



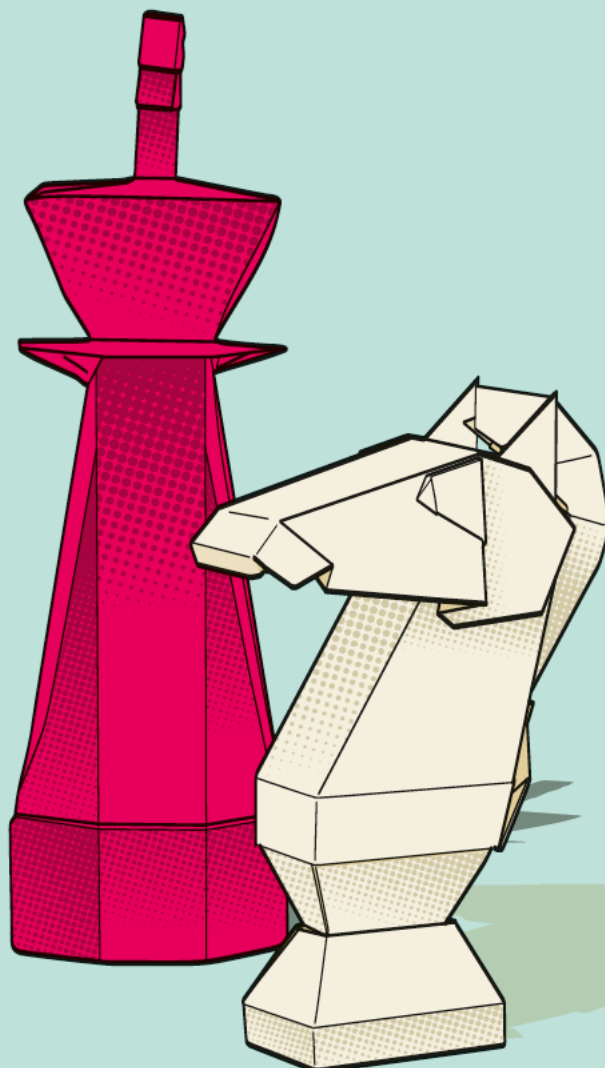
Pearson
Revise

Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1)

History

**Superpower relations and the
Cold War, 1941–91**

Revision Guide & Workbook + App





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Cold War, 1941–91**

Revision Guide & Workbook + App

Series Consultant: Harry Smith

Author: Brian Dowse

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The beginning of the Cold War

Before the Cold War Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union worked together as members of the Grand Alliance, which was created in 1941 to defeat Nazi Germany. The leaders of these countries met three times: at Tehran (1943), Yalta (1945) and Potsdam (1945).



Britain – a democracy led by Churchill – had been at war with Germany since 1939.



The USA – a democracy led by Roosevelt – had been at war with Germany and Japan since December 1941.



The Soviet Union – a communist one-party state led by Stalin – had been at war with Germany since 1941.

The Grand Alliance therefore was a 'marriage of convenience', in which three countries shared the aim of defeating their common enemy – Nazi Germany.

The Tehran Conference

(November–December 1943)

- ✓ The USA and Britain agreed to open up a second front by invading Nazi-occupied Europe.
- ✓ The Soviet Union would declare war on Japan once Germany was defeated.
- ✓ The boundaries of Poland would be moved westwards; Poland would gain territory from Germany and lose it to the Soviet Union.
- ✓ It was also agreed that an international body would be set up to settle future disputes between countries. This set the scene for the establishment of the United Nations.

The Yalta Conference

(February 1945)

- ✓ Germany, when defeated, would be reduced in size, divided and demilitarised. It would have to pay reparations.
- ✓ Europe would be rebuilt along the lines of the Atlantic Charter. Countries would have democratic elections.
- ✓ The UN (United Nations) would be set up.
- ✓ The Soviet Union would declare war on Japan once Germany was defeated.
- ✓ Poland would be in the 'Soviet sphere of influence' but run on a broader democratic basis.

The Potsdam Conference

(July–August 1945)

- ✓ A Council of Foreign Ministers was set up to organise the rebuilding of Europe.
- ✓ The Nazi Party was banned and war criminals were to be prosecuted.
- ✓ Germany was to be reduced in size and divided into four zones of occupation run by Britain, France, the USA and the Soviet Union.
- ✓ Berlin was also to be divided up into zones of occupation.
- ✓ The Soviet Union was to receive 25% of the output from the other three occupied zones.

The outcomes of the conferences

Remember: while Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union were able to work together to defeat Germany, who had surrendered in May 1945, tension was increasing between the wartime allies. Differences were beginning to emerge over the future of Germany and Eastern Europe. Moreover, Roosevelt's death had led to Truman becoming president and he was much more distrustful of the Soviet Union.

Students often confuse what happened at these conferences. Make sure you know the differences and the similarities between them.

Now try this

- 1 Explain what was agreed at the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences.
- 2 Draw up a timeline of the key events involving the Grand Alliance between November 1943 and July 1945.

Remember to get the events in the right order and to use detail.

The end of the Grand Alliance

Truman, Stalin and Churchill were the leaders of the USA, the Soviet Union and Britain when the war against Germany ended in 1945.

Europe should be democratic – a capitalist democracy. Roosevelt believed that democracy meant different political parties working to win voters' support in free elections.

Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin meeting in Yalta in 1945.

What should happen to Germany? Germany should be rebuilt.



What should happen to Germany? Germany should have to pay reparations, ensuring that it is never strong enough to start another war.

Europe should be democratic – a communist democracy. Stalin believed that because only communism truly represented the workers, democracies could only be communist.

The USA was the first to build an atomic bomb, which gave it an unbeatable advantage (until 1949, when the Soviet Union caught up).

The Soviet Union didn't do what it said it would do in Poland: the government was supposed to include multiple political parties, but actually was only a communist democracy.

After Germany surrendered in May 1945, the Grand Alliance started to come to an end. Roosevelt was the key figure in holding the Alliance together. He believed that the United States could work with the Soviet Union after the war came to an end through the United Nations. His successor, Truman, was, like Churchill, more suspicious of the Soviet Union and this increased tension between the Allies.

The end of the Grand Alliance

The USA dropped atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945. This gave them a huge military advantage over other countries.

Roosevelt was prepared to work with Stalin but he died in April 1945 and was replaced by Truman.

Stalin disliked the way in which Truman had tried to push him around at Potsdam in 1945.

Truman trusted Stalin much less, as he had broken the promises he made over Poland at Yalta. He felt that, thanks to the atomic bomb, he could push Stalin around at the Potsdam Conference.

Increased tension between the superpowers and the start of the cold war.

Britain had finished on the winning side in 1945 but was economically exhausted by the war. It was therefore unable to stand up to the Soviet Union on its own and became only an ally of the United States. The Cold War therefore became increasingly about the relationship between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Now try this

- 1 Explain how Roosevelt's death increased tension between the USA and the Soviet Union.
- 2 The Soviet Union said communism could be democratic, too. What was the Western criticism of communist democracy?

The breakdown of trust

Without a common enemy to fight, tensions between the USA and the Soviet Union intensified. Neither side trusted the other due to ideological differences and the fact that the USA, unlike the Soviet Union, possessed nuclear weapons.

Ideology

Understanding ideology – a set of political ideas about how society should be run – is key to understanding the Cold War. The USA and the Soviet Union had opposing ideologies.

The USA, Britain and other capitalist countries

Said communism enslaved people to the state. Capitalism was based on freedom and democracy:

- Everyone should be free to make money for themselves.
- Individuals are better at deciding what to make/sell than the state.
- Trade between countries makes everyone richer.

The Soviet Union and other communist countries

Said capitalism exploited the workers to make the rich even richer. Communism was based on fairness:

- Capitalism only makes some people rich by exploiting everyone else.
- Individuals are not as strong as everyone working together for the same aim.
- The state should take control of the economy and run it to benefit everyone.

The Long Telegram (1946)

A secret report from the US ambassador Kennan in Moscow to President Truman said:

- the Soviet Union saw capitalism as a threat to communism that had to be destroyed
- the Soviet Union was building its military power
- peace between a communist Soviet Union and a capitalist USA was not possible.

Novikov's Telegram (1946)

A report from Novikov, Soviet ambassador to the USA, told Stalin that:

- the USA wanted world domination and was building up its military strength
- the Soviet Union was the only country left after the war that could stand up to the USA
- the USA was preparing its people for war with the Soviet Union.

Ideological differences and the atomic bomb had made relations between the superpowers worse. The USA saw the Soviet Union as a threat to its economic interests in Europe. The Soviet Union feared and resented the USA's nuclear monopoly, which did not end until 1949.

Now try this

- 1 Create a table with two columns, one for capitalism and the other for communism. Then, insert any words that relate to either, matching words by their opposing term (e.g. capitalism: individual / communism: collective).
- 2 Now answer the following questions in the light of the table you have just created:
 - (a) What was communism's main criticism of capitalism?
 - (b) What was capitalism's main criticism of communism?
- 3 Why did trust between the USA and the Soviet Union decrease between 1945 and 1947?

Creating lists like this will enable you to understand key terms and topics and draw conclusions about them.

Satellite states

Between 1947 and 1949, the Soviet Union spread its sphere of influence to neighbouring countries. Countries like Poland and Hungary became 'satellite states' under the control of the Soviet Union.

Communism and 'free' elections

- At the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the Soviet Union agreed to free elections in the countries in its sphere of influence.
- However, elections were fixed to make sure the Communist Party won and non-communists were removed from government.
- Once in control, the communists shut down the opposition parties and each country became a single-party state.

Fixing elections and then shutting down opposition parties was known as 'salami tactics'.



- Land taken by Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War
- Soviet-controlled communist countries
- Non Soviet-controlled communist countries

Soviet expansion in Europe, 1945–48.

The growing Soviet influence in Eastern Europe

Country	How it became communist
Bulgaria	A communist government was elected in 1945, and all elected non-communists were executed.
Romania	A communist-led coalition took power. However, by 1947 the communists had taken over and Romania became a one-party state.
Poland	At Yalta Stalin promised to set up a joint communist/non-communist government. He then invited 16 non-communist leaders to Moscow and arrested them. Thousands of non-communists were arrested. The communists then 'won' the 1947 election.
Hungary	The communists lost the 1945 election but the communist leader Rakosi took control of the secret police, executed and imprisoned his opponents and turned Hungary into a communist state.
Czechoslovakia	Edward Benes set up a coalition government. However, the communists retained control of the army, the radio and the secret police. In 1948 they seized power completely, turning the country into a communist state.
East Germany	The original Soviet zone of occupation in Germany, it became a communist state in October 1949.

The impact of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe on superpower relations

- The USA saw the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe as a betrayal of the Yalta agreement, in which Stalin had made promises about holding democratic elections.
- Others saw it as evidence of Soviet expansion: Eastern Europe was a stepping-stone to a Soviet takeover of Western Europe.
- The USA was determined to contain communism through military and economic assistance: the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid.
- The Soviet Union argued it needed to control Eastern Europe as a buffer zone, protecting it from attack by the West. The US response was unnecessary and unreasonable.

Now try this

Describe how Stalin was able to gain control of Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1950.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

In response to the spread of Soviet control in Eastern Europe, the USA stepped up its involvement in Europe, and the Soviet Union was determined to defend itself against any threats from the West. The USA was determined to stop the spread of communism, and the Soviet Union was determined to defend itself against Western attack. Europe was the centre of this ideological 'battleground'. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan thus increased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Truman's concerns

- Europe was devastated after the war.
- In many countries people had no money, no jobs and were feeling hopeless.
- Communism was attractive to these people, especially in France and Italy: it made sure everyone had enough.
- Many in Eastern Europe had been liberated from Nazi rule by the Soviets.
- Countries like Poland, Romania and Bulgaria had already had communist governments forced on them and Truman feared this could happen in other countries too.
- Some governments (e.g. Greece and Turkey) were too poor to combat communist revolutions in their own countries.
- If Greece and Turkey became communist, then other countries across Europe and the Middle East would follow. This was known as the Domino Theory.



Post-war Berlin. Much of Europe had been destroyed during the war. Many people were homeless and starving. Truman feared that this could lead to people electing communist governments.

The Truman Doctrine (1947)

In a speech in 1947, US President Truman set out why the USA should get involved:

- ✓ Countries faced a choice between either capitalism or communism.
- ✓ Communism was bad because it meant people could not be free.
- ✓ The USA must try to contain (hold back) this spread of communism.
- ✓ The USA should provide money and troops (if necessary) to help free governments to combat communist takeovers.

The Truman Doctrine was all about stopping the spread of communism. The USA was prepared to use both military and economic methods to prevent this from happening.

The Marshall Plan (1947)

- ✓ About \$13 billion from USA to help rebuild Europe.
- ✓ Communism appealed most to people with nothing to lose, so the Marshall Plan hoped to stop communism by giving people a stake in the capitalist system.
- ✓ Countries must trade with the USA to get the money.
- ✓ Sixteen Western European countries took the money including Britain, France and West Germany.
- ✓ The Soviet Union criticised the Marshall Plan as an attack on them because it threatened communist control in Eastern Europe.

Now try this

- 1 Explain **two** consequences of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.
- 2 Explain why the USA hoped that the Marshall Plan would combat the spread of communism.

Cominform, Comecon and NATO

The establishment of NATO in Western Europe matched the setting up of Cominform and Comecon in Eastern Europe.

Cominform

Cominform stood for the Communist Information Bureau. Stalin set it up in 1947. The bureau organised all the communist parties in Europe and arranged their leadership so they would do what Moscow told them to.

Key points:

- ✓ Cominform got rid of any opposition to the Soviet Union's control in satellite states.
- ✓ It encouraged communist parties in Western countries to block Marshall Plan assistance.

Comecon

Comecon stood for the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Stalin set it up in 1949. It was the Soviet Union's alternative to the Marshall Plan.

Key points:

- ✓ It built up trade links between Comecon countries.
- ✓ It also prevented Comecon countries signing up to the Marshall Plan.
- ✓ Comecon included the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Albania and, from 1950, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

Consequences

Western Europe was now in one camp. It was linked to the USA through the Marshall Plan and the US policy of containment of communism.



Eastern Europe was now in one camp. It was tied to the Soviet Union as satellite states and the Soviet Union believed socialist revolution would spread worldwide.

Europe was now divided into two spheres of influence: Western Europe (capitalist and pro-American) and Eastern Europe (communist and controlled by the Soviet Union). The line that divided these two spheres of influence was known as the Iron Curtain.

The North Atlantic Treaty

Organisation (NATO)

- ✓ NATO was set up in 1949. It was a military alliance made up of the United States, Britain, Canada, Holland, Belgium, France, Denmark and Norway. West Germany joined in 1955.
- ✓ NATO was a military alliance based around the principle of collective security; if one country was attacked other countries had to assist it.
- ✓ NATO was directed against a possible military attack from the Soviet Union on Western Europe.

The significance of NATO

- ✓ NATO showed that, after the Berlin Blockade and the Soviet Union's own development of the atomic bomb, neither the United States nor Western European governments were prepared to accept future Soviet aggression.
- ✓ The Soviet Union therefore turned to strengthening its control over Eastern Europe, resulting in the formation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955.
- ✓ There were now two military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, facing each other across the Iron Curtain.

Now try this

Why was Stalin so keen to prevent satellite countries getting money from the Marshall Plan?

Germany and the Cold War

The Allies were unable to agree about Germany's future. A short-term solution, agreed at Potsdam in July 1945, was to divide the country and its capital, Berlin, into zones of military occupation. The United States, Britain and France were given Western Germany and West Berlin. The Soviet Union was given Eastern Germany and East Berlin. The Soviet Union felt threatened by the USA's rebuilding of Western Germany and West Berlin.

Reunification

The USA wanted a united, capitalist Germany that it could trade with and would help prevent the spread of communism.

Division

The Soviet Union wanted Germany to be weak, communist and divided, so that it would never be able to attack the Soviet Union again.

Bizonia and Western Germany

- ✓ It made sense for British and US zones to join together, as it would be easier to administer. The area was called Bizonia and was included in the Marshall Plan. Later on the French zone of occupation was added to create 'West Germany'.
- ✓ This was *not* popular with the Soviet Union, as Stalin was not consulted. He thought Bizonia went against the agreements made at the Potsdam Conference, and he suspected the USA was aiming to permanently divide richer Western Germany from poorer Eastern Germany.

Eastern Germany and the Berlin Blockade

- ✓ The Soviet Union had 1.5 million troops in its zone, whereas the Western countries had sent most of their troops home.
- ✓ Eastern Germany grew almost all the food that West Berlin ate.
- ✓ Berlin was deep in Soviet-controlled Germany, and divided into US, British, French and Soviet zones.
- ✓ In June 1948 the Soviet Union closed all road, rail and canal links into West Berlin to force British, French and US troops to leave their zone in the city.
- ✓ The Soviet Union blocked all supplies into Berlin to show it had the power to stop a divided Germany working.

The Berlin Airlift

West Berlin couldn't last for many days without supplies. It looked like the Western powers would have to pull out of Berlin. That would look weak, undermining the USA's image in particular. So Western powers responded with an airlift – between 26 June 1948 and 30 September 1949 thousands of tonnes of supplies were flown daily into Berlin.

West Germany

- The Berlin Airlift made the USA appear peaceful and generous.
- In September 1949, West Germany (FRG) was officially formed, with US support.
- In April 1949, Western European countries and the USA formed NATO to counter the Soviet military threat.

East Germany

- The Berlin Blockade made the Soviet Union appear aggressive and threatening.
- In October 1949, East Germany (GDR) was officially formed.
- In May 1955, the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact to counter the military threat from NATO.

Now try this

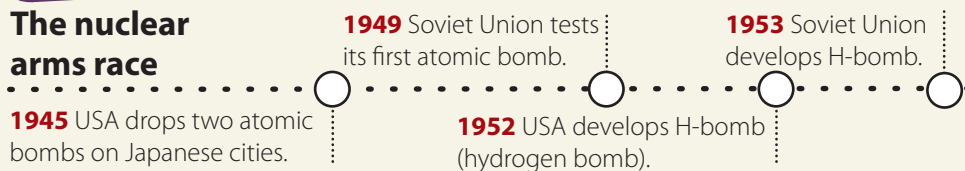
- 1 What were the FRG, GDR and NATO?
- 2 Explain what happened during the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, 1948–49.

The arms race and the Warsaw Pact

The United States initially had a monopoly of nuclear weapons, but the emergence of the Soviet Union as a nuclear power in 1949 led to the start of the nuclear arms race. The formation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955 further added to Cold War tensions in Europe.

Timeline

The nuclear arms race



Both superpowers having nuclear weapons was a powerful reason why a cold war did not become a hot war!

The significance of the nuclear arms race

1. Up to 1949, the United States thought it could use its monopoly of nuclear weapons to deter Soviet attack.
2. This meant that US military figures, such as Curtis LeMay and Douglas MacArthur, decided that the best strategy in the event of war with the Soviet Union was to use nuclear weapons.
3. However, by the mid 1950s the development of nuclear weapons to include bigger warheads and missile delivery systems meant that any nuclear war would destroy both sides resulting in Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).
4. This meant any military confrontation between both sides could rapidly escalate to nuclear war.
5. This meant that the USA and the Soviet Union had to find ways of stopping disputes between them turning into dangerous wars that involved nuclear weapons.



The characteristic mushroom cloud of a nuclear weapons test.

Formation of the Warsaw Pact

- ✓ The Warsaw Pact was a collective defence treaty involving the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Albania and Bulgaria.
- ✓ It was set up on 14 May 1955 following West Germany's entry into NATO on 9 May 1955.

Significance of the Warsaw Pact

- The formation of the Warsaw Pact meant there were now two opposing alliances in Europe separated by the Iron Curtain.
- Both alliances planned for military action against the other, including the use of nuclear and conventional weapons.
- The Warsaw Pact gave the Soviet Union direct control over the armed forces of its satellite states, thus strengthening its grip on Eastern Europe.

Now try this

Explain why both the nuclear arms race and the formation of the Warsaw Pact were significant developments during the Cold War.

Soviet control in Hungary

After Stalin died, Soviet leader Khrushchev indicated Soviet control would relax. But when Hungary started to move away from Soviet influence, the Soviet Union tightened its control for fear that if Hungary left the Warsaw Pact, other countries would follow.

Impact of Soviet rule

- Hungary suffered a lot under Stalin's control.
- Food and industrial products were shipped off to Russia.
- Any opposition in Hungary was ruthlessly wiped out.
- Matyas Rakosi was a brutal ruler. He called himself 'Stalin's best pupil' but was known as the 'Bald Butcher'.
- Communist rule became very unpopular.



The Hungarian uprising in 1956, showing a statue of Stalin that had been pulled down.

Destalinisation

When Stalin died, Khrushchev took over as Soviet leader. In 1956, in his 'secret speech', Khrushchev hinted that Soviet control would relax.

In October 1956, poor harvests and bread shortages meant that Hungarians started demonstrating against communist control with statues of Stalin pulled down and local communists attacked. Khrushchev appointed a more liberal Prime Minister for Hungary – Imre Nagy – in the hope that the situation would calm down.

Destalinisation meant that the Soviet Union no longer saw itself as a dictatorship. Instead it became a one-party state, governed by the Politburo with Khrushchev as its leader. Many Hungarians mistakenly believed that the end of Stalin's rule would bring an end to communism in Hungary, especially as Soviet troops had already withdrawn from neighbouring Austria.

Nagy as prime minister

Nagy wanted the following reforms for Hungary.

- Leave the Warsaw Pact and become a neutral country.
- Hold free elections leading to no more single-party communist government.
- UN protection from the Soviet Union.

However this was a problem for the Soviet Union because if Nagy succeeded in Hungary other countries in Eastern Europe would follow and the Warsaw Pact would collapse.

Now try this

- Why were many Hungarians prepared to protest against the government in October 1956?
- Why was Khrushchev reluctant to support Nagy's reforms of October 1956?

The Soviet invasion of Hungary, 1956

Khrushchev disapproved of Nagy's reforms and in 1956 Soviet troops invaded Hungary. This provoked a strong reaction in the West and in neutral countries condemning the invasion.

The Soviet invasion of Hungary

- Khrushchev disapproved of Nagy's reforms and proposals. If Hungary left the Warsaw Pact, other countries would soon follow.
- Khrushchev worried that Nagy's actions threatened communist rule. He claimed communists were being slaughtered in Hungary. This may have been propaganda, but a number of Hungarian communists had been killed and members of the state security forces, the AVH, attacked in the violence of October 1956, which took place in Budapest and other Hungarian towns and cities. Khrushchev feared the unrest would spread to other satellite states.
- On 4 November 1956, Khrushchev sent 200 000 Soviet troops into Hungary to depose Nagy and restore order.

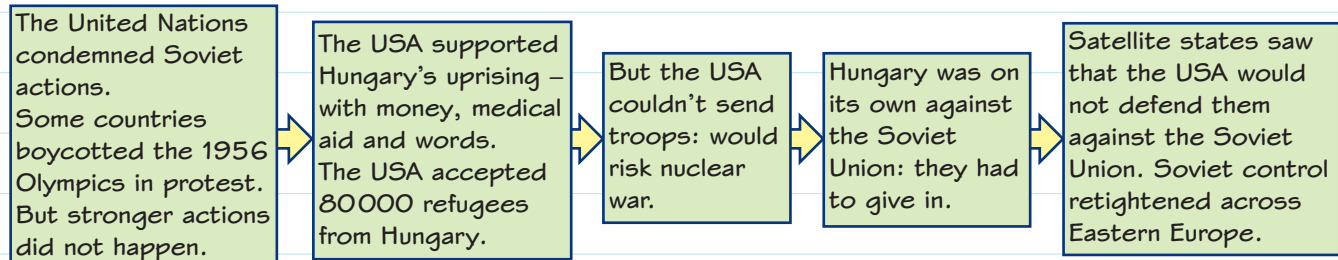


Damage in Budapest caused by Soviet troops during the invasion of Hungary, 4 November 1956.

The consequences of the Soviet invasion of Hungary

- ✓ Over 5000 Hungarians were killed as a result of the invasion, including around 1000 Soviet troops. Many Hungarian soldiers loyal to Nagy and the revolution fought against Soviet troops.
- ✓ Nagy and his government were deposed.
- ✓ Imre Nagy was arrested, tried and executed. Khrushchev wanted to prevent rebellions in other communist countries, such as Poland, and hoped he could do so by making an example of Nagy.
- ✓ A new leader, Janos Kadar, was appointed. He introduced the Fifteen Point Programme, which aimed to re-establish communist rule in Hungary. Kadar's policies were more moderate than those of other Soviet satellite states and resulted in Hungary having better living standards than other East European states. Hungarians, aware that the United States was not prepared to help them, grudgingly accepted this modified form of communist rule.

International reaction and consequences



Now try this

- 1 Explain **two** consequences of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956.
- 2 Explain how Khrushchev responded to the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

For question 2, think about Khrushchev's concerns, the Soviet invasion, and its consequences.

A divided Berlin

After the war, Germany was divided into four zones and its capital city, Berlin, was also divided into four. The divided city became a focus for the Cold War.

West Berlin

- West Berlin was deep inside Soviet-controlled East Germany.
- Divided Berlin gave the USA a foothold inside the Soviet **Eastern bloc**.
- Some Germans in East Germany did not like having a communist government.
- There were also better jobs with higher wages in the West.
- It was easy to get to West Germany once you had reached the western zones in Berlin.

The refugee problem in Berlin

- ✓ Between 1949 and 1961, 2.7 million East Germans crossed from the East to the West in Berlin. The population of West Germany increased while the economy benefitted from an influx of skilled workers. Many left for the West, leaving the East with a skills shortage.
- ✓ This looked bad for the Soviets: people clearly preferred West Germany.



Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum (November 1958)

- This stated that all Berlin belonged to East Germany and that occupying troops must leave in six months.
- The Soviet Union knew that if it tried to push the West out of Berlin by force, a war would start that it could not win, as the US had more nuclear weapons. So, a series of summit meetings took place between the leaders of the USA and the Soviet Union.

Summit meetings 1959–61 between the USA and the Soviet Union

Summit	Outcome
Geneva (May 1959), involving foreign representatives only	No solution agreed but a further summit organised for Camp David in the USA.
Camp David (Sept 1959), involving Eisenhower and Khrushchev	No solution agreed but a further meeting arranged in Paris.
Paris Summit (May 1960), involving Eisenhower and Khrushchev	A disaster. Khrushchev stormed out because the Soviet Union had shot down a US spy plane over Russia.
Vienna Conference (June 1961), involving Kennedy and Khrushchev	Neither was willing to back down. Khrushchev saw Kennedy's inexperience as a weakness and reissued his ultimatum for the USA to remove its troops from Berlin.

Now try this

- 1 Explain why West Berlin was so important during the Cold War.
- 2 Describe the summit meetings that took place between the USA and the Soviet Union over the future of Berlin.

The Cuban Missile Crisis: origins

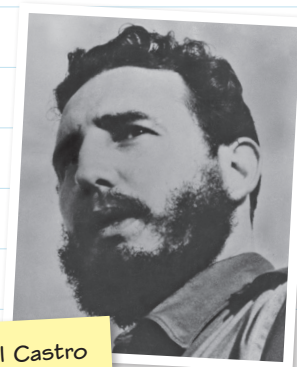
A revolution in Cuba set it against its neighbour, the USA. The USA attempted to bring Cuba back into its sphere of influence but instead, Castro, Cuba's leader, asked the Soviet Union for help with defence.

The Cuban Revolution, the USA and the Soviet Union

Before 1959 Cuba was very closely linked to the USA, for example, there were lots of US-owned businesses. Cuba had a socialist revolution in 1959 and the USA refused to deal with the new government. Instead, Cuba started to build **economic links** with the Soviet Union, for example, trading Soviet oil for Cuban sugar. The relationship between Cuba and the USA deteriorated.

Get Castro!

- The USA refused to recognise Castro's government because it did not want a socialist country in their sphere of influence, especially not a country with close links to the Soviet Union.
- The CIA tried to assassinate the leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro, with no success.
- The CIA convinced President Kennedy that a US-backed invasion of Cuba, designed to overthrow Castro, could solve the problem.



Fidel Castro

The Bay of Pigs incident – 17 April 1961

What the CIA told Kennedy:

- 👍 The invasion will look like a Cuban revolt – we've trained Cuban exiles and disguised old US planes as Cuban.
- 👍 Castro's control of Cuba is very weak.
- 👍 Most Cubans hate Castro.

What actually happened:

- 👎 The planes were recognised as US planes and photographed, and the information was published. The world knew that the USA had backed the invasion.
- 👎 In fact, Castro knew of the invasion in advance and 1400 US-backed troops met 20 000 of Castro's troops. The US-backed troops surrendered.
- 👎 In fact, most Cubans did not want their old leader, Batista, back again, because he had been corrupt.

The impact:

- Ended all chances of a friendly USA-Cuba relationship.
- Castro announced that he was a communist.
- Cuba and the Soviet Union started building closer ties – including military defence for Cuba...

Now try this

- 1 Describe the Bay of Pigs incident in your own words. What did President Kennedy think would happen and why did it fail?
- 2 Explain **two** effects of the Bay of Pigs invasion.
- 3 Why did the USA seek to overthrow Castro?

Czechoslovakia and the Prague Spring

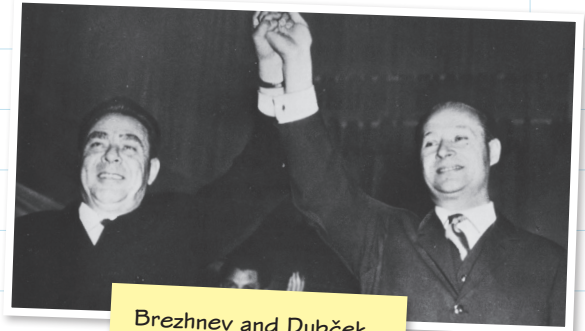
Like in Hungary, a relaxation of control in Czechoslovakia – another satellite state – led to a challenge to Soviet authority.

The impact of Soviet rule on Czechoslovakia

- Czechoslovakia's economy and living standards declined.
- Any opposition to communism was crushed.
- Communist rule became very unpopular.

Alexander Dubček

- In January 1968 Dubček became the Czechoslovakian leader.
- He was a good friend of Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.
- He was a communist and supporter of the Warsaw Pact but wanted to make communism better and easier to live under. Dubček called this 'socialism with a human face'.
- His reforms resulted in the 'Prague Spring' – a period of increased political freedom – in April 1968 and lots of criticism of communism resulted.



Brezhnev and Dubček

Dubček's reforms

Relaxation of censorship meant more freedom to say and write things, even if critical of communism. More democracy allowed other parties alongside the Communist Party. More power was given to the Czechoslovakian parliament and Soviet control was reduced. The economy was also reformed with 'market socialism' allowing for the introduction of some 'capitalist elements'. The powers of the secret police were also reduced.

How Czechoslovaks responded

Students, intellectuals, workers and young members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia welcomed Dubček's reforms enthusiastically. The reforms also led to writers, such as Vaclav Havel and Milan Kundera, writing books that were highly critical of Soviet-style communism.

Not all Czechoslovaks were happy: members of the secret police and some senior army officers resented losing their power and status due to the reforms.

How the rest of the communist world responded

- ✓ The Prague Spring horrified many older Czechoslovakian communists, as they felt it would lead to the collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia.
- ✓ Brezhnev and other communists in Eastern Europe, such as Eric Honecker, the leader of East Germany, were especially concerned. They feared the Prague Spring would lead to demands for reform elsewhere in the Eastern bloc that would threaten communist rule in Eastern Europe.
- ✓ Brezhnev now had a dilemma: Dubček was a friend and military action would damage the Soviet Union's reputation. On the other hand, if he did nothing, expectations would rise and the whole Eastern bloc might collapse.

Now try this

- 1 Explain how Dubček wished to reform communism in Czechoslovakia in 1968.
- 2 Why did people react to the Prague Spring in different ways?

Consider the reactions of ordinary Czechoslovaks and those of traditional communists.

The construction of the Berlin Wall

The Soviet Union and USA started negotiations to sort out the Berlin problem, but they broke down. Khrushchev's solution was the Berlin Wall.

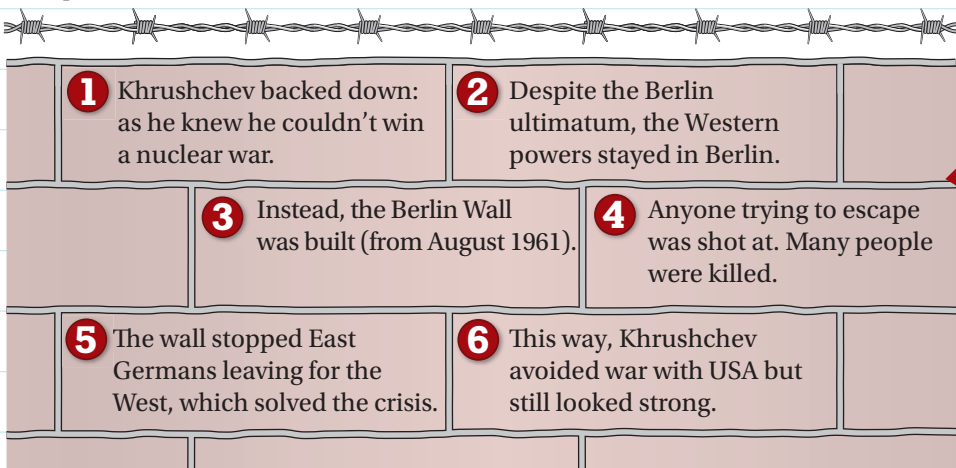
Building the Berlin Wall

- The four summit meetings of 1959–61 had failed to resolve the problem in Berlin, and President Kennedy started to prepare the USA for nuclear war.
- Khrushchev could not risk a nuclear war with the United States, but he still needed to solve the refugee problem that existed in Berlin.
- His solution was to build the Berlin Wall in August 1961. This was designed to prevent East Berliners travelling to West Berlin. In future, any East Berliner travelling to West Berlin would be shot.
- On 12 August 1961, East German troops erected a barbed wire fence around West Berlin. The fence eventually became a heavily guarded wall. Soviet tanks were deployed to stop Western access to the East. By the end of October 1961, West Berlin was completely cut off from East Germany.



Building the Berlin Wall August 1961. Note the number of soldiers in the background. Over 200 East Germans were shot trying to cross the wall between 1961 and 1989.

Why the Berlin Wall was built



Do not confuse the Berlin Wall Crisis with the Berlin Blockade.

Now try this

- 1 Write a narrative explaining the events that led to the construction of the Berlin Wall between 1958 and 1961.
- 2 Why did Khrushchev reach the decision to construct the Berlin Wall in August 1961?

For a narrative answer, begin with the refugee problem, move on to the failure of the summits and finish with the construction of the Wall.

To answer this 'why' question, you need to look at the reasons why the Wall was constructed.

The events of the Cuban Missile Crisis

When the USA discovered the Soviet Union's missile sites on Cuba, the USA was torn on how best to respond: attack while it could or do everything possible to avoid war.

The Cuban missile sites



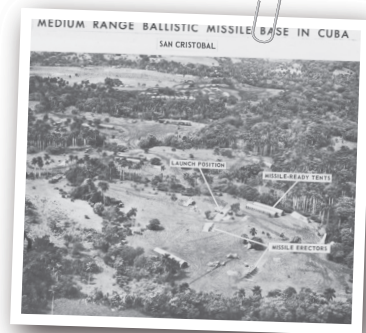
The Soviet Union saw Cuba as a fix to a key strategic problem: the USA had missiles close to the Soviet Union (e.g. in the UK), but the Soviet Union had no missiles close to the USA.

Cuba saw Soviet missiles as a great way to prevent the USA from invading Cuba again.

In September 1962, Soviet ships carried nuclear warheads and missiles to Cuba.

Then in October 1962, US spy planes photographed the Cuban missile sites and the secret was out.

The US public learned that they were now in range of Soviet nuclear missiles. There was panic.



How should the USA respond?

President Kennedy and his team thought through the different options. Some advisers (the 'hawks') wanted to attack straight away, while others (the 'doves') wanted to avoid nuclear war if at all possible.

Ignore the Cuban missiles: the USA also had many missile bases close to the Soviet Union, for example, in Turkey.

Do a deal and get the Soviet Union to withdraw from Cuba in return for the USA withdrawing from one of its missile bases close to the Soviet Union.

Invade Cuba: US troops would invade and get rid of the Castro government.



Nuclear attack: attack the Soviet Union quickly before the Soviet Union could attack the USA.

Warn Castro that his actions put Cuba in grave danger and hope that Castro would decide to stop the missile site construction.

Blockade Cuba to stop any more missiles or equipment coming from the Soviet Union.

Destroy Cuban missile sites. This could be done with airstrikes and so wouldn't need nuclear strikes or a land invasion.

Now try this

If you were an adviser to President Kennedy, which option would you have recommended and why?

Remember to link your recommendation to the arms race!

The Brezhnev Doctrine and Soviet control in Czechoslovakia

Brezhnev could not accept Dubček's reforms and the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Brezhnev then established the Brezhnev Doctrine.

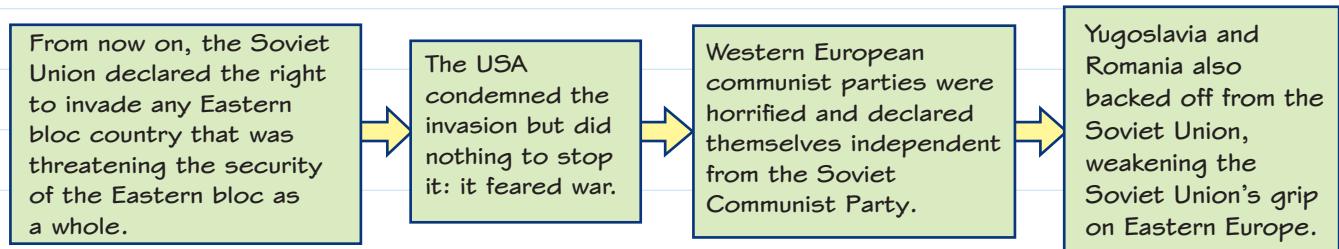
Brezhnev's response to Dubček's reforms

- ✓ Brezhnev could not allow the reforms, as any weakness in control could mean the break-up of the Warsaw Pact – even though this wasn't Dubček's intention.
- ✓ Brezhnev failed to convince Dubček to stop the reforms.
- ✓ In August 1968, the Soviet Union sent tanks to Prague and Dubček was arrested.
- ✓ Czechoslovakia returned to being under strict Soviet control under Gustav Husak. This was known as 'normalisation'.



The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, August 1968.

Consequences of the Brezhnev Doctrine



The importance of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was important because the Brezhnev Doctrine meant that the Soviet Union reserved the right to invade any country that threatened the security of the Eastern bloc. Therefore, other East European states, such as Poland or Hungary, were required to rigidly stick to Soviet-style communism or risk invasion themselves.

Now try this

- 1 Draw up a timeline showing the key events in the Cold War 1957–68.
- 2 Explain **two** effects of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.
- 3 Explain why the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was important to Soviet control of Eastern Europe.

Remember to think about the different places where events took place and the actions of the USA and Soviet Union.

The Berlin Wall and US-Soviet relations

While the construction of the Berlin Wall affected relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, it made war over Berlin less likely. Following President Kennedy's visit in 1963, West Berlin became an enduring symbol of freedom during the Cold War.

The impact of the Wall

- ✓ After the Berlin Wall went up in 1961, Western (British, US and French) troops remained in Berlin.
- ✓ The Wall solved the refugee problem, as East Germans could no longer travel to West Germany.
- ✓ The number of military alerts in Berlin declined as a result of the construction of the Wall. President Kennedy commented that, although not a nice solution, a wall was at least better than a war. The Wall seemed to suggest that the Soviets were no longer interested in unifying Berlin under communist rule, as Khrushchev had originally demanded in November 1958.
- ✓ The Wall was a humiliation for the Soviet Union and a propaganda victory for the West, as it suggested that East Germans preferred living in capitalist West Germany and had to be forced to stay in communist East Germany.
- ✓ The Wall was a notorious barrier between the freedoms enjoyed by West Berliners and those denied to East Berliners. It meant West Berlin became an enduring symbol of freedom. This was highlighted further by the fact that over 200 people lost their lives trying to cross the Wall.
- ✓ Khrushchev mistakenly thought that Kennedy had shown weakness by allowing the Wall to be built, and this encouraged him to think about deploying missiles in Cuba.

Kennedy's visit to West Berlin, 1963

- Kennedy famously visited West Berlin in 1963 and claimed "Ich bin ein Berliner" ("I am a Berliner").
- His speech was an expression of solidarity with the people of West Berlin. The fact that Kennedy chose to visit West Berlin personally and give this speech demonstrated that the United States and NATO were prepared to defend West Berlin from communist attack.
- Kennedy was also speaking after the Cuban Missile Crisis had ended and was showing his audience – both German and American – that he was not 'soft on communism'.



Kennedy speaking in West Berlin, 26 June 1963. West German leaders had previously shown him the Wall.

The Iron Curtain divides East and West

The construction of the Berlin Wall filled the last remaining gap in the Iron Curtain and meant that Europe was now completely divided.

There were two Germanys.

There were two different ideologies (capitalism and communism).

On either side of the Iron Curtain

There were two different alliances (NATO and the Warsaw Pact).

Now try this

- 1 Explain two consequences of the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.
- 2 Explain the significance of Kennedy's Berlin speech of 26 June 1963.

Look again at the picture and notes on this page.

The consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis

During the Cuban Missile Crisis the world came very close to nuclear war. There was a need to ensure this did not happen again, so relations between the United States and the Soviet Union actually improved after the crisis, leading to a period of cooling tensions, known as **détente**.

Short-term consequences of the crisis

- Communist Cuba survived as Kennedy gave assurances the USA would not invade Cuba again.
- The Soviet Union looked weak, as the world did not know the USA had removed missiles from Turkey. This undermined Khrushchev and Brezhnev replaced him as Soviet leader in 1964.
- US 'doves' came out well, as their desire to avoid war resulted in the missiles being withdrawn.

Timeline

1962

- **16 Oct** President Kennedy is informed that US spy planes have found missile sites on Cuba.
- **22 Oct** Kennedy decides against an attack. Orders a blockade of Cuba.
- **24 Oct** Soviet Union says a blockade is an act of aggression and its ships will ignore it.
- **25 Oct** USA and Soviet Union prepare for immediate nuclear attack.
- **27 Oct** Cuba gets ready for invasion. Khrushchev offers to remove missiles from Cuba if USA does the same from its Italy and Turkey bases. A US spy plane is shot down over Cuba. US 'hawks' demand retaliation. Robert Kennedy sets up a deal in which the USA would secretly withdraw warheads from Italy and Turkey.
- **28 Oct** Khrushchev agrees to the deal: missiles withdrawn in return for USA agreeing never to attack Cuba and taking its missiles out of Italy and Turkey.

Long-term consequences

The Cuban Missile Crisis showed how easily a nuclear war could start. The USA initiated a move to **détente** – a less stressful, more informed relationship between the USA and the Soviet Union.

- The Hotline Agreement created a direct communication link between Washington and Moscow.
- Limited Test Ban Treaty (August 1963) – both sides agreed to ban all nuclear weapon testing except for underground tests.
- In 1963 Kennedy gave a speech about working with the Soviet Union to focus on their 'common interests'.
- However, the Soviet Union was determined to catch up with USA in the arms race and achieved this by 1965. This meant Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). War would be so terrible that it must be avoided at all costs.
- The USA and the Soviet Union also signed the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, which limited the deployment of nuclear weapons in space, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968, which prevented nuclear weapons being given to other countries.

Make sure you are clear about the chronology of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Now try this

- 1 Explain how the USA responded to the discovery of missiles in Cuba.
- 2 Explain **two** consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Remember: only focus on what the USA did **after** the missiles were discovered.

International reaction to Soviet measures in Czechoslovakia

The Soviet response to the Prague Spring brought about a mixed reaction in both the East and the West. It did not damage the growing détente between East and West.

Impact on the West

- ✓ The United States and West Germany condemned the invasion and the Brezhnev Doctrine that followed it. The Soviet invasion was even described as 'the rape of Czechoslovakia'.
- ✓ However, the USA and West Germany offered no military support or assistance. The United States was already bogged down in the Vietnam War and also did not want to provoke an international crisis.
- ✓ Communist leaders, such as Jacques Duclos in France and Enrico Berlinguer in Italy, were appalled by the invasion, France and Italy therefore began to end their links with the Soviet Union.

Impact on the East

- ✓ The invasion and the Brezhnev Doctrine limited reforms in other Eastern bloc countries who feared a Soviet invasion.
- ✓ Countries such as Poland pursued policies that ignored public opinion, which increasingly demanded change. This led to public protests.
- ✓ The invasion strengthened Soviet control over the Eastern bloc as they could use military force to ensure their dominance.
- ✓ Yet the crisis also exposed differences in the Eastern bloc. Both Romania (led by Nicolae Ceaușescu) and Yugoslavia (led by Josip Broz Tito) condemned the invasion and signed alliances with communist China, dividing the communist world.



Jacques Duclos, leader of the French Communist Party. The Party originally had links with the Soviet Union but dropped them after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.



Josip Broz Tito, communist leader of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was a communist state that was not a member of the Warsaw Pact.

Soviet influence within the West began to decline as Western communist leaders developed a form of communism different to that in the Soviet Union.

Impact on superpower relations

- The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia did little to damage the growing détente between East and West. This was helped by the fact that relatively few people (less than 100) died as a result of the invasion.
- However, the invasion did create a sense of complacency in Brezhnev's mind. He believed that any Soviet military intervention in areas that contained pro-Soviet governments would not be challenged by the United States. This view proved to be mistaken following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Now try this

Explain how international relations were affected by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

You can focus here on either superpower relations or the impact of the invasion on the East and the West.

Détente in the 1970s

Détente, meaning the relaxing of tension between rivals, was used to describe the relationship between the USA and the Soviet Union in the later 1960s and 1970s.

SALT 1 – Strategic Arms Limitation

Treaty (1972)

Superpowers agreed to limit the number of nuclear weapons they had.

- ✓ No further production of strategic ballistic weapons (short-range, lightweight missiles).
- ✓ No increase in number of intercontinental ballistic weapons (ICBMs) (though new ones could be added to replace old ones).
- ✓ No new nuclear missile launchers. New submarines that could launch nuclear weapons (SLBMs) only allowed as replacements for existing missile launchers.
- ✓ The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty limited both sides to two ABM deployment areas.

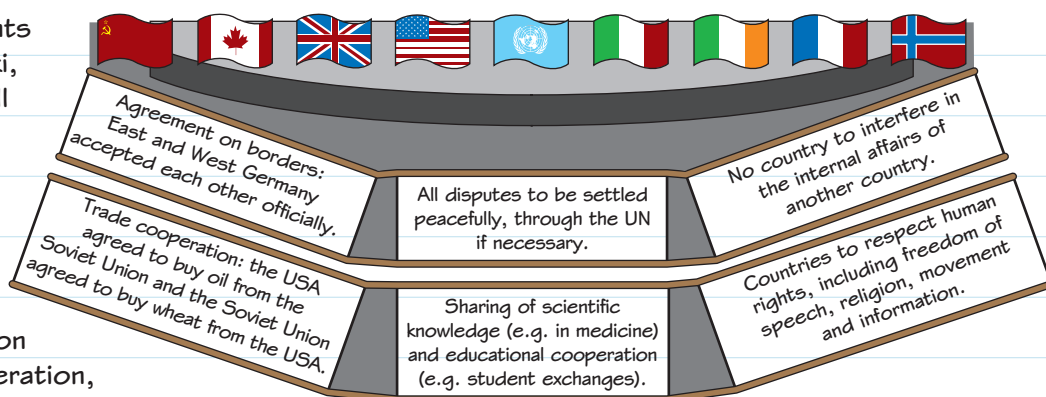
How effective was SALT 1?

- 👍 Slowed down the arms race by placing limits on the number of bombers, ICBMs and SLBMs each side could have.
- 👍 Led to further negotiations that culminated in the SALT 2 Treaty in 1979.
- 👍 Ensured that neither side had a decisive advantage in strategic nuclear weapons.
- 👎 Did not cover intermediate nuclear weapons, which both sides continued to deploy in Europe during the late 1970s.

Détente had limits. Superpowers still targeted nuclear weapons at each other and competed for influence. Also, the Soviet Union didn't honour the human rights agreements from the Helsinki Agreements.

1975 Helsinki Conference

The Helsinki Agreements were signed in Helsinki, Finland, in 1975, by all European countries except Albania and Andorra, as well as the USA, the Soviet Union and Canada. Representatives from 35 countries agreed on security issues, cooperation, human rights and borders.



The importance of Helsinki

- Helped the USA and the Soviet Union form a stable relationship.
- Represented the high point of détente.
- Coincided with more US-Soviet cooperation, like the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (1975) – a joint space mission – and trade agreements.

Limits to Helsinki

- The Soviet Union continued to focus on Eastern bloc countries and to apply the Brezhnev Doctrine. It treated dissidents (protesters) harshly; scientist Alexander Sakharov was arrested, hospitalised and force-fed.
- The USA continued to prioritise its interests in countries it could influence, like Chile and El Salvador.

Now try this

- 1 Explain two consequences of détente.
- 2 What was the importance of SALT 1 for the development of superpower relations?
- 3 Explain why the Helsinki Agreements were important in improving relations between the USA and the Soviet Union.