

THE COLD WAR

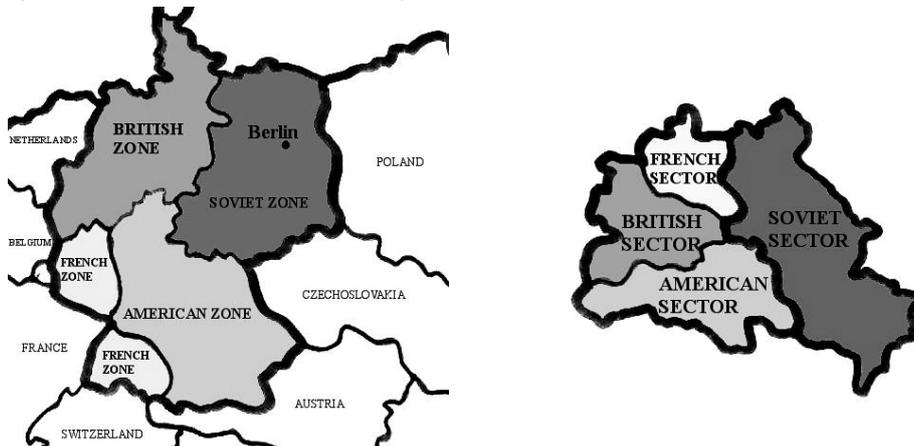
The origins of the Cold War

- In the Cold War **the west stood against the east, capitalism stood against communism.**

TASK 1: Compare the west to the east (political systems, ideology, economy etc.)

the West (the USA)	the East (the USSR)

- The first problems could be seen even before World War Two and during it
 - the Civil War in Russia (1918-1921)
 - the Katyn Massacre (1940)
 - the USSR did not help the Polish during their uprising in Warsaw (1944)
 - the USSR was not told that the USA had an atomic bomb until it was used on Hiroshima (1945)
- World War Two caused a rise of two **superpowers** – **the USA and the USSR**
- During World War Two many countries were occupied by Germany and lost their governments. The question now was who would be in charge of these countries. Usually it was the leaders of the local resistance. However, sometimes there was more than one anti-Nazi movement in the country. Usually, one of them was communist, e.g. in France, Greece, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.
- **The Yalta Conference (February 1945)**
 - **Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin**
 - **Germany** was **divided into four zones** controlled by the USA, France, Britain and the USSR.
 - **Berlin** (which was in the Soviet zone) was **divided into four zones** too.





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- There would be **free elections in the countries of Eastern Europe**.
- The **USSR would join the war against Japan** in return for Manchuria and Sakhalin.
- **The Potsdam Conference (July - August 1945)**
 - **Truman, Attlee and Stalin**
 - Trials for war criminals – **the Nuremberg Trials**
 - They agreed on the future border between Germany and Poland.
 - But otherwise they mostly **disagreed. No trust and many tensions** were on the agenda:
 - the USSR wanted a naval base in the Mediterranean
 - Stalin wanted Germany to pay for the war
 - Stalin had set up a communist government in Poland while Britain did not want this.
 - Truman had not told Stalin about the atomic bomb before it was used.
- **The Iron Curtain**
 - It was given its name by **Winston Churchill** in his speech in **1946**.
“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent.”
- **The Truman Doctrine – 1947**
 - the **policy of containment**
 - It was provoked by the events in Greece when the royalists had to fight a civil war against the communists supported by the USSR.
 - *“I believe it must be the policy of the USA to support all free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.”*
(Harry Truman)
- **Marshall Aid – 1947**
 - Truman believed that poverty provided a chance for communism so he wanted to make Europe prosperous again.
 - US Secretary of State George Marshall designed a plan to help the economies to recover. Within four years 13 billion dollars were sent to Europe. However, only sixteen countries accepted.
 - Eastern European countries (e.g. Czechoslovakia) declined the offer because it was forbidden by Stalin.
- **The Cominform (1947-1956)**
 - It was an organization which united all communist parties under the leadership of the USSR.
- **Comecon (1949-1991)**
 - Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
 - It was founded to serve as a counterpart to the Marshall Aid.
 - It united the economies of the communist countries – usually to their disadvantage.
- Communists took over in **Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria**.

The major events of the Cold War

- **The Berlin blockade and airlift 1948-1949**
 - Stalin did not want the new Germany to be strong. But the USA, Britain and France introduced a new currency, the Deutschmark, in their zones.
 - In June 1948 the Soviet army surrounded West Berlin and cut it off from the rest of Germany. The blockade of Berlin started. The plan was to starve the city and make the western powers back out.
 - However, any use of military force could mean war. So the solution was **to airlift supplies to Berlin**. The airlift started in **June 1948** and lasted until **May 1949** (318 days). During that time 1.5 million tonnes of supplies were transported to Berlin.
 - In May 1949 the Russians had to lift the blockade because it turned out to be pointless.
 - As a consequence, in **1949** the western **Federal Republic of Germany (BRD)** and eastern **German Democratic Republic** were founded by the opposing sides.
- In April **1949** **NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)** was founded as a military alliance of the western (non-communist) countries.

- In **1955** the USSR founded its own alliance, the **Warsaw Pact**, with the communist countries of Eastern Europe, except Yugoslavia.

- **The Korean War 1950-1953**

- Stalin supported communists in Asia too (China, Indonesia, Burma, Vietnam, Korea).
- Korea was divided into two states – North Korea was communist and South Korea was an anti-communist dictatorship supported by the USA. The division went along the 38th parallel. The relations were tense and full of competition.
- In **1950** **North Korea invaded South Korea**. The UNO and the USA sent armies to help South Korea. The American army was led by **General MacArthur**.

“Korea is a symbol to the watching world. If we allow Korea to fall within the Soviet orbit, the world will feel we have lost another round in our match with the Soviet Union, and our prestige and the hopes of those who place their faith in us will suffer accordingly.”
(the US State Department, 1950)

- The frontline moved back and forth but none of the sides was able to achieve a final victory.
- In **1953** an armistice was signed and **Korea remained divided along the 38th parallel**.



- **McCarthyism**

- In the late 1940s and early 1950s the public in the USA felt threatened by the spread of communism. This fear was encouraged by Senator McCarthy.

- In **1953** **Stalin died**. The next first man of the USSR became **Nikita Khrushchev** who was less aggressive and wanted peaceful co-existence with the West.

- In **1956** at the **20th Congress of the Communist Party** Khrushchev **attacked Stalin for being a dictator**.
- Khrushchev seemed to encourage freedom in the USSR and he was seen positively by the West. This era of the second half of the 1950s is called **the Thaw**. The world was more optimistic. However, Khrushchev's approach was sometimes misinterpreted, e.g. in Hungary in 1956. (see chapter on the Eastern Europe and the USSR)
- **The space race** - The USA and the USSR also competed in the space race – who would orbit the Earth first. The Soviets were more successful. In 1957 they released **Sputnik** (the first satellite) and sent the first dog **Laika** to space. In 1961 Soviet **Gagarin** was the first astronaut in space. (On the other hand, the Americans were the first to land on the Moon – Neil Armstrong in 1969.)
- However, in **1960 the U2 incident** showed that the trust was not renewed. An American spy plane U2 was shot down over the USSR's territory (where it should not have been, of course) and its pilot was captured. The USA denied any spying missions on the USSR but the film developed from the plane proved them wrong. The USA faced an embarrassment in the eyes of the world.
- **1961 – the Berlin Wall**
 - West Germany became richer than East Germany very quickly because it was supported by the USA. West Berlin, in the middle of East Germany, worked like a showcase to the people of East Berlin who tried to escape to the West in high numbers. This was not good propaganda for the communists. The Soviets were also afraid that West Berlin served as a “listening post” for spying on East Germany.
 - In August **1961 a wall was built to divide West and East Berlin**. No civilian was allowed to cross it and those who tried were usually shot.



- In 1963 John Fitzgerald Kennedy showed his support to the people of West Berlin in his **“Ich bin ein Berliner”** speech.

TASK 2: Read two different sources on the role of West Berlin. Comment on the different motivation and reasons to hold or seize West Berlin.

SOURCE A: (from a speech by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1961)

"We cannot and will not allow the communists to drive us out of Berlin, either gradually or by force. Our promise to Berlin is essential to the security of West Germany, to the unity of Western Europe and to the faith of the entire world."

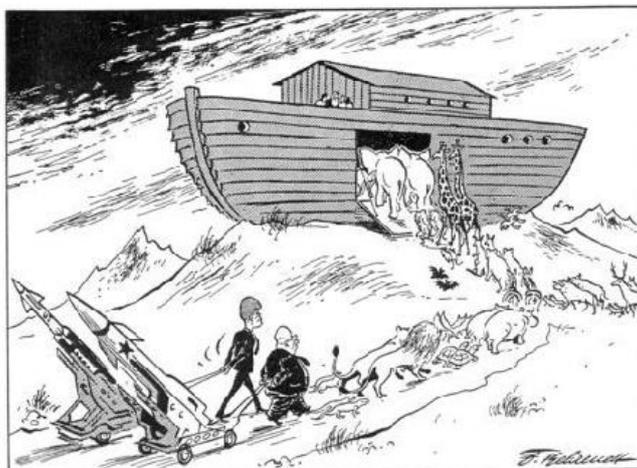
SOURCE B: (from a TV broadcast to the Soviet People by Nikita Khrushchev, a week before the Wall was built)

"Western Germany is becoming a danger to the peace of Europe. Its army is the largest on the European continent and is being trained ready to wage nuclear war. In West Berlin there is the greatest concentration of spy agencies ever assembled in one place. West German, US and English spies, and all 110 miles inside East German territory."

• **1962 - the Cuban Missile Crisis**

- This crisis was caused by bad relations with Cuba – communist Cuba was governed by the dictator **Fidel Castro** who had friendly relations with the USSR. The USA wanted to crush his regime. In **1961** Cuban emigration forces trained and equipped by Americans landed in the **Bay of Pigs** and wanted to overthrow Castro by force but they were defeated. Cuba became worried and more dependent on the USSR.
- Khrushchev used this situation to deploy **nuclear missiles in Cuba**. In October **1962** these missiles were identified by a US spy plane. The closeness of Cuba to US soil made the USA suddenly vulnerable to a possible nuclear attack (two thirds of US soil were now within the range).
- US President **John Fitzgerald Kennedy** informed the public about the threat. The USA started a **blockade of Cuba** and **threatened to invade Cuba** if the missiles were not removed. The next **ten days** were very tense. The world was **on the verge of a nuclear war**. Finally, Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba. The crisis was over.
- The USA clearly won this war of nerves. However, it was **the most serious conflict** between the USA and the USSR in the Cold War.
- One of the results of the crisis was **"the hot line"** - a direct telephone link which was set up between the Kremlin and the White House so now the heads of state could communicate directly and avoid future misunderstandings.

TASK 3: Comment on the contemporary cartoons depicting the Cuban Missile Crisis.

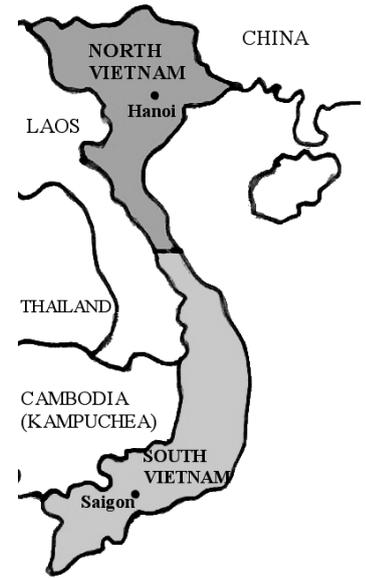


"For any case..."



- **the Vietnam War 1962-1975**

- Vietnam was formerly a colony of _____ called Indochina.
- In the 1950s communist rebels led by **Ho Chi Minh** overthrew the French control of Vietnam. They failed to achieve complete control so Vietnam was divided into the **communist North Vietnam** and **non-communist South Vietnam**. However, the communist guerrillas (**the Vietcong**) kept attacking South Vietnam to unite the country under their leadership.
- The **USA supported the South and the French** to prevent communism from spreading in south-east Asia. In 1961 American assistance increased from money and technology to military advisors. In **1962 first American troops were sent to Vietnam**.
- North Vietnam, on the other hand, accepted help from the USSR.
- The war did not go well for the Americans. Many controversial weapons were used, e.g. napalm or Agent Orange. Moreover, it became very unpopular with American public and many Americans protested (e.g. demonstrations, the Hippie movement, musical *Hair*).
- Finally, in 1973 peace was signed in Paris and American troops began to pull out of Vietnam. **The USA lost the Vietnam War**, with 55,000 dead. The last American left Vietnam in 1975. (On the other hand, Vietnamese civilian casualties are estimated to have exceeded two million.)
- In **1975** Saigon (the South Vietnamese capital) fell, was renamed to Ho Chi Minh City and the whole **Vietnam was united under communism**.



- In 1964 **Leonid Brezhnev** became the head of the Russian Communist Party (until 1982). His policy was tougher than Khrushchev's. Brezhnev's idea is today called the **Brezhnev Doctrine (1968)** and it proclaimed the duty of the USSR **to protect socialism in other countries**. For example, in 1968 armies of the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia to end the Prague Spring. (see chapter on Eastern Europe and the USSR)

- **The 1970s – the Détente**

- The 1970s were the era of **improving and relaxing relations between the superpowers**.
- In 1972 the USA and the USSR signed the **SALT** treaty (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) which limited the number of nuclear warheads. It was followed by SALT II in 1979.
- Also, in the 1960s both superpowers were rivals in the **space race**, while in 1975 the American and Russian spacecrafts **Apollo** and **Soyuz** docked together which was a visible sign of détente.
- In **1975** thirty-five countries (including the USA and the USSR) met at the **Helsinki Conference**.
 - The western powers recognized the frontiers of Eastern Europe and the Soviet influence there.
 - The USSR agreed to buy grain from the USA and export oil to the West.
 - The USSR agreed to allow more freedom and human rights inspections in their country.
 - West Germany finally recognized East Germany.
 - All countries agreed to improve human rights in the world.



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- **The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan 1979-1991**

- In 1979 the USSR invaded Afghanistan because it wanted to use the political instability to control the area, because it was afraid of the possible spread of Islam from the neighbouring Iran (the Islamic Revolution) and because Afghanistan was very close to the Middle East oil reserves.
- The USSR claimed to be invited to restore peace in Afghanistan. The **western countries protested**, e.g. the USA by boycotting the Olympic Games in Moscow, stopping grain shipments to the USSR and supporting the **Afghan guerrilla rebels in their fight against the invasion**.
- **The USSR was not successful in the war** and finally in **1991 the Soviet troops left Afghanistan**.
- The invasion is often nicknamed “**the Soviet Vietnam**” because the Soviet troops kept being killed by the guerrillas who used the same tactics like the Vietcong in Vietnam and there was also a lot of protest against the war in the USSR.

The end of the Cold War

- **US-Soviet relations in the 1980s**

- The diplomacy of the last decade of the Cold War was dominated by Ronald Reagan (US President 1981-1989) and Mikhail Gorbachev (leader of the Soviet Union 1985-1991).
- **Ronald Reagan** preferred a hard line policy and introduced the Strategic Defence Initiative (known as **the Star Wars**), a satellite anti-missile system. Reagan also increased the US military budget astronomically.
- In 1985 **Mikhail Gorbachev** became the leader of the USSR and he immediately started reforming the old Soviet system. He knew that the USSR could not win the **arms race** against the USA and he met Reagan in Geneva to negotiate.
- After several meetings the USA and the USSR signed the **START** (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) in 1991, followed by START II (1993) and START III (1997).

- **1989 - the Collapse of the Communist Bloc**

- The Cold War finally ended not only because of the negotiations in the 1980s but also because **the Communist Bloc collapsed from within, in a domino effect**.

In **1989 most of the Eastern European countries freed themselves from communism** in a series of revolutions. (for further details see chapter on the Eastern Europe and the USSR)

- Communist regime collapsed in **Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia and the Baltic republics**.
- In a process from 1990 to 1991, **the Soviet Union was dissolved** too.
- The **Warsaw Pact collapsed** in 1991.

TASK 4: Now, why did the Cold War get its name?



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REVISION:

TASK 5:

Explain the causes of the Cold War.

TASK 6:

Was the Cold War inevitable? Consider the facts you have mentioned in task 5.

TASK 7:

What were the worst moments of the Cold War?

TASK 8:

Compare the roles and actions of Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev.

TASK 9:

What were the “peacemaking” steps to end the Cold War?