

Superpower Relations and the Cold War (1941 – 91)

SECTION 1: The origins of the Cold War, 1941 – 58

Cold war – a situation of hostility which does not become open hostility

Hot war – when two sides are actually fighting each other

Capitalism – the focus is on individual rights, freedom and free trade. Have democratic elections with multiple parties

Communism – the focus is on the rights of the working class and equality. The economy is planned by the government. The Communist Party controls the government

- Two political ideologies clashing

History of Russia

- Russian revolution, abdication of Tzar and murder of Romanovs in 1918
- The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR/Soviet Union) formed in 1922
- 1928, Stalin, a communist, takes control as a dictator, feared as a communist empire

The Grand Alliance

- Russia, Britain and the USA formed the Grand Alliance in 1941 to defeat the Nazis
- A marriage of convenience between communists and capitalists united only by their opposition to Hitler, once he had been defeated, the Alliance became increasingly unsteady
- Discussed how much to fine Germany and how much each country gets of Germany

Name	Position	Beliefs
Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882 – 1945)	President of USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Believed strongly in democracy – Was more lenient in negotiations with Stalin as he thought he would need Soviet support in Japan – Believed USSR should be recognised as a superpower
Winston Churchill (1874 – 1965)	Prime Minister of Britain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Traditional values and believed in the British Empire – suspicious of Stalin – Saw his role as trying to stop Soviet expansion
Joseph Stalin (1878 – 1953)	Leader of the Soviet Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthened one-party rule – Cut back on people's individual rights – Convinced that the West wanted to destroy communism, so was very firm in negotiations

Tehran Conference Nov 1943

- Met to plan a winning strategy to end the war
- USA and Britain ease pressure on the Eastern Front by launching an attack on the Western Front
- USSR would help USA fight Japan once the war in Europe was over
- Discussed future of Germany and agreed it should be kept weak
- Laid foundations for the United Nations

Yalta Conference Feb 1945

against the government and communist regime, so the Soviet government sent an armed force to restore order

- By 1958, three million East Germans had crossed to the West which caused a 'brain drain' as skilled workers such as engineers and teachers left East Germany, knowing they could earn higher wages in the West
- Khrushchev's answer to the 'brain drain' was for Berlin to become part of East Germany to make it harder for people to move from the East to the West. He demanded Western countries recognise East Germany as an independent country, but they refused as they believed Berlin could still be reunited
- Khrushchev issued the Berlin Ultimatum in Nov 1958. It stated that Berlin should be demilitarised and Western troops withdrawn, making Berlin a free city (one with an independent government). The West had six months to make these changes or Khrushchev would take control over all travel routes into Berlin. This would force the West to talk to East German authorities, thus acknowledging East German as a legitimate country
- Eisenhower did not want to lose West Berlin and did not want war, so he agreed to have an international meeting
- In the first two meetings (Geneva, May 1959 and Camp David, Sept 1959) there was some progress made, however, just before the third meeting (Paris, May 1960) the USSR shot down an American spy plane over the USSR and captured the pilot. Eisenhower refused to apologise, and Khrushchev walked out of the meeting
- At the Vienna Conference 1961 (John F. Kennedy president) neither side wanted to back down. Khrushchev exploited Kennedy's inexperience as a weakness and the Berlin Ultimatum was renewed for another six months

The Berlin Wall

- East German troops secretly erected a barbed wire fence during the night of 12th August 1961
- Soviet tanks were sent to block further Western access to the East to stand off with the USA
- 136 people were killed at the Wall between 1961 and 1989
- In October 1964, 57 people escaped through a 145-metre tunnel, dug by students from a disused bakery on the street near Checkpoint Charlie
- Peter Fetcher was an eighteen-year-old East Berliner who attempted to escape to the West with a friend. He was fatally shot and left to die in no-man's land. His death became a symbol of the East German border regime's inhumanity

Kennedy's Speech in West Berlin

- Stated the proudest boast was to 'be a Berliner' 'Ich bin ein Berliner'
- Said the wall 'is an offence against history and humanity, separating families, dividing husbands and wives and brothers and sisters, and dividing up people who wish to be joined together.'

Reykjavik Summit (October 1986)

- Gorbachev proposed phasing out nuclear weapons and offered an increasing number of concessions. The price of these concessions was the withdrawal of SDI. At this summit Reagan was not prepared to put SDI on the negotiating table
- No agreement was reached but there was a positive increase in relations

Washington Summit (December 1987)

- Gorbachev accepted that the US would not scrap SDI and that the USSR's best interests lay in agreements on disarmament, reducing spending on weapons and better relations with the West
- The Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement was signed, stating that both countries would abolish all intermediate-range ballistic missiles
- The first time the superpowers had agreed to arms reduction rather than arms control.

Moscow Summit (May – June 1988)

- Resolved some complex detail related to the INF Treaty
- Later in the year, Gorbachev met Reagan in New York and announced a reduction in Warsaw Pact troops and that Soviet forces would leave Afghanistan

Malta Summit (December 1989)

- First full summit between Bush and Gorbachev. The two leaders established a good working relationship, no new agreements were made but both leaders declared the Cold War to be over

The End of Soviet Control in Eastern Europe

Country	Date	Other information
Hungary	May 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The government takes down the fence along the border with non-communist Austria – Promises a new democratic government, with free elections held in October
Poland	June 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Solidarity is legalised and wins a landslide victory in Polish elections
East Germany	Sept 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Huge numbers of East Germans leave for the West, travelling through Hungary to Austria – On 11th September, 125,000 East Germans cross the border
East Germany	Oct 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gorbachev refuses to help the East German government put down demonstrations
East Germany	Nov 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The East German government announces that the border crossing to West Berlin will be opened – Thousands of East Berliners force their way through the crossing. People on both sides start pulling the wall down – East and West Germany are formally reunited in 1990
Czechoslovakia	Nov 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The 'Velvet Revolution' overthrows the communist government – The anti-communist Vaclav Havel is elected president