

The Cold War: 1945-1991

Brad Kelly





COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Copyright in this work is owned by Cengage Learning Australia (“the work”). A condition of purchase of this electronic version of the work is that you agree to respect the copyright in the work, abide by the Copyright Act 1968 and specifically agree not to transfer, sell, assign, misuse, copy or transmit an electronic or other version of the work to any third party.

Please note: This product is accompanied by a licence (single user, network or adoption) governing the terms and conditions of its use.

This is a legal agreement between the you, (the “Customer”) and Cengage Learning Australia Pty Limited (ABN 14 058 280 149) (the “Licensor”) which provides the terms and conditions of this non-exclusive licence and the limited warranty for the Product. Use of the Product indicates an acknowledgement that the Customer has read and agreed to be bound by the terms and conditions of this Agreement. If you do not agree to these terms and conditions, return the Product to the place of purchase within 15 days of the date of purchase (with proof of purchase) for a full refund

1. Licence Grant

You do not receive title to the Product. Copyright in the Product (which includes all images, photographs, video, animations, audio, music and text incorporated in the Product, including all of the accompanying printed material) is owned by the Licensor and/or its suppliers and is protected by Australian copyright laws. The Licensor grants you a non-exclusive licence to use the Product subject to the restrictions and terms set out in this Agreement.

2. A Licence allows you to:

Use the Product on your computer. The Customer represents that they shall in no way place the Product in the public domain or in any way compromise our copyright in the Material. You agree to take reasonable steps to protect our copyright.

3. You may not:

Alter, modify, translate, reverse engineer, decompile, or adapt the software or create derivative works based on the Product. Make further copies by any means technological, electronic, digital whatsoever without the written permission of the Licensor. Rent or transfer all or any part of your rights under this Agreement. Remove or alter any copyright or other proprietary notice or label attached to the software.

4. Termination

Any failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this agreement will result in the automatic termination of this licence. Upon termination of this licence for any reason, the Customer must destroy or return to the Licensor all copies of the software and accompanying documentation.

5. Warranties

To the extent permitted by law, the Licensor’s liability for any breach of the warranty or any term implied by law into this licence is limited to the lowest cost of replacing the goods, acquiring equivalent goods or having the goods repaired.

The Cold War: 1945-1991

Brad Kelly



The Cold War: 1945–1991

1st Edition

Brad Kelly

Publishing editors: Michael Spurr and Danielle Dominguez

Editor: Georgia O'Connor

Project editor: Georgia O'Connor

Cover designer: Kevin Finn (TheSumOf)

Cover image: Shutterstock.com/PodPad

Illustrator: Guy Holt Design

Text design: Leigh Ashforth (Watershed Design)

Permissions researcher: Kaitlin Jordan

Production controller: Karen Young

Typesetter: Q2A Media

Any URLs contained in this publication were checked for currency during the production process. Note, however, that the publisher cannot vouch for the ongoing currency of URLs.

© 2018 Cengage Learning Australia Pty Limited

Copyright Notice

This Work is copyright. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission of the Publisher. Except as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, for example any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, subject to certain limitations. These limitations include: Restricting the copying to a maximum of one chapter or 10% of this book, whichever is greater; providing an appropriate notice and warning with the copies of the Work disseminated; taking all reasonable steps to limit access to these copies to people authorised to receive these copies; ensuring you hold the appropriate Licences issued by the Copyright Agency Limited ("CAL"), supply a remuneration notice to CAL and pay any required fees. For details of CAL licences and remuneration notices please contact CAL at Level 11, 66 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000, Tel: (02) 9394 7600, Fax: (02) 9394 7601

Email: info@copyright.com.au

Website: www.copyright.com.au

For product information and technology assistance,
in Australia call **1300 790 853**;
in New Zealand call **0800 449 725**

For permission to use material from this text or product, please email
aust.permissions@cengage.com

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia.

Cengage Learning Australia

Level 7, 80 Dorcas Street

South Melbourne, Victoria Australia 3205

Cengage Learning New Zealand

Unit 4B Rosedale Office Park

331 Rosedale Road, Albany, North Shore 0632, NZ

For learning solutions, visit cengage.com.au

Printed in China by China Translation & Printing Services.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 22 21 20 19 18



CONTENTS

About the book	iv
Author acknowledgements	vi
Introduction	1



01	Origins of the Cold War 1945–1953	6
----	-----------------------------------	---



02	Development of the Cold War until 1968	40
----	--	----



03	Détente	79
----	---------	----



04	Renewal and end of the Cold War	106
----	---------------------------------	-----

	Conclusion	139
--	------------	-----

	Index	144
--	-------	-----

ABOUT THE BOOK

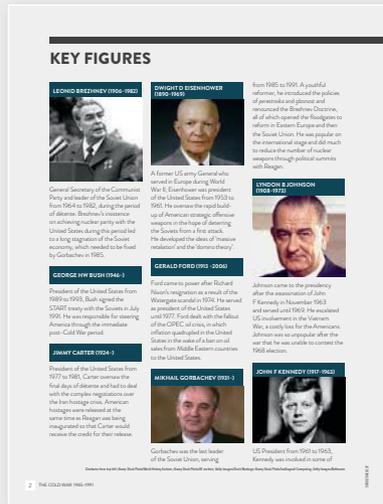
The Cold War: 1945–1991

The Cold War 1945–1991 has been developed especially for senior secondary students of Modern History in New South Wales. The book is based on the understanding that History is an interpretative study of the modern world by which you also come to better appreciate the making of the modern world.

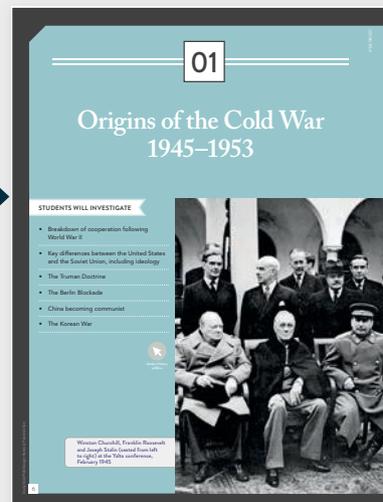
Developing understandings of the past and present in senior History extends on the skills you learnt in earlier years. As senior students you will use historical skills, including research, evaluation, synthesis, analysis and communication, and historical concepts, such as evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy, perspectives and contestability, to understand and interpret societies from the past.



BOOK INTRODUCTION provides a context to the issues that are addressed.



KEY FIGURES, KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS, AND KEY DOCUMENTS AND EVENTS feature brief biographies, profiles, definitions and summaries of key documents as a ready reference for learning and revision.



CHAPTER OPENINGS clearly identify the content to be addressed.

Consolidating ideologies

SOURCE 4. THE KENNAN LONG TELEGRAM, MOSCOW, 22 FEBRUARY 1946

In February 1946, United States ambassador to the Soviet Union, George Kennan, sent a telegram to Washington outlining his views on Soviet foreign policy.

As bastion of Kramin's autocratic view of world affairs a traditional and intricate Russian sense of mystery. Originally, this was a means of a people's spiritual life trying to find an exit response plan in neighborhood of fierce nomadic people. To this was added, in Russia came into contact with the peoples of the Caucasus, whose people, more highly organized societies in the area. But this latter type of mystery was one which afflicted neither Russian nor the Russian people. For Russian have naturally sensed that their role was relatively unimportant in terms of the political and psychological evolution, unable to stand comparison or contrast with political systems of Western countries. For this reason they have always feared foreign domination, hence turned to seek security only in patterns for their own feared what would happen if Russia learned truth about world without or if foreigners learned truth about world within. And they turned to seek security only in patterns for their own struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compact and comparison with it.

Western European countries that Russia, which had evolved sufficiently for half a century in Western Europe, might feel and feel for the rest of the world. After the establishment of the Soviet regime, Moscow always involved even more turbulent and intense by Lenin's interpretation, became a perfect symbol of autocratic mystery with which Russians, who were the previous generation for the autocratic life outside world, for the identity which which they did not know how to rule, for centuries they did not one to effect, for centuries they felt bound to defend. In the name of Marxism they sacrificed every right ethical, moral and political responsibility. Without it they would need before history, at best, as only the last of their long succession of cruel and senseless Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced country on a war, the height of military power in order to guarantee survival security of their internally torn regions. This is why Soviet program must be severely criticized in terms of Moscow, not only for the height of military power in order to guarantee survival security of their internally torn regions. This is why Soviet program must be severely criticized in terms of Moscow, not only for the height of military power in order to guarantee survival security of their internally torn regions. This is why Soviet program must be severely criticized in terms of Moscow, not only for the height of military power in order to guarantee survival security of their internally torn regions.

SOURCE STUDIES of visual and text primary sources and secondary literature appear frequently throughout the text and are combined with questions and activities to aid your evaluation and interpretation of evidence from the past.

Why did the Cold War end?

A number of scholars believe that it was Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika that ended the Cold War, simply because they opened up the door to the wave of pro-democratic calls for reforms after 1987. However, the historian Sali Dogdil suggests that, "It may be an exaggeration to argue that Gorbachev ended the Cold War, as he merely set in motion a process which was quite different from what he had hoped to achieve." In other words, Gorbachev set out to reform the Soviet Union, not end it. As part of this thinking, Gorbachev's endorsement of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which was in effect a withdrawal of support for propping up the communist regimes of Europe, may be regarded as significant. Calls for reform in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany were too strong to resist, and one after the other, the regimes were powerless to stop them.

Others suggest that Ronald Reagan's headline policies and renewal of the arms race played a role in ending the Cold War. While it is true that Reagan fought the Cold War with a vigor that had been absent during the period of détente, and that he significantly increased the arms budget, his policies did not ultimately lead to the end of communism in the Soviet Union or the Eastern bloc.

Historian John Lewis Gaddis leaves the final word to Gorbachev, who believed that in the final analysis, the end of the Cold War was a people's revolution from below. He writes,

HISTORIAN BOXES introduce key historians and schools of interpretation as a way of making historiography clearer.

Conclusion

Between 1945 and 1953 the Cold War became an entrenched rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The breakdown of the World War II Alliance was swift, as matters turned to establishing and consolidating each side's vision of postwar Europe. Both ideological and geopolitical conflicts undermined the breakdown. The American attempt to contain communism in Europe largely succeeded with a commitment to force in Iran, Turkey and Greece, and the spending of US\$15 billion dollars to help Europe recover. The Soviets, for their part, were able to keep a buffer zone on their western border in order to meet their own security needs. However, events in Asia soon changed the character of the Cold War. China emerged on the world stage as a major communist power and opened a second front in the conflict. This new front produced a war in Korea and later Vietnam. By 1953, the Cold War had been firmly established and the ideological, geopolitical and great power rivalries would shape international events for the next two generations.

Chapter summary

- The ideologies of communism and capitalism were fundamental to the origins of the Cold War.
- Geopolitics and great power rivalry were also significant factors in the disputes over Germany, Berlin, Iran, Turkey and Greece.
- The 1945 conferences revealed underlying differences between the two superpowers over the future of Germany and Europe. The Americans wanted a quick recovery based on self-determination, free trade and open markets, while the Soviets were more concerned about maintaining security on their Western borders.
- In 1946 public statements from various political leaders fired up tensions as the United States and the Soviet Union each sought to influence the outcome of the European postwar recovery.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CHAPTER REVIEW ACTIVITIES conclude each chapter. They include a brief precis of the topic, suggestions for further reading, and a range of learning activities that consolidate knowledge and understanding of the chapter's content. These tasks incorporate a range of historical understandings and skills.

JOSEPH STALIN

Joseph Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union from 1927 until his death in 1953. His interpretation of Marxist-Leninism developed into a system known as Stalinism, which involved the rapid industrialization and collectivization of Russia during the 1930s and the establishment of a personality cult around the leader. Rapid industrialization helped the Soviet Union to defeat Germany in World War II and emerged as a global superpower. However, it came with devastating consequences for the Soviet people. The process of industrialization and collectivization resulted in the deaths of millions of civilians during the 1930s. Oppression by his program led to the purges and show trials of the Communist Party during which

Stalin consolidated his position as leader.

At the end of World War II, Stalin sought security on the Soviet Union's western borders. He wanted to avoid being encircled by capitalist powers. As a result, he consolidated his power in Eastern Europe and during 1948 he tried to influence events in countries to his western border – Iran, Greece and Turkey. The Americans pushed back against the interference, and so commenced the Cold War.

SOURCE 18. Joseph Stalin

HARRY TRUMAN

Harry Truman was president of the United States from 1945 to 1953. Truman came to power during an extraordinary time in international events. He ordered the use of the atomic bomb to end World War II, and his policy of containing communism was a central plank in his plan for the transition into peacetime. In the immediate aftermath of

forced to manage a series of crises including the Berlin blockade and crisis, the opening of the Cold War occurred first in China and Korea, and Stalin's demands for a sphere of influence in eastern Europe. Truman's policy of being

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS are biographical profiles and assessments of key historical figures and frequently include questions and activities.

- What were the two central themes in Reagan's inaugural speech?
- In your view, was Reagan the right person to lead the United States at that time?
- Outline the main features of the SDI or Star Wars program.
- What were the criticisms of the SDI?
- How was the Reagan doctrine an extension of containment?
- Outline the Iran-Contra affair.
- Explain the concepts of Reaganomics and trickle-down economics.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES are included throughout the text to consolidate content knowledge and hone examination skills.

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONTENT RECALL

- Outline the basic differences between communism and capitalism.
- Describe at least three disagreements between the Soviets and Americans about the future of Europe.
- Summarize the agreements of Yalta, Potsdam and Helsinki in a table like the one below.

ISSUE	YALTA	POTSDAM

Draw up a table like the one below and provide a detailed summary of the Soviet and American aims after World War II.

SOVIET PROGRAMS	SOVIET AIMS	SOVIET STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

EXTENDED RESPONSE

- To what extent was the policy of containment the main cause of the Cold War?
- How important were Germany and Berlin in the origins and development of the Cold War? In your answer, you should refer to World War II, the four great powers and the blockade and airlift.
- Create a newspaper cartoon to represent ONE of the following events:
 - Truman's speech on the United States containment policy
 - Churchill's Speech of France speech
- Write a letter from one of Truman's advisers outlining what the American response should be about the Soviets in Eastern Europe at the end of the war.
- Make a list of ten significant ideological and geopolitical events between 1946 and 1947. After you have done this, rank them from 1-10 in order of importance in terms of their contribution to the deteriorating relationship between the Soviets and Americans.
- To what extent was the Cold War a geopolitical rather than ideological conflict?
- How significant was China and Korea to the continuation of the development of the Cold War?

ESSAY QUESTION

- Who started the Cold War? In your response you should consider the post-World War II aims of the Americans and the Soviets and each superpower's response to the other's aims.

The Cold War: 1945–1991 is a premium Cengage title and is fully supported by the NelsonNet platform. NelsonNet includes an eBook edition of the student book, additional worksheets and weblinks. These additional resources are indicated by icons in the student book. Weblinks for the book are at <http://nmh-coldwar.nelsonnet.com.au>.

The Suez Crisis, 1956

The United States and the Soviet Union had already experienced some tension over the Suez Canal in October 1956. The canal, which cut through Egypt, provided an important trade route from the Mediterranean to Asia. In July 1956, the Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser, frustrated by the withdrawal of American funding for construction of the Aswan Dam, nationalized the Suez Canal in an attempt to end the British military presence in the canal region. A few months later, Nasser prevented ships bound for Israel from passing through the canal. In response, British, French and Israeli soldiers marched on Egypt and seized the area around the canal. With the help of Soviet-backed military equipment, Nasser threatened to strike back. The standoff resulted in a lot of saber rattling from the Soviet Union. In fact, Khrushchev made a bloodcurdling threat to rain down nuclear bombs on Britain, France and Israel. The United States was reluctant to be drawn into the conflict and demanded that Israel withdraw. The crisis did not result in open conflict, but it did reinforce the divisions in the Middle East, with America supporting Israel and the Soviet Union falling in behind the Arab world.

The Six-Day War, 1967

The Six-Day War of 5–10 June 1967 was a significant event in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel's decisive victory rebuffed a series of borders annexing surrounding parcels of land that would result in ongoing disputes with its neighbours in Syria (Golan Heights), Jordan (the West Bank), and Egypt (Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip). Tensions had been brewing between Israel and its Arab neighbours throughout 1967. Nasser had once again blockaded Israeli-bound ships, and there was continuing violence between Israel

INFORMATION BOXES contain extended discussions of key events, concepts and historical developments. Many also include questions and activities.



DIAGRAMS are used to visually summarise complex ideas and events and each chapter includes **LOCATION MAPS**.

TEACHER RESOURCES Please note that complimentary access to NelsonNet is only available to teachers who use *The Cold War 1945–1991* as a core educational resource in their classroom. Contact your Cengage Education Consultant for information about teacher access codes and conditions.

AUTHOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Cengage Senior Publishing Editor Michael Spurr for his encouragement and expertise in preparing this book and Senior Publishing Editor Danielle Dominguez. I would also like to thank Georgia O'Connor for her editorial work and all the team at Cengage in permissions, design and production. I'd also like to thank Emma Leitch for her review of the manuscript.

On a personal note, to my beautiful children Emily and Darcy, who are patiently waiting for a gap in my schedule to co-write 'Windy the Fox'.



The Berlin Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate in West Germany, 1985

THE COLD WAR: 1945–1991

The Cold War was an ideological and geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1991. Its origins were found in the struggle over the post-World War II social, political and economic order, when each superpower sought to shape Europe and the world in their own image.

The Soviets were driven by their ideological commitment to communism, but it was geopolitics that stoked the fires of conflict. The Soviets had regarded World War II as a fight against fascism and at the end of the war were determined to create a buffer zone in the states of Eastern Europe to protect themselves against what they regarded as inevitable future conflicts among capitalist powers.

For the United States, World War II had brought them out of isolationism and towards a commitment to building a liberal, democratic world order. The Americans believed that peace was to be found in collective security and prosperity through free and open trade among nations. They believed in the principle of state sovereignty and were uneasy about the Soviets attempting to build a sphere of influence into the states of Eastern Europe.

The United States and Soviet approaches to the new world order were irreconcilable. The great wartime alliance that had defeated Hitler had broken down and a bipolar world was emerging between the superpowers.

The war was termed 'cold' because direct conflict never broke out between the Soviets and Americans. Of course, there were major sources of tension – Berlin, Greece, Turkey, China, Korea, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Vietnam and Afghanistan among them – but both sides understood the consequences of engaging in nuclear conflict.

Indeed, it was nuclear weapons that most defined the Cold War. The process of developing ever more destructive nuclear arms with greater reach and precision was carried out at the same time as each side sought disarmament agreements. The concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) – the idea that the first nuclear strike would represent suicide because the response would be so overwhelming – underpinned the restraint of both superpowers and brought new dimensions to international diplomacy.

The Cold War was shaped just as much by key figures as it was by events. On the Soviet side, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev brought vastly different leadership styles to the conflict. The United States leaders – Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Reagan – likewise shaped the Cold War in different ways.

The Cold War cannot be understood without taking into consideration how ideologies and geopolitics influenced the crises, responses and events in it for more than 45 years.

KEY FIGURES

LEONID BREZHNEV (1906–1982)



General Secretary of the Communist Party and leader of the Soviet Union from 1964 to 1982, during the period of *détente*. Brezhnev's insistence on achieving nuclear parity with the United States during this period led to a long stagnation of the Soviet economy, which needed to be fixed by Gorbachev in 1985.

GEORGE HW BUSH (1946–)

President of the United States from 1989 to 1993, Bush signed the START treaty with the Soviets in July 1991. He was responsible for steering America through the immediate post-Cold War period.

JIMMY CARTER (1924–)

President of the United States from 1977 to 1981, Carter oversaw the final days of *détente* and had to deal with the complex negotiations over the Iran hostage crisis. American hostages were released at the same time as Reagan was being inaugurated so that Carter would receive the credit for their release.

DWIGHT D EISENHOWER (1890–1969)



A former US army General who served in Europe during World War II, Eisenhower was president of the United States from 1953 to 1961. He oversaw the rapid build-up of American strategic offensive weapons in the hope of deterring the Soviets from a first attack. He developed the ideas of 'massive retaliation' and the 'domino theory'.

GERALD FORD (1913–2006)

Ford came to power after Richard Nixon's resignation as a result of the Watergate scandal in 1974. He served as president of the United States until 1977. Ford dealt with the fallout of the OPEC oil crisis, in which inflation quadrupled in the United States in the wake of a ban on oil sales from Middle Eastern countries to the United States.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV (1931–)



Gorbachev was the last leader of the Soviet Union, serving

from 1985 to 1991. A youthful reformer, he introduced the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* and renounced the Brezhnev Doctrine, all of which opened the floodgates to reform in Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union. He was popular on the international stage and did much to reduce the number of nuclear weapons through political summits with Reagan.

LYNDON B JOHNSON (1908–1973)



Johnson came to the presidency after the assassination of John F Kennedy in November 1963 and served until 1969. He escalated US involvement in the Vietnam War, a costly loss for the Americans. Johnson was so unpopular after the war that he was unable to contest the 1968 election.

JOHN F KENNEDY (1917–1963)



US President from 1961 to 1963, Kennedy was involved in some of

Clockwise from top left: Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive; Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive; Getty Images/Stock Montage; Alamy Stock Photo/IanDagnall Computing; Getty Images/Bettmann

the most intense episodes in the Cold War, including the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Berlin Wall crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Although his political adversary Nikita Khrushchev was older and more experienced in politics, Kennedy won the battle of wills during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Khrushchev was dismissed from the Soviet leadership as a result.

**NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV
(1894–1971)**



As Soviet leader from 1953 to 1964, Khrushchev condemned the crimes of Stalin in his February 1956 Secret Speech and believed that communism and capitalism could peacefully coexist. He oversaw a rapid build-up of nuclear arms, and led the Soviets during the Berlin Wall crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

RICHARD M NIXON (1913–1994)

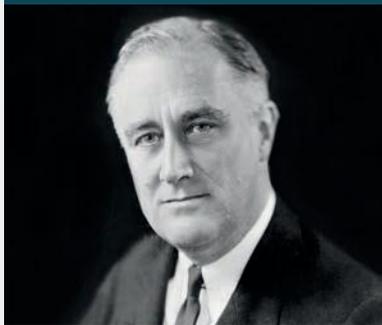
President of the United States from 1969 to 1974, Nixon exploited the Sino-Soviet split by reaching out to China. He was the first US president to visit China; in 1972 he welcomed China's inclusion in the United Nations and opened up full diplomatic relations with the communist leadership.

RONALD REAGAN (1911–2004)



Reagan was sworn in as US President in 1981 and held office until 1989. Reagan proposed 'Star Wars', an ambitious trillion-dollar nuclear defence shield in space. He referred to the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire'. His attitude towards the Soviet leadership changed as he established a warm friendship with new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

**FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT
(1882–1945)**



As US President from 1933 to 1945, Roosevelt steered the United States through the Great Depression and World War II. His Atlantic Charter set the tone for the United States' demands at the end of the war – open markets, free trade and national self-determination.

JOSEPH STALIN (1878–1953)



Stalin was leader of the Soviet Union from 1929 to 1953, and led negotiations in the postwar settlement. He wanted security for the Soviet Union's borders and demanded a buffer zone and sphere of influence among its neighbouring states. Under his leadership the Eastern bloc was created and the Soviet bomb was developed.

HARRY S TRUMAN (1884–1972)



Truman came to the presidency after the death of Roosevelt in April 1945 and held office until 1953. He was the only world leader to order a nuclear attack, bombing the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Truman was the architect of the containment policy that committed US military support to Greece and Turkey, and the Marshall Plan, a US \$15-billion plan to rebuild Europe.

Clockwise from top left: Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive; Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive; Getty Images/Stock Montage; Alamy Stock Photo/IanDagnall Computing; Getty Images/Bettmann

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

capitalism

An economic system in which the means of production are concentrated in private hands. This system underpinned the United States and the West's view of the world.

charm offensive

Gorbachev's tour of the West to show a friendlier side to the Soviet system.

communism

A social and economic system in which the means of production are owned by the state and the benefits are distributed among the citizens.

containment

The American policy, which lasted for the duration of the Cold War, of attempting to restrict the spread of communism. It had different manifestations as the geopolitics changed.

détente

A relaxation in tensions between the superpowers.

domino theory

The fear that countries in Southeast Asia would fall to communism one after another.

ideology

A system of social, political and economic views and values that influences government policy.

geopolitics

Relations between nations that are influenced by geographical issues.

glasnost

Gorbachev's policy of openness, which led to calls for pro-democratic reforms throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Mujahedeen

A guerrilla force led by Osama bin Laden against the communist government of Afghanistan.

Mutually Assured Destruction

A doctrine that held that whichever side in the conflict made the first nuclear strike would suffer a retaliation so great that it would guarantee its own destruction.

military-industrial complex

The massive peacetime armaments industry in the United States that took a large share of the United States budget.

ostpolitik

Meaning 'eastern policy', this was West Germany's attempt to engage with its Eastern bloc neighbours.

peaceful coexistence

Khrushchev's policy, which acknowledged that the Soviet and American systems could coexist peacefully. It replaced the communist doctrine of international revolution.

perestroika

Gorbachev's policy of economic restructuring that introduced limited forms of market economics into the Soviet Union.

rollback

Eisenhower and Dulles' policy of attempting to reverse communist advances in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America.

self-determination

The ability of a state to be free from outside interference and determine its own political future.

sphere of influence

An area over which a large power can exercise political control, but does not directly govern.

triangular diplomacy

The arrival of China as a nuclear power and the Sino-Soviet split meant that the US could negotiate with two communist powers.

Vietcong

Southern-based supporters of the North Vietnamese communists fighting against the South in guerrilla warfare.

The Atlantic Charter, 1941

The Atlantic Charter was a joint statement by United States President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill outlining the liberal democratic principles of the world order in the postwar world.

Kennan's Long Telegram, 1946

Written by George F Kennan, a high-ranking American official at the United States Embassy in Moscow, the telegram represented Soviet communism as aggressive and expansionist. It became an influential portrait of the Soviets in the United States' state department.

The Sinews of Peace Speech, 1946

Winston Churchill's speech contained the famous 'iron curtain' line and claimed that the world was being divided into two camps – communist and capitalist.

The Novikov Telegram, 1946

A telegram written by an official at the Soviet Union's embassy in Washington. The telegram painted a negative picture of the United States as the 'last man standing' among the capitalist world powers.

NSC-68, 1950

An influential report written by the United States National Security Council, which recommended that the United States commence a massive build-up of arms to counter the threat of the spread of Soviet communism.

Khrushchev's Secret Speech, 1956

New Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev delivered a speech to a closed session of the Politburo in which he condemned the policies of Stalin.

The Kitchen Debate, 1959

A discussion held between Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and US Vice President Richard Nixon at Moscow in July 1959. It demonstrated what both sides believed to be the weaknesses of each other's social, political and economic systems using housing and household appliances as examples.

Letters between Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1962

Correspondence between Kennedy and Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. It revealed the high level of restraint exercised by both men as the threat of nuclear war became a very real possibility.

Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik Speech, 1969

West German leader Willy Brandt addressed the Bonn Bundestag in October 1969 to lay out a plan for greater cooperation and trade between East and West.

The Helsinki Accords, 1975

A significant document for détente, the Helsinki Accords acknowledged security and cooperation agreements across Europe. They presented a framework for future cooperation between Eastern and Western European nations.

Gorbachev's Speech to the Soviet Politburo, 1987

In this speech, Gorbachev urged the party to embrace his twin policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. While he recognised the immediate challenges these policies presented to Soviet society, he encouraged his fellow party members to persist with the changes for the future good of the Union.

01

Origins of the Cold War 1945–1953

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

- Breakdown of cooperation following World War II
- Key differences between the United States and the Soviet Union, including ideology
- The Truman Doctrine
- The Berlin Blockade
- China becoming communist
- The Korean War



Modern History
syllabus

Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin (seated from left to right) at the Yalta conference, February 1945



Introduction

The Cold War was an **ideological** and **geopolitical** rivalry between the **communist** Soviet Union and the **capitalist** United States that dominated international relations from the end of World War II in 1945, until 1990. The Soviet Union and the United States emerged from World War II not just as victors, but as **superpowers**. At the same time, the defeat of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy marked the end of the **great power rivalries** that had shaped European politics since the late 19th century. Germany and Italy had been defeated and the victorious powers of Britain and France were weakened politically and economically. The Cold War, 'fought' between the Soviet Union and the United States, rapidly replaced the pre-1939 order. The Cold War was ideological in the sense that the United States and the Soviet Union developed political, social and economic systems that were incompatible with each other, and both superpowers competed to stamp their influence on the rebuilding of Europe and emerging independence movements in other parts of the world. The rivalry was also geopolitical, meaning that geographical proximity to a superpower or its allies was equally, if not more, important as ideology in determining which system would be adopted by smaller states.



Ideology, geopolitics and great power rivalry

ideology

A system of social, political and economic views and values that influences government policy.

geopolitics

Relations between nations that are influenced by geographical issues.

communism

A social and economic system in which the means of production are owned by the state and the benefits distributed among the citizens.

capitalism

An economic system in which the means of production are concentrated in private hands.

superpower

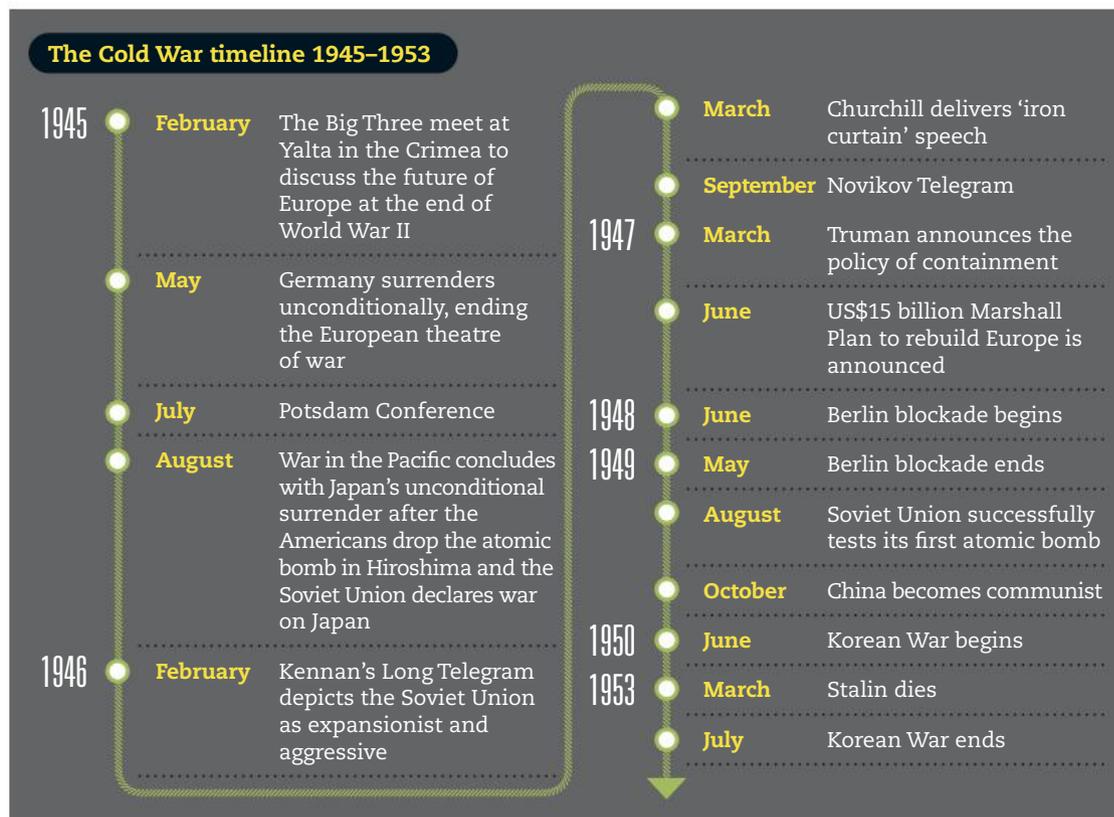
A great power that dominates the international system and has global reach that is underpinned by a strong economy and superior military capacity.

great power rivalry

Competition between leading global authorities; in this case, between the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union.



The origins of the Cold War



Ideological rivalry

The political systems of the Soviet Union and the United States had contrasting values that could not be easily reconciled. While Western-bloc countries enjoyed free multi-party democratic elections underpinned by the principles of **self-determination** and state **sovereignty**, the Soviet system was characterised by a one-party state. Many communist governments saw themselves as part of an international communist movement. In the US, the idea of individual freedom to pursue happiness and enjoy choice was fundamental to the American sense of self. On the other hand, Soviet leadership saw the role of citizens as working towards the development of a communist utopia. The ideology of

self-determination

The ability of a state to be free from outside interference and determine its own political future.

sovereignty

The authority of a nation to govern itself.

capitalism promoted the idea that free, international open markets with low trade barriers would bring prosperity and higher living standards to society. In the Soviet bloc, state ownership of businesses meant that the state would provide basic economic security to citizens in an attempt to avoid wide gaps between the rich and poor.

Geopolitical rivalry

Geopolitical rivalry was another important factor in the development and course of the Cold War. Geographical proximity to one superpower or its allies often resulted in smaller states being coerced into adopting the systems of the dominant superpower in the region. For example, the countries in Eastern Europe, including Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, had little choice but to take their cues from the leadership in Moscow, given their geographical importance to the Soviets as a **buffer zone** at the end of the war. As the war progressed, Americans even adopted the term **domino theory** to express their fear that one country after another would fall to communism in Southeast Asia. In 1962, the world was brought to the brink of nuclear war when the United States insisted that the Soviets could not bring nuclear warheads to Cuba, an island nation only kilometres away from mainland USA.

buffer zone

A geographical space dividing countries or regions for the purposes of providing security.

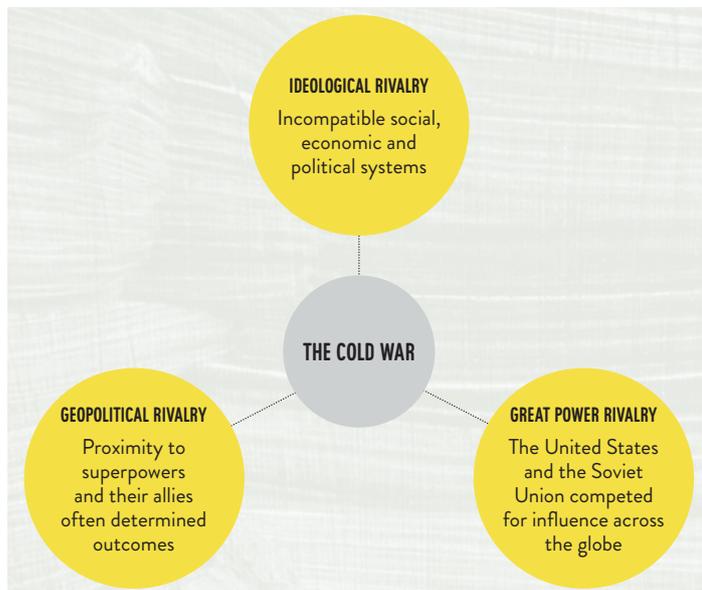
domino theory

The fear that countries in Southeast Asia would fall to communism one after another.

Great power rivalry

The Cold War can also be seen as a continuation of the great power rivalries of the past. In the vacuum of a ruined Europe that needed complete rebuilding and the emergence of anti-colonial, nationalist independence movements in the third world, the superpowers looked to consolidate their positions through offering economic and military support. Of course, that support often came with strings attached – most notably the expectation that the recipient would adopt the social, political and economic system of the sponsor.

Ideological rivalries can be seen in the origins of the Cold War, particularly during the 1945 conferences, discussions about the future of Eastern Europe and Germany and the United States' attempt to contain Soviet communism and fund the recovery of Western Europe through the Marshall Plan. But the rivalries were not merely ideological. Crises in Turkey and Greece in 1947, the Berlin blockade and airlifts in 1948, the spread of communism to China in 1949 and the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 all demonstrated the importance of geopolitics to the origins and development of the Cold War.



SOURCE 1.1 Rivalries contributing to the Cold War

- 1 Identify three fundamental differences between the ideologies of communism and capitalism.
- 2 Locate a world map. For each superpower, make a list of three nation states that might become the focus of geopolitical dispute in the Cold War. Choose ONE state from each list and suggest why it became the focus of dispute.
- 3 At the end of World War II the United States insisted that European powers give up their empires. Evaluate this demand in light of the idea that the Cold War was a continuation of great power rivalries.

American capitalism and Soviet communism

It is important to understand how ideologies influenced the superpowers' outlooks after World War II and why the United States and the Soviet Union felt so much was at stake in ensuring their economic, political and social systems were established in their spheres of influence.

Liberalism and capitalism

The United States' style of liberal democracy and its version of capitalism had been developed over a long period of time. These ideas originated in the **liberalism** of the Enlightenment, an 18th-century movement that emphasised the freedom of individuals and was underpinned by a rejection of tyranny. With an emphasis on the universal rights of man, these values found their way into the American Declaration of Independence, which read:

“ We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. ”

The Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776

liberalism

A broad political philosophy in which the state guarantees freedom of the individual.

This core belief in individual freedom informed the United States' Constitution and its system of government. Designed to restrict the power of any one individual over the state, the United States adopted a system of checks and balances, a Supreme Court to rule on Constitutional questions and the rule of law as the basis for personal and property rights. The word 'freedom' was synonymous with the American view of the world, and Americans assumed their political and economic values were universal in character.

The United States took a similar approach to economics. Rugged individualism had been a feature of the American version of the industrial revolution, and entrepreneurs made their fortunes opening up the interior of the country in the push from New England across the continent to California. Railways, ranching and gold mining delivered enormous riches for anyone with an enterprising talent. Hard work offered the promise of social mobility and the self-made man was born. For those who bought into the American dream, fortunes were within the reach of anyone with a strong work ethic and a great idea.

These beliefs were also reflected in the American view of global commerce. Free, open markets with low trade barriers were enshrined in Wilson's Fourteen Points, proclaimed towards the end of World War I. Article III encouraged 'the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations'.¹ The Atlantic Charter, signed in 1941 as the basis for cooperation between Britain and the United States, reiterated similar points in Articles IV and V. A world of unrestricted trade, the Americans believed, would bring lasting peace, prosperity and rising living standards to its citizens and to the rest of the world.

This political and economic view of the world shaped the American response to the destruction of Europe after World War II. United States Presidents Roosevelt and Truman believed that a strong, industrial Germany with the capacity to trade in free, open markets would offer the best chance of lifting employment, growth and a quick recovery across Europe. Americans also embraced the principle of national self-determination, which, in effect, meant the end of European colonies and a rejection of the Soviet demand of a sphere of influence on its western border.

The destruction of Europe had provided a silver lining for the United States. Access to new international markets during the war enabled America to recover from the Great Depression, but there was no guarantee the recovery would extend beyond the war's end. The threat of a contraction in the American economy made continuing access to European markets a priority for US policy makers. For the United States, the shadow of communism that hung over Europe was a threat to its own economic recovery.



Communism

The European and American experiences of industrialisation were different. Capitalism created a class structure, which over time came to be criticised by political thinkers, including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They lamented that capitalism was responsible for long hours, poor living and dangerous working conditions, and a lack of social mobility. Marx's 1848 *Communist Manifesto* criticised the monopoly of capitalism and argued that the **proletariat** had only their chains to lose by overthrowing the **bourgeoisie** and business interests.

While numerous political parties in Europe were influenced by Marx's ideas, a revolution led by Marxists first occurred under the leadership of Lenin in Russia in 1917. Marxist-Leninists were different from classical Marxists in that they argued that a revolutionary vanguard was required to lead change to society. By 1945, at the start of the Cold War, the ideas of Marx and Lenin had been developed further by Stalin. One of the core features of the Stalinist system, in which Stalin exercised total control, was the **personality cult**. Violence and totalitarian practices also became characteristics of Stalin's leadership during **collectivisation**, **industrialisation** and the communist **party purges**, as Stalin looked for practical ways to implement the ideas of the revolution.

proletariat

A Marxist term for the working class. Marx held that the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie and take back society's means of production.

bourgeoisie

Refers to the middle class in a society, where most of the society's wealth is concentrated.

personality cult

A system in which devotion and admiration is directed towards an idealised leader; in this case, Stalin.

collectivisation

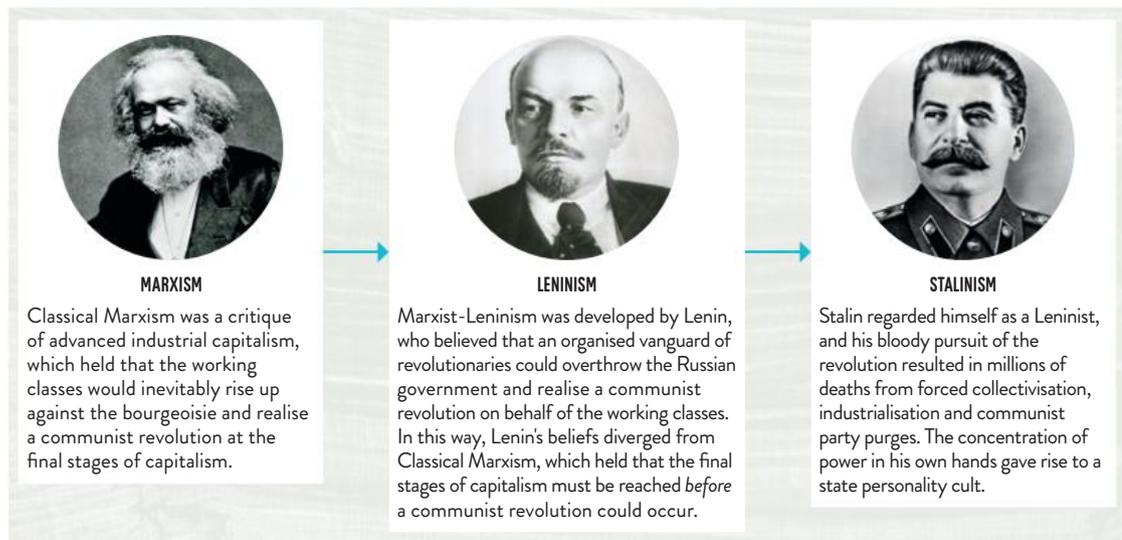
A policy carried out in the Soviet Union under Stalin. It involved bringing together individual landholdings and agricultural labour into communal farms.

industrialisation

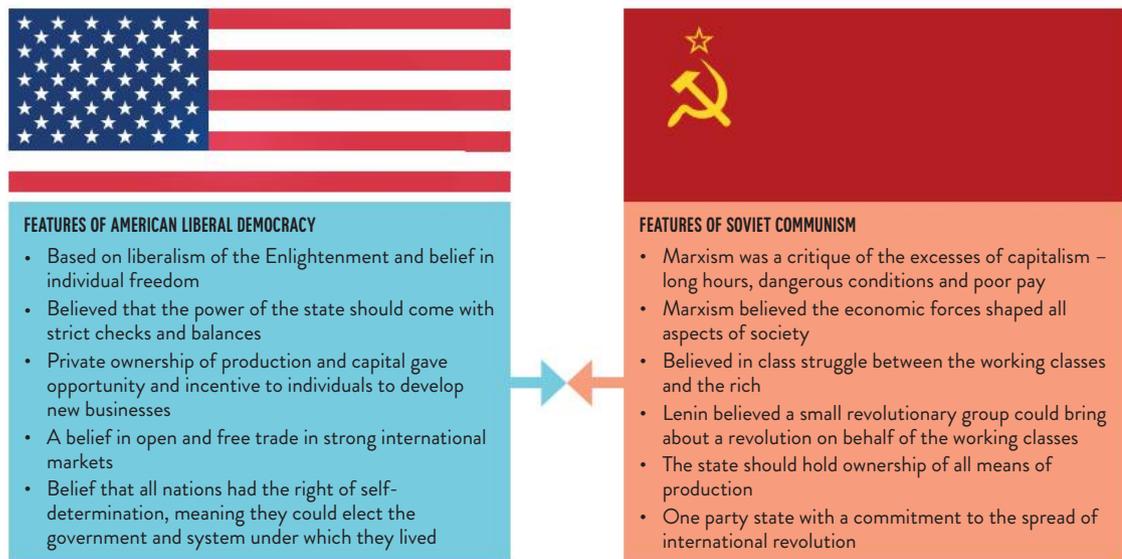
Industrialisation under Stalin involved the rapid development of various manufacturing industries throughout the Soviet Union.

party purges

Under Stalin, thousands of communist party members, including many key leaders, were accused of disloyalty and subsequently expelled from the party or executed.



SOURCE 1.2 Development of Soviet communism



SOURCE 1.3 Key differences in ideological outlooks of the Soviet Union and the United States

- 1 Review the statements below and then:
 - a Identify if each statement is from a capitalist or communist perspective
 - b Give at least TWO reasons for your claim
- Capitalism is responsible for many of the ills of society.
- With talent and determination, anyone can be rich.
- Revolution is necessary, even if it results in the deaths of millions of people.
- Individual freedom is far more important than the power of any society.
- A communist revolution is possible even if it is not carried out in an advanced industrial society.
- Nations are like people. They should be free to determine their own future.

US-Soviet alliance breaks down

That the Soviet Union and the United States had been allies in the war against Hitler only made their postwar relationship more challenging. It would not be easy to achieve a postwar resolution in a Europe in which the Soviet Union had absorbed most of the losses in men, resources and land. For every 50 Soviet dead there had been one American loss. The Soviets believed the Americans had dragged their feet in joining the war in Europe, despite US activity in North Africa from 1942 and in Italy from 1943. The D-Day landings of 1944, which played a major part in the Allied victory and for which the Americans were largely credited, occurred after Stalin had completed much of the heavy lifting, pushing Germany out of Soviet territory. The Soviet perception of the Americans as latecomers to World War II persisted as a sore point in the development of the Cold War.

Disagreements about the future of Germany and Eastern European countries set a tone of mistrust in discussions at a series of conferences in Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam during the war. The Soviets wanted to permanently weaken Germany, while the United States sought a strong industrial power on the continent to continue trading and ensure stability. Moreover, the presence of so many Soviet troops in occupied Eastern Europe meant that the US could do little by way of force to remove them. In the interim, Germany was divided into four zones until an agreement could be reached about its future. By 1949, failure to reach a resolution led to the permanent division of the country after the Soviet Union attempted to blockade Berlin, which was deep inside the Soviet zone of occupation.

In April 1945, Roosevelt died. His vice-president and replacement, Harry Truman, was not nearly as skilled in international diplomacy as his predecessor, yet was given the responsibility of leading the transition from war to peacetime. Truman adopted a policy of containing communism within Eastern Europe. This policy is known as the **Truman Doctrine**. As part of this policy, he authorised a US\$15-billion loan in the form of the **Marshall Plan** to help economies in Western Europe recover.

The Truman Doctrine might be regarded as the United States' declaration of the Cold War. The purpose of the doctrine was to contain communism within the Soviet Union and the Eastern European sphere. This declaration led to increasing tensions. The city was deep inside the Soviet occupation zone and when the Western powers achieved greater cooperation and then finally a unification of their zones, Stalin was furious. In June 1948 he blockaded all roads, rail and canals into West Berlin in an effort to starve out the Western powers. This blockade lasted until May 1949. The United States responded by airlifting supplies into Berlin. The Berlin blockade resulted in the permanent division of both Germany and Berlin. From now on, we talk about West Germany and West Berlin (controlled by the Allied forces), and East Germany and East Berlin (occupied by the Soviets).

Truman Doctrine

US President Truman's policy of containing communism to Eastern Europe after World War II.

Marshall Plan

US\$15-billion investment by the United States to rebuild Europe and ensure an economic recovery that would reflect Western economic and political values.

By 1949 communism had spread outside of Europe and into China. After a 27-year civil war between Mao's communists and Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces, Mao achieved victory and declared the creation of the People's Republic of China. The communist success signalled an important development in the Cold War. For the first time, the forces of communism had expanded outside Europe. With the North Korean adoption of communism in 1950 and a United Nations-led war to halt its advance in the South, a second front in the Cold War had opened.

- 1 Why was Europe an important battleground of ideas at the end of World War II?
- 2 Outline the development of American capitalism and Western democracy.
- 3 Describe the main differences between Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism.
- 4 Explain three points of difference between the United States and the Soviet Union in their approaches to obtaining peace and security at the end of World War II.

The 1945 conferences and emergence of the superpowers

The 1945 conferences laid the groundwork for postwar Europe. A new order would replace the old rivalries and tangle of alliances that had led to two world wars in a generation. It was hoped that it would be characterised by greater international cooperation, self-determination and prosperity. But it soon became clear that the United States and the Soviet Union had fundamentally different visions about how the postwar world should be fashioned.

Before the 1945 conferences, the Soviets and Americans met on a number of occasions to discuss the progress of the war and make plans for the postwar world. The main conference was at Tehran in 1943, where the following agreements and discussions took place.

- The British and Americans agreed to open up a second front in the war against Germany in Northern France.
- The Soviets agreed to declare war on Japan at the end of the war in Europe in return for Japanese territorial possessions, including Sakhalin Island.
- The Americans and Soviets discussed the future of Eastern Europe and the borders of Poland.
- They also discussed the formation of an international body, later known as the United Nations.

Plans for the postwar world were discussed at Yalta in February 1945 and Potsdam in July–August 1945. The conferences were attended by the leaders of the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain and were meant to produce agreement on a range of urgent questions about Europe. What would happen to Germany after the war? How would war-ravaged Europe be rebuilt and who would pay for the reconstruction? What should happen to Germany's top political leaders and war criminals?

The seeds of the Cold War were sown at these conferences. It was one thing to form and maintain an alliance in the face of the German threat and horrors of war. But in the absence of these factors, the victorious new superpowers wanted to build a world that reflected their own beliefs and to ensure ongoing peace, security and prosperity.

As we have seen, however, the visions of the United States and the Soviet Union were fundamentally different. This incompatibility became fully apparent at the 1946 conferences.

Yalta, 4–11 February 1945

With the defeat of Germany imminent, the **Big Three**, which included Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, United States President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, met at the Crimea resort town of Yalta to reach agreements on a number of outstanding issues. These included:

- **The war in the Pacific:** The United States convinced the Soviet Union to join the war against Japan in the Pacific after the conclusion of the war against Germany in Europe. In return, the Soviets would be granted a **sphere of influence** in Manchuria after the war.
- **The future of Germany:** Germany (and Berlin) would be divided into four zones after the war. Great Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union would each occupy and govern their zones.
- **The future of Eastern Europe:** America and Britain accepted that Eastern European states bordering the Soviet Union would be sympathetic to communism, and the Soviets agreed to free elections. This reflected the principle of self-determination found in the Atlantic Charter, which stated that all people were free to elect their own governments.
- **United Nations:** An agreement about the United Nations, in which there would be five permanent members of the Security Council – the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China.

Poland represented the biggest challenge in the negotiations. After all, Britain had declared war in response to Germany's invasion of Poland, and would not easily submit to Soviet demands for greater control of its neighbour. In effect, the Soviets wanted to push the Polish borders as far west as possible. This would result in the incorporation of many Polish citizens into the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's demands over Poland were an early expression of its desire for a buffer zone to cushion it against what it regarded as the inevitable conflict among capitalist powers.

Big Three

Refers to the political alliance held between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and United States President Franklin Roosevelt during World War II.

sphere of influence

An area over which a power can exercise political control without having to govern it directly.

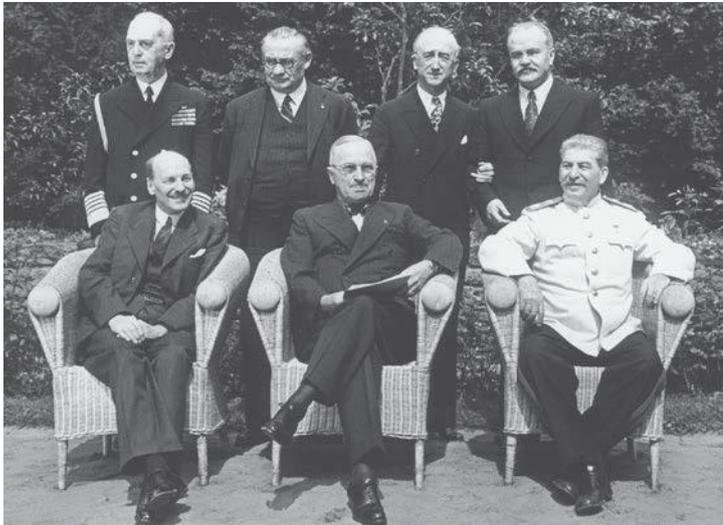


SOURCE 1.4 The Big Three: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, at Yalta in February 1945

Wartime tensions over Poland

Poland was a key trigger of World War II. The British declared war after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, and supported its government in exile in London. Sixteen days after the German invasion, Soviet forces entered Poland from the east under the secret terms of the Nazi-Soviet pact signed the month before. The Soviets occupied eastern Poland until mid 1941, when Germany launched Operation Barbarossa. From that point the Soviet Union and Britain, and from December 1941 the United States, formed a common front against the Axis powers in Europe. Though they were fighting a common enemy, relations between the Poles and the Soviets deteriorated as the Soviet liberated German-occupied Poland. A major point of conflict concerned the Soviets' treatment of the Polish defence force. The Polish Home Army, of about 400 000 men, played an important role in the defence of its country. But during 1944, when the Soviets were pushing the Germans back through Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union provided little support to the Poles. In fact, throughout 1944 the Soviets captured Home Army officers and transported them to Russia in an effort to set themselves up for dominating postwar Poland.

The climax came in August 1944 when the Polish Home Army launched a major operation to liberate the capital, Warsaw, from the Germans. Rather than support the Polish initiative, the Soviets stopped their advance outside Warsaw and allowed the Germans to crush the Home Army and demolish the city. Stalin was accused of allowing the Germans a free hand in the city and blocking British air force efforts to assist. To American and British observers, the defeat of the Polish Home Army also undermined the legitimacy of the Polish government in exile.



SOURCE 1.5 The Potsdam Conference was attended by the newly elected British Prime Minister Clement Attlee (seated left), United States President Harry Truman (seated centre), and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (seated right). Standing behind them are their key advisers.

Potsdam, July 1945

This conference was held in the German city of Potsdam from 17 July to 2 August 1945. In attendance were Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, United States President Harry Truman, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who was replaced midway by Clement Attlee after Churchill's election loss. As well as addressing issues outstanding from Yalta, a number of new agreements were made. These included:

- **Reparations:** Each country could only extract reparations from Germany within their zone of occupation.
- **Demilitarisation:** Germany was to be totally stripped of its military, including industries involved in making any military supplies.
- **Democratic Germany:** Germany was to be made into a democratic state and all discriminatory laws associated with Nazism were to be revoked. However, there was no plan for a German government and the Allied Control Commission, made up of Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States, assumed control.
- **War trials:** German military and government officials would be tried as 'war criminals' in Nuremberg.
- **Drawing borders:** The borders between the Soviet Union, Poland and Germany all shifted west.

On 24 July Truman told Stalin that the United States had detonated the first nuclear bomb, an assertion that the US President hoped would give him the upper hand in his relationship with the Soviet leader. The news came as no surprise to Stalin, however, who had discovered the information earlier through his espionage channels. The Americans' initial decision to withhold news of the detonation from an important ally sowed the seeds of distrust for Stalin.

- 1 How did the American aspiration for 'national self-determination' and the Soviet desire for a 'sphere of influence' lead to conflict during negotiations at Yalta and Potsdam?
- 2 What factors made negotiations around the future of Poland so complex?
- 3 What arrangements for reparations were made at Potsdam? Why did the Big Three refrain from imposing harsher financial penalties on Germany?
- 4 Though not openly hostile, discussions at Yalta and Potsdam revealed underlying grievances held by the United States and Soviet leaders. Examine the discussions held at these conferences and explain why they might have raised tensions between the superpowers.

JOSEPH STALIN

Joseph Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union from 1929 until his death in 1953. His interpretation of Marxist-Leninism developed into a system known as Stalinism, which involved the rapid industrialisation and collectivisation of Russia during the 1930s and the establishment of a personality cult around the leader. Rapid industrialisation helped the Soviet Union to defeat Germany in World War II and emerge as a global superpower. However, it came with devastating consequences for the Soviet people. The process of collectivisation and industrialisation resulted in the deaths of millions of civilians during the 1930s. Opposition to his program led to the purges and show trials of the Communist Party, during which

Stalin consolidated his position as leader.

At the end of World War II, Stalin sought security on the Soviet Union's western borders. Deeply suspicious of Americans and the West, he wanted to avoid being encircled by capitalist powers. As a result, he consolidated his power in Eastern Europe and during 1946 he tried to influence events in countries to his southern border – Iran, Greece and Turkey. The Americans pushed back against this interference, and so commenced the Cold War.



Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive

SOURCE 1.6 Joseph Stalin

HARRY TRUMAN

Harry Truman was president of the United States from 1945 to 1953. Truman came to power during an extraordinary time in international events. He ordered the use of the atomic bomb to end World War II, and his policy of containing communism was a central plank in his plan for the transition into peacetime. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the relationship between the Americans and Soviets deteriorated rapidly and Truman was

forced to manage a series of crises including the Berlin blockade and airlift, the opening up of the Cold War's second front in China and Korea, and Stalin's demands for a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Truman's policy of being 'tough on communism' was one of the reasons for the start of the Cold War.



Getty Images/Stock Montage

SOURCE 1.7 Harry Truman

Emerging differences between the superpowers

Cracks began to emerge in the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union in the final months of World War II. Their fundamental differences over politics, economics and social systems meant that their joint effort to defeat Hitler was purely pragmatic. Stalin was suspicious of the United States' late entry into the European war, as well as its failure to inform him of its secret atomic weapon (the Soviet leader had acquired knowledge of the nuclear bomb through spy channels).

At the Yalta Conference in February, disagreements about the postwar future of Poland and the states of Eastern Europe brought these tensions out into the open. After all, the British had entered the war to defend Polish territorial integrity and would not easily accept a permanent Soviet occupation of the country. But for the Soviets, Poland was a matter of security and a buffer zone to prevent a so-called 'capitalist encirclement'. The Americans, on the other hand, were guided by the principle of national self-determination and Roosevelt aimed to rally support among the Allies for a United Nations.



Personalities or Politics?



SOURCE 1.8 The Soviet sphere of influence

Postwar aims of the Soviet Union

The initial postwar aims of the Soviet Union revolved around security on its western borders. It had lost 27 million people in the war and would not retreat from Eastern Europe until agreement had been reached about the future of Germany. As Stalin pointed out in 1946, Germany was able to attack Russia by moving through countries hostile to communism. Consequently, the Soviets believed they were justified in their demands for a buffer zone and sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. They installed a communist government in Poland in January 1945, and forced other countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, to adopt governments sympathetic to Moscow. Stalin's other major postwar aim was to prevent Germany from making any further attacks on the Soviet Union. It was, therefore, not in Soviet interests to encourage the economic resurgence of Germany, which had been the major capitalist-industrial power on the continent.

Postwar aims of the United States

The Americans, far from accepting arguments about security, regarded the Soviet refusal to withdraw from their eastern positions as a desire to expand communism. To complicate matters, at Yalta, Roosevelt granted tacit acceptance of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe as a trade-off to obtain Stalin's support to finish the war against Japan. Roosevelt's untimely death in April 1945 left the matter entirely unresolved. His replacement, Harry Truman, who was not nearly as diplomatic as Roosevelt, took a more aggressive stance towards the Soviets. This strong position was in part a response to the United States' domestic political scene; Truman did not want to give the voting American public the impression that he was soft on communism. Historians can only speculate about whether Roosevelt would have been able to steer a smoother course through the postwar settlement than his successor.

Future of Germany

The future of Germany was a preoccupation of the Americans at this time. Unlike the Soviets, they wanted a strong industrial Germany to ensure the continuation of open markets and prosperous trade in Europe. The United States had benefited most from the war, with American companies taking huge orders for consumer and agricultural goods from a devastated Europe. This rapid rate of capital expansion could not be maintained without strong markets and without trading partners with deep pockets. At Yalta, the powers had agreed on a four-zone division of Germany and Berlin, with sectors going to the US, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France until permanent reunification arrangements could be made. The fractures in the alliance deepened in Berlin, and the Soviet and American failure to find common cause permanently entrenched Cold War tensions.

- 1 What actions made Stalin suspicious of the United States by 1945?
- 2 Why was the issue of Poland so difficult to resolve? What did the Soviets, British and Americans each want from the resolution?
- 3 Stalin wanted security on the western borders of the Soviet Union. How did he plan to achieve this?
- 4 How did Americans view the Soviet refusal to leave their Eastern bloc positions after World War II?
- 5 What complications were caused by the change of presidency from Roosevelt to Truman?
- 6 Identify what each side wanted for the future of Germany. How was the issue temporarily resolved?

1946: Growing tensions

Throughout 1946, a series of telegrams, speeches and articles demonstrated increasing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

George Kennan, an American diplomat at the Soviet Embassy in Moscow, sent a secret telegram to Washington in February, painting the Soviet leadership as paranoid, inherently aggressive and expansionist. The telegram became an influential portrait of the Soviet Union in the US State Department and consequently was one of the key documents driving American policy. Kennan argued that the Soviet Union believed it was being encircled by capitalist nations and feared being drawn into another war.

On 5 March 1946, Winston Churchill delivered his Sinews of Peace speech, famous for its 'iron curtain' reference, to an American audience in Missouri. It sparked a war of words between the superpowers, especially on the questions of the future of Eastern Europe and Soviet intentions for expansion.

In a reply to Churchill's speech on 14 March, Stalin angrily defended the Soviet right to a buffer zone in an interview with the Soviet state publication, *Pravda*. Stalin argued that the Soviets had lost many more men than the Americans and British during World War II and pointed out that the Germans had made their way through what was now the Soviet buffer zone to attack Russia. He declared,

“One can ask therefore, what can be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union, in a desire to ensure its security for the future, tries to achieve that these countries should have governments whose relations to the Soviet Union are loyal? How can one, without having lost one's reason, qualify these peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union as “expansionist tendencies” of our Government?”

Pravda interview with Joseph Stalin regarding Winston Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' address at Fulton, March 1946.
Reprinted in *The New York Times*, March 15 1946, p. 4.

In September 1946, the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Nikolai Novikov, sent an assessment of his own to Moscow. This telegram reinforced earlier assumptions, accusing the Americans of arriving late to World War II as a way to advance their own interests by allowing the Germans to weaken the Soviet Union's military power.

The views of both Kennan and Novikov each offered portraits of the other that reflected the mistrust, fear and suspicion that dominated early Cold War relations. Moreover, the extent to which policy responses were driven by these understandings of the other side can be seen in the language of the early crises around Berlin, and the emerging situation in Greece and Turkey.



SOURCE 1.9 Churchill (left) with Truman moments before Churchill delivered his famous 'iron curtain' line in the Sinews of Peace speech, Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946

Getty Images/Popperfoto

SOURCE A: THE KENNAN LONG TELEGRAM, MOSCOW, 22 FEBRUARY 1946

In February 1946, United States ambassador to the Soviet Union, George Kennan, sent a telegram to Washington outlining his views on Soviet foreign policy.

'At bottom of Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. Originally, this was insecurity of a peaceful agricultural people trying to live on vast exposed plain in neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples. To this was added, as Russia came into contact with economically advanced West, fear of more competent, more powerful, more highly organized societies in that area. But this latter type of insecurity was one which afflicted rather Russian rulers than Russian people; for Russian rulers have invariably sensed that their rule was relatively archaic in form fragile and artificial in its psychological foundation, unable to stand comparison or contact with political systems of Western countries. For this reason they have always feared foreign penetration, feared direct contact between Western World and their own, feared what would happen if Russians learned truth about world without or if foreigners learned truth about world within. And they have learned to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it.

It was no coincidence that Marxism, which had smoldered ineffectively for half a century in Western Europe, caught hold and blazed for first time in Russia ... After establishment of Bolshevik regime, Marxist dogma, rendered even more truculent and intolerant by Lenin's interpretation, became a perfect vehicle for sense of insecurity with which Bolsheviks, even more than previous Russian rulers, were afflicted. In this dogma, with its basic altruism of purpose, they found justification for their instinctive fear of outside world, for the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not to inflict, for sacrifice they felt bound to demand. In the name of Marxism they sacrificed every single ethical value in their methods and tactics. Today they cannot dispense with it. It is fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability. Without it they would stand before history, at best, as only the last of that long succession of cruel and wasteful Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced country on to ever new heights of military power in order to guarantee external security of their internally weak regimes. This is why Soviet purposes must always be solemnly clothed in trappings of Marxism, and why no one should underrate importance of dogma in Soviet affairs. Thus Soviet leaders are driven [by?] necessities of their own past and present position to put forward which [apparent omission] outside world as evil, hostile and menacing, but as bearing within itself germs of creeping disease and destined to be wracked with growing internal convulsions until it is given final Coup de grace by rising power of socialism and yields to new and better world. This thesis provides justification for that increase of military and police power of Russian state, for that isolation of Russian population from outside world, and for that fluid and constant pressure to extend limits of Russian police power which are together the natural and instinctive urges of Russian rulers. Basically this is only the steady advance of uneasy Russian nationalism, a centuries old movement in which conceptions of offense and defense are inextricably confused. But in new guise of international Marxism, with its honeyed promises to a desperate and war torn outside world, it is more dangerous and insidious than ever before ...

Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, is neither schematic nor adventuristic. It does not work by fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw—and usually does when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-engaging showdowns. Gauged against Western World as a whole, Soviets are still by far the weaker force. Thus, their success will really depend on degree of cohesion, firmness and vigor which Western World can muster. And this is factor which it is within our power to influence.'

Telegram 'The Change in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State', Moscow, 22 February 1946; National Security Archive www.nsarchive2.gwu.edu.

SOURCE B: WINSTON CHURCHILL'S SINEWS OF PEACE SPEECH, FULTON, 5 MARCH 1946

Former British war time prime minister Winston Churchill delivered his famous 'iron curtain' line in the Sinews of Peace speech to an American audience at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri.

'The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. ... A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist



international organisation intends to do in the immediate future ... I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshal Stalin. There is deep sympathy and goodwill in Britain—and I doubt not here also—towards the peoples of all the Russia and a resolve to persevere through many differences and rebuffs in establishing lasting friendships. We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers by the removal of all possibility of German aggression ... It is my duty however, for I am sure you would wish me to state the facts as I see them to you, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

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. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, 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.'

Winston Churchill's 'Sinews of Peace' speech, Missouri, 5 March 1946,
<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/speeches/speeches-of-winston-churchill/120-the-sinews-of-peace>
Reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown, London on behalf of The Estate of Winston S. Churchill.
© The Estate of Winston S. Churchill.

SOURCE C: STALIN'S REPLY TO CHURCHILL'S SPEECH, MOSCOW, 14 MARCH 1946

Stalin responded to Churchill's Sinews of Peace speech in an interview with the Soviet state publication *Pravda*. Here, Stalin outlined what he saw as the realities of the Russian situation.

'A point to be noted is that in this respect Mr. Churchill and his friends bear a striking resemblance to Hitler and his friends. Hitler began his work of unleashing war by proclaiming a race theory, declaring that only German-speaking people constituted a superior nation. Mr. Churchill sets out to unleash war with a race theory, asserting that only English-speaking nations are superior nations, who are called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world. The German race theory led Hitler and his friends to the conclusion that the Germans, as the only superior nation, should rule over other nations. The English race theory leads Mr. Churchill and his friends to the conclusion that the English-speaking nations, as the only superior nations, should rule over the rest of the nations of the world.

... In substance, Mr. Churchill now stands in the position of a firebrand of war. And Mr. Churchill is not alone here. He has friends not only in England but also in the United States of America ... In this respect, one is reminded remarkably of Hitler and his friends ...

... The Soviet Union has lost in men several times more than Britain and the United States together ... It may be that some quarters are trying to push into oblivion the sacrifices of the Soviet people which insured the liberation of Europe from the Hitlerite yoke ... But the Soviet Union cannot forget them. One can ask therefore, what can be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union, in a desire to ensure its security for the future, tries to achieve that these countries should have governments whose relations to the Soviet Union are loyal? How can one, without having lost one's reason, qualify these peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union as "expansionist tendencies" of our Government?'

Pravda interview with Joseph Stalin regarding Winston Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' address at Fulton, 14 March 1946.
Reprinted in *The New York Times*, March 15 1946, p.4.

SOURCE D: THE NOVIKOV TELEGRAM, WASHINGTON, 27 SEPTEMBER 1946

Soviet ambassador to the United States Nikolai Novikov provided an interpretation of the United States' foreign policy aims.

'The foreign policy of the United States ... is characterized in the postwar period by a striving for world supremacy. This is the real meaning of the many statements by President Truman ... that the United States has the right to lead the world. All the forces of American diplomacy – the army, the air force, the navy, industry, and science – are enlisted in the service of this foreign policy. For this purpose, broad plans for expansion have been developed ... and the establishment of a system of naval and air bases stretching far beyond the boundaries of the United States.





... [The United States had calculated] that during the Second World War they would succeed in avoiding, at least for a long time, the main battles in Europe and Asia ... [they] would enter only at the last minute, when it could easily affect the outcome of war ... [and] that the Soviet Union ... would also be exhausted or even completely destroyed as a result of the war ...

... All of the countries of Europe and Asia are experiencing a colossal need for consumer goods, industrial and transportation equipment, etc. Such a situation provides American monopolistic capital with prospects for enormous shipments of goods into these countries ... would mean a serious strengthening of the economic position of the United States ... and would be stage on the road to world domination.

... The Soviet Union continues to be economically independent of the outside world ... [and] the USSR's international position is currently stronger than it was in the prewar period ... the Soviet armed forces are located on the territory of Germany and other formerly hostile countries, thus guaranteeing that these countries will not be used again for an attack on the USSR ... Such a situation ... cannot help but be regarded by the American imperialists as an obstacle in the path of the expansionist policy of the United States.

... The "hard-line" policy with regard to the USSR announced by Byrnes ... is at present the main obstacle on the road to cooperation of the Great Powers ... The Present policy of the American government with regard to the USSR is also direct at limiting or dislodging the influence of the Soviet Union from neighbouring countries ... The numerous and extremely hostile statements by American government, political and military figures with regard to the Soviet Union and its foreign policy are very characteristic of the current relationship between the ruling circles of the United States and the USSR.'

'Telegram from Nikolai Novikov, Soviet Ambassador to the US, to the Soviet Leadership,' 27 September 1946, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVP SSSR, f. 06. op. 8, p. 45, p. 759, published in *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* #11, 1990, pp. 148–154, translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110808>.

SOURCE E: STALIN ON THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IN EASTERN EUROPE, APRIL 1945

'Whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army has power to do so. It cannot be otherwise.'

Joseph Stalin, quoted in David Christian, *Power and Privilege*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1994, p. 310.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Read Source A and answer the following questions:
 - a What view does Kennan take on Russian insecurity?
 - b According to Kennan, is Marxism a significant break from the Russian past? Give reasons.
 - c How does Kennan believe the Soviets will act when they come up against force?
- 2 Read Source B. What 'shadow' has fallen over Europe?
- 3 Create a map of Europe that draws the 'iron curtain' and highlight all of the main capital cities behind the curtain.
- 4 Read Source C. What is Stalin's central argument for wanting to maintain a sphere of influence in the countries on the Soviet Union's western border?

In what ways does Stalin compare Churchill and other Western leaders to Hitler?
- 5 Read Source D and answer the following questions:
 - a What does Novikov argue is the central aim of United States foreign policy?
 - b According to Novikov, how did the United States benefit from the war?
- 6 Read all sources and compare and contrast the foreign policy goals of the United States and the Soviet Union. How accurate do you think each side's view is of the other?
- 7 How useful are these sources for the historian trying to understand the Soviet Union's view of the United States and vice versa?

The Truman Doctrine and its consequences



While the skirmishes of 1946 were largely ideological, many of these disagreements were converted into open geopolitical conflicts, and by March 1947 the United States established the policy of **containment** in response to the changing circumstances in the countries on or near the Soviet Union's southern borders. Fearing **encirclement** by capitalist powers, the Soviets attempted to win Iran, Greece and Turkey over to their side, but the Americans regarded the expansion of communism as unacceptable. The British, who had traditionally provided support in the region, were unable to continue their military presence in the area due to the financial hardship they faced as a result of World War II. It fell to the Americans to provide the required support.

The crisis led the United States to establish long-running foreign policy positions against the Soviets: the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. These policies were an attempt to contain communism and promote capitalism as a means of recovery in Western Europe. The United States believed that the longer the major economies of Britain, France and Germany took to recover, the more vulnerable they were to the influence of communism.

Triggers for containment

Triggers for Truman's containment policy could be found in conflicts that erupted to the south of the Soviet Union, in Iran, Turkey and Greece.

Iran

When Soviet troops entered the northern Iranian region of Azerbaijan in August 1941, they did so on the agreement that they would withdraw from the territory (which was jointly occupied by the British in the south and the Soviets in the north) six months after the war ended. The Iranians had no reason to suspect that the Allies would not honour the agreement. In fact, in 1943, the Big Three met in the Iranian capital of Tehran, where they restated their commitment to Iranian territorial sovereignty.

As the jubilant V-Day celebrations in September 1945 heralded the end of the war, the Iranian government wrote a politely worded letter to the Allies – the Americans, British and Soviets – asking them to leave the country. Stalin, however, was concerned over American and British influence in Iran, a region that bordered the Soviet Union to the south. As early as September 1944, therefore, Stalin attempted to shape postwar Iran in ways that would be favourable to his own postwar goals.

Growing tensions between the superpowers ignited when, in December 1945, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, aligned with the leftist Tudeh Party, rebelled against the Iranian government and declared independence from Iran. The Soviets were already occupying the region in which the rebellion occurred, and refused to let Iranian government troops into the area to quell the discontent. This was an explicit demonstration of the Soviets' desire to control the region south of their border. To make matters worse, American and British troops were in the process of withdrawing from the country.

Truman was furious. In January 1946, he wrote a letter to James Byrnes, the US Secretary of State, expressing his anger at Russian actions in Iran. Truman wrote, 'Another outrage if ever I saw one ... Iran was our ally in the war ... Yet now Russia stirs up rebellion and keeps troops on the soil of her friend and ally, Iran'.²

The United States and Iran decided to use the newly established United Nations to put diplomatic pressure on the Soviets. On 30 January 1946, the United Nations passed a resolution which demanded the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Iran. On 2 March 1946, the deadline for the removal of all troops from Iranian soil passed with the Soviets still in place, but in a statement issued

containment

A United States policy that aimed to restrict the spread of communism. This policy was maintained for the duration of the Cold War.

encirclement

A term used to describe a nation surrounded by enemies. In this case, it refers to the Soviet Union being surrounded by capitalist powers.

on 25 March, the Soviets pledged to leave the country. On 4 April, the Iranians lodged another complaint to the UN, which conceded that the Soviets needed more time to withdraw. The Soviets withdrew by the end of the month.

The Iranian crisis was important for a number of reasons. First, because the US and Iran used the United Nations to apply pressure on the Soviets to withdraw. Second, because it was the first real test of power and the United States adopted a tougher stance. The United States' approach to this conflict reflected the view of Kennan's telegram a few months earlier, in which he argued that the Soviets would not stand up to the threat of force.

For Stalin's part, the Iranian crisis was more about securing an oil concession from the Iranians, as well as establishing a buffer zone in the northern region of Iran, which was on the border of the Soviet Union.

The Iranian crisis was the first real test of both parties' geopolitical resolve. But it also demonstrated that neither side was willing to clash openly. In this instance, Stalin backed down, but he was not yet finished in the region.

Turkey

Geopolitics would again play a central role in the conflict over Turkey. Since early 1946, the Soviets had been calling for a revision of the 1936 Montreux Convention, which gave Turkey control of the Black Sea Straits – a passage of water that linked the Black Sea with the Mediterranean.



SOURCE 1.10 The straits that link the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean beyond: the Bosphorus Strait, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles

Leaders in the United States viewed the Soviet demands over the Straits as expansionist and were concerned by the prospect of the Soviets achieving further advances in the Middle East (especially in the context of recent events in Iran). In addition to access to the Straits, the Soviets wanted to establish military bases on Turkish territory. Turkey rejected these demands and looked to the United Nations and the United States for support.

US ambassador to Turkey, Edwin Wilson, wrote to his Secretary of State James Byrnes in March 1946, claiming that 'the real Soviet objective is ... [the] actual domination of Turkey'.³

The following month, the USS *Missouri* sailed through the Straits and into Istanbul. It was a sign to the Soviets that the United States would protect Turkey's sovereignty.

The crisis came to a head on 7 August, when the Soviets wrote a formal letter rejecting the Montreux Convention, a move the United States regarded as aggressive. President Truman and Secretary Byrnes resolved to face off against the Soviets. They committed to resist Soviet aggression against Turkey, using all means at their disposal.

Although there was little possibility that the Soviets would actually launch military action to acquire the Black Sea Straits, the crisis in Turkey was important for the following reasons:

- It demonstrated that a smaller nation could successfully stand up to a larger, more powerful neighbour, and could seek the assistance of the United States to do so.
- Turkey aligned itself with the Western community and was granted membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949.
- The United States' response to the Soviets in Turkey laid the groundwork for the policy of containment.

Greece

The final crisis that convinced the Americans of the need to contain communism was the Greek Civil War (March 1946–October 1949). Again, geopolitics played a central role.

Greece had suffered greatly during World War II. The occupation by Nazi Germany and Italy was characterised by economic ruin and corruption, a famine that killed 40 000 people, the complete destruction of more than 1000 villages and small towns, and the summary execution of over 70 000 Greeks for political crimes. Bitter divisions in the country led to a deep split between the emerging communist forces on the left and the exiled Greek government on the right.

When German forces were expelled, Greece was left with a power vacuum. The Greek government in exile had very little control of events within its country, and during the war the Greek Communist Party (KKE) had become very influential. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, facing the political reality that the Soviets would control Eastern Europe after the war, sought a deal to prevent the communists from gaining power in Greece. On 9 October Churchill offered the Soviets a free hand in Romania in return for withdrawing from Greece. Stalin agreed.



SOURCE 1.11 In a show of support for Turkey, the USS *Missouri* sailed into Istanbul on 6 April 1946

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, Archives Branch, Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, DC



SOURCE 1.12 Greek civilians hold a protest against their government in December 1944. The protest broke out into violent street fighting between government forces, then aided by the British, and various resistance groups.

Getty Images/Dimitri Kessel

Some two months after the withdrawal, the right-wing Greek government sought to reassert its control of the country. On 3 December 1944, it unleashed the 'white terror', a violent persecution and repression of its leftist opponents carried out by its military forces. This persecution continued until the end of the war.

The crisis came to a head after the March 1946 Greek election, in which the right-wing government was reinstated. The KKE did not accept the outcome of the election, arguing that it had been rigged by the government, which was corrupt, unrepresentative and sponsored right-wing terrorism. The KKE responded to the election outcome by resuming the conflict that had been simmering since late 1944. With the support of the Yugoslav and Bulgarian communists, the KKE declared war on the Greek government and promised to restore democracy to the region.

The Americans were alarmed by the prospect of Soviet influence on the doorstep of the strategically important Middle East, especially when the British government, financially burdened by postwar reconstruction at home, declared that it could no longer support anti-communist efforts in the region.

The Greek Civil War led eventually to the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, but it was also significant for other reasons:

- Greece joined NATO in the aftermath of the Civil War.
- It caused a split between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union over the role of communism in the region. Yugoslav leader Josip Tito wanted to continue support for the KKE until the end, while Stalin was more cautious and withdrew support.
- It set the precedent that America would support the use of force to defend the right of countries to maintain their sovereignty in the face of communist aggression.

The crises in Iran, Turkey and Greece convinced the Americans that they needed to contain communism within the Eastern European sphere. The events also showed that the United States would use force to prevent communist expansion beyond the territories agreed at the wartime conferences. The Truman Doctrine signalled an intent to resist Soviet meddling in the internal affairs of other countries, but the American response would not end there. Central to this doctrine was the notion of containment.

Containment

Truman's announcement of the containment policy on 12 March 1947 included a statement about what he saw as the key differences between communism and capitalism. He told Congress:

“ One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression ... The second way of life ... is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. ”

Special message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, 12 March 1947.
Harry S Truman Presidential Library & Museum, www.trumanlibrary.org.

It was one thing for the Soviets to simply stay in their Eastern European positions after the war, but another thing entirely for them to attempt to spread their influence to the south and gain a foothold in the Near and Middle East. America would step in to assist.

The Truman Doctrine offered US\$400 million to protect Turkey and Greece against Soviet aggression. With British support withdrawn, the United States would now shoulder the burden of containing communism. Truman's speech also sounded as a broad warning to the Soviets that America would protect the right of people everywhere to determine their own political destiny – and with force if necessary.

- 1 What geopolitical developments encouraged Truman to adopt the policy of containment?
- 2 Explain the twin policies designed by the US to contain communism.
- 3 What was the original agreement under which the Soviets were allowed to stay in Iran during World War II and why did they want to stay in the region after the war?
- 4 How was the Iran crisis resolved?
- 5 What territorial claims were the Soviet Union trying to make on Turkey and why did the Americans oppose these claims?
- 6 Identify three reasons why the crisis over Turkey was significant in the development of the Cold War.
- 7 What impact did World War II have on Greece?
- 8 Outline the causes and events of the Greek Civil War.
- 9 What was significant about the American response to the Greek crisis?
- 10 Write an essay in response to the following statement: 'The events of 1946 and 1947 demonstrate that the conflict between the Soviets and the United States was as geopolitical as it was ideological'.

The Marshall Plan

We have seen that the United States sought to contain communism through diplomacy and the threat of force, but it also employed financial measures in its attempt to defeat the spread of communism. The aftermath of the war brought unimaginable poverty, and throughout 1946 the fear of famine and homelessness was everywhere in Europe. Winston Churchill may have come close to expressing the level of deprivation when he lamented that:

“ The awful ruin of Europe, with all its vanished glories ... glares us in the eyes. When the designs of wicked men or the aggressive urge of mighty States dissolve over large areas the frame of civilised society, humble folk are confronted with difficulties with which they cannot cope. For them all is distorted, all is broken, even ground to pulp. When I stand here this quiet afternoon I shudder to visualise what is actually happening to millions now and what is going to happen in this period when famine stalks the earth. ”

Winston Churchill's 'Sinews of Peace' speech, Missouri, 5 March 1946, www.winstonchurchill.org.

Reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown, London on behalf of The Estate of Winston S. Churchill. © The Estate of Winston S. Churchill.

When former US general and then-Secretary of State George Marshall addressed the crowd assembled at Harvard University on 5 June 1947, he urgently impressed upon his fellow Americans the grave situation in Europe. 'The people of [the United States] are distant from the troubled areas of the earth,' he began, 'and it is hard for them to comprehend the plight ... of the long-suffering peoples [of Europe].'⁴ Marshall detailed for his audience the visible destruction of cities and infrastructure, the disappearance of financial institutions, the loss of confidence in currencies and traditional divisions of labour and the short supply of raw materials.

General Marshall understood that without a plan for economic recovery, communism might become attractive politically, or Western European governments would be forced to make trade deals with the Soviet Union to meet their basic needs. In response, Marshall created the European Recovery Program or 'Marshall Plan'. This plan injected US\$15 billion worth of grants to provide the means of reconstruction in Europe, including fuel, raw materials and food.

Table 1.1 Marshall Plan aid to Europe

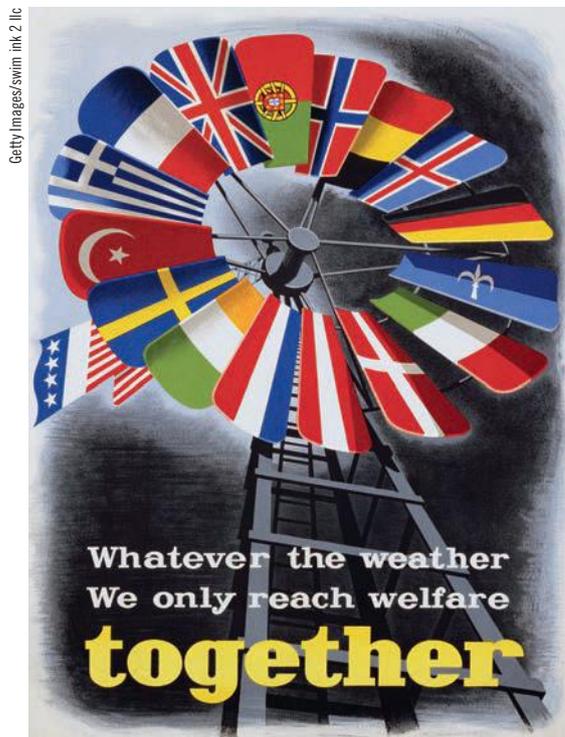
COUNTRY	AMOUNT \$US
Austria	468 million
Belgium	777 million
Denmark	385 million
France	2.296 billion
Greece	376 million
Iceland	43 million
Ireland	133 million
Italy	1.204 billion
Netherlands	1.128 billion
Norway	372 million
Sweden	347 million
Switzerland	250 million
Turkey	137 million
United Kingdom	3.297 billion
West Germany	1.448 billion

The Marshall Plan was at odds with the style of recovery hoped for by most European leaders. Many governments were suspicious of open, free-trade capitalism, and many regarded the Great Depression as a failure of the economic system and a key cause of World War II. Britain was busy constructing a welfare state and others believed that the Depression had brought Hitler to power. However, in the face of starvation and the threat of communism, leaders were left with little choice but to accept the grants from the United States.

The Marshall Plan also touched on one of the fundamental disagreements between the Americans and the Soviets: the future of Germany. For the Americans, it was important that Germany rise again as a powerful, industrial trading partner in Europe. They were convinced that a strong Germany was vital to the recovery of Europe. The Soviets, however, wanted to ensure that Germany would remain permanently weak. It was a sore point that would flare up in the following year with the Berlin Blockade.

The Marshall Plan had the effect of reinforcing the division between East and West. Although the money was largely targeted at Western European economic recovery, the Americans also offered aid to the Eastern-bloc countries and the Soviets. This offer was famously dismissed by Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov as 'dollar imperialism'. In response to the Marshall Plan, the Soviets created Comecon, an organisation that would coordinate trade cooperation among Eastern European countries.

The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan were central planks in the plan to contain communism in the early Cold War. In the context of postwar devastation in Europe and attempted Soviet incursions on Europe's southern borders, the Americans had to respond in ways that would challenge Soviet



SOURCE 1.13 Poster promoting the Marshall Plan. The rotor blades on the windmill depict the European nations that received the American aid.



SOURCE 1.14 German poster advocating the Marshall Plan. The main caption declares 'an open road for the Marshall Plan' and the open border gate illustrates free trade without customs borders.

influence or expansion. Containment heralded the end of British power on the continent and signalled the American intent to shoulder the burden of recovery in a way that would be acceptable to the United States vision of the postwar world.



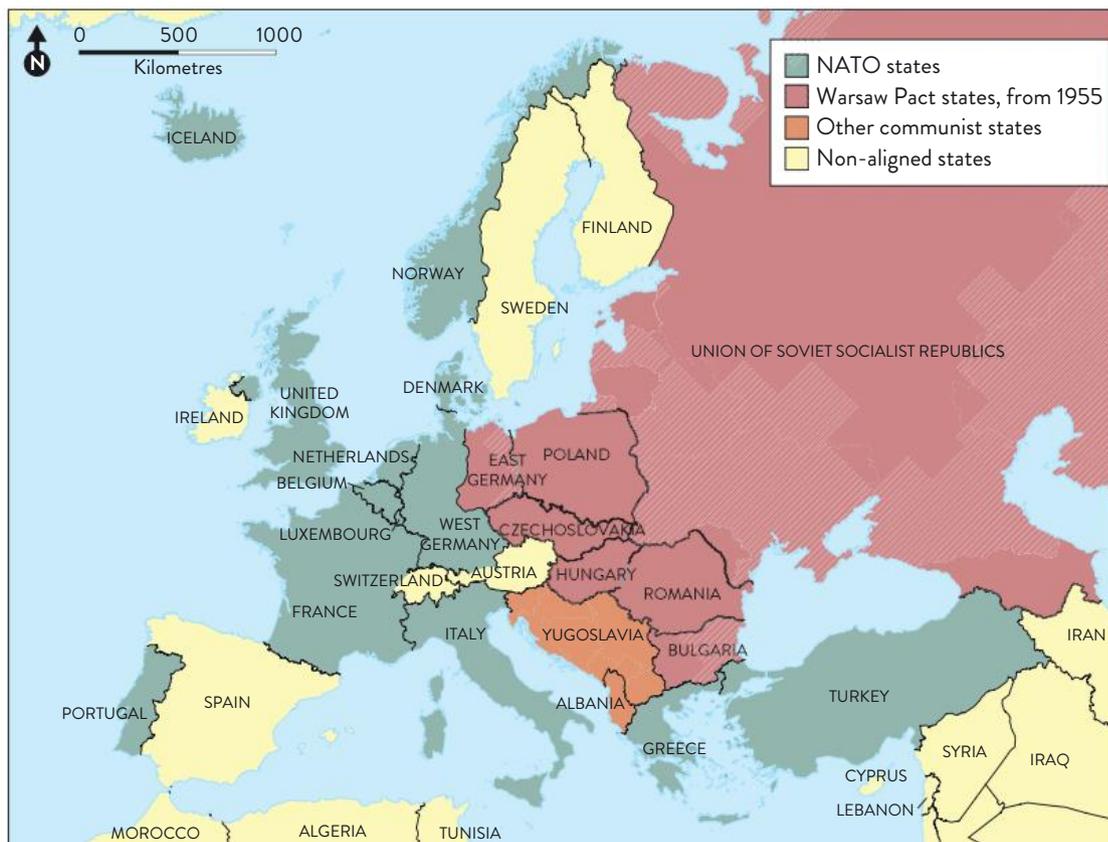
Containment and the Marshall Plan word bank

- 1 According to Churchill and Marshall, how desperate was the situation facing survivors of World War II in Europe?
- 2 What did the Americans hope to achieve with the Marshall Plan?
- 3 How was the Marshall Plan an expression of American economic values? Did all European leaders embrace these values?

Early crises in the Cold War

United States historian John Harper aptly summed up the origins of the Cold War when he wrote, 'The Cold War began in 1945, escalated in 1946, was unofficially declared in 1947, and congealed into a system in 1948–49'.⁵ By 1949 the disagreements and tensions of the previous years had become open conflict, and a series of subsequent events continued to heighten international tensions. These events included the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance led by the United States and made up of Canada and Western European nations, as well as the Soviets' first successful testing of an atomic bomb.

Other events, including the Berlin Blockade, the communist victory in China and the Korean War also contributed to major changes in the balance of global power and opened new theatres in the rivalry between the two superpowers.



SOURCE 1.15 Europe, 1949

The Berlin Blockade, 1948–1949

Since the Allies had agreed on the four-power division of Germany at Potsdam, the capital city of Berlin had been a source of tension between the two superpowers. It was also divided into four zones. Berlin, deep inside the Soviet occupation zone, was dubbed an ‘island of capitalism in a sea of communism’.

There were fundamental differences in the way the US and the Soviet Union viewed the future of Germany. The United States wanted to develop a strong, industrial Germany while the Soviets wanted to keep it permanently weak. The Soviets’ ongoing demands for reparations payments from Germany were designed to ensure the nation’s ongoing poverty. While the alliance against Germany would bring the Soviets and the Allies together in 1941, the future of Berlin would represent the first serious crisis of the Cold War.

By the beginning of 1947, the Western powers were growing impatient over the failure to settle Germany’s future. In January, the British and Americans combined their zones into a new area called **Bizonia**. In February 1948, the London Conference was convened to resolve the issue, but the Soviets were not invited. At the same time, the Russians were meddling in the affairs of Czechoslovakia as communist rebels staged a bloodless coup to consolidate their power, adding to the already heightened tensions.

In June 1948, the French occupied zone joined Bizonia – creating Trizonia – and the Western powers agreed to implement a democratic state and introduce a new currency, the Deutsche Mark. These developments were the first steps towards the permanent division of Germany into West and East Germany, and West and East Berlin.

The London Conference undermined the existing arrangements established by the Allied Control Council after World War II. It recommended that Germany be able to return to the international community as a free, democratic state in the western areas. It stated that Germany should be able to rearm, but it outlawed interference in the Soviet sector. During the conference, the Soviet ambassador to Britain informed the Americans and British that the only decisions the Soviets would accept were those laid down at Potsdam. On 20 March 1948, the Soviets withdrew from the Allied Control Council in opposition to the outcomes of the London Conference.

Stalin had felt under attack by the Americans before the London Conference. The Kennan Telegram, the Sinews of Peace Speech and the American policies of containment were behind the flow of Marshall Plan money into Europe. Now the West united the three Western zones into a single unit against the Soviets. Stalin wanted to keep Germany in a state of weakness, but the unification of the Western zones in Berlin posed a direct threat to this goal.

The immediate cause of the Berlin Blockade was the introduction of a new currency into Berlin on 23 June 1948. The Deutsche Mark had replaced the Reichsmark in the Western zones only five days earlier. Humiliatingly for the Soviets, East Germans rushed to cash in their Reichsmarks in exchange for the new currency.

Stalin responded aggressively by closing all roads, canals and railways into Berlin. If Stalin could not control the Allies, he would attempt to starve the two million West Berliners into submission.

Historians accept that Stalin did not want to provoke a war by blockading Berlin. With the establishment of Bizonia, he perhaps believed it inevitable that the West and East would be permanently divided and he wanted the West to give up Berlin. But Berlin was too important to let go of. Although the city was of no practical or strategic significance to the Americans, it was of enormous symbolic value and a major test of the containment policy. To let go of Berlin would mean accepting the principle of a Soviet sphere of influence in the east, and the Americans were not willing to move on this point. Worse, it would mean a triumph of communism over capitalism.

The United States responded to the blockade with a massive daily airlift of supplies into West Berlin that lasted from 24 June 1948 to 12 May 1949. The architects of the airlift were General Lucius Clay and Major General William Tunner. The Americans and the British airlifted more than 4000 tonnes

Bizonia

The name given to the combined United States and British occupation zones in Germany in the lead-up to the Berlin blockade and airlift.

of food, fuel and other basic necessities into Berlin each day. Also, in response to the blockade, the Western powers instituted a counter-blockade against the Russians that the United States claimed 'seriously pinched' the Soviets.

For the Soviets, the blockade backfired and the airlift was a humiliating demonstration of the United States' resolve. Images of American pilots dropping chocolate to West Berlin children were a propaganda coup for the West. Stalin did not want to lose face. He had already been having problems bringing Yugoslavia to heel, and he engaged in a series of secret meetings in order to resolve the crisis. The so-called Jessup-Malik conversations between an American and a Soviet diplomat sought to overcome the deadlock. The talks were so secret that not even General Clay, the American in charge of the operation, was notified. This was partly because the military were frustrated with the failure to resolve the crisis and were pushing for a military solution.

The aim of the secret talks was to negotiate a return to the principles of Potsdam – the four-power division and unanimous decisions on all questions related to Germany. The Soviets also wanted the Allied Control Council re-established. However, recent events proved too damaging for the superpowers to return to their former level of cooperation.

During negotiations, it emerged that a permanent division would be the outcome – the very thing the Soviets feared. The Soviets, desperate to save face, proposed a peace treaty with Germany, but to no avail. The talks ended with no firm agreements and the Soviets lifted the blockade on 12 May 1949.

Stalin failed in his political aims over Berlin. He was unable to prevent the unification of the Western zones of Germany. Instead, West Germany was established, and led by anti-communist Konrad Adenauer.

The Berlin blockade and airlift resulted in a number of significant developments:

- Germany was permanently divided into West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany) and East Germany (German Democratic Republic).
- The Americans demonstrated their commitment to the people of West Berlin.
- Berlin became the symbol of the Cold War.
- In April 1949 NATO was established as a frontline Western military alliance to combat the threat of communism.
- The Soviets used strategy to show they would not be intimidated by the United States.



Cetty Images/Keystone-France

SOURCE 1.16 Berlin was of enormous symbolic value to the Americans. In response to Stalin's blockade of West Berlin, the Western powers airlifted more than 4000 tonnes of supplies into Berlin each day for nearly a year.



The Berlin airlift

- 1 Why was Berlin a source of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union?
- 2 Outline the immediate causes of the Berlin blockade.
- 3 Why was the city of Berlin of symbolic value to the West?
- 4 How did the Americans respond to the blockade?
- 5 What were the results of the Berlin blockade and airlift?

Berlin and Germany in the Cold War

Germany and its capital city, Berlin, are fundamental to understanding the Cold War's origins. At a geopolitical level, the country represented the final positions of Soviet and American troops at the end of World War II. Its position in central Europe meant that a geopolitical division between East and West emerged, with Germany in the middle. The Soviet Union had pushed in from the East while the Americans came from the West.

At the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the Allies decided to divide Germany into four zones: American, British, French and Soviet. The position of the capital, Berlin, deep inside the Soviet sector, became a major source of tension. In Berlin, the two ideological systems, communism and capitalism, sat side by side. The prosperous Western sectors of the city were an embarrassment to the Soviets and were often referred to as an 'island of capitalism in a sea of communism'. Key events in Germany, including the Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948–1961) and the construction of the Berlin Wall (1961), were flashpoints in the broader ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. West Berlin became the symbol of Western resolve to halt the expansion of communism. The US President John F Kennedy declared solidarity with West Berlin in a famous speech in Berlin in June 1963, in which he declared 'Ich bin ein Berliner' (I am a Berliner).



Alamy Stock Photo/Keystone Pictures USA

SOURCE 1.17 President John F Kennedy declares solidarity with West Berliners

Getty Images/Mondadori Portfolio



SOURCE 1.18 Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong declares the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949 in Tiananmen Square in the capital, Beijing

China becomes communist, 1949

On 1 October 1949 the Chinese Communist Party, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, won its long-running civil war against Jiang Jieshi's (also known as Chiang Kai-shek) Nationalist Party and declared the People's Republic of China. China's turn to communism was significant because it meant that America's battle against communism had extended beyond Europe.

It was not immediately clear, however, whether Mao's government would take orders from Moscow. In 1944, Stalin had dismissed the Chinese as false communists, terming them 'margarine Marxists', and in 1945 Mao had sought to rid the Chinese communist party of Soviet influence.

These differences were soon cast aside as Mao declared an alliance with the Soviet Union. He publicly acknowledged that the Chinese must 'lean to one side' and join the international movement of communism led by Moscow. Obviously, the news that Chinese communists had prevailed led to differing reactions in Washington and Moscow.



The Chinese Revolution

American attitudes to communist China

In effect, the Chinese had opened up a second front in the communist war against capitalism. The United States had supported the defeated Nationalists with significant levels of aid since the war started in 1927 and the communist triumph caused major disappointment. In August 1949, the United States published the 'White Paper on China', which justified the withdrawal of funds supporting Chinese Nationalist forces based on the view that communist victory was inevitable. The document's release, just two months before the Nationalist defeat, was poorly timed. Truman and his secretary of State, Dean Acheson, received widespread criticism for the decision. To the public eye, the withdrawal of funds from the Chinese Nationalists had contributed to the communist victory.

Truman's hostile attitude towards the Chinese communists was revealed in a letter he wrote to Supreme Court Justice William Douglas in 1951, in which he asserted that, 'As long as I am President, if I can prevent it, that cut throat organization will never be recognized by us as the Government of China'.⁶ Indeed, the Americans suspended all diplomatic ties with the Chinese until Jimmy Carter's administration in 1979.

The 'loss of China', as it became known in American political discourse, had three main consequences:

- The Cold War had spread geographically outside Eastern Europe. While the United States was preoccupied with containing the Soviets in the eastern and southern states of Europe and the Middle East in Greece, Turkey and Iran, communism had emerged in China.
- A second front against capitalism had opened up in the world. This was a setback for Americans, whose main economic values centred around an international economic system underpinned by free trade and open markets.
- The West developed a fear that communism might spread through Southeast Asia. This later gave rise to the idea of the 'domino' theory, where one nation after another would fall to communism.

When North Korea adopted communism a year later, and Vietnam followed in 1954, those fears began to be realised.

Soviet attitudes towards communist China

Despite their differences, the Soviets and Chinese saw great opportunity in each other. That the most populous nation on earth would come into the communist fold was a major coup for Stalin and the international dimensions of the struggle. For Mao, he would now be the beneficiary of much-needed Soviet technology, aid and expertise to help with the industrialisation of China.

In December 1949, Mao went to Moscow to meet with Stalin. The transcript of their conversation offers a revealing insight into both men's priorities. Stalin was careful to maintain the provisions he made with the British and Americans at Yalta and to avoid any tactical military moves that may lead to an American intervention in China. Mao, on the other hand, asked for loans and expertise to develop China.

The meeting resulted in the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance on 15 February 1950. The articles of the treaty included a mutual military commitment in the event of external aggression and a memorandum to consult each other on international relations, economic and political cooperation.

As part of the treaty, China received US\$300 million in loans and Soviet experts to assist in an industrialisation program. Ultimately, however, China and the Soviet Union parted ways at the end of the



SOURCE 1.19 A 1950 Chinese postage stamp celebrates the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, which was signed following negotiations between Stalin and Mao Zedong.

decade. Mao grew increasingly dissatisfied with China's relationship with the Soviets and the terms of the treaty, which included high rates of interest on the loans. The Chinese leader believed that the Soviet experts offered sub standard advice on industrialisation, and Stalin consistently treated him with disrespect. Disagreements also emerged over foreign policy and the means and methods of industrialisation.

- 1 Why was the Chinese Communist Party victory a significant geopolitical development in the Cold War?
- 2 What was Truman's attitude towards China?
- 3 List three main consequences of China's turn to communism for the United States.
- 4 How did Stalin and Mao mutually benefit from the communist victory in China?
- 5 What did the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship offer to the Chinese?

The Korean War

After the Japanese were expelled from the region at the end of World War II, Korea was occupied jointly by the Soviets, in the North, and the Americans, in the South. It was expected that, after the war, Korea would resume its place as a sovereign state in the community of nations; however, the border drawn at the 38th parallel to establish a dividing line between the North and South still exists today, more than 70 years after World War II ended.

On 25 June 1950, in an attempt to unify the Korean peninsula, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung ordered 75 000 troops to cross the border into the American-occupied South. The invasion sparked a civil war between the communist North, led by Kim Il Sung, and capitalist South, led by Syngman Rhee. Each aimed to bring the entire Korean peninsula under their own system of government. The South was backed militarily and financially by the United States, and the North by the Soviets, making this the first **proxy war** held between the superpowers in the history of the Cold War.

proxy war

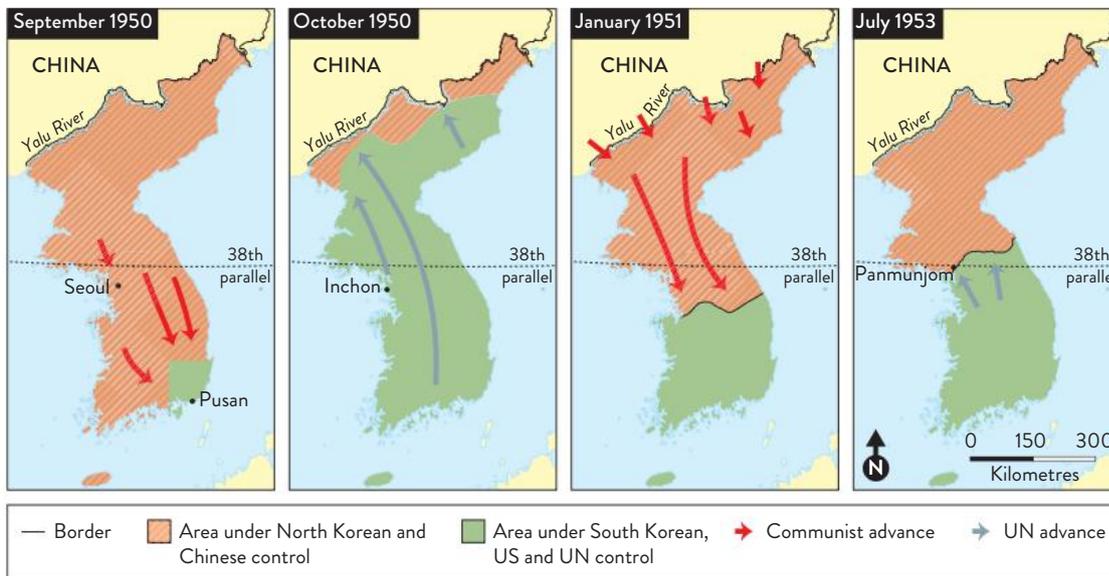
A war in which the Soviets and Americans did not directly clash but fought through other nations or conflicts.



Alamy Stock Photo/American Photo Archive

SOURCE 1.20 American military forces cross back into South Korea over the 38th parallel, which divided Korea into the communist North and the capitalist South.

Key events in the Korean War



SOURCE 1.21 The progression of the Korean War. The initial advance by North Korea nearly captured the entire peninsula, but the counterattack by UN forces reached the Chinese border before China became involved. The truce line of 1953 was almost exactly where the initial dividing line between the two Koreas had been before fighting began.

American attitudes towards Korea

The United States administration believed it had no choice but to enter the conflict in Korea. For Americans, the incursion of the North into the South was another example of international communism on the march, and Truman was already facing significant domestic criticism over his 'loss of China'. In 1949 the Soviet Union, in addition, successfully detonated its first atomic bomb. Truman was therefore under immense pressure to take a firm stand against further communist gains.

On 7 April 1950 Truman received the findings of a report he commissioned from the National Security Council, called 'NSC68'. The report recommended that, in order to meet the threat of communism, the United States should engage in a massive build-up of conventional and nuclear weapons to deter the Soviets from aggression. The paper had been the subject of much controversy and debate within the United States, but North Korea's decision to invade the South seemed to justify the paper's recommendation, and Truman did not want to appear 'soft' on communism.

The situation was made more complicated by a speech given by US Secretary of State Dean Acheson at the National Press Club in Washington in January 1950. Acheson claimed that Korea was outside the US defensive perimeter in the Pacific. Critics of Acheson suggest that this statement may have encouraged the outbreak of the war by giving Kim Il Sung a 'green light' to invade the South. Laying responsibility at Acheson's feet was popular in the United States. During the 1951 presidential election, Republican candidate (and future president) Dwight D Eisenhower, for example, accused Acheson of sparking the conflict with his comments.

By the middle of 1950, the Cold War had made significant developments. In a statement issued on 27 June 1950, Truman announced that the Cold War had taken a deadly turn, with the communists now willing to use force to press their claims.

“ The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. ”

Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea, 27 June 1950. Harry S Truman Presidential Library & Museum, www.trumanlibrary.org.

Truman warned China against starting a wider war in the region by targeting the Nationalist forces who had sought shelter on Taiwan (formerly known as Formosa). He also committed US naval and ground forces to push back the advancing North Koreans. The 7th Fleet in the Pacific was deployed to assist in meeting the challenge by the North.

A month later, on 19 July, Truman repeated his claim that the North's actions in Korea represented an international threat. He emphasised that, although Korea was a small country, thousands of miles away,

“ What is happening there is important to every American ... This attack has made it clear, beyond all doubt, that the international Communist movement is willing to use armed invasion to conquer independent nations. An act of aggression such as this creates a very real danger to the security of all free nations. ”

'Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Situation in Korea', 19 July 1950. Harry S Truman Presidential Library & Museum, www.trumanlibrary.org.

The Korean War was the first open military conflict in the Cold War and also the first major conflict in which the United Nations became involved. The United Nations voted 9–0 to declare the North Korean action a breach of the peace. Neither the Soviet Union nor China were at the Security Council, out of protest at the international community's refusal to recognise the Chinese government.

Chinese and Soviet attitudes towards Korea

When the United States invaded North Korean territory in October 1950 and pushed the retreating North Korean forces all the way back to the Yalu River on the Chinese border, Mao sent waves of Chinese soldiers to join the conflict. In October 1950, Mao issued an order to the Chinese People's Volunteers Army to deploy in defence of the:

“ Korean people's war of liberation and to resist the attacks of U.S. imperialism and its running dogs, thereby safeguarding the interests of the people of Korea, China and all the other countries in the East. ”

Mao Tsetung, Order to the Chinese People's Volunteers, October 1950.

Mao could not tolerate a North Korea occupied by the United States. His decision to enter the war, therefore, was motivated primarily out of concern over his long-term security and the growing threat of American military power.

Stalin was certainly emboldened by the Soviet acquisition of the bomb in August 1949. Before this, he was unlikely to have encouraged a war that threatened to bring the Soviet Union into direct conflict with the United States. The sheer manpower of China would also have given Stalin a level of courage in getting involved in a wider war. It is well documented that Stalin met with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and gave him military training and technology in preparation for his invasion of South Korea.

Some political analysts have argued that Stalin wanted to lure the United States into an Asian conflict to take away their focus from his actions in Eastern Europe. Whatever the case, it appears certain that the Soviet leader wanted to enjoy the benefits of a war while avoiding direct involvement in the conflict.

Impact of the Korean War

The Korean War was significant to the development of the Cold War for a number of reasons, including:

- It represented a further extension of communism into Asia.
- Troops from United States-aligned countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Turkey and New Zealand joined in the war under the banner of the United Nations.
- The war demonstrated China's willingness to support an ally that was threatened by capitalist powers.
- It was the first instance in which a UN-led force was used to prosecute a war.
- No treaty was signed to resolve the war, and Korea remains divided between North and South by the 38th parallel.

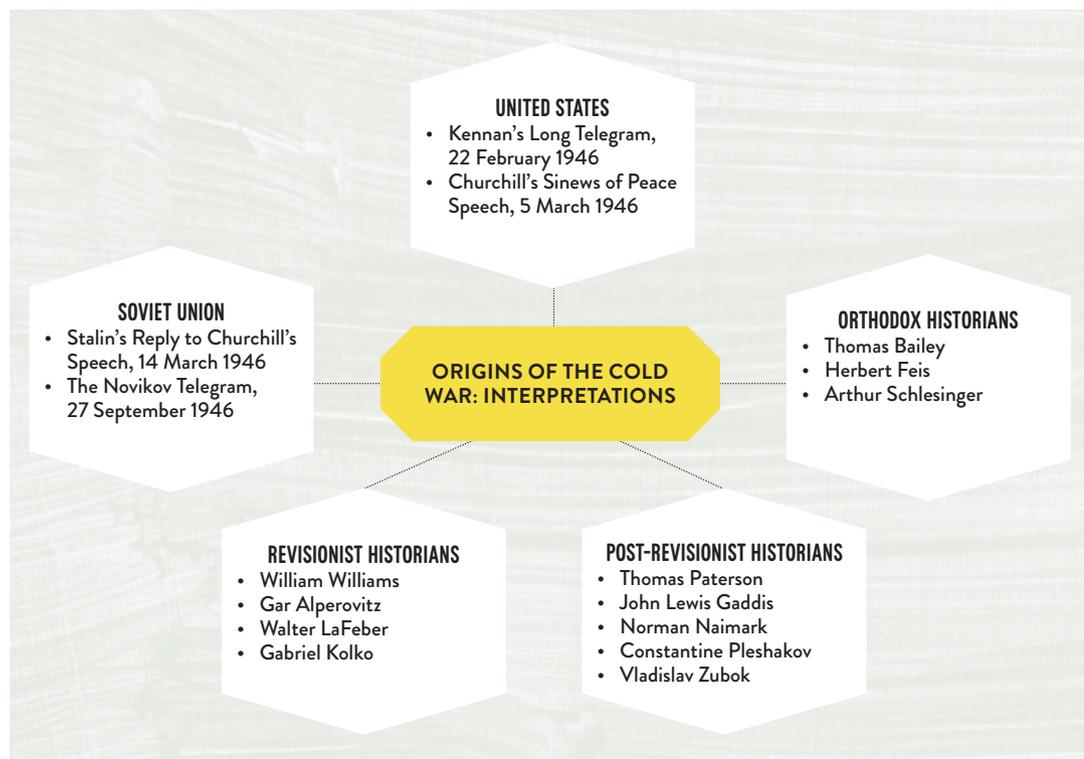
- 1 Identify both sides and their allies in Korea at the end of World War II.
- 2 Explain why the United States became involved in Korea.
- 3 What motivated Mao to send Chinese troops into Korea at the end of 1950?
- 4 Do you think international communism or geopolitics played a more important role in the Korean conflict? Give reasons for your answer.

Who started the Cold War?

Early interpretations of the origins and causes of the Cold War tend to rest on the respective interpretations of the superpowers. Kennan's Long Telegram and Stalin's reflections, for example, tended to attribute responsibility to the other power's expansionist policies. The term 'orthodox' is commonly used to describe early United States or Western interpretations of the Cold War, just as 'Soviet' refers to early interpretations of the conflict made by the USSR.

From the 1960s, Western historians moved towards attributing greater responsibility for the conflict to the actions of the United States. Shaped by the changing international context, such as opposition to the Vietnam War, these scholars, such as William Williams, saw America's economic motivations as central, and viewed Soviet concerns as justified. While there are many historians regarded as 'revisionists', because they revised orthodox interpretations, their emphasis on key factors varied.

More recently, some historians, such as John Lewis Gaddis, have revised revisionist interpretations. These historians are commonly referred to as post-revisionists and tend, broadly, to see the conflict as part of a bigger system of international relations and the result of tensions between the superpowers. With the opening of Soviet-era archives following the end of the Cold War, scholars such as Gaddis have continued to review their assessments, not only of the causes of the Cold War, but also its course and significance.



SOURCE 1.22 Overview of interpretations of the Cold War's origins

→ WILLIAM WILLIAMS

‘American leaders had ... come to believe the theory, necessity and morality of **open door** expansion ... As far as American leaders were concerned the philosophy and practice of open-door expansion had become both its missionary and economic aspects, the view of the world ...

Particularly after the atom bomb was created and used, the attitude of the United States left the Soviets with but one real option; either acquiesce in American proposals or be confronted with American power and hostility. It was the decision of the United States to employ new and awesome power in keeping with the Open Door policy, which crystallised the Cold War.’

William A Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, New York, 1962, pp. 206–207.

JOHN LEWIS GADDIS

‘Stalin’s postwar goals were security for himself and his ideology in precisely that order. He sought to make sure that no internal challenges could ever again place his country at risk. The interests of communists elsewhere in the world, admirable though these might be, would never outweigh the priorities of the Soviet State as he had determined them.’

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, Allen Lane, London, 2006, p. 11.

Open door

In economics, to mean free trade.



Perspectives

QUESTIONS

- 1 According to Williams, how did the open door policy contribute to the start of the Cold War?
- 2 What does Gaddis argue about Stalin’s intentions?
- 3 In your view, how did the Cold War start? Give evidence for your conclusions.



Conclusion

Between 1945 and 1953 the Cold War became an entrenched rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The breakdown of the World War II Alliance was swift, as matters turned to establishing and consolidating each side's vision of postwar Europe. Both ideological and geopolitical conflicts underpinned the breakdown. The American attempt to contain communism in Europe largely succeeded with a commitment to force in Iran, Turkey and Greece, and the spending of US\$15 billion dollars to help Europe recover. The Soviets, for their part, were able to keep a buffer zone on their western border in order to meet their own security needs. However, events in Asia soon changed the character of the Cold War. China emerged on the world stage as a major communist power and opened a second front in the conflict. This new front produced a war in Korea and later Vietnam. By 1953, the Cold War had been firmly established and the ideological, geopolitical and great power rivalries would shape international events for the next two generations.

Chapter summary

- The ideologies of communism and capitalism were fundamental to the origins of the Cold War.
- Geopolitics and great power rivalry were also significant factors in the disputes over Germany, Berlin, Iran, Turkey and Greece.
- The 1945 conferences revealed underlying differences between the two superpowers over the future of Germany and Europe. The Americans wanted a quick recovery based on self-determination, free trade and open markets, while the Soviets were more concerned about maintaining security on their Western borders.
- In 1946 public statements from various political leaders fired up tensions as the United States and the Soviet Union each sought to influence the outcome of the European postwar recovery.
- The Truman Doctrine aimed to limit the ability of the Soviet Union to spread its ideology. The doctrine manifested as a military commitment in Turkey and Greece, and a financial commitment, exemplified by the Marshall Plan.
- The Berlin blockade and airlift demonstrated the commitment of the Americans to the fight against communism and the symbolic value of Berlin in the Cold War.
- The rise of communism in China and North Korea opened up a second front in the Cold War.

Additional resources

- Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Cold War*, Penguin, London, 2005.
- Heller, Henry, *The Cold War and the New Imperialism: A Global History – 1945–2005*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2006.
- *The Cold War*, CNN series.

Endnotes

- 1 Woodrow Wilson, *The Fourteen Points*, Article III, www.u-s-history.com.
- 2 Letter from Truman to Byrnes in Truman, Harry S, *Strictly Personal and Confidential: The Letters Harry Truman Never Mailed*, University of Missouri, Missouri, 1999, p. 40.
- 3 Wilson, Edwin C., US Ambassador to Turkey quoted in Hasanli, J. (date unknown) in *The "Turkish Crisis" of the Cold War Period and the South Caucasian Republics*, CA and CC Press, Sweden, www.ca-c.org/c-g/2009/journal_eng/c-g-1/13.shtml.
- 4 The Marshall Plan Speech at Harvard University, 5 June 1947 www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechatharvarduniversity5june1947.htm
- 5 Lamberton Harper, John, *The Cold War*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, p. 63.
- 6 Truman quoted in, Spalding, EE, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism*, The University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky, 2006, p. 181.

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONTENT RECALL

- 1 Outline the basic differences between communism and capitalism.
- 2 Describe at least three disagreements between the Soviets and Americans about the future of Europe.
- 3 Summarise the agreements at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam in a table like the one below.

TEHRAN	YALTA	POTSDAM

- 4 Draw up a table like the one below and provide a detailed summary of the Soviet and American aims after World War II.

SOVIET POSTWAR AIMS	SHARED AIMS	UNITED STATES POSTWAR AIMS

EXTENDED RESPONSE

- 5 To what extent was the policy of containment the main cause of the Cold War?
- 6 How important were Germany and Berlin in the origins and development of the Cold War? In your answer, you should refer to World War II, the four-zone division and the blockade and airlift.
- 7 Create a newspaper cartoon to represent ONE of the following events:
 - a Truman's speech on the United States containment policy
 - b Kennan's Long Telegram
 - c Churchill's Sinews of Peace speech
- 8 Write a letter from one of Truman's advisers outlining what the American response should be about the Soviets in Eastern Europe at the end of the war.
- 9 Make a list of ten significant ideological and geopolitical events between 1946 and 1947. After you have done this, rank them from 1–10 in order of importance in terms of their contribution to the deteriorating relationship between the Soviets and Americans.
- 10 To what extent was the Cold War a geopolitical rather than ideological conflict?
- 11 How significant was China and Korea's turn to communism in the development of the Cold War?

ESSAY QUESTION

- 12 Who started the Cold War? In your response you should consider the post-World War II aims of the Americans and the Soviets and each superpower's response to the other's aims.

02

Development of the Cold War until 1968

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

- Containment
- The domino theory in Southeast Asia
- Khrushchev and 'peaceful coexistence'
- The arms race
- The space race
- Events and consequences of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Prague Spring



Modern History
syllabus

United States President John F Kennedy and General Curtis Lemay discuss surveillance of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962



Introduction

1953 was a watershed year in the development of the Cold War. In March Stalin died, sparking a three-year power struggle in the Soviet Union between Nikita Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov. Both leadership hopefuls signalled a shift away from Stalin's confrontational approach to international relations. Malenkov announced economic reforms that attempted to improve living standards for Soviet-bloc citizens who had suffered under Stalin's relentless pursuit of military and industrial supremacy. Three years later, Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' to the 20th Party Congress denounced Stalin for a range of crimes, including manipulating himself into power against the wishes of Lenin, the purges and show trials of the 1930s and the crimes associated with collectivisation and industrialisation. Khrushchev also sought to steer the superpowers away from dangerous confrontation by pursuing **peaceful coexistence**, the idea that capitalism and communism could exist side by side harmoniously.

peaceful coexistence
Khrushchev's policy which acknowledged that the Soviet and American systems could coexist peacefully. It replaced the communist doctrine of international revolution.

The Cold War, 1953–1968

1953	● January	Dwight D Eisenhower is sworn in as President of the United States
	● March	Soviet leader Joseph Stalin dies
1956	● February	Khrushchev's Secret Speech denounces Stalin
	● October	Soviet troops invade Hungary in response to calls for democratic reforms
1958	● November	Khrushchev demands that all foreign troops leave Berlin
1960	● August	Soviet Union condemns Mao's teachings as a departure from communism
1961	● January	Kennedy sworn in as President of the United States
	● April	CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fails
	● June	Khrushchev and Kennedy meet at the Vienna Summit
	● August	Berlin Wall is constructed in Berlin
	● December	First American troops arrive in Vietnam
1962	● October	Cuban Missile Crisis
1963	● June	Kennedy visits West Berlin
	● August	Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed by USSR, USA and Britain
	● November	Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas
1964	● October	China tests its first nuclear bomb
1968	● January	North Vietnamese launch the Tet offensive
	● Jan–Aug	Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia
	● August	France becomes the fifth nation to successfully test a nuclear bomb

rollback

Eisenhower and Dulles' policy of attempting to reverse communist advances in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

A doctrine which held that whoever made the first nuclear strike would suffer a retaliation so great it would guarantee their own destruction.

Change was also afoot in the United States. Two months before Stalin's death, former General Dwight D Eisenhower was sworn in as president. A World War II veteran and war hero who had led American forces in Europe, Eisenhower oversaw an extension in the policy of containment through **rollback**. Devised by his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the policy aimed at reversing Soviet advances in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and South America.

Underpinning the military and technological rivalry of the Cold War in the 1950s and '60s were the arms race and the space race. The spread of increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons that could be fired further was the key battleground in this rivalry. Missile tests, in which rockets were fired into space, were used by each superpower as an opportunity to show off their nuclear capabilities to the other. Of course, this was not the only benefit of scientific exploration, and the space race resulted in the first Russian cosmonaut in space. At the end of the 1960s the Americans landed the first man on the moon. Space became the new frontier of US–Soviet expressions of power. With the spread of nuclear weapons, fear was rife. Both sides understood the power of their arsenals and the doctrine of **Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)** gave both sides pause.

Yet the period was also marked by a series of geopolitical crises that threatened to drag the superpowers into direct conflict. In August 1961, the East German government under Walter Ulbricht erected the Berlin Wall in response to large numbers of people using Berlin as an escape route from the Soviet bloc to the West. Although Berlin had no real strategic significance in the Cold War, it was of enormous symbolic value to the Americans and they demonstrated a continuing commitment to West Berlin's independence. In October 1962, tensions peaked as the Soviets attempted to install offensive weapons on the tiny island of Cuba, just 90 miles off the coast of the United States. Desperate to prevent a direct nuclear confrontation, the Americans responded with a naval blockade of Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest the two sides came to nuclear war. Some historians date the period of détente from the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and a direct telephone hotline was set up between Moscow and Washington to prevent a war based on misunderstanding. But a relaxation in tensions did not mean that the Soviets would loosen their grip on power in the Eastern bloc. In Czechoslovakia, calls for democratic reforms led to Soviet tanks crushing any hint of reform in the Prague Spring of 1968. The episode was a lesson to the United States that any relaxation in tensions after the Cuban crisis would be short lived.

The development of the Cold War to 1968 was a dangerous period during which lack of engagement, mistrust and suspicion characterised the relationship between the superpowers. It tested the leadership of three American presidents, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, who were each forced to engage with an enemy they knew little about.

Containment

Containment was the United States' policy to limit the extension of Soviet influence. The geopolitical and military reality of 1945 was that the Soviets had pushed German forces back to Berlin through the countries of Eastern Europe, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. The Americans and British, who pursued the retreating Germans from the West, were in no position to demand that the **Red Army** give up their positions and so the Soviets enjoyed an effective buffer zone in the region. During the following years, there was a great deal of debate and hostility about the future of the Eastern European countries, as Soviet demands for a recognition of their sphere of influence clashed with the American desire to see all nations enjoy self-determination.

Red Army

The Soviet Union's armed forces.

The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan were key pillars of containment from the late 1940s. The United States government's commitment to defend the integrity of free states against Soviet interference was clearly demonstrated by its actions in Greece and Turkey, where it offered a US\$400-million loan and military assistance to the European nations. The Americans also responded to the threat of communism spreading through postwar Europe by offering a US\$15-billion European recovery package in the form of the Marshall Plan.

Containment was continued in various forms by Truman's successors, presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. Each leader adapted to the developments in the Cold War and the international situation facing their administrations. The most notable challenges they faced were containing communism that had spread outside of Europe and into Asia, the rise of nationalist movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons.

NSC-68

Containment remained a central plank in the United States' approach to the Soviets throughout the origins and development of the Cold War from 1945 to 1968. This policy was informed by a belief that the Soviet Union was aggressive and expansionist, a view that was, in turn, largely based on George Kennan's Long Telegram, as well as the experience of dealing with Stalin in the postwar settlement and the Berlin blockade. However, in 1950, a new portrait of the Soviets emerged in the National Security Council paper NSC-68 that would influence US foreign policy and attitudes towards the Soviets for another 20 years.

NSC-68 proposed that, as part of the containment policy, the United States should embark on a massive military build-up to deter the Soviets from pursuing their international agenda. While the paper celebrated US intentions to maintain individual and democratic freedoms across the globe, it accused the Soviet Union of calling for 'the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and structure of society in the countries of the non-Soviet world'.¹ In a rather self-serving portrayal, the US document explained Soviet actions in the world in terms of slavery, in contrast describing US actions as promoting individual freedom.

NSC-68 argued that the world was becoming less stable in the nuclear age, and called on the Americans to take on 'the responsibility of world leadership'.² To do this required a military build-up so large that it would act as a deterrent to a potential Soviet attack on the United States. The paper stated that 'For us the role of military power is to serve the national purpose by deterring an attack upon us while we seek by other means to create an environment in which our free society can flourish'.³

The paper also addressed the issue of containment:

“As for the policy of “containment”, it is one which seeks by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin's control and influence and (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system.

NSC-68 United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, 14 April, 1950,
as at www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/.

One of the paper's most significant findings was the conclusion that military strength was the fundamental basis for containment. The paper was pessimistic about American superiority. It claimed that the Soviet Union was catching up fast in the nuclear arms race, a development that emboldened the Soviet leadership. In fact, the paper noted that there was little intelligence on the progress of Soviet nuclear capability and expressed concerns that political and military decision makers had



developed 'a feeling of superiority in our atomic stockpile that might be dangerously misleading'.⁴ Moreover, the paper confirmed that the Soviets had long-range aircraft capable of deploying atomic weapons.

As a result of the paper, American military spending tripled in the following years. The paper also proved an influential portrait of the Soviets in the United States State Department.

Dulles, rollback and massive retaliation

There were some in Eisenhower's administration who wanted to go further than just containing communism. United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, Allan Dulles, who was head of the CIA, advocated a policy of rollback. This meant that the Americans would work actively against the gains made by the Soviets by encouraging reform movements in communist countries.

Events in Iran, a border state of the Soviet Union, demonstrated the extent of the United States' resolve. In 1951, the leftist leader Mohammad Mosaddegh had come to power with a promise to nationalise the oil industry, which would come at a great loss to the British and American oil companies that were operating in the area. The CIA plotted a revolution and Mosaddegh was removed from power and replaced with the pro-Western Shah, who would stay in power until the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Americans had long rejected the idea of the Soviet sphere of influence in Iran and were determined to take back ground.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection Historical

SOURCE 2.1 President Eisenhower (left) and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (right) were the architects of a new containment policy that advocated rollback and the idea of massive retaliation.

Another aspect of Eisenhower's foreign policy was the idea of massive retaliation put forward by US Secretary of State Foster Dulles. It became United States policy to protect its allies from communist aggression by threatening to use nuclear retaliation in the event of a Soviet attack. At the same time, Foster Dulles warned against being drawn into an expensive arms race that involved maintaining standing armies in Asia, Europe and elsewhere.

Containment from Truman to Eisenhower

We can summarise the development of containment from Truman to Eisenhower by saying that, while Truman tacitly accepted the status quo in the Eastern bloc, he was unwilling to allow the Soviets to gain more territory on their southern borders, namely Greece and Turkey. He demonstrated a commitment to use military resources and money to ensure that communists were walled in. Truman also understood the importance of economic recovery as a key plank in containment and authorised the Marshall Plan to help Europe recover.

Eisenhower had to deal with more challenging developments. First, the Soviet development of the bomb and the spread of communism into Asia opened up a second front in the Cold War. Eisenhower adopted the policy of massive retaliation and signalled his intention to use nuclear weapons to secure the interests of the United States and its allies. He hoped that building up a massive nuclear arsenal would deter both sides from becoming involved in a nuclear war.

Eisenhower: A military–industrial complex?

NSC-68 recommended a quadrupling of the American military budget. By the 1950s, the budget had tripled. But Eisenhower's final speech to the American people on the transfer of power to Kennedy in January 1961 issued a warning about the influence of the military in United States' political, domestic and foreign affairs. He cautioned against the growing economic share being handed over to the military in peacetime and its influence on government. This came to be known as the **military–industrial complex**. Eisenhower warned, 'We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military–industrial complex'.⁵

Before World War II, American isolationism meant that the United States did not have a huge military capability. Eisenhower was concerned about the influence of the arms industry in politics and its outsized share of the United States budget. He worried that,

“ We have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations ... ”

Dwight D Eisenhower, 'Military–industrial complex speech', 17 January 1961, avalon.law.yale.edu

Eisenhower's final address was an encouragement to find some perspective. The new president, John F Kennedy, would be faced with some significant challenges of his own.

military–industrial complex

The massive peacetime armaments industry in the United States that took a large share of the United States budget.



Military–Industrial complex

JOHN F KENNEDY

President John F Kennedy came to power in January 1961 and held office until his assassination in Dallas, Texas on 22 November 1963. An east coast Irish Catholic, Kennedy was a political outsider. He came to the presidency facing a number of serious Cold War issues, particularly around Cuba. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 led to the nationalisation of American businesses. The failed Bay of Pigs attempt to remove Castro in April 1961 left Kennedy embarrassed after he denied knowledge of the plot. But his biggest test in Cuba came in October 1962 with the Cuban Missile

Crisis. Kennedy's calm handling of events almost certainly averted nuclear war against the Soviets, and his decision to implement a naval quarantine of Cuba and stare down Khrushchev led to the situation defusing. Kennedy's relationship with Khrushchev was tense, as Kennedy sought to come to terms with the construction of the Berlin Wall and the early Soviet gains in the space race.



Nancy Stock/Photographical Press Ltd

SOURCE 2.2 John F Kennedy was President of the United States from 1961 until his assassination in 1963.

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV



SOURCE 2.3 Nikita Khrushchev succeeded Stalin as Soviet leader in 1956.

gulag

The Soviet Union's network of forced labour camps. Under Stalin, the gulag was used as a tool of political repression.

Nikita Khrushchev came to the leadership of the Soviet Union in 1956, at the end of a three-year power struggle with Malenkov after the death of Stalin in March 1953. Khrushchev was an old communist campaigner who early in his premiership famously told a group of NATO leaders that communism would eventually prevail over capitalism and finished with the explosive phrase, 'We will bury you!', prompting a walk-out among Western leaders. Despite this, he adopted the policy of peaceful coexistence, the idea that capitalism and communism could exist side by side in the international system. His great rival was US President John F Kennedy, and Khrushchev was regarded as having the upper hand in

the relationship, with political victories in the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. The end of his time in power coincided with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, with many communists believing that the Soviet's standing was diminished by the backdown.

Khrushchev was also a strident critic of the political system built by Stalin. In his 'Secret Speech' of February 1956, he condemned the excesses of Stalinism that led to the murder of millions in the collectivisation and industrialisation drives, the purges and show trials of the communist party and the **gulag**.

Containment under Kennedy and Johnson

Kennedy outlined his commitment to continuing Truman and Eisenhower's doctrine of containment in his inauguration address on 20 January 1961. In it he committed to:

“ Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that 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. ”

JF Kennedy, 'Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961', www.jfklibrary.org

Kennedy's first years in power were marred by a string of foreign policy failures against the Soviets. The Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April 1961 was a disaster. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had brought Fidel Castro to power; he had in turn nationalised a number of industries – many of which belonged to American companies. As a result, the United States sought his removal from power and Castro was forced to accept the protection of the Soviets.

At the Vienna summit in June 1961, Kennedy was unable to reach agreement with Soviet leader Khrushchev on issues as broad as the future of Berlin and Laos. In August, Kennedy was humiliated by his inability to stop the construction of the Berlin Wall. The following year, the world was brought to the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It seemed that the old campaigner Khrushchev would be able to outfox the young, new president.

Kennedy was well aware that without economic hope and prosperity, many in Latin America would be vulnerable to communism. In order to strengthen the United States' position in its own region, Kennedy created the Alliance for Progress. This was similar to the Marshall Plan in Europe. It offered a 10-year, US\$80-billion commitment to lift the living standards of Latin Americans by 2.5 per cent per capita, redistribute land and introduce a range of economic and social reforms.

On 22 November 1963, Kennedy was assassinated by gunman Lee Harvey Oswald as he was riding in his open-top car in Dallas, Texas. The assassination sent shockwaves throughout the United States and the world. The colour film footage capturing the assassination and shot from the crowd by Abraham Zapruder is among the most famous television clips of all time. In the few hours after Kennedy was pronounced dead in hospital, his Vice-President Lyndon B Johnson was sworn in as President.



Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive

SOURCE 2.4 Kennedy, moments before his assassination in Dallas, Texas, 22 November 1963

Johnson's biggest contribution to the United States' containment policy was his escalation of American involvement in the Vietnam War. From 1964, he demonstrated his willingness to commit US troops on the other side of the world in an effort to prevent the realisation of the domino theory. He did not want to be the president who lost Southeast Asia to communism.



Continuity and change:
Containment from
Truman to Johnson

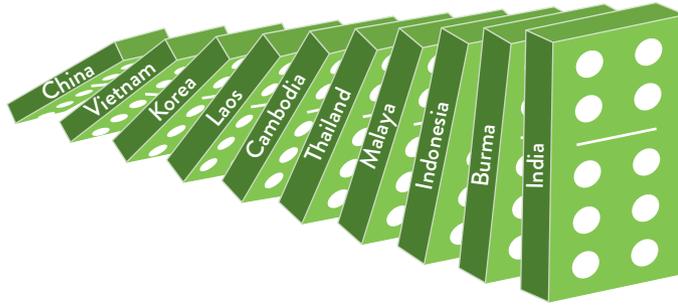
- 1 What was the aim of the original containment policy?
- 2 Why did the Soviets have the upper hand in Eastern Europe during this period?
- 3 How and why did the containment policy develop after 1949?
- 4 What did NSC-68 propose the Americans should do about containing the Soviets?
- 5 How did NSC-68 represent the actions of the Soviets compared to those of the Americans? Was this characterisation fair?
- 6 Explain what effect Eisenhower hoped 'massive retaliation' would have on international tensions.
- 7 Explain the differences between the containment policies of Truman and Eisenhower.
- 8 Outline how Kennedy hoped to contain the threat of communism in Latin America.

Domino theory

domino theory

The fear that countries in Southeast Asia would fall to communism one after another.

The term **domino theory** was coined to express the Western fear that, left unchecked, communism would spread throughout Southeast Asia. With China establishing a communist state in 1949,



followed by North Korea in 1950 and Vietnam soon after, there was a widespread fear that, just like a set of dominos, one nation after another would fall to communism.

On 7 April 1954, President Eisenhower was delivering a press conference in which a journalist asked about the importance of Indochina to the free world. Eisenhower's answer minted the idea of the domino theory. He said:

SOURCE 2.5 The domino theory held that if one nation came under the influence of communism, then neighbouring countries would follow it, each falling as in a line of dominoes.

“ 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. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences... But when we come to the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following, now you begin to talk about areas that not only multiply the disadvantages that you would suffer through loss of materials, sources of materials, but now you are talking really about millions and millions and millions of people. ”

Dwight D Eisenhower, The President's News Conference, 7 April 1954

The American Presidency Project. www.presidency.ucsb.edu.

Of course, all of this implied that the Soviet Union was both aggressive and expansionist – an idea that had gained currency in the State Department since Kennan's 1946 Long Telegram and the NSC-68 report.

Eisenhower's Vice-President Richard Nixon was similarly pessimistic about communism. In a televised report in 1953, Nixon warned that:

“ If Indochina falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaya with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia. If this whole part of Southeast Asia goes under Communist domination or Communist influence, Japan, who trades and must trade with this area in order to exist must inevitably be oriented towards the Communist regime. ”

Richard Nixon, televised report, December 1953.

As such, the domino theory came to be an influential idea within American foreign policy circles. Even Australia's commitment to Vietnam during the late 1960s was justified on the basis of the domino theory and the need to adopt a policy of forward defence. This policy implied that communism would eventually make its way to Australian shores, and therefore it was better to fight a war on foreign soil.

Over time the domino theory came to be applied closer to the United States, in Latin America. Critics dismissed it for its simplicity. They argued that the case of Cuba was more complex than a mere communist uprising, and claimed Castro himself was forced into communism by being isolated by the Americans. In fact, in many parts of the Third World, the Americans confused nationalist independence movements with the expansion of communism. Often after the removal of colonial

powers, a power vacuum existed in which movements sought support from either the United States or the Soviet Union to justify their claims for power.

- 1 Explain the term 'domino theory'.
- 2 What were some limitations of the theory?
- 3 What assumptions were implicit in the theory? Where did these assumptions come from?

The emergence of peaceful coexistence

By 1955, Khrushchev had defeated Malenkov to emerge as the leader of the party and government in the Soviet Union. The new leader wanted to make a decisive break from the Stalinist past and delivered the Secret Speech to the 20th Party Congress on 25 February 1956. The speech was a gamble. In condemning Stalin, Khrushchev risked fuelling a movement against the party itself. Its content was damning of Stalin and renounced him for his crimes.

Khrushchev claimed that the cult of the individual that had grown up around Stalin, was a departure from the teachings of Marx and Lenin. He drew attention to Lenin's explicit rejection of Stalin in the role of General Secretary and his claim that Stalin needed to be removed. Khrushchev concluded,

“When we pause to consider everything which Stalin perpetrated, we must be convinced that Lenin's fears were justified ... The negative characteristics of Stalin ... transformed themselves during the last years into a grave abuse of power ... which caused untold harm to our party.”

Nikita S Khrushchev, 'The Secret Speech – on the Cult of Personality', 25 February 1956, www.sourcebooks.fordham.edu.



Khrushchev was particularly critical of Stalin's invention of the term 'enemy of the people' to describe his political opponents. The concept, the new leader argued, ended debate and dissent within the party and resulted in extreme persecutions and methods of repression. Khrushchev went on to list party comrades who were shot after being labelled 'enemies of the people' and described the way in which the secret police were able to legally murder political rivals under the shelter of the Kirov Decrees. After making a long list of crimes and abuses committed by Stalin, Khrushchev reclaimed the tradition of Lenin in the Soviet state and rejected the period of Stalinism as an aberration.

Australian historian David Christian argues that Khrushchev's speech was significant for three reasons:

- 1 It condoned the Soviet political system up until 1934, including its elements of collectivisation, rapid industrialisation, central command economy, and strong leadership in a single party.
- 2 It criticised aspects of Stalinism that resulted in the purges of the party, but ignored the plight of the multitudes of others who fell victim to Stalinism.
- 3 It invented the phrase 'cult of personality'. This had the effect of absolving those present for the horrors of the 1930s and 1940s by heaping all the blame onto Stalin.⁶

Despite the inner party circle's desire to keep the Secret Speech secret, it was leaked, and many countries began to question the legitimacy of communist rule. The speech provided an insight into the terror of working with a paranoid Stalin coupled with a legal regime that was arbitrarily applied. The United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles called the speech, 'the most damning indictment of despotism ever made by a despot'.⁷

On the surface, both Malenkov and Khrushchev adopted a more conciliatory approach towards the United States in the 1950s. The policy of peaceful coexistence was based on Khrushchev's idea that the United States and Soviet social and economic systems could live side by side without conflict, and that war was no longer the inevitable outcome of the struggle. While Khrushchev maintained his position that socialism would eventually triumph over capitalism, he argued that the victory would come about by peaceable means. He took the unusual step of writing for American magazine *Foreign Affairs* to state his views.

Against the backdrop of early Cold War tensions, the policy of peaceful coexistence positioned Khrushchev as a peacemaker on the global stage. It marked a turn from the dangerous idea, which stretched back to 1917, that conflict was inevitable. Soviet citizens welcomed the ease in tension. As historian Rosa Magnusdottir writes, 'Selling peaceful coexistence as believable to an audience that had for over a decade considered war with America inevitable may seem like a difficult project, but ... the Soviet public embraced the opportunity'.⁸

On the other hand, US politicians found it difficult to accept talk of peaceful coexistence from Khrushchev. Historian John Lewis Gaddis observed, 'From 1957 through 1961, Khrushchev openly, repeatedly, bloodcurdlingly, threatened the West with nuclear annihilation ... he would even specify how many missiles and warheads each target might require'.⁹ Despite the continued mistrust, Vice-President Richard Nixon visited the Soviet Union in July and August 1959. Khrushchev returned the favour and visited the United States the following month. The talks marked a new spirit of cooperation. Khrushchev told President Eisenhower of the need for a common language and understanding.

As part of the policy, Khrushchev sought trade opportunities with Western nations, opened up cultural exchanges and built diplomatic relationships with other countries. The idea of peaceful coexistence was put to the test frequently, particularly during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

The kitchen debate

On 24 July 1959, the American National Exhibition was opened in Moscow to promote greater understanding between the two powers. The United States Vice-President Richard Nixon attended the event, and a series of tense responses were exchanged between Nixon and Khrushchev. They provide an insight into each man's understanding of the other's social system.

Khrushchev: Your American houses are built to last only 20 years so builders could sell new houses at the end. We build firmly. We build for our children and grandchildren.

Nixon: American houses last for more than 20 years, but, even so, after twenty years, many Americans want a new house or a new kitchen. Their kitchen is obsolete by that time ... The American system is designed to take advantage of new inventions and new techniques.

Khrushchev: This theory does not hold water. Some things never get out of date – houses, for instance, and furniture, furnishings – perhaps – but not houses. I have read much about America and American houses, and I do not think that this exhibit and what you say is strictly accurate ... I hope I have not insulted you.

Khrushchev: In Russia, all you have to do to get a house is to be born in the Soviet Union. You are entitled to housing ... In America, if you don't have a dollar you have a right to choose between sleeping in a house or on the pavement. Yet you say we are the slave to Communism.

Nixon: If you were in the Senate, we would call you a filibusterer! You – [Khrushchev interrupts] – do all the talking and don't let anyone else talk. This exhibit was not designed to astound but to interest. Diversity, the right to choose, the fact that we have 1000 builders building 1000 different houses is the most important thing. We don't have one decision made at the top by one government official. This is the difference.

The Kitchen Debate transcript, 24 July 1959 – Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, U.S. Embassy, Moscow, Soviet Union, www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1959-07-24.pdf





SOURCE 2.6 Soviet leader Khrushchev (left) with US Vice-President Richard Nixon at the Kitchen Debate in Moscow in 1959

QUESTIONS

- 1 What point is Khrushchev making about American houses and how does Nixon defend it?
- 2 How does Khrushchev dismiss the exhibit?
- 3 What is Khrushchev's argument about the right to housing?
- 4 How does Nixon defend the capitalist method of housing people?



- 1 Outline the main features of Khrushchev's Secret Speech in February 1956.
- 2 Explain the concept of 'peaceful coexistence'. How did it differ from past Soviet understandings of relations with the US?
- 3 What criticisms are there of peaceful coexistence?

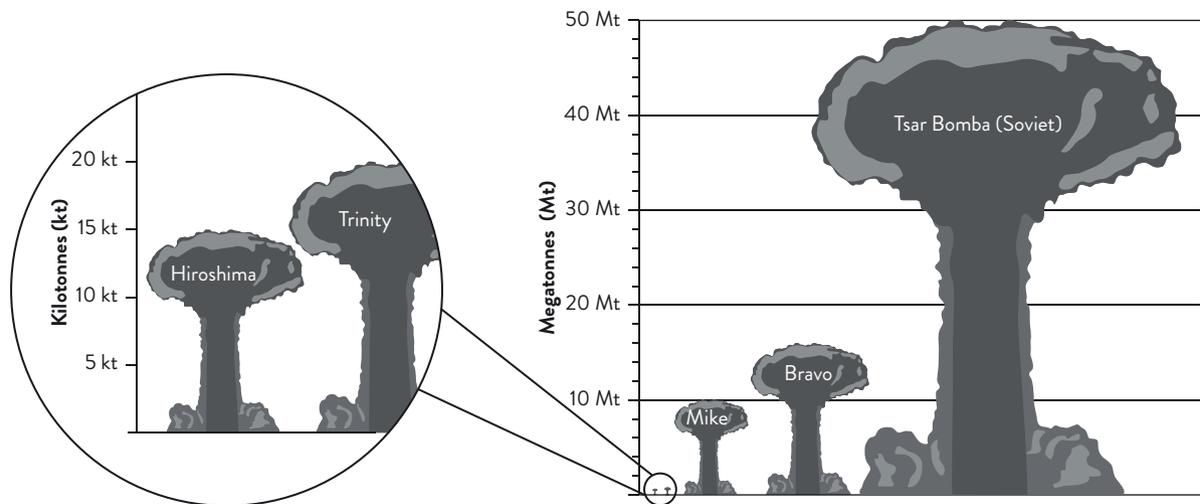
Superpower rivalry: the arms race

One of the core features of the Cold War was the race for military supremacy between the two superpowers. This was different to previous arms races in that the technologies being developed had the potential, without a hint of exaggeration, to destroy the entire planet and its inhabitants. The insights gained from the scientific study of atomic particles had the potential to lead to the development of nuclear weapons of ever-increasing power, sophistication and reach. The development of two kinds of nuclear weapons – atomic and hydrogen – would spark an arms race as each superpower sought to gain an advantage over the other.

The Americans had been trying to fashion nuclear power into a weapon since the Manhattan Project in 1942, and with its use in 1945 to end the war against Japan, the nuclear club had its first member. Leaders understood that this new bomb meant something much more terrifying than anything previously contemplated. President Truman, who ordered the first nuclear bomb to be dropped, later warned, 'It is a terrible thing to order the use of something that ... is so terribly destructive beyond anything we have ever had ... So we have got to treat this differently from rifles and cannons.'¹⁰

When the Soviets successfully tested their first nuclear bomb in August 1949, it sparked a superpower rivalry underpinned by the belief that more numerous and powerful bombs would edge out their rivals. But more reasoned voices wondered where this arms race would end. After all, it took only a limited number of weapons to exact unprecedented damage on the world.

The newer, more efficient, nuclear weapons of the 1950s onwards far outstripped the power of 'Little Boy', the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The Hiroshima explosion was the equivalent of about 14–18 000 tonnes of TNT. In comparison, in 1961, the Soviets exploded the 'Tsar bomba', the most powerful weapon ever built. Its blast was estimated as the equivalent of 45 million tonnes of TNT – 3 000 times more powerful than the bomb that killed more than 100 000 people in Hiroshima.



Source: 'Tiny Nukes', Popular Mechanics, October 2002 Illustrated by Paul Dimare.

SOURCE 2.7 Relative sizes of significant nuclear detonations. The first ever detonation of a nuclear weapon, 'Trinity', and the Hiroshima bomb, both atomic bombs, are dwarfed by later weapons of the Cold War period.

Ironically, President Eisenhower hoped to prevent nuclear war by building up nuclear arsenals at the expense of conventional non-nuclear forces. He spoke of 'massive retaliation', and over time this gave rise to the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). The doctrine was developed by Kennedy's Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and meant that both sides were deterred from delivering the first strike because the retaliation would be so great as to guarantee their own destruction.

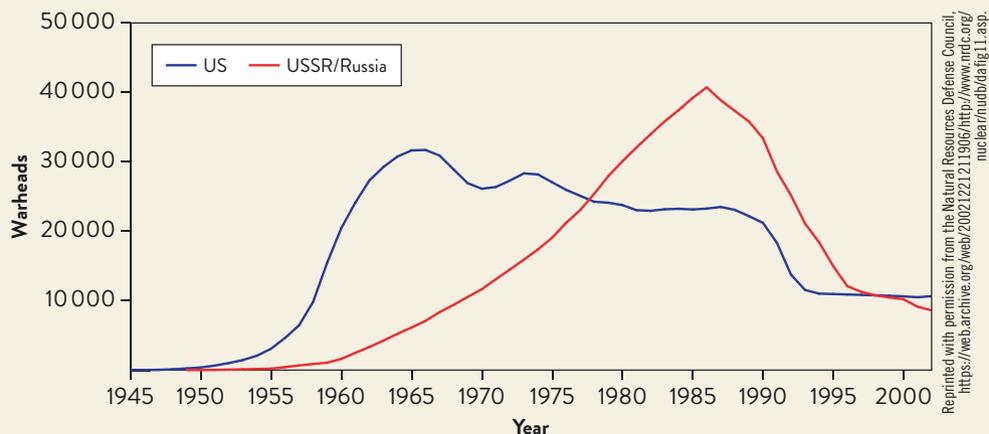
Most concerning was the desire of other countries to develop nuclear weapons. By the mid-1960s, five countries had obtained nuclear weapons: the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China. The rapid build-up of nuclear arsenals, coupled with the additional nuclear powers, meant an increasingly unstable world. The threat of war in the nuclear age would have ramifications far beyond anything previously imagined.

The arms race

1942	August	US establishes the Manhattan Project to develop the first nuclear bomb	1953	August	Soviets test first hydrogen bomb
1945	July	US conducts its first nuclear test	1960	February	France tests first nuclear weapon
	August	US detonates the first nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki	1961	October	USSR detonates a 58-megaton nuclear bomb, the largest ever
1946	January	United Nations calls for the elimination of all nuclear weapons	1962	October	Cuban Missile Crisis
1949	August	USSR detonates its first nuclear weapons	1963	August	Partial Test Ban Treaty
1952	January	Great Britain acquires its first nuclear bomb	1964	October	China conducts its first nuclear test
	November	US tests first hydrogen bomb, 'Ivy Mike'	1968	July	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is signed

Another important technological development during this period came in the form of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), which could deliver warheads from one continent to another. Throughout the 1950s, the Americans and Soviets developed missile technologies that could reach further and further. The Soviets were early leaders in these stakes, developing and testing the first intercontinental ballistic missile in August 1957. The Americans were concerned about the Soviet leadership in this field, and the concept of a 'missile gap' was born. The United States worked hard to catch up with Soviet numbers. In reality, the US overestimated the size of the USSR's arsenal during the late 1950s when Kennedy coined the term. In response to the missile gap – which intelligence later revealed to be a misguided assumption – American military spending increased from approximately US\$15 billion per year to US\$50 billion per year.

Number of nuclear warheads



SOURCE 2.8 The graph shows that while the United States enjoyed a significant lead in the arms race up until the 1960s, the Soviet Union used the period of détente to achieve nuclear parity with the United States. At its peak, the United States had just over 30 000 warheads while the Soviet Union had 40 000.

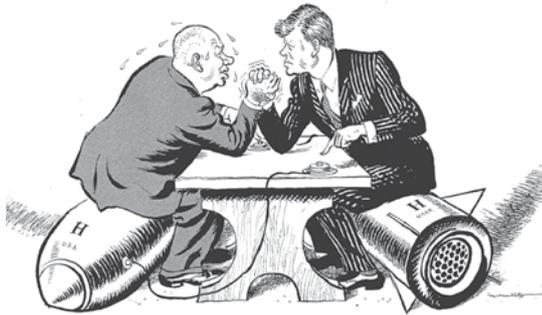
Reprinted with permission from the Natural Resources Defense Council, <https://web.archive.org/web/200212211906/http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/nudb/4dfig1.1.asp>.



The Cold War
arms race

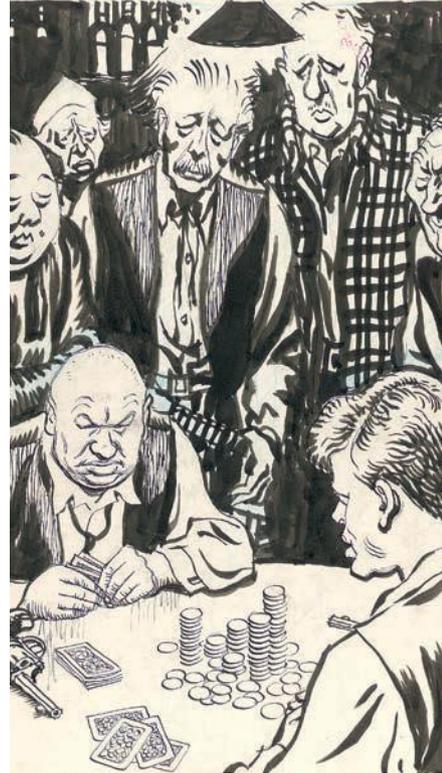
The development of huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons without intent to use them demonstrated a great deal of restraint by the United States, the Soviet Union and their allies. After the successful test of the hydrogen bomb by the Soviet Union, Malenkov argued that ‘modern weapons [would mean] the end of world civilization’.¹¹ Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill similarly lamented the development of the new weapon. In a speech to the House of Commons he said, ‘The new terror brings a certain element of equality in annihilation. Strange as it may seem, it is to the universality of potential destruction that I think we may look with hope and even confidence’.¹² President Eisenhower too was realistic about the consequences of war. A few months after the United States successfully tested its first hydrogen bomb, he said, ‘Atomic war will destroy civilization. There will be millions of people dead ... If the Kremlin and Washington ever lock up in a war, the results are too horrible to contemplate’.¹³ Robert Oppenheimer, the lead scientist in the Manhattan Project, told a television interviewer, ‘If there’s another world war this civilization may go under. We need to ask ourselves whether we are doing everything we can do avert that’.¹⁴

The arms race



Leslie Gilbert Illingworth / Solo Syndication

SOURCE 2.9 Leslie Illingworth’s cartoon from *The London Daily Mail* newspaper, 29 October 1962, depicts the arms race between the Soviets and Americans as a threat to world peace.



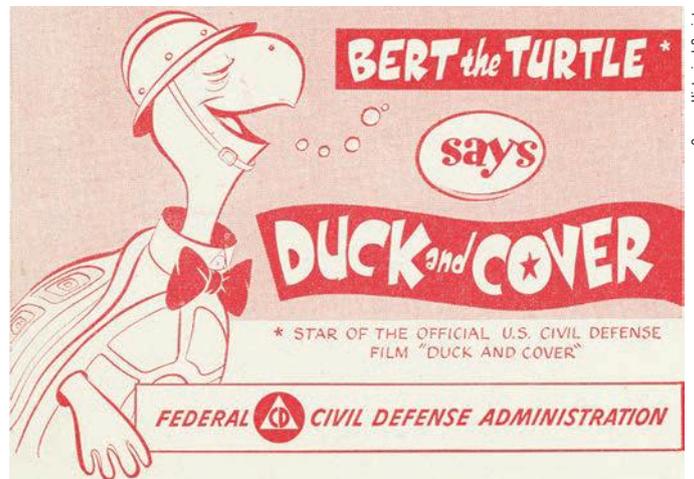
Leslie Gilbert Illingworth / Solo Syndication

SOURCE 2.10 This cartoon, ‘Cuban poker game’, is a parody of a scene from a Western film. The Soviet and American leaders play for high stakes in a poker game, while other world leaders look on.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify the key figures depicted in Sources 2.9 and 2.10.
- 2 Examine Source 2.9. What do the leaders sit on and what are the objects on the table?
- 3 Describe the scene in Source 2.10. What message is the cartoonist intending to convey?
- 4 When were these cartoons produced?
- 5 How useful are these cartoons to historians examining Cold War tensions?

The reality of nuclear war was often not understood by the population at large. In an attempt to reduce fears over a nuclear attack, American schoolchildren were taught duck and cover drills at school. United States propaganda films showed 'Bert the Turtle' ducking and covering his head, and schoolchildren were taught to do the same under their desks at school. Films compared a nuclear attack as equivalent to the dangers posed by fire or a car crash, and taught students about signals, shelters and what to do in the event of an attack. Unfortunately, and as the experience of Hiroshima had demonstrated, no normal building could cope with the blast, heat and radiation from a nuclear explosion.



SOURCE 2.11 Bert the Turtle, a character from the film *Duck and Cover*, was used in the 1950s to educate Americans on ways to protect themselves in the event of a nuclear attack.

The Doomsday Clock

In 1947, nuclear scientists, including Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer, developed what came to be known as the 'doomsday clock'. This clock shows how many minutes to midnight – or the end of the world – there were because of nuclear weapons. They calculated that it was 7 minutes until midnight in 1947. In 1953, the Soviet Union exploded the hydrogen bomb, which moved the hands to the highest point in history – 2 minutes to midnight. The end of the Cold War in 1991 moved the time back by 17 minutes. In 2017, when this book was written, the time was 2 minutes and 30 seconds to midnight in the wake of concerns over climate change, North Korea's testing of nuclear weapons, delivery capabilities and the renewal of tensions between Russia and the West.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What time is it on the Doomsday Clock today?
- 2 How does this compare to the time in 1953?



The use of nuclear weapons would have devastating consequences compared to a conventional war. There are three phases to a nuclear explosion. About 50 per cent of the energy from the bomb is the blast, 35 per cent is thermal radiation that generates huge levels of heat, and 15 per cent is nuclear fallout. The detonation causes a massive blinding flash, followed by a mushroom cloud. For example, the explosion over Hiroshima was the size of about 14 000 tonnes of TNT. It completely destroyed everything in a 1.6-kilometre radius around the blast point and heated the surface temperature of earth up to 6000 degrees Celsius. More than 6000 people who survived the blast and fire died of radiation injuries in the days, months and years after the blast. During the arms race, more sophisticated weapons and delivery systems would pack a greater punch. For example, each side developed the ability to deliver multiple warheads in a single rocket (MIRVs) and release them at different locations.



SOURCE 2.12 The mushroom cloud is one of the defining features of a nuclear blast, which has three phases: the blast, the heat and the nuclear fallout.

The significance of the arms race to superpower rivalry

In the context of superpower rivalry, the arms race was a significant battle for military supremacy during the Cold War. The search for a weapon that would provide a deterrent against one side launching a significant attack meant that an ever-increasing share of the Soviet and United States domestic budgets were spent on research and development of offensive weapons technology. Some estimates put the total US spend on development of its nuclear program between 1940 and 1989 at US\$5.5 trillion dollars. It is estimated that 7 per cent of that was spent on the development of the weapons themselves and over 50 per cent on the delivery capabilities, including rockets, bombers and submarines.

For the four years following World War II, the United States enjoyed a monopoly on the nuclear bomb. This put it in a strong bargaining position and it proposed the Baruch Plan to halt the development of nuclear weapons. The Soviets saw it as a way of shutting down their own program and rejected the plan. Once the Soviets achieved a successful test with the 'First Lightning' project, the Soviets and Americans scrambled to create more weapons and build up their stockpiles. This only led to both sides attempting to ramp up production and commenced the search for more powerful weapons.

The Baruch Plan

Soon after Truman ordered the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was clear for the world to see the destructive power of nuclear weapons. In an effort to avoid an arms race with the Soviets, some in the American administration, such as Secretary of War Henry Stimson, argued that the United States should share its nuclear knowledge with the Soviets. Others, such as George Kennan, argued against giving up the monopoly.

As a result, the United States presented the Baruch Plan to the United Nations on 15 June 1946, which was an attempt to regulate and limit the spread of nuclear technology in the world. The Baruch Plan proposed that all scientific knowledge should be exchanged between nations for peaceful purposes only. But the main purpose of the proposal was to eliminate all nuclear weapons from national arsenals and to create an agency for inspections.

The Soviet Union rejected the plan, believing that the United States was proposing the measure from a position of strength.

In January 1950, Truman announced that the United States would attempt to build a hydrogen bomb – a weapon that he called the super bomb. In November 1952 'Ivy Mike' was detonated in the Pacific islands. The explosion was massive with a force equal to 10 million tons of TNT. The initial fireball from the explosion itself had a radius of more than 3 kilometres and rose to a height of 17 kilometres within 1.5 minutes. Within a few minutes the flame stretched 41 kilometres into the sky. The following August, the Soviets tested a bomb of their own. It became clear to all that more weapons of greater destructive power would shape the rivalry. Coupled with this, the development of ICBMs meant that nuclear weapons could be delivered with very little warning.

It was remarkable that a single misstep by a leader or a miscommunication could unleash so much catastrophe on the world. In fact, many on both sides of the conflict assumed that a nuclear confrontation would become the reality one day. After the 1963 Cuban Missile Crisis, when the world stood at the brink of nuclear war, two significant developments took place. First, a direct hotline was

set up between the Kremlin and the White House so that the Soviet and American leaders could speak directly in the event of a war. Second, the incident gave rise to nuclear disarmament talks. In August 1963 a partial test ban treaty was signed as a first step towards limiting nuclear weapons.

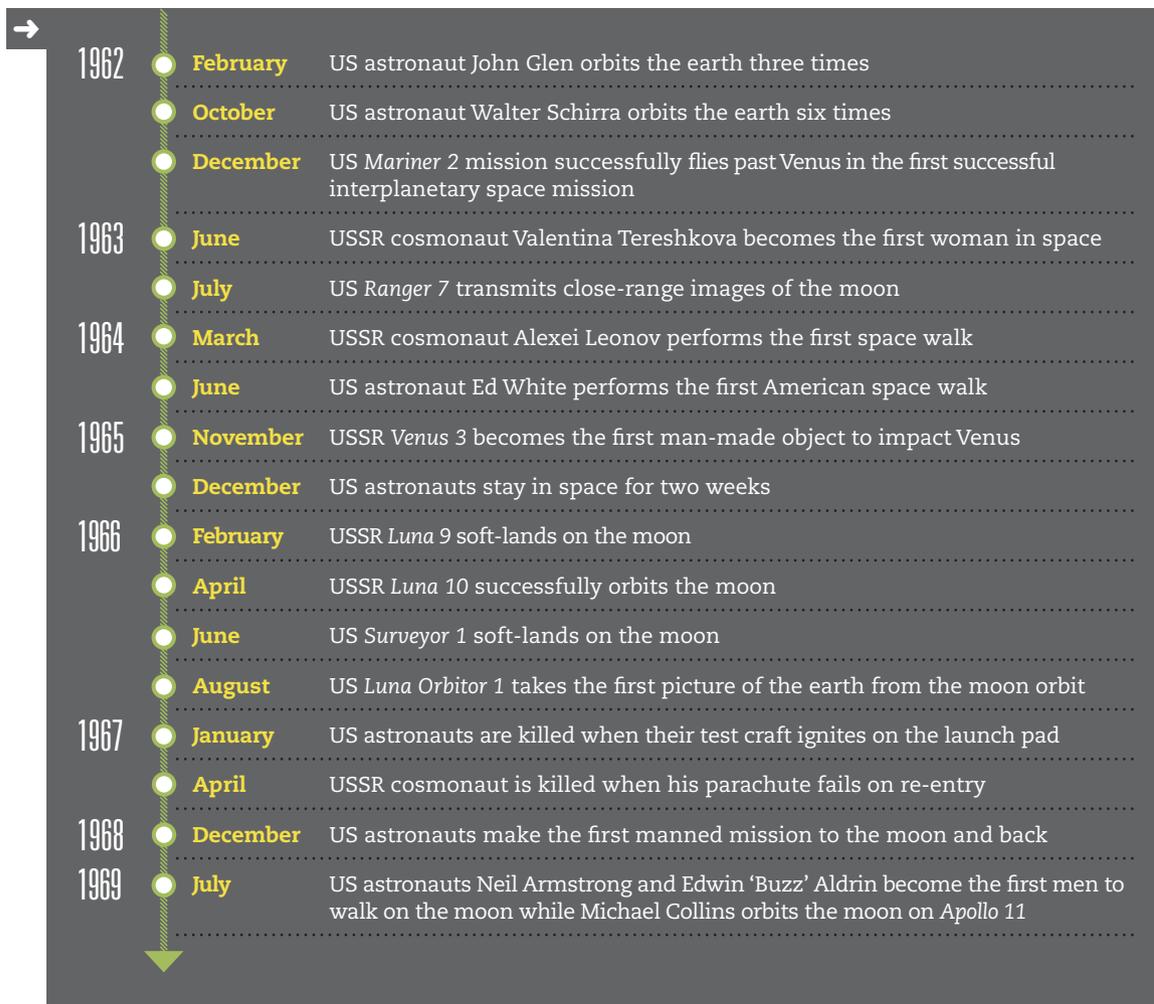
- 1 How did nuclear weapons change the character of arms races?
- 2 Draw a cartoon that outlines the differences between 'Little Boy' and the 'Tsar bomb'.
- 3 Explain the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD.
- 4 How aware were political leaders of the destructive power of the bomb?
- 5 View a *Duck and Cover* film from the early 1950s. Outline the advice given to students to follow in the event of a nuclear attack.
- 6 Explain the features of a nuclear detonation.
- 7 To what extent was the arms race a significant feature of superpower rivalry during the Cold War?

Superpower rivalry: the space race

Space became the new frontier in the rivalry between the Soviets and Americans during the 1950s. Going into space represented prestigious developments in each side's scientific and technological programs. And while the Americans held the initial lead in the arms race, the Soviet Union's emphasis on building rockets helped it pull ahead and reach a number of milestones before the United States.

The space race

1957	● October	USSR <i>Sputnik 1</i> delivers the first satellite into space
	● November	USSR launches <i>Laika</i> the dog into space
1958	● January	USA successfully launches its first satellite into orbit, <i>Explorer 1</i>
	● March	USA launches <i>Vanguard 1</i> into space, the first solar-powered satellite
	● October	USA establishes the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA)
1959	● January	USSR launches <i>Luna 1</i> , the first object to get close to the moon
	● March	USA launches <i>Pioneer 4</i> , on a trajectory towards the moon
	● April	USA announces the <i>Mercury 7</i> – a group of astronauts chosen as the first to go into space
	● September	USSR launches <i>Luna 2</i> , the first man-made object to reach the surface of the moon
	● October	USSR launches <i>Luna 3</i> , which orbits and photographs the moon
1960	● August	USA launches <i>Discoverer XIV</i> , the first spy satellite
1961	● April	USSR launches Yuri Gagarin, the first man into space
	● May	USA launches Alan Shepherd, the first American into space
		US President John F Kennedy announces the ambition to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade



- 1 What does a reading of the timeline reveal about the space race between the USSR and the USA?
- 2 Which side was faster to develop space technology? Give examples.
- 3 From your reading of the timeline, who won the space race? Justify your answer with examples.

The impetus for the space race was the arms race. The need to develop weapons delivery technology such as the ICBMs had led scientists in surprising directions. For the Soviets, launching a rocket into space meant the United States was no longer out of reach. Moreover, the precision with which scientists could control the speed and trajectory of a missile and rocket implied that the prospect of delivering a nuclear weapon to its intended target was becoming increasingly likely. And so, the space race was on.

The first milestone in the space race came as a significant shock to the Americans. The Russian *Sputnik* (which translates as 'Earth's travelling companion') program delivered the first satellite into space in October 1957 and a month later, a satellite containing the small dog called Laika was launched. In September 1959, *Luna 2* was launched by the Russians to become the first man-made object to reach the surface of the moon. One month later, the *Luna 3* orbited the moon, taking photographs of its surface.



SOURCE 2.13 A British newspaper headline, December 1957, ridiculing the Vanguard mission.

The United States was humiliated by early Russian gains. The initial American attempts at closing the space race gap added to the embarrassing sense of failure. When the Vanguard program failed to launch on its first attempt in December 1957, some media outlets ridiculed the attempt with headlines such as 'Kapotnik!' or 'Flopnik!'. Film footage of the rocket getting only a few feet into the air and then exploding before collapsing only added to the humiliation. In July 1958, Eisenhower created NASA to be at the forefront of the United States' move into space.

The most significant Soviet achievement was in April 1961, when the Soviets successfully launched their first man into space. The Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin orbited the earth onboard *Vostok 1* for 108 minutes. The English translation of *Vostok* is 'eastern dawn', and the head Russian scientist was at pains to point out the symbolism of the name in the press conference that followed the mission's success. In other words, he believed that the new age would be a Soviet age.



SOURCE 2.14 Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit in space.

Yuri Gagarin

The Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit the earth. In a press conference four days later, he spoke about his experiences aboard *Vostok 1*.

‘During the flight, I ate and drank water, maintaining a continuous radio contact with Earth over several channels, as well as over the telephone and telegraph. I observed the surrounding area, I followed the operation of the installations aboard the spaceship, I reported to Earth and recorded observations and other data in my log book as well as on a tape recorder.

My state of being during the entire period of weightlessness was superb ... I am immensely glad that my beloved fatherland was the first in history to penetrate cosmos. The first airplane, the first satellite, the first cosmic spaceship and the first manned flight into space, these are the stages on the great road of my fatherland toward the conquest of the mysteries of nature.’

Yuri Gagarin's First Speech about his flight into space, *The Atlantic*, 12 April 2011, www.theatlantic.com

QUESTIONS

- 1 Make a list of the technical duties of Gagarin during his first trip into space.
- 2 What evidence is there of Gagarin's pride in the Soviet space program?

The Apollo missions – a man on the moon

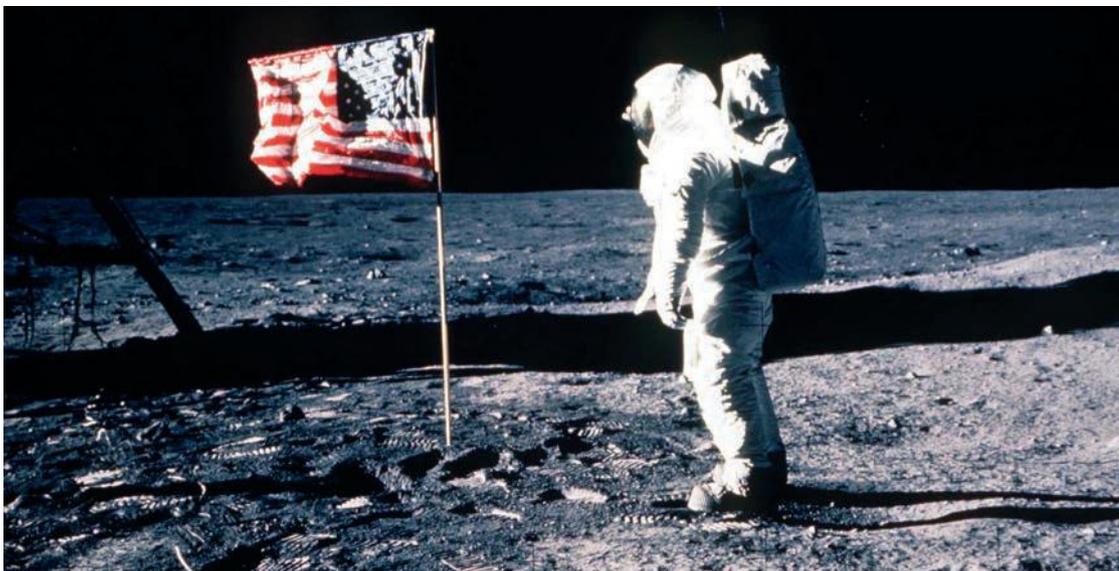
In 1962, Kennedy committed America to a space program that promised a man on the moon by the end of the decade. He informed a group of scientists of his intention to lead the space race rather than fall behind in it, and he vowed that exploration of space would be conducted in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding rather than filling space with destructive weapons. He concluded,

“ But if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon 240 000 miles away from the control station in Houston a giant rocket ... and do all this and do it right and do it first before this decade is out – then we must be bold. ”

John F Kennedy, Speech at Rice University, 12 September 1962, explore.rice.edu.



Kennedy's space
race speech



Getty Images/Rolls Press/Popperfoto

SOURCE 2.15 The United States realised President Kennedy's vision of having the first man to walk on the moon on 20 July 1969.

The Apollo missions were designed to send American astronauts onto the surface of the moon and therefore help the Americans pull ahead in the space race. On 20 July 1969, when Neil Armstrong stepped off the *Eagle* lunar module onto the surface of the moon, uttering the now-famous words, 'That's one small step for a man. One giant leap for mankind', Kennedy's dream was finally achieved. It is estimated that more than US\$25 billion was spent on the Apollo missions, with 17 flights to the moon – not all of them successful.

- 1 Identify the five most significant events in the space race between 1957 and 1969 and give reasons for your choices.
- 2 To what extent was the space race an extension of the arms race?

The Berlin Wall crisis, 1961

By virtue of its geography, the city of Berlin had come to symbolise the Cold War. After the blockade and airlift in 1948–49 had led to the division of East and West Germany, and Berlin along with it, any glance at a map would show that the city was located on an 'island of capitalism in a sea of communism'. West Berlin was connected to the rest of Europe by road, rail and canal corridors and the presence of Western military personnel ensured its ongoing protection. Anyone with a desire to leave the Eastern bloc simply had to make their way to West Berlin and on to freedom. As it was, 3.5 million people in the Eastern bloc took the opportunity to leave in the years leading up to 1961 in the search for better futures and higher living standards. By 1956, 30 000 young people per month were defecting through the city – many of them the brightest and most highly educated.

To prevent a continuing large-scale emigration from the socialist bloc, the East German authorities commenced construction of what they called the 'Anti-Fascist Protective Wall' – a misnomer that implied the structure was constructed to keep West Berliners out rather than preventing East Germans from leaving. West Berlin mayor Willy Brandt branded it a 'wall of shame'. Whatever its name, the wall was responsible for dividing the city for 28 years until it was opened on 9 November 1989, and it cost the lives of at least 139 people who tried to escape over it.

But the crisis over the Berlin Wall was much larger. It revived earlier Cold War rivalries and demonstrated the ongoing tensions over the place of Germany in the postwar order. Indeed, some historians have regarded the episode as Khrushchev attempting to force the West into negotiations over West Germany. Initially, it was a clumsy attempt by Khrushchev to demand American withdrawal from West Berlin.



The Berlin Wall

Background to the crisis

The crisis began three years earlier, in 1958, when Khrushchev made an attempt to resolve ongoing divisions over Germany. During the crisis of 1948, the city had been permanently divided and Khrushchev announced that he would disregard any previous agreements made about Berlin. He wanted the four powers to conclude a peace treaty with Germany to finally resolve the divisions, and threatened to hand over West Berlin to the control of the East German government unless an agreement could be made within six months. Economically prosperous, the citizens of West Berlin enjoyed a standard of living and freedom that was the envy of the East. Berlin provided both a symbol of capitalist prosperity and a contrast to the low living standards of those in the East. In other words, the city was an ongoing embarrassment to the communists. Moreover, the exodus of defectors had angered Khrushchev.

But it was not just pride on the line. West Germany's membership of NATO since 1955 and its ability to be part of an alliance that had nuclear weapons made Khrushchev increasingly nervous. In November 1958 he delivered a speech at a Soviet-Polish meeting in which he accused the West of trying to 'whip up military passions' in the East. The speech displayed some paranoia, comparing the actions of the West with Hitler's eastern policy prior to World War II, and Khrushchev threatened certain defeat of the Western powers. He announced,



“Hitler in his time also did everything to fan war hysteria in order to prepare the ground for an attack on the Soviet Union. However, it is well known how it all ended. It is not hard to imagine the fate of those who would try to unleash new aggression against the socialist states.”

Khrushchev, November 1958, germanhistorydocs.gwi.dc.org.

Khrushchev ended his speech with a call to free West Berlin from the American 'imperialists'.

Not one to give in to ultimatums, President Eisenhower's response to the speech was to strengthen his support for West Berlin. At the Geneva conference in 1959, Khrushchev accepted the principle of West Berlin independence but believed that the United States should withdraw

its military presence. Such a move would give a green light for the Soviets to dominate the Western sector, and Khrushchev's proposal was simply not palatable to the Americans.

The search for a resolution over the fate of Berlin failed, and negotiations were placed on hold after an American U2 spy plane was shot down over Soviet airspace. The question was deferred to the new President John F Kennedy when he met Khrushchev in Vienna in June 1961.

The Vienna meeting was remarkable. Khrushchev stated that ongoing tensions of a divided Germany threatened to lead the powers into a third world war, and he demanded that the United States withdraw from Berlin within six months. Kennedy's response was just as hardnosed. He increased the size of US forces in Berlin by 150 000 men, as well as the city's military budget. Like Eisenhower before him, Kennedy was unlikely to betray any American commitment to West Berliners.

Putting up the Berlin Wall

The tension between Kennedy and Khrushchev escalated. Neither side wanted to go to war over Berlin, as it had little strategic importance. When Berliners woke up on 13 August 1961, barbed wire had been laid across parts of the city and families unlucky enough to be in different parts of the city were divided. Over the coming days, concrete walls were erected and guards and dogs patrolled the border.

A concrete barrier, 3.6 metres high, physically divided the city. With 302 guard towers, the wall zig zagged through the city for 43 kilometres. In fact, it was two walls separated by a so-called 'death strip' that was filled with



SOURCE 2.16 Khrushchev (right) and Kennedy (left) meet at the Vienna Conference in June 1961. The crises over Berlin and Cuba demonstrated the restraint of both leaders.



SOURCE 2.17 The Berlin Wall was erected in August 1961 in response to large numbers of people flowing out of the Eastern bloc through East Berlin.

patrolling guards and dogs, barbed wire and later, electric fences. At some points, communist buildings formed part of the wall.

Just as the city of Berlin symbolised superpower tensions, the wall itself came to be the physical representation of the Cold War. The barrier divided East and West physically as well as ideologically.

Historians' assessment of the Berlin Wall

SOURCE A

'[The Berlin Wall is] valuable because the building of the Wall was not only the result of the communist regime's will to stop the flight of its own people to the West but also the result of the West's inability to effectively counter what is now universally acknowledged as an unbearable crime. The Wall is a lesson in the history of tyranny but also in the inability to face up to tyrants. The mistakes of those who allowed the Wall to be built may be repeated in the future. Learning what happened before, during and after the building of the Wall in 1961 may help us avoid the emergence of similar repressive artefacts in the future.'

Professor Eshel, Stanford University, "Berlin Wall and the Cold War", November 2009
<http://shc.stanford.edu/news/research/berlin-wall-and-cold-war>.

SOURCE B

'The Berlin Wall was an ideological defeat of colossal proportions for the Soviet Union and world communism. The wall became a symbol of the Cold War, concrete evidence of the inability of East Germany to win the loyalty of its inhabitants. It was also seen as hard proof that Soviet-style socialism was losing its economic competition with capitalism.'

David S Painter, *The Cold War: An International History*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, p. 151.

SOURCE C

'But the Berlin Wall was a tourniquet on the East German economy and eased pressure to resolve the broader question. Khrushchev noted that the Allies did not try to destroy the wall or challenge GDR control of East Berlin. Indeed, Kennedy quickly grasped that the wall was defensive. While deplorable, it offered propaganda advantages and did not threaten West Berlin.'

John Lamberton Harper, *The Cold War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, p. 131.

QUESTIONS

- 1 According to Source A, why did the Berlin Wall provide a valuable historical lesson?
- 2 According to Source B, why was the Berlin Wall a 'defeat of colossal proportions'?
- 3 Read Source C. Why was the Berlin Wall useful for both Khrushchev and Kennedy?

The Checkpoint Charlie standoff

On 27 October 1961, just months after its construction, the Berlin Wall was the focus of one of the most intense standoffs between the Americans and the Soviets – a standoff that almost brought the world to the brink of war. A disagreement about to whom Americans should show their diplomatic papers – the East German or Soviet border guards – led to American and Soviet tanks facing off 100 metres apart for 16 hours, as each group of soldiers awaited orders from their government. According to the postwar agreements, American officials should have been given unrestricted access to East Berlin – and they saw no reason why the construction of the Berlin Wall should hinder that access. When one official on his way to a state opera in the East was harassed for a passport by an

East German border guard, the official insisted that only Soviet guards had the authority to check official papers and he was turned back.

The American General Lucius Clay, who was in the city on behalf of Kennedy to deal with the crisis, ordered US army personnel to accompany the next diplomat into the East. When the convoy was again stopped by an East German border guard, Clay ordered tanks to stand within 50 metres on the American side of **Checkpoint Charlie**. Over the next 16 hours, tanks faced off against each other, reportedly blowing black smoke and revving their engines in attempts to intimidate the other side.

Eventually, both sides were ordered to back down by their respective governments, and each withdrew their tanks one after another. Neither the United States nor the Soviets wanted to go to war over Berlin, and this was the first time that diplomatic back channels were opened between Kennedy and Khrushchev. These channels would prove enormously valuable in defusing the Cuban Missile Crisis one year later.



Getty Images/Popperfoto

Checkpoint Charlie

The Western name for the main Berlin Wall crossing point between East and West Berlin.



Berlin's place in the Cold War



Checkpoint Charlie standoff

SOURCE 2.18 On 27 October 1961, a 16-hour standoff between US and Soviet tanks brought the superpowers to the brink of war. In the end, both Kennedy and Khrushchev decided that Berlin was not strategically significant enough to risk war.

- 1 Why was West Berlin an embarrassment to the Soviets?
- 2 Willy Brandt called the Berlin Wall the 'wall of shame'. What did the East German government call the wall and what did this imply?
- 3 What political factors contributed to the crisis over Berlin?
- 4 What objectives did Khrushchev put forward at the Vienna Summit and how did Kennedy respond?
- 5 Create a photo essay of the Berlin Wall crisis, annotating each image used.
- 6 Outline the key events in the Checkpoint Charlie standoff.

Cuba, 1962

Twelve months after Checkpoint Charlie, the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. Indeed, the Cuban Missile Crisis was the most dramatic and potentially dangerous conflict flashpoint in the Cold War and was the closest the world came to a direct nuclear confrontation between the two superpowers. US President Kennedy seemed willing to deploy his atomic arsenal to resolve the crisis, which lasted for 13 days in October 1962. Both sides stared each other down in a dangerous game of **brinkmanship**. The complex negotiations and restraint required to defuse the tension can be seen in an exchange of letters between Kennedy and Khrushchev, both of whom shared an understanding of the consequences of a nuclear strike.

brinkmanship

The act of bringing another power to the point of war and then retreating.

Background to the conflict

The tiny island nation of Cuba is about 150 kilometres off the United States coast. On 1 January 1959 the nationalist leader Fidel Castro seized power in a revolution after defeating the long term US-backed President Fulgencio Batista. The United States had long dominated the nation and the region economically. American investment in infrastructure and sugar in particular meant that huge profits moved offshore to the United States, leaving many Cubans impoverished.

Tensions between the United States and Cuba grew when Castro established a trade relationship with the Soviet Union and began to **nationalise** all US-owned businesses in 1960. This included seizing the assets of huge American interests including banks, sugar plantations, mines and oil refineries. In all, \$1.8 billion of American assets were nationalised, including household name businesses such as Coca-Cola and Exxon. Castro's actions led to a trade embargo with Cuba that was only lifted in 2016.

nationalise

To transfer ownership of an industry from a private company to the government.

In April 1961, tensions increased again when a covert American operation sought to remove Castro from power. A group of 1400 Cuban exiles, trained by the CIA, landed on the Bay of Pigs in a



Getty Images/PhotoQuest

SOURCE 2.19 From left, Cuban revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara (centre) share a laugh with Russian politician and Soviet First Deputy Chairman Anastas Mikoyan during a state visit, Havana, Cuba, 1960.



Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 2.20 US President John F Kennedy was forced to admit that the American government had planned and supported the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

botched invasion that ended in failure. In exchange for the return of the invaders, Castro demanded \$52 million worth of medical and other supplies for his nation. The incident was an embarrassment to Kennedy and it set the tone for his relationship with Khrushchev. The Soviet leader was able to score a number of victories over his rival, with the Americans unable to stop the construction of the Berlin Wall four months later.

It is worth noting that in the early years of the Cuban Revolution, Castro never declared his allegiance to communism. Reaching out to the Soviet Union was a pragmatic measure in order to ensure the stability of Cuba, and it was only in late 1961 that Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist. For the first time, a communist nation had emerged on the doorstep of the United States. It seemed that for all the protests against the Soviet sphere of influence and fighting for the principle of national self-determination, the United States found itself with an ideological adversary as a neighbour. Nonetheless, the Americans appealed to their long-standing policy of the **Monroe Doctrine** to assert their authority and leadership of Latin America.

During 1961 and 1962, with the embargo in place, Cuba found itself increasingly reliant on Soviet military and economic support. The episode at the Bay of Pigs had demonstrated to Castro the lengths that the Americans would go to in order to remove him from power. For the Americans, the new development in the Cold War was serious. In fact, it was so dire that, unlike the Berlin crisis only a year later, Kennedy was willing to consider using nuclear weapons to resolve this crisis.

On 16 October 1962, a US spy plane flying over Cuba identified the presence of ICBMs, and so sparked off a remarkable chain of events that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war.

Monroe Doctrine

A cornerstone of US foreign policy from 1823, the Monroe Doctrine opposed European expansion in the Americas.

The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962

- 1962
- **16 October** US spy plane identifies ICBMs in Cuba
 - **18 October** Kennedy meets with Soviet foreign minister Gromyko and advises him that America will not tolerate Soviet missiles in Cuba
 - **19 October** Kennedy meets with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff
 - **20 October** Additional missile bases are discovered in Cuba
 - **21 October** Kennedy orders a naval quarantine of Cuba to prevent Soviet missiles reaching the island
 - **22 October** Kennedy announces naval quarantine in an address to the American people
 - **23 October** Soviet missiles look to be operational and other Latin American states support the blockade of Cuba
 - **24 October** Soviet ships reach but do not cross the blockade line
 - **25 October** US Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson confronts the Soviets at the UN Assembly
 - **26 October** Khrushchev sends a letter offering to remove the missiles in return for an American guarantee not to invade Cuba
 - **27 October** U2 spy plane is shot down over Cuba
 - **28 October** Soviet Union announces removal of its missiles from Cuba

The events of the Cuban Missile Crisis

On 16 October 1962, months after suspicions were first raised about Soviet activity in Cuba, a U2 spy plane flying high over the tiny island's airspace found missile sites under construction. Assurances from the Soviets months earlier that they were not furnishing Cuba with missiles were found to be false. After the Bay of Pigs fiasco 18 months earlier, Castro was anxious to deter further US invasions of Cuba and there was a secret plan with Khrushchev to install nuclear weapons there.

Of course, the presence of nuclear weapons on Cuba was unacceptable to the Americans. President Kennedy assembled his advisers and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who laid out a range of possible options to deal with the crisis. Among the more hawkish responses were the bombing of the sites and the invasion of Cuba. Some argued that diplomatic pressure should be placed on the Cubans and Soviets. Finally, Kennedy decided on a quarantine of Soviet ships bound for Cuba. The choice of the term 'quarantine' over 'blockade' was a deliberate legal ploy to prevent a declaration of war.

Kennedy sent Khrushchev a letter and then appeared on national television to denounce the acts and announce a quarantine. As part of the speech, Kennedy promised a massive response should the Soviets attack America or its neighbours. He said, 'It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union'.¹⁵ Kennedy was clearly threatening nuclear war should the Soviets strike first.

Over the following days, letters were exchanged between Kennedy and Khrushchev which reveal each side's distrust of the other, and their keen awareness of the consequences of a nuclear exchange. American forces were put on DEFCON 3 and then DEFCON 2, which were the third- and second-



SOURCE 2.21 The installation of Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba triggered one of the most intense conflicts of the Cold War.

highest existing security alert measures. This meant that the full armed forces could be deployed within six hours and the nuclear missile defence shields were on high alert.

The quarantine angered Khrushchev, and he saw it as an aggressive act of war and a denial of Cuba's independence. He referred to the 'quarantine' as piracy and a breach of international maritime law. In a dangerous game of brinkmanship, Khrushchev ordered his ships to break the quarantine line. But on 24 and 25 October, the only ships he let up to the line were those without offensive weapons and they were allowed to proceed. This was Khrushchev's way of saving face.

Adlai Stevenson at the United Nations

The United States' Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, delivered a stinging rebuke of the Soviet Union at the United Nations Security Council. In the speech he outlined the United States' position and recoiled at the idea that his country was to blame for the crisis. Below is a famous exchange between the US and Soviet Ambassadors.

Stevenson: 'Do you, Ambassador Zorin, deny that the USSR has placed, and is placing, medium- and intermediate-range missiles and sites in Cuba? Yes or no? – don't wait for the translation – yes or no?'

Zorin: 'I am not in an American courtroom, sir ... You will have your answer in due course.'

Stevenson: 'I am prepared to wait for an answer until Hell freezes over, if that is your decision. I am also prepared to present the evidence in this room.'

UN Security Council Address on Soviet Missiles in Cuba, delivered 25 October 1962, www.americanrhetoric.com.



Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 2.22 Adlai Stevenson's speech at the UN Security Council on 25 October 1962 is regarded as one of the great performances by a US ambassador. Here he points out Soviet missile sites identified in reconnaissance photographs.

By 26 October it appeared that nothing short of an airstrike and invasion would end the crisis. But on that same day, a new letter appeared from Khrushchev through a back channel. A Soviet agent had contacted the ABC News reporter John Scali with an offer to the Americans – the Soviets would be willing to remove the bases in return for a guarantee not to invade Cuba. The next day a second message came through with tougher terms. Khrushchev wanted to add to the agreement that the United States remove its missile bases from Turkey.

The Americans decided to ignore the second message because they did not want the removal of these missiles to be part of a public agreement. However, the President's brother, Robert Kennedy, secretly met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and agreed to remove the missiles as long as it was not made public.

On the morning of 28 October, Khrushchev made an announcement that the missile bases in Cuba would be dismantled. The crisis was over. The Soviets removed the bases, the Americans ended their quarantine a month later and in April 1963 they removed their Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

Letters between Khrushchev and Kennedy

A series of letters exchanged between Khrushchev and Kennedy during the crisis offer a revealing insight into the thinking of both men in a context in which each side knew very little of the motives of the other. Here are some extracts from the letters.

SOURCE A: LETTER FROM KENNEDY TO KHRUSHCHEV, 22 OCTOBER 1962

In this letter, Kennedy gives advance warning to Khrushchev about his announcement of a naval quarantine to prevent Soviet ships arriving in Cuba.

'In our discussions and exchanges on Berlin and other international questions, the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your Government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the United States in any given situation, since I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would, in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war which it is crystal clear no country could win and which could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world, including the aggressor ... The rapid development of long-range missile bases and other offensive weapons systems in Cuba has proceeded. I must tell you that the United States is determined that this threat to the security of this hemisphere be removed.'

SOURCE B: LETTER FROM KHRUSHCHEV TO KENNEDY, 23 OCTOBER 1962

In this extract, Khrushchev objects to the quarantine by stating that it is against international law.

'I must say frankly that measures indicated in your statement [editor note: the naval blockade] constitute a serious threat to peace and to the security of nations ... The United States has openly taken the path of grossly violating the United Nations Charter, path of violating international norms of freedom of navigation on the high seas ... We affirm that the armaments which are in Cuba, regardless of the classification to which they may belong, are intended solely for defensive purposes, in order to secure the Republic of Cuba against the attack of an aggressor ... I hope that the United States Government will display wisdom and renounce the actions pursued by you, which may lead to catastrophic consequences for world peace.'

SOURCE C: LETTER FROM KENNEDY TO KHRUSHCHEV, 23 OCTOBER 1962

In this letter, Kennedy blames Khrushchev for the crisis and says that he will raise the issue with the UN Security Council.

'I have received your letter of October twenty-third. I think you will recognize that the step which started the current chain of events was the action of your Government in secretly furnishing long-range missiles to Cuba ... I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it already is.'



SOURCE D: LETTER FROM KHRUSHCHEV TO KENNEDY, 24 OCTOBER 1962

In this lengthy letter, Khrushchev is indignant at Kennedy's quarantine. He rejects the authority of the Organization of American States (OAS), which has condemned Soviet actions in Cuba, and repeats an earlier claim that Kennedy is violating international law. He also accuses Kennedy of taking a harder line than usual because of domestic elections.

'You, Mr. President, are not declaring a quarantine, but rather are setting forth an ultimatum and threatening that if we do not give in to your demands you will use force. Consider what you are saying! And you want to persuade me to agree to this! What would it mean to agree to these demands? It would mean guiding oneself in one's relations with other countries not by reason, but by submitting to arbitrariness. You are no longer appealing to reason, but wish to intimidate us.

... Therefore, Mr. President, if you coolly weigh the situation which has developed, not giving way to passions, you will understand that the Soviet Union cannot fail to reject the arbitrary demands of the United States. When you confront us with such conditions, try to put yourself in our place and consider how the United States would react to these conditions. I do not doubt that if someone attempted to dictate similar conditions to you—the United States—you would reject such an attempt. And we also say – no.

The Soviet Government considers that the violation of the freedom to use international waters and international air space is an act of aggression which pushes mankind toward the abyss of a world nuclear-missile war. Therefore, the Soviet Government cannot instruct the captains of Soviet vessels bound for Cuba to observe the orders of American naval forces blockading that Island. Our instructions to Soviet mariners are to observe strictly the universally accepted norms of navigation in international waters and not to retreat one step from them.'

SOURCE E: LETTER FROM KENNEDY TO KHRUSHCHEV, 25 OCTOBER 1962

In this letter, Kennedy outlines the sequence of events that have led to this point. He claims that the Soviets gave him the 'most explicit assurances' in September that they were not putting offensive weapons on Cuba.

'I have received your letter of October 24, and I regret very much that you still do not appear to understand what it is that has moved us in this matter ... I ask you to recognize clearly, Mr. Chairman, that it was not I who issued the first challenge in this case, and that in the light of this record these activities in Cuba required the responses I have announced.'

SOURCE F: LETTER FROM KHRUSHCHEV TO KENNEDY, 26 OCTOBER 1962

In this, the longest letter, Khrushchev begins by stating his opposition to all wars, and disputes that Soviet weapons on Cuba are meant for offensive reasons. Khrushchev says that each side could certainly wipe the other out in the event of a nuclear strike. He tells Kennedy that the ships bound for Cuba have no weapons on them and to stop them would be an act of piracy. Khrushchev proposes that both sides adopt a UN solution to the problem, before complaining about the Bay of Pigs invasion. He offers Kennedy a deal to declare that the US will not invade Cuba in return for the removal of the missiles.

'I see, Mr. President, that you too are not devoid of a sense of anxiety for the fate of the world understanding, and of what war entails. What would a war give you? You are threatening us with war. But you well know that the very least which you would receive in reply would be that you would experience the same consequences as those which you sent us. And that must be clear to us, people invested with authority, trust, and responsibility. We must not succumb to intoxication and petty passions, regardless of whether elections are impending in this or that country, or not impending ...

Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.'





SOURCE G: TELEGRAM FROM KENNEDY TO KHRUSHCHEV, 27 OCTOBER 1962

In this telegram, Kennedy clarifies Khrushchev's proposal of removing the missiles in return for a United States lifting of the quarantine and declaration not to invade Cuba.

'But the first ingredient, let me emphasize, is the cessation of work on missile sites in Cuba and measures to render such weapons inoperable, under effective international guarantees. The continuation of this threat, or a prolonging of this discussion concerning Cuba by linking these problems to the broader questions of European and world security, would surely lead to an intensification of the Cuban crisis and a grave risk to the peace of the world.'

SOURCE H: LETTER FROM KHRUSHCHEV TO KENNEDY, 27 OCTOBER 1962

This second letter demands tougher terms than the ones accepted by Kennedy.

'You are disturbed over Cuba. You say that this disturbs you because it is 90 miles by sea from the coast of the United States of America. But Turkey adjoins us; our sentries patrol back and forth and see each other. Do you consider, then, that you have the right to demand security for your own country and the removal of the weapons you call offensive, but do not accord the same right to us? You have placed destructive missile weapons, which you call offensive, in Turkey, literally next to us. How then can recognition of our equal military capacities be reconciled with such unequal relations between our great states? This is irreconcilable ... I therefore make this proposal: We are willing to remove from Cuba the means which you regard as offensive. We are willing to carry this out and to make this pledge in the United Nations. Your representatives will make a declaration to the effect that the United States, for its part, considering the uneasiness and anxiety of the Soviet State, will remove its analogous means from Turkey.'

Sources A–H: Official correspondence between Nikita Khrushchev and John F Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962, John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, microsites.jfklibrary.org.

QUESTIONS

- 1 According to Source A, what point is Kennedy making about the nature of nuclear war and the United States' determination in the matter over Cuba?
- 2 In Source B, how does Khrushchev view the American announcement of a quarantine?
- 3 In Source C, what attitude does Kennedy display?
- 4 In Source D, do you agree with Khrushchev's interpretation of Kennedy's actions as an ultimatum and intimidation? Why or why not?
- 5 What conclusions does Khrushchev make in Source D?
- 6 What point is Kennedy trying to assert in Source E?
- 7 In Source F, the attitude displayed by Khrushchev in previous letters changes. What accounts for this change?
- 8 In Source G, what conditions does Kennedy impose for an agreement?
- 9 In Source H, what reasons does Khrushchev give for the removal of American missiles from Turkey? Is this a fair exchange?
- 10 Write an essay in response to the following question: 'How useful are the letters between Khrushchev and Kennedy for the historian studying the Cuban Missile Crisis?'

The significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis is significant for a number of reasons:

- It was the first time that the superpowers nearly came to a direct nuclear confrontation.
- Kennedy regained favour on the international political stage. He had shown himself to be a strong international statesman.
- As a result of the failure to understand each other's intentions at the highest levels of government, a telephone 'hotline' was set up so that the United States and Soviet leaders could speak with each other in the event of a similar crisis in the future.
- Having stared a nuclear war in the face, both sides began to look for ways to limit the spread and build-up of nuclear weapons. In 1963, a Test Ban Treaty was signed and the process of disarmament began.
- Some historians regard the Cuban Missile Crisis as marking the beginning of détente.



Who was to blame for the Cuban Missile Crisis?



Cuban Missile Crisis

- 1 Explain the source of the tension between Cuba and the United States from 1959.
- 2 Outline the events of the Bay of Pigs invasion.
- 3 Explain Castro's path to communism.
- 4 Was it fair for the United States to appeal to the Monroe Doctrine at the same time as denying recognition of a Soviet sphere of influence on their own border states?
- 5 How was the crisis resolved?
- 6 What was the significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis for the Cold War?

Establishing the Eastern bloc

During the origins and development of the Cold War, a number of crises affected the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and again in 1968, and Hungary in 1956. As the Cold War developed, countries on the western border of the Soviet Union became increasingly vulnerable to communist interference. Indeed, despite promises of free elections in the months after the end of the war, communist regimes were established in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, East Germany and Yugoslavia. Below is a brief overview of the creation of communist states in three Eastern European countries.

POLAND

The Polish government-in-exile, led by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, spent most of the war years in London, being promised by Churchill and Roosevelt that their legitimacy and Polish territorial integrity would be respected after the war. However, by late 1944, Stalin had directed all matters about the future of Poland through the Polish Committee of National Liberation – the so-called Lublin Committee – a movement that had been dominated by Stalinists. Stalin invited the government-in-exile to join the movement at Yalta, but its influence would be greatly diminished. The Lublin Committee directed the controversial matter of borders and the hopes for free elections were soon dashed.

In the following months, government-in-exile figures were ruthlessly persecuted and sentenced to long prison terms. Mikołajczyk himself was persecuted and bullied out of the country by October 1946. In a series of referendums and elections, Polish sovereignty slowly leaked away and by 1949 it was effectively a puppet state of the Soviets.





CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Czech leader in-exile during the war, Edvard Beneš, signalled to Stalin that he would closely align his policies with those of the Soviets. This suited Stalin. The policies included the deportation of ethnic Germans and Hungarians from Czech territory, confiscation of large agricultural and industrial property, and building a strong military with close links to the Red Army.

Socialist parties were prominent in Czech politics, so Stalin did not wish to interfere too much until 1946, when the Soviets did not think Czech socialist reforms were going far enough. For example, the rich were still tolerated in society and an independently minded political system had tolerated pro-Western sentiment – a move that made Moscow uncomfortable.

In February 1948, a largely peaceful coup d'état was carried out and the Soviet-backed communists seized power. The coup was a warning to the West that the Soviets would not hesitate to force puppet states in countries who strayed too far away from Soviet orthodoxy.

HUNGARY

The Soviet occupation of Hungary in the years following the war was characterised by brutal repression. Confiscation of property, persecution of political leaders and the rape of women were common. It was no surprise that Stalinists received less than one-fifth of the vote in the first elections. Despite this, a coalition government formed by Zoltán Tildy was dominated by Stalinists in key positions, and eventually the Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi took power through a persistent process of what he called 'salami tactics', which meant slowly slicing away Hungarian rights.

Rákosi was a brutal Stalinist leader who took his cue from Moscow. Strong opposition from Hungarian anti-communist movements in 1956 was brutally repressed with the help of the Soviet Union. It was a sign that the Soviet Union would not tolerate dissent within the Eastern bloc.

Czechoslovakia, 1968

After the crises in Berlin and Cuba, a new level of cooperation took place between the Soviets and the Americans. Progress was made on a Limited Test Ban Treaty as both sides sought to reconsider the arms race in the context of the nuclear age. The next crisis would have to be dealt with by new leaders. In the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev emerged as leader after Khrushchev was removed in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In November 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas and was replaced by Lyndon B Johnson. The next crisis, which came just as tensions were relaxing between the superpowers, was a shock to everyone.

As a member of the Eastern bloc, Czechoslovakia was an important geopolitical ally for the Soviets. In the late 1960s, however, the country was experiencing political upheavals that threw its alliance with the Soviets into question.

Czechoslovakian communist leader Alexander Dubček came to power in January 1968. By the time he came to office, the Czechoslovakian economy was stagnant. The nation's wages were falling, its productivity was low and its production targets unrealistic.

Dubček's eight months in office were characterised by a series of pro-democratic reforms that came to be known as the **Prague Spring**. A fundamental aspect of this reform program concerned the freedoms of the individual. This point, at odds with Marxist-Leninism, made the Soviets and their Polish and East German neighbours nervous. This all came at a time when some western European nations, especially France and West Germany, were being destabilised by revolutionary fervour, creating a Europe-wide atmosphere of political volatility.



Prague Spring

Prague Spring

The democratic movement within Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Dubček's reforms were sweeping; he allowed independent trade unions, a free press and abolished censorship. He also struck a blow against the doctrine of the one-party state by allowing opposition political parties to form in Czechoslovakia. Democracy was in the air and this time it was being encouraged by the very communists who held power in a one-party state.

Dubček and his followers did not believe that the authority of the party should be based on the one-party system. The Czechoslovakian Communist Party supported the idea that 'authority must be won again and again by party activity ... to arouse socialist initiative and win over all the workers to communism through systematic persuasion and personal example'.¹⁶ Already, conservative elements in the party were attempting to suppress intellectuals and historians from investigating the Stalinist past.

The 'Two Thousand Words' Manifesto was published on 27 June 1968, and was an expression of the dissent within Czechoslovakia. Written by the intellectual Ludvík Vaculík, the document condemned party abuse and called on citizens to stage protests and strikes in an effort to rid the country of hardline conservative leaders. The document also criticised Moscow for its presumption to intervene in the development of Czechoslovakian socialism.

In July Dubček was summoned to a meeting of **Warsaw Pact** leaders. Knowing that it would be more of a dressing down than a discussion, Dubček refused to attend. In his absence the other states registered their disapproval of the growing liberalisation in Czechoslovakia. Dubček asked for bilateral talks with Moscow, to which Brezhnev agreed.

At Bratislava on 3 August 1968, Dubček and the Soviets agreed on the following understanding. The memorandum read, 'Our fraternal parties oppose ... anti-communist forces which aim at weakening the leading role of the working class ... We will never permit anyone to undermine the bases of the socialist regime'.¹⁷ The understanding finished with a commitment on both sides to resolve conflicts with mutual aid and support.

So it was met with some surprise when Soviet forces entered Czechoslovakia on 20 August to remove Dubček from power. The leader was kidnapped and flown off to Moscow, and conservative elements took over the party. That should have been the end of the matter. But the Czechoslovakian population commenced a protest of passive resistance.



The Prague Spring: Reporting on the Two Thousand Words manifesto

Warsaw Pact

The military alliance, led by the Soviet Union, established in 1955 as a counterbalance to the NATO alliance.

The Brezhnev Doctrine

The 'Prague Spring' gave rise to a new direction in Soviet foreign policy: the Brezhnev Doctrine. The crisis in Czechoslovakia had demonstrated that the Soviet Union would not hesitate to use its military might to crush pro-democracy reforms in the Eastern bloc and other parts of the world. It was a guarantee that would provide support to the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. Gorbachev effectively abandoned the doctrine in the 1980s, leading to pro-democracy demonstrations, which in turn led to multi-party elections, and ultimately the end of communism.



Brezhnev Doctrine

For some, Dubček's reforms did not go far enough. The playwright Václav Havel, who would become president of Czechoslovakia in 1989, asked, 'Why is it that the ideas put forward so far seem to sound so half-hearted? ... Let's be honest about this. You can only talk about democracy seriously when people occasionally have the opportunity of freely electing who is to govern them'.¹⁸ Havel went on to call for the release of the 80 000 political prisoners being held in Czechoslovakian jails.



Getty Images/Mondadori Portfolio

SOURCE 2.23 Soviet tanks roll into Wenceslas Square, Prague, on 20 August 1968.

The events of 1968 demonstrated that the Soviets were intent on maintaining power over the Eastern bloc. Reformers who had tried to deal with the intellectual problems of developing socialism in their own countries would be cast aside in the new Brezhnev era. While Khrushchev was about de-Stalinisation, the Brezhnev era might be regarded as an era of re-Stalinisation. In the words of Gaddis, ‘the old dictator’s ghost was not so easily exorcised after all’.¹⁹

LEONID BREZHNEV

Brezhnev was leader of the Soviet Union between 1964 and 1982. A deeply conservative leader, he resisted attempts to reform the communist system. His intervention in Czechoslovakia gave rise to the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine, a policy that committed Soviet military forces to counter reform movements in Eastern Europe. Brezhnev ruled over the Soviet Union during the time of détente. He used this period of a relaxation in tensions to achieve nuclear parity with the United

States, a move over which the right wing in the United States was deeply critical. Brezhnev’s efforts to build up Soviet nuclear weaponry stocks also contributed to the election of hardline anti-communist Ronald Reagan and a renewal of Cold War tensions.



Getty Images/Keystone-France

SOURCE 2.24 Leonid Brezhnev was leader of the Soviet Union between 1964 and 1982.

- 1 What actions did Dubček take to reform communism in Czechoslovakia?
- 2 How did the Eastern bloc countries respond to these attempts at reform?
- 3 Outline the developments of the Prague Spring from June to August 1968.

Conclusion



In the period between 1953 to 1968, political divisions between the superpowers were solidified and the Cold War reached increasingly dangerous levels. Tensions around Berlin and Cuba threatened to bring both sides into direct conflict, and given the build-up of powerful nuclear weapons, the United States and Soviet leaders became increasingly concerned over the dire consequences of nuclear war. A series of policy ideas, including containment, the domino theory and peaceful coexistence, guided foreign policy considerations and were influential in portraying the rival power as aggressive and expansionist.

The nuclear arms race and the space race developed during this period. By 1968 there were five members of the nuclear club and approximately 50 000 nuclear warheads capable of being delivered intercontinentally with stunning precision. The space race resulted in Soviet scientific and technological supremacy, with the Russians achieving a series of firsts, including the first satellite and the first man in orbit. At the end of the decade the space rivalry resulted in the United States landing the first man on the moon.

A series of crises over Berlin, Cuba and Czechoslovakia attested to the commitment of both sides to their respective ideologies. In effect, the old questions about spheres of influence were raised in each of these crises and the Soviets in Berlin and Czechoslovakia sought to defend their brand of socialism from democratic reforms. The crisis in Czechoslovakia gave birth to the Brezhnev Doctrine – a commitment to send in Soviet troops to prevent democratic forces from establishing themselves in the Eastern bloc.

Chapter summary

- Truman's policy of containment was extended by the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations as they dealt with a broadening Cold War.
- The Americans believed that communism represented a threat to neighbouring countries, giving rise to the domino theory.
- The period saw Khrushchev make a decisive break from Stalinism, but he was no less aggressive in his rhetoric towards the West.
- The development of the Cold War was characterised by the build-up of more powerful nuclear weapons, including hydrogen bombs, and delivery systems.
- The Cold War during this period was characterised by an arms race and a space race, where both sides battled for technological superiority.
- A series of crises in Berlin, Cuba and Czechoslovakia demonstrated each side's commitment to its ideology.

Additional resources

- Crampton, RJ, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century and After* (2nd Edition), Routledge, London, 1997.
- Fowkes, Ben, *Eastern Europe 1945–1969: From Stalinism to Stagnation*, Longman, Essex, 2000.
- Heller, Henry, *The Cold War and the New Imperialism: A Global History – 1945–2005*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2006.
- Magnusdottir, Rosa, "'Be Careful in America, Premier Khrushchev!'" Soviet Perceptions of Peaceful Coexistence with the United States in 1959' in *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol 47, no 1 (Jan–June 2006).

Endnotes

- 1–4 NSC-68 *United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, 14 April 1950, fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm.
- 5 Eisenhower, Dwight D, 'Military–Industrial Complex Speech', January 17 1961, avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp.
- 6 Christian, David, *Power and Privilege: The Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Challenge of Modernity*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1994, p. 325.
- 7 Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Cold War*, Penguin, London, 2005, p. 108.
- 8 Magnúsdóttir, Rosa, "'Be Careful in America, Premier Khrushchev!' Soviet Perceptions of Peaceful Coexistence with the United States in 1959", *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol 47, no 1, 2006, pp. 109–130.
- 9 Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 70.
- 10 Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 53.
- 11 Gaddis, *The Cold War*, pp. 64–65.
- 12 Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 65.
- 13 Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 66.
- 14 *The Cold War*, Episode 8: 'Sputnik 1949–1961', www.youtube.com.
- 15 John F Kennedy, 'Address on the Cuban Missile Crisis', 22 October 1962, sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1962kennedy-cuba.html.
- 16 *Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, 5 April 1968, cited in Fowkes, Ben, *Eastern Europe 1945–1969: From Stalinism to Stagnation*, Longman, Essex, 2000, p. 121.
- 17 Soviet memorandum, cited in Crampton, RJ, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century and After* (2nd Edition), Routledge, London, 1997, p. 335.
- 18 Fowkes, Ben, *Eastern Europe 1945–1969: From Stalinism to Stagnation*, Longman, Essex, 2000, pp. 122–123.
- 19 Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 109.

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONTENT RECALL

- 1 Outline the development of the policy of containment between 1945 and 1968.
- 2 Define the following terms: rollback, Mutually Assured Destruction, military–industrial complex and massive retaliation.

EXTENDED RESPONSE

- 3 How important was NSC-68 to United States perceptions of the Soviets in the development of the Cold War?
- 4 To what extent was the period between 1960 and 1963 the most dangerous in the Cold War?
- 5 Why did the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction become so important to maintaining a peaceful world?
- 6 Explain the importance of the domino theory in influencing American policy in Southeast Asia after 1955.
- 7 To what extent did Khrushchev represent a departure from previous Soviet leaders? In your answer, you should discuss peaceful coexistence and the Secret Speech.
- 8 To what extent was the Berlin Wall the most significant Cold War crisis in Europe since 1945?
- 9 How important was the Cuban Missile Crisis to the development of the Cold War after 1962?
- 10 How significant were the arms race and the space race in the development of the Cold War?
- 11 ‘Czechoslovakia was too important geopolitically for the Soviets to tolerate dissent.’ Discuss.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 12 What were the effects of the crises on changing superpower relations between 1961 and 1968?
- 13 To what extent were major policy changes on both sides responsible for the development of the Cold War? In your answer, you should demonstrate an awareness about specific policy changes such as MAD, peaceful coexistence and rollback.
- 14 To what extent was the development of the Cold War between 1953 and 1968 based on geopolitics over ideology?

Détente



STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

- Causes and consequences of détente
- Geopolitical aspects of conflict in Vietnam and the Middle East
- Sino-Soviet split



Modern History
syllabus

United States President Richard Nixon (right) and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev hold talks at the White House, June 1973.

Introduction

détente

A relaxation in tensions between the superpowers.

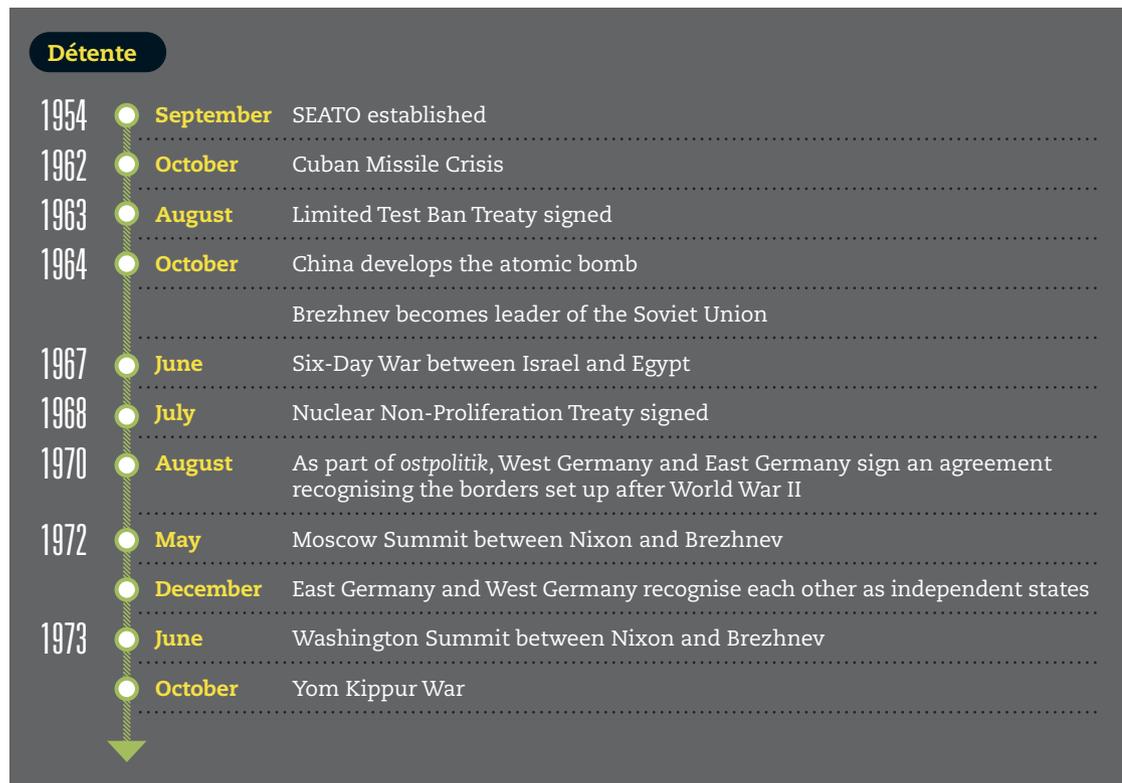
triangular diplomacy

The introduction of China as a nuclear power and the Sino-Soviet split meant that the US could negotiate with two communist powers.

rapprochement

The establishment or resumption of normal or friendly relations between countries.

The period of **détente** from 1963 to 1979 was the result of a series of complex changes in the global balance of power and an acknowledgement of the threat of nuclear war that arose from the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The emergence of China as a nuclear power in 1964 and the Sino-Soviet split led to an era of **triangular diplomacy**, during which relationships between the United States, the Soviet Union and China were redefined to accommodate changing geopolitical realities. For example, the United States entered into a conflict in Vietnam that it regarded as Chinese communist expansion rather than a nationalist uprising. The United States' commitment to containment and fear that the communist takeover of Vietnam would lead to other countries in Southeast Asia falling to communism like dominoes convinced President Lyndon B Johnson to escalate US involvement in Vietnam by committing air and ground forces. That the North Vietnamese communists were militarily supported by communist China opened a new and complex front in the Cold War. On the one hand, the United States was drawn into a conflict that was fuelled by Chinese military aid, while, on the other, it was seeking a **rapprochement** with China in an effort to isolate the Soviet Union after the Sino-Soviet split.



It was also in the interests of the Soviet Union to redefine its relationship with the United States. Participating in an expensive arms race meant that money was being spent on a massive military build-up rather than the development of the Soviet Union's domestic economy. In addition, the Soviets still needed to import technology and grain from the United States and an easing of tensions would benefit these priorities.

Having come perilously close to a nuclear confrontation in Cuba, in 1963 Soviet leader Khrushchev revived discussions about a nuclear test ban treaty. Although negotiations stalled at the point of verification, the superpowers were able to achieve the Limited Test Ban Treaty in October 1963. This was the first in a series of armament control initiatives that sought to restrain the development of strategic nuclear arsenals.

Tensions between China and the Soviet Union resulted in armed clashes on the Sino-Soviet border in 1969. The split provided an opportunity for the Americans to exploit the divisions and in 1972, US President Richard Nixon visited China in an effort to improve relations between the US and the Chinese communist regime. A year earlier, the Chinese communists had taken their seat at the UN Security Council after being denied it since 1949, and a promise to normalise relations between the Chinese and Americans by 1976 was a significant outcome of the meeting. China also provided a sizable new market for American goods at a time when the United States was in a deep recession.

But geopolitical developments in the Middle East in the 1970s undermined détente. The 1967 and 1973 wars between US-backed Israel and Soviet-backed Egypt, Jordan and Syria reignited tensions and led the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to place an embargo on oil sales to the United States. This in turn led to the quadrupling of the price of petrol, high inflation, unemployment and a recession that took nearly a decade to overcome. The Middle East was on the doorstep of the Soviet Union and Brezhnev was determined that the United States should not establish a military presence there. At the same time, the oil crisis exposed the Americans' heavy dependence on the region's oil and their determination to maintain a presence in the area.

Détente was deemed a failure by many. The main criticism of the policy was that it allowed the Soviet Union to achieve **nuclear parity** with the United States. Critics of détente also argued that the Soviet Union used the relaxation in tensions with the United States as an opportunity to exert its influence over various nationalist movements and regional conflicts in Asia and the Middle East. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was proof for critics of the failure of the policy, and the subsequent US election campaign run between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan revolved around being 'tough' on communism.

In his autobiography, former United States President Ronald Reagan was a scathing critic of détente. He argued that the Soviet Union used détente to achieve its own expansion. Reagan wrote, 'Détente is a French word the Russians had interpreted as a freedom to pursue whatever policies of subversion, aggression, and expansionism they wanted anywhere in the world'.¹

nuclear parity

The superpowers achieving an equal number of weapons.

- 1 What was triangular diplomacy?
- 2 How did the rise of China make the international situation more challenging for the Americans and the Soviets?
- 3 How were the relationships between the Americans, Soviets and Chinese redefined after the mid-1960s?
- 4 What was the American response to the Sino-Soviet split?
- 5 What interests did the United States and the Soviets have in ensuring that neither side gained a foothold in the Middle East?
- 6 By 1979, it appeared that détente had failed. What were some of the criticisms made about détente?

Economic and political reasons for détente

A permanent relaxation in tensions would give the Americans and Soviets the necessary economic and political space to assess new global realities. The emergence of a nuclear China led to a renegotiation of nation-state relationships in a multi-polar world. Both sides wanted to avoid an expensive arms race, and the opening up of new fronts in the Cold War combined with **decolonisation** movements occurring across the globe meant enormous change from the status quo.

The idea of reducing the huge expenses associated with the arms race was attractive to both the United States and the Soviet Union. By the 1960s, the Soviets were spending around 20 percent of their GDP on the development of new weapons to keep pace with American technological advances.

decolonisation

The process through which many countries gained political independence from the European governments that ruled them.

Ordinary Soviets had suffered under Stalin's regime. His relentless march towards industrial and military supremacy had come at the expense of living standards. Khrushchev and Brezhnev promised better conditions. Indeed, the Soviet Union benefited from trade agreements with the United States through which it gained access to new technologies and large stores of grain. However, the Soviet leaders failed to make economic reforms on a large enough scale to see a real turnaround in Soviet living standards.

The United States was becoming increasingly bogged down in the war in Vietnam – an expensive stalemate that had significant ramifications for the US budget. High inflation and large budget deficits had replaced the prosperity of the 1950s and a series of new social programs under Johnson's Great Society would have to be paid for. It was hoped that détente would mean a winding back of the military-industrial complex so feared by Eisenhower at the beginning of the 1960s.

Each confronted with their own complex set of geopolitical realities, the United States and the Soviet Union welcomed détente. The Cuban Missile Crisis had led the superpowers to the stark realisation that each knew very little about the other, and this lack of understanding nearly led to nuclear war. The emergence of nationalist liberation movements and other regional conflicts in Asia, Africa and the Middle East further impressed upon the superpowers the need for a reduction in tensions and increased levels of communication. In this way, the period of détente can be seen as a search for stability and understanding. Some of the reasons for détente included:

- the rise of China and the Sino-Soviet split
- the threat of nuclear war
- European *ostpolitik*
- national liberation movements around the world

The rise of China

The entry of China into the nuclear club in 1964 changed the balance of power in the world. Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, aptly described the impact China would have on international relations when he stated that a 'third force had been added to the equation, offering the other two the challenge and risks of greater maneuver'.² Indeed, China's turn to communism forced a reassessment of the superpowers' relationships with each other and brought a new term, 'triangular diplomacy', into political discourse. The bipolarity of the Cold War had morphed into multi-polarity.

China's acquisition of the bomb also brought simmering tensions between the Soviet Union and China out into the open, resulting in the Sino-Soviet split. The split was an opportunity for the United States to exploit the divisions in international communism. The Sino-Soviet split revealed, furthermore, that communism was not a monolithic force. Mao's adoption of Stalinist methods during the Great Leap Forward (1958–1962) cost the lives of 45 million Chinese. The Chinese leader's bloody turn to industrialisation and collectivisation mirrored the crimes of Stalin that Khrushchev had only recently condemned.

When Khrushchev announced his policy of peaceful coexistence, the Chinese were outraged. Mao had seen himself as an equal to Stalin and the potential leader of international communism after Stalin's death. Now China was going to assert its own form of socialism on the international stage and compete with the Soviet Union in the Asian world.



Change: China goes nuclear

The threat of nuclear war

A major motivation behind détente was minimising the threat of nuclear war. The Cuban Missile Crisis had shown international leaders how vulnerable the world was to a nuclear conflict. A series of letters exchanged between Kennedy and Khrushchev during the crisis reveal each side's appreciation of the grave danger posed by the weapons. At the height of the crisis on 26 October 1962 Khrushchev wrote a letter to Kennedy that outlined just how serious the conflict had become:

“ Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.”

Department of State Telegram Transmitting Letter from Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy, 26 October 26 1962.

John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

The build-up of nuclear weapons had led to a complex logic in which the development of anti-missile defence systems were seen as more of a threat than offensive weapons. The idea behind this was Mutually Assured Destruction, an unofficial doctrine which held that each side would be deterred from making the first nuclear strike because the retaliation would be so great as to ensure their own destruction. In other words, striking first would mean suicide. This fear made a significant contribution to deterrence and kept the Soviets and Americans in check. Anti-ballistic missile shields, however, undermined this idea, so much so that the SALT I treaty restricted defence shields to 200 weapons on two sites each and later to 100 weapons on one site each.

Some headway was made in reducing nuclear tensions. The United States and Soviet Union signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969. The treaties prevented states from attempting to acquire the knowledge and technology needed to develop nuclear weapons.

Europe and *ostpolitik*

Events in Europe had also been moving in the direction of a greater relaxation of tensions. By far the most significant European development was the West German leader Willy Brandt's embrace of *ostpolitik*. At its heart, this was an attempt to bring greater openness to the relationship between West Germany and the Soviet bloc.

In a speech to the Bonn Bundestag, the national parliament of West Germany, on 28 October 1969, Brandt laid out his argument for a new policy of cooperation with the Eastern bloc. He said,

“ The object of our practical political work in the years immediately ahead is to preserve the unity of the nation by easing the tenseness of relations between the two parts of Germany. The Germans are not only connected by reason of their language and their history with all its splendor and its misery, we are all at home in Germany.”

Chancellor Willy Brandt – Policy Statement Two States, One Nation (28 October 1969) 6. Deutscher Bundestag.

Translation: Jeremiah Riemer, www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org.

ostpolitik

Meaning 'eastern policy', this was the West German attempt to engage with its Eastern bloc neighbours.

The West German leader had sought to overcome the long-running impasse in East-West relations by signing a treaty on 12 August 1970, which accepted the borders drawn up after World War II, including the permanent division of East and West Germany. The treaty formally recognised the Oder-Neisse line – the border between Poland and East Germany that West Germany had previously failed to accept. In return, the Soviets agreed to open up greater trade opportunities between East and West and began to export their goods to West Germany.

On 3 September 1971, travel restrictions into the Soviet bloc were lifted after another treaty opened the way for West Berliners to achieve easier access to the rest of West Germany. But perhaps the most significant agreement was signed on 21 December 1972, in which East Germany and West Germany recognised each other as independent states.

But *ostpolitik* did not appeal to everyone. French President Charles de Gaulle had established trade links with the Soviets in 1964 and was unsympathetic to the idea of greater European integration due to the negative impact he believed it could have on the French economy.

During the time of the Cold War, the European Union was emerging. Some European leaders were convinced that the path to peace and prosperity lay in the integration of European states – not quite a



SOURCE 3.1 Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany kneels before a monument to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in Poland. Brandt was the architect of *ostpolitik* and played a significant role in *détente* by recognising the German borders and Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, and opening trade deals.

United States of Europe, but certainly in trade agreements that tied the economic interests of member states so closely together that the old rivalries would become redundant. It was in the interests of European development to achieve a permanent relaxation of tensions. Settling some of the outstanding issues would provide the basis for political and economic stability into the future.

National liberation movements

Anti-imperialism had been a feature of both Soviet and United States policy since World War I. Both were committed to helping countries previously colonised by European powers achieve independence. In the Soviet Union, Lenin's work was critical of imperialism, which he viewed as the international competition to exploit human and natural resources in the search for new markets and greater profit. In his 1917 political tract, *Imperialism*, Lenin referred to imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. Stalin also took up this theme, arguing that World War I was the natural outcome of conflict between capitalist powers. As the Cold War developed he came to see Soviet participation in World War I and the alliance with the United States and Britain as a pragmatic defence against capitalism. Stalin's moves to consolidate the Soviet Union's power in the countries on its western borders can be seen as his attempt to create a buffer zone against future imperialist aggression.

For the Americans, the concept of self-determination meant that European powers would have to let go of their colonial possessions. The American position stretched back to President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of 1918, in which he said that any fair settlement of the postwar world would include Article V, which involved the 'strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight'.³ Roosevelt also championed the idea of national self-determination in the Atlantic Charter, the signing of which spurred a number of nationalist leaders, including North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh, South Korea's Syngman Rhee and China's Mao Zedong, to push for independence.

National liberation movements often became entangled in Cold War tensions. The removal of former European powers in Asia, Africa and the Middle East often resulted in power vacuums in which political groups would seek international support – often from the Soviet Union or the United States – in their bid for control over a region. An anti-imperialist himself, Nikita Khrushchev voiced concerns that European imperialism would simply be replaced by a form of American imperialism in less economically advanced states where independence movements were backed by the United States government. In 1958 he told his foreign minister that the Soviets should give greater support to Arab countries in the context of American sponsorship of Israel. He said, 'I am not an adventurer, but we must aid national liberation movements, and if imperialism controls somewhere like the Middle East it could liquidate the national liberation movements'.⁴

The rise of national independence movements and the escalation of the Cold War can be seen as a case of bad timing. As historian John Lewis Gaddis states, 'It was awkward for the United States – even dangerous – that colonialism was ending as the Cold War was intensifying'.⁵



Reasons for *détente*

Superpower summits

During the period of détente, the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union came together for the first time since the Kennedy and Khrushchev meeting in Vienna in 1961. Two summits were held, one in Moscow in 1972 and the other in Washington in 1973, where Nixon and Brezhnev arrived at a number of significant agreements.

In the Moscow Summit of 1972, the most far-reaching outcomes included the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I). Before the meeting, Nixon flagged his intention to go to Moscow, the first US president to do so, in an effort to make some constructive decisions to limit the arms race. On that level, the summit was a success. Both sides used the opportunity of détente to curb the momentum of the nuclear arms race.

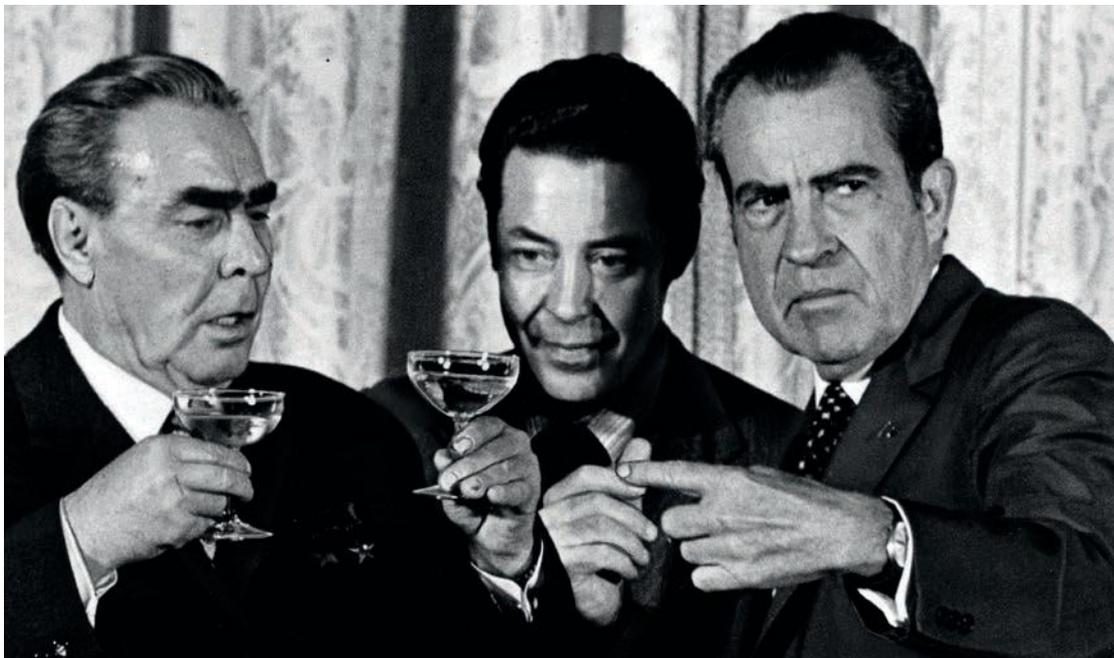
An extract from the summit's official communique reads:

“ They are a concrete expression of the intention of the two sides to contribute to the relaxation of international tension and the strengthening of confidence between states, as well as to carry out the obligations assumed by them in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Article VI). Both sides are convinced that the achievement of the above agreements is a practical step towards saving mankind from the threat of the outbreak of nuclear war. Accordingly, it corresponds to the vital interests of the American and Soviet Peoples as well as to the vital interests of all other people. ”

Joint Communique, Moscow, 1972, www.washingtonpost.com.

In addition, the world leaders discussed a number of important issues, including the relaxation of tensions in Europe, and committed to greater cooperation in science, technology and space exploration.

In June 1973, the superpowers met in Washington, where they signed the Prevention of Nuclear War Agreement. The treaty committed each side to adopting policies that minimised the threat of nuclear war and to acting ‘in such a manner as to prevent the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations, as to avoid military confrontations, and as to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war between them’.⁶ The other major achievements of the summits were in the area of trade. The Soviet Union agreed to purchase 5 million tonnes of US grain between 1973 and 1980, and a framework for other commercial deals was established, which included setting up trade accounts in each country.



Getty Images/The Washington Post

SOURCE 3.2 At the 1973 Washington Summit, Brezhnev (left) inspects Nixon's (right) glass as their interpreter looks on.

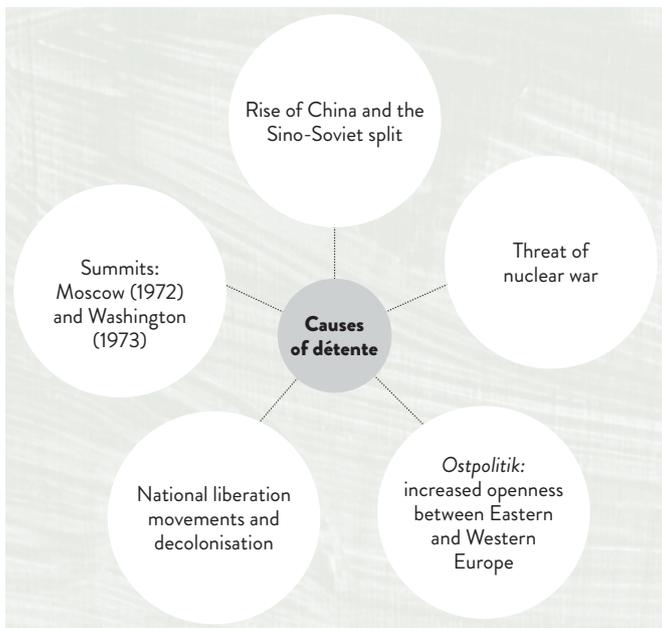
The Helsinki Accords, 1975

Détente made the 1975 Helsinki Accords possible. The accords were a series of security and cooperation agreements that resolved many of the outstanding issues in Europe that dated from the end of World War II. This had a significant impact on reducing tensions in Europe and benefited the Soviet Union most of all. In return, the Soviets submitted to international scrutiny of their human rights record and allowed a measure of press freedom. Thirty-five European nations, as well as the United States and Canada, were signatories to the agreement.

The issues were broken up into four so-called ‘baskets’, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 2.1 The Helsinki Accords

BASKET ONE	BASKET TWO	BASKET THREE	BASKET FOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and military issues • Borders and territorial integrity • Peaceful settlement of disputes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Trade • Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Freedom of the press • Reunification of families across international borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal follow-up meetings • Implementation strategies for the Accords



SOURCE 3.3 Causes of détente

Some of the outcomes of the Accords included:

- The borders established after World War II were recognised.
- Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia were formally brought into the Soviet Union.
- A monitoring group was set up to check on Soviet human rights records, which allowed dissidents to speak more freely.
- The Accords resulted in greater cooperation between East and West.
- There was greater religious and press freedom in the East.

- 1 What economic pressures in the Soviet Union and the United States made the period of détente a welcome development in the Cold War?
- 2 How did the emergence of China change the global power balance and what opportunities did it present to the Americans?
- 3 Why was the attempt to minimise the number of defensive weapons thought to be more effective than minimising offensive weapons in the early arms reduction talks?
- 4 Identify four achievements of *ostpolitik*.
- 5 How and why did national liberation movements get tied up in the Cold War?
- 6 Outline the main agreements reached at the Moscow Summit (1972) and the Washington Summit (1973).

Geopolitical developments

Vietnam

The Vietnam conflict had its roots in France's withdrawal from its colonial positions in Indochina in 1954. A strong Vietnamese nationalist movement led by Ho Chi Minh forced the French to leave the region, and Cold War rivalries were drawn into the power vacuum. The triumph of communism in China in 1949 and North Korea in 1950 convinced United States President Eisenhower that North Vietnamese communists above the 17th parallel were an extension of Chinese communist power in the region. Eisenhower feared that Southeast Asia would fall to communism due to the domino effect, and saw it as the United States' responsibility to contain the advance.

The Vietnam War

- 1945 ● Vietnam divides at the 17th parallel between the South and North
- 1949 ● China becomes communist
- 1954 ● France withdraws from Vietnam after the battle of Dien Bien Phu
SEATO forms
- 1955 ● America supports the right-wing Ngo Dinh Diem as president of South Vietnam
- 1957 ● North Vietminh starts a guerilla campaign in the South
- 1960 ● Vietcong forms in Hanoi
- 1961 ● US President Kennedy pledges extra aid to South Vietnam
- 1962 ● More United States military advisers arrive in Vietnam, bringing the number to 12 000
- 1963 ● Diem is assassinated after a military coup in South Vietnam in November
US President Kennedy is assassinated on 22 November and replaced by President Lyndon B Johnson
- 1964 ● Gulf of Tonkin Resolution gives the US president congressional approval to prosecute the war in Vietnam
- 1965 ● Operation Rolling Thunder sends 200 000 US combat troops to Vietnam by the end of the year
- 1967 ● There are nearly 500 000 US troops in Vietnam
- 1968 ● Tet Offensive
Large-scale anti-Vietnam War demonstrations break out in the United States
- 1969 ● Nixon announces that US troops will start withdrawing from Vietnam
My Lai massacre
- 1970 ● Large-scale anti-war demonstrations continue across the United States
- 1973 ● United States troops leave Vietnam
- 1975 ● Vietcong take Saigon

Vietcong

Southern-based supporters of the North Vietnamese communists fighting against the South in guerrilla warfare.



SOURCE 3.4 North Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh

What should have been part of the broader process of self-determination and national independence movements occurring across the globe – a process supported by both the Soviet Union and the United States – turned into a long-running and unpopular war because it was conceived and fought within the parameters of Cold War rivalry.

The Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, drafted by Ho Chi Minh, was a scathing summary of French oppression of the Vietnamese. The French, Minh argued, had betrayed their own Enlightenment principles of universal human rights and liberalism at the expense of the Vietnamese. When the French surrendered Vietnam to the Japanese in 1940, the Vietnamese ‘people were subjected to the double yoke of the French and the Japanese’.⁷

Voicing a strong intention to reject any French claim on Vietnam at the end of the war, the declaration read: ‘After the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies, our whole people rose to regain our national

sovereignty and to found the Democratic Republic of Vietnam ... The truth is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese and not from the French ... The French have fled, the Japanese have capitulated’.⁸

Minh followed this up with a warning to any power opposed to the new claim to Vietnamese independence. He wrote that the Vietnamese people ‘solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has the right to be a free and independent country – and in fact is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty’.⁹

At the end of World War II, Vietnam was divided along the 17th parallel into the British-occupied South and the Chinese-occupied North. This was supposed to be an interim arrangement until the French resumed control. Ho Chi Minh’s **Vietminh** attempted to negotiate its way into power with the southern occupiers, but the British were keen to hand power back to the French in an effort to prevent the spread of nationalist feeling in India and Burma. When the French returned, they maintained the status quo and in 1949 they installed the unpopular Emperor Bao Dai as the leader of Vietnam. In the meantime, the Vietminh were engaged in **guerrilla warfare** against the French. In retaliation, the French bombarded the Northern military port of Haiphong, killing 6000 Vietnamese. This had the effect of encouraging more Vietnamese to support the Vietminh.

The French fought a war with the Vietnamese between 1946 and 1953. However, public support for the war plummeted as French politicians and the media started to wage a campaign against French involvement in Vietnam. By 1953 the French military had lost heart. At the battle of Dien Bien Phu, the French were defeated by the Vietminh after 55 days of heavy fighting and amid high support for the Vietminh and a collapse of support in French public opinion. The French presence in Vietnam was no longer tenable. In 1954, the French withdrew.

Vietminh

League for the Independence of Vietnam – a coalition of groups for all levels of society led by Ho Chi Minh.

guerrilla warfare

An unconventional form of warfare in which it is not clear where the battle lines are or where the enemy is hiding.

It was left to the Geneva Conference of 1954 to settle Vietnam's future. The Geneva Settlement included:

- French military withdrawal from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (Indochina).
- Independence granted to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.
- Vietnam was divided along the 17th parallel until elections could be held in July 1956.
- It was anticipated that the July election would result in the reunification of Vietnam.



Vietnam



Vietnam – Cold War rivalry or national self-determination?

Introduction of Cold War rivalry

The 1954 Geneva Settlement had given the communists the upper hand. North of the 17th parallel, the Vietminh were able to recommence a rebuilding and reform program, which gave them a significant advantage in establishing peace and stability before any election. But land reforms had led to conflicts which the South represented as a bloodbath to the international community. Nearly one million wealthy North Vietnamese fled, and the South accused the communists of killing large numbers of wealthy landowners. These numbers have since been revised down, but the propaganda machine in the South used the inflated figures to paint a picture of the North as aggressive communists.

Despite this, there was an underlying fear in South Vietnam and the United States that the popularity of the Vietminh would lead to its election victory in 1956. Viewed through the lens of containment, this would obviously be an unacceptable outcome – despite the democratic dimensions and commitment to national self-determination.

The domestic political situation in the United States forced the hand of Eisenhower's response to the events unfolding in Vietnam. Many in government believed that the fall of Vietnam would be a continuation of the march of communism from China and North Korea.

The United States therefore made the decision to intervene in the conflict on the side of the South Vietnamese regime under Ngo Dinh Diem. If the Vietminh were shoring up their support for the upcoming elections in the North – and it should be noted that they were also achieving a level of popularity in the South – then the Americans would strengthen the capitalist regime in the South. It was ironic that the United States was working against the wishes of the people in Vietnam. The Vietminh had achieved great popularity by legitimate democratic means, yet the US sought anti-communist agents to undermine the Vietminh's support.

The US also rejected the Geneva agreement and the upcoming election to reunify the country. It gave US\$250 million to support Diem's regime in the South, even though it was corrupt and brutal. In response to the conflict in Vietnam, the US formed the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). This guaranteed the involvement of other Southeast Asian and Pacific countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand in any future conflict on the side of capitalism.

But it was not only US attitudes to the division of Vietnam that were viewed through the lens of the Cold War. The war-weary Soviets and Chinese, with the Korean War fresh in their minds, wished to avoid a second conflict. They wanted Ho Chi Minh to accept the Geneva demands and submit his party to a democratic election and the unification of Vietnam.



SOURCE 3.5 During the Vietnam War the Ho Chi Minh Trail wound its way through Laos and Cambodia. It was used to traffic Viet Cong forces and supplies into South Vietnam.

Dominoes



SOURCE 3.6 *Washington Post* cartoonist Herbert Block's depiction of the domino theory, May 1964

US involvement in Vietnam

The United States involvement in Vietnam grew over time. Its early intervention included providing limited support to the French in 1950 and some military aid to the South Vietnamese. In the end, nearly 650 000 soldiers were drafted into the Vietnam War, which cost the lives of 58 220 American service men and women. Another cost was to the US economy, which suffered from crippling budget deficits and high inflation. US involvement in the war was also deeply unpopular, and cost the political career of President Johnson, whose approval rating was so poor that he did not contest the 1968 election.

After events in China and Korea, the United States' fear that communism would spread to other parts of Asia grew, resulting in its re-commitment to the containment policy. This policy was first promoted by US President Eisenhower, who used the term 'domino theory' to describe the threat of communism spreading from one country to another. While Eisenhower referred to the Middle Eastern context rather than Southeast Asia, subsequent US leaders applied it to Vietnam and promised to provide military support to any country that was threatened by communist powers.

Diem's South Vietnam

In order to prevent communism from spreading from North Vietnam to South Vietnam, the United States chose

to compromise its own values by supporting the corrupt regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. The United States administration wanted to 'win the hearts and minds' of the South Vietnamese, and attempted to aid the regime in a huge building program of economic development and social reform. But the corrupt Diem simply diverted the funds to secure his own power base. In effect, Diem was working against United States goals and his unpopularity led to communist guerrilla attacks in Vietnam throughout 1957.

South Vietnam was beset by a number of difficulties after the withdrawal of the French. These included:

- a lack of government structures and a functioning police force.
- corrupt government officials that extended all the way up to Ngo Dinh Diem.
- nepotism in the government. Diem gave key government positions to members of his own family.
- rigged elections. The National Assembly was made up of representatives who gained power illegitimately.
- restrictions on freedom of the press. Journalists suffered severe penalties, including imprisonment, for reporting on government corruption.
- private armies conducting a reign of terror that resulted in the murder of thousands of South Vietnamese who were suspected of being communists.
- the Rural Community Development Program. This program drove peasants off farms into large collectives. It was very unpopular and bred resentment.
- Diem's persecution of South Vietnam's Buddhists, who made up 75 percent of the population. He supported the Catholic minority.

When President Kennedy came to power in January 1961, he continued Eisenhower's policy. Like his predecessor, Kennedy had come to see the simmering tensions in Vietnam as a microcosm of the larger conflict between capitalism and communism. Diem continued to disappoint the United States administration with his refusal to exemplify American values. Yet Kennedy could see no alternative other than to continue to prop up the regime. He increased spending and sent the CIA to train the South Vietnamese in the tactics of guerrilla warfare. Kennedy believed that intense training of the South would prevent the need for the United States to step up its involvement in the country by sending in troops.

In December 1960, the North created the National Liberation Front (NLF) – otherwise known as the Vietcong – an outpost of the North Vietnamese communists in the South. The Vietcong engaged in guerrilla warfare, which was a key feature of the war. The Americans, used to conventional conflict, were confused by the presence of the Vietcong, and they created **strategic hamlets** in an effort to pacify the peasants and minimise the attraction to the communists. The villages were surrounded by barbed wire or bamboo to keep the Vietcong out.

The situation in South Vietnam seemed to be declining rapidly and American policymakers were torn over the United States' response. To withdraw would be to acquiesce to communist power in the region, while to escalate would mean the commitment of US ground forces to a war that it was doubtful it could win.

At the end of 1963, South Vietnam was heading into a crisis. A military coup on 1 November 1963 ousted Diem, and he was brutally murdered by soldiers the following day. The murder sparked widespread celebrations in the South, and it was later revealed that the United States had foreknowledge that the coup was about to take place. While the murder of Diem took care of an anti-democratic autocrat, it further destabilised South Vietnam, leaving the Americans with more problems.



SOURCE 3.7 US President Eisenhower (left) meets South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem in Washington. Diem violently cracked down on opposition in Vietnam.



SOURCE 3.8 Women commonly took up combat roles in the North's fight for the unification of Vietnam.

strategic hamlets
Small villages of South Vietnamese people that Americans were confident were not infiltrated by Vietcong guerrillas.

The new South Vietnamese leader General Duong Van Minh promised to establish free elections and neutrality. This would have allowed the United States a dignified exit from the conflict, but new President Lyndon Johnson rejected the offer. On the domestic front, Johnson was under increasing pressure from Republicans in the Congress, who accused him of being 'soft' on communism – a regular motif in United States foreign policy that often forced the hand of the US in international events.

Escalation

In August 1964, US naval vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin came under North Vietnamese attack. This resulted in the Congress giving the president powers to declare war against Vietnam without having to seek the authority of Congress. Only two senators voted against the so-called Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, and it was used to escalate American involvement in the conflict after 1964.

The Northern communists made increasing gains in 1964 by attacking the United States' bases in the South. As a consequence, Johnson felt he had no option but to commence air attacks on the North, and so Operation Rolling Thunder was born. Massive bombardment of Northern positions, it was hoped, would bring the communists to the negotiating table. But despite tonnes of bombs being dropped over Vietnam, equivalent in scale to World War II European bombing operations, air power alone was insufficient.

In February 1965, the United States took the significant step of introducing the first ground troops into Vietnam, and the first marines arrived in March. Troops from other countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and South Korea, were also committed. Once this had been done, military considerations ruled future decisions and the United States was directly at war with the North Vietnamese – the South Vietnamese now stood by and let the Americans conduct the conflict on their own terms.

By 1968, the United States had 500 000 ground troops in Vietnam. Many of them were conscripts in a war that was becoming increasingly unpopular on the American home front. As the first televised war, pictures of American deaths and casualties were beamed into living rooms across the United States, with news reporters recounting harrowing stories from the conflict zones. New television technology meant that for the first time, people could see the grim realities of war.

President Johnson's escalation of American involvement in Vietnam was influenced by his beliefs on the origins of the conflict. Like Eisenhower and Kennedy before him, he saw Vietnam as part of a broader Cold War struggle.

Getty Images/PhotoQuest



SOURCE 3.9 American bombers engaged in Operation Rolling Thunder

7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam. Photograph by Michael Colebridge 25 August 1967. © Australian War Memorial [AN COL/67/0781/WN]



SOURCE 3.10 Australian troops in Vietnam awaiting helicopter transport

In fact, Johnson expressed a fear that Soviet expansion, if left unchecked, would lead to a third world war. He said, 'Everything I knew about history told me that if I got out of Vietnam and let Ho Chi Minh run through the streets of Saigon, then I'd be doing exactly what Chamberlain did in World War II. I'd be giving a big fat reward to aggression'.¹⁰

When Nixon took over from Johnson he implemented a policy of 'Vietnamisation', which meant that the US would gradually stop fighting the war and hand over the combat fighting to South Vietnamese troops. The US role would principally be one of training. This was in response to huge anti-war protests in the United States throughout 1969 and 1970.

The war did not go well for the Americans. The My Lai massacre of March 1968 involved the brutal murder of about 500 South Vietnamese civilians by American soldiers in one of the strategic hamlets. An attempt to cover up the massacre by high-ranking US army officers led to domestic and international outrage.

The crisis in Vietnam ended in a humiliating withdrawal of the United States, and the Northern victory over the South. Three million Vietnamese were killed in the conflict, billions of dollars were spent and millions of hectares of thick jungle were destroyed by the use of incendiary bombs and chemicals.

In the years following the Vietnam War, many from the South fled to countries such as Australia and the United States as refugees. Next door, in Cambodia, the communist political group, the Khmer Rouge, murdered refugees and their own people in a genocide. The war was a disaster for the United States on all fronts: it lost international credibility, it suffered a heavy economic toll, and at the same time it exposed deep social divisions within the United States, evidenced, for example, by the Double V demonstrations, which opposed African-American troops being asked to fight for their country while they did not enjoy full rights at home.

The Vietnam War was America's longest running stalemate at the time, and many at home could not see the connection between the fight for Vietnamese independence and the fight against the Soviet Union.



Getty Images/CBS

SOURCE 3.11 Vietnam was the first televised war and this contributed to the tide of public opinion turning against the war. Journalists such as Morley Safer beamed unfiltered images of the war into the homes of viewers each night, including some showing American soldiers using cigarette lighters to burn down villages.

- 1 Outline the struggle for Vietnamese independence.
- 2 Why did Ho Chi Minh believe that the French had lost their right to reclaim Vietnam after World War II?
- 3 Why did the French leave Vietnam?
- 4 Outline the details of the Geneva Settlement.
- 5 What kind of a ruler was Ngo Dinh Diem? Provide a detailed response.
- 6 What were strategic hamlets and what made war in the Vietnamese context especially difficult?
- 7 Outline the course of the war for the Americans. How did it end for them?
- 8 What was the significance of the Vietnam War in the overall context of the Cold War?

The Sino-Soviet split

On the surface, it appeared that Chairman Mao Zedong's 1949 declaration of the People's Republic of China (PRC) would result in his country entering into the small, but growing family of communist nations led by the Soviet Union. But the relationship between Mao and Stalin was strained from the start. Stalin had referred to Chinese communists as 'Margarine Marxists', and there was no guarantee that Mao himself would follow the model of communist development espoused by the Soviets.

In February 1950, the Soviets and the PRC signed a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. As part of the package, the Soviets provided US\$300 million worth of aid and entered into a mutual defence pact. The Soviets returned control of parts of Manchuria to the PRC and they promised a united front against any return of Japanese aggression in the region.

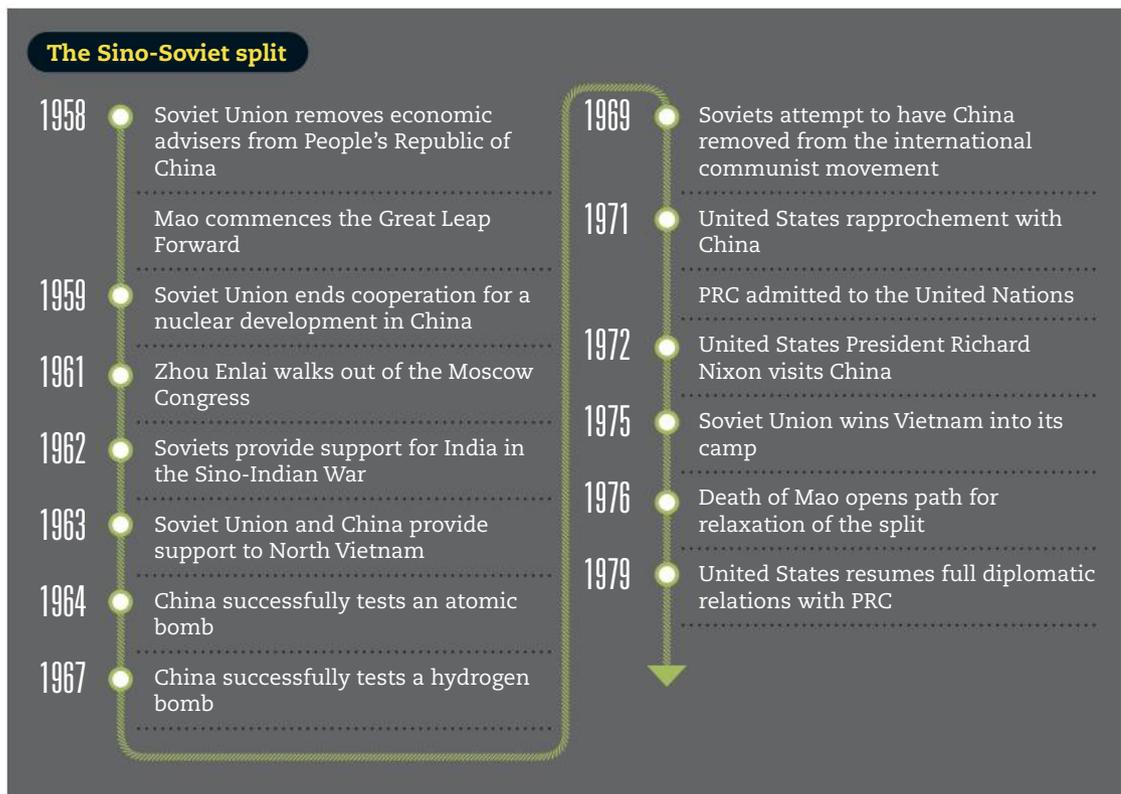
But it soon became clear that international communism was not the monolithic force that the United States assumed it was. In fact, by 1963 the Soviets and the Chinese were not even on speaking terms.



The Sino-Soviet split



The Sino-Soviet split:
A letter from Mao to Khrushchev



Why the PRC and not China?

This chapter will refer to the People's Republic of China (PRC) rather than just China. Much of the international community did not accept the legitimacy of the communist government in China until 1971 when it was admitted to the United Nations. The United States and PRC governments did not establish full diplomatic relations until 1979. Many regarded the legitimate government of 'China' as the exiled remnant of the nationalist forces in Taiwan. The PRC refers to the communists who ruled mainland China.

The Sino-Soviet split was a series of ideological and territorial disputes that came out into the open after Stalin died in 1953 and China developed the atomic bomb in 1964. In reality the tensions had stretched all the way back to 1949. With Chinese influence in central Asia growing, the Soviet Union was desperate to be regarded as an equal to the United States on the international stage, and feared further erosion of its international standing. The split developed from a series of crises dating from the Great Leap Forward, which included China's building of the nuclear bomb, its development of a ballistic missile with a live nuclear warhead in October 1966 and the development of the hydrogen bomb in June 1967. In 1969, Chinese-initiated border fighting nearly turned from skirmishes to an outright conflict.

In 1958, Chairman Mao attempted to follow the Stalinist path in realising the 'Great Leap Forward'. This program was designed to implement rapid industrialisation in China – in a move reminiscent of Stalin in the 1930s. Under classical Marxism, a true communist revolution could only occur in the highly industrialised stages of capitalism so that there is enough wealth to redistribute. In the case of both the Soviet Union and China, revolution appeared to come far too early on Marx's timetable. Not to be deterred, both Stalin and Mao forced a rapid industrialisation program, which also meant stripping away the agricultural roots of society and forcing farmers onto massive collectives and workers into factories. The results for China were shocking. It is estimated that more than 45 million people died between 1958 and 1962.

At the Soviet Union's 20th Party Congress in February 1956, only two years before Mao implemented the Great Leap Forward, Khrushchev denounced Stalin and his regime. In doing so, the new Russian leader criticised the very things that Mao was attempting, such as rapid industrialisation. When Khrushchev announced his peaceful coexistence policy a few years later, Mao was furious. He believed that communists should continue to strive for international domination. The origins of the Sino-Soviet split are, therefore, to be found in the different interpretations of Marxist-Leninism and the leadership of international communism.

During the 1966 Cultural Revolution, Mao denounced the Soviet Union and the United States in a manner puzzling to the international community. He accused the Soviets of 'imperialism' in regard to their involvement with North Vietnam, and claimed that the Brezhnev Doctrine posed a threat to the Chinese.

The split with the Soviets advanced the Chinese cause. Being courted by Nixon and Kissinger meant greater participation in the United Nations and, most importantly, US recognition of the communist regime on 1 January 1979 – a move that had been denied since the communists came to power three decades earlier. Being brought in from the diplomatic cold meant that Taiwan had lost the legitimacy of the international community as the seat of Chinese power.



SOURCE 3.12 Victims of the disastrous famine that occurred in China during the Great Leap Forward



SOURCE 3.13 As part of Mao's Great Leap Forward, Chinese villagers built 'backyard' smelters to create iron.



SOURCE 3.14 At its heart, the Sino-Soviet split was a dispute over the interpretation of communism and its global leadership. This 1978 illustration depicts the hostile relationship between China (the fire-breathing dragon) and the Soviet Union under Stalin (the bear).

The Sino-Soviet split was a significant event in the Cold War because it opened up a multi-polar world and placed a wedge between the Soviet Union and the Chinese. No longer would communism come to be regarded as a monolithic global movement on the march. It was also an opportunity for the United States to diminish the power of the Soviet Union by strengthening ties with China. In 1972, Richard Nixon became the first United States president to visit communist China, and by the end of the decade, full diplomatic relations had been restored with the United States.

- 1 What ideological differences between Mao and Khrushchev started the Sino-Soviet split?
- 2 What were some of the events that resulted from the Sino-Soviet split?
- 3 Explain why Mao might be regarded as a Stalinist.
- 4 How did the Sino-Soviet split benefit the Americans and disadvantage the Soviets?

The Middle East

The Arab-Israeli conflict was one of the most significant and long-running disputes in the Cold War. During the period of détente, two wars and one revolution escalated Cold War tensions – the Six-Day War (1967), the Yom Kippur War (1973), and the Iranian Revolution (1979). The Middle East was an important battle ground for both sides in the Cold War. The region lay on the Soviet Union's southern border, and therefore the Soviets did not want the United States to control the area. For the United States, its unwavering support for the newly formed state of Israel meant that it had to provide an ongoing military presence in the region. Surrounding Arab states rejected the right of the new nation to exist. A strong US-backed Israeli military forced its Arab adversaries to look elsewhere for arms, and countries such as Egypt signed huge arms and aid deals with the Soviet Union. In addition, the 1973 Yom Kippur War and subsequent oil crisis exposed the United States' dependency on cheap Middle Eastern oil supplies.



The Suez Crisis, 1956

The United States and the Soviet Union had already experienced some tension over the Suez Canal in October 1956. The canal, which cut through Egypt, provided an important trade route from the Mediterranean to Asia. In July 1956, the Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser, frustrated by the withdrawal of American funding for construction of the Aswan Dam, nationalised the Suez Canal in an attempt to end the British military presence in the canal region. A few months later, Nasser prevented ships bound for Israel from passing through the canal. In response, British, French and Israeli soldiers marched on Egypt and seized the area around the canal. With the help of Soviet-backed military equipment, Nasser threatened to strike back. The standoff resulted in a lot of sabre rattling from the Soviet Union. In fact, Khrushchev made a bloodcurdling threat to rain down nuclear bombs on Britain, France and Israel. The United States was reluctant to be drawn into the conflict and demanded that Israel withdraw. The crisis did not result in open conflict, but it did reinforce the divisions in the Middle East, with America supporting Israel and the Soviet Union falling in behind the Arab world.

The Six-Day War, 1967

The Six-Day War of 5–10 June 1967 was a significant event in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel's decisive victory redrew a series of borders annexing surrounding parcels of land that would result in ongoing disputes with its neighbours in Syria (Golan Heights), Jordan (the West Bank), and Egypt (Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip).

Tensions had been brewing between Israel and its Arab neighbours throughout 1967. Nasser had once again blockaded Israeli-bound ships, and there was continuing violence between Israel and its neighbours, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Alarmed at the conclusion of a mutual defence pact between Egypt, Syria and Jordan in May 1967 that would effectively encircle it, Israel made the decision to preemptively strike in the early hours of 5 June 1967.

The course of the Six-Day War

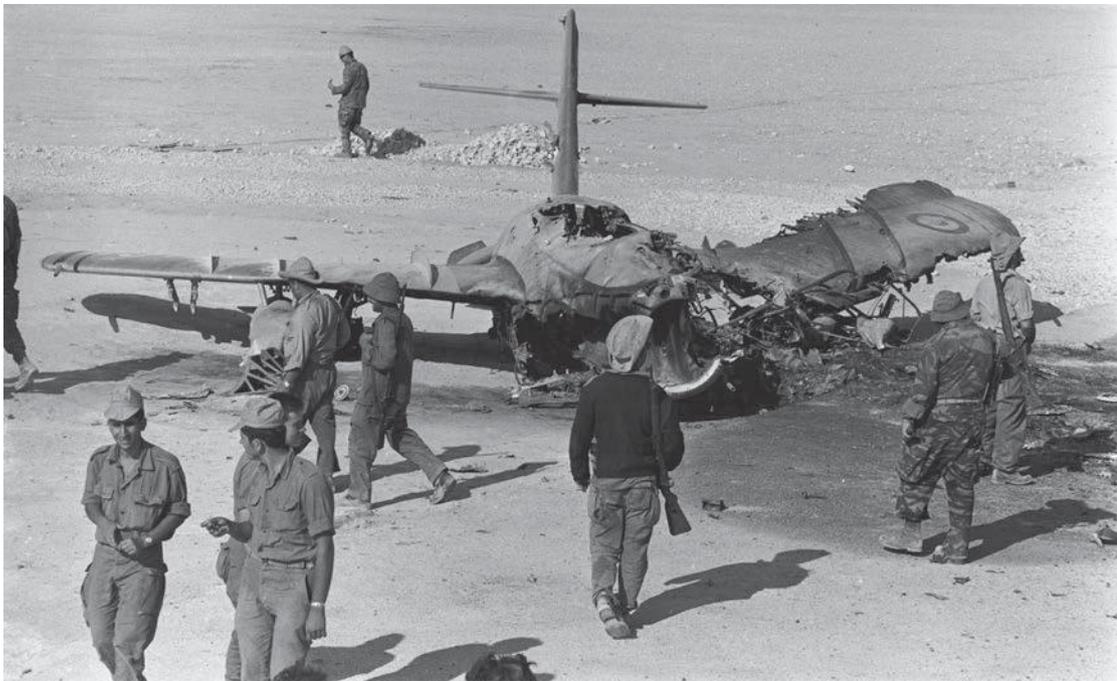
On 22 May, Nasser blockaded the southern Israeli port of Eilat and the Gulf of Aqaba. The blockade would significantly cripple the Israeli economy because 80 percent of Israel's oil imports were transported through the port. It appears that Nasser knew the blockade was provocation for war, and US President Johnson denounced the move as an illegal act under international maritime law. In the weeks after the blockade, Egypt had amassed 100 000 troops and 1000 tanks on the Israeli border to face off against the 45 000 Israeli troops who were mobilised on the southern border.

With Egypt anticipating a ground war at the border, at 7.45 am on 5 June, the Israeli air force staged a massive preemptive air strike, crippling Egypt's air force. The attack, which lasted for more than two and a half hours, destroyed Egyptian air force runways. The next targets were the MiG fighters and radar systems. Coming in three waves, the attack was overwhelming, and 90 percent of the Egyptian air force capacity was wiped out that day. Anxious to avoid a full-frontal assault, Israeli ground forces moved into the Sinai region in an effort to occupy as much of the Sinai as possible to use later as a bargaining chip. Aided by air cover, the Israelis routed the Egyptian army, which retreated after heavy air bombardment. Israel won the Sinai within 96 hours.



Getty Images/Popperfoto

SOURCE 3.15 Egyptian tanks and armour destroyed by Israeli jet fighters line the sides of a Sinai road during the Six-Day War, June 1967.



Getty Images/Corbis Historical

SOURCE 3.16 Israeli soldiers look at the burnt ruins of Egyptian aircraft at El Arish airport, Egypt, during the Six-Day War, June 1967.

Meanwhile, to the north, Jordan had amassed a force of 45 000 men in the West Bank. It subsequently made a plan with Egypt to attack Israel from the east and meet Egyptian forces advancing north. Of course, the rout in the Sinai would prevent the planned advance. On the morning of 5 June, the war with Jordan commenced and Israel immediately made a peace offer, through the United Nations, to Jordan, in an attempt to prevent Jordan from joining the war. King Hussein famously replied that ‘they are receiving our reply by air’ as Jordanian bombing of targets commenced. Yet the Jordanians were no match for the Israelis. Within days, Israel had captured the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israel accepted a UN-brokered cease-fire and fighting stopped at 8 pm on 7 June.

The final front in the war was against Syria, which had for months subjected Israel to incessant shelling from the Golan Heights. On 5 June, Syrian planes attacked civilian communities and early the next morning an infantry force attacked a *kibbutz*. The Israeli Defence Force drove them back over the border within hours. When Syria recommenced shelling, only 5 hours after agreeing to a UN ceasefire on 8 June, Israel considered a full land invasion of Syria. The US National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy supported this idea; given Syria’s position as the key Soviet ally in the region, a decisive Syrian defeat would be a significant blow to the prestige of the Soviets. By the evening of 10 June, after a three-day battle, the Golan Heights fell to Israel.

kibbutz

A communal agricultural settlement in Israel.

The significance of the Six-Day War

The Six-Day War represented a crushing defeat for the Arabs and showed just how decisive the Israeli army could be in executing its tactics. The war had the following results:

- It destroyed much of the air force capacity of the Arab enemies and at least half of their military.
- It gave Israel significant and strategic parcels of land to act as a buffer against Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Israel’s land mass quadrupled.
- 18 000 Arab soldiers were killed compared to 700 Israelis.
- The focus on the Arab–Israeli conflict shifted to land claims.
- The war brought 1.3 million Arabs, mostly Palestinians, into the state of Israel.
- The Palestinian nationalist movement was born.

The Yom Kippur War, 1973

It would be six years before the Egyptians and Syrians would attempt to reverse the Israeli gains made in the 1967 war. In 1973, on the eve of Yom Kippur, the most holy Jewish holiday, the Egyptians and Syrians staged a surprise coordinated invasion in which the Egyptians attempted to expel the Israelis from the Sinai while the Syrians sought to drive them out of the Golan Heights.

The new Egyptian leader, Anwar el-Sadat, wanted to improve the economy of Egypt, and to do so he needed to regain the Sinai and make peace with Israel. He also turned his back on Nasser's alliance with the Soviet Union, expelled socialist advisers and opened up diplomatic channels with the Americans. Despite this, the Egyptian and Syrian invasion was backed by advanced Soviet military technology.

The Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir made a direct appeal for US assistance and the Americans responded by throwing their military might behind Israel, delivering \$US2.2 billion in arms. In turn, the Soviets began to resupply the Syrian military – their biggest ally in the region.

OPEC oil shock impact on the United States

Events in the Middle East had a devastating impact on the American economy. The United States' decision to support Israel in the conflict led to an angry reaction from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which introduced a ban on sales to the United States that lasted until March 1974.

The incident exposed the United States' dependence on oil. Americans relied heavily on oil-fuelled transport and manufacturing, and the price of oil was embedded into every facet of the economy. The cost of bringing goods to market relied on a cheap and abundant supply, and indeed the creation of American suburbia and its car manufacturing industry all revolved around easy and inexpensive access to oil. Though making up only 6 percent of the world's population, the United States consumed 30 percent of the world's oil. And nowhere was that oil more cheaply sourced or in greater supply than in the Middle East.

Since well before World War II, the United States and Britain were focused on securing their share of oil in the region. Britain had a tradition of colonial territorial interests in the area from the end of World War I, but when it lost its empire at the end of World War II, this influence waned. The United States also had to secure its supply. One State Department official claimed in August 1945 that 'a review of the diplomatic history of the past 35 years will show that petroleum has historically played a larger part in the external relations of the United States than any other commodity'.¹¹



SOURCE 3.17 Outcome of the Six-Day War



SOURCE 3.18 An Israeli Howitzer tank shells enemy positions in the Syrian desert during the Yom Kippur War, October 1973.



SOURCE 3.19 The OPEC embargo created petrol shortages across the whole of the United States.

consequence of this sales ban, the price of oil in the United States quadrupled, from \$US2.55 to \$US11.65 per barrel.

The United States' decision to resupply arms to Israel in 1973 had led to an economic crisis in America. The embargo and increased cost of oil resulted in a number of problems, including poor countries struggling to buy the oil and relying on loans from Western banks. The main problem was how to combat the inflation that came with higher energy costs. By 1974, inflation in the United States was running at 15 percent per annum. Historian Killen argues that the embargo was so significant that it 'altered the course of modern economic and political history ... the oil crisis plunged the US economy into a recession that lasted the rest of the decade'.¹²

Oil shortages led to public panic. Petrol stations ran out of fuel and hoarding became commonplace. The impact on the global economy of the quadruple price rise was so apparent that Henry Kissinger said it, '[was] one of the most pivotal events in the history of this century'.¹³

The Iranian Revolution, 1979

Cold War tensions were also exposed in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. On 1 February of that year, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had been in exile for 15 years, made a triumphant return to Iran. Only two weeks earlier, the Iranian leader Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who had ruled the country with an iron fist since 1953, was forced to flee to the United States, where he later received treatment for lymphoma. Ordinary Iranians demanded his return to Iran to face justice for decades of repression at the hands of his hated SAVAK secret police.

The return of the Ayatollah led to an Islamic Revolution and the overthrow of the Shah on 11 February. Khomeini returned Iran to a deeply conservative form of Islam that transcended politics and transformed Iran into a **theocratic state**. More than anything, Khomeini was a populist who provided a religious explanation of the political situation.

theocratic state

A state in which religious leaders rule in the name of a deity.



Getty Images/Corbis Historical

SOURCE 3.20 Ayatollah Khomeini waves to a crowd of supporters from the window of his Tehran home after his return from 15 years of exile in France. His return marked the transition from what had been the secular rule of the Shah of Iran to the establishment of a state based on the teachings of Islam.

On 4 November, Islamic student followers of Khomeini stormed the US Embassy in Tehran and took 52 Americans hostage, holding them for more than a year. The hostage-taking was in response to a call from the Ayatollah to strike at the interests of the United States, which he referred to as 'The Great Satan'. President Carter responded by freezing \$US8 billion worth of Iranian assets held in the United States and putting a ban on Iranian oil imports. He also deported a number of Iranians. In return for the release of the hostages, Iran demanded the return of the Shah to face justice.

The Shah's death in July 1980 put an end to one of the demands, and the Iran-Iraq war that began in September added further pressure to find a solution. The negotiations to end the hostage crisis were a highly political affair, taking place right in the middle of a US election. Accusations have been levelled that the United States' negotiators wanted to delay the hostages' release until after the election so that they could claim credit and so as not to give Carter a boost in the polls. In the end they were released at the moment of inauguration so that the credit went to both Reagan and Carter, who flew to Germany to meet the released hostages.

- 1 Why was the Middle East an area of strategic importance to the Soviets and the United States?
- 2 How did the geography of Israel change after the Six-Day War and what impact did this have in the region?
- 3 What impact did OPEC's decision to ban oil sales have on the United States after 1973?
- 4 How did the Iranian Revolution directly affect the United States?
- 5 To what extent were events in the Middle East the most significant crisis during the period of détente?

Features and consequences of détente

The Soviet Union used the period of détente to achieve military parity with the United States while continuing to neglect development of its domestic economy. At half the size of the American economy, the Soviet economy was characterised by poor-quality goods, low productivity, shortages of consumer items and technologies that lagged behind the West. Despite this poor domestic performance, between 1965 and 1970, the Soviet military budget increased by 40 percent. This included a large build-up of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with a long-range strike capability, the revival of conventional forces to meet the threat of NATO in Western Europe, and the development of the Brezhnev Doctrine – the commitment to military intervention in any country proposing reforms at odds with Soviet-style communism. With the threat of China now emerging, it was also forced to develop weapons should a second front in the Cold War open up against a communist rival.

For the United States, the period of détente involved a war in Vietnam, which it waged in an attempt to contain communism. This was an expensive stalemate that led to large budget deficits and prevented it from continuing the arms race with the Soviet Union. Many right-wing Americans were deeply critical of their government for allowing the Soviets to achieve nuclear parity with the United States. By the end of the 1970s, with the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it looked like the US administration had taken its eye off the ball.

Of course, there were some remarkable successes during détente. These included:

- **The SALT I treaty:** The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) were the first steps towards reducing the threat of nuclear weapons. They focused on the reduction of nuclear arms around the world. The bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union resulted in an agreement to reduce defensive weapons.
- **The Helsinki Accords:** In August 1975, the Helsinki agreements represented greater cooperation between the countries of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. In effect, Eastern and Western Europe were making significant agreements and compromises on issues that stretched back as far as World War II. For example, NATO countries for the first time recognised the borders of the Eastern-bloc countries. In return, the Soviets agreed to grant certain political freedoms such as freedom of the press and an improvement in human rights records. Following *ostpolitik*, greater trade links were established across Europe.
- **US-China relations:** A significant feature of détente was the strengthening of relations between China and the United States. Starting with Nixon's visit in 1972, China was admitted into the United Nations and given full diplomatic status by the United States in 1979. The United States recognised the Communist Party as the legitimate government of China.
- **Ostpolitik:** Willy Brandt's extending of an olive branch to the Eastern-bloc countries was a significant success of détente. Brandt's decision to accept the borders between East and West Germany was not necessarily an abandonment of the dream of reunification, but a pragmatic political move towards closer cooperation.
- **The stabilisation of superpower relationships:** Détente emerged from the high point of superpower tension – the Cuban Missile Crisis. The threat of nuclear war had been significantly reduced by an open discussion about arms reductions.



Conclusion

Détente was a welcome period of relaxation in tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States between 1962 and 1979. Although the thaw collapsed at the end of 1979 and a second phase of the Cold War was ushered in, a greater understanding between the East and West was achieved during this time. Compared to the period of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when leaders were fumbling without any real knowledge about the intentions of the other side, détente can be seen as achieving more understanding between the superpowers.

Détente was also a time of significant geopolitical change. The United States was locked in a stalemate in Vietnam, the Soviets and the Chinese had developed more complex geopolitical tensions on their border, and events in the Middle East showed that superpower rivalry was alive and well. Yet the main achievements of détente, including opening up greater links between East and West and reducing armaments, should not be downplayed.

Chapter summary

- The period of détente was a welcome relief from the tensions that existed in the period between 1945 and 1962 – the height of which was the Cuban Missile Crisis and the threat of a nuclear confrontation between the two powers.
- The period had economic and political benefits for both sides of the conflict.
- With the rise of China and the Sino-Soviet split, a new multi-polar world emerged, which the United States used to its advantage.
- Détente was most successful in Europe, where West German Chancellor Willy Brandt sought closer relations with his eastern neighbours through *ostpolitik*.
- Conflict was still a feature of the period, as evidenced by the Vietnam War, the Sino-Soviet split and continuing tensions in the Middle East.
- The achievements of détente increased understanding on both sides and began a process of nuclear arms controls and reductions.

Additional resources

- Heller, Henry, *The Cold War and the New Imperialism: A Global History – 1945–2005*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2006.
 - Painter, David S, *The Cold War: An International History*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999.
-

Endnotes

- 1 Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*, New York, Threshold, 1990, p. 265.
- 2 Anatoly Dobrynin, cited in Asselin, P, *A Bitter Peace: Washington and the Making of the Paris Agreement*, The University of North Carolina Press, North Carolina. 2002, p. 49.
- 3 Woodrow Wilson, *14 Points*, avalon.law.yale.edu.
- 4 Dunbabin, JPP, *The Cold War: Great Powers and their Rivalries*, Routledge, London, 2008, p. 232.
- 5 Gaddis, JL, *The Cold War*, Penguin, London, 2005, p. 123.
- 6 *Prevention of Nuclear War Agreement*, United States–Soviet Union, signed 22 June 1973, www.state.gov.
- 7–9 *Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam*, September 2 1945, www.unc.edu/courses/2009fall/hist/140/006/Documents/VietnameseDocs.pdf.
- 10 Lyndon B Johnson, cited in www.americanforeignrelations.com.
- 11 Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the United States*, Harper Perennial, New York, 2003, p. 413.
- 12 Killen, Andreas, *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol and the Birth of Post-Sixties America*, Bloomsbury, New York, 2006, p. 24.
- 13 Johnson, Paul, *Modern Times: A History of the World from the 1920s to the 1990s*, Phoenix, London, 1992, p. 669.

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONTENT RECALL

- 1 Outline the political and economic motives behind détente.
- 2 Outline the achievements of the summits in 1972 and 1973.
- 3 What were the causes of the Sino-Soviet split?

EXTENDED RESPONSE

- 4 What was China's role in reshaping the geopolitics of the Cold War?
- 5 Describe how *ostpolitik* and the Helsinki Accords helped to reduce Cold War tensions in Europe.
- 6 How did the Vietnam War impact on the United States' standing in the world during this period?
- 7 How did the United States exploit the tensions between China and the Soviet Union?
- 8 How significant were events in the Middle East for Soviet-American relations during this period in the Cold War?
- 9 Create a table outlining the successes and failures of détente.

ESSAY QUESTION

- 10 To what extent was détente successful in reducing superpower tensions between 1962 and 1979?

04

Renewal and end of the Cold War

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

- Conflict in Afghanistan
- Attitudes and policies of the United States and Soviet Union under the leadership of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev
- Disarmament initiatives
- The end of European communism and the Cold War



Modern History
syllabus



The Berlin Wall falls, November 1989

Introduction

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on 25 December 1979 marked the end of détente and the renewal of the Cold War. Two years later, Ronald Reagan, a former Hollywood actor and Republican, became the president of the United States, having taken a strong stance against communism during the election campaign. In a speech at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington in 1983, Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as the ‘evil empire’ and embarked on a massive weapons build-up, thereby renewing the arms race. Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI or Star Wars) planned to take nuclear weapons into space with an elaborate and expensive anti-ballistic missile defence shield designed to put the Soviets out of the arms race altogether by rendering their technology useless.



In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan through its southern border, a conflict that later came to be regarded as the Soviet version of Vietnam. Similarly to the United States in Vietnam, the Soviet Union suffered a humiliating loss at the hands of a group of Islamic jihadi fighters known as the *Mujahedeen*. The *Mujahedeen* were led by a Saudi tycoon by the name of Osama bin Laden and were trained and funded by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The war represented the loss of faith in détente and trust between the American administration and the ageing Brezhnev.

In 1985 a young politician, Mikhail Gorbachev, was elected as the head of the Soviet Union and change was in the air. A committed Leninist, Gorbachev had come to power after the deaths of three old leaders in quick succession, with a wide-ranging reform agenda to tackle entrenched problems within the Soviet system. But that reform program would eventually lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of communism in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev’s desire to implement foreign policy reforms, along with economic restructuring and greater openness led to a limited reintroduction of economic and political freedoms that turned into a tsunami of change.

As part of Gorbachev’s push for foreign policy reform, he was determined not to be drawn into a renewed arms race. For Gorbachev, the urgent needs of a stagnant economy were too important to ignore. The revolution that had promised so much to the worker had failed to deliver, and Gorbachev entered into a range of talks and agreements to reduce the number of nuclear weapons around the globe. Armaments conferences and superpower summits were a core feature of the relationship between Reagan and Gorbachev. Gorbachev and his foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze embarked on a so-called *charm offensive* to show that Soviet leaders could cooperate.

Mujahedeen

A guerrilla force led by Osama bin Laden against the communist government of Afghanistan.

charm offensive

Gorbachev’s tour of the West to show a friendlier side to the Soviet system.

When, on 9 November 1989, that most enduring symbol of the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, collapsed, growing pro-democracy movements across the Eastern bloc gained momentum that led to free elections and the end of communism. Most of those pro-democracy revolutions, with the exception of the Romanian revolution, were peaceful and by 1991 the Cold War was over. Germany was reunified in 1990 and the Soviet Union was dissolved with the stroke of a pen.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

When 75 000 Soviet troops marched into the Afghani capital of Kabul on 25 December 1979, they did so in support of a fledgling Marxist revolution that attempted to cast aside a strong Muslim tradition in favour of communism.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) had been in power since 1978 when the 'April Revolution' overthrew the pro-American government in a violent coup. What was interesting about the revolution was the attempt of an atheistic Marxist government to lead citizens who held deeply conservative Islamic beliefs into a communist utopia. It would be no easy task. An example of the deep religious and political divide within the country was demonstrated in October 1978, when Prime Minister Nur Mohammed Taraki introduced a new Afghani flag. It featured the deep red of the Soviets in place of the traditional Islamic green. It soon became clear that the new Afghan leaders would require the support of the Soviets if they were to survive. In December 1978, the Soviets and Afghans signed a 'Treaty of Friendship'.

The new Afghani leadership were zealous in pushing through socialist reforms in the country, but met with stiff resistance from religious leaders and those in rural communities. Violent resistance began to break out and the country was threatened with civil war. The Soviet Union, reluctant to intervene directly, sent military advisers into the country to support the PDPA. They also encouraged the leaders to tone down their reforms in an effort to quell discontent.

In particular, the Soviets targeted Hafizullah Amin, one of the zealous factional leaders of the PDPA. This intervention backfired. Many PDPA supporters did not want to become puppets of a foreign government and turned their support to Amin, leading to further divisions. By September

1979, internal fighting within the PDPA resulted in the death of Prime Minister Taraki and when the Soviets finally invaded on 25 December, one of their first acts was to kill Amin and install a new government that was more favourable to Moscow.

The Soviets did not take the decision to invade Afghanistan lightly. Dubbed the 'graveyard of empires', Afghanistan had been an extraordinarily difficult area to conquer, stretching all the way back to antiquity. Afghanistan is a country that features mountains, deserts and freezing winters, and it is difficult to achieve a strategic advantage. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev was convinced that the operation would be over within a month. The Soviets, however, remained there for nearly a decade.



SOURCE 4.1 The Afghan Mujahedeen were funded by the American CIA and helped to defeat the Soviet Union after a decade-long conflict.

Meanwhile, opposition to communism was growing in the countryside. With support from countries such as Pakistan, Iran and the United States, the Soviet Union would have to deal with a new, heavily funded guerrilla force, the *Mujahedeen*, led by Osama bin Laden.

The Soviet invasion was the final nail in the coffin of détente. One of the striking features of the invasion was that the Soviets underestimated the reaction of the Americans. In response to the invasion, the Carter administration:

- halted technology and grain shipments to the Soviet Union
- withdrew the United States team from the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games
- withdrew from SALT II talks
- significantly increased spending on defence

External players heavily influenced the Soviet Union's response in Afghanistan and its decision to remain in the conflict for as long as it did. In his memoirs, Gorbachev argues that extracting the Soviet Union from Afghanistan was difficult because the conflict had drawn in a range of regional players including Pakistan, Iran and the United States, many of whom were funding and providing training and weapons for the *Mujahedeen*. By 1989 the Afghan war had cost 1.5 million lives. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan therefore renewed Cold War tensions.

- 1 What ideological tensions made the invasion of Afghanistan so difficult for the Soviets?
- 2 What resistance did the Soviets face during their invasion of Afghanistan?
- 3 Why was Afghanistan known as the 'graveyard of empires'?
- 4 Who were the Afghan *Mujahedeen*?
- 5 What impact did the invasion have on American-Soviet relations?

US attitudes and policies under Reagan

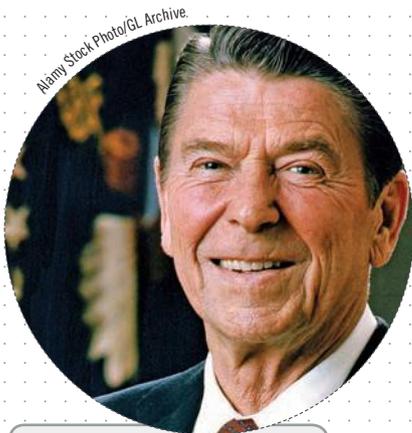
At the turn of the decade, United States citizens were reeling from events in Afghanistan and Tehran. In November 1980 they elected a new president, Ronald Reagan, a leader who had resolved to be tough on communism and promised a renewed prosperity to the middle classes after a decade-long recession.

Reagan's inaugural speech covered two central themes. First, he denounced potential adversaries as 'enemies of freedom' and warned that America would fight for its brand of peace. This promise was an open threat to any government, particularly in Central America, that would be tempted away by communism, and was also a sign of support for anti-communist forces everywhere. This approach came to be known as the Reagan doctrine. Second, Reagan signalled his intention for economic reform. He wanted to roll back the size of the federal government and implement a series of reforms that included tax cuts, reductions to public spending and less red tape for American businesses. Reagan's America would be the beacon light of resurgent capitalism in the world.

Reagan was a tough talking, former Hollywood actor who aimed to reassert American dominance. His foreign policy featured a commitment to defeat the Soviets in a renewed arms race through the Star Wars program, strong anti-communist rhetoric and an intention to halt the spread of communism in his backyard.



RONALD REAGAN



SOURCE 4.2 Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States

Ronald Reagan was president of the United States between 1981 and 1988. A former Hollywood actor, he was elected to the presidency on the basis of a strong anti-communist platform and an economic plan to bring prosperity back to America through tax cuts for corporations and high-income earners, and by cutting government spending. Reagan was deeply critical of détente and believed that it allowed the Soviet Union to catch up to the United States in the arms race and to extend its influence in the world – particularly in the Middle

East. Reagan initiated the ‘Star Wars’ program, an ambitious plan to establish an anti-ballistic missile defence shield in space, to protect America against the threat of nuclear war with the Soviets. The tide of tension with the Soviets turned in 1985 when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. Reagan and Gorbachev developed a friendship and subsequently embarked on a round of nuclear disarmament talks. A series of superpower summits between the two during the 1980s laid the groundwork for disarmament.

Star Wars

The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was the cornerstone of Ronald Reagan’s new rearmament program. It was ambitious in scope, technologically advanced and enormously expensive. It should also be noted that it was in the very early stages of scientific development and would not be realised for decades.

Star Wars

Officially known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a plan to protect the United States from nuclear attack through the use of a missile defence system.

It was nicknamed **Star Wars** because its main feature was to deploy defensive weapons into outer space to intercept incoming ballistic missiles before they could reach the United States. Weapons analysts believed that the program would not work. They argued that there was very little that could be done to prevent a full-scale attack and that the program undermined the concept of mutual deterrence, which may prevent an attack in the first place.

Star Wars was a response to claims that the United States had been duped into a false sense of security during the period of détente and that by the early 1980s the Soviet Union was able to match American nuclear capability. The invasion of Afghanistan had proven to some within the United States that the Soviets were inherently expansionist and aggressive. The SDI would restore American arms superiority.

The Star Wars program was hugely expensive. It was undertaken at a time when the Soviets could not afford to engage in a massive arms build-up that would put vast amounts of pressure on its economy. In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union and one of his key policies was disarmament. In the United States, in contrast, bankrolling arms development became popular. By the end of the Reagan presidency, the United States had accrued a \$US2.5 trillion debt – up from \$US1 trillion in 1980.

Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis has argued that Star Wars was ultimately about advancing the weapons technology so far as to make nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. Reagan wanted to abolish nuclear weapons altogether, and he knew that the Soviets were so far behind in technology that he could bring the rivalry into different territory. In the end, SDI was derided by media and political commentators and eventually shelved by the scientific community because it was too difficult to achieve.

**The Strategic
Defense
Initiative**

JOHN LEWIS GADDIS

‘Reagan was deeply committed to SDI: it was not a bargaining chip to give up in future negotiations. That did not preclude, though, using it as a bluff: the United States was years, even decades, away from developing a missile defense capability, but Reagan’s speech persuaded the increasingly frightened Soviet leaders that this was about to happen.’

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, Allen Lane, Great Britain, 2005, p. 133.

RONALD REAGAN

‘What made the idea promising was that, if it worked and we then entered an era when the nations of the world agreed to eliminate nuclear weapons, it could serve as a safety valve ... the SDI held too much potential for the security of mankind to be traded away at the negotiating table.’

Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography by Ronald Reagan*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1990, p. 608.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

‘We are stealing everything from the people. And turning the country into a military camp. And the West clearly want to pull us into the second scenario of arms race. They are counting on our military exhaustion. And then they will portray us as militarists. And they are trying to pull us in on the SDI.’

Mikhail Gorbachev, ‘Gorbachev discusses De-Militarization’, Making the History of 1989, Item #149, (accessed November 23 2017).



SOURCE 4.3 Political cartoon from 1987, satirising the Star Wars initiative.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Gaddis refer to the SDI as a ‘bluff’?
- 2 What did Reagan believe to be a positive outcome of the SDI?
- 3 What was Gorbachev’s view of the potential for a Soviet arms build-up?
- 4 In what ways does the cartoon use satire in its treatment of the SDI?

The 'Evil Empire'

At a breakfast hosted by the National Association of Evangelicals on 8 March 1983, Reagan's attitude to the Soviet Union was revealed in the so-called 'Evil Empire' speech. In this speech, Reagan criticised the Soviet dismissal of religion as a guiding moral force. The context was that Reagan was in the middle of the Geneva arms talks and believed they were going nowhere fast. Frustrated with the Soviets' refusal to budge on removing key missile sites, Reagan believed that America was falling behind in the arms race and he needed to convince the rest of America and the Congress that this was the case.

Reagan was in no mood to appease the Soviets. He strongly believed that the Soviets had replaced God with the state and that the consequences of this ideology for peace were grim. Reagan said,

'Let us pray for the salvation of all those who live in totalitarian darkness ... Let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.'

Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography by Ronald Reagan*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1990, p. 570.

The Reagan doctrine

Another central plank in President Reagan's anti-communism was the so-called Reagan doctrine. This foreign policy position sought to provide support to any country in the third world to resist Soviet aggression. Indeed, Reagan believed that the Soviets were actively promoting instability in underdeveloped countries in order to gain a foothold.

The doctrine was reminiscent of Eisenhower's rollback policy of the 1950s. This United States policy sought to challenge communist-inspired takeovers with force if necessary, particularly in Central America.

The Reagan doctrine

The Reagan doctrine was best expressed in the President's 1985 State of the Union address:

'Our security assistance programs help friendly governments defend themselves and give them confidence to work for peace. And I hope that you in the Congress will understand that, dollar for dollar, security assistance contributes as much to global security as our own defense budget.

We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives – on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua – to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.

The Sandinista dictatorship of Nicaragua, with full Cuban-Soviet bloc support, not only persecutes its people, the church, and denies a free press, but arms and provides bases for Communist terrorists attacking neighboring states. Support for freedom fighters is self-defense and totally consistent with the OAS and UN Charters. It is essential that the Congress continue all facets of our assistance to Central America. I want to work with you to support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security.'

Ronald Reagan, 'Address before a joint session of the Congress on the State of the Union', 6 February 1985.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What do you think Reagan means by 'security assistance'?
- 2 What does Reagan accuse the Sandinistas of?
- 3 What role does Reagan believe 'freedom fighters' have in resisting communism?

A key feature of the Reagan doctrine was that it supported communist opposition even if it was at odds with democratic values. This support had the benefit of keeping American troops out of foreign entanglements, but it meant that the United States sometimes found itself supporting groups with questionable human rights records. Still, after Vietnam the United States public had little appetite for direct American involvement in another lengthy war, and this seemed like a reasonable price to pay.

Historian Henry Heller has listed some of the key features of the Reagan doctrine:

- It rested on low-intensity warfare.
- It used economic blockades to starve out communist supplies.
- It provided support for counter-revolutionary armies, which ranged from standard armies to guerrilla forces to death squads.
- It used covert US military warfare including psychological and technological warfare.
- Lightning strikes were carried out by US troops.¹

In conducting foreign policy through proxy and covert activity, the American government exposed itself to controversy, such as in the Iran-Contra affair. In 1985 Hezbollah militants held Americans hostage in Lebanon. In order to secure their release, and without the knowledge of the United States Congress, the Reagan administration agreed to sell weapons to Iran to help in their war against Iraq.

To hide the funds generated by the weapons sale, the money was rerouted to the pro-American 'Contra' rebels fighting the communist regime in Nicaragua. This roundabout arms deal had the effect of resolving the hostage crisis and funding anti-communist forces. Of course, the whole operation was illegal.

Reagan testified in November 1986 that he knew nothing of the sales. After a lengthy Congressional hearing throughout 1987 it was discovered that National Security Advisor John Poindexter and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North had conducted the negotiations without Reagan's knowledge. The affair was a major scandal in the United States.



Getty Images/Bethmann

SOURCE 4.4 Lt. Colonel Oliver North was at the centre of the Iran-Contra affair. North claimed he was acting on orders from superiors when he secretly re-routed funds from arms sales to Iran to the 'Contra' in Nicaragua. Such covert activities were a feature of the Reagan administration's tactics to halt the spread of communism in Central America.

Reaganomics

The third major plank of Ronald Reagan's presidency was his determination to return economic prosperity to America after the deep recession of the 1970s. Reagan came to the presidency with strong views on the economy and how to fix it. For him, the problem began and ended with 'big government'. It was too large, too expensive, too intrusive, and taxed too highly. He believed that tax cuts and reducing the size of government would cure American ills.

Among the cornerstones of Reagan's policies were deep cuts to social programs and increased military spending. Reagan thought that the tax burden on Americans was too great. He believed that the tax system was the greatest roadblock to prosperity and argued that the best way to increase government revenue was by cutting taxes. Reagan's logic was that if taxes were lower, people would be encouraged to work more. If people worked more, then tax revenues would be higher. If corporations were taxed less, there would be incentive to invest and create jobs. In the first August of his administration, Congress passed a plan for tax cuts of 25 percent over three years. As a wealthy actor, Reagan had personal experience of being obliged to give large amounts of his earnings to the government in taxes.

trickle-down economics

In economics, the belief that tax cuts to the rich would create more jobs.

This thinking became the basis for so-called **trickle-down economics**. The idea was that in a capitalist economy, tax cuts would stimulate activity by giving business incentives to create jobs. Proponents believed that trickle-down would benefit all Americans – but over time this was shown to be false through low wages growth and growing inequality.

Reagan and trickle-down economics

‘At the peak of my career at Warner Bros., I was in the ninety-four percent tax bracket; that meant that after a certain point, I received only six cents of each dollar I earned and the government got the rest. The IRS took such a big chunk of my earnings that after a while I began asking myself whether it was worth it to keep on taking work. Something was wrong with a system like that ... If I decided to do one less picture that meant other people at the studio in lower tax brackets wouldn’t work as much either; the effect filtered down, and there were few total jobs available. I remember one scene in the Knute Rockne picture that had only a farmer and a horse in it; shooting it on location created work for seventy people.’

An American Life: The Autobiography by Ronald Reagan. Simon and Schuster, New York 1990, pp. 231–232.

QUESTIONS

- 1 According to Reagan what was the obstacle to economic prosperity in America? Provide Reagan’s reasons.
- 2 Explain Reagan’s ‘trickle-down’ theory.
- 3 Do you agree or disagree that Reagan was taxed too highly as a film star? Give at least two reasons for your answer.

- 1 What were the two central themes in Reagan’s inauguration speech?
- 2 In your view, was Reagan the right person to lead the United States at this time? Give detailed reasons for your response.
- 3 Outline the main features of the SDI or Star Wars program.
- 4 What were the criticisms of the SDI?
- 5 How was the Reagan doctrine an extension of containment?
- 6 Outline the Iran-Contra affair.
- 7 Explain the concepts of Reaganomics and trickle-down economics.

Soviet attitudes and policies under Gorbachev

stagnation

In economics, a long period of low economic growth.

When Leonid Brezhnev died on 10 November 1982, the new leadership was forced to deal with the entrenched **stagnation** of the Russian economy, a feature of his 22 years in power. Two days later, Yuri Andropov was appointed General Secretary of the Party and had to grapple with a number of intractable problems facing the Soviet economy: corruption, a black market, and a poor understanding of economics within the leadership.

Andropov attempted to reverse the most serious problems, particularly low worker productivity, declining living standards, long queues for consumer goods and alcoholism at work. If efficiency were to return to the Soviet economy, then self-discipline would have to reign. This view reflected a deeply

held belief among the leadership that it was poor Soviet habits rather than the Soviet system that resulted in poor economic performance. Andropov attempted to provide greater freedom to enterprise managers over their own budgets. The old leader was ill, and he charged a young technocrat by the name of Mikhail Gorbachev with carrying out the reforms.

Another of Andropov's goals was to strike at the corruption in the Party, a move that was deeply unpopular among the old guard. When the General Secretary died in February 1984, an old Brezhnev ally, Konstantin Chernenko, assumed leadership of the Party. Too ill to effectively govern, Chernenko lasted a little over 12 months before Gorbachev was appointed to the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party in March 1985. The new General Secretary would usher in reforms that would eventually lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe.

New leadership

Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union on 11 March 1985. Although he strongly supported the Soviet system, he believed that the system was broken and needed reforming. The great question confronting the reformers was whether or not Gorbachev could borrow from capitalism in order to save socialism.

On 27 January 1987, Gorbachev stood in front of the **politburo** and set a new direction for the Soviet Union. Many of the old guard were dead, and Gorbachev promoted young people with fresh ideas to key positions. The new General Secretary wanted to establish a decisive break from the stagnation and corruption of the Brezhnev era.

Australian historian David Christian provides an argument that the 'Gorbachev generation' of political leaders were natural reformers for the following reasons:

- they were highly educated and came of age at a time of de-Stalinisation
- they came to power when the Soviet Union was already a superpower, and therefore lacked the vulnerability felt by earlier leaders
- the central problem of their careers was to reform an existing system
- the Stalin generation had blocked their rise to power so they had plenty of time to think about the issues facing the Soviet Union²

One fundamental problem with the Soviet economy was that there was little incentive for workers to increase **productivity**. Quotas imposed by a central planning authority dictated the number of goods to be produced, with penalties for failure to meet the required targets.



Attitudes towards the Soviet economy: perestroika and glasnost

politburo
The Soviet central leadership committee.

productivity
An economic term to describe the efficiency, the quality and the speed with which workers produce goods.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

Mikhail Gorbachev was leader of the Soviet Union between March 1985 and December 1991. He was a committed communist whose domestic and international policies had the unintended consequences of leading to the end of communism. Gorbachev's domestic policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (economic restructuring) were designed to promote greater political freedom in the Soviet Union and to introduce minor market reforms to reinvigorate the economy. A part of Gorbachev's plan to return

the Soviet Union to prosperity was to minimise its financial and military commitments abroad. He repealed the Brezhnev Doctrine, which meant that he did not intervene in the affairs of Eastern European states. This led to widespread democratic movements which, in turn, resulted in the overthrow of communism in the Eastern bloc.



Nancy Stock Photo/ITAR-TASS Photo Agency

SOURCE 4.5 Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev

Vodka

By 1985 alcoholism had become a national problem in the Soviet Union. It was rampant in the workplace and led to absenteeism and low productivity, as well as burdening health, law enforcement and community services. Work accidents and domestic violence incidents increased. Tax on the 14.7 billion litres of vodka consumed annually by Russians represented 13 percent of the national budget. There were more than one million alcoholics treated in hospital each year, and 14 000 alcohol-related road deaths. The cost to the economy was enormous. An estimated 80 billion roubles per year was lost to alcohol abuse.

Gorbachev tried to attack the problem of alcoholism head on. In May 1985, he introduced measures to restrict the sale of vodka and reduce its production. He banned sales of alcohol before 2 pm, increased the price, cut production and lifted the drinking age from 18 to 21. Sales fell by nearly 50 percent. Ironically, this led to a crisis in government revenue because the tax from alcohol had previously made up such a large percentage of the national budget. The Soviet government was forced to print money to compensate for the reduction of tax revenue from vodka and this resulted in inflation.

Workers nicknamed Gorbachev 'Comrade Orange Juice' or 'Mineral Water Secretary' and were forced to find alternatives to combat the shortage of vodka. Ordinary Russians began to drink perfume, anti-freeze for engines, cleaning fluids or varnish. It was reported that 11 000 people died this way.

Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign

'The anti-alcohol campaign became one more sad example of how faith in the omnipotence of command methods, extremism and administrative zeal can ruin a good idea ... Home brewing became widespread. Sugar vanished from the shelves. Then cheap [perfume] vanished from the shelves – to be consumed in the place of alcohol ... The negative consequences of the anti-alcohol campaign greatly exceeded its positive aspects.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 1995, Doubleday, New York, p. 221–222.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What did the anti-alcohol campaign reveal about communism?
 - 2 Why do you think the anti-alcohol campaign failed?
-
- 1 How was Gorbachev different from the leaders who came before him?
 - 2 What traits, according to Christian, characterised the 'Gorbachev generation'?
 - 3 What impact did alcohol have on the Soviet economy?
 - 4 How did Gorbachev try to fix the problem of alcohol? Did that stop ordinary Russians from drinking?

Perestroika and glasnost

Gorbachev's strongest policy positions were laid out at the 27th Party Congress in March 1986. In his 1987 book *Perestroika*, Gorbachev writes of the 1970s anomaly in which great technological advances had the potential to deliver high living standards. However, he writes, 'The country began to lose momentum ... A kind of "braking mechanism" affecting social and economic development formed'.³ Gorbachev's reforms reflected the Soviet leader's strong belief that things needed to change in order for productivity to be lifted. This change would involve a reexamination of the nature of socialism and the introduction of limited market reforms to get the economy moving.

Perestroika

The policy of *perestroika*, or 'economic restructuring', was Gorbachev's response to a number of key problems facing the Soviet economy, including low productivity and poor quality of goods, falling agricultural harvests, declining living standards and long lines to purchase scarce and expensive consumer goods.

These problems, Gorbachev believed, were inherited from the Brezhnev era and they had become entrenched. Gorbachev believed that the introduction of limited market reforms might provide the incentive for ordinary workers to lift their productivity. Restructuring involved less central planning, and decision-making was handed over to local operations.

In other words, Gorbachev believed in a form of market socialism that drew inspiration from Lenin's New Economic Policy, in which the state gradually retreated from some state enterprises by allowing the sale of surplus goods, thus incentivising workers. Gorbachev allowed cooperatives and small businesses to emerge. Hairdressers and restaurants began to pop up all over Russia. But the reforms did not bode so well in major industries, and worker dissatisfaction led to a general coal miners' strike in 1988 that nearly crippled the country.

Overall, the *perestroika* reforms were a failure. Only 750 000 out of 135 million workers were employed in privately run enterprises by 1988. The era of *perestroika* coincided with great political change that resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union and the transition of Russia into a capitalist free market economy.

perestroika

Gorbachev's policy of economic restructuring.

Perestroika

GORBACHEV

'*Perestroika* was a reform that aimed at gradual political change to create an infrastructure for market economics. We had several generations with no experiences of markets. You can't just announce the markets and see them appear overnight. I was actually saying it will take a generation for it to start working.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, in *Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy*, Part 2, 'The Agony of Reform', PBS.

'What specifically did we accomplish as a result of the stormy years of *perestroika*? The foundations of the totalitarian system were eliminated. Profound democratic changes were begun. Free general elections were held for the first time, allowing real choice. Freedom of the press and a multi-party system were guaranteed ... Human rights now became an unassailable principle.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, 2000, Columbia University Press, pp. 57–58.

REAGAN

'I read *Perestroika*, the book by Mikhail Gorbachev that outlined his goals for restructuring the Soviet economy ... Although he didn't describe it as such, it was a bill of particulars condemning the workings of communism, and it was as damning as anything ever written about Communism in the West. It was an epitaph: Capitalism had triumphed over Communism.'

Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography by Ronald Reagan*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1990, pp. 702–703.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Gorbachev wish to introduce *perestroika* at a gradual pace?
- 2 Make a list of what Gorbachev feels that he achieved as a result of *perestroika*. Why do you think his list of achievements did not include economic success?
- 3 Describe Ronald Reagan's attitude towards *perestroika*.

Glasnost

The second of Gorbachev's major reform policies was **glasnost**. Translated as 'openness', the intention of this reform was to establish genuine transparency in the Soviet government. This would include holding multi-candidate elections between members of the Communist Party (all other political parties were banned), encouraging political debate and giving the press greater freedom to comment on the actions of the government and the direction of policy.

Gorbachev believed that the communist elites were the most significant barrier to change. *Glasnost* would help swing open the doors of democratic reform and this is what the old bureaucracy feared most. They were not used to having their decisions open to public scrutiny.

It would take a while for *glasnost* to establish itself. After all, there had not been a tradition in Russia of open debate, scrutiny of public officials and discussions about the direction of the society. The new openness led to the proliferation of organisations that did not come under the umbrella of the Communist Party. By 1987 these organisations met to discuss topics as varied as liberalism, nationalism and the environment. Known as 'informals', these groups were not supposed to offer a political alternative to communism, but Gorbachev knew that such groups would inevitably allow alternative political ideas to flourish.

Gorbachev wanted to go beyond using *glasnost* as a slogan and introduced a series of reforms that would encourage public debate. He knew full well that Russians were cynical about the old propaganda techniques, and he wanted his reforms to create genuine change. To ensure that *glasnost* would take root within the Soviet citizenship, Gorbachev:

- engaged the support of key intellectuals and writers to help him communicate the serious issues facing the Soviet Union. He wanted the workers to be aware of the problems and a part of the solution.
- was interested in hearing about the lives of everyday people in ways that were unmediated by the bureaucracy. For this, he needed a free and open press.
- encouraged and allowed intellectual debate about policy from within and outside the government ranks, and encouraged robust debate among conservatives and radicals.
- enforced a more open government bureaucracy so that there would be no more secrecy. Information would henceforth flow freely.

The need for *glasnost* was tragically revealed on 26 April 1986, when the number 4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl, in the Ukraine, leaked radioactive waste. The Soviet people were not informed of the disaster until Gorbachev relayed the details on television on 28 April. In the two days prior, Chernobyl, only 130 kilometres away from the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, was under threat from explosions ripping through the other reactors and endangering the water supplies. Eight thousand lives were lost as a result of the explosion, and radioactivity of the area was not contained because of a veil of secrecy that accompanied the clean-up in the initial stages of the disaster.

In 1988, Gorbachev announced the first democratic elections in Russia in the hope that his reforms would provide him with broad public support. However, by 1988, ordinary Russians were struggling with reform. The promises of perestroika had failed to take effect and inflation had gripped the country. There were shortages in consumer products and long lines for food.

Perhaps the most significant impact of *glasnost* came in the Soviet bloc. In countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and East Germany, the hope of greater transparency and free speech gave weight to the people's desire for political freedoms. It was *glasnost* that allowed pro-democracy demonstrations, which in turn led to the eventual collapse of Soviet-backed regimes.

Glasnost

nomenklatura

Influential government and industry posts given to people by virtue of their standing in the Party rather than their talent.

'Glasnost made its way with considerable difficulty. The **nomenklatura** opposed *glasnost* in every way they could, both openly and secretly ... But it was precisely *glasnost* that awakened people from their social slumber, helped them overcome indifference and passivity and become aware of the stake they had in change ... *Glasnost* helped us to explain, and promote awareness of the new realities ... In short, without *glasnost* there would have been no *perestroika*.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, 2000, Columbia University Press, pp. 60–61.

'The closed nature and secrecy of the nuclear power industry, which was burdened by bureaucracy and monopolism in science, had an extremely bad effect. I spoke of this at a meeting of the Politburo on 3 July 1986: "For thirty years you scientists, specialists and ministers have been telling us that everything was safe. And you think we look on you as gods. But now we have ended up with a fiasco ..." Chernobyl became a difficult test for *glasnost*, openness and democracy ... shed a light on many of the sicknesses of our system as a whole ... the concealing and hushing up of accidents and other bad news, irresponsibility and carelessness, slipshod work, wholesale drunkenness. This was one more convincing argument in favour of radical reforms.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 1995, Doubleday, New York, pp. 191–193.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Which group of people had the most to lose from *glasnost* and why?
- 2 How did *glasnost* benefit the Soviet Union?
- 3 Why did the Chernobyl nuclear incident reveal the need for *glasnost*?

Foreign policy and arms reduction

Though well aware of the massive military build-up underway in the United States, Gorbachev did not want to undermine political progress at home by becoming entangled in another arms race. After all, the Soviets were spending US\$2 billion per year in a war they would eventually lose in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Soviets had to choose between participating in the space race or increasing living standards for their citizens. Gorbachev would take the path of domestic reform for the benefit of his citizens.

In the process, he would embark on a new course unthinkable to previous generations. To counter the growing arms rivalry, he would go down the path of **disarmament**. Gorbachev spoke out against the arms race, arguing that it was the fortune spent on nuclear rivalry that was robbing ordinary Russian citizens of higher living standards.

Significantly, he acted **unilaterally** to ban further deployment of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in April 1985. In 1987, he made unilateral cuts to the Soviet military budget. On 7 December 1987 Gorbachev gave an address to the United Nations in which he announced that he would cut the ground force by 500 000 men. In the speech he also denounced the threat of force. These were brave moves.

disarmament

The movement to reduce the number of conventional and/or nuclear weapons in the world.

unilateral

To make a decision or act alone.

Gorbachev's speech to the UN, 1988

'It is evident ... that force and the threat of force can no longer be, and should not be instruments of foreign policy ... The compelling necessity of the principle of freedom of choice is also clear to us ... Freedom of choice is a universal principle to which there should be no exceptions.

In order to involve society in implementing the plans for restructuring it had to be made more truly democratic. Under the badge of democratization, restructuring has now encompassed politics, the economy, spiritual life, and ideology. We have unfolded a radical economic reform, we have accumulated experience, and from the new year we are transferring the entire national economy to new forms and work methods ...

The Soviet Union has made a decision on reducing its armed forces. In the next two years, their numerical strength will be reduced by 500 000 persons, and the volume of conventional arms will also be cut considerably. These reductions will be made on a unilateral basis.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, address to the 43rd United Nations General Assembly, 7 December 1988.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What did Gorbachev argue could no longer be used as an instrument of foreign policy and why?
- 2 What is significant about the fact that Gorbachev made this speech about domestic issues to the United Nations?



SOURCE 4.6 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (right) took on a more affable tone during state visits in what some called a 'charm offensive'.

The charm offensive

It was French officials who first coined the term 'charm offensive' to describe Gorbachev's tour of the West, which aimed to reveal a friendlier side to the Soviet system. The French daily newspaper *Le Monde* went so far as to use the term 'Operation Seduction' to describe the kind of international diplomacy used by Gorbachev and his foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze. With his wife Raisa by his side, and desperate to hose down rumours of a new nuclear arms race, Gorbachev met with French President Francois Mitterrand in his first international engagement in October 1985. A tough negotiator, Gorbachev was also a strong communicator with a keen sense of how his image abroad would shape his ability to get things done at home. Only days before the French visit, Gorbachev flattered the French by comparing himself with Charles de Gaulle in an interview televised in the Soviet Union and France.

Reagan's Star Wars initiative alarmed Gorbachev. In February 1986, he told the 27th Party Congress that developments in the nuclear arms race required a 'rethinking' of past foreign policy positions of the Soviets and 'new approaches' to deter each side from the further development of nuclear weapons. In other words, Gorbachev was calling for a fresh engagement with the West.

Only a month after Gorbachev came to power, he attempted to take the moral high ground in his relationship with the United States by announcing a unilateral moratorium on nuclear weapons tests. Such an act was almost revolutionary in itself. In October he called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

Gorbachev and Reagan had over time developed an affable relationship that had softened the attitudes of the Soviets and Americans towards each other. Approaching something akin to friendship, the two leaders at least had developed an understanding of each other through private meetings and the development of so-called summit diplomacy, in which the two heads of state met for high-level meetings. Americans were gripped with Gorbachev fever, called 'Gorbymania', and the Soviet leader was crowned *Time* magazine's 'Man of the Year' in 1987.

During this exercise in public relations, Gorbachev was able to portray himself as a new breed of Soviet leader, wholly committed to nuclear disarmament. This contrasted starkly with Reagan's build-up of nuclear weapons. Even the leaders of France and Britain had voiced public concern about the Star Wars program, and Gorbachev was able to exploit this contrast in negotiations.

The charm offensive must be understood in the context of Gorbachev's domestic reforms program. For Gorbachev, withdrawing from the arms race and dialling down tension on the international stage was important for his reform of socialism at home, which he was committed to above all else.



Reagan and Gorbachev relationship

- 1 Outline the economic and social problems in the Soviet Union after Brezhnev's death.
- 2 Leaders of the 'Gorbachev generation' appeared more energetic and innovative than those in the previous Soviet administration. What do you think were the reasons for this?
- 3 Why was vodka such a huge problem for the Soviet economy? Make a list of the measures Gorbachev put in place to address alcoholism.
- 4 Explain how Gorbachev thought that *perestroika* would address the problems facing the Soviet economy.
- 5 Why was *perestroika* a failure?
- 6 Did *glasnost* backfire on Gorbachev? Give reasons for your response.
- 7 What impact did *glasnost* have in Eastern bloc countries?
- 8 What was the underlying purpose of Gorbachev's foreign policy initiatives?
- 9 Why were armaments reductions so important to Gorbachev's agenda?
- 10 Explain why it was important for Gorbachev to build warmer relationships with Western leaders.

Disarmament agreements, 1978–1991

The rapid build-up of arms since 1949 had led to a world awash with nuclear weapons. By the late 1970s, there were tens of thousands of nuclear warheads pointed at major Soviet and American cities and little understanding between the superpowers about intentions or future directions. With the renewal of the Cold War in 1980, fears of a nuclear confrontation grew.

From the late 1970s a series of talks and summits sought to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world. A precedent had already been set. After the fright caused by the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviets and Americans signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), and this was followed by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), a promise not to spread nuclear arms knowledge or technology around the world.

Further progress was made with the SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitations Talks) Treaty in 1972, in which both countries decided to reduce the number of defensive weapons sites, a move that was in line with the MAD doctrine. This agreement kicked off a new round of nuclear disarmament talks.



The superpower summits archive



Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 4.7 Reagan and Gorbachev were both committed to the ideal of a safer world in the nuclear age.

SALT II, Austria, 1979

The success of SALT I had made both superpowers realise that negotiation and compromise was possible. The SALT II talks went from 1972 until 1979, when an agreement was finally signed. While the SALT I agreement focused on defensive weapons, the new round of negotiations targeted offensive weapons. The goal was to limit the total number of offensive weapon delivery systems that each side could maintain. More significantly, it attempted to set up a framework to curtail the development of new weapons that would destabilise the system.

What made negotiations particularly challenging was that comparisons were difficult, because of the differences in technologies and weapons between the superpowers. In the end, both sides agreed to limit their nuclear forces to 2250 nuclear delivery vehicles. Unfortunately, the agreement was never ratified in the United States Congress and Senate because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Geneva Summit, Switzerland, 1985

The Geneva Summit was held in November 1985. It was the first superpower summit between the Americans and Soviets in eight years, and both leaders were keen to make progress. The summit was useful in that Reagan and Gorbachev were able to spend extensive amounts of time with each other, but no concrete agreements were made. Remarkably, both men met without advisers, only their interpreters, which was a significant break in convention and helped to build up some trust between the two men. One of the successes was that talks commenced on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which set ambitious targets to halve the nuclear force. One of the most intensely debated issues was Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, which the leaders could not reach agreement on.

Reykjavik Summit, Iceland, 1986

The summit at Reykjavik, Iceland was held in October 1986. The focus of the meeting was on the reduction of nuclear weapons on both sides, and an ambitious zero option was placed on the table. The total elimination of nuclear arms would mean that Gorbachev would be able to achieve his

domestic aims of having money diverted away from the military to improve the living standards of Soviets. But Reagan was hamstrung by some in the United States who believed he could win the Cold War by drawing the Soviet Union into an arms race that would effectively bankrupt them. Reagan was a supporter of the zero option, but his failure to halt the Star Wars program led to a breakdown in negotiations.

Reagan later remarked that, 'At Reykjavik, my hopes for a nuclear-free world soared briefly, then fell during one of the longest, most disappointing – and ultimately angriest – days of my presidency'.⁴ Over two days, as Reagan tells it, a series of unprecedented arms reductions talks took place between the Soviets and the Americans in which they agreed to eliminate nuclear weapons around the world. When Gorbachev and Reagan were close to a resolution, Gorbachev asked Reagan to suspend the SDI research – which was in a laboratory stage at this point. When Reagan refused to entertain the idea of not building a space-based missile defence shield, both men left the summit angry and the zero option collapsed.

Despite the disagreement over the zero option and SDI, there was some progress. A whole class of nuclear weapons was eliminated when the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) was signed. Missiles were further reduced to 1600 per side and 6000 warheads.

Washington Summit, United States, 1987

The Washington summit made further progress on arms reductions. The 6000 warheads agreed to at Reykjavik were reduced to 4900 each. Declassified documents later showed that Gorbachev was anxious to achieve a significant reduction in arms before Reagan's term in office expired in the following year, proposing a 50 percent reduction in nuclear weapons and a 25 percent reduction in conventional armed forces in Europe. Gorbachev also wanted to eliminate all chemical weapons.

An historic moment occurred at the Washington Summit when the INF Treaty was signed. Ronald Reagan went on US television to celebrate the achievement, saying,

“ [We] have signed the first agreement ever to eliminate an entire class of U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons. We have made history. And yet many so-called wise men once predicted that this agreement would be impossible to achieve – too many forces and factors stood against it. Well, still we persevered. We kept at it. ”

Ronald Reagan, 'President Reagan Discusses Summit Meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, 1987', *Making the History of 1989*, chnm.gmu.edu.

On the table at the summit was also a discussion of human rights and the freedom of movement for people in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. A number of regional conflicts were discussed, such as Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war. Both leaders regarded the summit as a great success and a further step towards disarmament.

Moscow Summit, Soviet Union, 1988

The Moscow Summit was held in May 1988. It was not as successful as the third summit the year before, but it did result in the elimination of 3000 missile warheads. One of the issues that Reagan wanted to push at the summit was the Soviet Union's human rights record. This was received coldly by Gorbachev, who was more focused on arms reduction measures. For the past few years, Reagan had brought up the persecution of a Jewish minority within Russia that wanted to leave the country, and restrictions around the freedom of religion. Gorbachev did not want to be lectured by Reagan and told him so.

Nonetheless, the warmth in the friendship between Reagan and Gorbachev continued. At the summit, Reagan even declared that the Cold War was over during a walk through Red Square, and when asked about his 'evil empire' comment of an earlier time he responded by saying, 'I was talking about another time, another era'.

START Treaty, Soviet Union, 1991

After years of negotiations, the START Treaty was signed in Moscow by the new United States President George HW Bush and Gorbachev in July 1991. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty made deep cuts to the nuclear arsenals of both superpowers, as well as limiting the number of warheads and delivery systems. But perhaps the greatest success of the treaty was in the provisions for monitoring and verifying reductions. That is, both sides allowed their own observers in to verify that reductions were taking place in accordance with the provisions.

The START provisions established a limit of 1600 delivery vehicles and 6000 warheads for each side in total. This included a cap of 4900 ICBMs and sub-marine launched missiles and a ban on the development of new types of ICBMs and SLBMs.

TABLE 4.1 The superpower summit agreements

MEETING	ACHIEVEMENTS
Geneva, Switzerland, November 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not produce any major treaties, but laid the groundwork for future cooperation • Agreement to work towards a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) to halve nuclear arsenals on both sides • Began work on an Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty to remove short- and medium-range nuclear missiles from Europe • Both sides could not reach agreement on the SDI (Star Wars) • Reagan and Gorbachev spoke privately for a few hours
Reykjavik, Iceland, October 1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gorbachev proposes that nuclear weapons be eliminated by the year 2000 • Superpowers agreed to halve the number of strategic nuclear weapons within five years • Limited each superpower to 1600 missiles and 6000 warheads • Intermediate Nuclear Forces to be withdrawn from Europe (although this was withdrawn after failure to reach agreement on SDI)
Washington, United States, December 1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INF treaty was finally signed on 8 December • Further reductions of warheads to 4900 each • Discussion about various political issues including Central America and human rights
Moscow, Soviet Union, May–June 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of 3000 medium-range missile warheads • Both sides came closer to signing the START treaty
Moscow, Soviet Union, 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • START treaty was signed between Gorbachev and President George HW Bush, which made deep cuts in the nuclear arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union

Collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

The years 1989–1991 represent a dramatic period in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, one in which 45 years of Soviet-backed communism fell apart under the strain of pro-democracy demonstrators. A few key factors resulted in the end of communism in this area: Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* had opened the floodgates of change, the Soviet Union conceded it would no longer prop up unpopular communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the tide of pro-democracy demonstrations in the Soviet bloc led to the eventual fall of communism.

Abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine

The reform that contributed most to the end of the Cold War was Gorbachev's abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine. The doctrine espoused the threat of force to maintain the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe ever since troubles arose in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Many Soviet-bloc despots relied on this insurance to maintain control within their own borders, confident that any sign of trouble would be met with the arrival of Soviet tanks.

In March 1985 Gorbachev summoned leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries to inform them of his rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine. He preferred nations in the Eastern bloc to stand on their own two feet as independent sovereign states without the interference of the Soviet Union in their internal affairs. Many of the leaders dismissed this as rhetoric. The ramifications of what Gorbachev meant would not become clear until pro-democracy movements began to threaten existing governments across the Eastern bloc.

But Gorbachev's plans to end the doctrine were indeed concrete. On 7 December 1988 Gorbachev addressed the United Nations General Assembly where he effectively ended the Soviet Union's military support of countries in the Warsaw Pact. He said,

“By agreement with our allies in the Warsaw Pact, we have made the decision to withdraw six tank divisions from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and to disband them by 1991. Assault landing formations and units, and a number of others, including assault river-crossing forces, with their armaments and combat equipment, will also be withdrawn from the groups of Soviet forces situated in those countries. The Soviet forces situated in those countries will be cut by 50 000 persons, and their arms by 5000 tanks.”

Address by Mikhail Gorbachev to the 43rd United Nation General Assembly session, December 7 1988.

Gorbachev's announcement was about as plain as it could get. Eastern European countries were on their own. Their governments would have to accommodate the increasing calls for greater democratic freedoms of the people and deal with the consequences without the threat of Soviet tanks rolling in to quell dissent.

Popular revolutions in Eastern Europe

In 1989 Gorbachev would make good on his promise of non-intervention. Popular revolutions swept through Eastern European states, ironically many of them inspired by the reforms of Gorbachev himself. Although these revolutions took on different faces in each country, many would lead to democratic elections and ultimately the overthrow of communism. The death of communism was largely a peaceful affair. With more than a touch of irony, once Poland fell, the other states began to fall across Eastern Europe like a row of dominoes.

Poland

The first of these revolutions was in Poland, where change had been simmering since 1981. The Solidarity Movement – a coalition of non-communists including trade unions, intellectuals and the Catholic Church – was a powerful influence in a country with more than 10 million workers. Communist repression had driven these groups underground, but they became publicly active again after Gorbachev came to power and offered a new direction of economic restructuring and greater openness.

When Gorbachev announced the end of the Brezhnev doctrine in December 1988, the Solidarity movement approached the communist government to test the weight of Gorbachev's commitment.



SOURCE 4.8 Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa had been pressing for change in Poland since the Solidarity movement began in 1981. Gorbachev repealed the Brezhnev Doctrine in 1988, opening the door to a peaceful transition to Polish democracy.

In a series of round table meetings between Solidarity and the communist government, it was agreed that the first free elections would be held in June 1989. This was, in effect, a peaceful revolution. Without the threat of Soviet tanks hanging in the air, Solidarity won in a landslide and Tadeusz Mazowiecki became the first non-communist prime minister in Poland since the end of World War II.

In December 1990, a presidential election was held in Poland. The popular leader of Solidarity, Lech Walesa, reluctantly ran for the presidency. He became Poland's first non-communist president in 45 years.

The Polish experience was a peaceful, democratic revolution and communist leaders in the Eastern bloc looked on nervously at the situation unfolding. In June 1989 hundreds of thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators in Hungary managed to secure free and open elections with non-communist parties.

Hungary

Like Poland, Hungary had a long history of opposition to Soviet control. The failed 1956 uprising is the most obvious example. In late 1988, reformists in the Communist Party and bureaucracy, and intellectuals, began to advocate change and formed political organisations. The appointment of a new party leader in 1989 prompted further changes. The new leadership introduced what can best be described as a democratisation package, which permitted the formation of independent trade unions, the right to assembly and association, and freedom of the press. This was followed by the introduction of new electoral laws, revision of the constitution, the formation of new political parties, and open and free elections. Such a rapid and peaceful transition would not have been possible without Gorbachev's renouncement of the Brezhnev Doctrine.



SOURCE 4.9 As a precursor to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November, Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock (left) and Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn cut the fence between their two countries on 27 June 1989. Border guards had already begun dismantling the sections on 2 May 1989.

The iron curtain opens

The liberalisation of Hungary also tore apart Churchill's metaphorical 'iron curtain', which had divided Europe since 1945. Movement between the Soviet bloc states and the West had been strictly curtailed in the Cold War era, as the Berlin Wall so dramatically illustrated. In a radical step, Hungary, as early as 1988, had begun to permit the free travel of its citizens. Unhindered by Moscow, the government began dismantling the 240 kilometres of electrified fence that served as the border between Hungary and Austria. As news of the removal of the fence spread, East Germans and Czechoslovakians, who were able to travel to Hungary, arrived to seek political asylum at the West German embassy in the Hungarian

capital of Budapest. Within months, the trickle of Czech and East German refugees became a flood of tens of thousands of people crossing the border directly into Austria. The iron curtain had parted without intervention from the Soviets.

East Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall

The city of Berlin was fundamental to the development of the Cold War. It was the location of its early crises, and the dividing Wall of 1961 was of enormous symbolic significance. Throughout the summer of 1989, East Germans began to demand greater freedoms of movement. Their leader, Erich Honecker, was a staunch and inflexible communist who resisted any hint of change and who clung to power right to the end.

Tensions had been simmering in East Germany throughout 1989 and they were heightened by the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the East German state in October 1989. Pro-democracy marches and protests were growing louder, spurred on by events in neighbouring Hungary and Poland. The ageing, hardline East German leader Honecker was becoming increasingly out of step with the attitudes of his fellow Eastern bloc leaders and even Gorbachev. He had watched the protests in Tiananmen Square in China, and was in favour of using force to crack down on demonstrators. One of his leading politburo members, Egon Krenz, had even expressed solidarity with the Chinese.

But it was Gorbachev who gave the East German protestors the impetus they needed to increase their calls for change. At an event to mark the 40th anniversary of the creation of the East German state, Gorbachev's remark that, 'Life punishes those who come too late' seemed to be a swipe at the slow pace of change within the regime. He also commented to international reporters that socialist leaders 'who do not react to the realities of life' will find themselves in danger of being overthrown.

At the celebrations, East German protestors yelled 'Gorby! Gorby!' on the streets, much to the anger of Honecker, who was determined to stick with the old state socialism. Throughout October, tensions between the protestors and the regime were getting stronger. Mass arrests and the beating of protestors by the East German police marked the beginning of the month. But on 9 October 1989, 70 000 people took part in a candlelight parade to call for change. Against all expectations, the East German police this time did not react.

Honecker could not rely on the Soviet troops to step in. Gorbachev had ordered them to remain in their barracks. In mid-October, Honecker stepped down as leader of the East German state.

The new East German politburo spokesman Günter Schabowski held a press conference in front of international media on 9 November 1989. His answers to a series of questions about the timing of a new law promising greater ease of travel between East and West Germany provided the spark that ended European communism. Schabowski had not read his briefing notes carefully enough, and under persistent questioning from an Italian journalist about the timing of a law that would allow East Berliners to cross into West Berlin, he muttered the words, 'Immediately. Without delay'.



SOURCE 4.10 East Germans crossing the border from Hungary into Austria in April 1989

Alamy Stock Photo/travelstock44



Alamy Stock Photo/ImageBROKER

SOURCE 4.11 On the evening of 9 November 1989 and into the next day, hundreds of thousands of Berliners climbed on top of the Wall and tore it down with sledgehammers and chisels.

The words were broadcast on Berlin television that evening. Hundreds and then thousands of Berliners streamed down to the wall around key points, including Checkpoint Charlie and the Brandenburg Gate. East German border guards, settling into another boring night of patrol, were unsure about the gathering throng. They were ordered not to fire on the crowd.

East and West Berliners, separated for 28 years, began to climb on top of the wall and proceeded to dismantle it with hammers and picks. On the evening of 9 November 1989, the symbol of the Cold War was torn to the ground in jubilant celebration.

A 1.3-kilometre section of the wall still stands at the East Side Gallery. More than 100 paintings mark the longest remaining fragment of the wall as a tribute to freedom and unification. Perhaps the most famous painting is by Dmitri Vrubel, depicting Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker locked in a kiss, titled, ‘My God, Help Me to Survive This Deadly Love’.

Several international as well as German politicians and commentators were unhappy about the prospect of a united Germany in which a prosperous and efficient West German economy would have to prop up a culturally different, under-resourced and under-performing eastern sector. Prominent West German author Günter Grass objected to the proposed unification on historical, cultural, economic and political grounds:

“ I still believe, as I did in the past, that we shouldn’t have annexed East Germany in that over hasty way ... Before long, the country and its industry were liquidated, while the Treuhänd (the agency that privatised East Germany’s state-owned enterprises) sold off its assets for next to nothing. ”

Günter Grass Interview, ‘The Nobel Prize Doesn’t Inhibit Me in My Writing’, Spiegel Online, 20 August 2010.



Alamy Stock Photo/traveistock44

SOURCE 4.12 This famous painting on the remaining section of the Berlin Wall at the East Side Gallery depicts Brezhnev and Honecker's fraternal kiss at the 30th Anniversary of the creation of East Germany in 1979.



SOURCE 4.13 Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, 1992

The former East Germany had a population of 16 million in 1990, compared with West Germany's population of 63 million. It was significantly smaller, more agricultural and poorer than its western counterpart. West German per capita income in 1989 was US\$24 400 and East German per capita income was US\$10 400. In 2010 per capita income in the united Germany had risen to US\$38 200.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, aware that a reunified Germany would face a general election soon after any amalgamation, took immediate action to soften the blow of unification when the Berlin Wall was opened. This included drawing up a ten-point plan for the unification and consulting with Gorbachev and former East German leader Egon Krens. Germany was formally reunited in October 1990.

Romania

The revolution in Romania ran a much rockier course than those in countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia. Nicolae Ceausescu had ruled a corrupt regime from 1965 to 1989, living a lavish lifestyle while his citizens were mired in poverty. Ceausescu presided over a cruel, Stalinist police state that ruthlessly suppressed opposition.

While pro-democratic movements were peacefully sweeping across Europe, Ceausescu ordered his security forces to fire on demonstrators assembled at Timisoara on 17 December 1989. In the following days, violent clashes between government forces and protestors resulted in the deaths of more than 1000 people.

Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, realising that the waves of demonstration would eventually drive them from power, attempted to escape. On 25 December 1989, they were hastily summoned, tried, found guilty and executed by a special court. Their final hours were a fitting humiliation after the horrors they had visited upon the Romanian people. Ceausescu was defiant to the end, telling his captors that he did not recognise their authority as a court. Their deaths were televised on Romanian television as proof that the dictator and his wife had fallen.



SOURCE 4.14 Newspaper headlines following the executions of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu.

The fall of communism in the Soviet Union

The transformation of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) Soviet Union from a communist superpower to a number of independent states, including the fledgling capitalist, democratic Russian Republic, was dramatic. Again, Gorbachev's reforms, particularly *perestroika*, were crucial to the breakdown of the Soviet Union, an entity that was composed of multiple republics, including the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the Ukraine and by far the largest and most powerful republic, Russia. The reforms of *glasnost* and *perestroika* created a political space in which voices of dissent could be more freely expressed.

At the same time, Gorbachev's efforts to reframe the political structures of the Soviet Union were extensive. Between February and March 1990 the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, on Gorbachev's recommendations, gave up its monopoly on power, permitted multi-party elections and established a mechanism for states to withdraw from the USSR. The steps laid the foundations for the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, as nationalism and liberalism emerged as alternative political ideologies to communism.



It was one thing for Gorbachev to declare an end to his support of the Brezhnev Doctrine and allow the Eastern bloc to fall. But it was another matter entirely for the states of the Soviet Union to declare their independence. When the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia struck the first blow, Gorbachev was furious. He denied permission for them to secede – but the momentum began to swing against him. The economic problems facing the Soviet Union were dire, and political openness had led to growing calls for reform and secession. Instead, bloodshed became the order of the day.

But the drift towards democratisation grew stronger. Boris Yeltsin, a new pro-democratic leader rising up in Russia, joined the many calling for a multi-party election. At the beginning of 1990, Gorbachev readied Soviet citizens for a referendum on the future of the Union. With communism falling apart in Eastern Europe, the Soviet leadership was faced with a number of pressing questions: what would a new federation of the 12 republics that made up the Soviet Union look like? How would each state be characterised? Was there even a need for a union?

The election of Boris Yeltsin as president of the Russian Federation on 10 July 1991 answered some of these questions for Gorbachev. In the atmosphere of change, it was not clear where the authority of Yeltsin (as Russian president) began and Gorbachev's (as Soviet leader) ended. Immediately after Yeltsin's election, Gorbachev declared that the sovereignty of Russia meant putting the needs of Russia before those of the Soviet Union.

Such pronouncements made one thing clear: the Soviet Union was slipping away. On 19 August 1991 communist hardliners sought to reassert their authority by staging an unsuccessful coup while Gorbachev was on vacation in the Crimea. With the backing of the KGB, tanks rolled into the square outside parliament house, the leaders declared a state of emergency and Gorbachev was placed under house arrest.

Yeltsin was on hand in Moscow. Standing on one of the tanks, Yeltsin addressed the crowd and called for a general strike until the attempted coup was over. He condemned the conspirators and demanded that Gorbachev be released from custody. Yeltsin came off looking like the champion of reform and a supporter of Gorbachev.

The August 1991 coup

'It is essential to give the country's president, Gorbachev, an opportunity to address the people. Today he has been blockaded. I have been denied communications with him. We demand an immediate [meeting] of an extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of the Union. We are absolutely confident that our countrymen will not permit the sanctioning of the tyranny and lawlessness of the putschists, who have lost all shame and conscience.'

Yeltsin's address to the Russian people, delivered from a tank outside the parliament building, Moscow, 19 August 1991, translated from Russian by the US State Department.

'Looking back now at everything that happened, it is evident to me that the main orientation of Yeltsin and his entourage was to pursue a course aimed at the dissolution of the Soviet Union, at taking control of Russia, so as to seize power for themselves ... The August coup caused a breakdown in the process of the formation [of the new Union], created complications and spurred on the process of disintegration.'

Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 110 and 135.

QUESTION

- 1 Compare and contrast the views of Yeltsin and Gorbachev on the meaning of the August coup.



SOURCE 4.15 Russian President Boris Yeltsin stands on top of a tank in defiance of a communist-led coup in August 1991. Although the coup itself was short-lived and non-violent, it eventually hastened the collapse of the Soviet Union.



who wanted to destroy it. On 25 December 1991 Gorbachev signed a law dissolving the Soviet Union, and the 70-year communist experiment, which began with Marx and Lenin, was no more. The Cold War was over.

Although Yeltsin was not involved in the organisation of the coup, he immediately took steps to protect the interests of Russia. In the week that followed the coup, a number of large states, including the Ukraine and Belarus, declared their independence from the Soviet Union. It became clear that the Union was falling apart. Gorbachev was becoming increasingly isolated and unpopular. The Russian people blamed him for the failure of *perestroika* but seized on *glasnost* to propel their revolution.

At 7.30 am on 25 December 1991, the Soviet flag was lowered above the Kremlin for the final time. Mikhail Gorbachev was now a leader without a country. With the stroke of a pen, the Soviet Union was dissolved as the leading countries affirmed their independence from the Union. Gorbachev signed a paper relinquishing all of his duties as president of the USSR.

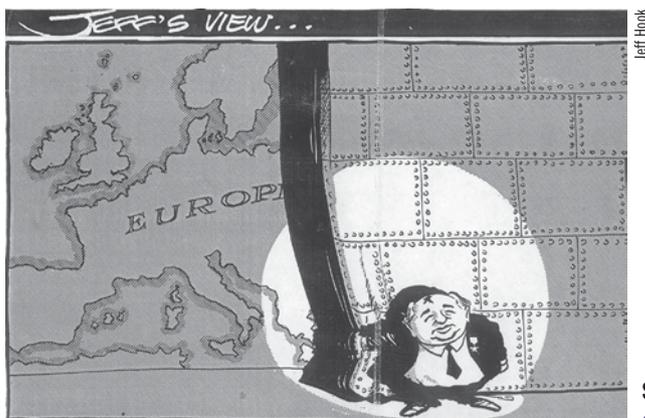
It is ironic that in trying to save the Soviet system, Gorbachev was the inspiration of so many

Gorbachev and the end of the Soviet Union



"What do you say we bury him too?", by Nicholas Garland, *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 1985. © Telegraph Media Group Limited 1985.

SOURCE 4.16 "What do you say we bury him too?", Nicholas Garland, *Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 1985



Jeff Hook

SOURCE 4.17 Jeff Hook, 'Opening the curtain', 14 November 1989



Jeff Hook

SOURCE 4.18 Jeff Hook, 'The cracks begin', 10 November 1989

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who are the two figures in Source 4.16 and what are they deliberating over?
- 2 Identify three key visual elements used in Source 4.17 and describe their historical significance.
- 3 Examine Source 4.18.
 - a What do the cracking bricks refer to?
 - b Does the speaker convey a positive or negative attitude to Gorbachev's reforms?
 - c How is Gorbachev (centre) contrasted with the personalities to his left and to his right?
- 4 How useful are these three sources for the historian studying Gorbachev's role in the end of communism?

- 1 To what extent was abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine the most important factor in the fall of communism in the Eastern bloc?
- 2 Why was the fall of communism a largely peaceful affair?
- 3 How significant was the fall of the Berlin Wall in the events that led up to the end of the Cold War?
- 4 Explain how events in the Soviet Union quickly moved out of Gorbachev's control.
- 5 To what extent do you agree with the argument that Gorbachev destroyed communism in his attempt to save it?

Why did the Cold War end?

A number of scholars believe that it was Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* that ended the Cold War, simply because they opened up the door to the wave of pro-democratic calls for reforms after 1987. However, the historian Saki Dockrill suggests that, 'it may be an exaggeration to argue that Gorbachev ended the Cold War, as the terms on which the Cold War ended were quite different from what he had hoped to achieve'.⁵ In other words, Gorbachev set out to reform the Soviet Union, not end it. As part of this thinking, Gorbachev's renouncement of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which was in effect a withdrawal of support for propping up the communist regimes of Europe, may be regarded as significant. Calls for reform in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany were too strong to resist, and one after the other, the regimes were powerless to stop them.

Others suggest that Ronald Reagan's hardline policies and renewal of the arms race played a role in ending the Cold War. While it is true that Reagan fought the Cold War with a vigour that had been absent during the period of détente, and that he significantly increased the arms budget, his policies did not ultimately lead to the end of communism in the Soviet Union or the Eastern bloc.

Historian John Lewis Gaddis leaves the final word to Gorbachev, who believed that in the final analysis, the end of the Cold War was a people's revolution from below. He writes,

'And so the Cold War ended, much more abruptly than it began. As Gorbachev had told Bush at Malta, it was 'ordinary people' who made that happen: the Hungarians who declared their barbed wire obsolete and then flocked to a funeral for a man who had been dead thirty-one years; the Poles who surprised Solidarity by sweeping it into office; the East Germans who vacationed in Hungary, climbed embassy fences in Prague, humiliated Honecker at his own parade, persuaded police not to fire in Leipzig, and ultimately opened a gate that took down a wall and reunited a country.'

Gaddis, *The Cold War*, Penguin, London, 2005, p. 259.

QUESTIONS

- 1 According to historians, how responsible was Gorbachev for the end of the Cold War?
- 2 According to historians, how responsible was Reagan for the end of the Cold War?
- 3 To what extent do you agree with the view that the end of the Cold War was a people's revolution from below?

The Cold War in hindsight

Most place the end of the Cold War around the collapse of the Soviet Union. Margaret Thatcher dated the end at 1988. Some trace it to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, while George HW Bush declared a new world order in a speech in 1990. The Soviet Union was officially dissolved in 1991.

However, tensions between the United States and Russia, both still significant nuclear powers, have resurfaced. When the Soviet Union disbanded and the United States became the world's only superpower in 1991, a period of hegemonic liberal democracy was ushered in, lasting throughout the 1990s until the attacks on the Twin Towers in the United States in September 2001.

Although the ideological dimensions of the conflict between the Russians and Americans have subsided, the geopolitical rivalry remains strong. Recent Russian involvement in the Ukraine is one example of reemerging tensions. The conflict in the Ukraine began due to Kiev wanting to forge closer trade deals with the European Union. With the capital Kiev on the western side of the old Soviet frontier, this move was resisted by Russian-speaking separatists in the east of the country. The Russian government intervened on the side of the separatists and, in 2014 after a public vote that many believe was rigged, it annexed Crimea (previously a Ukrainian region). The annexation came amid allegations that Russian troops in the Ukraine were involved in the shooting down of a Malaysian Airlines flight.

Geopolitical tensions between the old rivals were also sparked in the Middle East when the Russians, under Vladimir Putin, backed the regime of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, who was fighting a civil war on several fronts (most famously against the Islamic State, which emerged as a significant non-state actor in 2014 to take large parts of Iraq and Syria and declare an Islamic caliphate). Ongoing rivalries about how best to resolve the conflict in Syria have brought the Americans and Soviets into conflict once again.

The Cold War was a geopolitical and ideological conflict that stretched 45 years between 1945 and 1991. It was the most significant political, social and economic conflict of the second half of the 20th century and its legacies can be seen across the globe today.



After the Cold War

By the time the Soviet Union was dissolved on 25 December 1991, the Cold War had been the status quo in international relations for 45 years. Historians and observers began to consider the reasons for the end of the Cold War and to speculate on what global forces would replace it. Read the following sources and answer the questions below.

JOHN LEWIS GADDIS, 1997

'The "new" Cold War history will be multi-archival, in that it will at least attempt to draw upon the record of all participants in that conflict ... Cold War history will take ideas seriously ... For the events of 1989–91 make sense only in terms of ideas. There was no military defeat or economic crash, but there was a collapse of legitimacy. The people of one Cold War empire suddenly realised that its emperors had no clothes on.'

John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, pp. 282 and 283.

ERIC HOBBSBAWM, 1994

'The collapse of one part of the world revealed the malaise of the rest. As the 1980s passed into the 1990s it became evident that the world crisis was not only general in an economic sense, but equally general in politics. The collapse of communist regimes ... produced an enormous zone of political uncertainty, instability, chaos and civil war, but also destroyed the international system that had stabilized international relations for some forty years ... the tensions of troubled economies undermined the political systems of liberal democracy, parliamentary or presidential, which had functioned so well in the developed capitalist countries since the Second World War.'

Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*, Abacus, London, 1994, p. 10.





SAMUEL P HUNTINGTON, 1996

'The post-Cold War is a world of seven or eight major civilizations. Cultural commonalities and differences shape the interests, antagonisms, and associations of states. The most important countries in the world come overwhelmingly from different civilizations. The local conflicts most likely to escalate into broader wars are those between groups and states from different civilizations ... Power is shifting from the long predominant West to non-Western civilizations. Global politics has become multipolar and multi civilizational.'

Samuel P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, Simon and Schuster, London, 1996, p. 29.

QUESTIONS

- 1 According to Gaddis, how will historians provide a more balanced interpretation of the Cold War post-1991?
- 2 According to Gaddis, what was the primary reason for the end of the Cold War?
- 3 Reread the extract from Eric Hobsbawm. How did the collapse of communism have a negative effect on both sides of the conflict?
- 4 Explain Samuel P Huntington's view of the source of conflict after the end of the Cold War.
- 5 Research ONE of the following conflicts in the post-Cold War world in light of the views of one of the historians.
 - a The breakdown of the former Yugoslavia (Hobsbawm)
 - b The war on terror (Huntington)
 - c The transition to democracy in post-Soviet Russia (Yoshihiro Francis Fukuyama)

Conclusion

At the beginning of 1980, the world was entering into a renewal of the Cold War. New tough-talking United States President Ronald Reagan had come into office after the collapse of détente, promising to take a harder line against the communists, and had spoken of the Soviets as the ‘evil empire’. In addition, he escalated the arms race through the Strategic Defense Initiative – or Star Wars program – which aimed to create the first nuclear weapons shield in space. In its early stages it was simply a laboratory project and many weapons analysts dismissed it as wishful thinking.

But all that was to change with the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. A youthful reformer who represented a significant break from the old guard in terms of foreign and domestic policy, Gorbachev’s attempt to save communism had three planks: a reduction in international tensions through pulling out of the arms race, an economic restructuring program with limited market mechanisms, and an opening of the Soviet Union to greater levels of freedom and discussion about the Soviet system.

Reagan and Gorbachev developed a warm friendship, meeting at four superpower summits where significant achievements in nuclear arms reductions were made.

By the beginning of the next decade, the Eastern bloc and Soviet communism had collapsed. Gorbachev’s reforms, it seemed, had watered the seeds of pro-democracy revolutions across Eastern Europe, and his refusal to send in Russian tanks to quell discontent meant that a tsunami of change swept across the Eastern bloc. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall – the symbol of the Cold War – fell. Subsequently, revolutions sprung up in one Eastern European country after another. Finally, the Soviet Union itself disbanded.

Chapter summary

- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on 25 December 1979 spelled the end of détente.
- In January 1981, Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president of the United States on a tough anti-communist platform. He proposed a space-based missile defence shield called the Strategic Defense Initiative, or Star Wars.
- In March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union, and his twin policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* were intended to reform, not destroy, communism. He embarked on a round of summit diplomacy and a charm offensive in an effort to reduce international tensions and fight for nuclear arms reductions.
- Pro-democracy movements in Eastern Europe were propelled by Gorbachev’s abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine and his promise not to interfere in the politics of Warsaw Pact countries. This led to a wave of peaceful revolutions and the eventual collapse of communism in the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union.

Additional resources

- Dockerill, SR, *The End of the Cold War Era*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005.
- Gaddis, JL, *The Cold War*, Penguin, London, 2005.

Endnotes

- 1 Heller, Henry, *The Cold War*, 2006, Monthly Review Press, 2006, p. 65.
- 2 Christian, David, *Power and Privilege: The Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Challenge of Modernity*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1994, pp. 363–364.
- 3 Gorbachev, Mikhail, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, Harper Collins, London, 1987, p. 18.
- 4 Reagan, Ronald, *An American Life*, 1990, Threshold, 1990, p. 675.
- 5 Dockerill, SR, *The End of the Cold War Era*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005.

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONTENT RECALL

- 1 Outline Reagan's policies and attitude towards the Soviet Union prior to 1985.
- 2 How did Reagan's attitudes about the Soviets change after Gorbachev came into power?
- 3 Make a table like the one below outlining the problems that *glasnost* and *perestroika* were intended to fix and how they were supposed to fix these problems.

	PROBLEMS	SOLUTION
<i>Glasnost</i>		
<i>Perestroika</i>		

EXTENDED RESPONSE

- 4 To what extent were the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* responsible for the eventual collapse of communism in the Soviet Union?
- 5 Research one of the revolutions in Eastern Europe and present the main features and events of the revolution. Choose between Hungary, East Germany and Poland.
- 6 How important was Gorbachev's foreign policy in contributing to the end of the Cold War? You can discuss nuclear disarmament, the charm offensive and renouncement of the Brezhnev Doctrine in your response.
- 7 How much progress was made on the reduction of nuclear weapons between 1978 and 1991?
- 8 To what extent was the emergence of Boris Yeltsin in Russia the most significant challenge to the Soviet system?
- 9 Make a list of factors that caused the collapse of the Soviet Union and rank them in terms of importance.

ESSAY QUESTION

- 10 To what extent was Gorbachev responsible for the end of the Cold War?



Getty Images/AFP

CONCLUSION

European leaders, including President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin (third from right), meet at the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Sochi, 11 October 2017.

The Cold War was the central geopolitical feature of the world for 45 years, between 1945 and 1991, and its character evolved with changing political, technological and military developments. The rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union was shaped as much by leadership styles as ideology, and this was reflected in the policies and attitudes of successive governments in both nations. Cold War rivalry was also a struggle to answer old questions in new ways. What, for example, would become of industrial capitalism and colonialism after the cataclysmic events of the first half of the 20th century? But it was the development of nuclear weapons that was the most dangerous aspect of the rivalry. New technologies increased the capacity for greater destruction and the production of large arsenals often became a priority over building higher living standards, especially in the Soviet Union.

The role of leadership in the development of the Cold War

Central to the development of the Cold War was the role of leaders, who were entrusted with holding an ideological line in the face of shifting geopolitical realities. That is not to say that those ideologies were not flexible when the situation suited. The various crises of the Cold War showed that leaders often had to make significant compromises in order to avoid open conflict.

On the Soviet side, Stalin's bloody pursuit of the revolution was later condemned by Khrushchev. He regarded Stalin's industrialisation push as a betrayal of Marxist ideals, and adopted a more conciliatory approach towards the West, exemplified in his rhetoric of 'peaceful coexistence'. Likewise, Gorbachev represented a significant departure from those who came before him. A reformer, Gorbachev was much more proactive in attempting to revisit the political, social and economic assumptions of socialism so that it would survive than Brezhnev, who had presided over the long economic decline of the Soviet Union.

Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive



Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 5.1 AND 5.2 Communist ideas were adapted to the practical realities of building the revolution. Khrushchev (right) condemned Stalin's (left) bloody pursuit of industrialisation as a betrayal of the revolution.

Successive United States presidents also responded to the changing geopolitical and military realities in different ways. When Roosevelt died in April 1945, it was left to Truman to guide the United States into a postwar settlement that would reflect American interests. With less experience in international diplomacy than Roosevelt, Truman adopted a hard-nosed approach to Stalin and the Soviets, and was partly responsible for the breakdown in the wartime alliance.

For the Americans, it was the various expressions of containment that most shaped United States foreign policy as communism spread outside of Europe into Asia and eventually to South America. Whether it was Truman attempting to limit the damage to Eastern Europe by making a military commitment to Greece and Turkey in 1947, Eisenhower insisting on the rollback of communism, Kennedy dealing with the nuclear threat on Cuban shores in 1962, Johnson escalating American involvement in Vietnam in response to fears of falling dominoes through Southeast Asia, or Reagan's support of repressive anti-communist regimes in South and Central America, geopolitics had a significant hand in shaping the American response to Soviet actions in the world.

The struggle over old certainties

In addition to the immediate ideological and geopolitical rivalries, the Americans and Soviets grappled with much larger and more established forces of history: capitalism, industrialisation, colonialism and national rivalry. In the first half of the 20th Century, simmering tensions caused by these forces culminated in two world wars and the Great Depression. For the Americans, industrial capitalism had brought a new sense of individual freedom and a spirit of entrepreneurial adventure. The United States had been the beacon light of this project on the American continent. For the Soviets, capitalism meant an inevitable drift towards war sparked by greed. Stalin himself later pointed to the two world wars as proof of this and justification for his moves to occupy Eastern European territories. In his eyes, a buffer zone was necessary to prevent the Soviet Union from being encircled by hostile capitalist powers. For European powers, the United States' insistence that they let go of their empires at the end of the war as part of the postwar settlement changed the trajectory of their prosperity and the shape of their economies. It also sparked off a series of national independence movements that themselves became significant sites of Cold War struggle.

By 1945, the old world order seemed to have given way. The trauma of the Great Depression and the world wars had caused a significant disruption to the march of industrial progress and the organisation of society. The two superpower rivals both claimed to offer coherent political, economic and social systems to provide the stability and prosperity that populations in Europe, Asia and the Americas craved. In an immediate postwar environment of deep deprivation, it seemed those who could deliver on the promise of food and work would be in a better position to rebuild the institutions of Europe in their own image.

Changing technologies and nuclear threat

One of the most significant aspects of the Cold War was the development of atomic weapons of ever greater power and further reach. The relative size of the atomic bomb that claimed 200 000 Japanese lives at Hiroshima in August 1945 was dwarfed by the *Tsar Bomba* tested by the Soviets 15 years later. For the first time in history, it was no exaggeration to say that political rivals harboured nuclear arsenals that could effectively spell an end to humankind. In fact, the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction became the policy centrepiece for both sides.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the main flashpoint of this nuclear stand-off. The letters between Kennedy and Khrushchev that sought to resolve the crisis reveal a deep awareness in both men of the consequences of taking a wrong step. They reveal a level of restraint on both sides that defused the situation.



SOURCE 5.3 Kennedy (right) chairs a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The episode demonstrated the real threat of nuclear confrontation, which was defused in back channel diplomacy between the leaders of both countries.

Accompanying the arms race was the space race, which further intensified conflict between the superpowers. When Ronald Reagan announced the so-called Star Wars program – a plan to host a nuclear defence shield in space – he had effectively married the arms and space races in a way that many considered fantastical. But in the end, sanity prevailed and the subsequent trend towards disarmament meant that the Cold War ended with a whimper rather than a mushroom cloud.

Key features of the Cold War

Any serious attempt to understand the Cold War should involve examining the conflict as a whole rather than a series of discrete events. Students should take into account how both sides contributed to its origins and development, rather than simply laying blame on one side or the other. The conflict should be understood as it emerged from the ruins of World War II, considering how the ideologies of communism and capitalism pressed heavily on the postwar settlement and the rebuilding of political, economic and social institutions. One should attempt to understand the appeal of communism in the face of the desperate plight of the masses, the race to gain a geopolitical advantage in Europe and the attempt of the Americans to re-establish free markets and liberal democracies in Europe through the Marshall Plan. These factors meant that both sides would come into inevitable conflict.

It is important to enter a study of the Cold War with a strong understanding of communism and capitalism and how they functioned not only in theory but in practice. In theory communism represented the triumph of the worker and an industrial paradise, but the reality proved very different. In practice, leaders were forced to compromise their communist ideals and adjust to an ever-changing set of circumstances in order to retain power and avoid conflict. For example, the inevitability of international revolution espoused by Marx, Lenin and Stalin was tempered by Khrushchev, who arrived at the position of 'peaceful coexistence' after realising the resilience of capitalism. Likewise, Gorbachev, in attempting to save socialism, had to adopt a series of market-based economic and political liberal reforms.

Where communist leaders refused to compromise on their ideology, devastating results followed. Mao's Great Leap Forward, which caused tens of millions of deaths in China, provides one example. Stalin's pursuit of rapid industrialisation and collectivisation represents another. While the communist ideology promised to give workers a reprieve from the harsh realities of capitalism, the sheer loss of human life in communist societies during the Cold War showed that, in practice, this promise was very difficult to fulfill.

Yet capitalism was not without its faults. United States President Dwight Eisenhower warned that the relationship between capitalism, the state and the military would result in a military-industrial complex and the funnelling of huge amounts of taxpayer dollars into the defence industry. This was a reality that could be seen throughout the Cold War and one that still exists today. In other words, the defence industry offers huge financial rewards for companies who are in the business of building weapons.

The Cold War should also be understood in the context of changing superpower relations. It is traditional to speak of the Cold War as a bi-polar conflict. But in reality there were a great deal of non-aligned countries that were emerging out of the former colonial world. The largest among these included India and Indonesia. By 1964, the Sino-Soviet split fundamentally changed the character of the conflict between the Americans and the Soviets, and a multi-polar world emerged. Sensing a geopolitical advantage in exploiting the ideological divisions between the Chinese and the Soviets, the Americans sought closer relations with China after Nixon's visit in 1971 and established full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1979. They sought to isolate the Soviets and render the image of a monolithic communism obsolete. They succeeded, and by the 1980s China had initiated a series of economic reforms that would eventually lead it to become a global economic superpower under the banner of a communist state.



SOURCE 5.4 US President Richard Nixon visited China in 1971 in an attempt to exploit the Sino-Soviet split, which had been simmering for over a decade. China's admittance into the nuclear club in 1964 led to a multi-polar world and the introduction of triangular diplomacy.

The extent to which the various crises in the Cold War were a symptom or a cause of the ideological frictions is something that students of the Cold War would do well to consider. The impact of events such as the Berlin Blockade, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Prague Spring, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Berlin Wall all had strong ideological underpinnings that fundamentally changed the relations between the superpowers. They were crises that ended in a new normal. For example, although the ideological differences were real, it was not until the Berlin Blockade and the construction of the Berlin Wall that those crises manifested themselves in physical barriers made of concrete and steel. Likewise, it was not until the United States stationed its navy off the coast of Cuba to prevent the Soviets crossing a quarantine line that the abstract threat of nuclear war became a possibility.

That none of these conflicts resulted in a direct confrontation between the superpowers is testament to the restraint of leaders. In the end, cool heads prevailed and the arms race ended in a series of disarmament agreements between 1980 and 1991.

Though the Cold War ended over 25 years ago, political tensions between the West and East remain. Despite the integration of many former Eastern bloc countries into the European Union, many in that part of the world have failed to see higher living standards materialise in a way that kept pace with the West. This has led to some disquiet among citizens in Western Europe, who resent Eastern European workers coming to the West. In addition, some contemporary political commentators see the reassertion of Russian power in the region under President Vladimir Putin as just another chapter in an old battle between the Russians and the Americans.



The Cold War
activity grid



Dealing with the
examination

INDEX

A

Afghanistan
Soviet invasion 107–9
Allied Control Council 29
American liberal democracy 10
American liberalism 9
Andropov, Yuri 114–15
Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) 85
Arab–Israel conflict 96–101
arms race 51–7
arms reduction, Soviet 119–20
Atlantic Charter (1941) 5, 9
Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini 100–1

B

Baruch Plan 56
Bay of Pigs 3, 65–6, 67
Berlin blockade 11, 27, 28–30
Berlin Wall 3, 42, 61–4
background 61–2
Checkpoint Charlie 64
collapse 108, 127–30
putting up 62–3
Big three 13
Bizona 28
bourgeoisie 10
Brandt, Willy 61
ostpolitik speech 5, 83–4, 102
Brezhnev, Leonid 2, 74, 75, 114, 125–31
brinkmanship 65
buffer zone 8
Bush, George HW 2

C

capitalism 4, 9
Carter, Jimmy 2
Castro, Fidel 65–6, 67
charm offensive 4, 107, 120–1
Chernenko, Konstantin 115
Chernobyl 118
China 30–2, 94–6
American attitudes to communist 31
attitudes towards Korea 34
nuclear weapons 82, 95
rise of power 82
Soviet attitudes to communist 31–2
and Soviet Union 80–1, 94–6
US relations 85, 102
Christian, David 115
Churchill, Winston 5, 13, 14, 54
Sinews of Peace Speech (1946) 5, 17, 18–19, 25, 28
Cold War
1945–53 6–38
1945 conferences 12–15

1946: growing tensions 17–20
after the 135–6
arms race 53, 141–2
arms reduction, Soviet 119–20
charm offensive 4, 107, 120–1
conclusion 139–43
Cuban Missile Crisis 66
détente 80
development, role of leadership 140
disarmament agreements
(1978–1991) 121–4
early crisis 27–37
Eastern bloc 72–3, 75, 124–34
‘Great Leap Forward’ 94–5
and great power rivalry 8
in hindsight 134–6
key features 142–3
nuclear threat 140–1
origins 36
renewal and end of 106–37
Sino-Soviet split 94
Soviet leadership 140–1
space race 57–8
Vietnam 87, 89–90
who started the 36
Cold War timeline
1945–53 7
1953–68 41
collectivisation 10
communism 4, 10
collapse of 124–34
‘domino’ theory 3, 5, 31
Soviet 10, 124–34
containment 4, 21–5, 42–7
Dulles, rollback and massive
retaliation 44
and Eisenhower 45–6
under Kennedy and Johnson 46–7
NSC-68 43–4, 45
Truman to Eisenhower 45
Cuban Missile Crisis 3, 5, 42, 65–73, 80, 82, 141
background 65–6
Bay of Pigs 3, 65–6, 67
events 67–9
time line 66
Czechoslovakia 42, 73–5

D

decolonisation 81
détente 2, 4, 79–103
economic and political reasons for 81–6
features and consequences 102
geopolitical developments 94–101

geopolitical developments: Vietnam 87–93
time line 80
disarmament 119
agreements (1978–1991) 121–4
domino theory 4, 8, 31, 48–9
Doomsday Clock 55
Dubcek, Alexander 73–4
Dulles, John Foster 42, 44

E

Eastern bloc 72–3, 75
collapse of communism 124–34
economic reasons for détente 81–6
Eisenhower, Dwight D 2, 42, 44–5, 48, 52, 62, 87

F

Ford, Gerald 2

G

Gaddis, John Lewis 36, 37, 110, 111, 134
Gagarin, Yuri 59–60
Geneva Summit (Switzerland, 1985) 122
geopolitical rivalry 8
geopolitics 4
Germany 16–17, 30, 83
Berlin blockade 11, 27, 28–30
Berlin Wall 3, 42, 61–4, 127–30
East 127–30
glasnost 2, 4, 116, 118–19, 134
Gorbachev, Mikhail 2, 107, 110, 111, 125–31, 140
charm offensive 4, 107, 120–1
disarmament agreements
(1978–1991) 121–4
glasnost 2, 4, 116, 118–19, 134
perestroika 2, 4, 116, 117, 134
Politburo speech (1987) 5, 115
Soviet attitudes and policies 114–21
Vodka and alcoholism 116–19
great power rivalry 8
Greece 23–4, 43
guerrilla warfare 88, 91
gulag 46

H

Helsinki Accords (1975) 5, 85–6, 102
Ho Chi Minh 84, 88
Hobsbawm, Eric 135
Hungary 73, 126
Huntington, Samuel P 136

I

ideological rivalry 7–8
ideology 4
industrialisation 10
intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) 102, 119
Iran 21–2
Iranian Revolution (1979) 96, 100–1
iron curtain 126–7

J

Japan 52
Jessup-Malik conversations 29
Johnson, Lyndon B 2, 46–7, 73, 92–3

K

Kennan, George F (Long Telegram) 5, 17, 18, 28, 36, 43
Kennedy, John F 2–3, 5, 45–7, 62, 65–6, 67–71, 73, 82–3, 91
Khrushchev, Nikita 3, 41, 46, 49–51, 61–2, 67–71, 73, 80, 82–3, 140
Kitchen Debate (1959) 5
Secret Speech (1956) 5, 41
Kitchen Debate (1959) 5, 51
Korea
American attitudes towards 34
Chinese and Soviet attitudes towards 35
Korean War 32–5
impacts of 35
key events 33

L

Leninism 10
liberalism 9
Limited Test Ban Treaty 73, 80, 83, 121
London Conference 28

M

Malenkov, Georgy 41, 49
Manhattan Project 52
Mao Zedong 30, 31–2, 82, 84, 94
Marshall Plan 11, 21, 25–7, 43
Marxism 10
massive retaliation 44
Middle East 96–101
military-industrial complex 4, 45
Monroe Doctrine 66
Moscow Summit (Soviet Union, 1988) 123
Mujahedeen 4, 107, 108–9
Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) 4, 42, 52, 141

N

Nassa, Gamal 97
National Liberation Front (NLF) 91
national liberation movements 84–5
National Security Council (NSC-68) 43–4, 45
Ngo Dinh Diem 90–1
Nixon, Richard M 3, 50–1, 85
Kitchen Debate (1959) 5, 51
US-China relations 85, 102
nomenklatura 119
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 27, 102
Novikov, Nikolai (1946 Telegram) 5, 17, 19–20
NSC-68 (1950) 5
nuclear parity 81
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968) 121
nuclear weapons 52–6, 82–3, 85–6, 141–2

O

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil shock 99–100
Osama Bin Laden 109
ostpolitik 4, 5, 83–4, 102

P

party purges 10
peaceful coexistence 41, 49–51
perestroika 2, 4, 116, 117, 134
personality cult 10
Poland 13, 72, 125–6
Politburo speech (Gorbachev, 1987) 5, 115
political reasons for détente 81–6
Potsdam (July 1945) 14–15, 28, 30
Prague Spring 42, 73, 74
proletariat 10
proxy war 32

R

rapprochement 80
Reagan, Ronald 3, 81, 109–14, 117
charm offensive 4, 107, 120–1
disarmament agreements (1978–1991) 121–4
Star Wars program 110–11, 120–1, 142
Reagan doctrine 109, 112–14
Reaganomics 113–14
Red Army 42
Reykjavik Summit (Iceland, 1986) 122–3
rollback 42, 44
Romania 130
Roosevelt, Franklin D 3, 9, 11, 13, 14–15

S

self-determination 7
Shevardnadze, Eduard 107
Sinews of Peace Speech (1946) 5, 17, 18–19, 28
Sino-Soviet split 94–6
Six-Day War (1967) 96, 97–8
South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) 89
sovereignty 7
Soviet communism 10, 124–34
Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) 130
Soviet Union 41, 49
arms reduction 119–20
attitudes to communist China 31–2
attitudes towards Korea 34
attitudes and policies under Gorbachev 114–21
Brezhnev doctrine 125
charm offensive 4, 107, 120–1 and China 80–1, 94–6
collapse of communism 124–34
disarmament agreements (1978–1991) 121–4
foreign policy 119–20
glasnost 2, 4, 116, 118–19, 134
invasion of Afghanistan 107–9
leadership and Cold War 140–1
Moscow Summit (1988) 123
nomenklatura 119
perestroika 2, 4, 116, 117, 134
Politburo speech (Gorbachev, 1987) 5, 115
postwar aims 16
stagnation 114
START treaty (1991) 2, 124
tension between USA 17–20, 110, 112, 141
US-Soviet alliance 11–12
Vodka and alcoholism 116–19
space race 57–61
Apollo missions 60–1
sphere of influence 13, 20
stagnation 114
Stalin, Joseph 3, 13, 14–15, 20, 41, 140
Stalinism 10
Star Wars 110–11, 120–1, 142
START treaty (Soviet Union, 1991) 2, 124
Stevenson, Adlai 68
Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) 85, 102, 121
Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) 122
Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) 110–11
Suez Crisis (1956) 97

superpowers
emergence of 12–15
emerging differences between 15–16,
142
superpower rivalry 51–61
arms race 51–7
space race 57–61
superpower summits 85–6, 102, 121–4

T

theocratic state 101
triangular diplomacy 4, 80
trickle-down economics 114
Truman, Harry S 3, 9, 11, 31, 45, 52
Truman Doctrine 11, 21–5, 42
Turkey 22–3, 43

U

Ulbricht, Walter 42
United States 10, 42
attitudes to communist China 31
attitudes towards Korea 34
attitudes and policies under Reagan
109–14
charm offensive 4, 107, 120–1
China relations 85, 102
disarmament agreements (1978–
1991) 121–4
postwar aims 16
Star Wars 110–11, 120–1, 142
tension between Soviet Union 17–20,
110, 112, 141
US–Soviet alliance 11–12
and Vietnam War 82, 90–3
Washington Summit (US, 1987) 123

V

Vietminh 88, 89
Vietnam War 82, 86–93
time line 87
US involvement 82, 90–3

W

Warsaw Pact 74
Washington Summit (US, 1987) 123
Williams, William 36–7

Y

Yalta conference 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 30
Yeltsin, Boris 131–3
Yom Kippur War (1973) 96, 99–100



Investigating
Modern History
9780170402002



World War I
9780170402071



Power and Authority
in the Modern World
9780170402149



The American
Civil Rights
Movement: 1945-1968
9780170410144



Conflict in Europe:
1935-1945
9780170410120



Conflict in Indochina:
1945-1979
9780170410113



Russia and the
Soviet Union: 1917-1941
A National Study
9780170417570



The Cold War:
1945-1991
9780170410137



The World Order:
1945-2011
9780170410151

The Cold War: 1945-1991 is tailored specifically to the Stage 6 Modern History syllabus for NSW Year 11 students. Including all nature and methods of Modern History options and the most popular case studies, this student resource covers the key content, skills and assessment practices of Modern History at Year 11. **The Cold War: 1945-1991** also provides students with practical strategies and advice for approaching the Historical Investigation.



Aligned to the NSW Modern
History syllabus



Historically accurate maps
and images



Extensive range of activities
and worksheets



Primary and secondary source
studies build historical skills
and understandings



In-depth content to support
student understanding



Online portal to access
your digital resources