reexamine our attitude to the Soviet Union. The wave of the future is not the conquest of the world by a single dogmatic creed but the liberation of the divine energies of free nations and free men.”*
- c. In 1963, a “hot line” was established between Washington and Moscow which it was hoped could in the future prevent crises getting out of control by allowing leaders to communicate directly.
- d. A Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed by the US, the Soviet Union and Britain which forbade future nuclear testing in the atmosphere.
- e. In 1963, the US sold \$250 m worth of wheat to the Soviet Union.

The urge to détente was to prove so strong that not even Vietnam and Czechoslovakia could dampen it.

What do the historians have to say about Cuba 1962?

1. Hugh Thomas: *The Cuban Revolution*

Thomas takes a somber look at the events of the crisis. He highlights the very real fears the leaders of the time had that a nuclear conflict was highly likely. He makes mention of Defence Secretary McNamara’s belief that “he had few sunsets left”. In Cuba, Che Guevara was writing that the fight for the liberation for oppressed peoples had to continue even at the cost of millions of lives. Thomas also highlights the extent of US preparations for war:

*“...all US missile crews had been put on maximum alert, 800 B-47 bombers were prepared... along with 550 similarly loaded B-52s and 70 B-58s. 90 B-52s carrying 25 to 50 megaton H-bombs were in the air over the Atlantic, while 100 Atlas, 50 Titan and 12 Minutemen ICBMs were ready on their launch pads...”*¹⁰

2. John Lewis Gaddis: *We Now Know*

Gaddis suggests that after Cuba, Soviet-American competition became more stable and predictable. Neither would again take risks in the other’s sphere of influence and oddities like a divided Korea and a Berlin Wall were accepted as normal. The arms race intensified but under agreed sets of rules. However, he suggests that the peace which ensued could not be permanent. By having to focus so much on military strength, the Soviet Union was to fail in most non-military areas, and it was this which would ultimately bring down the communist state. The Soviet Union would for many years convey an image of strength, but it was a decaying system.

⁹ See Chapter 8.

¹⁰ Thomas, H, *The Cuban Revolution*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1986, p 639

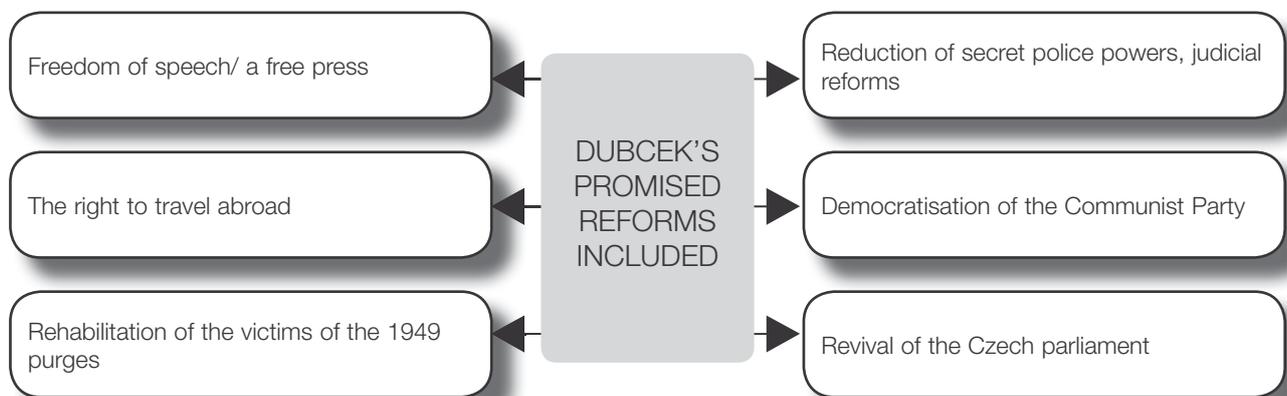
“...nuclear weapons and the fear they generated may well have stretched out the process of decay inside the USSR – in effect slowing down time – although they could not reverse it. Not the least of the Cold War’s oddities is that its outcome was largely determined before two-thirds of it had even been fought.” ¹¹

Czechoslovakia 1968

Czechoslovakia was arguably the most western-oriented and industrially advanced of the Russia’s East European satellite states. However, by the mid-1960s unrest in the country was growing. Industrial progress was hampered by state restrictions, living standards were falling and by late 1967, the police were having to brutally suppress anti-government student demonstrations. Under Party leader Novotny, Czechoslovakia had been docilely subservient to the Soviet Union. Things changed in January 1968 when Novotny was replaced as party first secretary by Alexander Dubcek.

Working with President Svoboda and Prime Minister Cernik, Dubcek sought to liberalise society and create ‘socialism with a human face’. In April, Dubcek promised a series of reforms:

Figure 7.3: Dubcek’s promised reforms



As Dubcek’s “Prague Spring” continued, Soviet leaders took fright. They were afraid that if the “reform disease” in Prague was not immediately squashed, the contagion could spread to Budapest, Warsaw and so on. Soviet leaders issued a series of warnings to the Czech leadership. Dubcek assured the Soviets of Czechoslovakia’s continuing loyalty to the Warsaw Pact and Socialism. On 10 August, the Czech Communist Party announced that the September Party Congress would end “democratic centralism”, thus granting rights to other political parties.

This was too much for the Soviet leadership and on 20 August Soviet troops, accompanied by forces from all the other Warsaw Pact countries (except Romania) invaded Czechoslovakia. There was no armed resistance but rather a clear, passive opposition. As Soviet tanks resided in the centre of Prague, the Czech leadership was taken to Moscow and ordered to end the rehabilitations, water down any reforms, restore censorship and accept the permanent positioning of Soviet troops in the country. The Prague Spring was over.



¹¹ Gaddis, J L, We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War, OUP, Oxford, 1997, p 280

The results of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia:

- Dubcek was sacked and replaced by Gustav Husak who proved to be pliable and subservient to the Soviet leadership. Dubcek was later expelled from the party and became a forestry worker.
- Dubcek’s reforms were steadily reversed.
- Clearly change within the Soviet style systems was not possible.
- However, the Soviet action did not affect the improving relationship with the US which would result in the détente period.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia gave birth to what became known as “The Brezhnev Doctrine”. In a sense, this was a Truman Doctrine in reverse. As Truman had drawn a line in the sand to prevent the spread of communism to the west, so the Soviets were doing the same to prevent the spread of democratic western thinking into the east. The Soviet newspaper Pravda explained the thinking of the Brezhnev Doctrine:

*“...There is no doubt that the peoples of the socialist countries and the Communist Parties have and must have freedom to determine their country’s path to development. However, any decision of theirs must damage neither socialism in their own country nor the fundamental interests of other socialist countries. This means that every Communist Party is responsible not only to its own people but also to all the socialist countries and the entire Communist Movement...”*¹²

The message was clear. Any threat to communist (read Soviet) power in Eastern Europe would not be tolerated.

Exercise 7.1

Answer the following questions:

1	What was the main reason for the building of the Berlin Wall?	
2	How did Kennedy view the construction of the wall?	
3	Was it a good thing for the West?	
4	What was Khrushchev’s justification for placing missiles on Cuba?	
5	What were the two main options considered by the US to deal with the Missile Crisis?	
6	Who was the real winner of the Missile Crisis?	

¹² Kovalev, S, in *Pravda*, 26 September 1968

7	What was the ironic result of the Cuban Missile Crisis?	
8	How did the Missile Crisis affect future Soviet behaviour?	
9	What was the Prague Spring?	
10	What was the Brezhnev Doctrine?	

Exercise 7.2

Match the description on the left with the historical figure's name on the right.

1	I was the Mayor of West Berlin in 1961.		DEAN ACHESON GUSTAV HUSAK WILLY BRANDT FIDEL CASTRO NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV ALEXANDER DUBCEK GEORGE BALL LEONID BREZHNEV WALTER ULBRICHT ROBERT KENNEDY
2	I sought to bring reform to Czechoslovakia.		
3	I urged President Kennedy to impose a quarantine during the Missile Crisis.		
4	I was East German leader in 1961.		
5	I became the new Czech leader after the Soviet invasion.		
6	I was strongly opposed to President Kennedy bombing the Soviet bases in Cuba.		
7	I sought Cuban independence and accepted later Soviet assistance.		
8	I consider I triumphed during the Cuban Missile Crisis despite western views.		
9	I took over the Soviet leadership in 1964.		
10	I advised Kennedy to see Berlin in global terms.		

ESSAYS 2:

Responding to HSC questions on the Development of the Cold War to 1968

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the second section of the syllabus: Developments of the Cold War to 1968. These outlines are not presented as the ‘be all and end all’ responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a ‘first draft response’ to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author’s head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

“To what extent was superpower rivalry reflected in the arms race and the space race?”

The danger with this question is that it invites a narrative response. It would be quite easy to offer a list of events in the arms race and to relate the story of space rivalry. The detail that such a response would include is needed, but this question requires more than simply a list of events. Students need to develop an argument. Clearly, superpower rivalry was reflected in the arms race and the space race. What is required is some discussion the why, and of the significance.

Technology became a key element of the superpower rivalry which developed after 1945. As tensions increased it became necessary for each side to maintain their defensive capability. As one side made technological progress, the other had to match for fear of facing the possibility of nuclear blackmail. The irony was that few believed such weapons would ever be used. Though there were some who believed that space might have military capability, the space race became much more a battle of national prestige and propaganda.

- Make the point that the Cold War arms race was substantially different to anything that had ever occurred in history:
 - there was a qualitative difference in the nature of the arms race between the superpowers;
 - refer to the different types of destructive technology: the Manhattan Project and the development of the A-bomb, the later development of the H-bomb;
 - the superpowers now had steadily increasing methods of delivering their weapons: rocket technology evolved into the development of ICBMs and SLBMs, and the B52 bomber.
- As each technological step was taken, each side had to keep pace:
 - failure to do so would result in superpower blackmail;
 - only the ability to deter an enemy and to be able to reply in kind during any crisis could ensure the maintenance of superpower status.
- This was brought out keenly in the Cuban Missile crisis:
 - the inferiority of the Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal was the fundamental reason for its backing down in 1962;
 - it became the prime objective of the Soviets to achieve parity so as to never again face

such humiliation.

- Consequently, the arms race became a key feature of superpower rivalry as each sought to match and outmatch each other's progress in this area:
 - the US developed long-range bombers and had bases in friendly countries like Turkey;
 - the Soviets responded by developing intermediate SS-33 missiles to threaten Europe;
 - throughout the 1950s and 1960s, each side tried to outdo the other in ICBMs, SLBMs, MIRVs;
 - in 1967 the US began to investigate AMB system; this would reach a crescendo with Reagan's SDI plans in the 1980s;
 - the pressure that the arms competition had on the Soviet Union in the 1980s was a key factor in bringing down that regime.
- The superpower arms race was both frightening and totally futile:
 - Each side developed the potential to destroy the earth several times over – this frightening prospect meant that each Cold War crisis could be fatal;
 - Nixon's behaviour during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 is evidence of this;
 - however, it was also futile, as madmen and mistakes apart, these weapons would never be used.
- Though there were fears about the militarisation of space, the space race tended to reflect the propaganda aspect of superpower rivalry:
 - the Soviets were often ahead of the US: first satellite (Sputnik 1957), first man in space (Yuri Gagarin 1961), first space walk and so on;
 - these achievements were impressive but their value was essentially for propaganda;
 - the US resented being second to the Soviets, hence Kennedy's eagerness to "put a man on the moon before the decade was over";
 - the Soviets only gave up the space race when economics made such competition next to impossible and so the US won the race to the moon in 1969.

Clearly superpower rivalry was reflected in both the arms race and the space race. The arms race was a deadly contest in which each side had to keep pace or face nuclear blackmail. The space race reflected more the propaganda aspect of superpower rivalry, each success displaying the superiority of communism or democracy.

Essay No 2

“Evaluate the impact of crises on the development of the Cold War in the period to 1968. In your answer refer to any TWO of: the Berlin Wall (1961), Cuba (1962) and Czechoslovakia (1968).”

This question expects some analysis of the impact of the crises, not simply a description of the crises. Clearly some narrative detail is required to establish some context. However, the focus has to be on the significance of the crises and how each crisis affected the development of the Cold War.

Both the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the Czechoslovakia crisis of 1968 had a major impact on the Cold War's development, but in quite different ways. In the short run, Cuba was frightening in its implications. In the medium term it fostered improved US-Soviet relations and its long-term

result was to render nuclear weapons almost useless. In a sense it guaranteed the longevity of the Cold War to the late 1980s. Czechoslovakia reaffirmed the basics of Cold War reality but otherwise had little impact on the development of the Cold War.

- Provide just a brief background of US interest in Cuba:
 - Castro's revolution in 1959/ Cuba's veering towards the Soviets;
 - the Bay of Pigs invasion and Cuba's acceptance of Soviet defence help.
- Deal briefly with the actual Missile Crisis but do not carried away with lots of dramatic detail:
 - the placing of Soviet missiles on Cuba and their discovery;
 - the options facing Kennedy;
 - the quarantine and Khrushchev's eventual backing down;
 - the end of the crisis.
- The medium-term impact of the crisis was arguably beneficial:
 - brought home the dangers of nuclear confrontation;
 - led to real improvements in superpower relations: the "hot line" and the 1963 Test Ban Treaty;
 - Kennedy's 1963 Washington speech suggested hope for a real improvement in relations.
- The Soviet response to Cuba was "never again";
 - having been blackmailed and humiliated once, it was not going to happen again;
 - the Soviets began rearming in earnest to achieve parity;
 - explain parity;
 - having achieved parity, it rendered the likely use of nuclear weapons in the Cold War highly unlikely.
- John Lewis Gaddis suggests that the possession of nuclear weapons by each side ensured the longevity of the Cold War:
 - the Soviet Union had become a monodimensional power, ie its superpower status rested on nuclear weapons alone;
 - this meant it had to be taken seriously;
 - Cuba led to Soviet parity which Gaddis suggests meant that "destruction had given way to longevity".
- The impact of the Czechoslovakia crisis was quite different:
 - give brief details of what happened;
 - the west took no action – why not? Too busy with Vietnam, events in France (almost a revolution), US domestic problems;
 - main reason: Yalta had placed Czechoslovakia in the Soviet sphere of influence – it was no business of the west.
 - such was the determination of each side to respect Yalta, the Czechoslovakia crisis proved to be no impediment to the development of détente under Nixon.

Cuba took the world to brink of destruction but its medium term impact on the development of the Cold War was, ironically, to ease superpower tensions and improve relations. In the longer term it

forced the Soviets to seek parity which resulted in the effective redundancy of nuclear weapons. The Czechoslovakia crisis merely had the effect of confirming basis of the Cold War in Europe and had no impact on the later moves towards détente.

Possible HSC-style questions on the section of the syllabus:

“Development of the Cold War to 1968”

1. “To what extent was superpower rivalry reflected in the arms race and the space race?”
2. Evaluate the impact of crises on the development of the Cold War in the period to 1968. In your answer refer to any TWO of: the Berlin Wall (1961), Cuba (1962) and Czechoslovakia (1968).
3. How did changing US and Soviet policies and strategies affect the development of the Cold War in the period to 1968?
4. Assess the significance of the policies of containment and peaceful co-existence on the development of the Cold War between 1953 and 1968.

Chapter 8:

Economic and political reasons for détente

Introduction

What does the term détente mean?

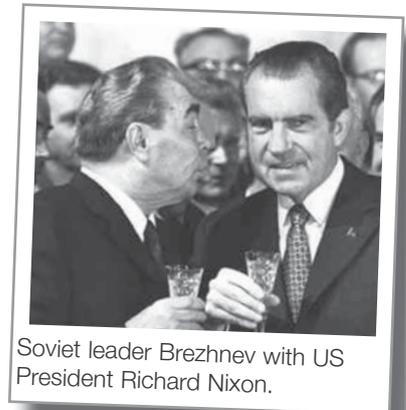
The term “détente” refers to the easing of tensions between nations and the development of peaceful cooperation in international relations.

In the late 1960s and through the 1970s, détente referred specifically to the dramatic improvement in US-Soviet relations and Sino-US relations.

The urge to détente came from both the United States and the Soviet Union.

In March 1971, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev said:

*“...Our policy has always combined firm rebuffs to aggression with the constructive line of settling international problems and maintaining normal, and whenever the situation allows, good relations with states belonging to the other social system...”*¹



The roots of détente

The significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962:

- The main effect of the missile crisis was that the real possibility of nuclear war was brought home to both sides. Never again must the superpowers allow events to spiral out of control as they almost did over Cuba.
 - The shock of the events of October 1962 led directly to the Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and the installation of the “hot line” between Moscow and Washington.²
 - In a sense these were the earliest acts of détente.
- The Cuban Missile Crisis had been a global humiliation for the Soviet Union. The catch cry in Moscow was now “no more Cubas”.
 - In order to avoid the possibility of another humiliation, the Soviet Union embarked on a massive build-up of its military forces.
 - By the late 1960s, it had not achieved equality with the US, but it had achieved “parity”, ie though the US remained ahead in terms of nuclear weaponry and destructive power, it was no longer pre-eminent.
 - In any nuclear exchange the Soviet Union would be able to inflict unacceptable

¹ Brezhnev speaking at the 24th Party Congress, March 1971

² See Chapter 7

damage on the United States even though it would come off worse.

- As a result the Soviet Union was willing and able to negotiate such things as arms reduction and other issues from a position of strength.
- If the Soviets had not reached this position, it is hard to imagine that the Americans would have pursued détente so eagerly.
- The missile crisis had another indirect effect which would lead to the desire for détente on the part of the United States.
 - Cuba had proven to the US the effectiveness of the containment policy. Thus, entry into the Vietnam War was good policy, and was not greatly questioned as America's "cold war consensus" held.
 - However, following the "Tet Offensive" of 1968,³ the US became increasingly eager to extricate itself from the war.
 - US President Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, were firmly of the belief that peace in Vietnam could be achieved via Soviet pressure on North Vietnam to engage in peace talks.
 - The Soviets could be persuaded to apply this pressure by being offered the benefits of détente (see below).

Soviet motives for détente

- A major factor supporting the move towards détente from the Soviet side was the disastrous state of its economy.
 - Attempted reforms were not working, the country could not feed itself, and despite its spectacular space successes, it was falling behind the west in most areas of technology.
- An easing of tensions with the west would certainly facilitate the transfer of much needed technology, expertise and investment to the Soviet Union from the United States and other western countries.
 - Détente could also stimulate east-west trade.

Kissinger and the concept of "linkage"

- Nixon and Kissinger were well aware of the Soviet economy's woes and saw in détente a chance to use the "bait" of western technology to temper Soviet behaviour around the world.
 - Hence was born the idea of "linkage".
- Kissinger argued that the Soviets could not have the benefits of cooperation in one area while stirring up trouble elsewhere.
 - The aim of détente, from the US perspective, was thus to make the Soviet Union more compliant and less prone to stirring up trouble in the Third World.⁴

³ In January 1968, communist forces launched a massive offensive against US/ South Vietnamese forces. This was the Tet Offensive. Though the offensive failed, it turned into a major political/ psychological communist success. The result of this was the perception that the US was losing the Vietnam War which in turn spurred domestic demands for a withdrawal from the war. Vietnam will be covered in more detail in Chapter 9.

⁴ The Soviet Union supported anti-western liberation movements in Third World countries. An example of this would be its support of the Vietcong and Communist North Vietnam against the US in the Vietnam War.

Détente and China

- The People's Republic of China played a key role in the development of détente.
 - The United States did not have diplomatic relations with Communist China and relations between the two powers had been in deep freeze since the Communist takeover in 1949 and the Korean War (1950-53).
 - However, since 1960, relations between the two giant communist powers – the Soviet Union and China – had deteriorated so much that by the late 1960s they were even fighting each other along their common frontier.⁵ Kissinger said at the time:

“...the deepest international conflict in the world today is not between the US and the Soviet Union but between the Soviet Union and Communist China.”

- Nixon hoped to play on the Sino-Soviet split, play one off against the other and to keep them guessing about US intentions.
 - He wanted them both to fear that the US would line up with one power against the other.
 - The US thus hoped to drive a wedge between the two already estranged former allies.
 - The Soviets feared being isolated, while Chinese leader Mao Zedong viewed the Soviet Union not the US, as China's number one enemy.
 - For all three, the superpower triangle pointed to détente.

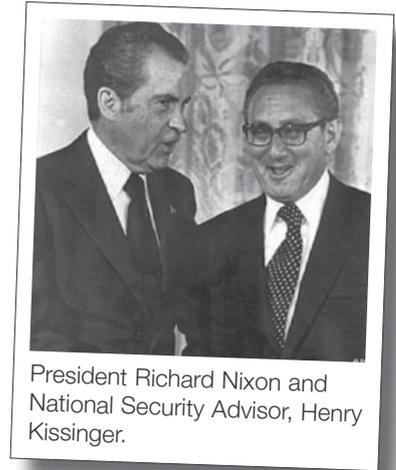
Growing American weakness

- An alternative explanation for the policy of détente suggests it resulted from the relative decline of American power.
 - The US had dominated world affairs since 1945 and this domination was based on three key factors:
 - (i) US nuclear superiority
 - (ii) the strength of the American dollar
 - (iii) the united support inside the United States for presidential action in the face of the perceived communist threat – the cold war consensus.
 - By the late 1960s, these three sources of strength were diminishing:
 - (i) the Soviet achievement of parity led to a relative weakening of the US nuclear position (though the US of course maintained its overall superiority)
 - (ii) the US economy was not the unquestioned powerhouse it once had been, due in no small part to the strains imposed upon it by the war in Vietnam
 - (iii) following the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the Cold War consensus disappeared and so the president could not be sure of the US public's unquestioning support in foreign policy.
- The logical course of action was thus to pursue détente.

⁵ See Chapter 9

Richard Nixon, President January 1969-August 1974

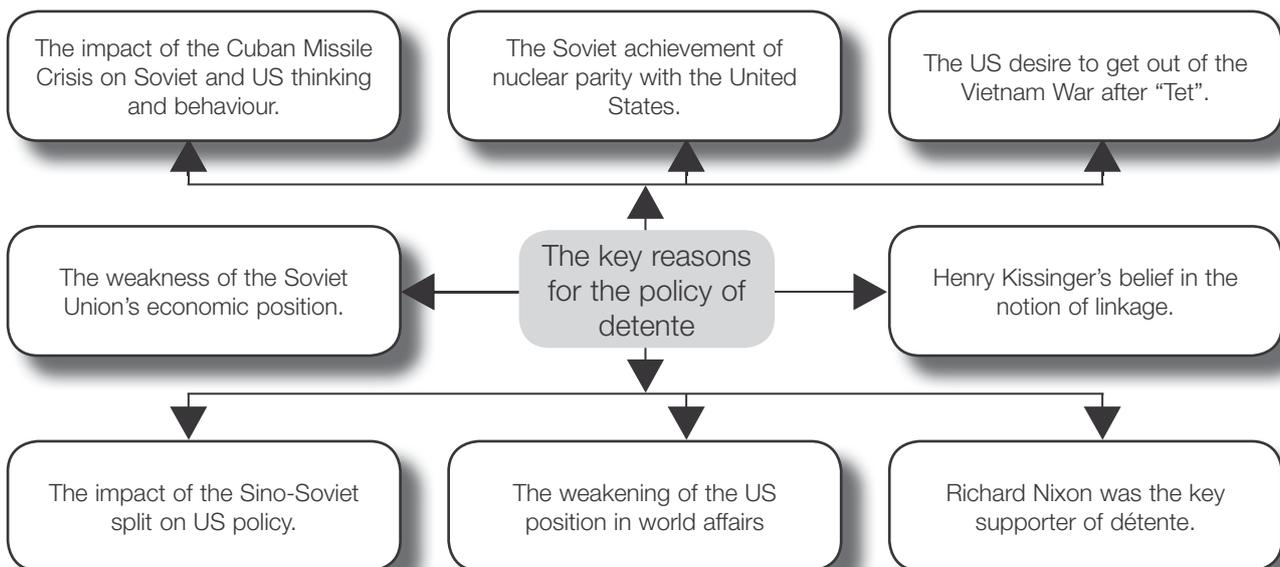
Richard Nixon had been a key player in American political life for over twenty years. He had served in the US navy in the Pacific during World War II. By 1952, he had been a Congressman for a California district for four years and a senator for California for two years. From 1953 to 1961 he had been President Eisenhower’s vice-president. In 1960, he was very narrowly defeated in the presidential election by John Kennedy.



President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger.

- In the late 1940s, Nixon had been a key member of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee which made him a key player in the communist witch hunts of the time.
- Nixon was thus highly experienced and had a record as a tough, non-nonsense, anti-communist.
 - This reputation allowed Nixon to reach out his hand to the Soviets.
 - The view in the US was that “if Nixon – of all people – believes in détente with the Soviet Union, the policy must be okay”.

Figure 8.1 summarises the key reasons for the détente policy.



Exercise 8.1

Read each statement below. Circle the correct alternative answer provided on the right.

1	The Soviet Union was as vulnerable to US nuclear blackmail in the late 1960s as it had been in October 1962.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	The United States public remained confident of a US victory in Vietnam after the Tet Offensive.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The events of the Cuban Missile Crisis had a real sobering effect on both the US and Soviet Union.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

4	The Soviet Union's economy was experiencing significant difficulties during the late 1960s.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	Henry Kissinger believed in linking US policies towards the Soviet Union in one area, with another.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	The United States government was not interested in the Sino-Soviet conflict.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	There is evidence to suggest that the relative strength of the US was declining by the late 1960s.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Nixon's tough, anti-communist past was of use for him when he began to seek better relations US-Soviet relations.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Détente was an American initiative in which the Soviet Union was not particularly interested.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	The purpose of détente was to end the Cold War.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Exercise 8.2

Provide the term which is defined by each of the following.

1	The idea that concessions granted to the Soviet Union in one area must be matched by their "improved behaviour" in another.	
2	The term describing the Soviet nuclear position vis-à-vis the United States by the late 1960s.	
3	The significant improvement in US-Soviet relations that had been achieved by the late 1960s.	
4	The term which described the conflict between the Soviet Union and Communist China.	
5	The term describing the acceptance by most Americans of the need to follow a strong policy of containment.	
6	The major event of the Vietnam War which changed perceptions about the likelihood of victory in the Vietnam War.	
7	The National Security advisor during the administration of Richard Nixon.	
8	The near disaster of 1962 which was a key factor in bringing about an easing of US-Soviet relations.	

9	This was formed to root out suspected communists inside the United States.	
10	The vice-president of the US under President Eisenhower, 1953-61.	

What do the historians have to say about the economic and political reasons for détente?

1. Thomas G Paterson: *Meeting the Communist Threat*

Paterson makes the point that détente was not a sign of weakness. It was not a policy that had replaced containment; Nixon was as keen on the containment of communism as had been any President before him. He sought to produce an international 'equilibrium' or balance of power by keeping both the Soviet Union and China in check. In achieving this, the US would be able to curb revolution.

*"...Rational or irrational, this secretive President decided to move American foreign policy from containment through confrontation to containment through negotiation. Détente became the new lever for this strategy of meeting the Communist threat."*⁶

2. Walter LaFeber: *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1975*

LaFeber explains that the Soviet Union was receptive to US proposals for détente for a variety of reasons. Brezhnev was facing problems at home that ranged from intellectual dissent to an assassination attempt. In 1968, it had proven necessary to send the tanks into Czechoslovakia in order to end the Prague Spring. The 1966-70 Five Year Plan was failing and then there were the issues of China and the Soviets' disastrous agriculture.

*"...Brezhnev also desired Nixon's help. The new Sino-American relationship forced the Soviets to be sufficiently friendly so that a Washington-Peking front could not threaten them... Despite, or because of decades of coercion, Russian farm workers were only one sixth as productive as American."*⁷

⁶ Paterson, T G, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan*, OUP, New York, 1988, p 222

⁷ LaFeber, W, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-75*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1976, p 274

Chapter 9:

Geopolitical developments: Vietnam, Sino-Soviet split, the Middle East

Introduction

The early Cold War was largely focused in Europe, in particular Germany and the city of Berlin. The Chinese Revolution of 1949 and the Korean War (1950-53) switched attention to Asia. However, the belief in the monolithic nature of communism persisted. This was the belief that all communist insurgency around the world was directed in a global conspiracy from Moscow. The hugs shared between Soviet leader Khrushchev and Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong seemed to reinforce this idea. Whether communist action occurred in Berlin, Cuba, South East Asia or the Middle East, it was assumed that it was being directed by the Soviets. This was a notion revived by President Reagan in the early 1980s. ¹

However, such an analysis was deeply flawed. It viewed the world in a simplistic manner and ignored the historical complexities and unique nature of each situation. This was to become apparent in three key areas.

- Indochina had been under French control for almost a century by the time the nationalist Vietminh defeated the French army at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.
 - The Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh, was above all a nationalist. He would use any help he could get but “he was his own man”.
 - The US failure to recognize this led them to view Vietnam in purely cold war terms and led to full scale US military intervention in the 1960s.
 - The consequences for the United States and the people of Vietnam (and Cambodia) were to be disastrous.
- The socialist solidarity between the Soviet Union and Communist China lasted little more than a decade.
 - By 1960, the two communist powers had become bitter enemies. By the late 1960s there were major armed clashes along their common border.
 - This development alone should have convinced the US of the wrongheadedness of their monolithic view of communism.
 - President Nixon’s realization of the Sino-Soviet split became a key motivating factor in the policy of détente. ²
- The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 turned the Middle East into a region of constant conflict that still continues today.
 - The Israelis and the Palestinian Arabs have fought many times since 1948 over the land of Palestine. Time has managed only to complicate the issue.
 - From an early stage, the Middle East conflict became a theatre of Cold War machinations as both east and west tried to establish a foothold in the region.
 - The Middle East became the classic example of “cold war by proxy” as the US has

¹ See Chapter 12.

² See Chapters 8 and 10.

remained steadfastly pro-Israel, while the Soviets maintained their backing of several Arab states.

Vietnam

From the 1860s to World War II, Indochina had been the pride of the French colonial empire. French rule was often brutal and always exploitative though the French claimed to be pursuing “la mission civilisatrice”, bringing civilization to the colonial world. During World War II, Japan took over Indochina, though it allowed French authorities to administer the region until March 1945. Japanese rule was even more brutal than that of the French. With the defeat of the Japanese in World War II, Vietnamese nationalists expected to be allowed to rule their own land.

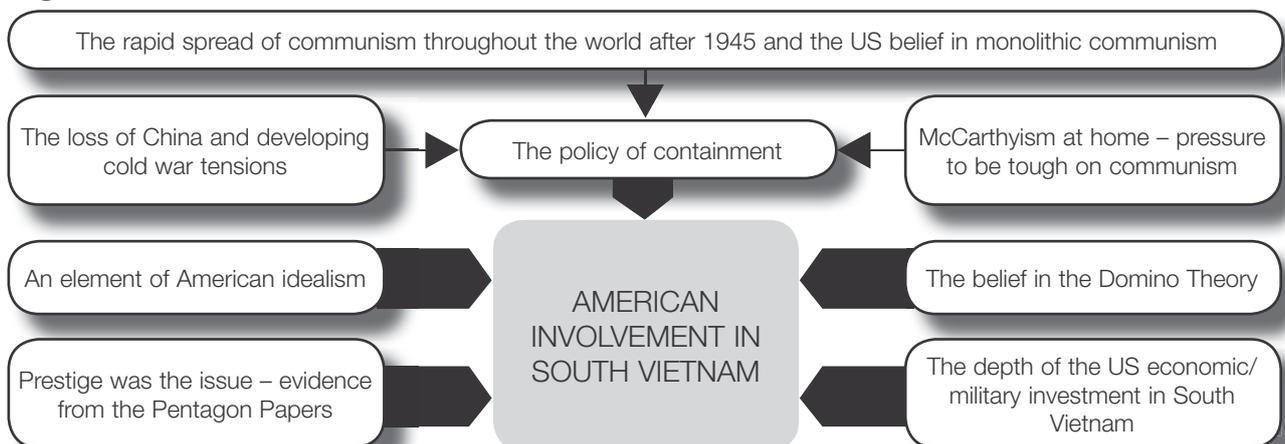
The French had every intention of returning and reclaiming their former colony. The Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh, spent much of 1946 in negotiations with the French but the talks came to nothing and war broke out in November 1946 between the French and the nationalist Vietminh. The expected French victory did not eventuate. Following the French humiliation at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, French rule was over. However, Ho did not gain his country. The Geneva Conference of 1954 resulted in the division of Vietnam at the 17th parallel into a communist North and non-communist South.

- To the US, Ho Chi Minh was no Vietnamese nationalist. He was a Soviet/ Chinese puppet who tried to cloak himself in the mantle of nationalism to achieve his aim of making Vietnam a communist country.
- Thus, the US threw its support behind the South Vietnamese regime of President Diem.
- The US believed in the “domino theory”, the idea that if South Vietnam “fell” to communism other South East Asians would follow one after another, like a “row of dominos”.
- Having “lost” Eastern Europe and China, and having experienced the McCarthyist anti-communist witch hunts of the early 1950s, the US was not going to allow its prestige to suffer with the loss of Vietnam.



Figure 9.1 summarises the reasons for US involvement in Vietnam. American support for Diem came in several forms: financial aid, military advisors (the Green Berets), military hardware, social, health and educational policies which sought to “win the hearts and minds” of Vietnamese villagers. US business willingly invested in the South Vietnamese economy to the extent that South Vietnam was being described as an ‘economic miracle’.

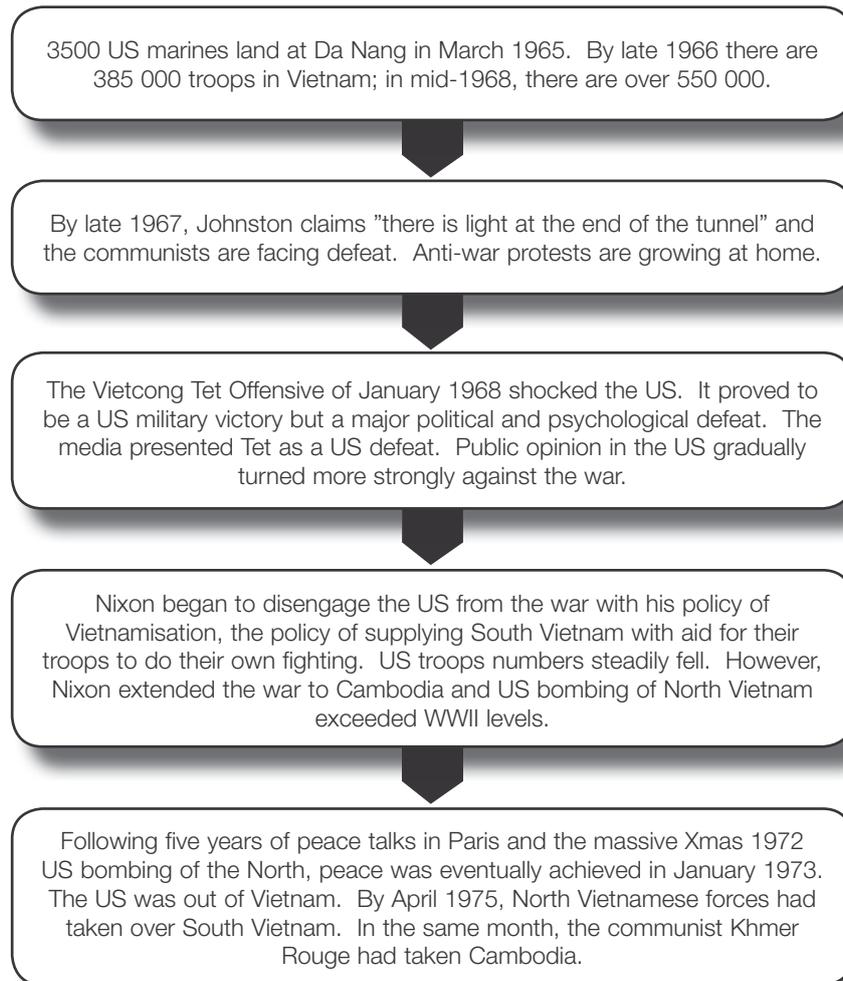
Figure 9.1: America’s motivation to become involved in Vietnam



By 1963, the regime of President Diem had become deeply unpopular. An army coup in November 1963 resulted in the murders of Diem and his brother Nhu. The coup clearly had American support. South Vietnam now entered a period of enormous instability and by late 1964 appeared on the brink of falling under communist control. In 1965, President Johnson decided to escalate American involvement in Vietnam and “Americanise” the war against the communists.³

The United States entered the Vietnam War full of confidence, convinced that no “raggedly-assed, fourth rate country”⁴ could defeat it. The US withdrew from the Vietnam War in January 1973; South Vietnam fell to the communists in 1975. Figure 9.2 outlines the key events of the Vietnam conflict.

Figure 9.2: The course of the Vietnam war



The significance of the Vietnam War

1. Though Vietnam was a classic case of old fashioned, cold war containment, it did not harm US-Soviet relations as much as might have been expected. The Soviet Union (and China) continued to support North Vietnam but US-Soviet links continued in the 1960s.
2. Nixon’s desire to extricate the US from Vietnam was a major factor in fostering the policy of détente.⁵

³ The secret Pentagon Papers published in 1971, revealed that the Johnson administration was motivated largely by upholding US prestige. It could not allow Communist North Vietnam and its southern guerrilla allies, the Vietcong, to win in Vietnam. Such a result would be utterly humiliating for the US.

⁴ Johnston’s description of North Vietnam.

⁵ See Chapter 8.

3. The ultimate victory of the North Vietnamese did not see the whole of South East Asia fall to communism and hence dealt a death blow to the idea of the Domino Theory.
4. The defeat of the US in Vietnam weakened the US in the eyes of the world and discouraged US presidents from embarking upon such ventures for some time. One of President Reagan's goals as president was to erase the memory of Vietnam and enable the US to pursue more forceful policies again.
5. For the people of Indochina, the Vietnam War was a catastrophe. Open warfare in the region would not be over until 1991. Vietnam had to endure over a decade of tough domestic policies after unification in 1976. Cambodia had to suffer the over three years of the insane brutality of the Khmer Rouge. Arguably, it was US bombing of, and intervention in, Cambodia that made possible the coming to power of the Khmer Rouge.

Exercise 9.1

Place the following events listed on the right into the correct chronological order.

1st event		There are 385 000 US troops in Vietnam Nixon's Xmas bombing of North Vietnam Murder of Diem French defeat at Dien Bien Phu South East Asia comes under communist control The Tet Offensive US pulls out of the Vietnam conflict US decides to back Diem regime Johnston decides to Americanise the war Nixon begins the Vietnamisation policy
2nd event		
3rd event		
4th event		
5th event		
6th event		
7th event		
8th event		
9th event		
10th event		

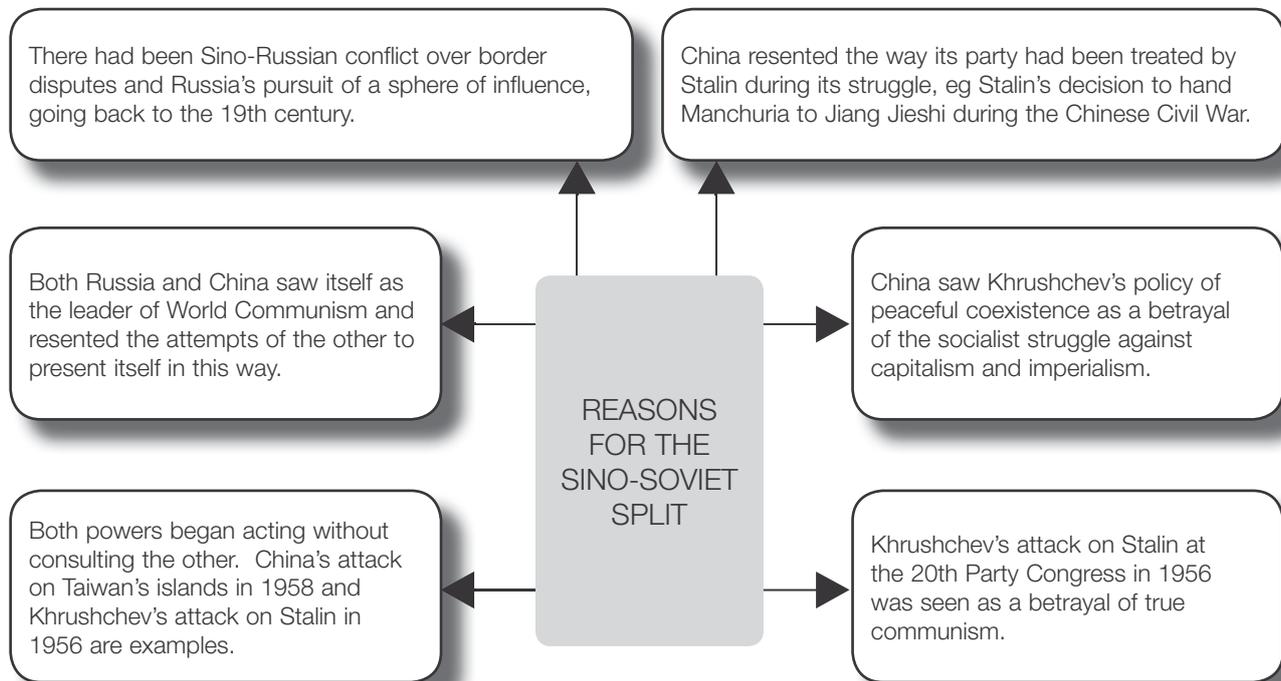
The Sino-Soviet split

Before 1949, the Soviet Union was the unchallenged leader of the World Communist Movement. Communists across the world looked to Stalin for guidance and leadership, not to mention financial support. The Chinese Communist Party had similarly looked to Moscow since its inception in the 1920s. The Communist International (Comintern) had been formed in 1919 to coordinate worldwide communist action and it had been based in Moscow.

However, China's 1949 revolution now offered the prospect of rivalry for the leadership of world communism. At first, the Soviet and Chinese parties had amicable relations. After years of Japanese occupation, civil war and the Korean War, China was clearly the weaker partner and needed Soviet aid. Khrushchev and Mao visited each other and provided a joint front in the fight against capitalist imperialism.

However, by 1960 the Sino-Soviet relationship had broken down. Figure 9.2 summarises the reasons for the breakdown.

Figure 9.3: Reasons for the sino-soviet split



The significance of the Sino-Soviet split:

So deep did the Sino-Soviet split become, in the late 1960s there were major armed clashes between Soviet and Chinese troops along their common frontier. The split was also significant in other ways:

1. It destroyed the unity of the world communist movement.
 - a. Communist supporters around the world split into either Soviet or Chinese blocs.
 - b. Some communist nations veered towards China rather the Soviet Union, eg Albania.
2. China and the Soviet Union found themselves in conflict in indirect ways as new issues arose.
 - a. Between 1979 and 1991, a Third Indochina War raged between the Vietnam-backed government in Cambodia (the Heng Samrin/ Hun Sen regime) and opposition forces comprising the Khmer Rouge, Prince Sihanouk and Son San.
 - b. The Cambodian regime was backed by Vietnam which was supported by the Soviet Union.
 - c. As a result, China backed the opposition. "My enemy's enemy is my friend."
 - d. In this action China continued to support the Khmer Rouge (as it had between 1975-78), and found itself a loose ally of the US, Britain and Australia.
3. The US took advantage of the split and moved to establish relations with China as part of its détente policy.

- a. Nixon’s strategy was clearly to play off the Soviet Union against China.
- b. The Soviet Union became very concerned at the prospect of a hostile China throughout the 1970s.

The Middle East

Cold War rivalry was a key feature of the Middle East Conflict for over forty years. Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Israeli-Arab War which followed, the region has been beset with violence, ranging from isolated acts of terror to state terrorism to all out war.⁶ For much of this time, the United States and the Soviet Union have been heavily involved in the region.

The table below summarises the key events of conflict in the Middle East between 1947 and 1991, and the involvement of the superpowers in that conflict.

Time	Arab-Israeli Conflict	Cold War aspect
The 1948 War	Following the UN decision to partition Palestine, Arab states combine to drive Israel out of Palestine, arguing that it is Arab Palestinian land. Israel is victorious and survives.	In 1947, both the US and the Soviet Union accept the UN Partition Plan which made provision for the creation of a Jewish entity in Palestine.
The early 1950s	Israel is subject to guerrilla “fedayeen” attacks along its borders.	Egypt’s President Nasser buys arms from (communist) Czechoslovakia. He refuses to join the (US-sponsored) Bagdad Pact.
The Suez War of 1956	Britain and France conspire with Israel to attack President Nasser’s Egyptian regime after he had nationalised the Suez Canal. Israel moves swiftly through Sinai but US pressure forces Britain and France to pull out.	The Soviets enjoy Britain and France’s discomfiture. The Suez War allows them to invade Hungary and destroy the revolution. The Middle East is becoming an area for Cold War rivalry.
From the Suez War and to the 1967 Six Day War	Israel continues to develop in face of major Arab opposition and attacks by Palestinian guerrillas. In 1964 the Palestinian Liberation Organisation is formed to drive out the Israelis from “the Palestinian Homeland.” By 1967, it appears that the Arabs are planning to attack Israel.	Soviet aid flows to Egypt, assists in the building of the Aswan Dam. The Soviet Union attends the Afro-Asian Conference in Cairo (1957); Nasser visits Moscow in 1958. The Iraq monarchy is overthrown in 1958; some of the rebels are communists. In 1963, Ba’athist officers seize power in Syria. The country is soon pro-Soviet. The Soviets maintain arms deliveries to Egypt and Syria. The US fully backs Israel with large-scale economic and military aid. Jewish opinion in the US lobbies the government to back Israel. The US has replaced Britain as the key player in the region. In 1958 US forces land in Lebanon to stabilize trouble there.

⁶ To the Israelis, attacks by Palestinian guerrilla groups have always been deemed terrorism. To the Palestinians, attacks by Israeli Defence Forces have always been deemed state terrorism.

Time	Arab-Israeli Conflict	Cold War aspect
The 1967 Six Day War	In a secret pre-emptive move, Israel attacks the Arab states and defeats them in six days. The Israelis now occupy the Sinai Peninsula (Egyptian), the West Bank of the River Jordan (Jordanian) and the Golan Heights (Syrian).	The massive Arab defeat, allows the Soviet Union to deepen its commitment to the Arab states.
From the Six Day War to the 1973 Yom Kippur War	Attacks on Israel continue, often followed by major Israeli retaliation. A three year "war of attrition" (1967-70) ensues along the Suez Canal between Egypt and Israel.	The Soviet Union supplies Egypt with MIG21 fighters, and T55/ T54 tanks. However, in 1972, President Sadat ejects Soviet advisors from the country. By 1973, there are 3000 Soviet advisors in Syria.
The 1973 Yom Kippur War	Egypt launches a surprise attack on Israel across the Suez Canal. For a while Israel is in danger of defeat but recovers and moves deep into Egypt. International intervention brings hostilities to an end.	Brezhnev offers to send Soviet troops to the region following a request from Sadat for peacekeepers. Nixon warns the Soviets to keep out and places US forces on a nuclear alert. Brezhnev backs down.
The 1970s to the Camp David Agreement	Efforts are made to achieve peace. Egyptian President Sadat visits Israel, and Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979 following the Camp David Agreement of 1978.	Kissinger engages in "shuttle diplomacy" between Egyptians and Israelis and eventually arranges a post-war settlement. The US assist in developing an Egyptian-Israeli dialogue, culminating in the Camp David Agreement of 1978 between Israel, Egypt and the US.
The 1980s	In 1982, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. With Egypt out of the Arab-Israeli equation, Israel continues to dominate the region. In 1982 it invades Lebanon to remove Palestinian guerrillas. The guerrillas are forced to seek sanctuary across the Arab world. In 1987, Palestinians in the occupied territories (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank) rise up against Israel in an "intifada". Guerrilla attacks and Israeli retaliation becomes a regular feature of the Arab-Israeli conflict.	US-Israeli relations cooled due to Israeli actions, though US backing of Israel was never really in question. Some Arab states, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, gravitated towards the US. The fall of the (pro-US) Shah in Iran led to closer links between the US and Iraq's Saddam Hussein! The Soviet Union maintained its presence with close links to Syria and Libya.
The 1991 Gulf War	Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, US-led forces attack Iraq and drive it out of Kuwait.	The end of the Cold War removed the Middle East as a source of US-Soviet/Russian rivalry. In 1991 the US and the Soviets co-sponsored peace talks in Madrid. The Soviet Union supported US efforts to gain UN support for its war against Saddam Hussein.

Exercise 9.2

Read each statement below. Circle the correct alternative answer provided on the right.

1	The Soviet Union has always been unwilling to cooperate with the state of Israel.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	The Arab states have always been solidly pro-Soviet.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The US was opposed to the Anglo-French conspiring with Israel to attack Egypt during the Suez War.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	Superpower involvement steadily increased turning the Arab-Israeli Conflict into a Cold War conflict.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	The Soviet Union would not have been too unhappy with the massive Israeli victory in the 1967 war.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	The 1973 Yom Kippur War had the potential to change a purely localised affair into to a major Cold War crisis.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	By the late 1970s, the Soviet Union had managed to squeeze the US out of Middle East affairs.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	The US had positive relations with the Iraq regime of Saddam Hussein in the 1980s.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	The Soviet Union proved unwilling to support US moves against Iraq in 1990.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	The end of the Cold War seemed to do nothing to reduce superpower rivalry in the Middle East.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

What do the historians have to say about Geopolitical developments: Vietnam, Sino-Soviet split, the Middle East

1. Moya Ann Ball: *Vietnam-On-The-Potomac* ⁷

Moya Ann Ball writes in detail about the decision making processes of both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. However, she shows how Kennedy and Johnson both saw the Vietnam issue in black and white terms of containment. In September 1963, she argues there was no intention of the US pulling out of Vietnam. In a news conference of September 12, Kennedy put it simply, “*we want the war to be won, the communists to be contained.*” ⁸ When Kennedy became President, he had hopes of carrying out a domestic reform program he called ‘The New Frontier’. However, cold war concerns were still the dominating issue of his presidency. Moya Ann Ball puts it this way:

⁷ This reference can also be found in: Webb, K Conflict in Indochina (Everything You wanted to know... series). This book offers a very detailed account of US involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia.

⁸ Ball, M A, *Vietnam-On-The-Potomac*, Praeger, New York, 1992, p 73

“Discussion of the Vietnam problem...was fitted into allusions to Greece and Turkey⁹. Although Kennedy and his advisors were pressing forward with their New Frontier, their roots were still in Cold War rhetoric and in many respects, it was a case of ‘Plus ca change, plus c’ est la meme chose (roughly, the more things change, the more things remain the same),”¹⁰

2. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler: US-China Relations Since World War II

Hoobler and Hoobler show that despite the break in Sino-Soviet relations, both the US and China were slow to move together. When the US signed the 1963 Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union, China accused it of pursuing a “two-handed policy” – extending the hand of friendship to the Soviet Union and a fist to China. In 1967, polls in the US suggested most Americans saw the Chinese as a greater threat to peace than the Soviet Union. When the Soviets suggested reconvening the Geneva Conference which had failed to unify Vietnam in 1954:

“...The Chinese at first supported this move but then turned against the proposal. They accused the USSR of plotting with the United States to find a face-saving way out of Vietnam.”¹¹

3. Chaim Herzog: The Arab-Israeli Wars

Chaim Herzog, a former Israeli Director of Military Intelligence and Israeli Ambassador to the UN, offers his insight to the Cold War impact on the Middle East. Herzog argues that as early as 19 June, shortly after the Six Day War of 1967, Israel had offered Egypt peace when the Israeli cabinet voted to return the Sinai to Egypt and the Golan Heights to Syria, in return for peace and demilitarization. Herzog further states that moves were afoot to negotiate with King Hussein of Jordan. However, the Soviet Union deliberately acted to stall these attempts at peace.

“...President Nikolai Podgorny, together with a large military staff, came to the Middle East and immediately set about the task of reconstructing the Egyptian and Syrian armies. This Soviet move influenced the Arab reaction to the Israeli peace moves... Russian intrigue and Arab intransigence prepared the ground for a further renewal of hostilities in the area.”¹²

9 This was the 1946-47 crisis which led to the Truman Doctrine which embodied the principle of containment.

10 Ball, p 47

11 Hoobler, D and T, US-China Relations Since World War II, Franklin Watts, New York, 1981, p 52

12 Herzog, C, The Arab-Israeli Wars, Book Club Associates, 1982, pp 190-1

Chapter 10:

Features and consequences of détente

Introduction

The period of détente was a brief one. It blossomed at the beginning of President Nixon's first administration (1969-73) but by the time of President Reagan's first administration (1981-85) the Cold War had well and truly returned. Compared to the revolutionary impact that events inside the communist bloc after 1989 had on US-Soviet/ Russian relations, détente seems positively tame. Yet it would be quite wrong to underestimate the achievements of détente.

Détente should be seen in its historical context. Less than a decade after Cuba, the superpowers were signing significant arms agreements. The precedent of the SALT Treaty made the arms deals of the Gorbachev era possible. ¹ The opening up of relations with China was irreversible which even the events of Tiananmen Square in June 1989 could not change. ²

Détente and the People's Republic of China

China had to a large degree been ostracised from the international scene since its creation in 1949. The US still preferred to recognise the nationalist regime of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-Shek) on Taiwan and thus excluded Communist China from the United Nations. Chinese troops had fought Americans in the Korean War. Dulles had taken the US "to the brink" over Communist threats to Taiwan in 1958. America's involvement in the Vietnam War had been partly motivated by the fear of Chinese communist expansionism.

However, in 1971, certain developments occurred:

- An American table-tennis team played matches inside China. The term "ping-pong diplomacy" was born.
- During 1971, Henry Kissinger made several secret trips to China.
- In July 1971, Kissinger appeared publicly in Beijing and announced that President Nixon would visit China and that a process of normalisation of relations between the US and China would begin.
- In February 1972, Nixon went to China and visited Mao. He stated that the US shared China's concerns about Soviet hegemonism, and that formal US-China diplomatic relations would be established. ³
- China entered the United Nations in 1972 and took the seat on the UN Security Council formerly held by the Taiwan Nationalist regime.



Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon,
Feb 1972

There have been various "contortions" in Chinese internal politics since 1972. However, China has remained open. Today it is a major world power, with close ties to all the major western economies. China's key role in world politics and economics in the 21st century began with the détente policy of the early 1970s.

¹ Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of the Soviet Union 1985-91. See Chapters 13 and 14.

² There were major protests in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in May and June 1989. Chinese authorities suppressed the protests in a bloody manner. Up to 1000 people were estimated to have been killed.

³ This occurred in January 1979.

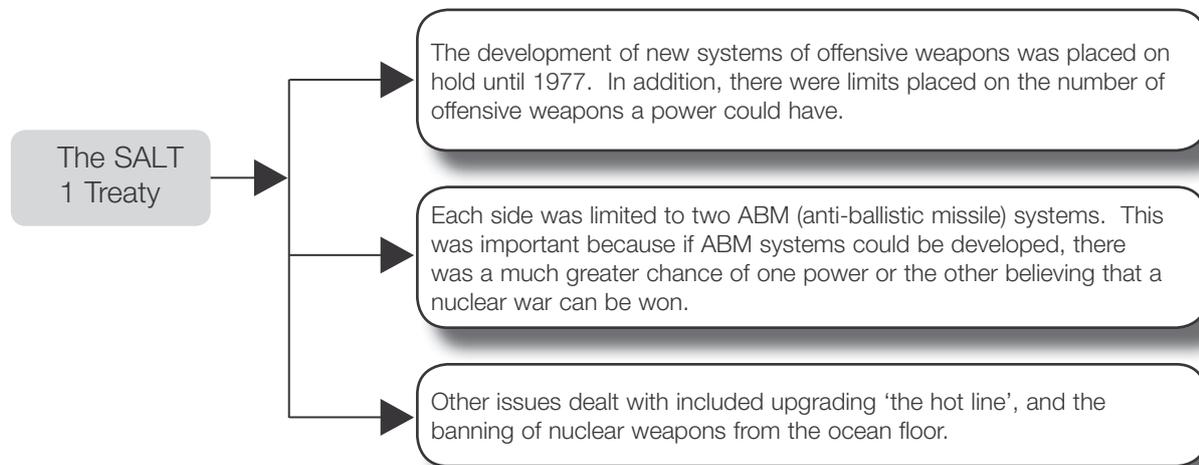
US-Soviet Meetings and their results

During the period of détente, summit meetings between the leaders of the superpowers became much more frequent. During the 1970s, there were five summit meetings:

- May 1972: Nixon met Brezhnev in Moscow
- June 1973: Brezhnev visited Nixon in Washington
- June 1974: Nixon returned to Moscow
- November 1974: new US President Ford met Brezhnev in Vladivostok
- June 1979: President Carter met Brezhnev in Vienna

One of most important results of détente was the SALT 1 Treaty. Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) began in 1969. These talks resulted in the signing of several agreements in 1972. These are summarised in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1: The SALT 1 treaty



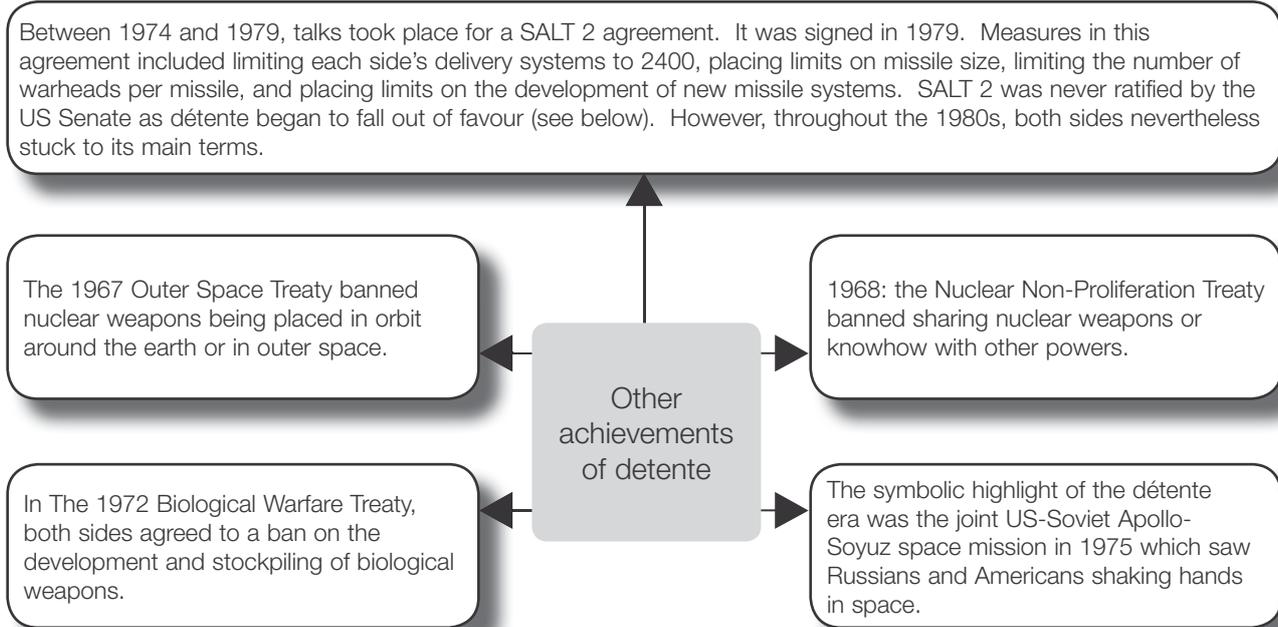
During Nixon's time as president (January 1969-August 1974), there was a series of agreements signed which clearly indicated the improvement in US-Soviet relations. Détente was producing real results.

- In 1972 the "Basic Principles of Relations between the USSR and USA" was signed. Due to the nuclear danger, peaceful coexistence was the only logical basis for US-Soviet relations.
 - Thus, despite ideological differences, "Basic Principles" confirmed the need for good bilateral relations and pledged non-intervention in each other's affairs.
- In October 1972 a major trade agreement between the powers was signed.
- In June 1973, Nixon and Brezhnev signed an "Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War". This pledged both sides to enter into immediate negotiations if there was ever any possibility of a nuclear conflict developing between the two nations. ⁴

Other achievements of détente are summarised in Figure 10.2.

⁴ In October 1973, Nixon placed US forces on nuclear alert during the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East. There was no reference to the Soviet Union.

Figure 10.2: Other Achievements Of Detente



In July-August 1975, 35 powers met in Helsinki to sign the Helsinki Declaration. This was the culmination of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Helsinki Agreement comprised three 'baskets':

1. a multilateral recognition of Europe's frontiers
2. a call for closer economic, cultural and scientific cooperation between east and west
3. a call for fundamental human rights and freedoms

Brezhnev was well pleased with the agreement. The first 'basket' granted official recognition of the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe while the second guaranteed assistance to the ailing Soviet economy. The third 'basket' could be conveniently ignored.

Ostpolitik

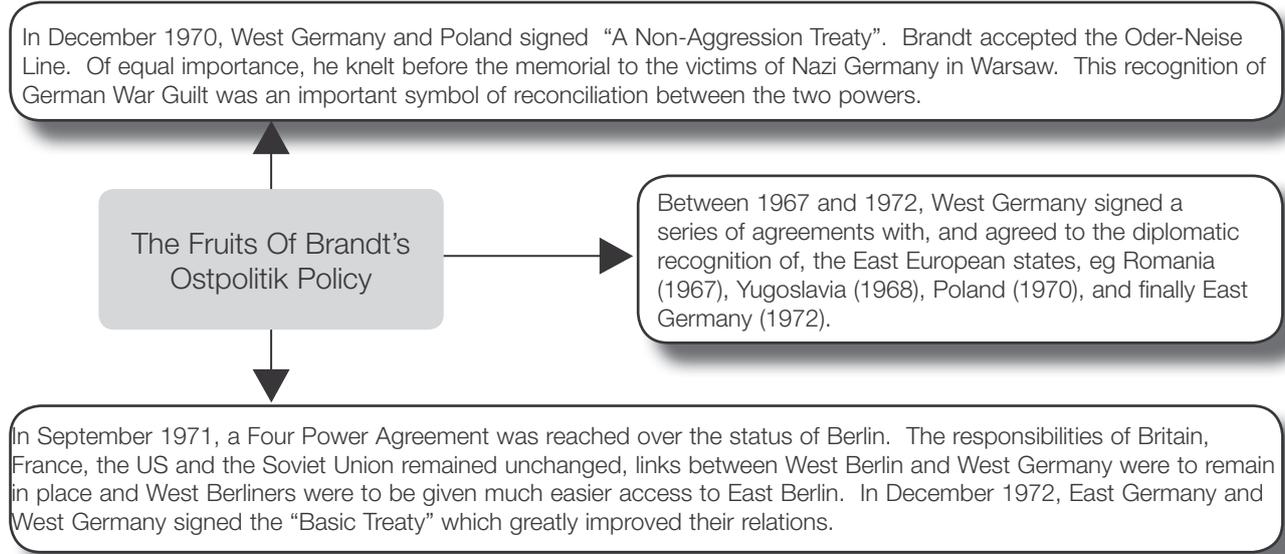
Détente was not only a US-Soviet exercise. The Chancellor of West Germany, Willy Brandt, was also pursuing his policy of 'Ostpolitik'. Brandt wanted to see an improvement in east-west relations and more particularly an improvement in relations between East Germany and West Germany. Several principles underlay Brandt's policy:

- an acceptance of the two states/ one nation nature of modern Germany
- an acceptance of the Oder-Neise Line
- less obvious support for West Berlin by West Germany.

Brandt had abandoned the idea of the reunification of Germany on the basis of pre-1939 frontiers.

Brandt's policy of Ostpolitik produced a series of major agreements in the early 1970s. The effect of these agreements was to nullify the 1955 "Hallstein Doctrine" which stated West Germany would have no relations with any state that recognised East Germany (DDR). The fruits of Brandt's Ostpolitik are summarised in Figure 10.3.

Figure 10.3: The Fruits Of Brandt’s Ostpolitik Policy



Exercise 10.1

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	Why did détente with China come as such a shock to the world?	
2	Identify two specific diplomatic gains made by China from the policy of détente.	
3	How many times did Nixon and Brezhnev meet, where and when?	
4	Name the two important arms agreements signed between the US and the Soviet Union	
5	Why were limits on ABM systems so important?	
6	Name three additional agreements to emerge from détente.	
7	Who appeared to be the “winner “ from the Helsinki Agreement?	
8	Who was Willy Brandt? What term was given to describe his policy of improved east-west relations?	
9	How did Brandt cement West German-Polish relations?	
10	What agreement succeeded in reducing tensions over the status of Berlin?	

The Decline of Détente

For all its success and for all the improvements in east-west relations, détente did not last. By 1980 it was effectively dead. Signs that its demise was coming were evident as early as 1975. The following extract appeared at the time of Helsinki Agreement. Its cynical tone reveals how many in the west were beginning to think of détente.

*“...It was show time in Helsinki. This week’s summit spectacular might be titled Goodbye to World War II. Others thought of it was Dreams of Détente. Still others would prefer to call it Much Ado About Nothing, The Grand Illusion or perhaps even The Decline of the West. A few days before the show opened the conference received some bad reviews from critics who labeled it The Betrayal of Eastern Europe. But fortunately they will not be present at the premiere to put a damper on the show.”*⁵

The inauguration of President Ronald Reagan in January 1981 saw the nails hammered into the coffin of détente. However, Reagan’s election should be seen rather as the result of the failure of détente rather than its cause. Détente died during the latter part of the administration President Jimmy Carter (1977-81) and in fact had suffered painful blows even earlier.

- The policy of détente was very closely associated with Nixon and Kissinger.
 - As a result, Nixon’s disgrace in 1974⁶ was bound to affect détente, as was the waning of Henry Kissinger’s reputation following the communist takeover of South East Asia in April 1975.⁷

However, doubts over détente had appeared even before Nixon left office.

- US behaviour during the 1973 Yom Kippur War of October 1973⁸ showed the limits of détente.
 - Egyptian President Sadat had asked for US and Soviet troops to intervene in the Sinai Peninsula to act as a buffer between Egyptian and Israeli troops.
 - Brezhnev seemed willing to send troops, even unilaterally.
 - Nixon responded by placing US nuclear forces on alert; Brezhnev promptly withdrew his offer of troops and the crisis quickly receded.
 - This incident seemed to show the hollowness of the fine talk that had been heard at the Moscow and Washington summits.
- The final US defeat in Vietnam was soon working to the Soviets’ advantage.
 - Apart from the propaganda windfall of seeing the greatest power in the world humbled by North Vietnam and Vietcong guerrillas, the Soviet Union eagerly built up Cam Ranh Bay which had of course previously been a major US base.
- Of even greater importance was the failure of the 1972 Trade Agreement. On 13 December 1974 the US passed the “Jackson Amendment”.
 - The Jackson Amendment attached conditions to the freeing up of US-Soviet trade, principally demands for freer emigration of Soviet Jews.
 - The Soviets claimed that this was against the spirit of the agreement and so formally rejected it in January 1975.

⁵ Time Magazine, 4 August 1975, p 8

⁶ In August 1974, Nixon was forced to resign as a result of the Watergate Scandal. He is the only president in US History who has been forced out of office.

⁷ See Chapter 9.

⁸ See Chapter 9.

- The Soviets' rejection was to deny them lower tariff rates and \$300m in export/ import bank credits.
- Détente was becoming so unpopular, that President Ford ⁹ ordered his administration to avoid the word. The impression was growing that the Soviet Union was making the gains but not offering anything in return.
 - Anti-Soviet dissidents, men like Andrei Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn were hounded and their works banned; Solzhenitsyn was even expelled from the Soviet Union.
 - Jews were persecuted and denied a chance to emigrate to Israel.
 - The Soviet Union was blatantly interfering in Third World conflicts such as Angola and Ethiopia (sometimes with Cuban assistance).
 - The question had to be asked, what was the US getting out of détente?

The presidency of Jimmy Carter (1977-81) saw an end to détente but this was not really by design. Several factors combined during Carter's term to finish it off.

- Carter tried to bring human rights issues to the forefront of international relations. This was perhaps a reflection of Carter's religious beliefs.
 - However, to the Soviets it smacked of linkage and the Jackson Amendment.
 - Brezhnev made it clear he would not compromise party control inside the Soviet Union even at the expense of US-Soviet relations.
- The Soviets were also looking anxiously at the steadily improving Sino-American relationship.
 - In January 1979, formal diplomatic relations were established between China and the US.
 - Despite China's invasion of Vietnam in early 1979, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping was feted as he toured America later in the year.
 - As Soviet-US ties soured, Sino-American relations began to improve and the Soviets feared being isolated.
- The Carter administration was split on the issue of détente.
 - Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, clearly approved of détente; National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brezinski opposed it, and in fact delighted in being *"the first Pole in 300 years in a position to really stick it to the Russians.."*
 - As time went on, it was Brezinski's line that won out.
- The Soviet Union only made matters worse by its continuing interference around the globe and support of radical regimes.
 - It built up ties with regimes stridently opposed to the US such as Gaddafi's Libya, Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Assad's Syria. It openly supported rebel movements in Angola and Ethiopia.
 - The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was the last straw. ¹⁰

⁹ Gerald Ford took over as president from Nixon. He was in office from August 1974 to January 1977. He narrowly lost the 1976 election to Jimmy Carter.

¹⁰ Afghanistan will be dealt with fully in Chapter 11.

The Iranian Revolution: 1979

In February 1979, the Islamic Revolution in Iran overthrew the pro-US regime of the Shah. From November 1979 to January 1981, following the takeover of the US embassy in Tehran by young militants, 66 American hostages were held captive. In April 1980 a botched rescue bid by US forces served to heighten America's apparent impotence. The Iran Hostage Crisis destroyed Carter. In the 1980 election, Ronald Reagan promised to restore US prestige and have the country once again "ride tall in the saddle". Reagan argued that détente had been a one-way street in the Soviets' favour, and wasn't the Soviet long-term aim after all world revolution? Reagan was swept to power. He and Secretary of State Haig proceeded to take a hard line with the Soviet Union. They found that they had a strong supporter in this in British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Détente's brief life was over.

Exercise 10.2

Place the events listed on the right in the correct chronological order.

1st event		
2nd event		
3rd event		The election of Ronald Reagan
4th event		Nixon resigns over Watergate
5th event		Yom Kippur war
6th event		Helsinki agreement
7th event		US-Chinese relations established
8th event		Start of the Iran hostage crisis
9th event		Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
10th event		Passing of the Jackson amendment
		Carter elected president
		Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States

What do the historians have to say about the Features and consequences of détente?

1. Walter LaFeber: *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-75*

LaFeber comments on the behaviour of the US during the Middle East Yom Kippur War of October 1973. He makes the point that for all the idealistic rhetoric of détente, when it appeared that a real Soviet presence might be established in the Middle East and the dangers of that were realized. Détente was quickly jettisoned for good old-fashioned Truman Doctrine style containment.

“...In these regions (the Middle East) American policy continued to emphasise containment rather than détente. Once established in the Middle East, the Soviet Union would have access to routes to Africa, the Indian Ocean, Western Europe and the oil fields on which the west depended...”¹¹

2. Jonathan Steele: *The Limits of Soviet Power*

Steele suggests that part of the unpopularity of détente had psychological roots. While Brezhnev talked of the irreversibility of détente, to Americans it seemed to reflect failure. If the Soviet Union was now America's equal, had not the US free enterprise-democratic system failed to keep ahead. Détente had not changed the Soviet Union internally as evidenced by the way that it hounded dissidents and Jews. Neither had détente encouraged the Soviets to “behave” in the Third World as evidenced in its involvement in African conflicts.

“...Taught that their country was the world's most powerful nation and ‘the last best hope’ of mankind they found it hard to accept that their major ideological enemy had become their military equal and seemed immune to the liberalising tendencies that détente was expected to bring...”¹²

3. Newsweek Magazine

Even before the election of Reagan, opinion inside the US was already moving strongly against the continuation of détente. Newsweek Magazine was typical of much of the commentary of the time. It argued that the US military position had deteriorated significantly in the face of the massive Soviet expansion of its military power. Debate was no longer about the existence of expanded Soviet power, but what it intended to do with that power.

“...For many European analysts, the buildup is clearly expansionist. “Look at the countries around the Persian Gulf,” said Group Commander Hans Meubroch of London's Institute for the Study of Conflict, “Ethiopia, Afghanistan and South Yemen are now in the Soviet camp. Iran is threatened. Further afield, Cubans are in Africa, and Vietnam has all but joined the Warsaw Pact. This is expansion by proxy based on Soviet strength.”¹³

11 LaFeber, W, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-75*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1976, p 280

12 Steele, J, *The Limits of Soviet Power*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1985, p 60

13 Newsweek Magazine, June 1979

ESSAYS 3:

Responding to HSC questions on Detente

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the third section of the syllabus: Détente. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

Account for the willingness of the superpowers to pursue détente.

This question is obviously seeking an argument regarding the causes of détente. It is not seeking information about the process of détente, though it may be useful to include some examples of détente in action in order to explain the reasons for the policy. The term "superpowers" clearly refers to the United States and the Soviet Union but reference to China should also be included.

Both the US and the Soviet Union had sound economic and political reasons for pursuing the policy of détente. For both, the Cuban Missile Crisis provided some incentive. The US hoped to use détente to get itself out of Vietnam, while Kissinger hoped to employ his belief in linkage to obviate the relative weakening of the US position in world affairs. For the Soviets it was a combination of the need for economic assistance and technology. The Soviet achievement of nuclear parity made détente possible.

- The Cuban Missile Crisis had brought home to both the US and the Soviet Union the enormous dangers of Cold War confrontation:
 - a loss of nerve, a mistake or a misunderstanding could have had catastrophic consequences in 1962;
 - very briefly explain;
 - this spurred each side to avoid such things in the future, eg the establishment of the "hot line"; this was really the start of détente.
- The US had its own reasons to pursue détente:
 - it was bogged down in Vietnam – explain this;
 - Tet had proven the war was unwinnable and so a way out had to be found;
 - Nixon believed that by improving relations with the Soviet Union and China, those powers might place pressure on their ally, North Vietnam, to compromise and seek peace;
 - Nixon also had hopes of playing off one communist power against the other;
 - Kissinger's belief in linkage; explain how this affected détente;
 - the relative weakening of the US place in the world – as one theory suggests – made détente attractive; explain this idea.
- The Soviet economy was in a mess:
 - US technology was badly needed;

- economic aid and grain were required to prop up the ailing system;
- détente might stimulate US-Soviet trade.
- The Soviets' achievement of nuclear parity made both sides willing to pursue détente:
 - explain the concept of parity;
 - the US no longer had the massive advantage over the Soviets it once had and so could never blackmail them again;
 - the Soviet nuclear strength gave them confidence and the capability to deal with the US as equals;
 - these developments made détente possible.

Both superpowers had reasons to pursue détente. Both wanted to avoid another Cuba and the dangers inherent in such a situation. The US sought a way out of the Vietnam War while the Soviets desperately hoped détente would bring badly needed technology and economic assistance. The Soviet achievement of parity made détente the logical policy.

Essay No 2

How significant was the policy détente on the development of the Cold War in the period to 1979?

The term “how significant” clearly indicates that a judgment of some kind is required for this question. A response which simply gives a list of measures and agreements from the period will not be attacking the issue of significance. The question has an end date of 1979. However, it would be perfectly acceptable to allude to the short-term nature of détente.

The policy of détente had a major impact on reducing Cold War tensions between the superpowers. Less than a decade after Cuba, the superpowers were taking steps to make the world safer rather than threatening to destroy each other. Détente brought China out of isolation. It also had the effect of greatly reducing tensions in Europe.

- One of the key benefits of détente was to make personal contact between US and Soviet (and Chinese) leaders a regular occurrence:
 - Nixon and Brezhnev met three times; give details;
 - Brezhnev also met Ford and Carter;
 - Nixon also met Mao Zedong;
 - consider the significance of the personal element in relations.
- The world was a more peaceful place thanks to détente:
 - consider the impact of SALT 1;
 - the talks for SALT 2 – each side adhered to it even after Afghanistan cooled relations;
 - the Basic Principles Agreement;
 - the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War;
 - the Outer Space Treaty;
 - the Biological Warfare Treaty;
 - explain the significance of these in superpower relations.
- Détente had the effect of making US-Soviet relations more normal as opposed to the

dangerous stand-off of earlier years:

- economic ties were extended – explain;
- the powers worked together to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons – explain the Non-Proliferation Treaty;
- refer to the Helsinki Conference;
- the Soyuz-Apollo mission.
- Détente brought China out of isolation for the first time in over twenty years:
 - China joined the UN, took its seat on the Security Council;
- diplomatic relations were established with the US in 1979;
 - significance: placed China on a path that it still follows today as a key player in the world community.
- Mention could also be made of Brandt’s version of détente: Ostpolitik
 - explain its aims
 - how did Ostpolitik improve the European situation?
- However, détente did not last and some reference should be made to this, but students should not go too far on this:
 - refer to Nixon’s behaviour during the Yom Kippur War;
 - the US suspicion that the Soviets were “taking but not giving”;
 - détente could not survive the invasion of Afghanistan and Reagan.

Détente clearly had a major impact on the development of the Cold War to 1979. It led to a major improvement in and a more personal style of US-Soviet relations. Détente did much to make the world a safer place, and to place US-Soviet relations on a more normal footing. It also brought China out of isolation to which it has never returned. However, détente did not last much more than a decade.

Possible HSC-style questions on the section of the syllabus:

“Detente”

1. Account for the willingness of the superpowers to pursue détente.
2. How significant was the policy détente on the development of the Cold War in the period to 1979?
3. Assess the impact of the Vietnam War and the Sino-Split on the development of the Cold War.
4. Why did détente not survive for more than a decade?
5. “The Middle East Conflict became the Cold War by proxy.” To what extent is this an accurate reflection of superpower involvement in the Middle East after 1945?

Chapter 11:

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its impact

Introduction

Since the 9/11 attacks on the United States in 2001, conflict in Afghanistan has been a major preoccupation of the United States (also Britain and Australia). In 2001, US forces invaded Afghanistan and quickly removed the extreme Islamist Taliban regime. The Taliban was accused of supporting, and providing bases for the Al-Qaida terrorists who hijacked the planes on 9/11. Western forces became bogged down in a war with Taliban insurgents in support of the unpopular and corrupt regime of Hamid Karzai. Many commentators see parallels with the war in Vietnam, and President Obama's attempt to get out of Afghanistan similar to the dilemma faced by Nixon in the early 1970s.

The US was also involved in Afghanistan during the 1980s, only this time in support of Islamic insurgents. During the 1980s, Afghanistan served as something of a barometer of the state of US-Soviet relations. The Soviet invasion of the country in December 1979 signalled the official end of détente. Official US sponsorship of the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen rebels by the Reagan administration symbolised a return to Cold War. The withdrawal of Soviet troops in February 1989 was but one element in the new fabric of US-Soviet relations in the Gorbachev era.

Background

- The Soviet Union had offered arms to Kabul ¹ as early as the 1950s following a US decision not to provide such aid. By the 1970s, Soviet aid to Afghanistan far exceeded that of any other country.
- In 1973, the Afghan king, Zahir Shah, was overthrown in a bloodless army coup led by Mohammed Daud. A republic was established.
- In April 1978, Daud was toppled in a communist coup which brought to power Mohammed Taraki of the Khalq (People's Party).

"...Domestically the 1978 coup was in many ways long overdue and few educated Afghans denied that some kind of change was needed. The country's social system was patriarchal and feudal. Massive illiteracy, absentee landlordism, the sale of women as brides were the main features..." ²

The appearance of a Marxist party preaching class struggle seems incongruous in a poverty-stricken, Islamic, desert country such as Afghanistan. In fact, Taraki only really held sway in the capital Kabul. Rebel groups in the country vowed to overthrow the communist regime and install an Islamic Republic like Iran. ³ However, the rebels were leaderless and not coordinated, and so their opposition was limited to ad hoc guerrilla attacks on government forces.

- In February 1979, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan, Adolph Dubs was kidnapped and later shot following an abortive rescue bid.

¹ The Afghan capital.

² Jonathan Steele in the English Guardian newspaper, January 1980

³ The regime of the pro-American Shah of Iran had been overthrown in February 1979. It was replaced an Islamic regime headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini.

- By June 1979, there were 3000 Soviet advisors in Afghanistan and the Soviet presence was growing. The Soviet presence was not popular and a serious Afghan insult of the time was to call somebody “a son of Roos (Russian).
- Differences within the Khalq led to the overthrow of Taraki in September 1979 and the coming to power of Hafizullah Amin. Amin’s government was not popular and the Soviets feared the Khalq Party might lose control of the country.

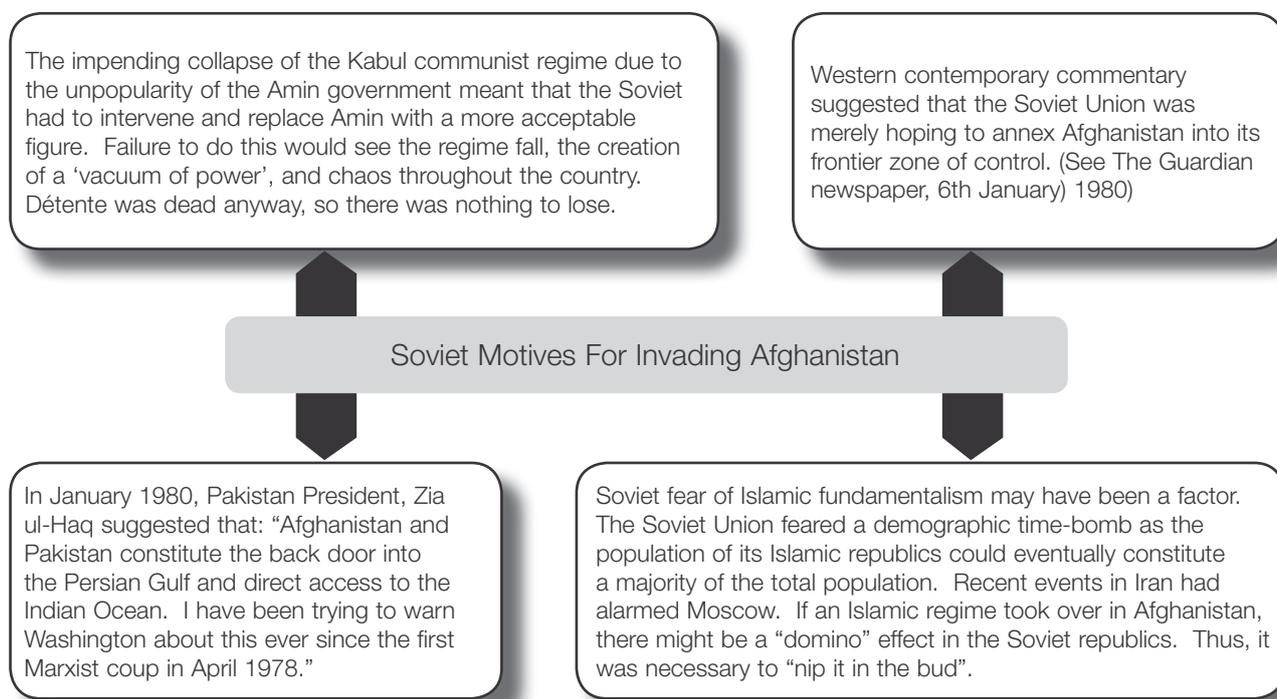


On Christmas Day 1979, 50 000 Soviet airborne and ground troops entered Afghanistan. Entering from Uzbekistan in the north, they quickly gained control of Kabul and the Bagram air base. Other troops entering from Turkmenistan soon had control of Herat and Khandahar. Amin was arrested and accused of being a US agent. He was executed. Babrak Karmal took over as leader.

Why did the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan?

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was seen in the west as evidence of the traditional expansionist nature of the Soviet Union. Eastern Europe, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Africa and now Afghanistan. Clearly détente had been a waste of time and the only possible western response had to be a strong revival of the policy of containment. However, as Figure 11.1 suggests, the motives of the Soviet Union in invading might have been more complex.

Figure 11.1: Soviet Motives For Invading Afghanistan



What was the impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?

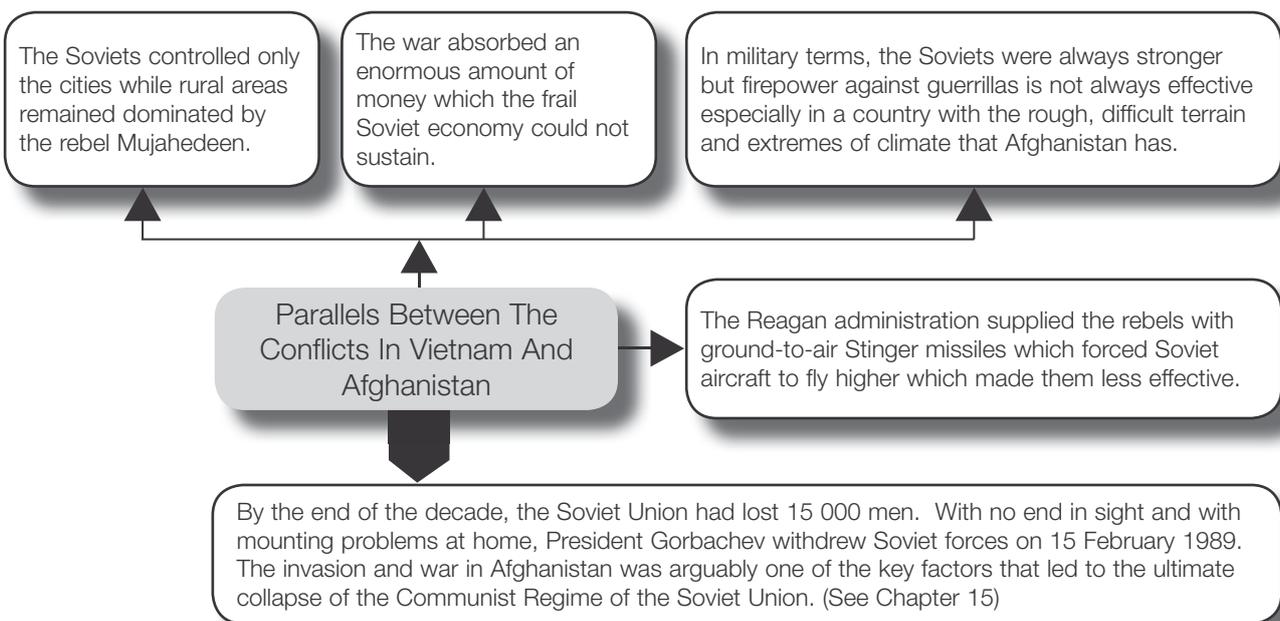
- US President Carter took immediate action against the Soviet Union.
 - The SALT 2 Treaty was shelved.
 - Economic “punishment” included the ending of wheat exports, the withholding of licences for the export of modern technology and a reduction of fishing rights.

- The Soviet airline, Aeroflot, was now limited to two flights a week to the US.
- The United States boycotted the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.
- Carter immediately increased US defence expenditure by 5% and ordered young men to register for the draft.

Overnight, the bad old days of the Cold War had returned.

- Of greater significance was the promulgation of what became known as the “Carter Doctrine”.
 - The United States would intervene if the Soviet Union threatened western interests in the Persian Gulf.
- Afghanistan was also significant in that it was the first time since 1945 that Soviet troops had crossed borders to install a friendly government.
 - Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) had been part of what was accepted as Russia’s sphere of influence.
 - Afghanistan was not!
- Commentators soon began to suggest that the Soviet Union now had its own “Vietnam”. Indeed there were some parallels as explained in Figure 11.2.

Figure 11.2: Parallels between the conflicts in Vietnam and Afghanistan



Afghanistan after the departure of the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union left the government of President Najibullah ⁵ to deal with the expected onslaught of the Mujahedeen. Commentators expected Najibullah to fall as quickly as Thieu had fallen when the US pulled out of South Vietnam in 1973. However, Najibullah’s regime held out for several years against the seven party Mujahedeen alliance, due in part to the deep divisions within the Mujahedeen. The regime eventually fell 1992.

⁵ Najibullah had replaced Babrak Karmal in 1986.

US support of the Mujahedeen in the 1980s was a major factor in establishing and sustaining the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism, as was its failure to support the country after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. Once the Soviets had been removed (and once the Soviet Union itself had disintegrated by 1991), the US showed little interest in the country. By the mid-1990s, Afghanistan was under the control of the strictly fundamentalist Taliban regime, though parts of the country remained under the control of local warlords.⁶ Following the 9/11 attacks, US-led forces invaded Afghanistan to remove the Taliban, accusing the regime of backing Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaida terrorists who had attacked New York. A pro-US regime under Hamid Karzai was put into power. War still rages in Afghanistan⁷ between the Afghan regime supported by Western forces, and the rebel Taliban. No end seems to be in sight.

Exercise 11.1

Read each of the following statements and indicate whether you consider them to be true or false.

1	There was a pro-Communist government in Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion of December 1979	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	The Soviets executed the Afghan leader soon after they had entered the country.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The Soviet invasion seemed to have little impact on the policy of détente.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	Pakistan did not believe that the Soviet motive for the invasion was to gain direct access to the Indian Ocean.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	The Soviet Union was deeply disturbed by the growing Muslim population within its own borders.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	Despite the invasion of Afghanistan, the SALT 2 Treaty managed to gain acceptance in the US Senate.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	The Carter Doctrine referred to the US determination to protect oil supplies from the Persian Gulf region.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Due to the nature of the country, the Afghan war did not pose any special economic burden for the Soviet Union.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	There seemed to be no real similarities between the Soviet war in Afghanistan and the US war in Vietnam,	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Since the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Muslim Fundamentalism has had a major impact on the country.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

What do the historians have to say about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its impact?

1. Thomas G Paterson: *Meeting the Communist Threat*

Paterson tries to place the US reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan into the context of the wider world view of the Reagan administration. Paterson suggests that Reagan and his advisors believed that the troubles of the Third World were the result of international Soviet intrigue.

⁶ The 2007 film, *Charlie Wilson's War*, starring Tom Hanks and Julia Roberts, is set against the background of US assistance to the Mujahedeen. The film attempts to make the point that US failure to support Afghanistan after the Soviet war was a key factor allowing the Taliban into power.

⁷ This was written in early-2019.

What was needed was the revival of Truman Doctrine and global containment of communism. Afghanistan merely provided further evidence of the need for this outlook which would become fully developed in “The Reagan Doctrine”.⁸

“...The Reagan Doctrine committed the United States to the active support of anti-Communist movements around the world, including ... the Afghan rebels. Reagan determined to meet the Communist threat, which he believed omnipresent, head on.”⁹

2. Newsweek Magazine

Newsweek’s commentaries at the time emphasised the expansionist nature of the Soviet regime and its willingness to seize opportunities to increase its geopolitical strategic advantages. It stated that Soviet success in Afghanistan would result in Soviet planes being within 550 kms of the Persian Gulf, the oil lifeline of the West and Japan. These warplanes could cut that lifeline at will.

“...And all that now stands in the way of Russia’s historic quest for a southern port is the disputed territory of Baluchistan, which straddles the Iran-Pakistan border. Opportunities are rife for the Soviets to exploit the Baluchi insurgency against the governments of both countries...”¹⁰

3. Ramon Moshref: The Role of Afghanistan in the fall of the USSR

Moshref uses the book *The Fateful Pebble* by Anthony Arnold¹¹ as the basis for his argument that Afghanistan was a major factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Empire rested on three key pillars: military power, the KGB and the Communist Party. Moshref believes that the disaster that Afghanistan was for the Soviet Union, had the effect of eating away at the power of each of these three instruments of power. Combined with economic malaise and Gorbachev’s new policy agenda, Afghanistan hastened the decline of the Soviet Union.

“...Afghanistan was a major factor in breaking the myths which had surrounded the Soviet Empire for decades. The speedy implementation of Perestroika and Glasnost, coupled with a breakdown of the economics and changing Soviet ideology were elements breaking apart the Soviet Union.”¹²

8 See Chapter 12.

9 Paterson, T G, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan*, OUP, New York, 1988, p 256

10 Newsweek Magazine, 14 January 1980

11 Arnold, A, *The Fateful Pebble*, Presidio Press, 1993

12 Moshref, R, *The role of Afghanistan in the fall of the Soviet Union*, from Afghanistan Online, <http://www.afghan-web.com/history/articles/ussr.html>

Chapter 12:

US attitudes and policies under Reagan¹

Introduction

The 1970s had not been a good decade for the United States. It opened with an unsuccessful invasion of Cambodia which enflamed US public opinion and led to the shooting of American students by Ohio National Guardsmen.² The United States managed to leave Vietnam but only after the most inhumane bombing of North Vietnam that had some people believing Richard Nixon was seriously unstable. In 1973, Vice-President Agnew was forced to resign following bribery allegations. Worse came in 1974 with the resignation of Richard Nixon following the Watergate Scandal. By April 1975, all of Indochina was under communist rule. Why had 58 000 Americans died? President Carter was perceived as a weak leader who had let the Soviet Union reap all the benefits of détente without having to give anything in return.

At the end of the decade, Iranian militants had held 52 Americans hostage and reveled in their humiliation of their superpower enemy. Carter's calamitous rescue attempt in April 1980 merely rubbed salt into the wound. When Ronald Reagan became president in January 1981, he made it clear from the start that he intended to give Americans reason to hold their heads high again. On welcoming home the American hostages in 1981, Reagan pleased many Americans when he said:

"...Let terrorists beware that when the rules of international behaviour are violated our policy will be one of swift and effective retribution..."

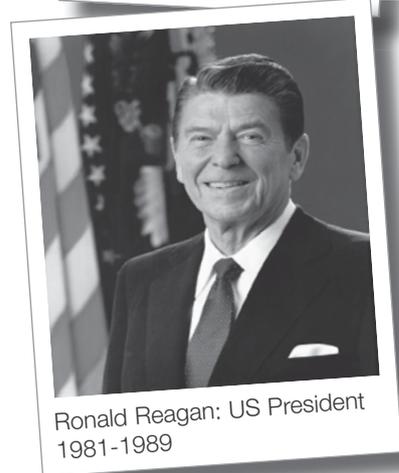
Reagan made it very clear from the start that he was not going to continue détente, he was not going to allow the United States to be pushed around and that the United States would stand up proudly and extol its superior free and democratic values. Such thinking fitted in well with his description of the Soviet Union as "the evil empire". When Reagan spoke to the British House of Commons in June 1982, he reinforced this view when he said:

"...The march to freedom and democracy... will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people..."

Reagan restored credibility to the idea of containment and even flirted with the notion of "rollback",³ not heard of seriously since the days of John Foster Dulles in the 1950s.



Ronald Reagan in his acting days, "Tennessee's Partner" - 1955



Ronald Reagan: US President 1981-1989

1 This chapter will focus on the 1st Reagan administration, 1981-85. Reagan's policies for 1985-89 will be covered in Chapter 13 and 14.

2 Kent State University, Ohio, 4 May 1970

3 The notion of removing communist control of a country as opposed to simply preventing its spread.

The Reagan Doctrine

Reagan's aim to restore US prestige around the world and to take a hard line with perceived communist expansionism evolved into what became known as the "Reagan Doctrine". No longer would the US be treated as if it was of no account, humiliated and made to feel embarrassed about its values and policies. Reagan said that the American people could once again "ride tall in the saddle".⁴ The Reagan Doctrine could be summed up as:

- the restoration of American pride and prestige
- the pursuit of a clear ideological line
- the return to containment and selective rollback
- the fostering and support of anti-Soviet irregular forces
- the continuation and strengthening of the Monroe Doctrine⁵

A none-too flattering analysis of the Reagan Doctrine was provided by the journalist Christopher Hitchens in 1986 in the British weekly "The New Statesman". The article was clearly unsympathetic to Reagan, yet by diluting Hitchens' negative view of Reagan, five elements can be isolated that comprised "The Reagan Doctrine".

1. "Anti-communist subversion would no longer be distinguished from anti-Soviet resistance"

Anyone who was fighting the Soviet Union in any way deserved American help. This help might be legal – a Congressional aid package to El Salvador – or it could be illegal – aid to the Contras in Nicaragua (see below).

2. "Alliances with existing governments would be judged in the light of this test (opposition to the Soviet Union)"

Jimmy Carter's focus on human rights was ended. If a regime was opposing the Soviet Union – no matter what it was like – it was deserving of US assistance. Thus, aid flowed to military dictatorships such as Chile and Guatemala, and the apartheid regime of South Africa.

3. "Terrorism was to become the key word"

Terrorists and their supporters were to be punished. US attacks on Libya throughout the 1980s provided evidence of this.

4. "the press and the public had to weaned from... sickly inhibitions about the use of force"

This would involve the use of the media to convince the American people of the justice of the US position. No US president has used the media as effectively as Ronald Reagan. His speeches left Americans feeling proud, lacking guilt and happy to see the use of force.

5. "Since there would have to be dirty work, there would have to be surrogates"

Nations or groups would be needed to put into practice some of the less savoury elements of the Reagan Doctrine. This might involve removing enemies, the use of torture and or military force. Such help might come from countries such as Honduras, Israel and South Africa.⁶

4 Reagan enjoyed making references to Western movie lines such as this. Before he was a politician, he had been a Hollywood actor, appearing in over 50 movies.

5 The policy enunciated in 1823 by President Monroe that stated the western hemisphere was not for European interference. Reagan modified this to mean communist interference.

6 In the early 21st century, the foreign policy of President George W Bush (2001-09) followed a similar line to that of Reagan. The enemy now was "Islamic terrorists" rather than the Soviet Union.

It should be noted that the behaviour of the Soviet Union in the late 1970s and early 1980s made Reagan's job easy. Any perceived criticism of the US at this time should be balanced by the fact that the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, was backing obnoxious dictators such as Mengistu of Ethiopia, was stifling democratic protests in Poland, and in 1983 it shot down a civilian Korean airliner – Flight KA007 – on the pretext that it had strayed into Soviet air space. ⁷

US Foreign Policy during President Reagan's 1st Administration (1981-85)

(a) Nicaragua

The Reagan administration seemed preoccupied with affairs in Central and South America. The US had always been sensitive to matters in this region.

- In the early 1900s, President Theodore Roosevelt's policy in the region was to “speak softly and carry a big stick”.
- In the 1930s, the US installed the Somoza family to run Nicaragua. President Franklin Roosevelt said of Somoza at the time: *“He may be a son of a bitch, but at least he's our son of a bitch.”*
- In 1954 Eisenhower removed the government of Guzman in Guatemala.
- In 1965 Johnson intervened in the Dominican Republic.
- In 1973 Nixon removed the Allende regime in Chile.

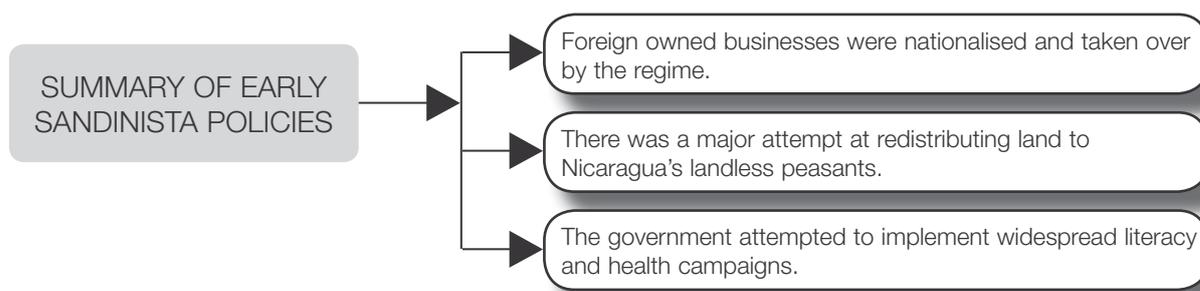
Thus, Reagan's policies in Central America represented not only a revival of containment but also a continuation of traditional US foreign policy.

Since the 1930s, **Nicaragua** had been ruled by the Somoza family. The regime was brutal and corrupt, and the Nicaraguan people gained nothing. Following an earthquake in the capital Managua in 1972, the US sent aid. Most of it was stolen by Somoza regime cronies. Such rule spawned the growth of opposition groups, principally the Sandinista Liberation Front in the 1960s.

In 1979, the Somozas were driven out of Nicaragua. The new Sandinista regime immediately sought to implement policies for the people, similar to those of Castro in Cuba. These are summarised in Figure 12.1.



Figure 12.1: Summary of early sandinista policies



⁷ History is complicated. Five years later on 3 July 1988, the American missile cruiser USS Vincennes shot down an Iran Air plane, Flight IR655, killing 290 people.

In the eyes of the Reagan administration, the Sandinista regime was a new Cuba. Its policies, government and foreign policy were seen not as nationalist but purely communist. The regime had to be destroyed. For much of Reagan’s time in office, much effort was expended trying to remove the Sandinistas.

- Economic warfare by the US against the regime included trade and credit blockades.
- Reagan backed the Nicaraguan Defence Force (NGF), better known as the contras. Using Honduras as a base, the contras launched frequent raids on Nicaragua.
 - they attempted to destroy cotton and coffee crops
 - attacks were launched on roads, bridges, hospitals, schools
 - the contras were guilty of many atrocities
- The US supplied the contras with high speed boats to attack Nicaraguan shipping and it mined Managua harbour.

The contras were not very successful in gaining support and the US was roundly condemned by many Latin American regimes for persecuting the regime. The World Court condemned America’s unlawful use of force against Nicaragua. In 1985, Daniel Ortega was elected president of Nicaragua.

In late 1986, the Reagan administration was hit with the “Iran-contra affair” or “Irangate”.

- The US Congress voted for a suspension of aid to the Contras.
- To circumvent Congress, the administration secretly sold arms to Iran. The funds raised by these sales were then used illegally to continue financing the Contras despite the Congressional ban. The “hero” of the affair was Colonel Oliver North.
- When the affair became public, Reagan said he could not remember authorising it, and most of those involved escaped punishment.

The Nicaraguan war was finally ended thanks to the intervention of President Arias of Costa Rica who persuaded fellow South American governments to support his peace plan. Despite US opposition, the plan was gradually implemented and the situation in Nicaragua settled down. Arias won the Nobel Peace Plan for his efforts.

Exercise 12.1

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	After the disastrous decade of the 1970s, what did Reagan hope to restore to the American people?	
2	What term used in “western movies” did Reagan use to illustrate what he hoped American could do in the future?	
3	To what traditional policies did the Reagan administration seem to be returning?	
4	What was the key element of the Reagan Doctrine?	

5	How had the US been involved in Nicaragua before 1979?	
6	Who were the opposing sides in the Nicaraguan conflict?	
7	How did the US try to destabilise the Sandinista regime?	
8	What was the international reaction to US actions against Nicaragua?	
9	What did the Iran-contra affair/ Irangate involve?	
10	Who was largely responsible for helping to resolve the Nicaraguan conflict?	

(b) Beyond Nicaragua

In October 1983, the US invaded the island of **Grenada**, 160 kms north of Venezuela.

- Revolution in 1979 brought to power a Marxist government.
- Following an internal power struggle, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was executed.
- A US-led force of 7600 troops invaded in “Operation Urgent Fury” and removed the new government of Hudson Austin.
- This was the only case of a communist government ever being overthrown by US military action.

Reagan was strong in his support of right wing Latin American regimes, no matter how bad their human rights records. If they were committed anti-communists, they were suitable allies. The Duarte regime in **El Salvador** was given \$55m worth of arms in 1982. Meanwhile, right-wing death squads remained beyond government control. The US continued in its attempts to isolate Cuba and bring down the Castro regime. In 1989, President George Bush Snr launched “Operation Just Cause”, the invasion of Panama. The Panamanian President, Manuel Noriega had fallen out of favour with the US. He was replaced by opposition leader, Guillermo Endara. Over 2000 civilians were killed in the operation and large parts of Panama City were destroyed.

US policy in the **Middle East** under Reagan was to counter Soviet influence in the region by backing Israel and “moderate” Arab states like Saudi Arabia..

- Following the 1982 Israel-Lebanon war, international peacekeepers were sent to Lebanon.⁸ These included US troops. In 1983 a suicide bomb attack on the US headquarters in Beirut led to the deaths of 241 US marines.
- Libya was “punished” several times with US bombing raids for its alleged backing of terrorist attacks.

⁸ The Middle East is covered in Chapter 9.

- Though the US condemned Israel for its behaviour in Lebanon and the West Bank, it remained resolute in its support of the Jewish state.

The Reagan Doctrine was also active in **Asia**.

- In 1981, a massive CIA operation was carried out involving \$100m worth of aid and five countries to supply Mujahedeen rebels fighting Soviet and government forces in Afghanistan.
- Egypt provided training, Saudi Arabia provided finance, China allowed flights over its territory and Pakistan allowed supplies to cross its territory.
- By 1986, the Reagan administration was open in its support of the Mujahedeen and began supplying Stinger ground-to-air missiles.

Aid packages were also given to China and Pakistan's President Zia. Both were deemed deserving as they each had the Soviet Red Army on their borders.

Reagan was also active against communism in **Africa**. A policy of "constructive engagement" was pursued with South Africa.

- Apartheid was still denounced and some sanctions imposed against the regime but the US under Reagan saw South Africa as a friend engaged in countering Soviet influence in Southern Africa.
- In March 1981, the US Ambassador to the UN, Jeanne Kirkpatrick met with the Head of South African Intelligence. A top level South African military delegation visited Washington.
- South African attacks inside Angola were not denounced.⁹
- The Reagan administration tried to reverse the 1976 Clark Amendment passed by Congress which forbade US aid to the rebel forces fighting the Marxist MPLA in Angola.

(c) The Arms Build-up

Throughout the first Reagan administration (1981-85), there was a massive American arms build-up. In Europe the Reagan arms build-up was viewed with alarm, some seeing him as a greater threat to world peace than the Soviets. He was regarded by his opponents as a "trigger-happy cowboy".

- In 1981, Reagan gave the okay for the development of the neutron bomb or "enhanced radiation artillery shell". In essence this weapon aimed to kill people rather destroy the land. It was believed it might be more effective against Soviet tanks.
- In October 1981, work on the MX missile and the B1 bomber started.
- Medium range Pershing II and Cruise missiles were stationed in Western Europe, actions which spawned much opposition in Europe.
- Reagan's pet project was the "Strategic Defence Initiative" or "Star Wars". The principle behind this idea was for the US to establish antiballistic missile defences in outer space which could shoot down Soviet missiles before they could reach the US, using laser and particle-beam technology.
 - The scheme was controversial and was ridiculed by some scientists who saw it as naïve, incredibly expensive and counter-productive as it might invite a Soviet first strike if it ever looked like working.
 - It was also a breach of the 1972 ABM Treaty.

⁹ After Portugal left its colony in Angola in the mid-1970s, civil war broke out between the western-backed UNITA and the Marxist MPLA. South Africa supported UNITA.

The Reagan administration responded to criticisms of its policies by offering deals to the Soviets.

- In November 1981, Reagan said the US would cancel the Pershing and Cruise emplacements if the Soviets dismantled their SS20, SS4 and SS5 missiles, already in place.
- The Soviets were being asked to destroy systems already in place for a US promise to do nothing. Predictably the offer came to nothing.

(d) Inconsistency?

The hard line approach of the Reagan administration to the Soviet Union was not always consistent. The US was pressuring Western European nations to support it, in particular opposing West German Chancellor Schmidt’s efforts at better German-Soviet relations. There were plans in the early 1980s for a giant gas pipeline to be built from the Soviet Union into Western Europe. Reagan pressured Europe not to aid the pipeline development.

- However, US opposition did not extend to US wheat sales to the Soviet Union which reached record-breaking levels. A major one year agreement was signed in August 1982.
- In August 1983, Agriculture Secretary Bloch signed a Five Year Deal which guaranteed the Soviet Union 9m tons of grain per annum for five years.

US opposition to the pipeline was eventually dropped in November 1982.

Reagan had his critics who accused him of naivety, inconsistency, illegality, lack of solid knowledge in foreign affairs and defence, and at worst of being a danger to the peace of the world. However, his supporters argued that by the beginning of Reagan’s second term of office in early 1985 American prestige had been restored, communism was being contained and even rolled back, US influence in Latin America was dominant and the US military position stronger than ever.

Exercise 12.2

Match the term on the right with the description on the left.

1	Enhanced radiation artillery shell		
2	SS20s and SS5s		Iran-Contra Affair
3	Exclusion of Europeans from the Western Hemisphere		Star Wars
4	The invasion of Grenada		Clark Amendment
5	Pershing and Cruise Missiles		The Sandinistas
6	Illegal US plan to finance the Contras in Nicaragua		Operation Urgent Fury
7	The fostering and support of anti-Soviet irregular forces		Medium Range US Missiles
8	The revolutionary group ruling Nicaragua after 1979		Neutron Bomb
9	Congressional rule which forbade aid to rebels in Angola		The Reagan Doctrine
10	The Strategic Defence Initiative		The Monroe Doctrine
			Medium Range Soviet Missiles

What do the historians have to say about US attitudes and policies under Reagan?

1. A contemporary view: *The Washington Post* ¹⁰

The Washington Post was often critical of Reagan's policies. Many of the more liberal newspapers and commentators were, while in the 'heartland' of the US, Reagan enjoyed considerable support. In August 1982, it attacked the administration for the "intense, whimsical frivolity of American foreign policy". To make its point, the paper quoted two administration statements made within days of each other.

Reagan told US farmers: "*American farmers can be assured that they will continue to have a fair opportunity to export grain to the USSR..*"

Following Soviet actions against Poland, ¹¹ Commerce Under-Secretary Oliver stated: "*And despite media criticism of our announced sanctions (against the Soviet Union) I happen to think that we are much admired ... in standing (up) for justice and freedom.*"

2. Thomas G Paterson: *Meeting the Communist Threat*

In explaining US involvement in Central America during the Reagan years, Paterson makes the point that US foreign policy was being directed on the same basis as it was in the early days of the Cold War. El Salvador was seen as "*a textbook case of indirect armed aggression by Communist powers*" while in Nicaragua the revolution had been betrayed and had "gone Communist". In essence, Reagan was a firm believer in the monolithic nature of world communism with all actions around the globe emanating from Moscow.

"...*The Reagan Administration's attention fixed on Central America... Blaming turmoil in the region on the 'Moscow-Havana axis'...*" ¹²

3. Russell Baker: *Reconstructing Ronald Reagan*

Ronald Reagan died in June 2004 from Alzheimer's Disease. In subsequent years, several works have appeared dealing with his presidency. It is impossible to judge Reagan based on only his first administration as his relations with Mikhail Gorbachev and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union are so much part of the Reagan legacy. However, at this stage, it is possible to make comments about Reagan the president. Baker's piece in the New York Review of Books in which he reviews several new works on Reagan highlights one of the more interesting aspects of Reagan. Reagan was clearly a man of great contradictions. He was a keen supporter of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s yet became the Republican Party's greatest hero; he was an aggressive anti-communist but developed his own form of détente; he was accused of being a political dunce yet triumphed over Democrat opponents time and again. Baker has backhanded praise for Reagan:

"...*There was obviously something about this seemingly unremarkable man that made him extraordinary, but no one could define it... George Shultz, his secretary of state, has written about the Reagan "mystery" and recalled Robert McFarlane, White House national security adviser, marveling that "he knows so little, and accomplishes so much"....*" ¹³

¹⁰ The Washington Post, August 1982

¹¹ See Chapter 13

¹² Paterson, T G, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan*, OUP, New York, 1988, p 256

¹³ Russell Baker, *The New York Review of Books*, 1 March 2007

Chapter 13:

Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev

The Soviet Union in the early 1980s: pre-Gorbachev

Soviet leaders had probably accepted the demise of détente, despite their vain attempts to keep it alive. In public, Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko talked about reviving the process but the concurrence of Afghanistan and a Reagan White House meant that the heady days of superpower links in the early 1970s were over. With nothing to lose, the Soviets pursued hard line policies:

- Its involvement in Afghanistan increased. By April 1981, there were over 110 000 Soviet troops in the country.
- Dissent at home was crushed, seen in the continued hounding of dissidents like the scientist Andrei Sakharov. Dissent outside of the Soviet Union was also crushed as seen in moves taken against the independent Polish trade union based Solidarity movement.
- Involvement in Third World conflicts, particularly in Africa continued, often backed by Cuban forces. ¹

Leonid Brezhnev died in late 1982. He had not been in full control of affairs for some time due to age and ill health. His successor was the former KGB Chief, Yuri Andropov. The western media were quite taken by Andropov at the time. Stories appeared of his liking for western novels, his jazz tastes and his alleged ability to speak five languages. In early 1983, Andropov presented several proposals aimed at lowering east-west tension. These included:

- cuts to Soviet medium missile numbers to the level of France and Britain;
- reduction of long-range Soviet missile numbers by a quarter;
- a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

None of his proposals were taken up. Andropov died in early 1984 and was followed by the ageing hardliner, Konstantin Chernenko. Meanwhile east-west relations continued to cool. In May 1984, the Soviets announced their boycott of the Los Angeles Olympic Games. In March 1985, Konstantin Chernenko died, aged 72. In that month, the Communist Party Central Committee elected Mikhail Gorbachev as party General Secretary. Gorbachev became the fourth leader of the Soviet Union in less than two and a half years!

Mikhail Gorbachev

Mikhail Gorbachev was quite a different type of Soviet leader. At 54, he was the country's youngest leader since Lenin. He presented a major contrast to his three immediate predecessors. Young-looking, stylish, charming, well-educated, he and his equally



well-educated and stylish wife, Raisa, presented a new Soviet face to the world. Britain's prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, was known for her tough, Reaganesque, anti-communism. Yet when she met Gorbachev in 1984, she described him as *"a man with whom we can do business"*.

¹ The Soviets backed the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, the MPLA in Angola, SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) in Namibia and Frelimo in Mozambique.

- Gone was the old dowdy appearance of Soviet leaders.
- The Soviet Union’s new first couple presented an image of grace and a certain style.
- Some western journalists began comparing the Gorbachevs to President John Kennedy and his wife, Jackie, in the 1960s.

Appearance of course is one thing; substance is quite something else. Did Gorbachev really represent change?

Gorbachev was not free to follow his own path. He was surrounded by old-style party hacks who wished to maintain their privileges, and by others who would have liked to have seen a return to Stalinist policies. Throughout 1985 and early 1986, Gorbachev gradually retired old Brezhnevites and introduced new figures from the provinces into leading positions. Such figures included Ligachev and future Russian president, Boris Yeltsin.

Gorbachev had risen through the party as a technocrat. He knew better than most the parlous state of the Soviet economy and the desperate need for reform. This was brought home to the world in April 1986 when the number four reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Ukraine experienced a meltdown. Chernobyl is arguably the worst nuclear accident in history.

Gorbachev knew reform was needed. This was to come in dramatic fashion with his twin policies of:

- glasnost – openness
- and perestroika – restructuring..

The main elements of these two policies are summarised in Figures 13.1 and 13.2.

Figure 13.1: Glasnost the policy of openness

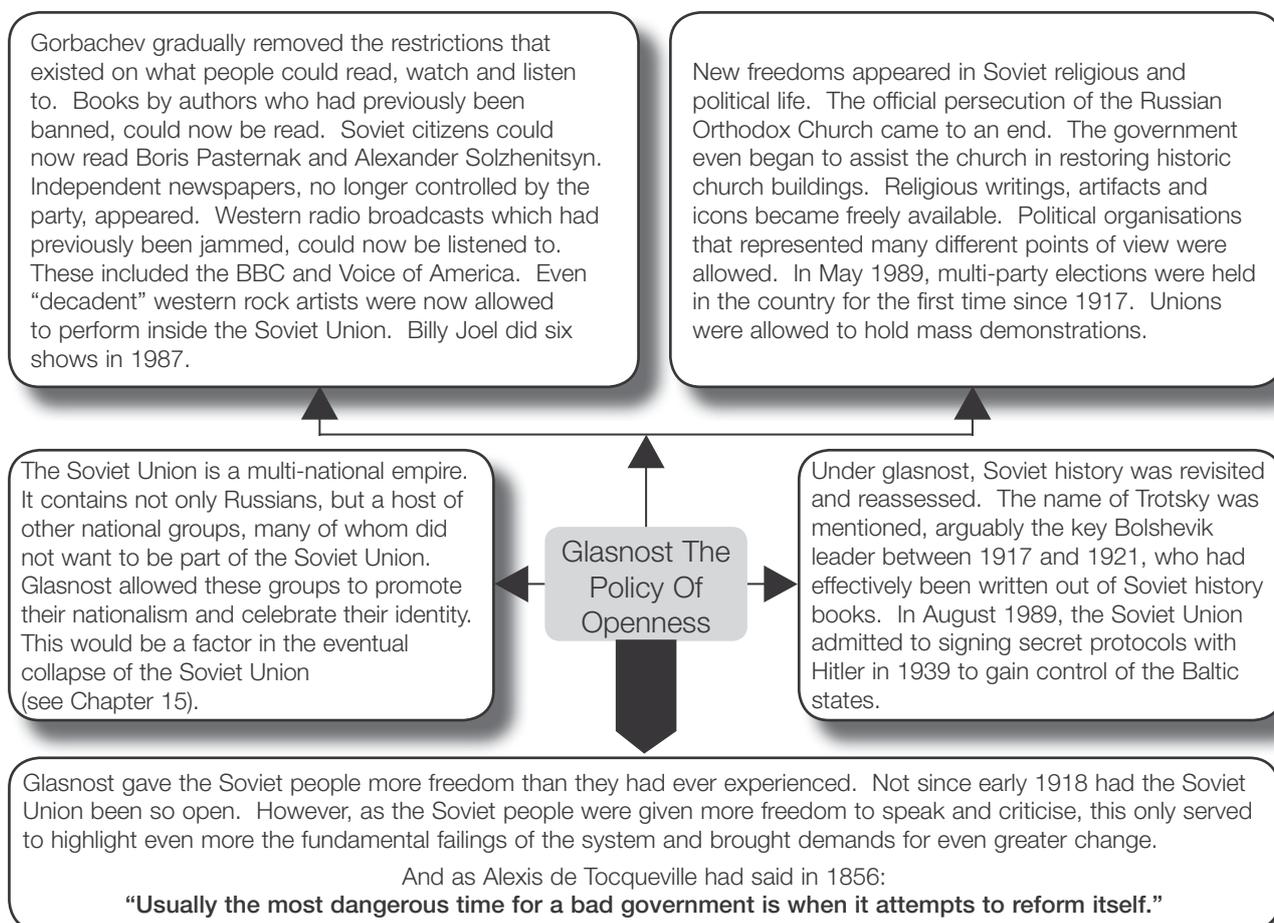
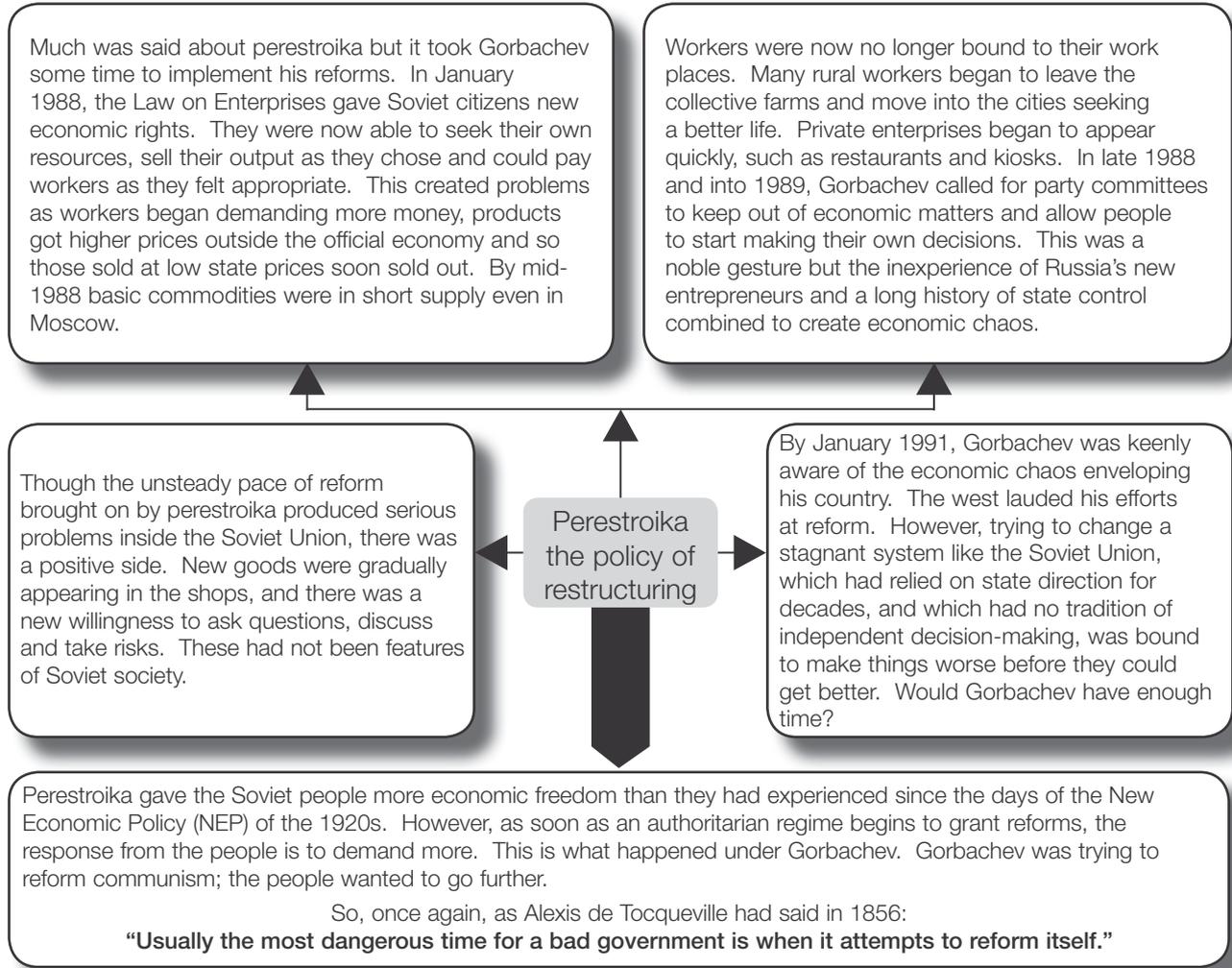


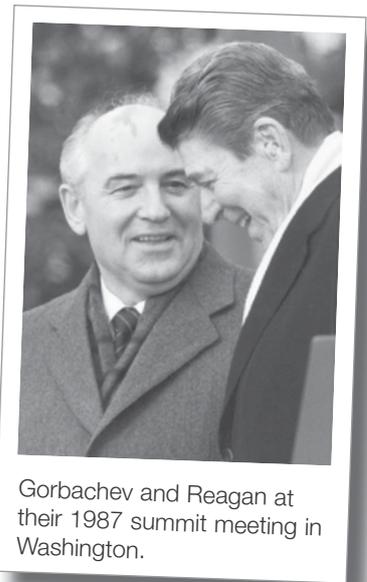
Figure 13.2: Perestroika the policy of restructuring



Rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union

Gorbachev’s willingness to embrace reform at home quickly endeared him to western commentators. His enthusiasm for seeking arms reductions and for reducing Cold War tensions offered enormous potential for improved US-Soviet relations. Gorbachev quickly offered proposals in these areas. The question though was: how would the Reagan White House respond?

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, only a hard line, anti-communist like Richard Nixon could pursue détente and not be attacked by hard line, anti-communist opinion inside the US for going soft on communism. So too in the 1980s, only a hard line, anti-communist like Reagan could pursue such a cooperative line in US-Soviet relations as eventuated. This aspect of Gorbachev’s policy will be covered in Chapter 14.



Gorbachev and Reagan at their 1987 summit meeting in Washington.

Exercise 13.1

Complete the following passage using the terms given in the box below.

In late 1982, Soviet leader _____ died. He was followed by former _____, Yuri Andropov. Andropov was welcomed in the _____ and he proposed some measures to improve US-Soviet relations. Andropov's death in 1984 led to the brief rule of _____. Cold War relations were still _____. In March 1985, _____ became the Soviet Union's _____ leader since Lenin. He saw the need for _____ and introduced his programs of _____ (openness) and perestroika (_____). Writers such as _____ could now be read and Soviet citizens had the chance to become _____. The reforms were generally welcomed by the Soviet people but they raised _____ for more and caused great _____ when things did not improve quickly.

Gorbachev	Chernenko	entrepreneurs	glasnost
Brezhnev	Pasternak	reform	expectations
disillusionment	KGB Chief	tense	
west	youngest	restructuring	

What do the historians have to say about Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev?

1. George Shultz: *Triumph and Turmoil*

When Konstantin Chernenko died in 1985, Vice President George Bush (Snr) and Secretary of State George Shultz attended the late Soviet leader's state funeral. It gave both men a chance to "weigh up" the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. Margaret Thatcher had already advised Reagan that Gorbachev was different and now the two US leaders had a chance to assess the man close up. Shultz was clearly impressed. He noted Gorbachev's articulate manner and his ability to talk at length on issues without the need of notes.

"...He was quicker, fresher, more engaging, and more wide ranging in his interests and knowledge. The content of our meeting was tough and his manner was aggressive, but the spirit was different. He was comfortable with himself and with others, joking with Gromyko in a way that emerged from genuine confidence in his base of knowledge and his political abilities." ²

2. Gail Sheehy: *Gorbachev – A One-Man Revolution*

Sheehy argues that Gorbachev gained much of his inspiration for perestroika from the policies of US President Franklin Roosevelt. In the 1930s, Roosevelt faced the possibility of the collapse of capitalism. He responded with hope, planning and boldness, and gave the world The New Deal. The rallying cry of perestroika – new thinking – was inspired, said close Gorbachev advisor, Alexander Yakovlev, by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal ideas.

"...In a triumph of pragmatism over ideology, Gorbachev came to accept that to save the Communist system he would have to reform it in some major way. The FDR model also suited his own unique qualities. 'His eyes are still open, he's still willing to learn and admit it when he doesn't know,' as (US) Ambassador Ridgway observed of him in 1987." ³

2 Shultz, G, *Triumph and Turmoil*, Scribner, New York, 1993, p 529

3 Sheehy, G, *Gorbachev: A One-Man Revolution*, Mandarin, London, 1991, pp 302-3

3. John Lewis Gaddis: *We Now Know*

Considering Gorbachev's key role in the eventual demise of the Soviet Union (see Chapter 15), it is interesting that Gaddis does not have much to say about the last Soviet leader in his "rethinking of the Cold War". Gaddis' view is that the fundamental flaws of the Soviet system were so deep rooted, there was nothing Gorbachev could do to fix it, and neither can his policies be blamed for bringing down the system. The system Stalin built was durable, survived his death and Khrushchev's attempt at de-Stalinisation. Soviet leaders simply did not know how to rule any other way.

*"...Not until Gorbachev was a Soviet leader fully prepared to dismantle Stalin's structuralist legacy. It tells us a lot that as it disappeared, so too did the Cold War and ultimately the Soviet Union itself."*⁴

4. Robert Service: *Russia – From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*

Service makes the point that Gorbachev was not seeking to end Soviet rule. His goal was to preserve the Soviet Union and continue the one-party state. The October Revolution was still to be revered. However, Service suggests that Gorbachev was trying to destroy the ills of the regime that had developed during the Brezhnev era. These included corruption, illegal profiteering, distrust of the government and the growth of ethnic nationalism. However:

*"...he failed to understand that his actions were strengthening the very phenomena which he was trying to eliminate..."*⁵

4 Gaddis, J L, *We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War*, OUP, Oxford, 1997, p 293

5 Service, R, *Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*, Penguin, London, 2009, p 466

Chapter 14:

Disarmament agreements 1987-1991

Introduction

Mikhail Gorbachev's desire for change was matched by his willingness to take Soviet Foreign Policy into a new direction. The confrontational nature of US-Soviet relations that marked the period of the first Reagan administration underwent a major transformation. Reagan and Gorbachev met at five summit meetings:

- Geneva - November 1985
- Reykjavik - October 1986
- Washington – December 1987
- Moscow - June 1988
- New York December 1988

Both sides had reason to seek an improvement in relations. **Gorbachev** was trying desperately to reform his ailing country with his policies of glasnost and perestroika. Agreements to limit future arms increases or to even reduce armaments would have major beneficial effects on the sick Soviet economy. For **Reagan** there was a place in history to consider. Reagan's wife, Nancy, ever protective of her husband, was keen for the president to have a legacy that went beyond the scandal of the Iran-Contra affair. By 1987, Reagan's inner circle had undergone changes which made possible serious arms negotiations. The administration now included men like Frank Carlucci (Secretary of Defence), Lieutenant General Colin Powell (National Security Advisor) and William Webster (CIA Director). These men were:

*"pragmatic professionals with a greater sense of moderation on the issue of US-Soviet relations, including support for Gorbachev's reforms."*¹

Disarmament Agreements and other matters: Attempts, Failures and Successes

The final six years of the Cold War - 1985 to 1991 – saw Soviet leader Gorbachev, and US leaders Reagan (to January 1989) and Bush Snr (from January 1989) focus greatly on disarmament. There were false starts, there were failures and but there also were major successes.

- As soon as Gorbachev came to power he made his **intent** on arms reduction clear:
 - he declared a six month freeze on the deployment of any new Soviet SS-20 missiles in Europe;
 - he declared a unilateral moratorium on all Soviet nuclear tests;
 - he made clear his desire to meet President Reagan as soon as possible;
 - in September he suggested the US and the Soviet Union reduce their nuclear arsenals by 50%.
- In November 1985, Gorbachev and Reagan met at the **Geneva** Summit. The leaders did not strike any bargains at the meeting but it was clear that the two leaders had established a rapport.

¹ Bastian, P, Bearing Any Burden: The Cold War Years 1945-91, HTA of NSW, Wareemba, 2003, p 134

- Throughout **1986**, Gorbachev pushed ahead with even more radical ideas.
 - His “January Proposal” called for the removal of all intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe. This was dramatic, as a major part of the US-Soviet tension of the early 1980s had revolved around Soviet deployment of SS-20s and US deployment of Cruise and Pershing in Europe.
 - he even called for the elimination of “all” nuclear weapons by 2000.
 - By the mid-1980s, Afghanistan had become a quagmire for Soviet forces, much as Vietnam had for the US in the 1960s. Gorbachev now started pulling Soviet troops out.
- In October 1986, Reagan and Gorbachev met again at **Reykjavik** in Iceland. The Iceland meeting has been considered a failure for its lack of concrete arms agreements. However, the following should be considered:
 - A “zero-option” was openly discussed, ie the suggestion that all INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) missiles be taken out of Europe and the men seriously discussed eliminating all nuclear missiles in a decade.
 - Though nothing came of Reykjavik, partly due to Reagan’s insistence on keeping “Star Wars”, the ground was firmly set for the INF Treaty of 1987.
- Throughout **1987**, there were serious moves towards a major arms agreement. Margaret Thatcher encouraged both Gorbachev and Reagan to work on an INF agreement. By September both countries’ foreign ministers were able to announce agreement had been reached. The result was the 1987 INF Treaty that was signed at the Washington Summit in December 1987.
- In December 1987, Gorbachev and Reagan met in **Washington**. The highlight of this summit was the signing of the **INF Treaty**, one of the most significant arms agreements of the twentieth century.
 - all ground-launched missiles with a range of 500-5500 kms were to be verifiably destroyed;
 - in the next three years 1846 Soviet and 846 US missiles were destroyed;
 - each side made major concessions that allowed for inspections;
 - Gorbachev ignored SDI which had been a stumbling block the previous year.²

Between 1987 and 1989, Gorbachev took steps to extricate the Soviet Union from various conflicts which had proved costly both in economic terms and in diplomatic terms. These decisions added further to improving US-Soviet relations. These decisions are summarized in Figure 14.1.

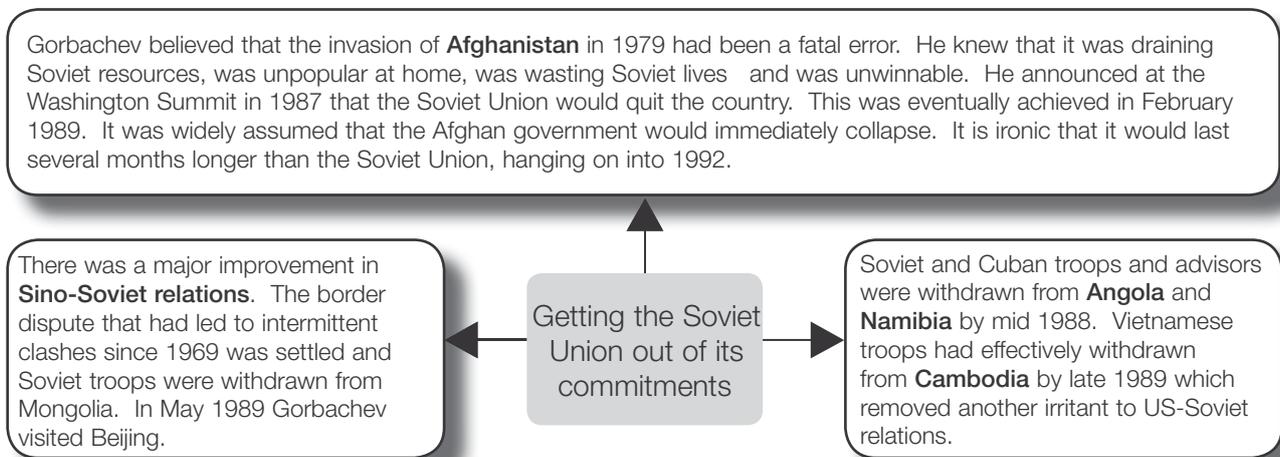
- In June 1988, Gorbachev and Reagan met for a fourth time in Moscow, the capital of what Reagan had once described as “the evil empire”. The mood was again positive and it was clear that progress was being made on a START agreement, though both sides accepted it would not be ready at the summit. Reagan was allowed to address Moscow University and extol the virtues of democracy and free enterprise.
- In December 1988, Gorbachev and Reagan met for the final time in New York. By now there was a new President-elect, George Bush Snr. This was really a courtesy farewell visit to mark the end of the Reagan presidency. However, Gorbachev did make a major address to the UN:

² The US Congress voted to reduce SDI expenditure by a third three weeks before the summit. This effectively scuttled the project.

- he announced that Soviet forces would be reduced by 500 000;
- he was withdrawing 10 000 tanks from Eastern Europe;
- and he announced that from now on the Soviet Union intended to follow a ‘defensive posture’.
- In November 1990, The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty was signed. The agreement did not relate to numbers of troops but to military hardware, eg each alliance was allowed only 20 000 tanks.
- Between 1989 and 1991, Gorbachev was preoccupied by events in Eastern Europe and inside his own country. However, this did not prevent the signing of the START Treaty in July 1991:
 - neither side was allowed more than 6000 nuclear warheads;
 - neither side was allowed more than 1600 ICBMs/ SLBMs and bombers;
 - this complicated agreement was not finally implemented until 2001 by which time the Cold War had been over for decade.⁵



Figure 14.1: Getting the Soviet Union out of its commitments



⁵ The START Treaty was renamed START 1 when talks began for another START Treaty. START 1 expired in December 2009. A new START Treaty was signed in April 2010 by Presidents Obama and Medvedev at their meeting in Prague. This agreement was ratified by the US Senate and the Russian parliament in 2011.

Exercise 14.1

Rearrange the events listed on the right into the correct chronological order.

1st event		
2nd event		Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan
3rd event		The Reykjavik Summit
4th event		Gorbachev visits Beijing
5th event		Gorbachev's six month freeze on SS-20 deployments
6th event		The Moscow Summit
7th event		START 1 Treaty
8th event		Gorbachev's address to the United Nations
9th event		Obama-Medvedev Treaty signing in Prague
10th event		The Geneva Summit
		Signing of the INF Treaty

What do the historians have to say about Disarmament agreements 1987-1991?

1. George Shultz: *Triumph and Turmoil*

George Shultz was a major player in the achievement of the INF Treaty in 1987. As Secretary of State, he worked at length with Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, to bring about the agreement. However, in his memoirs, Shultz is at pains to give the major credit for the agreement to Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev. He argues that the agreement was possible because of Reagan's determination to maintain western strength while at the same time recognising the opportunity presented by Gorbachev's presidency. Reagan recognised that Gorbachev represented something different in Soviet foreign and domestic policy. As for Gorbachev:

*"... (he) had come into power in 1985 with a difficult set of problems. He was perceptive enough to see them and bold enough to be decisive in dealing with the critical foreign policy issues that we faced."*⁶

⁶ Shultz, G, *Triumph and Turmoil*, Scribner, New York, 1993, p 1015

2. Robert McMahon: *The Cold War – A Very Short Introduction*

McMahon's book should not be overlooked by its subtitle. It is one of many titles in the excellent OUP "Very Short Introduction" series which provides thorough overviews of complex topics. He examines the summits between Reagan and Gorbachev and comments on their significance. His conclusion regarding the significance of the INF Treaty of 1987 is one with which few historians would take issue.

*"...For the first time in the atomic era, an entire class of nuclear weapons was being not just limited but eliminated."*⁷

3. Lynn Davis: *Lessons of the INF Treaty*

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see the enormity of the INF Treaty. However, at the time opinion was far from united on the agreement, and there were concerns among some western commentators that the treaty had given too much away and would work in the Soviet Union's favour. There were concerns that this was a first step to the denuclearisation of Europe and maybe even a US disengagement from Europe. The author of this piece, of course, was writing before the convulsions inside Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from 1989-91 resulted in the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union.

*"...Will NATO's strategy of flexible response remain credible? Will the imbalance between conventional forces in Europe now become more dangerous? Will the treaty unleash political forces leading to the denuclearisation of the continent and American disengagement from NATO?"*⁸

⁷ McMahon, R, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, OUP, 2003, p 163

⁸ Davis, L E, *Lessons of the INF Treaty*, *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1988

Chapter 15:

Collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR

Introduction

For anyone born later than about 1965, it is difficult to fully grasp the enormity of the events that unfolded in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991. “Baby-boomers” had been brought up in the Cold War/ nuclear age where east-west tensions and the possibility of nuclear Armageddon were “simply the ways things were”. It was taken for granted the Berlin Wall was permanent and that Germany would be forever divided. Even though the Soviet Union was weaker than the United States, its nuclear strength ensured its major power status and that it would be taken seriously on the world stage.

And then came 1989! The unpopularity and the absurdity of communist rule in Eastern Europe were well known. There had been protests against the Soviet-backed regimes on several occasions – East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in the early 1980s. However, on each occasion the Soviet Union had moved to ensure its control, sometimes in a low-key manner (Poland, early 1980s) and sometimes with brute force (Hungary, 1956). Yet in 1989, each of the East European countries was allowed to break off the shackles of communist control. Gorbachev spoke at the time of “the Sinatra Doctrine”.¹

The key symbolic moment of 1989 came in November with the pulling down of the Berlin Wall. The Wall had always been of great propaganda value for the west.

- In 1963, President Kennedy had stood in front of the wall and gave his famous “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech.
- In 1987, President Reagan stood on the same spot and said: “Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

To many the end of the Berlin Wall represented the end of the Cold War.

The forces of change were also at work inside the Soviet Union. Gorbachev had unleashed forces that he could not control. There were demands for ever more reform and great dissatisfaction at the slow pace of perestroika. More dangerous still for the regime, nationalist groups were calling for their independence. The Soviet Union faced the possibility of breaking apart. Against this background, old-style Soviet hard liners within the party and the army were ready to bring down Gorbachev, halt the reforms and restore the Soviet Union to its former glory days. The comic coup attempt against Gorbachev in August 1991 marked the end of communism inside the Soviet Union. By the end of the year, the Soviet Union had ceased to exist.

The end of communism in the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe finally made redundant the US policy of containment – there was now nothing left to contain. The Cold War was finally over.

¹ This was a reference to the Frank Sinatra song, “My Way”, which contains the line “I did it my way”. Gorbachev was allowing East European regimes to do things in future “their way”.

This chapter will attempt to deal with these amazing events in four stages:

1. Part one will provide a narrative overview of the events of 1989 inside Eastern Europe.
2. Part two will attempt to explain how such events were possible.
3. Part three will provide a narrative overview of events inside the Soviet Union.
4. Part four will attempt to provide some analysis to explain the reasons for end of the Cold War.

Part One: Eastern Europe in 1989 – A narrative overview

The key events inside the Eastern European countries of Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia in 1989 are presented in Figure 15.1.

East Germany: 1989

East Germany was one of the more hard line communist states. Party leader, Erich Honecker, had even tried to suppress reports of Gorbachev's reforms. When Gorbachev visited East Germany in October 1989, he was given a rapturous welcome by East German crowds.

- In August and September, many East Germans who had allegedly been on holiday in Hungary, escaped to the west via that country. The western media at the time made much of these train refugees.
- In October following major demonstrations in Dresden and Leipzig, Honecker ordered troops to fire into the crowds. Egon Krenz countered the order and within less than a week Honecker had been forced out.
- On 1 November, the border with Czechoslovakia was opened; thousands more fled. Within two days mass demonstrations led to the resignations of the police and security ministers, and then the entire cabinet.

On 9 November the **Berlin Wall** itself was opened "almost by accident". A government spokesman had said in reply to a reporter that the wall was to be opened immediately. A border guard at 11.00 pm, persuaded by crowds that television reports had announced the opening of the wall, let people through to the western side. Soon thousands were passing in and out. West Berlin border guards were unable to stem the tide. As the euphoria grew, hundreds of people climbed on to various sections of the wall and began trying to break it up. Within days whole sections of the wall were coming down. Even bulldozers were used pull down concrete slabs.

- Events now moved very quickly.
 - By mid-November, the feared East German secret police, the Stasi, was dissolved, the Communist Party's leading role was ended and elections called for mid-1990.
 - The Krenz government fell in December and elections were moved forward.
 - Within days, Honecker and Stasi leaders were arrested, while Communist and Stasi offices were invaded by rampaging crowds.



Figure 15.1: Events inside Eastern Europe during 1989

Poland	Hungary	Bulgaria	Romania	Czechoslovakia
<p>The Solidarity trade union movement was legalized.</p> <p>Elections were held in June – Solidarity won 160/ 161 seats.</p> <p>A non-Communist prime minister was appointed, Tadeusz Mazowiecki.</p> <p>In November, the Polish United Workers Party (Communist) declared socialism to be dead.</p> <p>The country has embraced democratic elections and form of government.</p> <p>Former Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa, who had been imprisoned by the Communists, became Poland's president from 1990-1995.</p> <p>Poland joined NATO in March 1999 and the EU in May 2004.</p>	<p>In May party leader Kadar was forced to resign by reformers within the party.</p> <p>Karoly Grosz the new leader. The border with Austria was opened.</p> <p>The 1956 uprising was revisited: Irme Nagy was given a public reburial and it was announced that the events of 1956 had not been counter-revolution.</p> <p>In October the National Assembly declared the prime position of the Communist Party ended, other parties were legalized.</p> <p>Steps were taken to bring in capitalism.</p> <p>Hungary joined NATO in March 1999 and the EU in May 2004.</p>	<p>The Communist Party leader, Todor Zhivkov, was forced to resign in November.</p> <p>The leading role of the Party was ended.</p> <p>Persecution of Turk minorities (a policy of Zhivkov) was ended.</p> <p>Multi-party elections were held in 1990.</p> <p>Zhivkov was arrested on charges of fraud and nepotism.</p> <p>Bulgaria had arguably moved the most slowly towards democracy of the former East European countries.</p> <p>Bulgaria joined NATO in March 2004 and the EU in January 2007.</p>	<p>In Romania events were violent.</p> <p>Romania was a true Stalinist state run by Nicolai Ceausescu and his secret police, the Securitate.</p> <p>The arrest of a priest in Timisoara led to riots across the country after Securitate forces shot protestors.</p> <p>While giving a speech in Bucharest, Ceausescu was heckled, he quickly lost control, was arrested, tried and along with his wife, was shot on 25 Dec.</p> <p>A National Salvation Front took over, with elections in May 1990.</p> <p>Romania joined NATO in March 2004 and the EU in January 2007.</p>	<p>In November police brutality against protestors led to large protest organised by Civic Forum, led by Vaclav Havel.</p> <p>The cabinet resigned and the party dropped its primary position.</p> <p>The peaceful nature of change gave rise to the term "The Velvet Revolution".</p> <p>President Husak resigned and elections were held on 28 Dec. Vaclav Havel was elected president by the Czech parliament.</p> <p>Alexander Dubcek, hero of the Prague Spring of 1968, was chosen speaker of the parliament.</p> <p>In 1993, the country split in two: the Czech Republic and Slovakia.</p> <p>The Czechs joined NATO in March 1999, Slovakia in March 2004. Both joined the EU in May 2004.</p>

The unification of Germany

Looking back, the unification of West and East Germany seems inevitable. However, though the Soviets may have discarded the need for control of the East European states, a united Germany was too much to consider; the memories of the war were burned deep into the Russian psyche. A divided Germany was a key element in the notion of Soviet security. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stated at the time:

“We had paid an enormous price for it and to write it off was inconceivable.”

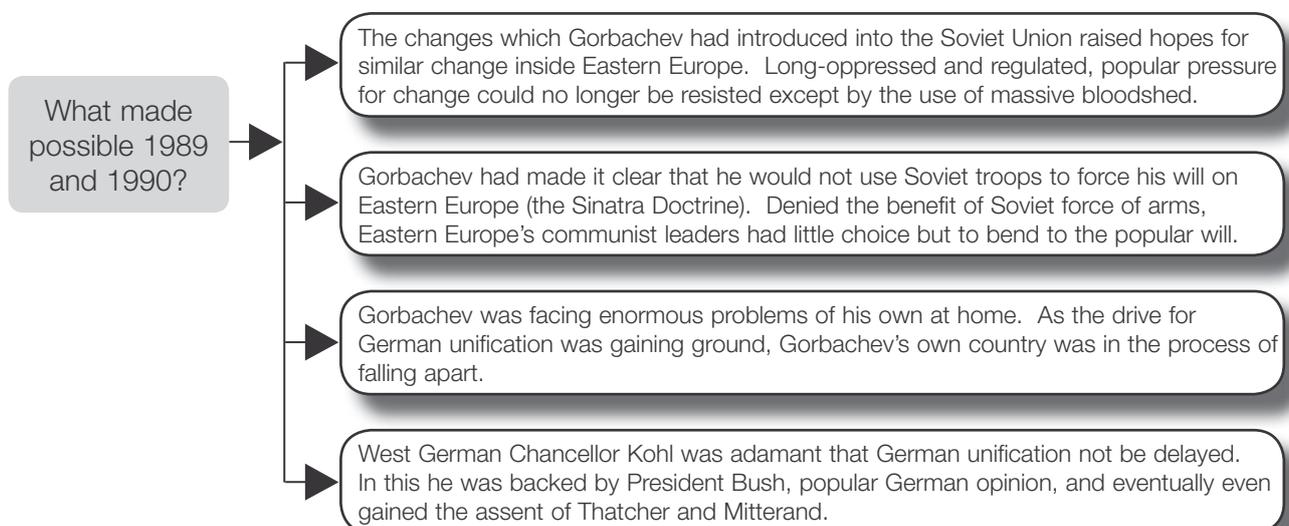
- Documents released in the UK in early 2010 reveal that Prime Minister Thatcher had contacted Gorbachev and requested that he stand in the way of German unity. French president, Francois Mitterand, also had deep reservations about the prospect of a united Germany.
- However, US President Bush and West German Chancellor Kohl were keen on taking advantage of the chaos in East Germany to bring about a quick unification.
- Bush pushed for “two plus four talks”.
 - East and West Germany would discuss domestic issues.
 - The four post-war occupying powers of Britain, France, the US and the Soviet Union would deal with wider international issues.
 - By January 1990, Gorbachev had conceded that reunification was coming.
- Throughout 1990, US, Soviet and European leaders were meeting constantly to bring about a quick German unification. Chancellor Kohl was keen to cement his place in history. Issues such as continued German NATO membership, size of the German army, German economic aid to the Soviet Union and monetary union were resolved.

The formal reunification of West and East Germany was achieved in October 1990!

Part Two: How and why were the events of 1989 inside Eastern Europe possible?

No event in history is inevitable. However, the quick collapse of communism in Eastern Europe seemed to be almost irresistible. Figure 15.2 suggests some of the factors that made this possible.

Figure 15.2 What made possible 1989 and 1990?



The removal of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany marked the end of the Cold War. Those issues which had raised tensions to the point of war in 1948-49, 1958 and 1961 were gone. The wall as a propaganda symbol had disappeared. The German threat to Russia was no more and the ideological struggle was over. The issue was now not the threat of an aggressive, expansionist, communist superpower, but the dangers that might ensue from its internal disintegration.

Exercise 15.1

Match the descriptions given on the left with the names listed on the right.

1	Polish Solidarity leader, later President of Poland		Erich Honecker Lech Walesa Todor Zhivkov Nicolai Ceaucescu Vaclav Havel Francois Mitterand Helmut Kohl Karoly Grosz Egon Krenz Eduard Schevadnadze
2	Soviet Foreign Minister under Gorbachev		
3	Hungarian leader following the fall of the communist regime		
4	Hard line East German leader overthrown in November 1989		
5	West German Chancellor keen on German unification		
6	Former Bulgarian leader arrested for fraud and nepotism		
7	Romanian dictator who was executed on Xmas Day 1989		
8	French president, at first wary of German unification		
9	East German leader during the East German revolution		
10	President of Czechoslovakia after the Velvet Revolution		

Part Three: A narrative overview of events inside the Soviet Union 1989-91

By 1990, the Soviet Union was facing monumental problems. Not only were the people becoming disillusioned by the slow pace of perestroika and emboldened to protest by the new freedoms given by glasnost, but nationalism was rearing its ugly head. The Soviet Union's non-Russian nationalities were demanding greater rights and in many cases independence. This presented a major dilemma for Gorbachev:

- To crush nationalist protests would be a negation of everything he stood for and possibly put his solid relations with the US into reverse.

- However, if he did nothing he risked offending Kremlin hard liners who would not stand by as the Soviet Union fell apart.

In fact, events were to show that Gorbachev could do little about what was happening to his country.

- In late 1989 and early 1990, fighting broke out between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Azeris massacred Armenian minorities in the Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan called Ngorno-Karabakh. In January, Gorbachev sent troops into the Azeri capital, Baku, to restore order.
- In February 1990, following the East European examples, the Soviet Communist Party lost its leading role once granted by the constitution.
- More dangerous for Gorbachev were results from elections to the Congress of People's Deputies to the Russian Republic.²
 - The leader of the Russian Republic was now Boris Yeltsin.
 - Yeltsin and Gorbachev had fallen out and Gorbachev had unsuccessfully attempted to remove him from power.
 - Yeltsin was now a threat to Gorbachev's power.
 - In June 1990, the Russian Republic declared itself to be a sovereign nation. Russian laws were to have precedence over Soviet laws.
- Throughout 1990, the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were becoming increasingly restive and making demands for independence.
 - In early 1991, Interior Ministry troops were involved in armed clashes with nationalists in Latvia and Lithuania, resulting in many deaths.
 - Boris Yeltsin increased tensions by visiting the Baltic republics and recognising their independence.
- During 1991, several Soviet republics refused to vote on Gorbachev's new plan for a federation, there were major demonstrations in Moscow and Ukrainian miners went on strike. It seemed the country was falling apart.

The August 1991 Coup

In August 1991, Gorbachev went to the Crimea for a short holiday. On 18 August, there was an attempt to remove him from power. The coup plotters included Vice-President Yanaev, Prime Minister Pavlov, Interior Minister Pugo and the head of the KGB, Kryuchkov. Gorbachev was placed under house arrest at his holiday dacha.

- The coup turned out to be hopelessly planned and seriously flawed. The plotters assumed that the people would simply accept what they had done, and that the army and security forces would go along with it.
- Their television performance in Moscow revealed a group of old men, nervous and soon aware of their major error.
- In Moscow crowds demonstrated against the coup. Army units refused to fire on crowds.
- The hero of the hour was Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, who addressed crowds outside of the Russian "White House" parliament, standing on a tank. Risking his life, he called on the people to resist the coup.

² Russia was but one of the 15 republics that comprised the Soviet Union. It was of course the largest, most populous and most wealthy. Whoever became Russian leader would be very powerful.

The coup collapsed within three days. The failure of the coup can be put down to several factors:

- The coup leaders were utterly inept. They had made no proper plans, had not arrested possible opponents (eg Yeltsin) and clearly lost their nerve when things did not go as they expected.
- Yeltsin had his finest hour and proved to be a courageous rallying point against the coup. His promotion of Russia as the primary source of loyalty had a major effect on the people, the army and even KGB people. From now on, it was Yeltsin's views that mattered, not those of Gorbachev or the plotters.
- The Soviet people had become used to exercising their freedoms since glasnost. The Soviet Union of 1991 was not the Soviet Union of Stalin's time.
- Ultimately, Mao Zedong's dictum applied: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." The army would not back the plotters. Without the army, the coup had no chance of success.

Gorbachev returned to Moscow but it now became clear that it was Yeltsin who was running the show. Yeltsin demanded an end to the Communist Party, the closing down of the party newspaper, Pravda and demanded that party property be taken over by local soviets. Gorbachev resigned as General Secretary of the Communist Party. Gorbachev may have been rescued from his house arrest but it was clear that politically, he was finished.

Soon after the coup's collapse, the country began to break apart.

- The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania declared their independence. Other republics followed, including the Ukraine.
- In November, Yeltsin announced that all Soviet property inside the Russian republic was now Russian property.
 - Other republics followed suit.
 - Gorbachev now looked quite pathetic – he was a leader without a country.
- Discussions now proceeded on the formation of a new, looser grouping of the former Soviet republics.
 - Gorbachev wanted a new federal union.
 - However, Yeltsin's plan for a loose "Confederation of Independent States" (CIS) prevailed.
- On 17 December, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR declared its existence at an end.
- On 25 December, Gorbachev resigned as President of the USSR.

From midnight of 31 December 1991, the Soviet Union was no longer a nation and had receded into history.

What factors can be identified to explain the end of the Cold War?

The Cold War dominated world politics for almost half a century. It affected every corner of the world, imposed itself on conflicts that had little or no ideological concerns and on more than one occasion brought the world to the point of total destruction. It seemed that it might last forever. And yet between 1989 and 1991, it came to a sudden end. How can such a fundamental and rapid change to the world political scene be explained? What follows is a series of explanations that attempts to offer some thoughts on this question.

1. For a short time, the western propaganda line argued that the collapse of communism, and hence the end of the Cold War, was inevitable. Communism denied its people freedom, the right to make their own decisions and to choose. It was able to exist only by the imposition of, at times, often brutal government force. It relied upon a command economy that simply does not work.
2. Supporters of communism have a different explanation. They argue that it was all the fault of Mikhail Gorbachev. The rapid collapse of the socialist system was the direct result of Gorbachev's ill-conceived policies of glasnost and perestroika. The Soviet system had survived invasion and occupation by Nazi Germany, had defeated Hitler and within fifteen years had a man in space. It could have survived the 1980s but for Gorbachev's failed policies.
3. Perhaps President Reagan deserves credit for the end of the Soviet Union and thus the Cold War. By escalating the arms race during his first administration and placing so much emphasis in "Star Wars", Reagan forced the Soviet Union to attempt to keep up with the Americans. This it simply could not do. The strains Reagan had placed on the Soviet Union were too much and the system buckled.
4. Clearly the role of Gorbachev is important. Acknowledging the chaotic state of the Soviet Union, he attempted to reform the system from the top. However, as soon as he eased up and offered the people the chance of more reform, it was clear that he had released pressures which he was unable to control. His rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine and support for glasnost had "let the genie out of the bottle" and it could not be put back. As demands for more change grew, Gorbachev faced two choices:

- a. allow the reform process to run its course
- b. impose enormous, bloody repression.

Gorbachev was not like former Soviet leaders. There would be no bloody repression.

5. Another way of considering the role of Reagan is to consider how he responded to Gorbachev's internal reforms and his pursuit of improved US-Soviet relations. Reagan (and Shultz) realised that Gorbachev was different. When Gorbachev sought arms cuts and a reduction in east-west tension, there was no knee-jerk rejection from the US side. Instead, the US worked with Gorbachev from a position of great strength, and brought about major agreements and improved US-Soviet relations. Once this was done, there was no going back to old style cold war confrontation.
6. The collapse of the Soviet Union was essentially an economic phenomenon. The Soviet system was inefficient, corrupt, unaccountable, nepotistic and riddled with bureaucratic red tape. It could put a man into space, but it could not provide the most simple needs of its people. The command economy which Stalin had utilized to such good effect to industrialise his country and repel the Nazis, became an absurdity. Managers would fudge figures, hoard supplies and showed no initiative for fear of failing. Such an economy could last only so long. As it tried to compete with the US in arms and space technology, the Soviet economy simply collapsed through sheer exhaustion.

What do the historians have to say about the Collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR?

Much has been written about this vast topic, often based on some of the ideas developed above. What follows is taken from the 1997 work of the American historian, John Lewis Gaddis whose work has been referred to throughout this book.³

Just two of Gaddis' ideas will be discussed here. He compares the Soviet Union to a **triceratops**. From the outside this beast (ie the Soviet Union) looked quite formidable.

- It had a tough skin, bristling armament and its sheer size alone would be enough for most creatures to leave it well alone and show it some respect.
- However, inside the body, its respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems were clogging up.
- Eventually, this clogging up would prevent the giant creature from moving.
- However, nobody would know any of this until the day the triceratops is found on its back, legs in the air, still quite formidable but dead – and stiff as a board.

Gaddis suggests that this analogy neatly applies to the Soviet Union. On the outside it looked dangerous and formidable, bristling with a range of nuclear weapons, a large fleet and an army of millions, dominating half of the European continent. However, a look at the inside of this creature would reveal an inefficient and backward economic structure that could not provide for its citizens, and a system that relied on force to maintain its control. Eventually, the internal nature of the Soviet Union would lead it to clog up and eventually cease functioning. This, in essence, argues Gaddis, is what happened to the Soviet Union.

However, this raises another issue? If the Soviet Union was in this condition, why did it last so long? Gaddis suggests that the answer lies in the fact that the Soviet Union had become monodimensional.

*"...This is where nuclear weapons come in, for they encouraged the monodimensional measurement of power."*⁴

Gaddis argues that both sides in the Cold War had tacitly agreed to measure each other's strengths in terms of one particular category of power – nuclear missile capacity. In this regard, the Soviet Union could match the United States (parity). In this regard, it still seemed like a formidable triceratops.

*"...It was as if the ailing triceratops somehow convinced its adversary to focus only on its external appearance, disregarding its reflexes, blood pressure, X-rays, and stool samples."*⁵

Thus, US-Soviet relations had become fixated on the nuclear arms race. Nuclear weapons managed to maintain the image of a strong Soviet Union, long after it had gone into an irreversible decline. Gaddis suggests that there had been a kind of trade off in the Cold War:

*"...we avoided destruction, but at the price of duration; the Cold War went on much longer than it might have had nuclear weapons never been invented. Given the fact that they did exist, the Cold War could have ended with a bang at just any point. It took decades to arrange a whimper."*⁶

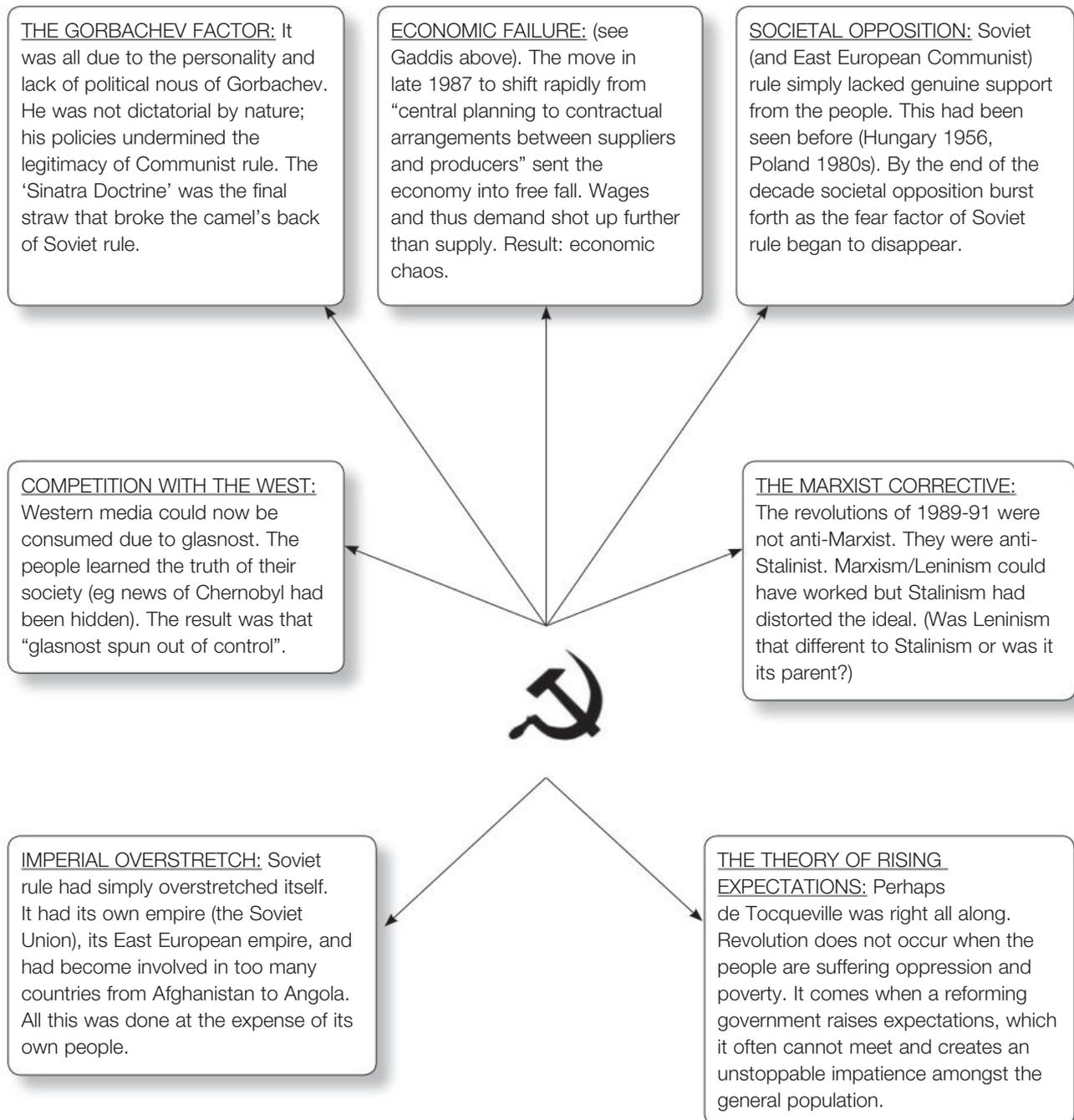
3 Gaddis, J L, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, OUP, Oxford, 1997

4 Gaddis, p 291

5 Gaddis, p 292

6 Gaddis, p 292

In his book “Post-Communism: An Introduction”, Leslie Holmes provides a section early on which outlines a series of theories to explain the collapse of communism and hence the end of the Cold War between 1989 and 1991. The following diagram summaries some of the points that Holmes raises. ⁷



⁷ Holmes, L, Post-Communism: An Introduction, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, Chapter II

ESSAYS 4:

Responding to HSC questions on Renewal and end of the Cold War

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the fourth section of the syllabus: Renewal and end of the Cold War. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

Assess the impact of US policies and attitudes under Reagan on the development of the Cold War in the first half of the 1980s.

The assess part of the question indicates that students are expected to make a judgment about US policies and attitudes under Reagan, not simply produce a list of those policies. A time limit has been given for the question. It clearly wants a discussion of the hard line period of Reagan rule, ie to 1985. Reagan's period of rapprochement with the Soviet Union under Gorbachev is thus not relevant to this question.

The Reagan administration was totally unambiguous in its approach to the Soviet Union. Reagan sought to restore US pride and confidence in the world and have the US 'ride tall in the saddle'. The end result of Reagan's approach to foreign policy was to bring détente to a shuddering halt and widen the Truman Doctrine with his own Reagan Doctrine. Under Reagan, the US vastly expanded the arms race. It might be argued that the pressure placed on the Soviet Union by Reagan's policies ultimately brought the communist regime down.

- Reagan's prime objective as president was to restore US pride and prestige:
 - refer to the period of the 1970s when the US seemed to lurch from scandal to scandal, and international disaster to disaster;
 - give examples;
 - the Iran Hostage Affair was the last straw;
 - how to restore pride? Stand up to the Soviets.
- Reagan's policies brought an end to détente:
 - comment on Reagan's attitude to détente;
 - indicate how the US now pursued a harder line towards the Soviets.
- This was promoted with the Reagan Doctrine:
 - explain this, link it to the Truman Doctrine;
 - use Nicaragua as an example;
 - go beyond Nicaragua, eg Grenada, Africa.
- A major element of Reagan's strategy was a massive arms build-up:
 - refer to his plans for Europe: deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles;

- development of new technology: the neutron bomb, the MX missile;
- Reagan's fascination with the Strategic Defence Initiative (Star Wars).
- it could be argued that the pressure placed by Reagan on the Soviets by his policies was the "straw that broke the camel's back":
 - the ailing Soviet economy could not keep up;
 - Gorbachev's recognition of the sick state of the Soviet economy led to his policies of perestroika and glasnost which ultimately had the effect of unleashing forces he could not control;
 - do not go too far with this argument; this is a Reagan question.

US policies and attitudes under Reagan changed the course of the Cold War during the early 1980s. The cooperation of détente came to an end while the US pursued a more traditional, containment-style policy with the Reagan Doctrine. Arguably, it was this that eventually brought down the Soviet regime.

Essay No 2

Explain why communism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the USSR at the end of the 1980s.

Clearly this question is not seeking a simple narrative of the events of 1989 to 1991. To merely describe the fall of the various communist regimes in Eastern Europe and then Gorbachev's own demise is not enough. However, the details of such a description should be included in an answer. It is necessary to provide an argument. This is a massive issue about which historians have written lengthy books containing in depth analysis. In a forty five minute response, something more straightforward is called for.

Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s for a combination of short term reasons. Over-commitment to foreign adventures combined with the pressure placed upon Moscow by the Reagan arms build-up, brought the Soviet economy to its knees. The advent of Gorbachev had a twin effect. He unleashed forces he could not control, and his nature was such that the traditional Soviet use of brute force to maintain control would not be used. However, these factors hide the fundamental reason for the collapse of communism: the total failure of the system which meant that by the 1980s, the Soviet Union was nothing more than a hollow triceratops to use John Lewis Gaddis' metaphor.

- By the late 1980s, pressures had been brought to bear on the Soviet economy that brought it to its knees:
 - losses from the end of détente
 - refer to costs, both human and economic of Afghanistan;
 - the Soviets were still aiding Eastern Europe, Cuba;
 - refer to foreign adventures in Africa;
 - attempting to keep up with the Reagan arms race proved impossible;
 - the Soviet economy reached a point of collapse.
- Gorbachev understood the sad state of the Soviet system:
 - refer to his attempts to reform;
 - perestroika and glasnost;
 - well-intentioned but failures – explain why

- his policies merely speeded up the Soviet demise.
- Gorbachev's policies sparked enthusiasm in Eastern Europe where there was pressure on communist regimes to emulate him:
 - provide examples;
 - the Soviet Union faced with a choice of letting Eastern Europe go or using force to keep it under control;
 - explain Gorbachev's attitude, eg Sinatra Doctrine;
 - without Soviet arms, the communist regimes could not survive.
- The Soviet Union began to fall apart:
 - explain the explosion of nationalism;
 - relate the rise of Yeltsin;
 - discuss the failed August 1991 coup and its consequences.
- However, the fundamental issue was the rotten state of the Soviet system:
 - refer to its vices: corruption, nepotism, inefficiency;
 - the dead hand of centralised control;
 - bring in Gaddis' idea of a monodimensional power – the Soviet Union seemed large and powerful on the outside, like a giant triceratops – but inside it was rotten;
 - explain the analogy.

Gorbachev's policies, the pressure from Reagan and foreign adventurism were merely factors which decided the timing of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The system was rotten to the core, and had arguably decayed completely years earlier. It was only the external appearance of nuclear weapons which gave the illusion of strength.

Possible HSC-style questions on the section of the syllabus:

“Renewal and end of the Cold war”

1. Assess the impact of US policies and attitudes under Reagan on the development of the Cold War in the first half of the 1980s.
2. Explain why communism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the USSR at the end of the 1980s.
3. To what extent was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan responsible for the collapse of communism in the USSR?
4. How far does Mikhail Gorbachev deserve responsibility for the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR?
5. Why was the Cold War renewed with such vigour in the early 1980s?
6. Account for the major improvement in superpower relations that occurred in the second half of the 1980s.

Timeline

- 1945 - January/ February: The Yalta Conference
May: The defeat of Germany
July: The Potsdam Conference
August: The defeat of Japan
- 1946 - Beginning of the French-Indochina War
Churchill's "iron curtain" speech
- 1947 - March: The Truman Doctrine
The Marshall Plan
- 1948 - Czechoslovakia fully taken over the communists
The Berlin Blockade and airlift
Creation of the state of Israel. First Arab-Israeli War.
- 1949 - End of the Berlin Blockade
The Soviet Union explodes an atomic bomb
China becomes communist under Mao Zedong
- 1950 - NSC-68
North Korea invades South Korea. Start of the Korean War
- 1951 - General MacArthur is sacked by President Truman
- 1952 - Election of Dwight Eisenhower as US President.
Eisenhower immediately goes to Korea
- 1953 - End of the Korean War
- 1954 - Battle of Dien Bien Phu
The Geneva Conference
- 1955 - Ngo Dinh Diem becomes President of South Vietnam
- 1956 - The Suez War
The Hungarian Revolution
- 1957 - Khrushchev now Soviet leader
Launch of Sputnik
- 1958 - Berlin crisis
- 1959 - Cuban Revolution
Khrushchev's visit to the US
- 1960 - The U2 incident
Sino-Soviet split
- 1961 - Bay of Pigs invasion
Kennedy-Khrushchev Vienna summit
Building of the Berlin Wall
- 1962 - Cuban Missile Crisis

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- 1963 - Test Ban Treaty
Murder of Ngo Dinh Diem
Assassination of President Kennedy
 - 1964 - 23 000 US advisors in Vietnam
Creation of the PLO
Khrushchev is overthrown. Brezhnev now Soviet leader
 - 1965 - President Johnson commits troops to Vietnam
 - 1966 - 385 000 US troops in Vietnam
 - 1967 - Six Day War in the Middle East
 - 1968 - The Tet Offensive
Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia
Election of President Nixon
 - 1969 - Apollo II moon landing
President Nixon begins Vietnamisation
 - 1970 - US invasion of Cambodia
 - 1971 - Kissinger's secret missions to China
 - 1972 - Nixon-Brezhnev summit
SALT 1 Treaty
Nixon visits China
US Xmas bombing of North Vietnam
 - 1973 - Paris Peace Accords. The US pulls out of Vietnam
The Yom Kippur War in the Middle East
 - 1974 - Nixon resigns over the Watergate scandal
 - 1975 - South Vietnam taken over by the communists
The Helsinki agreement
Joint Soyuz-Apollo space mission
 - 1976 - formal reunification of North and South Vietnam
 - 1977 - Election of President Carter
 - 1978 - Camp David Agreement between the US, Israel and Egypt
Vietnam invades Cambodia
 - 1979 - China invades Vietnam
Ayatollah Khomeini takes power in Iran
Iran hostage crisis
The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua
Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
 - 1980 - Unsuccessful US rescue attempt of the Iranian hostages
Election of President Ronald Reagan
 - 1981 - Over 110 000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan
 - 1982 - Brezhnev dies. Andropov now Soviet leader.
Israeli invasion of Lebanon

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- 1983 - US invasion of Grenada
Soviets shoot down Korean Flight 007
 - 1984 - Andropov dies. Chernenko becomes Soviet leader
Reagan re-elected President
 - 1985 - Reagan embroiled in the Iran-Contra affair
Chernenko dies. Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader
Reagan-Gorbachev Geneva summit
 - 1986 - Chernobyl incident
Reagan-Gorbachev Reykjavik summit
 - 1987 - The INF Treaty
Start of the Intifada
 - 1988 - Reagan visits Moscow
 - 1989 - Soviet troops pull out of Afghanistan
East European Revolutions
Fall of the Berlin Wall
 - 1990 - End of communist control of Eastern Europe confirmed
Reunification of Germany
 - 1991 - START Treaty signed
August coup by Soviet hard liners against Gorbachev
Collapse of the Soviet Union
The end of the Cold War no longer in doubt



Glossary

ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Treaty 1951
Al Qaida	anti-western terrorist group
Apollo	US space craft
appeasement	policy of giving concessions to an enemy, usually associated with British policy towards Hitler in the 1930s
B-52	eight engine US bomber
Baruch Plan	post-1945 plan calling for international regulation of atomic power
Brezhnev Doctrine	Soviet policy of maintaining Soviet domination of Eastern Europe
brinkmanship	Dulles' policy of taking crises to the brink of nuclear war in the 1950s
capitalism	socio-economic system based on free enterprise thinking
Carter Doctrine	US policy to ensure the security of US oil supplies in the Persian Gulf
CENTO	Central Treaty Organisation, also known as the Bagdad Pact, 1955
Chernobyl	Soviet nuclear reactor which went into a meltdown in 1986
CIA	US Central Intelligence Agency
cold war	a great power conflict marked by distrust, suspicion and rivalry but which managed to avoid a descent into hot war
comecom	Soviet organised economic organisation for Eastern Europe, post-1945
cominform	Soviet organised international grouping of communist parties after 1945
comintern	International Communist Organisation formed in 1919 to promote world revolution
containment	US policy of preventing the spread of communism
contras	anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua, 1980s
counter-insurgency	policy of combatting guerrilla activity
coup	forceful takeover of political power
Cruise	US missile of the 1980s
Curzon Line	acknowledged Soviet-Polish border after 1945
détente	era of improved US-Soviet relations, late 1960s/ 1970s
Dien Bien Phu	site of French defeat against the Vietminh, 1954
Domino Theory	US belief that if South Vietnam falls to communism, other South East Asian countries will follow
Eisenhower Doctrine	US policy of combatting communism in the Middle East

El Alamein	site of British military victory against Germany, 1942
espionage	spying
fedayeen	anti-Israeli Palestinian guerrilla group, 1950s
glasnost	Gorbachev's policy of openness
Green Berets	US military advisors to South Vietnam, 1950s/ 60s
hegemonism Chinese	Soviet policy of dominating a geographical area, term used by the Chinese
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
INF	intermediate nuclear forces
intifada	Palestinian protest movement against Israeli occupation of the occupied territories from 1987
Iran-contra affair	illegal US operation to provide arms for the contras
iron curtain	Churchill's term to describe the division between eastern and western Europe
isolationism	US inter-war policy of avoiding political and military entanglements
KGB	Soviet secret police
khalq	Afghan communist regime
Khmer Rouge	extreme communist group in control of Cambodia, 1975-79
Lend-Lease	US system of wartime aid to its allies
Long Telegram	Kennan's advice regarding how to deal with the Soviet Union
manifest destiny	US belief in its god-given destiny to spread across the American continent
Marshall Plan	US plan for the economic revival of post-WWII Europe
McCarthy era	late 1940s/ early 1950s paranoid America when alleged communist sympathisers were being rooted out
MIRV	multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicle
Mr X article	Kennan's article in 1947 on how to deal with the Soviet Union
mujahedeen	anti-Soviet Afghan guerrillas in the 1980s
nationalisation	state takeover of the ownership of an enterprise
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, western alliance 1949
non-aligned	not allied to NATO or the Warsaw pact
Oder-Neise Line	Poland post-1945 western border
Operation Barborossa	Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941
Ostpolitik	Willy Brandt's brand of West German détente in the late 1960s/ early 1970s

parity	term to describe the Soviet nuclear strength vis-à-vis the US
partisans	anti-Nazi resistance fighters, often fighting behind enemy lines
peaceful co-existence	Khrushchev policy in the 1950s for better US-Soviet relations
perestroika	restructuring
Pershings	US missiles of the 1980s
Polaris	US nuclear submarine
Prague Spring	Dubcek's brief period of reform in 1968 in Czechoslovakia
proletariat	the working class
proxy war	conflict in which the superpowers supported rival sides
quarantine	term to describe US blockade of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis
Reagan Doctrine	US policy in the 1980s to support any anti-Soviet groups
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
Sandinistas	revolutionary group in power in Nicaragua in the 1980s
SEATO	South East Asian Treaty Organisation
Sino-Soviet split	rift between the Soviet Union and Communist China
SLBM	submarine launched ballistic missile
Soyuz	Soviet space craft
sphere of influence	geographical area dominated by one superpower
Sputnik	Soviet satellite launched in 1957
SS20	Soviet missile from the 1980s
SS-33	intermediate Soviet missile of the 1950s
Star Wars	term used to describe Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative
START	strategic arms reduction talks
Strategic Defence Initiative	plan to shoot down any incoming missiles from outer space
Suez Crisis	1956 crisis when Britain/ France/ Israel conspired to attack Egypt
Taliban	radical Muslim fundamentalist groups which ruled Afghanistan 1995-2001
Truman Doctrine	US policy of containment
U2	high altitude photo-reconnaissance plane
Vietminh	nationalist Vietnamese body that defeated the French in 1954
Warsaw Pact	Soviet dominated communist alliance, formalised in 1955
Watergate	scandal involving President Nixon which forced his resignation
wehrmacht	German term for the army during the Nazi period



Dramatis Personae

Acheson, Dean	US Secretary of State, 1949-53
Adenauer, Konrad	Chancellor of West Germany, 1949-63
Andropov, Yuri	Soviet leader, 1982-84
Arias, President	President of Costa Rica, behind Nicaragua peace plan, late 1980s
Ball, George	US Under Secretary of State, 1961-69
Batista, Fulgencio	US-backed dictator of Cuba, 1952-59
Brandt, Willy	Mayor of West Berlin 1957-66; Chancellor of West Germany 1969-74
Brezhnev, Leonid	Soviet leader, 1964-82
Brzezinski, Zbigniew	National Security Advisor during the Carter administration
Bush, Jnr, George W	US President, 2001-2009
Bush, Snr George	US President, 1989-1993
Castro, Fidel	Cuban revolutionary leader
Chernenko, Konstantin	Soviet leader, 1984-85
Churchill, Winston	British Prime Minister, 1940-45, 1951-55
Clay, General	US Commander in West Berlin at the time of the Berlin blockade
Clifford, Clark	White House Counsel during the Truman administration
Diem, Ngo Dinh	President of South Vietnam, 1955-63
Dubcek, Alexander	promoter of reforms during the Czech 1968 "Prague Spring"
Dulles, John Foster	US Secretary of State, 1952-59
Ebert Jnr, Friedrich	Mayor of East Berlin
Eisenhower, Dwight D	US President, 1953-61
Gagarin, Yuri	Soviet cosmonaut, first man into space 1961
Glenn, John	US astronaut, first American to orbit the earth, 1962
Ho Chi Minh	Vietnamese nationalist leader, President of North Vietnam 1954-69
Husak, Gustav	Czech communist leader, 1968-89
Hussein, King	King of Jordan, 1952-99
Johnston, Lyndon	US President, 1963-69
Kadar, Janas	Hungarian communist leader, 1956-89
Karzai, Hamid	Western-backed President of Afghanistan, 2004-
Kennan, George	US diplomat, presidential advisor, referred to as "father of containment"

Kennedy, John	US President, 1961-63
Kennedy, Robert	Attorney-General under President Kennedy, later US senator
Khrushchev, Nikita	Soviet leader, 1957-64
Kim Il Sung	North Korean leader, 1945-1994
Kim Jong Il	North Korean leader, 1994-
Kissinger, Henry	National Security Advisor/ Secretary of State under Presidents Nixon and Ford
Kohl, Helmut	Chancellor of West Germany at the time of German reunification
Lumumba	Congolese Prime Minister, 1960
Malenkov	briefly shared power with Khrushchev in Soviet Union after Stalin's death
Mao Zedong	leader of Communist China, 1949-76
Marshall, George	US Secretary of State under President Truman, author of the Marshall Plan
Mobutu	President of Zaire, 1965-97
Molotov	Soviet Foreign Minister, 1939-49, 1953-56
Monroe, James	US President, 1817-25
Mossadegh, Dr Mohammed	leader of Iran overthrown in CIA-sponsored coup 1953
Nagy, Imre	leader of 1956 Hungarian Revolution, executed 1958
Nasser, Gamal Abdel	President of Egypt, 1954-1970
Nixon, Richard	US President, 1969-74
North, Colonel Oliver	man at the centre of the Iran-Contra scandal in mid-1980s
Ortega, Daniel	President of Nicaragua, 1980s
Osama Bin Laden	leader of Al Qaida terrorist organisation
Podgorny, Nikolai	effective head of state, 1965-77
Powers, Gary	U2 pilot shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960
Reagan, Ronald	US President, 1981-89
Reuter, Ernst	Mayor of West Berlin at the time of the Berlin Blockade, 1948-49
Rommel	leading German general during WWII
Roosevelt, Franklin	US President, 1933-45
Sadat, Anwar	President of Egypt, 1970-81
Saddam Hussein	leader of Iraq, 1979-2003, executed 2006
Shevardnadze, Eduard	Soviet Foreign Minister, 1985-1990
Shultz, George	US Secretary of State, 1982-89

Stalin	leader of Soviet Union, 1929-1953
Syngman Rhee	leader of South Korea at the time of the Korean War
Taraki, Mohammed	President of Afghanistan, 1978-79
Tereshkova, Valentina	Soviet cosmonaut, first woman in space, 1963
Thatcher, Margaret	British Prime Minister, 1979-1990
Tito	leader of Yugoslavia, 1945-1980
Truman, Harry	US President, 1945-53
Ulbricht, Walter	leader of East Germany, 1950-71
Vance, Cyrus	US Secretary of State, 1977-1980
Washington, George	US President, 1789-97
Wilson, Woodrow	US President, 1913-21
Yeltsin, Boris	Russian President 1991-99
Zhdanov, Andrei	organised the Cominform, 1947

Answers to Revision Exercises

Exercise 1.1

1 – dislike of both Nazism and Communism/ let each destroy the other; 2 – Russia was now an ally to be helped; 3 – material aid/ a second front; 4 – large amounts of aid through the Lend-Lease program; 5 – The Battle of Stalingrad; 6 – the Soviet Union was now more self-assured/ confident of victory; 7 – the presence of Red Army troops would make post-war control easier; 8 – he wanted his “puppet regime” in control after the war; 9 – its economic/ military power, untouched by the war, the atomic bomb; 10 – its defeat of Germany, Red Army control of Eastern Europe.

Exercise 1.2

1 – Churchill/ Stalin: Moscow 44; 2 – Potsdam; 3 – Casablanca: Jan 43; 4 – Potsdam; 5 – Yalta; 6 – Yalta; 7 – Tehran; 8 – Stalin/ Stinnes: Dec 43; 9 – Potsdam; 10 – Tehran.

Exercise 1.3

1 – trust him/ can work with him/ get along well/ admire the Soviet war effort; 2 – do not trust him/ will not be pushed around by him/ time be tough with him; 3 – admire him but do not trust him/ sense of history warns to be wary of Stalin and his post-war aims; 4 – does not know the players/ lack of experience/ most decisions probably already made; 5 – (A) Potsdam, (B) Casablanca, (C) Yalta, (D) Potsdam.

Exercise 2.1

1 – FALSE; 2 – FALSE; 3 – TRUE; 4 – TRUE; 5 – FALSE; 6 – TRUE; 7 – TRUE; 8 – FALSE; 9 – FALSE; 10 – FALSE.

Exercise 2.2

After 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union faced each other as global rivals. The traditional view of this rivalry sees the contest in terms of ideology. The United States was committed to democratic freedom while the Soviet Union sought to spread communism across the world. However, an alternative view sees the US-Soviet rivalry as nothing more than a traditional context of competing national self-interest. In this context, ideology was a tool of policy rather than a goal in itself.

Exercise 3.1

1 – isolationism, non-involvement in foreign conflicts; 2 – deteriorating due to differences over matters such as Poland, Germany and Iran; 3 – civil war between communist and royalist forces; 4 – weak economy/ severe winter/ imperial problems; 5 – a communist victory in Greece could lead to Soviet domination in the eastern Mediterranean and neighbouring areas; 6 – limited, even Roosevelt had kept him in the dark; 7 – threat to US way of life and to US power; 8 – build up military power and be willing to use atomic and biological warfare; 9 – Under-secretary of State, later Secretary of State; 10 – communism was an infection which, if not checked, could spread across the world.

Exercise 3.2

(1) The Soviet Union is concerned only with national reconstruction after the Nazi destruction of World War II. The Soviet Union has been invaded three times in 27 years and so its prime aim is defence and the prevention of another western invasion seeking to destroy socialism. President

Truman has displayed an aggressive, combatant and anti-Soviet attitude since becoming president. The whole purpose of containment is to spread American imperialism and weaken the power of the Soviet Union at every opportunity.

(2) The Soviet Union is intent on spreading its communist philosophy across the world and it will stop at nothing to achieve this. It has broken its word repeatedly since the war, over issues such as Poland and clearly cannot be trusted. It has destroyed the independence of half of Europe by imposing puppet communist regimes that do the bidding of Moscow. The US was forced to introduce containment to bring an end to aggressive communist expansionism.

Exercise 4.1

1 - The creation of the Anglo-American BiZone; 2 - Soviets introduce regulations slowing traffic into West Berlin; 3 - Introduction of the Deutschmark into the western zones; 4 - Stalin imposes a blockade on West Berlin; 5 - The allies launch Operation Vittles; 6 - Stalin calls off the blockade of Berlin; 7 - The establishment of West Germany; 8 - The allies finally call off the airlift; 9 - The establishment of East Germany; 10 - The introduction of National Security Council Paper NSC68.

Exercise 4.2

1 – China went communist/ Soviets exploded an atomic bomb/ spy scandals; 2 – to unite his country very quickly; 3 – seen as Kim working under the orders of Stalin; 4 – Soviet absence from the Security Council which meant the proposal to send UN troops to Korea was not vetoed; 5 – US troops to Pusan/ the Inchon landing; 6 – fear of MacArthur invading China; 7 – wanted to take the war into China/ maybe use atomic weapons/ he was sacked by Truman; 8 – permanent division of the country/ three million dead/ massive destruction; 9 – communism had been contained; 10 – arms build-up/ creation of alliances/ poor Sino-US relations.

Exercise 5.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – true; 5 – false; 6 – false; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false.

Exercise 5.2

1 – Mohammed Mossadegh; 2 – Nikita Khrushchev; 3 – Mobutu; 4 – Richard Nixon; 5 – Bulganin; 6 – Nasser; 7 – Imre Nagy; 8 – Georgy Malenkov; 9 – John Foster Dulles; 10 – Dwight Eisenhower.

Exercise 6.1

1st - The US atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; 2nd - The Soviet Union explodes its first atomic bomb; 3rd - Both the US and the Soviet Union have developed the hydrogen bomb; 4th - Soviet development of the SS-33; 5th - Development of ICBMs; 6th - US development of the Minuteman missile; 7th - US development of the Polaris submarine; 8th - Soviet development of SLBMs; 9th - Both the US and the Soviets have ABM capacity; 10th - The Soviets have developed MIRVs

Exercise 6.2

1 – first man in space; 2 – first American to orbit the earth; 3 – first space station; 4 – first US satellite; 5 – first manned craft to orbit the moon; 6 – first spacecraft to the moon and back; 7 – first space walker; 8 – first manned moon landing; 9 – first US space station; 10 – first American in space.

Exercise 7.1

1 – stop flow of refugees to the west; 2 – as part of the global communist threat; 3 – yes, removed Berlin as a source of tension, great propaganda; 4 – to defend Cuba from possible US attack; 5 – an air strike, quarantining the island; 6 – the US? – the missiles were removed; Cuba? – it would not be invaded; 7 – it led to an improvement of US-Soviet relations; 8 – it sought nuclear parity; 9 – short-lived reform era; 10 – Soviet policy to keep its satellite countries under control.

Exercise 7.2

1 – Willy Brandt; 2 – Alexander Dubcek; 3 – George Ball; 4 – Walter Ulbricht; 5 – Gustav Husak; 6 – Robert Kennedy; 7 – Fidel Castro; 8 – Nikita Khrushchev; 9 – Leonid Brezhnev; 10 – Dean Acheson.

Exercise 8.1

1 – FALSE; 2 – FALSE; 3 – TRUE; 4 – TRUE; 5 – TRUE; 6 – FALSE; 7 – TRUE; 8 – TRUE; 9 – FALSE; 10 – FALSE.

Exercise 8.2

1 – linkage; 2 – parity; 3 – détente; 4 – Sino-Soviet split; 5 – Cold War consensus; 6 – Tet Offensive; 7 – Henry Kissinger; 8 – Cuban Missile crisis; 9 – UnAmerican Activities Committee; 10 – Richard Nixon.

Exercise 9.1

1st - French defeat at Dien Bien Phu; 2nd - US decides to back Diem regime; 3rd - Murder of Diem; 4th - Johnston decides to Americanise the war; 5th - There are 385 000 US troops in Vietnam; 6th - The Tet Offensive; 7th - Nixon begins the Vietnamisation policy; 8th - Nixon's Xmas bombing of North Vietnam; 9th - US pulls out of the Vietnam conflict; 10th - South East Asia comes under communist control.

Exercise 10.1

1 - its secret preparations/ past history or poor US-Chinese relations; 2 - entry into the United Nations/ diplomatic relations with the US; 3 - three: Moscow 1972, Washington 1973 and Moscow 1974; 4 - SALT 1 and SALT 2; 5 - reduced the chance that a power might consider a nuclear war winnable; 6 - Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, the Biological Warfare Treaty; 7 - The Soviet Union; 8 - Chancellor of West Germany/ Ostpolitik; 9 - recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line and acceptance of German war guilt; 10 - The 1971 Four Power Agreement.

Exercise 10.2

1st - YOM KIPPUR WAR; 2nd - NIXON RESIGNS OVER WATERGATE; 3rd - PASSING OF THE JACKSON AMENDMENT; 4th - HELSINKI AGREEMENT; 5th - CARTER ELECTED PRESIDENT; 6th - US-CHINESE RELATIONS ESTABLISHED; 7th - DENG XIAOPING'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES; 8th - START OF THE IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS; 9th - SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN; 10th - THE ELECTION OF RONALD REAGAN.

Exercise 11.1

1 – true; 2 – true; 3 – false; 4 – false; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – false; 10 – true.

Exercise 12.1

1 - pride, prestige; 2 - ride tall in the saddle; 3 - containment, rollback; 4 - support for any group opposed to the Soviets; 5 - installed and supported the Somoza regime; 6 - Sandinistas, contras; 7 - economic warfare, aid to the contras; 8 - mostly opposed, including World Court; 9 - illegal sale of arms to Iran, illegal provision of arms to the contras; 10 - President Arias of Costa Rica.

Exercise 12.2

1 - neutron bomb; 2 - medium range Soviet missiles; 3 - The Monroe Doctrine; 4 - Operation Urgent Fury; 5 - medium range US missiles; 6 - Iran-Contra Affair; 7 - The Reagan Doctrine; 8 - The Sandinistas; 9 - Clark Amendment; 10 - Star Wars.

Exercise 13.1

Brezhnev - KGB Chief - west - Chernenko - tense - Gorbachev - youngest - reform - glasnost - restructuring - Pasternak - entrepreneurs - expectations - disillusionment.

Exercise 14.1

1st - Gorbachev's six month freeze on SS-20 deployment; 2nd - The Geneva Summit; 3rd - The Reykjavik Summit; 4th - Signing of the INF Treaty; 5th - The Moscow Summit; 6th - Gorbachev's address to the United Nations; 7th - Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan; 8th - Gorbachev visits Beijing; 9th - START 1 Treaty; 10th - Obama-Medvedev signing in Prague.

Exercise 15.1

1 - Lech Walesa; 2 - Eduard Schevadnadze; 3 - Karoly Grosz; 4 - Erich Honecker; 5 - Helmut Kohl; 6 - Todor Zhivkov; 7 - Nicolai Ceausescu; 8 - Francois Mitterand; 9 - Egon Krenz; 10 - Vaclav Havel.