A/A* Revision Notes

1945 - 1991

The Cold War

History GCSE
THE ROOTS OF THE COLD WAR

Almost as soon as WW2 ended a bitter struggle developed between the USSR and USA.

Historians have produced three conflicting explanations for the start of the Cold War:

1. The USSR was to blame. Stalin planned for a communist takeover of the world. The takeover of Eastern Europe was the first step towards world control.
2. The USA was to blame. Soviet actions were defensive. The USA wanted to control its area of influence but refused to allow the USSR to do the same.
3. Neither side was to blame. The Cold War was based on misunderstanding and forces beyond the control of both sides.

THE LONG-TERM CAUSES OF THE COLD WAR

The roots of the Cold War are to be found earlier in history – in 1917 when Soviet communism was born during the Russian Revolution.

The USA and USSR were both rich and enormous countries – having great natural resources. But they were starkly separated by their different beliefs.

AMERICAN CAPITALISM

1. People should be free to make as much money as they can.
2. Factories and other property should be owned by individuals and companies.
3. The government should interfere as little as possible in the lives of ordinary people.
4. At elections people should be allowed to choose anyone they want for the government.
5. The Press should be allowed to criticise the government.
6. The government should not interfere with religion.

SOVIET COMMUNISM

1. Rich people are wicked and selfish. They should be forced to share their wealth.
2. Factories and other property should be owned by the state on behalf of all the people.
3. A communist government should get involved in every aspect of life.
4. At elections people should only be allowed to choose communists for government.
5. The Press should never criticise a communist government.
6. Religious belief is nonsense and should be wiped out by the government.

Each side thought they were completely right.

Tension and hostility increased during the civil war in Russia between the White Russians and Bolshevik revolutionaries (reds). In 1919 the USA, Britain and France invaded the Soviet Union in order to destroy communism by supporting the Whites. This failed, increasing tension between the countries.
THE COMMON ENEMY

In 1941 hostility was suspended between the USA and the Soviet Union as they were linked by their common wish to destroy Hitler. But the end of the war proved a difficult situation. Nazi power over Europe had been destroyed but what should replace it?

Shortly before his death, Hitler predicted the start of the cold war.

‘After the collapse of the German Reich, and until there is a rise in nationalism in Asia, African or Latin America, there will only be two powers in the world: The United States and Soviet Russia. Through the laws of history and geographical position these giants are destined to struggle with each other either through war, or through rivalry in economics and political idea.’ Hitler’s Political Testament, April 1945

1945: THE BREAKDOWN OF THE WARTIME ALLIANCE

The Victory over Hitler created new worries for the winners. They had different views as to the future of Europe after the war. Before the end of 1945 deep division were emerging between the leaders of the USA and the Soviet Union.

WHY DID THE WARTIME ALLIANCE FALL APART IN 1945?

YALTA AND THE ARGUMENT OVER POLAND

In February 1945 the leaders of Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union met at Yalta. The three leaders were Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. The end of the war was in sight and they met to decide on the shape of the post-war world. Much of their time was spent discussing the future of Poland, but there were many disagreements about how it should be run.

YALTA: THE ATTITUDE OF THE LEADERS

- Roosevelt was very ill (in 2 months he would die). He was keen that democracy should be introduced in to Eastern Europe. However he trusted Stalin and wanted to make sure that the USA and USSR remained on good terms after the war.
- Churchill was very concerned about the future of Poland and Eastern Europe. He did not trust Stalin. He wanted to stop Stalin from imposing communism on the territory taken by the Red Army. Britain had gone to war in 1939 to help Poland and Churchill did not want to abandon Poland to Soviet control.
Stalin was obsessed with the security of the USSR. He wanted the Soviet Union to retain the Polish territory he had taken in 1939 as part of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. He also wanted to make sure the new government of Poland would be friendly towards the Soviet Union.

**THE MEETING AT YALTA**

The meeting at Yalta, in the Soviet Union, took place between 4th and 11th February 1945. Stalin refused to leave the USSR so the two leaders had to go to him! The three men were pleased at how the war was going. Roosevelt said that there was a friendly atmosphere about the meeting (but underneath serious disagreements existed.)

The discussions were wide ranging but mainly focused on Poland. The three leaders had previously agreed that the Soviet Union would take land from Poland, and Poland would in turn be given German land (as part of Germany’s reparations.)

- They argued about the details – Churchill wanted to limit the changes as he was worried about taking too much land from Germany.

But there was even greater disagreement over who should govern Poland. Eventually Britain and USA thought they had ‘won’. Stalin agreed to include non-communists in the government. And he accepted free elections to be held in Poland – and said these elections should take place ‘within a month’.

**THE TERMS OF THE YALTA AGREEMENT**

1. A Declaration on Liberated Europe – stated that each liberated country would be given an emergency government with representatives from any important non-fascist groups and that free elections would be held as soon as possible to set up a democratic government.
2. The borders of Poland were altered (thing with USSR and Germany.)
3. The Lublin government (com) in Poland would be expanded so that it would include some of the London Poles (non-com). Free elections would be held in Poland too.
4. German Prisoners of War from Soviet territory were sent back to the USSR (they were previously being held by Britain and America.) About 10,000 of these men were executed on their return.
5. Germany should be divided into occupied zones. Churchill argued there should be a French zone too was he was keen to restore the power of France. Stalin and Roosevelt accepted this suggestion.
6. The USSR agreed to help with the war against Japan. In return the USSR gained control of island territories north of Japan. This turned out to be a good deal for the USSR as they did not have to do much fighting before the Japanese surrender.
7. The setting up of the United Nations. Stalin successfully argued that each country should have a veto on the decisions of the powerful Security Council.

**THE WEAKNESS OF THE YALTA AGREEMENT**

It was the highlight of the wartime alliance. To Roosevelt and many Americans it seemed like the beginning of a post-war period of co-operation. In fact the Yalta agreement was flawed in a number of ways...

**YALTA: THE PROBLEMS**

- The Americans and Soviets interpreted it differently. The Agreement talked about the need for ‘democracy’ and ‘free elections’. To Roosevelt this meant the American system of free speech. Stalin’s
The idea of democracy was a communist one where the communist party represented the people and no opposition was allowed.

- Yalta raised false expectations in the USA. They were bitterly disappointed when Stalin did not allow western-style governments to be set up in Eastern Europe.
- It tried to achieve compromise over Poland, which turned out not to be possible. Either Poland was democratic or it was friendly towards the USSR. Leading figures in Polish society were anti-Russian. Stalin knew that he could only make sure that Poland was friendly by destroying freedom of speech.

### Yalta in Practice

Stalin did not really bring any non-communists into the government at Poland.

- Polish opponents of communism were dealt with ruthlessly – in March, 16 leaders of the Polish went to have talks with the Soviet authorities near Warsaw. They were promised their own personal safety. They were arrested and never seen again!
- The Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, refused to allow London Poles play a significant part in the government. This man was in charge of negotiating the details of the new Polish government with the British and American ambassadors in Moscow.

### A New Face at the White House

Harry Truman became president when Roosevelt died in April 1945. He had made his reputation in domestic politics and had almost no experience of international politics.

He was very different to Roosevelt and his personality played a part in the development of a tougher American policy.

- Roosevelt was much more diplomatic than Truman.
- Truman was less certain about USSR and USA getting along in comparison to Roosevelt.

### Truman Takes a Tough Line

In April 1945, as soon as he came to power, he spoke angrily to the Soviet Foreign Minister (Molotov). He insisted that the Soviets carry out the agreements at Yalta.

As Molotov left he said: ‘I have never been talked to like that before in my life.’ To which Truman said: ‘Carry out your agreements and you won’t get talked to like that.’

### The Potsdam Conference

The three leaders (Attlee, Truman and Stalin) met at Potsdam, near Berlin, between 17 July and 2 August 1945. This was the last of the great wartime summit meetings. It showed how the wartime alliance was changing by the different leaders – Roosevelt (died) to Truman, Churchill (replaced) to Attlee.

Truman told Stalin the USA had the atomic bomb – Truman had a greater sense of power and felt this would put him in a stronger position in any arguments with the Soviet Union. The US government thought it might take 20 years for the Soviet Union to develop and atom bomb.

### Potsdam: Areas of Agreement and Disagreement
1. German reparations were agreed. Each country was to take reparations from its own area of occupation. The Soviet Union was to receive some additional industrial equipment from the western zones of occupation (little of this was ever handed over.)
2. The details of the German-Polish borders on the rivers Oder and Neisse were finally agreed. The British and Americans disliked the position of the new border but could do little about it.
3. It was agreed that the Nazi Party should be stamped out in all sectors of Germany.
4. The Soviet Union wanted to play a part in the running of the rich German industrial area. The USA rejected this idea.
5. The Soviet Union wanted to share in the occupation of Japan. Truman firmly blocked this idea.
6. The USA and Britain asked for a greater say in what went on in Easter Europe. Stalin rejected this suggestion.

THE IRON CURTAIN

The new hostility towards the Soviet Union was encouraged by Churchill’s famous speech on 5 March 1946. It was made at Fulton, Missouri, USA. Truman had already seen the speech before Churchill had given it. The audience was mostly American. He talked about the divide between the East and the West and called for an American-British alliance to meet the communist menace.

The Communist Parties, which were very small in all of these Eastern states, are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control.

THE SOVIET TAKE-OVER OF EASTERN EUROPE

After 1945 the Soviet Union took control of much of Eastern Europe. Historians are still debating the motives behind this take-over. Was this a defensive move or was this a step towards a take-over of the whole of Europe?

WHY DID STALIN TAKE CONTROL OF EASTERN EUROPE?

LIBERATION?

The Soviet take-over was complete until 1948 but it began before the end of WW2. As countries were liberated from the Germans, the Red Army made sure governments friendly towards the Soviets replaced it. In most countries the Soviet government set up anti-fascist coalition governments but gave local communists a leading position.

These communist-dominated governments introduced nationalisation and took land away from the landlords. Opposition parties were undermined. Elections were rigged. Eventually all opposition was destroyed and Soviet control was complete!

STAGE 1: THE TAKE OVER OF POLAND
This was Stalin’s first priority.

A few London Pole’s remained in the government, but it remained completely dominated by the Lublin group (communist.) On 5 July 1945 the western allies admitted defeat over Poland by ‘recognising’ the largely communist government. Communist power was strengthened further in January 1947 when rigged elections were held in Poland. The leader of the London Poles, Mikolaczyk, thought his life was in danger and fled!

**STAGE 2: THE TAKE OVER OF ROMANIA AND BULGARIA**

This was the next priority for Stalin. In Romania and Bulgaria, the Red Army swept in, and set up communist dominated coalition governments in late 1944.

In Romania: In February 1945 (near time of Yalta) a Soviet politician, Vyshinsky, ordered the King of Romania to appoint a new prime minister chosen by Stalin. He said that it wasn’t in line with the Yalta agreement, but Vyshinsky made a big fuss and got his way. By mid 1945 communists were in control in Romania. The monarchy in Romania was abolished in 1947.

In Bulgaria: elections were held in November. These were rigged and the communists won. In September 1946 the communist government abolished the government.

**STAGE 3: THE TAKE-OVER OF HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

Stalin did not have a clear view of what he wanted for Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

In Hungary: free elections took place in November 1945 and the non-communists won. Fresh elections then were held in August 1947. These were rigged (ofc) and the communists took power. In November all non-communist parties were banned.

The final stage in this take-over came when communists seized power in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

In Czechoslovakia there was a coalition government of communists and non-communists. There was a strong local communist party in Czechoslovakia. Fair elections were held in 1946 and the communists won 38% of the vote. The president and the foreign minister were non-communist but the prime minister was a communist. There was an economic crisis in 1947 – harvests were bad and industry was in trouble. Elections were due for May 1948 but the communists were afraid that they would do badly. So they used armed force to seize power. Many non-communists were arrested and the foreign minister was murdered! Rigged elections were held shortly afterwards and the communists won a huge majority.

**The Soviet take-over was complete!**

**THE WAR (WW2) AS A TRIUMPH FOR SOVIET COMMUNISM**

Soviet leaders felt that they had made the most important contribution to the winning of the war. 10 million Germans, 80% of German losses, had died on the Eastern front. The Soviet leaders believed that they had largely won the war, so they had a right to shape the future of Europe.

Also Stalin saw the war as proof of communism – communist Russia had triumphed over capitalist Germany. This gave a new sense of confidence and determination to the Soviets.

**NEVER AGAIN: THE LEVEL OF THE SOVIET WARTIME SACRIFICE**
The Soviet Union suffered much more than the other allies in WW2. 15 million Soviet soldiers and civilians had been killed, and many more Russians died due to food shortages and harsh conditions of wartime. In total about 25 million Soviet citizens died. Stalin was determined that this should never happen again.

**SOVIET STRATEGIC THINKING**

To ensure that the devastation of the Second World War was not repeated he took control of Eastern European countries and set up the iron curtain. Germany had attacked Russia through Poland, so establishing a communist state here was important to Stalin. Most countries in Eastern Europe had been anti-communist before WW2, and Stalin thought that they would revert back to this if they were allowed to be independent again.

**US IMPERIALISM**

The USA was by far the wealthiest country in the world in 1945. The Soviets were convinced that the USA was going to spread their power by buying up companies in other countries and selling American goods wherever they could. In this way the USA could build a new kind of empire without using American troops, as American capitalism would do it instead. So to try and stop American businesses dominating the world, an option was to set up a group of friendly communist states.

**THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE AND THE MARSHALL PLAN**

Traditionally American foreign policy was based on isolationism: having as little to do as possible with international politics. The Soviet takeover forced American politicians to think again and to reject traditional thinking.

**HOW DID THE USA REACT TO THE SOVIET TAKE-OVER OF EASTERN EUROPE?**

After 1945 the USA moved away from isolationism and built up its own ‘sphere of interest’: a group of pro-American states that included all of the world’s richest industrialised countries.

**1946: COLD WAR ATTITUDES DEVELOP**

Relations between the USA and Soviet Union deteriorated throughout 1946.

- The Americans were critical of Soviet policy in Iran. The Soviets were meant to withdraw in March 1946. The Americans criticized the Soviet occupation at the United Nations. Stalin gave in and withdrew his troops.
- The American representative, Byrnes, blocked every Soviet proposal and criticized Soviet policy at the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in April 1946.
- The Soviet navy wanted to set up naval bases in the Black Sea. Turkey felt threatened by these plans and in August 1946 the US blocked the Soviet plans. The Americans made it clear that they would use force to resist any Soviet move.
THE CRISIS OF 1947

Conditions in Europe were especially harsh in 1947. At the beginning of the year there was an economic crisis in Western Europe. Discontent in Western Europe made many begin to turn to communism. The USA realised that unless conditions improved there was a real possibility that the communists could come to power (in Italy and France esp.). By early 1947 it was clear to the US government that their friends in Western Europe could not cope alone.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

In February 1947 the British government stated that they could no longer afford to pay for troops in Greece and Turkey. Unless America replaced Britain in these countries, they could come under Soviet control. So Truman decided to offer American financial help to Greece and Turkey.

He went further and declared that American support was available for any people who wanted to fight communism. This became known as the Truman Doctrine. It was based on the idea of containment – the USA would use its wealth and power to stop or contain the spread of communism.

Through the Truman Doctrine the USA had rejected isolationism and announced it would play a leading role in world politics.

In Greece and Turkey the doctrine was successful. Initially the doctrine was applied to Europe and the Middle East. Eventually, it was extended to the whole world and led to war in Korea and Vietnam.

THE MARSHALL PLAN

In Washington, in 1947, there was a belief that communism could only be stopped if Western Europe became wealthy. By the spring of 1947 it was clear that without American help there was little chance of economic recovery.

In June 1947, General George Marshall announced the scheme whereby the USA would offer economic aid to Western Europe. This money was available to all countries; including the Soviet Union in theory. But Stalin refused to have anything to do with it, and also ordered Poland and Czechoslovakia to not take part as well. He saw the plan as an attempt to impose capitalist ideas on European countries. Stalin was right. The Plan was based on a belief that communism would be much less attractive to ordinary people id they had good jobs and were well paid.

Western Germany was one of the countries who accepted Marshall Aid. This resulted in a step towards the division of Germany, and this angered the Soviet authorities.

The Plan was a great success. Over four years, $13,000 million of help was provided. By 1952 whe the Marshall Plan officially ended, the countries were much more economically prosperous. The Plan was also useful to the USA as by rebuilding Western Europe, America was creating wealthy trade partners who would want to bu large amounts of American goods.

THE SOVIET RESPONSE

In 1947, Cominform was set up to strengthen the links between communist parties in different countries.
Communists in Western countries were told to wreck the Marshall Plan through strikes. Despite the strikes, American money flowed into Western Europe and eventually the demonstrations and strikes came to an end.

**COMECON**

Having failed to destroy the Marshall Plan, the USSR created its own economic bloc of countries in Eastern Europe. In January 1949 Comecon was set up. It was a trading organisation of communist countries but was nowhere near as successful as the Marshall Plan. It did not involve any injection of money into East European countries and eventually the Soviet Union used it to encourage each country to specialise in different products.

**THE BERLIN BLOCKADE AND NATO**

In 1948 Stalin tried to starve the people of West Berlin into submission. He failed. The Western allies kept West Berlin supplied through a massive airlift.

**WHAT WERE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BERLIN BLOCKADE?**

**TOWARDS A DIVIDED GERMANY**
Germany divided as the Americans made West Germany more and more pro-American, dividing from the Soviet East Germany. The US government decided to include western Germany in its plans for a new non-communist Western Europe.

**THE EMERGENCE OF WEST GERMANY**

1. The Marshall Plan for the economic rebuilding of Europe was extended to the western part of Germany but not to the Soviet zone.
2. In January 1947 the British and American governments fused their two zones into a single unit called Bizonia. A few months later the French joined them and this formed Trizonia. Stalin saw these as acts of betrayal. At Yalta and Potsdam they had agreed that decisions about Germany would be taken jointly, but Stalin had not been consulted this time. He became very suspicious of Western motives!
3. In June, the USA and Britain introduced a new currency, the Deutschmark, into Bizonia. This move strengthened the economy of Western Germany but caused an economic crisis in Eastern Germany.

On 24 June 1948, Stalin responded by closing all roads, canals and railways that led from the West into Western Berlin.

**THE BERLIN AIRLIFT**

Some advisers thought that the Western powers would have to give way because the 2 million people in West Berlin would starve as long as the roads out of Berlin remained blocked. Another view was that tanks should blast a way through the blockade.

General Clay, the leading military American expert was keen to send his troops down the autobahn towards Berlin. This could easily lead to a full-scale war with the USSR. So they decided on a middle course: to keep the city supplied by aircraft.

To people in the West Stalin seemed to be acting with great aggression and the attack on Berlin looked like the first step towards a communist march westwards. To President Truman it was a test of the new policy of containment: the USSR would not be allowed to take over West Berlin.

**STALIN ENDS THE SIEGE**

In May 1949 the Soviet authorities called off the blockade. The airlift was a triumph for the American and British air forces.

- During the airlift British and US planes flew nearly 200,000 missions to Berlin.
- Over 1.5 million tons of food, fuel and equipment was sent to Berlin.
  - By the spring 1949, aircraft were landing in West Berlin every 3 minutes and 8000 tonnes of supplies were being flown in a day.

**RESULTS OF THE BLOCKADE**

1. 79 British and American pilots were killed in accidents – costly to the allies in financial and human terms.
2. Ended the ill feeling between USA and Germany.
3. West had shown how determined it was to resist communism. GO CONTAINMENT!

4. A divided Germany:
   a. Western zones, including West Berlin = Federal Republic of Germany (formed in May 1949)
   b. USSR zone with a communist government = German Democratic Republic (formed in October 1949)

5. NATO!

THE FORMATION OF WEST GERMANY

The blockade accelerated moves towards a powerful, pro-Western in most of Germany.

West Germany held its elections in August 1949, where the Christian Democrats won the majority. Its leader Konrad Adenauer hated communism and believed very strongly in linking West Germany to the USA and Western Europe. This was the last thing Stalin wanted – the idea of a powerful capitalist German state made him feel très insecure.

THE FORMATION OF NATO

The Western allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in April 1949.

The organisation was dominated by America, reflected in the fact that every supreme commander of NATO has been American. The formation of NATO was a milestone in American foreign policy. Never before had the USA been a member of a peacetime military alliance. The fact that Truman broke with all traditions of American foreign policy shows how determined he was to stop the spread of communism.

NATO members: USA, Canada, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Iceland, Luxembourg, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Portugal. In 1952 Greece and Turkey joined and in 1955 West Germany joined.

All NATO members agreed to go to war if any one of them was attacked. The alliance was supported with large numbers of troops on the ground. There was a permanent presence of American forces in Europe. In particular there were large numbers of NATO forces in West Germany. The Soviet Union felt threatened by this, which increased when West Germany joined NATO in 1955.

The Soviet Union responded to NATO by setting up its own military alliance in 1955. This was established under a treaty called the Warsaw Pact. For the next three decades NATO and Warsaw Pact forces faced each other and prepared for war.
American politicians claimed that the USA had fewer nuclear warheads. In fact the USSR had only about 50 atoms bombs in 1953 and did not catch up until 1978.

On the other hand the USSR had a huge conventional army of soldiers, tanks, artillery and so on. Truman was fearful of the USSR’s conventional army. During the Korean War Truman ordered a massive increase in American spending on conventional weapons. He also increased spending on American NATO forces in Western Europe.

The arms race increased the climate of fear between the 2 superpowers. In particular, each side was afraid that the other might try to win a ‘hot war’ by launching a surprise pre-emptive strike (an attack that is launched by one side before the other side can attack).
KHRUSHCHEV AND CO-EXISTENCE

Stalin was the dictator of the Soviet Union from the late 1920s to 1953. His regime was cruel and repressive, using secret police and force. When Stalin died in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev became the new leader who immediately started to relax the Soviet state’s grip on its citizens.

In May 1955, Khrushchev signed the Austrian State Treaty. This ended the occupation of Germany with the allies, and made Austria an independent sovereign state. Khrushchev also pulled the Red Army out of the Soviet-occupied zone of Austria. He seemed to be a man who didn’t want to dominate the world.

In 1956, Khrushchev made a secret speech to the Communist Party, denouncing Stalin as a cruel tyrant. Statues of Stalin came down, cities were renamed, the secret police became less active, and more consumer goods were produced. This whole process was called ‘destalinisation’. It was very popular in the Soviet Union, as the Soviet people seemed to be gaining more freedom – this made it more popular in the West too. Khrushchev had a different attitude to the West as well. He replaced the old policy of confrontation with peaceful co-existence. The USSR would recognise the Western powers’ right to exist – this led to a ‘thaw’ in the Cold War.

However destalinisation encouraged people in the satellite states of Eastern Europe and they expected similar changes. They tried to weaken Soviet influence in their countries.

These satellite states and the West had misunderstood Khrushchev’s motives. He wasn’t going to grant widespread concessions in the satellite states, as this could lead to the end of communism in Eastern Europe and the destruction of the Soviet buffer against the West.

Revolts in East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia were ruthlessly put down, ending the ‘thaw’ in the Cold War.

KHRUSHCHEV AND THE WEST

By ‘peaceful co-existence’, Khrushchev simply mean that each side ought to allow the other to compete equally on the world stage.

1. He raised the political influence of the Soviet Union: made high profile visits to foreign leaders and gave aid to Third World countries.
2. He demanded the right to solve problems within the Soviet Union’s ‘sphere of interest’ i.e. Hungarian Revolution and the Berlin Wall.
3. He challenged the West when he felt the Soviet Union was being threatened. These confrontations led to the U-2 crisis.
4. He tried to demonstrate the technological and nuclear superiority of the Soviet Union: engaging in a space race and nuclear arms race with the West (USA).
5. He challenged the dominance of the USA in the Olympic Games.

One of the results of Khrushchev’s actions was the election of John F. Kennedy in 1961 as the president of the USA – he promised to ‘get tough’ on the communists.
THE GENEVA SUMMIT

In 1955, the world leaders met. They discussed world trade, the arms race and disarmament.

President Eisenhower suggested an ‘open skies’ policy for aircraft. According to Eisenhower’s proposal, each side would be able to monitor from the air the other’s arms build-up. So neither would be able to stock-pile weapons, and suspicion would be reduced.

No decisions were made. The Geneva Summit marked the high point in the ‘thaw’ of the Cold War even so!

THE ARMS RACE 1955-63

- **1957**
  - October: USSR developed a rocket, the R-7. This could launch a satellite (Sputnik) into space.
  - December: USA tested their rocket, Atlas-A. This could be fitted with a nuclear warhead and launched at targets thousands of miles away.

- **By 1960**
  - Both countries had Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). These could also be launched at far away targets. Both sides tried to position them near enemy borders (USA based some in Turkey).

- **1960**
  - USA: fired a Polaris missile from a submarine. It was now possible to fire missiles over a large distance from under the sea.
  - USSR: soon developed their own nuclear submarines.

By 1960 both sides had enough nuclear weapons to destroy every living thing on Earth (this situation was called ‘overkill’.)
THE HUNGARIAN RISING, 1956

Hungary was a Soviet satellite state. Hungarians believed that destalinisation and the international thaw had created the right atmosphere in which to win reforms. After a revolt in Poland in June 1956, the Soviet Union had granted concessions to the Poles. This encouraged the Hungarians to seek an end to the Soviet stranglehold on Hungary. They hoped to gain political freedom and economic improvements through increased contact with the West. Some hoped for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary.

Demonstrations and protests in the capital (Budapest) led to the election of Imre Nagy as prime minister in October 1956. He had already been PM in 1953 and was known to be a moderniser.

The Soviet Union was caught off guard by the riots and withdrew its troops – Khrushchev hoped that this would calm the situation.

Nagy announced a programme of reform:

- No more government control of the press and radio
- Non-communists allowed to participate in the government
- Free democratic elections
- Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact - this move was completely unacceptable to Khrushchev. The other reforms had made communism ‘look bad’, but this reform would threaten the Soviet Union’s military safety.

On 4th November 1956, the Red Army returned and crushed the uprising. In the fighting that followed, 4000 Hungarians were killed and perhaps as many as 200,000 fled to the West.

RESULTS OF THE RISING

In Hungary...

1. Nagy was arrested and executed!
2. Protesters were imprisoned and 300 were executed.
3. A hard-line communist government under Janos Kadar was introduced.

For Khrushchev...

1. In terms of military: it was a success. Hungary had returned to a pro-Soviet state.
2. In terms of propaganda: it was a failure. Soviet communism looked brutal and cruel

For the USA (and NATO, United Nations)...

1. It was a failure. The US was shown to be powerless to ‘roll back’ communism.

Overall, the West grew more frightened of the USSR and the Cold War intensified.
THE U-2 CRISIS

The year of 1960 had begun with great hope. The ‘Big Four’ – Eisenhower, Khrushchev, Charles de Gaulle (France) and Macmillan (Britain) – were going to meet at a summit in Paris in May. Yet before the leaders even arrived in Paris, hopes of new friendlier relations were dashed.

THE SPY IN THE SKY

The U-2 = a lightweight spy plane that could fly 75,000 feet above the Earth; developed by the USA by the 1950s. It flew so high, that even if it was detected by radar, it would be too high to intercept by other aircraft. It had high-tech cameras which could take photos of sites from far away.

On 1st May 1960, two weeks before the Paris summit, a U-2 piloted by Gary Powers took off from a US base in Pakistan. At first the flight went well and Powers was able to take photos of the Soviet Union. But as Powers crossed the Ural Mountains, his plane was hit by a Soviet SAM-2 missile. It crashed near the Soviet town Sverdlovsk. Powers was captured by the Soviets and the U-2 was recovered for Soviet scientists to study.

THE AMERICAN RESPONSE

The Americans tried to cover up what had happened as if they admitted to spying on the Soviet Union, then the summit talks would be ruined.

At first the Americans announced that a U-2 research plane studying weather conditions had disappeared somewhere over Turkey. But the Americans did not know that Powers had been captured and had admitted to spying. Also the Soviets now had discovered the thousands of photographs of Soviet territory in the plane.

On 7th May 1960 Khrushchev announced he had both Powers and the U-2. The Americans had been caught spying and telling lies.

THE END OF HOPES FOR PEACE

Khrushchev said he would attend the summit as long as the Americans apologised. Eisenhower however refused to apologise. He claimed that it was America’s responsibility to protect itself from a possible surprise attack – therefore U-2 flights were an important part of US defence strategy.

Khrushchev was not satisfied with this answer and left before the summit talks had started. He then cancelled an invitation to Eisenhower to visit the Soviet Union. The Cold War had just got colder.
THE BERLIN WALL

Despite Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful co-existence, he challenged the Western presence in Berlin.

BERLIN: AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE USSR

1. American aid had made West Berlin into a showpiece of capitalism.
2. West Berliners enjoyed luxury goods whilst East Berliners were suffering with long hours and food shortages.
3. East Berlin tried to rebel in 1953, but this was suppressed by the Soviet army.
4. East Berliners were fleeing to West Berlin: more than 2 million had fled by 1961. Around 2000 skilled workers were leaving for the West every day.
   a. This was easy to do as there weren’t strong fortifications between the two sides of Berlin.
5. Western govs used Berlin as headquarters for spying

In June 1961, at the Vienna summit, Khrushchev again demanded that the West give up Berlin. President Kennedy refused so Khrushchev decided to make it impossible for East Berliners to travel to West Berlin.

On 13th August 1961 the East Germans put up a barrier of barbed wire between East and West Berlin.

They protected the barrier with machine guns.

Kennedy protested but was unwilling to risk going to war over Berlin.

They built a concrete wall 45 km long to replace the barbed wire.

If anyone tried to cross the wall, they were shot. In the first year after the wall was built, 41 East Berliners were shot trying to cross the wall. Families and friends were separated. East Berliners saw the wall as a sign of inferiority in comparison to the West Berliners.

PROPAGANDA

Relations between the superpowers strained considerably.

The Americans used the Berlin Wall for propaganda: if the communist system was so perfect, why was it necessary to turn it into a prison?

In 1963 Kennedy visited West Berlin. They applauded him warmly when he declared, ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’ (I am a Berliner). He promised the USA’s commitment and that they would never desert West Berlin.
The Soviets saw this visit and speech as a deliberate attempt to cause trouble.

**WHO GAINED AND WHO LOST FROM THE BUILDING OF THE BERLIN WALL?**

1. Flow of refugees stopped which allowed the communists to consolidate their control over East Germany.
2. Enemies of communism could argue that communism was so awful that people had to be walled in to make sure that they did not run away from communism.
3. People in Eastern Germany who did not support communism were trapped.
4. The building of the wall was the beginning of a period of calm in Europe. On both sides people accepted that there was no immediate prospect of change and the level of tension went down.
The space race was an offshoot of the Cold War, with both superpowers trying to win the space race in order to prove their superiority.

1957
• USSR: launch their satellite Sputnik 1. Also launch Sputnik 2 which took the first dog into space

1958
• USA: first satellite, Explorer 1 launched

1959
• USSR: Luna 3 takes pictures of the far side of the Moon

1960
• USSR: Sputnik 2 orbits the Earth with two dogs

1961
• USSR: 12th April, Yuri Gagarin is the first person to orbit the Earth. Soviets use this as great propaganda
• USA: in Jan. send Ham, a chimpanzee, into space. In May Alan Shephard flies ‘Freedom 7’ into space. In May also launches the Apollo manned space programme

1962
• USA: orbit the Earth. Also Telstar, the world’s first communications satellite, goes on air
HOW CLOSE TO WAR WAS THE WORLD IN THE 1960S?

Relations between the USA and USSR became more and more tense as the nuclear arms race continued.

CUBA AND THE USSR

Cuba was only 160km from the coast of Florida, giving it great strategic importance in the Cold War.

Before 1959 Cuba was a poor country controlled largely by American business. Cuba had been ruled by the dictator Batista since 1934, but his cruel reign ended in 1959 by guerrillas led by Fidel Castro.

Castro nationalised all foreign-owned land, property and oil refineries. In January 1960 he made an alliance with the USSR, who promised to buy Cuba’s sugar (the USA bought Cuba’s sugar cane in Batista’s rule). The Americans did not like this arrangement. In October 1960 they stopped all trade with Cuba – they now had an enemy on their doorstep.

THE BAY OF PIGS 1961

Kennedy was persuaded by the CIA that Castro could be overthrown by supporters of Batista. So these rebels, backed by the Americans, landed at the Bay of Pigs (Cuba’s south coast) in April 1961. The attack was a total disaster! The rebels received no local Cuban support and were defeated in a few days. Kennedy was embarrassed and realised he had been wrongly advised.

THE USSR ARMS CUBA

Castro was now certain the USA was Cuba’s enemy so he looked to the USSR for more support.

In December 1961, he publicly declared himself a communist. This declaration convinced the USA that Cuba was a Soviet satellite state.

The Americans launched ‘operation mongoose’ – a plan to replace Castro as ruler of Cuba by October 1962. To do this the Americans considered many options:

1. Sabotage: disrupt the Cuban govt and economy by attacking key installations e.g. railway bridges
2. Assassination of Castro
3. Blowing up an American plane and blaming Cuba – using this as an excuse to invade

Cuba depended on the Soviet Union for military protection. In June 1962 Castro began to receive shipments of Soviet arms e.g. aircraft and ground-to-air missiles.

In September Castro received medium-range offensive nuclear missiles and bomber planes. The Americans knew about these weapons but the Soviets insisted these were defensive. On 14th October 1962, U-2 planes photographed Soviet missiles on launch pads in Cuba. This proved that the Soviets had lied. The missiles had a range of around 4000 km – so most large American cities could be hit. Nuclear destruction lay only a matter of minutes away. And more ships were reported to be on the way to Cuba from the USSR!

N.B USA had NATO bases in Turkey, near the Soviet Union.
THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

KENNEDY AND KHRUSHCHEV

Kennedy was elected as president because he had promised to get tough on the communists. But so far he had done anything but. He had been bullied by Khrushchev at the Vienna summit in June 1961 over Berlin, and in August 1961 Kennedy did not stop the Berlin Wall.

Different views of Khrushchev's actions:

- Some believe that Khrushchev was testing how strong Kennedy was and how far he was prepared to go to by placing missiles in Cuba. Also that he was trying to establish Soviet supremacy over the Americans.
- He was simply helping Cuba to defend itself from a possible attack by the USA

KENNEDY RESPONDS

Kennedy gathered around him advisers who were in contact during the 13-day crisis. The advisers presented 7 alternative ways of dealing with the crisis:

1. Allow the USSR to keep its bases on Cuba
2. Make a diplomatic protest to the USSR
3. Discuss the missiles directly with Castro
4. Place a naval blockade around Cuba
5. Bomb Cuba with non-nuclear weapons
6. Invade Cuba and seize the bases
7. Launch a nuclear attack on Cuba

1+2: USA would appear like it was backing down.
3: Castro was unlikely to negotiate after the Bay of Pigs
4: best option!
5, 6 + 7: would cost too many lives and risk nuclear war

On 22nd October 1962 Kennedy announced his plan. The blockade would be enforced by the US navy.

THE WORLD HOLDS ITS BREATH

On 24th October the first Soviet ships carrying missiles encountered the American ships blockading Cuba.

If Khrushchev ordered his ships to defy the blockade, he would risk starting a nuclear war. He ordered his ships to return. The Americans continued to insist that the Soviets dismantle the missile sites in Cuba. Meanwhile several incidents occurred which could have sparked a war:

- An American U-2 plane was shot down over Cuba
- A Soviet ship was boarded and inspected by US naval officers, and found to contain nuclear bomb parts. Because of this some people recommended an attack on Cuba, but the president disagreed.

On 26th and 27th October Khrushchev sent 2 letters to Kennedy. In the first he offered to remove the missile sites if Kennedy called off the blockade and promised to not invade Cuba. The second demanded the USA withdraw missiles which were in Turkey.

Kennedy replied to the first letter and accepted the terms. On 28th October the Soviet govt agreed to remove its missiles from Cuba. Secretly Kennedy agreed to withdraw his missiles from Turkey. The crisis was over.
On 3rd November 1962, the missiles began to be withdrawn. The Americans called off their blockade on 20th November.

RESULTS OF THE CRISIS

1. It gave the world a shock: for a fortnight the superpowers had been on the brink of a nuclear conflict.
2. Kennedy: publicly he claimed victory. He had stood up to the Soviets and forced them to back down. His prestige in the West increased.
3. Khrushchev: he was the real winner. He had secured the safety of communist Cuba and got rid of American missiles in Turkey.
4. Helped to stabilise East-West relations: in June 1963 a ‘hot line’ was set up between Moscow and Washington so that the leaders could discuss matters directly and avoid other crises.
5. Moves to control the arms race: Test Ban Treaty of 1963
6. European allies were shocked at how little they were consulted during the emergency. It seemed that their opinions weren’t as important as the Americans: de Gaulle (French PM) pulled France out of NATO and encouraged others to do the same.
7. Chinese weren’t impressed by Khrushchev as he had looked cowardly: encouraged the Chinese to follow an independent line of their own in world politics.

N.B Brezhnev becomes new Soviet leader and replaces Khrushchev in October 1964

CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1968

Czechoslovakia was a Soviet satellite state since 1948. The Czechoslovakian people felt bitter about this as:

1. They had lost their political and economic independence
2. They remembered how they had been a democracy before WW2
3. Little consumer goods were being produced
4. Their country seemed to be run only for the benefit of the Soviet Union

DUBCEK AND THE PRAGUE SPRING

Protests grew throughout the 1960s.

In January 1968 the demands for change brought Dubcek to power as Czechoslovakia’s new leader. He began to introduce changes during a period known as the Prague Spring. Dubcek promised his people ‘socialism with a human face’. He hoped to increase the standard of living in Czechoslovakia and aimed to make the political system more democratic.

1. He allowed different factories to compete with one another
2. He wanted to increase trade with the West
3. He wanted to borrow funds from the USA to restructure Czechoslovakian industry
4. He proposed to abolish censorship of the press
5. He proposed to allow free travel abroad

Dubcek was mindful of what happened in Hungary in 1956, so tried to reassure Brezhnev that his reforms would not threaten the security of the Soviet Union. He promised that Czechoslovakia would not leave the Warsaw Pact.
THE SOVIETS RESPOND

Brezhnev was unconvinced by Dubček’s reassurances and concerned by knock-on effects. Brezhnev was influenced by other Warsaw Pact countries esp. East Germany which saw increased freedom in Czechoslovakia as a direct threat to their own regime.

On 3rd August 1968 Brezhnev announced the Brezhnev Doctrine: the Soviet Union promised to intervene if any communist state appeared to be abandoning communism. On the same day Czechoslovakian hard-liners presented Brezhnev with a letter asking him to intervene in Czechoslovakia.

On 20th August 1968, 500,000 troops from the Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovaks wanted to avoid bloodshed. Prague radio instructed people to carry out passive resistance. As a result most resistance was non-violent – demonstrations and sit-ins. Secret radio and television stations kept the outside world informed until they were silenced. Only a few Czechoslovaks died during the invasion. January 1969: a Prague student, Jan Palach, set fire to himself in protest against the Soviets.

Eventually the Soviets crushed the resistance. Dubček was forced to abandon his reform programme an dhe was expelled from the Communist Party. Husak was appointed as the new leader, returning to the old ways.

RESULTS

1. Damaged East-West relations slightly: the West had welcomed Dubček’s reforms and watched the invasion with horror; but weren’t prepared to intervene and risk a war.
2. Showed that the Soviet Union would not allow any political reform or opposition.
3. Showed that the West was powerless to stop the Soviet Union doing as it pleased between the Iron Curtain.
4. Relations between USSR and China deteriorated as the Chinese disliked the way it treated other communist countries

THE ARMS RACE

The arms race during the 1960s was based on deterrence – that an enemy would not attack as it would be deterred by that country’s weapons. The arms race was costly and made the world a highly dangerous place.

- March: a Disarmament Conference opened in Geneva. It had some success...
- August: Test Ban Treaty signed. this agreement banned the testing of nuclear weapons in the air or under water.
- 17th October: a UN resolution banned countries putting nuclear weapons in space.
- 187 countries signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This limited nuclear weapons to the five existing nuclear powers (USA, USSR, UK, China and France)
The USA came up with terrifying proposals e.g. a manned orbiting military space station but these projects were dismissed as they were too costly.

**THE SPACE RACE**

The space race was an important feature of the Cold War as it gave the superpowers an opportunity to beat one another, and the developed technology could also be used in the arms race.

In the early 1960s the USSR dominated the space race, but the USA overtook the USSR due to greater financial resources in the latter 1960s.

- **1961**
  - Kennedy sets NASA the task of landing a man on the moon before the end of the decade. His goal was 'mastery of space'.

- **1963**
  - USSR sent the first woman into space

- **1964**
  - USSR make the first flight without space suits

- **1965**
  - USSR makes the first spacewalk

- **1968**
  - Race to the moon!
  - USA complete the first manned orbit of the moon

- **1969**
  - USA land the first man on the moon (Armstrong on 21st July) - defining moment of 20th century

Other achievements were the Mariner probes developed by the USA, which were sent to Venus and Mars – completing theories about these planets.
WHY DID DÉTENTE COLLAPSE IN THE 1970S AND 1980S?

DÉTENTE

During the early 1970s, the USA and USSR came to accept each other’s areas of influence in the world, and both wanted to improve international relations.

PRESSURE FOR DÉTENTE IN THE USSR

- Brezhnev was keen to extend Peaceful Co-existence (Khrushchev’s policy)
- Brezhnev wanted to persuade the West to accept Soviet control of Eastern Europe
- The USSR had now caught up in the nuclear arms race with the USA, so didn’t need to spend a lot of money on arms. They could spend this money improving the low standards in the communist bloc
- The Iron Curtain countries had very poor industrial efficiency and needed to trade with the West
- The USSR had quarrelled with China and needed better relations with the USA

PRESSURE FOR DÉTENTE IN THE USA

The Americans had lots of problems themselves, and didn’t want to fight an international Cold War.

- Stagflation: rising inflation and economic stagnation. This along with the Vietnam War and arms race was crippling the US economy.
- Failure in the Vietnam War: dented confidence and produced a huge peace campaign. This campaign was particular popular with the members of the America’s black Civil Rights Movement.

THE BEGINNINGS OF DÉTENTE

Nixon = US president // Henry Kissinger = US secretary of state (foreign minister)

Both Nixon and Kissinger were keen to improve relations with the USSR and also China. So Nixon announced the Nixon Doctrine. The US would stick to its treaty obligations and would continue to hold a ‘nuclear umbrella’ over the free world. But it expected its allies to take care of their own defence.

The leaders of the USA and USSR began to meet with each other. In 1972 Nixon went to Moscow – the first visit to the Soviet Union by a US president since 1945. In 1974 Brezhnev returned the visit and went to Washington DC.

In 1972 East and West Germany signed agreements to recognise each other’s borders – removing tension between the superpowers. This also helped trade links to develop between the USA and USSR.

Relations between the USA and China improved. In 1971 the USA agreed that China should be allowed to join the United Nations. Then the US table tennis team visited China, opening the way for meetings between both sides. In 1972 Nixon visited China.
There was also co-operation in space. In July 1975 three US astronauts and two Soviet cosmonauts docked their spacecraft together while in orbit around the Earth. This was a very visible sign of détente.

SALT I 1972

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks began in 1969 and produced the Salt 1 agreement in 1972. This agreement ran for five years. It limited the number of ICBMs and ABMs (anti-ballistic missiles) both superpowers could hold. Each side used spy satellites to check the other side was not breaking the terms. Although SALT 1 did not reduce existing stocks of weapons, it was seen as a huge achievement at the time.

HELSINKI AGREEMENT 1975

In August 1975, 35 countries (incl. USA and USSR) signed the Helsinki Agreement in the Finnish capital (Helsinki).

1. The West recognised the frontiers of Western Europe and acknowledged Soviet influence in that area.
   a. West Germany officially recognised East Germany
2. The Soviets agreed to buy US grain and to export oil to the West.
3. All countries agreed to improve human rights, particularly:
   a. Freedom of speech
   b. Freedom of religion
   c. Freedom of movement

RESULTS

1. People in Eastern Europe formed groups to campaign for further freedoms
   a. Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia
   b. Helsinki Watch Group in Helsinki and East Germany
2. Economic consequences in the Eastern bloc: communist governments could borrow from the West.
   By the 1980s most were hugely in debt.

N.B Carter becomes new US president in 1977 (same year as SALT I agreement ended)

CRITICISMS OF DÉTENTE

After the mid-1970s there were signs that détente was falling apart...

- West became frustrated as the Soviet Union were still abusing human rights
- In the Easter bloc, dissidents (those who completely disagreed with the government, even over issues like street lamps) were prosecuted and suppressed.
  o People in Charter 77: fired from work, children expelled from school, citizenship and driving licenses cancelled.
- Brezhnev cancelled an agreement in which the USA tried to get human rights for Soviet Jews
- Suspensions whether each side was keeping to the terms of SALT 1.
  o In fact both sides were positioning more and more missiles against each other.

SALT II 1977-79

SALT I ended in 1977. Carter attempted to achieve further arms reductions in the SALT II talks. However Carter annoyed Brezhnev by trying to talk about human rights in a discussion about arms reduction. An agreement
was finally reached in 1979. But this agreement never came into force, as the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan! This shattered any hopes that détente would continue.

AFGHANISTAN 1979

SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

(Brezhnev still Soviet leader)

Afghanistan was a poor and barren land. But is had an important location! It offered a route between the oil-rich Middle East and the Soviet Union. Afghanistan had been under Soviet influence since 1947 but the USA also gave aid to the country.

In January in 1979, there was a revolution in the neighbouring town of Iran. The shah (king) was overthrown by fundamentalist Muslims. The revolution was anti-American. In November 1979, 53 US hostages were seized and held for over a year. The Soviets were also worried about this revolution.

Afghanistan had an unstable government. In 1979 Hafizullah Amin seized power and named himself president. Amin was a communist, but was not friendly with the Soviet Union. Also he was opposed by Muslim groups in the country. The Soviet Union feared that these Muslim groups would take control of Afghanistan and set up an Islamic state, like they had done in Iran. Large Muslim populations lived in areas of the Soviet Union that bordered Afghanistan – this could have knock-on effects.

THE USSR INVADES


REATIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Brezhnev claimed that:

- The invasion was needed in order to restore order in Afghanistan.
The troops had entered on request of the Afghan government, which wanted protection.

The troops would be withdrawn as soon as the situation stabilised.

China reacted angrily – it promised to support the Mujaheddin, the Afghan fighters waging guerrilla warfare against the Soviet troops.

But the Americans reacted angrily (even though they claimed they had purposefully tricked the Soviets to invade in order to give them ‘their own Vietnam War’.). Carter described the invasion as a threat to world peace. Actions by the Americans:

1. In January 1980 Carter pulled the USA out of the upcoming Moscow Olympics
   a. Describing the Soviet Union as an ‘unsuitable state for a festival meant to celebrate peace and good will’.
2. Carter advised the US senate not to confirm the SALT II agreement
3. He sent a US navy task force to the Arabian Sea to protect oil routes out of the Middle East
4. He cut trade between the USA and USSR - the exports of grain, technological goods...

Soviet Union denounced the USA as an ‘absolutely unreliable partner, whose leadership is capable – at any moment – of cancelling treaties and agreements’.

Détenê had totally collapsed!

THE RENEWED COLD WAR

Reagan was elected as the new US president in January 1981. He was elected as he had a tough anti-communist stance; referring to the Soviet Union as ‘that evil empire’. He believed that Carter had been too soft on the Soviets.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WEAPONS

Reagan actively began a new Cold War.

- He increased the USA’s defence spending from $178 billion in 1981 to $367 billion in 1986
- New weapons, e.g. the cruise missile, were developed
  - NATO agreed that 464 cruise missiles should be positioned in Western Europe
- In 1981 USA developed the neutron bomb – which was a lot more powerful
- The Americans were also developing the MX missile, which could be fired from underground launch sites

THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE (SDI)

In 1983 US scientists began working in the SDI. This project was informally named ‘Star Wars’. The aim was to prevent Soviet nuclear missiles from reaching US targets by creating a huge laser shield in space.

In 1982 meetings between the USA and USSR resumed under the banner of START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks). Reagan demanded huge cuts in Soviet nuclear capability. In response, the Soviets pulled out of the
talks. Reagan’s statements were very aggressive – this terrified the Soviets into thinking he was preparing the US to fight a war with them.

SOLIDARITY IN POLAND

The solidarity movement in Poland can mark as two things:

1. A factor in the collapse of détente
2. Also marked the beginning of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe

CHALLENGES OF POLAND

1. Much of Poland had been ruled by Russia since the 18th century: most Poles were proud of their nation and disliked communism
2. WW2 increased the Poles’ hatred for Soviet Russia: Stalin had carved their country up with Hitler in 1939. In 1940 Stalin massacred thousands of Polish Army officers
3. Most Poles were Catholics: the Catholic Church was well-organised and encouraged Polish nationalism
4. Ordinary Polish people had more power than in other communist countries: polish farmers held on to their own farms. Among Polish factory workers there was a strong tradition of using strikes against the government

THE BIRTH OF SOLIDARITY
High prices and food and fuel shortages

Protest movements emerged in 1980

Shipyard workers in Gdansk went on strike - led by Lech Walesa

Walesa created Solidarity, the first free trade union in the whole Soviet system

Unrest developed into nationwide strikes. Solidarity soon had a membership of 9 million

The Polish government was losing grip - many feared a Soviet invasion

The invasion did not happen. Soviet troops carried out 'training manoeuvres' near the Polish border

The communist Polish government had a new leader General Jaruzelski. He imposed martial law (rule by the army) in 1981. 10,000 political opponents of the government, including Walesa, were arrested. Solidarity was declared as an illegal organisation.

Pope John Paul II (leader of the Roman Catholic Church) was a Pole. In 1982 he met Reagan. Together they discussed how to destroy communism in Poland. Reagan gave lots of money to Solidarity. The pope encouraged the Poles, who were mostly Catholic, to speak out. Catholic priests worked as informants for the CIA.

Jaruzelski’s attempts to destroy Solidarity failed! Walesa was put in prison, but this seemed to make him an even bigger hero. In November 1982 Walesa was released from prison and in 1983 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

WHY DID COMMUNISM COLLAPSE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE?
SOVIET FAILURE IN AFGHANISTAN

After the first few months in 1980, Soviet troops controlled the towns where they were based. But the Mujaheddin controlled the countryside. The Mujaheddin were fighting to get rid of the Soviet troops AND turn Afghanistan into a Muslim state. The Mujaheddin were well equipped as China and the USA had given them weapons.

The Soviets were in the same position as the Americans had been in the Vietnam War. Though they were a superpower with modern technology, they couldn’t win a guerrilla war. The Mujaheddin attacked Soviet supply routes and shot down helicopters. The Soviets suffered more and more. They only succeeded in propping up the unpopular communist government in Kabul. There were 125,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan by the early 1980s, yet they still couldn’t defeat the Mujaheddin. In 1982 a massive attack in the Panjahir Valley failed against the Mujaheddin.

The Soviet Union also faced hostility from other Muslim nations, like Pakistan. The Soviets worried that the 30 million Muslims in the Soviet Union might revolt in support of the Mujaheddin.

N.B Gorbachev = new Soviet leader in 1985

Gorbachev realised that the USSR couldn’t win this war. In 1987 he started talks with the USA and they came to an agreement in 1988 at Geneva. The last Soviet troops left Afghanistan in February 1989.

The Soviet war was disastrous for Afghanistan:

- 3 million Afghan refugees fled to Pakistan or Iran
- 1 million people died
- After the departure of the Soviets, fighting continued between rival Afghan groups
- Afghans who remained suffered from food shortages – war had destroyed farm land

THE END OF THE COLD WAR: MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

The Soviet leadership was weak in the early 1980s. Everyone kept on dying!

- Brezhnev died in 1982
- Next leader was Andropov, died in 1984
- Then Chernenko, died 1985
- GORBACHEV TOOK OVER!

Gorbachev became the new Soviet leader in 1985. He was the youngest (54!) to hold power since Stalin. Gorbachev appeared to be open to new ideas and was keen to see progress, both within the Soviet Union and with international relations.
WEAKNESSES IN THE SOVIET BLOC

The West did not realise this, but the Soviet bloc was on the edge of disaster...

1. The Soviets were spending too much money on the military: the arms race and war in Afghanistan drained the money. Around 25% of Soviet GNP was being spent on the military
2. Soviet industry was inefficient: it was still being run along Stalinist lines, but without the fear and terror, the workers weren’t meeting the targets and there was a lot of corruption. Some party officials were making money themselves by selling raw materials on the black market instead of directing it towards the factories.
   a. Quantity and quality of USSR’s industrial output fell
3. They were in debt, due to massive borrowing during détente
4. The Soviet bloc was very polluted due to outdated technology and carelessness: overuse of water for irrigation had caused the Aral Sea to dry up.
   a. 1986, a nuclear accident at Chernobyl showed how derelict Soviet industry had become
5. Discontent throughout the Soviet bloc: low standard of living in comparison to West, food shortages and long queues for basic goods. Yet Communist Party officials lived in luxury!
6. People fed up with repressive regimes in the Iron Curtain countries:
   a. Yet despite suppression, protest groups (Charter 77 and the Helsinki Watch...) managed to produce samizdat (home-published) pamphlets and secret radio broadcasts
7. Whole Soviet bloc gripped by defeatism: alcoholism (lots of soldiers returning from Afghanistan were alcoholics), no hope for the future – government simply going through the motions.

NEW SOVIET POLICIES

Many people believed that the communist system could not be changed, but Gorbachev felt there had to be changes. He knew that these changes would anger some Communist Party members. The two most famous policies he introduced were:

❖ Perestroika, meaning restructuring.
   o Involved changing economic policies to allow more competition
   o Foreigners were given more freedom to become involved in the Soviet economy
   o Soviet businesses were given the freedom to base what and how much they produced on consumer demand
   o Businesses had to pay for themselves through profit rather than relying on govt money
❖ Glasnost, meaning openness.
   o It involved restoring faith in government and ending corruption
   o Gorbachev believed that people should not be punished simply for disagreeing with government policies – there should be more open debate
   o Glasnost should not only be adopted within the Soviet Union, but also with the West

Additionally Gorbachev:

❖ Believed that the Soviet Union would have to cut back its global commitments
❖ Saw the need to abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine by loosening Soviet control over satellite states
❖ Aimed to cut military spending and pull out of Afghanistan

THE USA RESPONDS
Reagan relaxed his anti-Soviet position when he saw these reforms. He also saw that cuts in arms expenditure was essential – if the USSR was going to do it, he felt it was safe for the USA to do the same.

Reagan and Gorbachev met several times during the 1980s:

- In Geneva in November 1985: both agreed in principle to cut offensive weapons by 50%
- At a summit meeting in Iceland, in 1986: only partially successful. USA refused to give up its SDI. But the USSR confirmed it was withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan. The USSR also promised to test more nuclear weapons unless the USA did so
- December 1987: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) called for the dismantling of all American and Soviet medium and short-range nuclear weapons


In 1989, Gorbachev’s popularity was at its height! In October he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In December he and George Bush met to announce the end of the Cold War.

THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM: REFORM IN THE SOVIET UNION

Many people who had been imprisoned for disagreeing with communism were released. Others were allowed to return from exile abroad - one famous example is Andrei Sakharov a renowned physicist and human rights campaigner.

As a result of economic changes in 1987, people could now buy and sell for profit for the first time since Stalin had come to power.

However hard-line communists were horrified at what Gorbachev was doing:

- They said he was stirring up trouble
- They also condemned him for raising the expectations of the Soviet people (which was right)

Once Gorbachev had allowed freedom of speech, many people now openly said they wanted to get rid of communism – this was especially strong in Eastern Europe.

TROUBLE IN EASTERN EUROPE

During the 1980s the communist countries of Eastern Europe became increasingly discontented with control from Moscow. In Poland, the trade union Solidarity won considerable support. In protests in Hungary in 1986, protesters waved the Hungarian flag.

In March 1989, Gorbachev told the Eastern European countries that the Red Army would no longer protect them. It was clear to ordinary Eastern Europeans that Soviet tanks would not be used to put down demonstrations.
After troubles in Hungary in early 1989, it was agreed that other political parties could be formed. Far from protecting the Hungarian communists, Gorbachev began withdrawing Soviet troops from the country.

Suddenly the Soviet bloc disintegrated.

**HUNGARY**

In May 1989 the govt dismantled the border with non-Communist Austria.

In December 1989 the govt announced free elections for 1990, which were won by a coalition of Nationalists and Catholics.

**POLAND**

In June 1989 free elections were held – Solidarity won nearly all the seats.

In December 1990 Walesa became the first non-communist leader in Eastern Europe!

**EAST GERMANY**

By September 1989, thousands of East Germans had moved to West Germany through the new 'hole' in the Iron Curtain between Hungary and Austria – this made a mockery of the Berlin Wall.

The East German leader was forced to resign when his soldiers refused to fire on the protestors.

On 10th November 1989 the Berlin Wall was torn down!

Free elections were held in March 1990.

East and West Germany were united in October 1990.

**CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

In November 1989, there were mass protests encouraged by Dubcek and the playwright Havel.

In December 1989, the communist govt resigned, and Havel became president.

Free elections were held in 1990; the Communist Party polled only 14% of the votes.

**ROMANIA**

In December 1989, the hated communist dictator Ceausescu and his wife were executed. This was the only country where there was fighting.

**BULGARIA**

In November 1989 the leader Zhirkov resigned. The Communist Party abandoned communism and renamed itself the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

Free elections were held in 1990, which were won by BSP.

**ALBANIA**
Albania had been the most closed Communist country in Europe – it moved more slowly away from Communism.

Free elections were held in 1992.

A democratic constitution was introduced in 1998.

**THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION**

In 1990 the three Baltic states, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, declared independence from the Soviet Union – these were not just Soviet satellites; they had been part of the USSR itself.

People were fed up with Gorbachev:

- Felt he had done too little to stop the fall of communism in Eastern Europe – saw this as an act of weakness
- The economic reforms, perestroika, he had introduced had had no immediate effect: still food shortages and rising prices

Other Russians wanted the complete collapse of the communist system. In February 1990, 250,000 people demonstrated against the communists in Moscow. In the annual May Day parade in Moscow’s Red Square, Gorbachev was booed!

In August 1991, hard-line communists led a coup against Gorbachev. They imprisoned him in his own dacha (country home) in the Crimea. To seemed as though the USSR was about to return to the bad old days, when reform movements were stamped out by the communists.

Yeltsin wanted to destroy Soviet communism.

However Boris Yeltsin, the new president of the Russian Republic, led a demonstration against the coup. He insisted that reform had to continue in order for Russia to be saved. Yeltsin was seen as hero who would save Russia from a slide back into communism repression. He was also seen as the man with the power.

Yeltsin went on to disband (definition: cause an organised group to break up) the Soviet Communist Party. Yeltsin wanted to destroy Soviet communism.

He formally ended the USSR in December 1991! Later in the same month, Gorbachev resigned as Soviet president (there was no longer a Soviet Union for him to be president for!). The communist red flag that flew over Kremlin was lowered for the last time.