

The Grand Alliance

The Grand Alliance was made up of the 'big three' allies from World War Two — Britain, the USA and the USSR. They were united by their desire to defeat Nazi Germany, but as the war ended, tensions emerged.

The 'Big Three' discussed Europe's Future at Tehran and Yalta

- 1) In 1943, the Grand Alliance held a conference in Tehran. The talks focused mainly on plans to defeat the Nazis. But the allies also started to discuss what would happen to Europe and Germany after the war.
- 2) Britain and the USA were politically very different from the USSR and there were tensions between the three allies. These were put aside during the war as they fought a common enemy (Germany).
- 3) The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed the USSR could claim a 'sphere of influence' in Eastern Europe after the war was over. Eastern European countries would be subject to Soviet policies and ideas.
- 4) The Grand Alliance made more decisions about the future of Europe at the Yalta Conference in February 1945:
 - Free elections would be held in previously occupied countries in Eastern Europe.
 - The United Nations (UN) would replace the failed League of Nations.

The USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was also known as the Soviet Union.

Comment and Analysis

The allies had different interpretations of a 'free' election. To the USA and Britain, it meant lots of political parties competing for votes. But Stalin (the leader of the USSR) believed only communist parties should run in elections as they were the only parties that truly represented the people.

Potsdam revealed the First Cracks in the Grand Alliance

After Germany surrendered in May 1945, the allied leaders met again at Potsdam over July and August. They wanted to work on the finer details of their plans for Germany and Europe.

Some important agreements were made at Potsdam...

- The new boundaries of Poland were agreed.
 - The 'big three' plus France would divide Germany and Berlin between them.
 - Nazi leaders would be tried for war crimes at Nuremberg.
- 1) Some things remained undecided. For example, Germany would be divided into four zones (one each for Britain, France, the USA and the USSR) — but the allies didn't decide if, or when, the zones could rejoin and form a country again.
 - 2) Tensions were high. Roosevelt had died and Harry Truman had succeeded him as US President — Truman was more suspicious of the USSR and less willing to compromise.
 - 3) Britain and the US were also alarmed by Stalin's actions in Poland — he had installed a government consisting of only pro-communist members. Britain and the US felt this went against the Yalta agreement.

Britain also had a new leader — Clement Attlee replaced Churchill mid-conference.

The USA and the USSR had very Different Ideologies

The tension between the USA and the USSR was partly caused by their very different beliefs — the USSR was communist, while the USA was capitalist. Both countries also feared the other's intentions.

- 1) Communism meant state control of industry and agriculture. The USA, by contrast, valued private enterprise — the 'American Dream' was that anyone could work their way to the top.
- 2) The USSR only allowed one political party — the Communist Party. The USA valued political freedom.
- 3) Communism aimed at world revolution, and so it was seen by Americans as a danger to their democracy. However, the communists also feared worldwide American influence.

'East' and 'West' had different perspectives...

Summarise the tension in the Grand Alliance between 1943 and July 1945. Include how the allies' relationships altered and why their attitudes changed.



The Two Superpowers

The USSR and the USA emerged from the Second World War as the two biggest powers in the world. But they were very suspicious of one another, and began to interpret each other's actions as threats.

The USA kept their Atom Bomb a Secret

- 1) Japan was on Germany's side in the war, and continued to fight after Germany surrendered in May 1945. In August 1945, the USA dropped two atom bombs on Japan — destroying the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- 2) The atom bombs meant that military help from the USSR wasn't needed to defeat Japan. President Truman also refused to allow the USSR to take part in the US occupation of Japan.
- 3) The USA had kept the exact nature of the atom bomb a secret from the USSR at Potsdam in July 1945 (although Stalin's spies had passed on many details).
- 4) These nuclear weapons boosted the status of the USA. For four years it was the world's only nuclear power. Stalin saw the development of the atom bomb as an attempt to intimidate the USSR, and was angry that the USA had managed to surpass Soviet technology.
- 5) The atom bombs increased the rivalry between the USA and the USSR. The USSR sped up the development of its own atomic bomb, starting an arms race between the two countries (see p.71).



The atom bomb caused devastation in Hiroshima.

© Everett Collection / Mary Evans

The USSR became Influential in Eastern Europe

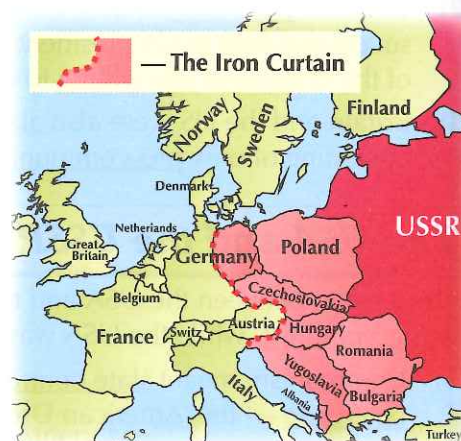
- 1) At the end of the Second World War, the Red Army (the USSR's army) occupied Eastern Europe. These countries would pass into the USSR's sphere of influence after the war.
- 2) Between 1945 and 1948, Stalin installed pro-Soviet 'puppet' governments in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.
 - For a while it seemed that Czechoslovakia might remain democratic. But when the Communist Party seemed likely to lose ground in the next election, it seized power in February 1948.
 - The exception to Soviet domination was Yugoslavia, which had freed itself from the Germans without the Red Army. Yugoslavia was communist but more open to the West. Its leader, Tito, argued with Stalin over political interference. Stalin cut off aid but didn't invade.

There was an 'Iron Curtain' between East and West

- 1) Increasing tensions between the USA and the USSR became known as the 'Cold War'. There was no direct fighting — both sides were afraid of another war, especially after 1949, when the USSR had its own nuclear weapons.
- 2) Countries in Western Europe tended to support the USA. Most countries in Eastern Europe were dominated by the USSR. In a famous speech in 1946, Winston Churchill warned there was an 'Iron Curtain' dividing Europe.

Comment and Analysis

Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech demonstrates the breakdown of the Grand Alliance — Britain and the USA now viewed the USSR as a threat, not an ally.



Countries under the influence of the USSR became known as its 'satellite states' (in pink).

My two favourite superpowers — flying and being invisible...

In the exam, try to explain people's actions by considering the way they would have looked at a situation. Here, each country is acting for reasons that made sense to the people in charge.

EXAM TIP

Mutual Suspicion

The **Cold War** was a period of international tension — with each side **suspicious** of the other.

The 'Long' and 'Novikov' telegrams were detailed Reports

By 1946, tensions between the superpowers were **high**. Each country issued **secret telegrams** about the other.

- 1) The telegrams were detailed reports describing the **motivations** and **intentions** of the other country.

The Long Telegram (February 1946)

- Issued to **President Truman** about the USSR.
- It said that Stalin had given a speech in favour of the **destruction** of capitalism.
- It warned of the USSR trying to **weaken** and **divide** Western powers, while building the strength of its own military.

The Novikov Telegram (September 1946)

- Issued to **Stalin** about the USA.
- The report claimed that the USA was pursuing **world supremacy**.
- It warned that the USA was trying to **limit the influence** of the USSR in Europe.

- 2) Neither country seemed to know for certain what the other was thinking. The reports **panicked** the Russian and American governments and **accelerated** the Cold War — the findings seemed to confirm their **worst fears**.

Truman Acted to Contain the Communist Threat

President Truman was extremely **worried** about the spread of communism to **Western Europe**. Many countries were undergoing **economic hardships**, which he thought might make communism look more **appealing**. The USA decided to **intervene** in Europe to try and **contain** the spread of communism.

The Truman Doctrine (announced March 1947)

The USA pledged to **support** any nation threatened by a **communist takeover**. This support could be diplomatic, military or financial. For example, the USA gave \$400 million of **aid** to **Turkey** and **Greece** to **stop** communism spreading.

The Marshall Plan (announced June 1947)

This promised \$17 billion of **aid** to European countries to help **rebuild** their **economies** — the areas of Germany under Western occupation benefited massively. Stalin, however, ordered all of his **satellite states** to **reject the plan**. He believed the USA was using **economic incentives** to lure Eastern European states away from the USSR.

The USSR Reacted by creating the Cominform

Stalin felt threatened by the Truman Doctrine, and reacted by **strengthening** and **uniting** his allies.

- 1) **The Cominform** (Communist Information Bureau) was set up in 1947. The organisation **brought together** all European communist parties and placed them **under the control** of the USSR.
- 2) **The Comecon** (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) was established in 1949. It countered the Marshall Plan by **nationalising** industries, **collectivising** agriculture and offering **economic aid**.

Stalin hoped this would **encourage** economic development in Eastern Europe and discourage trade with the **West**. It also **appeased** the countries that had been ordered to refuse Marshall aid.

Comment and Analysis

Marshall Plan aid ensured that a lot of Western Europe became **allied** with the USA. Stalin's retaliation — his creation of the Cominform and, later, the Comecon — **strengthened** his alliances in Eastern Europe.

The Cold War was tense — but preferable to a hot one...

In your own words, summarise what the USA and the USSR believed about each other after the Long and Novikov Telegrams were sent, and how this might have affected their actions.



The Berlin Crisis

Tension over the division of Germany had been building since the Potsdam Conference, and finally spilled over in the Berlin crisis in 1948. It resulted in an even larger rift between the two great powers.

In 1948 the **USSR** and the **West** Clashed over **Berlin**



Berlin was in East Germany. The French, British and US sectors formed West Berlin, while the Soviet sector was called East Berlin.

- 1) Immediately after the war, there were four zones of occupied Germany, and four zones in Berlin. In 1947, the USA and Britain agreed to combine their zones to form 'Bizonia'. The next year, the French agreed to add their zone.
- 2) The new western zone had a single government, and in June 1948 introduced a new currency to help economic recovery.
- 3) This alarmed the USSR. Stalin did not want a unified western zone on his doorstep. West Berlin's strong capitalist economy embarrassed the USSR, and made communism look weak.
- 4) As a result, Stalin decided to blockade Berlin to try to force the West to withdraw from West Berlin.
- 5) In June 1948, he ordered that all road, rail and canal links between West Berlin and the outside world should be cut off.

Comment and Analysis

Stalin wanted to force the West to withdraw from Berlin altogether. The Western powers believed that if this happened, the Soviet Union would be tempted to invade West Germany.

The Western powers wouldn't give up West Berlin...

- The West decided to bypass the blockade and fly in supplies. This became known as the Berlin Airlift, and lasted for 318 days.
- By 1949, 8000 tons of supplies were being flown in each day.
- Tegel airport was built in West Berlin to accommodate the large volume of flights. It meant supplies could be delivered in even greater numbers.

After the crisis, **Germany** was **Divided in Two**

- 1) When it became clear that the West was determined not to withdraw from Berlin, Stalin had to lift the blockade. It was also clear that Germany would remain divided.
- 2) In 1949, two separate states were formed — West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany) and communist East Germany (German Democratic Republic).

Comment and Analysis

The end of the Berlin blockade increased tensions as Stalin hadn't lifted the blockade willingly. The allies appeared strong, and had discredited and humiliated Stalin.

The **Two Powers** formed **Military Alliances**

- 1) Stalin's blockade during the Berlin crisis showed how unprepared the West would be if there was a conflict with the USSR.
- 2) As a consequence, the Western Powers decided to form a military alliance. In 1949, NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) was created.
- 3) All members of NATO agreed to respond together if any member of the alliance was attacked.

The USSR saw the formation of NATO as a real threat.

- In 1955, the USSR established the Warsaw Pact to rival NATO. All the USSR's satellite states (except Yugoslavia) became members.
- Its main aims were to improve the defensive capability of Eastern Europe and strengthen relations.
- There were now two power blocs in Europe — NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Members of the Warsaw Pact formed the so-called 'Eastern Bloc'.

The West had made Stalin look weak...

Explain how important the Berlin Crisis was for relations between the US and the USSR. [8]



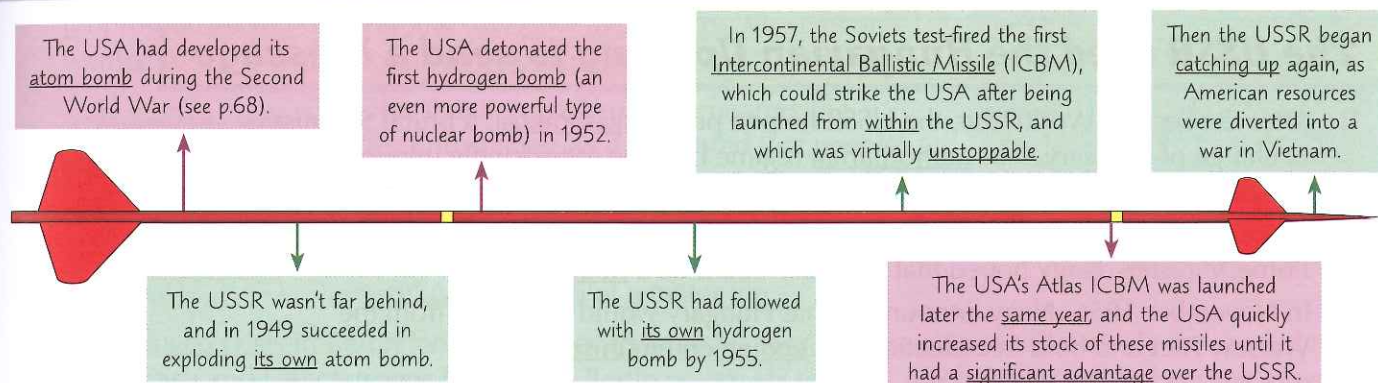
The Arms Race

In the Cold War, the USA and the USSR tried to gain an advantage by forming military alliances and developing ever more powerful weapons. The aim was to 'look strong' to deter the other from attacking.

The USA and the USSR began an Arms Race

- 1) During the Cold War, the USA and the USSR worked to develop the most powerful weapons they could — there was an arms race.
- 2) Neither side really wanted to use these weapons, but both felt the other couldn't be allowed to gain an advantage. The fear was that if either gained a significant military advantage, that country might be tempted to trigger a war to take advantage of it.
- 3) Instead, a stand-off developed where both countries didn't dare act against the other, but didn't dare get 'left behind', either.
- 4) This competition sometimes spilled over into other areas. For example, when the USSR launched the first satellite into space, the USA quickly developed one of its own. This 'space race' led to the USSR sending the first man into space in 1961, and to the USA sending astronauts to the Moon in 1969.

Both countries developed Nuclear Stockpiles



- 1) The arms race was also fuelled by the fear and suspicion created by other events. The formation of NATO in 1949 made the USSR feel militarily vulnerable.
- 2) In February 1950, communist China and the USSR signed a treaty of alliance, which strengthened Western fears that the USSR was planning communist domination.

Comment and Analysis

By this point, the USSR and the USA had the power to destroy each other multiple times over. As tensions increased, the threat of nuclear war became a real possibility.

Khrushchev raised hopes of 'Peaceful Co-existence'

In 1953, Stalin died and another member of the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, took power.

Comment and Analysis

Because Khrushchev continued to develop weapons, the West still felt threatened and the arms race didn't slow down.

- 1) Khrushchev said he wanted 'peaceful co-existence' with the West. His words brought hope that there would be a 'thaw' in the Cold War.
- 2) But Khrushchev remained very competitive with the USA.
- 3) He wanted communism to spread, but thought the best way to achieve this was to clearly demonstrate its superiority — not defeat the West in a war.

The rivalry between the USA and the USSR kept on going...

When answering an exam question, always remember to give evidence to back up your points. For this page, you could use the sequence of 'tit for tat' weapons development to show how neither side dared fall behind in the arms race.



Divisions in Eastern Europe

Not all of the USSR's satellite states had willingly accepted communism, and the USSR soon faced unrest.

Unrest began to Stir in the Eastern Bloc

- 1) When Khrushchev came to power, he made a speech criticising Stalin's policies and brought in measures to 'de-Stalinise' the USSR. These included the abolition of the death penalty and the freeing of political prisoners jailed under Stalin's regime.
- 2) Some satellite states hoped that their countries would also become 'de-Stalinised'. Khrushchev abolished the Cominform (see p.69), meaning that states in Eastern Europe would have more political and economic freedom from the USSR.

Communism created a lot of economic hardship — poor living conditions increased anti-Soviet sentiment.

Comment and Analysis

Khrushchev wanted the Eastern Bloc to remain communist — he just didn't agree with Stalin's approach to communism. He thought that giving satellite states more economic independence would stabilise their communist regimes, but his plan backfired.

- 3) These moves allowed tensions in the satellite states to rise to the surface. Not all states had chosen communism, and saw the changes as a chance to loosen ties with the USSR.
- 4) In 1956, there was an uprising in Poland. The USSR threatened to intervene, but eventually allowed the new government to follow their own version of communism. This encouraged other states to consider revolt.

The USSR used the Hungarian Uprising to send a Message

- 1) After the Second World War, the USSR helped put Mátyás Rákosi, a brutal Stalinist, in charge of Hungary. His authoritarian regime became increasingly unpopular. In October 1956, the people of Budapest protested against the government of Rákosi.
- 2) Khrushchev allowed the liberal Imre Nagy to take over from Rákosi as Hungarian Prime Minister. Nagy hoped that Hungary could be a neutral state.
- 3) In November 1956, Nagy announced that Hungary would withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and hold free elections — ending communism there.
- 4) If Hungary was allowed to turn away from communism, other satellite states might do the same. The USSR felt it had to respond with force and make an example of Nagy.
- 5) Khrushchev, who had only held power for two years, also wanted to use the crisis to assert his authority.
- 6) Soviet tanks invaded Hungary in November 1956. Thousands of Hungarians were killed or wounded. Nagy was arrested and hanged. János Kádár became Prime Minister and ensured loyalty towards the USSR.

The crisis Strengthened the USSR and Discredited the West

- 1) Khrushchev's brutal response to Hungary demonstrated to satellite states that disloyalty wouldn't be tolerated. It also showed the Western powers that the USSR was still in control.
- 2) It was a turning point for Khrushchev — his actions reasserted his authority over the satellite states and destroyed any illusions in the West that his leadership signified a 'thaw' in the Cold War.

Western Reactions

- There was a lack of intervention from Western countries. They condemned the USSR's actions, but thought that helping Hungary would risk a nuclear war.
- The UN asked the USSR to withdraw from Hungary, but Kádár refused to take part in discussions. The situation remained unresolved.

Comment and Analysis

The Western powers' reputation as upholders of democracy was discredited. Their inaction sent a clear message to Eastern Europe that they wouldn't receive Western help to move away from the USSR. The UN was shown to be weak.

The USSR kept a tight hold on its satellite states...

Explain the significance of the Hungarian uprising as a factor in keeping the Eastern European satellite states loyal to the USSR. [8]



The Berlin Question

The 1950s saw more communication between the two superpowers, but underlying tensions remained.

There were some Steps to Improve East-West Relations...

President Eisenhower succeeded President Truman in January 1953, while Khrushchev came to power in September. This provided an opportunity to create a fresh start — there were several encouraging steps towards defusing tensions between the two powers:

- The USA and the USSR met in Geneva in 1955 and agreed to communicate more openly.
- In 1955, the USSR officially recognised the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) as a state.
- Khrushchev also freed some prisoners and reduced censorship in the USSR.

...but Berlin remained a Source of Tension

- 1) After the Berlin crisis in 1948 (see p.70), West Berlin was a unified zone and continued to develop economically, benefiting from a new currency and American (Marshall Plan) aid.
- 2) The situation in East Berlin was very different — the USSR had drained it of resources and its economy was slow to develop. Many people wanted to leave and go to the more prosperous West Berlin instead.
- 3) The situation was hugely embarrassing for Khrushchev, as it suggested that people preferred life under capitalism to communism.
- 4) It also threatened East Germany's economy, as many of those who left were skilled workers in search of a better life.
- 5) The refugee crisis in Berlin led Khrushchev to issue his 'Berlin Ultimatum' in 1958. He demanded that US, British and French troops leave West Berlin within six months. West Berlin would become a free city.
- 6) Eisenhower refused the ultimatum. Khrushchev took no further action, but the Berlin issue wasn't solved.



By 1961, at least 3 million East Germans had emigrated from East Berlin to West Berlin.

The Soviet attitude towards Berlin...

- The USSR felt threatened by the economic success in West Berlin.
- East Berlin had become dependent on trade links with West Berlin.
- The USSR worried the West was trying to use its strong economy to interfere in Eastern Europe.

The Western attitude towards Berlin...

- After the Berlin Airlift, West Berlin became a symbol of democracy — it had to be supported or the West would lose credibility.
- People fleeing from East Berlin suited the West — it was good propaganda because it made communism look weak.

Khrushchev and Eisenhower held a Summit in 1959

- 1) In 1959, Khrushchev became the first communist leader to visit the USA. The meeting symbolised a new spirit of co-operation and communication between the two powers.
- 2) At the meeting they discussed Berlin. Eisenhower still didn't agree to withdraw from West Berlin, but did agree to discuss the matter more deeply.
- 3) The leaders decided to meet in Paris the following year. Although no firm decisions had been made, the arrangement of another summit promised to continue the optimistic dialogue they had started.

Both powers refused to compromise on Berlin...

You need to show you understand how events are connected. Here you could show how the superpowers' attitudes towards Berlin were shaped by the Airlift or West Berlin's economic success.



The Berlin Wall

In 1961, around 2000 Germans crossed over from East to West Berlin every day. When it became clear that the situation wasn't going to be solved diplomatically, Khrushchev constructed the Berlin Wall.

Talks about Berlin Broke Down...

- 1) President Eisenhower and Khrushchev had agreed to discuss the Berlin question at the Paris Summit in 1960. Days before the summit was due to take place, the USSR shot down a U2 American spy plane over Soviet territory.
- 2) Eisenhower denied that it was a spy plane, but the USSR then produced the pilot (alive) and the plane's wreckage as evidence. When the USA refused to apologise, Khrushchev walked out of the Paris Summit.
- 3) The U2 incident hindered further negotiations about Berlin. Both countries met again at Vienna in June 1961 — by this time, John F. Kennedy had replaced Eisenhower as US President.
- 4) Kennedy vowed to take a tougher approach towards communism. He refused to compromise over Berlin, and no resolution was reached.

Comment and Analysis

After the Vienna Summit, the USSR believed that problems in Berlin wouldn't be resolved by negotiation. This sparked the creation of the Berlin Wall.

...so the Berlin Wall was Put Up

- 1) Khrushchev felt he had to act to stem the flow of refugees out of East Berlin. On 13th August 1961, a 27-mile barrier was built across the city of Berlin overnight, separating East from West.
- 2) It was fortified with barbed wire and machine gun posts, and was later strengthened and made into a more permanent barrier. Military checkpoints policed any movements into or out of East Berlin.
- 3) Before the wall, East Berliners had entered West Berlin freely. After the wall, they could no longer go to work in West Berlin and were instantly separated from friends and relatives.
- 4) Citizens from East and West Berlin were rarely allowed through the military checkpoints and anyone who tried to escape East Berlin was shot.



A photo of the newly-built Berlin Wall.

© Mary Evans Picture Library/Imagno

The Berlin Wall helped Stabilise the situation in Europe

After the Berlin Wall was put up, Cold War tensions over Berlin stabilised.

The West condemned Khrushchev, but was actually relieved...

- Immediately after the Berlin Wall appeared, Soviet and Western troops were positioned either side of the wall, but then both powers agreed to back down.
- The USA condemned the building of the wall, but took no further military action.
- Kennedy was actually relieved — he'd been preparing for a confrontation of some sort.

'It's not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war' — President Kennedy, 1961.

- 1) The wall succeeded in stopping mass emigration to West Berlin. It also gave East Germany the opportunity to rebuild its economy, and strengthen itself as a communist state.
- 2) In the West, the Berlin Wall became a symbol of oppression and the failure of communism. In the USSR, it was seen as a sign of strength.
- 3) President Kennedy visited West Berlin in 1963 and gave a famous speech stating his solidarity with West Berlin and its people. He declared 'Ich bin ein Berliner' (I am a Berliner).

The wall cemented the divide between East and West Berlin...

Write a summary of the events that led to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.



The Cuban Missile Crisis

As tension was increasing over Berlin, the USA also began to have problems closer to home. Cuba had long been the USA's economic ally, but revolution brought the communist threat to the USA's doorstep.

The Cuban Revolution in 1959 Worried the USA

- 1) Since 1952, Cuba had been ruled by Batista, a ruthless military dictator, who allowed American businessmen and the Mafia to make huge profits in a country where most people lived in poverty.
- 2) In 1956, a rebel called Fidel Castro began a guerrilla war. By 1959, he had enough support to take Cuba's capital, Havana, and successfully overthrew the government.
- 3) This revolution worried the USA. The USA had a long economic history with Cuba. It owned half of Cuba's land and held most of the shares in all Cuban industries.
- 4) The USA felt it had a right to be involved in Cuba's affairs. But Cubans had grown to resent American influence in their country — they didn't feel like an independent state.

In a 'guerrilla war', small military units use tactics like raids to fight a larger opponent.

The USA had occupied Cuba from 1898 to 1902. When Cuba became independent, the two countries maintained close economic ties.

The USA Accidentally pushed Castro Closer to the USSR

- 1) When Castro seized power in 1959, he nationalised US companies and increased taxes on goods imported from America. This angered the USA.
- 2) Eisenhower was concerned that Castro's drive towards public ownership showed that he was moving towards communism.
- 3) He threatened to stop importing Cuban sugar. Sugar was Cuba's main source of wealth, and the USA was sure that Castro would back down.
- 4) Instead, Castro signed a trade agreement with the USSR — the USSR promised to buy all sugar exports. All remaining American property in Cuba was confiscated.
- 5) In January 1961, the USA severed all diplomatic relations with Cuba — the new US President John Kennedy no longer recognised Castro's government.

'Nationalisation' means taking a privately owned industry and placing it under public ownership.

Comment and Analysis

Khrushchev wanted to help Castro, who was sympathetic towards communism. He also saw an opportunity to gain influence near US soil.



By 1961, Cuba had consolidated its ties with the USSR. As Cuba was only 100 miles from the USA, the communist threat had come dangerously close.

Rebels backed by the USA Invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs

Kennedy couldn't let a communist state emerge next to America — he intervened.

- 1) In 1961, Kennedy authorised an invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro rebels.
- 2) In April 1961, the rebels landed in the Bay of Pigs, but they were easily defeated and the USA didn't help — it was a bit of a fiasco.
- 3) The USA was humiliated, and had pushed Cuba even closer to the USSR.

Tensions continued to grow...

- The invasion led Castro to decide that Cuba needed Soviet military assistance to defend itself. This sparked one of the biggest crises of the Cold War — the Cuban Missile Crisis (see p.76).
- In December 1961, Castro publicly announced that he was a communist, confirming US fears.

The Bay of Pigs invasion wasn't Kennedy's finest moment...

In the exam you get marks for how well you organise your ideas. Make sure you've got a clear argument in your head before you start to write your answer — it's best to jot down a plan first.



The Cuban Missile Crisis

Khrushchev agreed to help Castro and began to build nuclear missile sites in Cuba.

Khrushchev planned to put Nuclear Missiles in Cuba

- 1) In September 1961, Cuba asked the USSR for weapons to defend itself against further American intervention. By July 1962, Khrushchev had decided to put nuclear missiles in Cuba.
- 2) Although Khrushchev already had missiles that could reach the USA, missiles in Cuba would allow him to launch a nuclear attack on all of central and eastern USA with very little warning.



- 3) In October 1962, American U2 spy planes spotted that nuclear missile bases were being built in Cuba.
- 4) President Kennedy demanded that Khrushchev dismantle the missile bases and ordered a naval blockade of Cuba. All Soviet ships were to be stopped and searched to prevent missiles being transported to the island.
- 5) As tensions grew, US bombers were put in the air carrying nuclear bombs and the USA prepared to invade Cuba. The world was on the brink of nuclear war.

Comment and Analysis

The USA had placed missiles in Turkey right next to the USSR in April 1962. In Khrushchev's eyes, putting missiles in Cuba was a reasonable response.

On 27th October 1962, Khrushchev made a deal to dismantle the missile bases in Cuba and ordered his ships to turn around. In exchange the USA lifted the blockade, promised to not invade Cuba — and secretly agreed to remove their missiles from Turkey.

The crisis Significantly Altered the Course of the Cold War

The Cuban Missile Crisis was important because it forced everybody to face up to how quickly a tense situation could become an absolute catastrophe. In the short term, efforts were made to defuse tensions and improve communication between the powers.

- In 1963, a telephone 'hotline' was established between Washington and Moscow. This enabled the two superpowers to talk directly and more quickly in the event of a crisis.
- All nuclear missiles were removed from Cuba, and then from Turkey by April 1963.
- Kennedy emerged from the crisis as a hero who had stood up against the threat of communism.
- Khrushchev, however, was discredited — he'd forced the USA to remove their missiles from Turkey, but had agreed to keep the deal a secret. In the eyes of the public he'd failed and he resigned in 1964.

In the long term, the crisis prompted new measures to bring the build up of nuclear weapons under control.

- 1) **The Limited Test Ban Treaty** was signed by both powers in 1963. It stated that all future tests of nuclear weapons had to be carried out underground to avoid polluting the air with nuclear radiation.
- 2) **The Outer Space Treaty** was drawn up in 1967. It forbade countries (including the USSR and the USA) from placing weapons of mass destruction in space.
- 3) **The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** came into force in 1970. Both superpowers agreed not to supply nuclear weapons or related technology to countries that didn't already have nuclear arms. The treaty also encouraged nuclear disarmament, but it allowed countries to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes (e.g. energy).

The Cuban Missile Crisis was one of the most dangerous events in the Cold War, but it also marked the beginning of a period of 'détente' (see p.79).

Signing that Non-Profiterole Treaty must've taken guts...

What was the significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis for the development of the Cold War? [8]

Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91



The Prague Spring

In 1968, discontent within the Soviet Eastern Bloc stirred again. Czechoslovakia wanted more freedom from Moscow, and decided to move away from Soviet influence in a rebellion known as 'the Prague Spring'.

There was **Opposition to Soviet Control in Czechoslovakia**

- 1) Tension had been building in Czechoslovakia. It had become a communist state in 1948 and its policies were heavily influenced by the USSR.
- 2) It was a member of the Warsaw Pact, which discouraged trade with countries outside the Eastern Bloc and promoted Soviet-style communism.
- 3) There was growing discontent about the extent of external control over Czechoslovakian affairs. In 1956, students and writers protested at the lack of free speech and free movement in the country.

Soviet policies such as collectivisation and centralisation slowed economic progress in Czechoslovakia.

Dubcek wanted to **Move Away from Soviet policies**

- 1) In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek became the leader of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. Dubcek wanted Czechoslovakia to follow its own version of communism.
- 2) In April 1968, he introduced a series of reforms that went against Soviet-style communism.

Dubcek's Reforms

- Travel to the West was made available for all.
- The border with West Germany was re-opened.
- All industry became decentralised.
- Trade unions and workers were given more power.
- Freedom of speech and opposition parties were allowed.

Decentralisation meant that companies were no longer controlled by Communist party officials — workers and local authorities were given more power.

- 3) Many of the reforms were aimed at improving the performance of Czechoslovakia's economy — partly by developing closer relations with the West.
- 4) This worried the USSR — it didn't want any Western involvement in its Eastern Bloc.
- 5) Even though some reforms moved away from Soviet policy, Dubcek was still a communist. He promised that Czechoslovakia would stay in the Warsaw Pact and remain a loyal ally to Moscow.
- 6) For four months, Dubcek's new policies were tolerated by the USSR, and Czechoslovakia enjoyed relative freedom. This period is known as the 'Prague Spring'.

The USSR was **Under Pressure to Intervene**

- 1) The USSR grew increasingly concerned about Dubcek's reforms. Dubcek promised he was still loyal to Moscow, but his new policies meant that the USSR had less control over Czechoslovakia.
- 2) The leader of the USSR, Leonid Brezhnev, was worried that Dubcek's reforms could lead to a rejection of communism in the Eastern Bloc and in the USSR itself. If Czechoslovakia pulled away, other satellite states might follow.

Events in August 1968 triggered a Soviet response...

- President Tito of Yugoslavia visited Prague. Yugoslavia had refused to sign the Warsaw Pact and had never accepted the USSR's version of communism. The trip was an ominous sign to Brezhnev that Czechoslovakia was no longer loyal to the USSR.
- The USSR received a letter from communists in Czechoslovakia, asking for help.

Dubcek wanted to **reform Czechoslovakia peacefully...**

In the exam, always read the question carefully and work out what it wants you to do. It's very easy to just describe what happened — but often you need to analyse events, too.



The Prague Spring

In August 1968, the USSR decided to intervene militarily. This led to a new pro-Soviet leader in power and Czechoslovakia returned to Soviet-style communism.

The USSR Invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968

- 1) On 21st August 1968 500,000 Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia.
- 2) The Czechoslovakians responded with non-violent demonstrations — people took to the streets with anti-invasion banners, and in January 1969 a student burned himself alive in the street in protest.
- 3) In April 1969, Ducek was forcibly removed from office, and replaced with Gustav Husak. Husak was loyal to Soviet-style communism, and would ensure that Czechoslovakia remained close with the USSR.

Czechoslovakia was keen to avoid the violence that erupted in the 1956 Hungarian uprising (see p.72).

Countries Criticised the USSR, but Didn't Act

There was an international outcry at the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, but no action was taken.



© Mary Evans / Iferfoto

Warsaw Pact forces enter Prague in August 1968.

- The UN denounced the invasion and proposed a draft resolution requesting the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. This was vetoed (rejected) by the USSR.
- Many countries condemned the Soviet action but didn't intervene. They were wary of interfering within the USSR's sphere of influence.
- Communist parties in the West criticised Brezhnev's reaction and sought to distance themselves from Soviet influence.

Comment and Analysis

Countries were wary of taking action against the USSR. The Prague Spring occurred at a time when the Cold War had thawed slightly. Nobody wanted to re-ignite tensions between the two superpowers.

The lack of reaction from the UN and the West made the Western powers appear weak.

The Prague Spring Strengthened the USSR

- 1) The USSR succeeded in returning Czechoslovakia to Soviet-style communism.
- 2) Brezhnev used the Prague Spring as an opportunity to establish his authority in the Eastern Bloc. He showed he was prepared to invade a friendly satellite state in order not to weaken the anti-Western alliance. He also proved to the USA that he was a strong and determined leader.

Brezhnev Doctrine

- After the invasion, Brezhnev announced that in future the USSR would intervene in any country where communism was under threat.
- The Brezhnev Doctrine was important because it strengthened the USSR's control over its satellite states.
- It also sent a message to the Eastern Bloc that giving up communism wasn't an option — the USSR would respond with force.

- 3) Soviet-American relations continued to be strained. Despite recent moves towards reducing the nuclear threat (see p.76), both countries still distrusted one another.
- 4) The incident reminded both superpowers that the Cold War wasn't over. Brezhnev had proved he was still willing to risk conflict to uphold communism in the Eastern Bloc.

The USSR regained control — the Cold War got chillier...

Look back at pages 73-78. Make a timeline of the main crises that occurred in the Cold War between 1958 and 1970, and summarise what happened in each one.



Détente — Easing of Tensions

In the 1970s there was a period of 'détente' — an easing in tension between the two superpowers.

The policy of **Détente** was **Practical**

Détente wasn't just goodwill — it was also a sensible policy for both countries.

- 1) The 1960s were marked by crises, including some of the most tense moments in the Cold War (p.73-78). Both the USA and the USSR wanted to avoid other near misses.
- 2) Boosting military power hadn't succeeded in reducing tensions. Both countries recognised that a new strategy was needed.
- 3) Both countries were also keen to reduce their military spending — the arms race was extremely expensive and led to falling standards of living.

Comment and Analysis

The USSR was especially worried about falling living standards in the Eastern Bloc. In 1970, there were riots in Poland in response to high living costs.

The Superpowers agreed to **Reduce Arms and Cooperate**

The two superpowers developed closer relations under détente. In 1975, Soviet and American spacecraft docked together in space. However, the most significant progress was achieved through diplomacy.

The First Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT 1) 1972

- 1) SALT 1 was a treaty signed in 1972 by the USA and the USSR. It limited the number of ABMs (anti-ballistic missiles) each country could have and placed a temporary limit on the numbers of ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) on both sides.
- 2) ABMs were designed to intercept incoming missiles and had the potential to upset the delicate 'nuclear balance' between the USSR and the USA.
- 3) In the short term, the treaty was a success because it slowed down the arms race.

Comment and Analysis

By limiting the number of ABMs each country could have, SALT 1 reduced the likelihood of one country holding an advantage over the other.

If one side could use ABMs to destroy the other side's missiles then the threat of retaliation would be gone. The side with ABMs could launch a first strike and then just destroy the missiles that were fired back towards it.

The Helsinki Agreement 1975

- 1) The Helsinki Agreement in 1975 was a pact between the USA, the USSR, Canada and most of Europe. All countries agreed to recognise existing European borders and to uphold human rights.
- 2) Both superpowers accepted the division of Germany and the USSR's influence over Eastern Europe.
- 3) The West viewed the USSR's agreement to uphold human rights as great progress, but the USSR didn't stick to its word. It didn't grant freedom of speech or freedom of movement to its citizens. This undermined the Helsinki agreement and made the USA distrust the USSR.

The Second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT 2) 1979

- 1) The SALT 2 Treaty was signed in 1979. The treaty banned the USA and the USSR from launching new missile programmes and limited the number of MIRVs (Multiple Independently targetable Reentry Vehicles) each country could have.
- 2) However the treaty was never ratified (approved) by the US Senate, so it didn't come into effect. See p.80 for more information.

MIRVs are weapons which can carry several missiles at once and deploy them to different targets.

The superpowers took important steps towards limiting their nuclear arms during détente, but both countries continued to hold vast stockpiles of weapons.

You'd better learn this, or I'll put you in détente-tion...

- 1) *Not down a quick summary of why both powers wanted to pursue détente.*
- 2) *Write out a table listing the successes and failures of détente.*



The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

The Soviet War in Afghanistan was a turning point for détente in the 1970s — it demolished the trust that had been so carefully built up between the USA and the USSR.

The USSR got bogged down in a War in Afghanistan

- 1) In 1978, a civil war broke out in Afghanistan. Rebels were protesting at new radical reforms brought in by the Afghan communist government, which had close ties to the Soviet Union.
- 2) The Afghan government requested help from the USSR, which invaded Afghanistan in December 1979.
- 3) This decision turned out to be a disaster — the USSR found itself in a seemingly unwinnable conflict.
- 4) It had to fight in difficult mountainous terrain against determined opposition, who were supplied with weapons by the USA.

Comment and Analysis

The USSR used the Brezhnev Doctrine (see p.78) to justify the invasion. It was also concerned by the idea of an anti-Soviet government in Afghanistan, as the countries shared a border.

Around 1 million Afghan civilians were killed and over 6 million became refugees.

The War was Disastrous for the USSR

- 1) 15,000 Soviet troops were killed and the government spent huge amounts of money, but the USSR couldn't win.
- 2) The Soviet-Afghan War led to a loss of public support in the USSR for the communist regime. The Soviet people were angry at falling living standards, which had deteriorated as a direct result of high spending in Afghanistan.

Comment and Analysis

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he admitted that the USSR couldn't afford to keep fighting. In 1988, he began withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan (see p.82).

It didn't work out too well for Brezhnev internationally, either...

- The war was an embarrassment for Brezhnev and undermined the USSR's strong military reputation, which was essential for keeping its satellite states under control.
- In January 1980, the UN condemned the invasion. It proposed a resolution demanding Soviet withdrawal, but the resolution was vetoed (rejected) by the USSR.
- In 1980, the USA and over 50 other countries (including Canada and West Germany) boycotted the Moscow Olympic Games, in protest at the Soviet-Afghan War.

The Superpowers began to Move Away from Détente

The war caused tension between the USSR and the USA to resurface. The situation was as dangerous as ever.

- 1) Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was interpreted by the USA as an act of communist expansionism. In 1979, US President Jimmy Carter was so alarmed he stopped the SALT 2 Treaty (see p.79) being debated by the US Senate, meaning it could never come into effect. Instead he called for an increase in the defence budget.
- 2) The USA was also worried that the USSR was trying to gain influence in the Persian Gulf, close to the Afghan border. The oil-rich area had formed close economic ties with the West, and Carter thought Soviet influence in Afghanistan threatened US interests there.
- 3) Carter warned that the USA would use force to prevent the USSR from gaining control of the Gulf region. This warning became known as the Carter Doctrine.



The Carter Doctrine was the first threat of aggression between the superpowers since détente.

The USSR bit off more than it could chew...

If you're asked about the importance of an event, think about its knock-on effects, e.g. the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan contributed to the end of détente and harmed Brezhnev's popularity.

EXAM TIP

The Second Cold War

Cold War tensions were resurrected during the 1980s, in a period now known as the 'Second Cold War'.

Reagan Boosted American Defences

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the policy of détente was badly damaged. It was in even more danger when US President Carter was succeeded by President Ronald Reagan in January 1981.

- 1) Ronald Reagan was a hardline anti-communist. His speeches were often full of anti-Soviet rhetoric and he called the USSR an 'evil empire'. This increased hostility between the two superpowers.
- 2) Reagan didn't believe in the policy of détente. He was willing to negotiate with the USSR, but only from a position of strength.
- 3) This meant he wanted to increase American defences. American intelligence gathered in 1976 also suggested that the USA had underestimated the USSR's nuclear strength, and the USA felt it had to catch up.

This worried the USSR
— it couldn't afford to
match Reagan's spending.

Reagan started the biggest arms build-up in American history...

- In the 1980s the USA spent \$550 billion a year on conventional and nuclear weapons.
- Reagan also re-authorised some weapons programmes that had been abandoned during détente. The USA began to develop the neutron bomb, which was designed to cause maximum loss of life and minimum damage to property.

The USA Launched the Strategic Defence Initiative

Relations between the superpowers worsened when Reagan announced his Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

- 1) In March 1983, Reagan announced the development of the Strategic Defence Initiative, nicknamed 'Star Wars'.
- 2) The program would develop weapons that would be deployed in space and that could destroy nuclear missiles after they had been launched.
- 3) It would be the ultimate defence system — even nuclear missiles already heading towards the USA could be stopped.
- 4) If successful, the SDI would shift the balance of the Cold War in the USA's favour.
- 5) By 1983, détente was truly over.

Comment and Analysis

The SDI is a typical example of the differing perspectives that kept the Cold War going. For the USA, the SDI was a means of defence. But the USSR viewed it as an act of aggression — the USA would theoretically be able to attack the USSR without fear of retaliation.



© Mary Evans / Imagno

There were anti-nuclear demonstrations as old fears resurfaced. This demonstration took place in Vienna in 1983. The banner reads 'create peace without weapons'.

Reagan's attitude Changed after 1985

- 1) When Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the USSR in March 1985, Reagan reassessed his attitude towards the USSR.
- 2) Gorbachev proposed radical reforms and was far more open towards the West than previous Soviet leaders. Reagan recognised that the USSR was being steered in a new direction.
- 3) The USA realised that this change could be good. Although initiatives like the SDI weren't scrapped, Reagan thought negotiation was now the best way to protect American interests.
- 4) Importantly, the two leaders got on well, creating a better relationship between the superpowers.

Gorbachev's leadership brought about a thaw in Cold War tensions, and the return of détente.

In the early 1980s, the Cold War Re-gained momentum...

Give an account that analyses the role that Reagan's attitude played in the ending of détente. You could mention his fears about the USSR and the Strategic Defence Initiative. [8]



Gorbachev's 'New Thinking'


Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the USSR and radically **changed** Soviet policies. This was one of the biggest **turning points** in the Cold War — it laid the foundations for the **collapse** of the USSR.

The Cold War created a Crisis in the USSR

- 1) The **arms race** with the USA and the war in Afghanistan were hugely **expensive** and the Soviet economy just couldn't **support** this level of spending.
- 2) Soviet goods were **poor quality** and Soviet **farming** was **inefficient** — there **wasn't enough food** and millions of tonnes of grain had to be **imported** from the USA.
- 3) The communist government was becoming more **corrupt** and was unable to give the Soviet people the **same high living standards** as people had in the West.

By the 1980s, Soviet citizens were becoming increasingly **discontent**.

Gorbachev introduced Radical Reforms

- 1) In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party. He was **more open** to the West than previous leaders and he admitted that the Soviet system had **problems**.
- 2) He introduced two major policies — '**perestroika**' and '**glasnost**'. 

Perestroika means 'restructuring'...

- Gorbachev wanted to make the Soviet economy more **efficient**.
- He moved away from the **centralisation** of industry — the government no longer told businesses exactly **what** they had to produce.
- Gorbachev also allowed private business ownership and allowed Soviet businesses to **trade** with the **Western** powers.

Perestroika and glasnost were part of what is known as Gorbachev's 'New Thinking'. Changes to foreign policy were part of it too.

Glasnost means 'openness'...

- Gorbachev gave the Soviet people **new rights**.
- Thousands of **political prisoners** were **released**.
- **Free speech** was allowed and censorship was **relaxed**.
- In 1989, Gorbachev created the USSR's first **elected** parliament — Communist Party officials were chosen by the **public** for the first time.

Comment and Analysis

Gorbachev **didn't want to end** communism — he wanted to **modernise** it. He hoped that reform would **revive** the USSR's struggling economy, which was falling **further behind** the USA's.

Gorbachev changed Foreign Policy

- 1) Gorbachev **improved relations** with the **West**. He met with US President Reagan several times, for example at the **Geneva Summit** in 1985. Gorbachev's **open attitude** softened Reagan's **hard approach**.
- 2) In 1987, a **disarmament treaty** was signed — the **INF Treaty** (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty). The USA and the USSR agreed to **remove** medium-range nuclear **missiles** from Europe within three years.
- 3) The first missiles were **dismantled** in 1988. The INF Treaty was a **milestone** in American-Soviet relations — both countries **actively reduced weapons** for the first time.
- 4) Gorbachev reduced the scale of the USSR's commitments abroad. In 1988, he announced that all Soviet troops would **withdraw** from **Afghanistan**.
- 5) In 1988, he also announced the immediate **reduction** of the USSR's **weapons stockpile** and the **number of troops** in the Soviet armed forces.

Gorbachev's **decrease** in military spending and his decision to **withdraw** from Afghanistan **greatly defused** tensions between the superpowers.

In 1988, Gorbachev decided to **abandon** the **Brezhnev Doctrine** (see p.78). He told the United Nations that Eastern Europe now had a **choice** — the USSR **wasn't** going to **control** it any longer.

Gorbachev wanted to improve communism...

Draw a table with three columns labelled 'perestroika', 'glasnost' and 'foreign policy'. Put each of Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' policies into the table under the correct heading.



Eastern Europe Pulls Away

Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' was intended to modernise communism, but actually sparked its decline.

The satellite states **No Longer Feared the USSR**

Gorbachev's decision to abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine led to the USSR losing control of its satellite states.

- Gorbachev stated the USSR would no longer use force to uphold communism in its satellite states. In 1988, he announced the withdrawal of Soviet troops, tanks and aircraft from Eastern Europe.
- It was fear of Soviet military intervention that had kept opposition movements under control within the USSR's satellite states. Without it, they had a chance to act.

'New Thinking' **Energised Opposition**

- The nature of Gorbachev's new policies encouraged reformist movements within Eastern Europe.
- Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' also caused splits in the Soviet Communist Party, making control of Eastern European countries from Moscow more difficult.

Some members thought that Gorbachev's reforms weren't radical enough, and others worried they were too radical.

The Berlin Wall **Fell in November 1989**

- In May 1989, communist Hungary opened its border with non-communist Austria. This let East Germans travel through Hungary to Austria, and then into West Germany.
- Between August and September 1989, thousands left East Germany for West Germany. The East German government was unable to control the situation, and received no help from the USSR.
- In October 1989, there were mass protests against the communist regime. The East German government finally agreed to open the border between East and West Berlin in November 1989. Free elections were promised and the wall was torn down.
- The fall of the Berlin Wall showed that the relationship between East and West was transforming, and that the USSR was losing its grip over communist territory.



© Mary Evans / Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo

As news of the decision to open the wall spread, Berliners gathered at the wall. Here, East German officials wait for orders.

Communist governments in Eastern Europe started to **Collapse**

- Free elections were also held in Poland in June 1989. In 1990, a new non-communist government came to power. The USSR didn't intervene.
- In December 1989, communist governments collapsed in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Hungary's Communist Party suffered a large defeat in free elections in March 1990.

In October 1990, communist East Germany and democratic West Germany rejoined to form a single state again. For many people this was a powerful symbol that the communist experiment was over.

Comment and Analysis

The reunification of Germany and the decline of communism in the USSR's satellite states symbolised a new thaw in the Cold War. Europe was no longer ideologically divided between East and West.

The satellite states eventually got a bit of space...

Look back at the information on Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' and the effect it had on Europe. Make a timeline of events between 1988 and 1990.



The Collapse of the Soviet Union

Despite the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Cold War wasn't over until the USSR collapsed.

The Republics of the USSR Wanted Independence

As the USSR lost its grip on its satellite states, it was undergoing a national crisis.

- 1) In early 1990, some important regions in the Soviet Union demanded independence, especially the Baltic republics — Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.
- 2) They were encouraged by the recent success of revolutions across Eastern Europe (see p.83) and by Gorbachev's policy of 'glasnost' (openness), which gave greater power to individuals and encouraged constructive criticism of Soviet policy.
- 3) Gorbachev didn't want to lose the Republics. He granted them more power — but it wasn't enough.
- 4) The leaders of the Soviet republics no longer listened to Gorbachev, and he lacked the authority to make them comply with Soviet wishes.

The USSR was made up of 15 republics. Each republic had its own parliament, but was centrally controlled by Moscow.

- Lithuania declared itself independent in March 1990. Soviet troops were sent to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, in January 1991, and several civilians were killed in the violence that followed. But this only strengthened the independence movement.
- In April 1991, Georgia declared its independence, followed by the Ukraine's declaration in August.

Military intervention no longer deterred protests, it escalated them.

As Gorbachev's authority weakened, independence movements gained in strength.

There was a Political Crisis in the USSR

By 1990, Gorbachev faced opposition from within his own party and the public. The Communist Party was divided — some members wanted more drastic reform and others wanted a return to former Soviet policies. The public were unhappy because Gorbachev's reforms hadn't lived up to their high expectations.

- 1) More traditional Soviet communists were worried that the Communist Party was so divided it was going to split up.
- 2) They thought Gorbachev's reforms had gone too far and plotted a coup against the government in August 1991.
- 3) They arrested Gorbachev, tried to force him to resign, and sent tanks onto the streets of Moscow to deter protesters.
- 4) The coup didn't go to plan — it was condemned by Boris Yeltsin, a Soviet politician who opposed Gorbachev and wanted the USSR to adopt capitalism.
- 5) Yeltsin went onto the streets to rally opposition against the coup. There were mass protests in major cities, showing that Soviets had clearly rejected communism. The coup failed.

Economic reforms hadn't worked

- The USSR's economy hadn't improved, and in 1990 a quarter of its population was living below the poverty line.
- Economic corruption was still rife.
- Inflation was high and basic goods were in short supply.
- The huge costs of the arms race and the war in Afghanistan hindered the reforms too.

The Soviet Union Collapsed

- 1) On Christmas Day 1991, Gorbachev resigned.
- 2) The USSR was dissolved on the 26th December.
- 3) The republics that made up the Soviet Union had become independent states. These included Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Belarus.
- 4) The biggest of the republics was Russia. Yeltsin was elected leader and adopted capitalism.

As more and more countries declared their independence from the USSR, they also declared their intentions to pull out of the Warsaw Pact (p.70). This made it weaker and it eventually ended in July 1991.

The dissolution of the USSR marked the end of the Cold War...

Explain two reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union. [8]

EXAM QUESTION

Revision Summary

That pretty much sums up the Cold War — now all you have to do is check it's all sunk in.

- Try these questions and tick off each one when you get it right.
- When you've done all the questions for a topic and are completely happy with it, tick off the topic.

The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-58 (p.67-72) ☒

- 1) What was the Grand Alliance? ☐
- 2) Describe the different ideologies followed by the USA and the USSR. ☐
- 3) Why was the USSR in a position of influence over Eastern Europe after the Second World War? ☐
- 4) What did Churchill mean when he said an 'Iron Curtain' divided Europe? ☐
- 5) Why were the Long and Novikov Telegrams important? ☐
- 6) What was the Truman Doctrine? ☐
- 7) What was the Cominform? What did it do? ☐
- 8) Describe the events of the Berlin Airlift. ☐
- 9) Give two consequences of the 1948-49 Berlin Crisis. ☐
- 10) What is meant by an 'arms race'? ☐
- 11) What did Khrushchev mean by 'peaceful co-existence'? ☐
- 12) Give two consequences of the Hungarian uprising. ☐

Cold War Crises, 1958-70 (p.73-78) ☒

- 13) Why was Berlin a source of tension between the superpowers? ☐
- 14) Describe Khrushchev's 'Berlin Ultimatum' of 1958. ☐
- 15) How did the Paris and Vienna Summits affect the USSR's attitude towards Berlin? ☐
- 16) Give two consequences of the establishment of the Berlin Wall. ☐
- 17) Describe the main events of the Cuban Missile Crisis. How did it alter the course of the Cold War? ☐
- 18) Why did the USSR end the Prague Spring? ☐
- 19) How did other countries react to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia? ☐
- 20) What was the Brezhnev Doctrine? ☐

The End of the Cold War (p.79-84) ☒

- 21) What does 'détente' mean? ☐
- 22) Name three treaties signed by the superpowers in the 1970s. ☐
- 23) How did the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan change relations between the USA and the USSR? ☐
- 24) What was US President Reagan's attitude towards détente? ☐
- 25) What was the SDI? ☐
- 26) When did Mikhail Gorbachev become leader in the USSR? ☐
- 27) What were 'perestroika' and 'glasnost'? ☐
- 28) How did Gorbachev change Soviet foreign policy? ☐
- 29) Why did opposition to communism rise in Eastern Europe after 1988? ☐
- 30) Why was there a political crisis in the USSR by 1990? ☐
- 31) Describe the events that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union from 1990-91. ☐