Superpower relations and the Cold War 1941-1991 Timeline of Events

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| **Dates** | **Events** |
| **1941**  **East and West** | **Creation of the Grand Alliance – USA, USSR and Britain – to join forces to fight the Nazi’s in WW1.** |
| **1943**  **East and West** | **Tehran Conference – The Grand Alliance Meet 1st time– Positive meeting**   * Britain and American agree to open a second front by invading France in 1944 * Soviets agreed to attack Japan once Germany were defeated. * UN to be set up after the war. * Borders of Poland moved further West at the request of Stalin |
| **1945**  **East and West** | **Yalta Conference – The Grand Alliance Meet 2nd time – Positive**   * Germany to be divided into four zones after the war – Britain, France, USA and USSR to control a zone. * Hunt and try Nazi criminals * Free elections for countries who had been taken over and controlled by the Nazi’s during WW2. * Eastern Europe would be a Soviet ‘sphere of influence’. |
| **1945**  **East and West** | **Potsdam Conference – The Grand Alliance Meet 3rd time – Negative**   * Germany and its capital Berlin to be divided into four zones. * Germany to be demilitarised * Democracy returned to Germany * Nazi Party banned * Germany to pay reparations to Allies of equipment and materials.   However they disagreed over how much compensation should be paid by Germany. US said not too much so Germany could repair them. Also disagreed about the free elections, US wanted all Eastern European countries to have free elections but USSR disagreed as they had already liberated and lept control over some countries influencing communism. |
| **1945-1948**  **East** | **Creation of the Satellite States**   * Stalin created a ‘buffer zone’ taking control or influencing countries along their border in Eastern Europe to become communist. Protect their border from the capitalist West. * Lativa, Estonia and Lithuania – Baltic states under full control of Soviet Union. * Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia were ‘influenced’ in their free elections by the USSR and these became communist countries, part of the satellite states and ‘sphere of influence’. |
| **1946**  **West** | **Churchill’s ‘Iron Curtain’ Speech**   * Churchill made a speech to say an ‘iron curtain’ had been closed between the West and East. |
| **1946**  **West** | **Long Telegram**   * USA representative in Moscow sent a telegram to USA to say Moscow disliked capitalism. This increased tension. |
| **1946**  **East** | **Novikov Telegram**   * In response to the USA telegram, the USSR ambassador in the USA sent a telegram to Moscow to say that the USA disliked communism and the USA were willing to go to war to prevent the spread of it. This increased tension. |
| **1947**  **West** | **Truman Doctrine**   * Created to prevent the spread of communism. Greece was at threat of a communist takeover and Britain could not afford to help so the USA stepped in and prevent military support and money. Greece avoided becoming communist. * Truman doctrine was for the US to provide military support to stop the spread of communism in Europe. |
| **1947**  **East** | **Cominform**   * Created in response to the Truman Doctrine. * Stalin used this to secure his control over the satellite states, so they followed communism and took orders from Moscow. * Satellite states could only trade with other satellite states and all contact with non-communist countries was not allowed. * Propaganda was spread to discourage the spread of capitalism. |
| **1947**  **West** | **Marshall Plan**   * Linked to the Truman Doctrine. * USA was to provide money to countries that had been affected by war in WW2. * This was to encourage the countries to improve their economy and so avoid the threat of communism from spreading to them. USA gave $12.7 billion out to countries to prevent the spread of communism. * USSR saw this as ‘dollar imperialism’ |
| **1948-49**  **East and West** | **The Berlin Crisis – Berlin Blockade**   * Berlin had been divided into four zones due to the Potsdam conference agreements. * USA, Britain and France decided to run their zones together to support co-operation. This was called Trizonia. * As part of Trizonia, a new currency was created, the Deutschmark which created a separate economy from the East. * Stalin saw this as the countries ‘ganging up’ on the East. * Stalin knew West Berlin was vulnerable because it was surrounded by Soviet controlled territory. There were only two land routes and two air routes or ‘corridors’ that the West were allowed to use to deliver supplies to West Berlin. * June 1948 – Stalin decided to shut off the land routes into West Berlin called the Berlin blockade. He wanted to prove that even though they had merged their zones, they were still week. Stalin hoped that West Berlin would join forces with the East. * If the West tried to force supplies through the land routes, it might have been seen as military action so the West needed another plan. |
| **1948-49**  **West and East** | **The Berlin Airlift – Operation Vittles**   * Western Allies flew food, coal and other necessities to the allied zones uing the air corridors. * The pilots took a huge risk as they could not be sure the Soviets would not shoot them down. * People of West Berlin and Western troops in the city joined forces and built a new runway at the old Berlin airport so supplies could be delivered. Over a 1,000 tonnes of supplies were delivered every day for 10 months by the USA and Britain. * 9th May 1949 – after nearly a year of blockade, Stalin ended the blockade. He had lost and the allies looked good as they had avoided war. |
| **1949**  **West** | **NATO set up**   * NATO was created by Western countries as they saw Stalin as a potential military threat after the Berlin blockade and the communist take-over of Czechoslovakia the same year. * Britain, France, USA and 9 other Western countries created NATO to protect each other. If one country was being attacked, all members would come to assist. * This led to American military presence in Europe, which has continued to this day. |
| **1949**  **West** | **Formation of Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)**   * 3 days after the end of the Berlin Blockade, the 3 zones of West Germany, Trizonia became a state called FRG. The people of West Germany could elect their own government and a chancellor was elected. Its capital was Bonn. |
| **1949**  **East** | **Formation of German Democratic Republic (GDR)**   * Stalin’s response to the creation of FRG by the West was the creation of the GDR. Only the communist bloc countries recognised it as a nation. FRG refused to recognised East Germany until the 1970s. * For the next 40 years, people spoke about West and East Germany. |
| **1949**  **East** | **Comecon set up**   * In response to the Marshall Plan. USSR to provide money to communist countries to prevent the spread of capitalism and the temptation of taking the Marshall plan money from the USA. |
| **1949 onwards**  **West and East** | **Arms race increases between USSR and USA**   * Atomic bomb developed by USA in 1945 * Soviet atomic bomb developed in 1949 * In response the USA developed the Hydrogen bomb in 1952. It was 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb. * Soviets developed a Hydrogen bomb in 1953. * In responses the USA created the ICBM – Inter-continental ballistic missile – which could launch a nuclear weapon at a longer distance. * A few months later the USSR developed their own ICBMs. |
| **1955**  **East** | **Creation of the Warsaw Pact**   * When West Germany joined NATO in May 1955, the USSR saw this as a threat towards East Germany. * The Warsaw Pact was a reaction to NATO and had the same principle as NATO, the Eastern European countries became members who would support each other in military action if threatened by their enemies. * These countries that made up the Warsaw pact – Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia. Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and GDR became known as the Eastern Bloc. |
| **1956**  **East** | **Hungarian Uprising**   * Protests in Hungary due to fuel shortages and poor harvest. Also protests of the lack of political freedom. * Protesters clashed with Soviet troops so Khrushchev replaced the leader Rakosi with Imre Nagy. He believed in the communist beliefs and he ended the protests. * Within days Nagy proposed reforms He wanted to introduce non-communists to the government, ending a one-party government. He also released political prisoners. * On the 1st Nov 1956 Nagy announced that Hungary was going to leave the Warsaw pact. * Khrushchev said this was a step too far as it could influence other satellite countries to step away from Moscow control with would weaken the Satellite states. * 1,000 tanks were sent into Hungary to stop Nagy and his reforms. * Nagy asked for helped from the West, as part of the Truman doctrine promise but the West ignored them. * Nagy and his supporters were arrested and Nagy was executed. The death was seen as a threat to other satellite state leaders. * A new communist leader was put in charge of Hungary to keep securing and following Moscow instructions. |
| **1957**  **East** | **Launch of Sputnik**   * USSR launched a satellite into space, seen as a big development in technology. Threat to the USA. |
| **1958**  **East** | **Khrushchev’s Berlin Ultimatum**   * Many people were leaving East Berlin to move to West Berlin because there was more money and jobs available under the West’s control. * Khrushchev ordered a Berlin ultimatum. He wanted Berlin to be a free city (a city with its own independent government – under Moscow control) He also wanted all allied troops out of Berlin. He gave the allies 6 months to make these changes or he would block supply routes. * This had a large negative impact on international relations. * The ultimatum lead to a number of summits to try and work out how to deal with the Berlin problem. |
| **1959**  **East and West** | **Geneva Summit**   * First summit to try and deal with the Berlin problem, which did not work**.** |
| **1959**  **East And West** | **Camp David Summit**   * Second summit to try and deal with the Berlin problem, which did not work. |
| **1959**  **East** | **Revolution in Cuba**   * Cuban rebels took over the Cuban government by force. Cuba became a communist country. USA saw this as a threat having communism on their door step. |
| **1960**  **West and East** | **Paris Summit**   * More talks to try and deal with the Berlin problem but during the talks, the Soviets announced they had shot down a US spy plane over the Soviet Union. They interrogated the pilot who admitted he was spying. * The US refused to apologise so USSR stormed out of the talks. |
| **1961**  **West and East** | **Bay of Pigs Incident**   * USA used Cuban exiles, which did not support communism, to return to Cuba to remove the communist government. It was supposed to look like a counter-Cuban attack and not the USA being involved. * However the uprising failing because: the exiles were not well trained, Castro who was head of the communist government in Cuba had been told about the plan and was waiting for them at the Bay of Pigs to attack them – 20,000 soldiers against the 1,400 Cuban exiles. * Bay of Pigs was humiliating to the US. * Khrushchev improved his friendship with Cuba and publicly announced they would supply arms to them * US saw this as a threat to them. |
| **1961**  **East** | **Vienna Summit**   * New president Kennedy met with Khrushchev to try and deal with the Berlin problem. Khrushchev knew the US had failed with its Bay of Pigs incident. * Khrushchev decided to demand the ultimatum again and Kennedy refused to accept it. * Kennedy increased military spending by $2 billion as a response to protect the USA if war broke out. |
| **1961**  **East and West** | **Berlin Wall Created**   * Khrushchev decided to build a border to prevent any more people from leaving. 12th August 1961 East German troops built a barbed wire fence around Berlin and between East and West Berlin. * Soon work started on building a permanent structure out of concrete. It cut through streets and buildings – 27 miles. * The wall was guarded and a ‘no man’s land’ was created with booby traps and barbed wire, look out towers with machine guns and powerful search lights. * Families and friends were separated. People tried to cross the wall and were killed. * The wall showed the USSR had to use force to stop people leaving. Although it stopped people leaving. * USA saw it as a border being closed with the Soviets without their permission. West Berlin however became known as a place of freedom. * Kennedy travelled to West Berlin and made a speech by the wall saying ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’ (I am a citizen of Berlin praising the freedom of the West. |
| **1962**  **West and East** | **Cuban Missile Crisis**  14th October 1962 – American U2 spy plane took picture of launch pads in Cuba for nuclear weapons.  Kennedy was also informed USSR ships were heading to Cuba with what seemed to be nuclear weapons on them. Khrushchev sent nuclear missiles to Cuba to help defend from future US attacks. USA discovers them in 1962  •Kennedy decides to blockade Cuba to stop missiles arriving from USSR.  •Khrushchev sent a telegram saying he would remove missiles from Cuba if USA wouldn’t invade.  • Khrushchev then sent another telegram adding he wanted US missiles removed from Turkey too.  •Kennedy responded to first telegram publicly and second one secretly, increasing his reputation as a strong leader, making Khrushchev look like he backed down- maybe why he was dismissed as leader of USSR in 1954  •Moscow-Washington Hotline set up and 3 treaties (Test Ban 1963, Outer Space 1967, Non-Proliferation 1968) signed to reduce testing and spread of nuclear weapons. |
| **1963**  **West and East** | **Setting up the ‘hotline’**   * As a consequence of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the USA and the USSR created a hotline, a direct phone line between leaders of each country to discuss issues before they get too far. |
| **1963**  **West and East** | **Limited Test Ban Treaty**   * Another consequence of the missile crisis was the test ban of nuclear weapons, by USA, USSR and Britain. No testing in outer space or underwater. |
| **1967**  **West and East** | **Outer Space Treaty**   * USA and USSR agreed not to use space for military purposes. Do not put nuclear weapons in orbit. |
| **1968**  **West And East** | **Nuclear Non-proliferation treaty**   * Stop the spread of nuclear weapons. Countries signed to say they would not share nuclear technology with any other countries. |
| **1968**  **East** | **The Prague Spring**   * People were upset in Czechoslovakia and wanted reforms. Riots started due to people being upset of Soviet presence. * Alexander Dubcek took over as leader. He was communist. He knew though reforms had to be made to make Czechoslovakia stronger. He relaxed censorship, trade unions given more powers, trade with the West was increased to improve the economy and he gave people the freedom to travel abroad. He introduced reforms ‘Socialism with a human face’. Not anti- communist, just wanted more freedom. This became known as the Prague Spring. * Brezhnev, leader of the USSR, saw this as a threat to the ideals of communism and a threat towards the Warsaw Pact. |
| **1968**  **East** | **Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia**   * Brezhnev disliked the Prague Spring reforms by Dubcek that he sent in 500,000 Warsaw Pact troops to invade Czechoslovakia and ended the ‘Prague Spring’. * Brezhnev ordered the Czech troops to stay in their barracks so they didn’t fight back. * The Warsaw troops were a powerful force and the Czech people could not fight back against them. * Dubcek was arrested and sent to Moscow to stop his reforms. He was then removed from office for someone who followed the communist rules better. * This event led to the creation of the Brezhnev doctrine. * The West were shocked with the invasion but did not get involved as they were hoping to have détente with the USSR. |
| **1968**  **East** | **Creation of the Brezhnev Doctrine**   * Brezhnev doctrine created as a response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. * Any actions of a communist country affect all communist countries. So if one country threatens the other countries then it was the duty of the other countries to take steps to stop those actions. * The satellite countries felt threatened and knew if they tried to make any reforms they would have the full force of the Soviet Union against them. |
| **1969**  **East** | **Jan Palach,** a student, protests against Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia by setting himself on fire in Prague. |
| **1970-1980**  **West and East** | **Détente**   * A period of peace between two groups that were previously hostile with each other. * After the Cuba crisis the USA and USSR wanted to get on better in the 1970s- this thaw (peaceful period) in the Cold War is called détente * •Both needed to focus on economic and social problems at home, not war * SALT 1 1972- Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. Limited the number of nuclear weapons both sides had * Helsinki Accords 1975- agreed to respect borders, work for closer relations and respect human rights. * SALT 2 1979- Tried to introduce restrictions on missiles, but USA didn’t trust the USSR after invasion of Afghanistan so US withdrew from talks. |
| **1972**  **West and East** | **SALT 1 Agreement**   * Limit nuclear weapons. * Anti-Ballistic missile treaty * Interim treaty to restrict ICBMs and SLBMs. |
| **1974**  **West** | **President Nixon visits Moscow**   * Nixon visited Brezhnev in Moscow after the signing of SALT 1 to show they were building their relationship. |
| **1975**  **West and East** | **Helsinki Agreement**  Peace agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact  3 baskets were agreed   1. European Borders – borders cannot be moved in Europe. 2. International cooperation – Share technology, science and trade. 3. Human rights – Respect human rights and freedoms of speech, religion and free movement across Europe. |
| **1975**  **West and East** | **Apollo-Soyuz Mission**  Soviet and American astronauts worked on the Apollo-Soyuz mission to space together. |
| **1979**  **West and East** | **SALT 2 Agreement**  President Carter and Brezhnev worked together to create SALT II.   * Restrictions in missile launchers and bombers. Also restrict testing of ICBMs. * Although the US did not trust Brezhnev. * This was backed up with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. |
| **1979**  **East** | **Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan**   * Afghanistan was on the border of the USSR. It was a Middle Eastern Country. * Iran which bordered Afghanistan saw an Islamic extremist group take control of the country. * USSR were worried this extremist takeover could spread through the Middle East and could take over the USSR. * USSR supported a Afghan group to take over power in the country. However the group asked the West for advice and not the USSR so Brezhnev decided he could not trust them in power. * So to prevent this spread of influence they invaded Afghanistan to make sure they country was communist. * USA was furious at this invasion. They ended détente as the USSR had used military force again to spread their ideas. * The USA support local Afghan fighters to try and fight off the USSR. |
| **1979**  **West** | **Carter Doctrine**   * As a response of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter promised to support any Middle East country with military support to fight against the spread of communism. |
| **1980**  **West and East** | **End of détente**   * The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan saw the trust break between the USA and USSR and détente ended between the superpowers. |
| **1980**  **West** | **USA boycott of the Moscow Olympics**   * As another response of the USA angers towards the USSR for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the USA boycotted the Moscow Olympics and encouraged other Western countries to do it. * This was public humiliation for the Soviets. |
| **1983**  **West** | **President Ronald Reagan makes ‘Evil Empire’ speech**   * Reagan was very clear when he became president of the US, that he did not trust the USSR. He described the Soviet union as the ‘evil empire’ and that the US were the forces of good. |
| **1983**  **West** | **Reagan announces SDI – Strategic Defence Initiative – ‘Star Wars’.**   * Satellites placed in space which had powerful lasers which could shoot down Soviet missiles to prevent them harming the US. * This was against the Outer Space Treaty both countries had signed after the Cuban Missile Crisis. * Moscow was shocked by this news. The Soviets knew they could not complete with this new technology as they did not have the money to do it. * This actually encouraged Mikhail Gorbachev’s new thinking as the USSR realised they could not compete anymore in the arms race as they didn’t have the money. |
| **1984**  **East** | **USSR boycott of the Los Angeles (LA) Olympics**   * As a reaction to the boycott of the Moscow Olympics, some of the Warsaw pact countries boycotted the LA Olympics in the USA. |
| **1985**  **East** | **Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the USSR**   * When Gorbachev came to power as leader of the USSR, he knew he needed to try and save the USSR by improving relations with the US and make reforms. |
| **1985**  **East** | **Gorbachev’s ‘New Thinking’**  **3 Factors for Gorbachev’s ‘New Thinking’.**   1. Remove the Brezhnev Doctrine to allow countries to develop their own reforms to improve their countries. 2. Perestroika – reconstruction. Gorbachev knew he need to improve the USSR economy and the only way to do this was to improve trade, especially with the West as they had the money to buy materials. 3. Glasnost – Openness. Gorbachev encouraged freedom of media. He said people should not fear the government so they needed to be able to have their freedom of speech, travel and have a better understanding of how the country was run. He wanted less corruption in the government. He wanted people to choose to be communist not forced to be it. |
| **1985**  **West and East** | **Geneva Summit – Reagan and Gorbachev met for the first time.**   * No agreements made but Gorbachev and Reagan created a strong relationship. |
| **1986**  **West and East** | **Reykjavik Summit**   * Part of the Soviet Union had been affected by the nuclear power plant explosion, called the Chernobyl disaster. Gorbachev saw this as an essential reason to reduce nuclear weapons as the disaster killed many and the effects would last for years. * However no agreements were made. |
| **1986**  **East** | **Chernobyl nuclear power Plant disaster**   * Part of the Soviet Union had been affected by the nuclear power plant explosion, called the Chernobyl disaster. This showed how dangerous nuclear power was. |
| **1987**  **West and East** | **INF Treaty – Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty**   * Created at the Washington summit. * First US and USSR summit to lead to a creation of a treaty. * Both countries would abolish all land-based missiles with a range of 500-5,500km. |
| **1988**  **East** | **Gorbachev ends the Brezhnev Doctrine**   * Soviet satellite countries were now able to be free to choose how they governed their countries without the fear of attack from the USSR by ending the Brezhnev doctrine. This move saw many satellite countries look towards free elections to create a new government. * Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia all saw reforms made to their governments which saw a move away from the USSR. * Also people started to move from East Berlin to West Berlin for the first time in years. |
| **1989**  **East** | **Sinatra Doctrine –** Members of the Warsaw Pact were free to make reforms in their country without USSR interference. |
| **1989**  **East** | **Fall of the Berlin Wall**   * With the fall of the Berlin wall, people were reunited with family and friends for the first time in 30 years in Berlin. Emotions ran high and people started to smash the wall themselves. * People took souvenirs of the wall home to commemorate the end of the separate. * Without Brezhnev Doctrine, satellite states could introduce reforms without fear and Berlin did this. * •Many hold new elections and elect non-communists (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia) * •12 Soviet Republics left the USSR and formed the Commonwealth of Independent States after hard-line communists tried to remove Gorbachev. |
| **1990**  **East** | **Collapse of the Soviet Union**   * Satellite states were able to gain independence from the Soviet Union due to the breakdown of the Brezhnev doctrine. * Due to the poor treatment of these countries by the communists, many countries voted against communism in free elections. * They no longer followed the policies of Moscow. * After the Warsaw Pact ended, every member of the satellite states abandoned communism. This saw the end of the Soviet Union. |
| **1991**  **East** | **Warsaw Pact dissolved**   * The Warsaw Pact was created to protect communism in Eastern Europe against capitalism. * When countries no longer feared the USSR, they reformed and moved away from communism. * Without communism, it made it impossible for the Warsaw act to survive. * Military cooperation between the Warsaw states ended first and then it was formally dissolved. * Significant moment in the history of the Cold War. It was what many Eastern countries feared and it no longer existed. |
| **1991**  **East** | **Gorbachev resigns from power**   * Losing control over the Soviet satellite states play a major part in the downfall of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. Hard-line communists blamed him for the reforms and losing control over Eastern countries. * When the Baltic states declared themselves independent, his position as Soviet leader weakened further. * Communists tried to stage a coup against Gorbachev – but this failed due to support from the Russian leader Boris Yeltsin. * Gorbachev resigned on 25th Dec 1991 which marked the official end of the Soviet Union. |
| **1991**  **West and East** | **End of the Cold War**   * With no more Soviet union and with Eastern Europe having access to reforms, there was no longer a threat from the USSR against the US and this marked the end of the Cold war. |