

# Cold War

For other uses, see [Cold War \(disambiguation\)](#).



*Photograph of the Berlin Wall taken from the West side. The Wall was built in 1961 to prevent East Germans from fleeing and to stop an economically disastrous drain of workers. It was a symbol of the Cold War and its fall in 1989 marked the approaching end of the war.*

The **Cold War** was a state of political and military tension after World War II between powers in the Western Bloc (the United States, its NATO allies and others) and powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact).

Historians do not fully agree on the dates, but 1947–91 is common. The term “cold” is used because there was no large-scale fighting directly between the two sides, although there were major regional wars, known as proxy wars, supported by the two sides. The Cold War split the temporary wartime alliance against Nazi Germany, leaving the USSR and the US as two superpowers with profound economic and political differences: the former being a single-party Marxist-Leninist state operating a planned economy and controlled press and owning exclusively the right to establish and govern communities, and the latter being a capitalist state with generally free elections and press, which also granted freedom of expression and freedom of association to its citizens. A self-proclaimed neutral bloc arose with the Non-Aligned Movement founded by Egypt, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia; this faction rejected association with either the US-led West or the Soviet-led East. The two superpowers never engaged directly in full-scale armed combat, but they were heavily armed in preparation for a possible all-out nuclear world war. Each side had a nuclear deterrent that deterred an attack by the other side,

on the basis that such an attack would lead to total destruction of the attacker: the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD). Aside from the development of the two sides' nuclear arsenals, and deployment of conventional military forces, the struggle for dominance was expressed via proxy wars around the globe, psychological warfare, massive propaganda campaigns and espionage, rivalry at sports events, and technological competitions such as the Space Race.

The first phase of the Cold War began in the first two years after the end of the Second World War in 1945. The USSR consolidated its control over the states of the Eastern Bloc, while the United States began a strategy of global containment to challenge Soviet power, extending military and financial aid to the countries of Western Europe (for example, supporting the anti-communist side in the Greek Civil War) and creating the NATO alliance. The Berlin Blockade (1948–49) was the first major crisis of the Cold War. With the victory of the communist side in the Chinese Civil War and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–53), the conflict expanded. The USSR and USA competed for influence in Latin America, and the decolonizing states of Africa and Asia. Meanwhile, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was stopped by the Soviets. The expansion and escalation sparked more crises, such as the Suez Crisis (1956), the Berlin Crisis of 1961, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, a new phase began that saw the Sino-Soviet split complicate relations within the communist sphere, while US allies, particularly France, demonstrated greater independence of action. The USSR crushed the 1968 Prague Spring liberalization program in Czechoslovakia, and the Vietnam War (1955–75) ended with a defeat of the US-backed Republic of South Vietnam, prompting further adjustments.

By the 1970s, both sides had become interested in accommodations to create a more stable and predictable international system, inaugurating a period of détente that saw Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the US opening relations with the People's Republic of China as a strategic counterweight to the Soviet Union. Détente collapsed at the end of the decade with the Soviet war in Afghanistan beginning in 1979. The early 1980s were another period of elevated tension, with the Soviet downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 (1983), and the “Able Archer” NATO military exercises (1983). The United States increased diplomatic, military, and economic pressures on the Soviet Union, at a time when the communist state was already suffering from economic stagnation. In

the mid-1980s, the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the liberalizing reforms of *perestroika* ("reorganization", 1987) and *glasnost* ("openness", c. 1985) and ended Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. Pressures for national independence grew stronger in Eastern Europe, especially Poland. Gorbachev meanwhile refused to use Soviet troops to bolster the faltering Warsaw Pact regimes as had occurred in the past. The result in 1989 was a wave of revolutions that peacefully (with the exception of the Romanian Revolution) overthrew all of the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union itself lost control and was banned following an abortive coup attempt in August 1991. This in turn led to the formal dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 and the collapse of communist regimes in other countries such as Mongolia, Cambodia and South Yemen. The United States remained as the world's only superpower.

The Cold War and its events have left a significant legacy. It is often referred to in **popular culture**, especially in media featuring themes of espionage (e.g. the internationally successful *James Bond* movie franchise) and the threat of nuclear warfare.

## 1 Origins of the term

At the end of World War II, English writer George Orwell used *cold war*, as a general term, in his essay "You and the Atomic Bomb", published 19 October 1945 in the British newspaper *Tribune*. Contemplating a world living in the shadow of the threat of nuclear warfare, Orwell looked at James Burnham's predictions of a polarized world, writing:

Looking at the world as a whole, the drift for many decades has been not towards anarchy but towards the reimposition of slavery....James Burnham's theory has been much discussed, but few people have yet considered its ideological implications—that is, the kind of world-view, the kind of beliefs, and the social structure that would probably prevail in a state which was at once unconquerable and in a permanent state of "**cold war**" with its neighbours.<sup>[1]</sup>

In *The Observer* of 10 March 1946, Orwell wrote, "after the Moscow conference last December, Russia began to make a 'cold war' on Britain and the British Empire."<sup>[2]</sup>

The first use of the term to describe the specific post-war geopolitical confrontation between the USSR and the United States came in a speech by Bernard Baruch, an influential advisor to Democratic presidents,<sup>[3]</sup> on 16 April 1947. The speech, written by journalist Herbert Bayard Swope,<sup>[4]</sup> proclaimed, "Let us not be deceived: we are

today in the midst of a cold war."<sup>[5]</sup> Newspaper columnist Walter Lippmann gave the term wide currency with his book *The Cold War*; when asked in 1947 about the source of the term, Lippmann traced it to a French term from the 1930s, *la guerre froide*.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 2 Background

Main article: **Origins of the Cold War**

There is disagreement among historians regarding the



*Allied troops in Vladivostok, August 1918, during the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War.*

starting point of the Cold War. While most historians trace its origins to the period immediately following World War II, others argue that it began with the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 when Lenin and his Communists took power.<sup>[7]</sup> Vladimir Lenin stated that his new Soviet Union was surrounded by a "hostile capitalist encirclement", and he viewed diplomacy as a weapon to keep Soviet enemies divided, beginning with the establishment of the Soviet Comintern, which called for revolutionary upheavals abroad.<sup>[8]</sup> His successor Joseph Stalin viewed his USSR as a "socialist island", stating that it must see that "the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement."<sup>[9]</sup>

Various events before the Second World War demonstrated the mutual distrust and suspicion between the Western powers and the Soviet Union, apart from the general philosophical challenge the communists made towards capitalism.<sup>[10]</sup> There was Western support of the anti-Bolshevik White movement in the **Russian Civil War**,<sup>[7]</sup> the 1926 Soviet funding of a British general workers strike causing Britain to break relations with the Soviet Union,<sup>[11]</sup> Stalin's 1927 declaration of peaceful coexistence with capitalist countries "receding into the past,"<sup>[12]</sup> conspiratorial allegations during the 1928 Shakhty show trial of a planned British- and French-led coup d'état,<sup>[13]</sup> the American refusal to recognize the Soviet Union until 1933<sup>[14]</sup> and the **Stalinist Moscow Trials** of the Great Purge, with allegations of British, French, Japanese and Nazi German espionage.<sup>[15]</sup> However, both

the US and USSR were generally isolationist between the two world wars.<sup>[16]</sup>

The Soviet Union initially signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. But after the German Army invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Soviet Union and the Allied powers formed an alliance of convenience. Britain signed a formal alliance and the United States made an informal agreement. In wartime, the United States supplied both Britain and the Soviets through its Lend-Lease Program.<sup>[17]</sup> However, Stalin remained highly suspicious and believed that the British and the Americans had conspired to ensure the Soviets bore the brunt of the fighting against Nazi Germany. According to this view, the Western Allies had deliberately delayed opening a second anti-German front in order to step in at the last moment and shape the peace settlement. Thus, Soviet perceptions of the West left a strong undercurrent of tension and hostility between the Allied powers.<sup>[18]</sup>

### 3 End of World War II (1945–47)

#### 3.1 Wartime conferences regarding post-war Europe

Further information: Tehran Conference and Yalta Conference

The Allies disagreed about how the European map should



*The "Big Three" at the Yalta Conference: Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin, 1945.*

look, and how borders would be drawn, following the war.<sup>[19]</sup> Each side held dissimilar ideas regarding the establishment and maintenance of post-war security.<sup>[19]</sup>

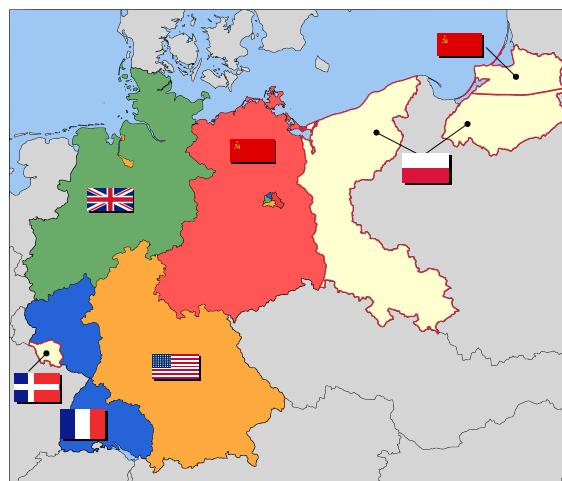
The western Allies desired a security system in which democratic governments were established as widely as possible, permitting countries to peacefully resolve differences through international organizations.<sup>[20]</sup>

The Soviet Union sought to dominate the internal affairs of countries that bordered it.<sup>[19][21]</sup> During the war, Stalin

had created special training centers for communists from different countries so that they could set up secret police forces loyal to Moscow as soon as the Red Army took control. Soviet agents took control of the media, especially radio; they quickly harassed and then banned all independent civic institutions, from youth groups to schools, churches and rival political parties.<sup>[22]</sup> Stalin also sought continued peace with Britain and the United States, hoping to focus on internal reconstruction and economic growth.<sup>[23]</sup>

The Western Allies were divided in their vision of the new post-war world. Roosevelt's goals – military victory in both Europe and Asia, the achievement of global American economic supremacy over the British Empire, and the creation of a world peace organization – were more global than Churchill's, which were mainly centered on securing control over the Mediterranean, ensuring the survival of the British Empire, and the independence of Central and Eastern European countries as a buffer between the Soviets and the United Kingdom.<sup>[24]</sup>

In the American view, Stalin seemed a potential ally in accomplishing their goals, whereas in the British approach Stalin appeared as the greatest threat to the fulfillment of their agenda. With the Soviets already occupying most of Central and Eastern Europe, Stalin was at an advantage and the two western leaders vied for his favors. The differences between Roosevelt and Churchill led to several separate deals with the Soviets. In October 1944, Churchill traveled to Moscow and agreed to divide the Balkans into respective spheres of influence, and at Yalta Roosevelt signed a separate deal with Stalin in regard of Asia and refused to support Churchill on the issues of Poland and the Reparations.<sup>[24]</sup>



*Post-war Allied occupation zones in Germany.*

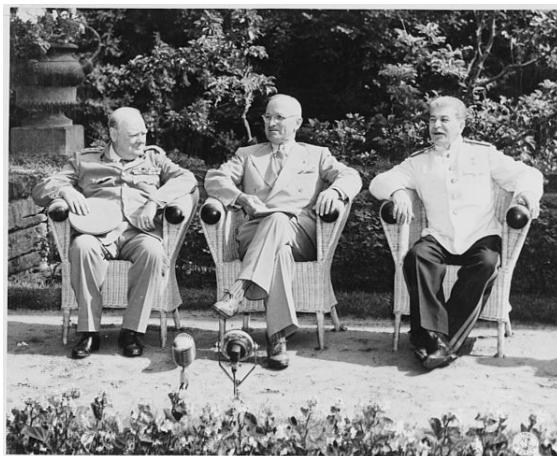
Further Allied negotiations concerning the post-war balance took place at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, albeit this conference also failed to reach a firm consensus on the framework for a post-war settlement in Europe.<sup>[25]</sup> In April 1945, President Roosevelt died and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman, who distrusted

Stalin and turned for advice to an elite group of foreign policy intellectuals. Both Churchill and Truman opposed, among other things, the Soviets' decision to prop up the Lublin government, the Soviet-controlled rival to the Polish government-in-exile in London, whose relations with the Soviets had been severed.<sup>[26]</sup>

Following the Allies' May 1945 victory, the Soviets effectively occupied Central and Eastern Europe,<sup>[25]</sup> while strong US and Western allied forces remained in Western Europe. In Allied-occupied Germany, the Soviet Union, United States, Britain and France established zones of occupation and a loose framework for parceled four-power control.<sup>[27]</sup>

The 1945 Allied conference in San Francisco established the multi-national United Nations (UN) for the maintenance of world peace, but the enforcement capacity of its Security Council was effectively paralyzed by individual members' ability to use veto power.<sup>[28]</sup> Accordingly, the UN was essentially converted into an inactive forum for exchanging polemical rhetoric, and the Soviets regarded it almost exclusively as a propaganda tribune.<sup>[29]</sup>

## 3.2 Potsdam Conference and defeat of Japan



*Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman and Joseph Stalin at the Potsdam Conference, 1945.*

Further information: Potsdam Conference and Surrender of Japan

At the Potsdam Conference, which started in late July after Germany's surrender, serious differences emerged over the future development of Germany and the rest of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>[30]</sup> Moreover, the participants' mounting antipathy and bellicose language served to confirm their suspicions about each other's hostile intentions and entrench their positions.<sup>[31]</sup> At this conference Truman informed Stalin that the United States possessed a powerful new weapon.<sup>[32]</sup>

Stalin was aware that the Americans were working on the atomic bomb and, given that the Soviets' own rival program was in place, he reacted to the news calmly. The Soviet leader said he was pleased by the news and expressed the hope that the weapon would be used against Japan.<sup>[32]</sup> One week after the end of the Potsdam Conference, the US bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Shortly after the attacks, Stalin protested to US officials when Truman offered the Soviets little real influence in occupied Japan.<sup>[33]</sup>

## 3.3 Beginnings of the Eastern Bloc

Further information: Eastern Bloc

During the opening stages of World War II, the Soviet



*Post-war territorial changes in Europe and the formation of the Eastern Bloc, the so-called 'Iron Curtain'.*

Union laid the foundation for the Eastern Bloc by invading and then annexing several countries as Soviet Socialist Republics, by agreement with Nazi Germany in the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. These included eastern Poland (incorporated into two different SSRs),<sup>[34]</sup> Latvia (which became the Latvian SSR),<sup>[35][36]</sup> Estonia (which became the Estonian SSR),<sup>[35][36]</sup> Lithuania (which became the Lithuanian SSR),<sup>[35][36]</sup> part of eastern Finland (which became the Karelo-Finnish SSR) and eastern

Romania (which became the Moldavian SSR).<sup>[37][38]</sup>

The Central and Eastern European territories liberated from the Nazis and occupied by the Soviet armed forces were added to the Eastern Bloc by converting them into satellite states,<sup>[39]</sup> such as East Germany,<sup>[40]</sup> the People's Republic of Poland, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the People's Republic of Hungary,<sup>[41]</sup> the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic,<sup>[42]</sup> the People's Republic of Romania and the People's Republic of Albania.<sup>[43]</sup>

The Soviet-style regimes that arose in the Bloc not only reproduced Soviet command economies, but also adopted the brutal methods employed by Joseph Stalin and Soviet secret police to suppress real and potential opposition.<sup>[44]</sup> In Asia, the Red Army had overrun Manchuria in the last month of the war, and went on to occupy the large swathe of Korean territory located north of the 38th parallel.<sup>[45]</sup>

As part of consolidating Stalin's control over the Eastern Bloc, the NKVD, led by Lavrentiy Beriya, supervised the establishment of Soviet-style secret police systems in the Bloc that were supposed to crush anti-communist resistance.<sup>[46]</sup> When the slightest stirrings of independence emerged in the Bloc, Stalin's strategy matched that of dealing with domestic pre-war rivals: they were removed from power, put on trial, imprisoned, and in several instances, executed.<sup>[47]</sup>

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was concerned that, given the enormous size of Soviet forces deployed in Europe at the end of the war, and the perception that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was unreliable, there existed a Soviet threat to Western Europe.<sup>[48]</sup>

### 3.4 Preparing for a “new war”

Further information: Long Telegram, Iron Curtain and Restatement of Policy on Germany

In February 1946, George F. Kennan's "Long Telegram" from Moscow helped to articulate the US government's increasingly hard line against the Soviets, and became the basis for US strategy toward the Soviet Union for the duration of the Cold War.<sup>[49]</sup> That September, the Soviet side produced the Novikov telegram, sent by the Soviet ambassador to the US but commissioned and "co-authored" by Vyacheslav Molotov; it portrayed the US as being in the grip of monopoly capitalists who were building up military capability "to prepare the conditions for winning world supremacy in a new war".<sup>[50]</sup>

On 6 September 1946, James F. Byrnes delivered a speech in Germany repudiating the Morgenthau Plan (a proposal to partition and de-industrialize post-war Germany) and warning the Soviets that the US intended to maintain a military presence in Europe indefinitely.<sup>[51]</sup> As Byrnes admitted a month later, "The nub of our program was to win the German people ... it was a battle between us and Russia over minds ..."<sup>[52]</sup>

A few weeks after the release of this "Long Telegram", former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri.<sup>[53]</sup> The speech called for an Anglo-American alliance against the Soviets, whom he accused of establishing an "iron curtain" from "Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic".<sup>[39][54]</sup>

## 4 Beginnings of the Cold War (1947–53)

Main article: Cold War (1947–1953)

### 4.1 Cominform and the Tito–Stalin split

Further information: Cominform and Tito–Stalin split

In September 1947, the Soviets created Cominform, the purpose of which was to enforce orthodoxy within the international communist movement and tighten political control over Soviet satellites through coordination of communist parties in the Eastern Bloc.<sup>[55]</sup> Cominform faced an embarrassing setback the following June, when the Tito–Stalin split obliged its members to expel Yugoslavia, which remained communist but adopted a non-aligned position.<sup>[56]</sup>

### 4.2 Containment and the Truman Doctrine

Main articles: Containment and Truman Doctrine  
By 1947, US president Harry S. Truman's advisers urged



*European military alliances.*

him to take immediate steps to counter the Soviet Union's influence, citing Stalin's efforts (amid post-war confusion and collapse) to undermine the US by encouraging rivalries among capitalists that could precipitate another war.<sup>[57]</sup> In February 1947, the British government announced that it could no longer afford to finance the Greek monarchical military regime in its civil war against communist-led insurgents (see *Greek Civil War*).

The American government's response to this announcement was the adoption of **containment**,<sup>[58]</sup> the goal of which was to stop the spread of communism. Truman delivered a speech that called for the allocation of \$400 million to intervene in the war and unveiled the **Truman Doctrine**, which framed the conflict as a contest between free peoples and totalitarian regimes.<sup>[58]</sup> Even though the insurgents were helped by Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslavia,<sup>[14]</sup> US policymakers accused the Soviet Union of conspiring against the Greek royalists in an effort to expand Soviet influence.<sup>[59]</sup>

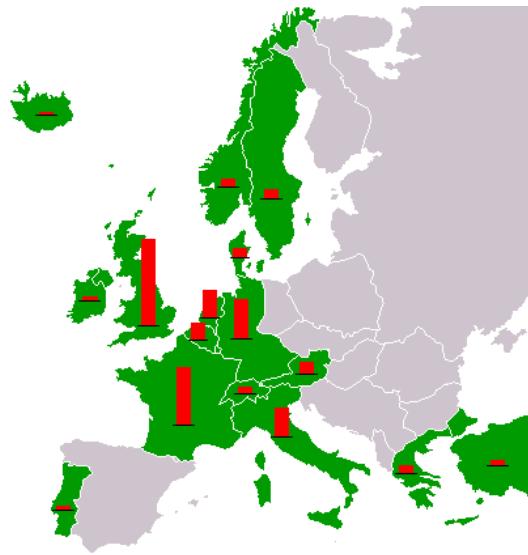
Enunciation of the Truman Doctrine marked the beginning of a US bipartisan defense and foreign policy consensus between Republicans and Democrats focused on containment and deterrence that weakened during and after the **Vietnam War**, but ultimately persisted thereafter.<sup>[60][61]</sup> Moderate and conservative parties in Europe, as well as social democrats, gave virtually unconditional support to the Western alliance,<sup>[62]</sup> while European and American communists, paid by the KGB and involved in its intelligence operations,<sup>[63]</sup> adhered to Moscow's line, although dissent began to appear after 1956. Other critiques of consensus politics came from anti-Vietnam War activists, the **CND** and the **nuclear freeze** movement.<sup>[64]</sup>

### 4.3 Marshall Plan and Czechoslovak coup d'état

Main articles: **Marshall Plan**, **Western Bloc** and **Czechoslovak coup d'état of 1948**

In early 1947, Britain, France and the United States unsuccessfully attempted to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union for a plan envisioning an economically self-sufficient Germany, including a detailed accounting of the industrial plants, goods and infrastructure already removed by the Soviets.<sup>[65]</sup> In June 1947, in accordance with the **Truman Doctrine**, the United States enacted the **Marshall Plan**, a pledge of economic assistance for all European countries willing to participate, including the Soviet Union.<sup>[65]</sup>

The plan's aim was to rebuild the democratic and economic systems of Europe and to counter perceived threats to Europe's balance of power, such as communist parties seizing control through revolutions or elections.<sup>[66]</sup> The plan also stated that European prosperity was contingent upon German economic recovery.<sup>[67]</sup> One month later,



*Map of Cold-War era Europe and the Near East showing countries that received Marshall Plan aid. The red columns show the relative amount of total aid received per nation.*



*European economic alliances*

Truman signed the **National Security Act of 1947**, creating a unified **Department of Defense**, the **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**, and the **National Security Council (NSC)**. These would become the main bureaucracies for US policy in the Cold War.<sup>[68]</sup>

Stalin believed that economic integration with the West would allow **Eastern Bloc** countries to escape Soviet control, and that the US was trying to buy a pro-US realignment of Europe.<sup>[55]</sup> Stalin therefore prevented Eastern Bloc nations from receiving Marshall Plan aid.<sup>[55]</sup> The Soviet Union's alternative to the Marshall plan, which was purported to involve Soviet subsidies and trade with central and eastern Europe, became known as the **Molotov Plan** (later institutionalized in January 1949 as

the Comecon).<sup>[14]</sup> Stalin was also fearful of a reconstituted Germany; his vision of a post-war Germany did not include the ability to rearm or pose any kind of threat to the Soviet Union.<sup>[69]</sup>

In early 1948, following reports of strengthening “reactionary elements”, Soviet operatives executed a coup d'état in Czechoslovakia, the only Eastern Bloc state that the Soviets had permitted to retain democratic structures.<sup>[70][71]</sup> The public brutality of the coup shocked Western powers more than any event up to that point, set in a motion a brief scare that war would occur and swept away the last vestiges of opposition to the Marshall Plan in the United States Congress.<sup>[72]</sup>

The twin policies of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan led to billions in economic and military aid for Western Europe, Greece, and Turkey. With US assistance, the Greek military won its civil war.<sup>[68]</sup> Under the leadership of Alcide De Gasperi the Italian Christian Democrats defeated the powerful Communist-Socialist alliance in the elections of 1948.<sup>[73]</sup> At the same time there was increased intelligence and espionage activity, Eastern Bloc defections and diplomatic expulsions.<sup>[74]</sup>

#### 4.4 Berlin Blockade and airlift



*C-47s unloading at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin during the Berlin Blockade.*

Main article: Berlin Blockade

The United States and Britain merged their western German occupation zones into “Bizonia” (1 January 1947, later “Trizonia” with the addition of France’s zone, April 1949).<sup>[75]</sup> As part of the economic rebuilding of Germany, in early 1948, representatives of a number of Western European governments and the United States announced an agreement for a merger of western German areas into a federal governmental system.<sup>[76]</sup> In addition, in accordance with the Marshall Plan, they began to re-industrialize and rebuild the German economy, including the introduction of a new Deutsche Mark currency to re-

place the old Reichsmark currency that the Soviets had debased.<sup>[77]</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Stalin instituted the Berlin Blockade (24 June 1948 – 12 May 1949), one of the first major crises of the Cold War, preventing food, materials and supplies from arriving in West Berlin.<sup>[78]</sup> The United States, Britain, France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and several other countries began the massive “Berlin airlift”, supplying West Berlin with food and other provisions.<sup>[79]</sup>

The Soviets mounted a public relations campaign against the policy change. Once again the East Berlin communists attempted to disrupt the Berlin municipal elections (as they had done in the 1946 elections),<sup>[75]</sup> which were held on 5 December 1948 and produced a turnout of 86.3% and an overwhelming victory for the non-communist parties.<sup>[80]</sup> The results effectively divided the city into East and West versions of its former self. 300,000 Berliners demonstrated and urged the international airlift to continue,<sup>[81]</sup> and US Air Force pilot Gail Halvorsen created "Operation Vittles", which supplied candy to German children.<sup>[82]</sup> In May 1949, Stalin backed down and lifted the blockade.<sup>[46][83]</sup>

In 1952, Stalin repeatedly proposed a plan to unify East and West Germany under a single government chosen in elections supervised by the United Nations if the new Germany were to stay out of Western military alliances, but this proposal was turned down by the Western powers. Some sources dispute the sincerity of the proposal.<sup>[84]</sup>

#### 4.5 NATO beginnings and Radio Free Europe

Main articles: NATO, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Eastern Bloc information dissemination

Britain, France, the United States, Canada and eight



*President Truman signs the National Security Act Amendment of 1949 with guests in the Oval Office.*

other western European countries signed the North At-

lantic Treaty of April 1949, establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>[46]</sup> That August, the first Soviet atomic device was detonated in Semipalatinsk, Kazakh SSR.<sup>[14]</sup> Following Soviet refusals to participate in a German rebuilding effort set forth by western European countries in 1948,<sup>[76][85]</sup> the US, Britain and France spearheaded the establishment of West Germany from the three Western zones of occupation in April 1949.<sup>[86]</sup> The Soviet Union proclaimed its zone of occupation in Germany the German Democratic Republic that October.<sup>[30]</sup>

Media in the Eastern Bloc was an organ of the state, completely reliant on and subservient to the communist party, with radio and television organizations being state-owned, while print media was usually owned by political organizations, mostly by the local communist party.<sup>[87]</sup> Soviet propaganda used Marxist philosophy to attack capitalism, claiming labor exploitation and warmongering imperialism were inherent in the system.<sup>[88]</sup>

Along with the broadcasts of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Voice of America to Central and Eastern Europe,<sup>[89]</sup> a major propaganda effort begun in 1949 was Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, dedicated to bringing about the peaceful demise of the communist system in the Eastern Bloc.<sup>[90]</sup> Radio Free Europe attempted to achieve these goals by serving as a surrogate home radio station, an alternative to the controlled and party-dominated domestic press.<sup>[90]</sup> Radio Free Europe was a product of some of the most prominent architects of America's early Cold War strategy, especially those who believed that the Cold War would eventually be fought by political rather than military means, such as George F. Kennan.<sup>[91]</sup>

American policymakers, including Kennan and John Foster Dulles, acknowledged that the Cold War was in its essence a war of ideas.<sup>[91]</sup> The United States, acting through the CIA, funded a long list of projects to counter the communist appeal among intellectuals in Europe and the developing world.<sup>[92]</sup> The CIA also covertly sponsored a domestic propaganda campaign called Crusade for Freedom.<sup>[93]</sup>

In the early 1950s, the US worked for the rearmament of West Germany and, in 1955, secured its full membership of NATO.<sup>[30]</sup> In May 1953, Beria, by then in a government post, had made an unsuccessful proposal to allow the reunification of a neutral Germany to prevent West Germany's incorporation into NATO.<sup>[94]</sup>

## 4.6 Chinese Civil War and SEATO

Further information: Chinese Civil War and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

In 1949, Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army defeated Chiang Kai-shek's United States-backed Kuomintang (KMT) Nationalist Government in China, and the Soviet Union promptly created an alliance



*Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin in Moscow, December 1949*

with the newly formed People's Republic of China.<sup>[95]</sup> According to Norwegian historian Odd Arne Westad, the communists won the Civil War because they made fewer military mistakes than Chiang Kai-Shek, and because in his search for a powerful centralized government, Chiang antagonized too many interest groups in China. Moreover, his party was weakened in the war against Japan. Meanwhile, the communists told different groups, such as peasants, exactly what they wanted to hear, and cloaked themselves in the cover of Chinese nationalism.<sup>[96]</sup>

Chiang and his KMT government retreated to the island of Taiwan. Confronted with the communist revolution in China and the end of the American atomic monopoly in 1949, the Truman administration quickly moved to escalate and expand the containment policy.<sup>[14]</sup> In NSC-68, a secret 1950 document,<sup>[97]</sup> the National Security Council proposed to reinforce pro-Western alliance systems and quadruple spending on defense.<sup>[14]</sup>

United States officials moved thereafter to expand containment into Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in order to counter revolutionary nationalist movements, often led by communist parties financed by the USSR, fighting against the restoration of Europe's colonial empires in South-East Asia and elsewhere.<sup>[98]</sup> In the early 1950s (a period sometimes known as the "Pactomania"), the US formalized a series of alliances with Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and the Philippines (notably ANZUS in 1951 and SEATO in 1954), thereby guaranteeing the United States a number of long-term military bases.<sup>[30]</sup>

## 4.7 Korean War

Main article: Korean War

One of the more significant impacts of containment was the outbreak of the Korean War. In June 1950, Kim Il-sung's North Korean People's Army invaded South Korea.<sup>[99]</sup> Joseph Stalin "planned, prepared, and initiated" the invasion,<sup>[100]</sup> creating "detailed [war] plans" that were communicated to the North

Koreans.<sup>[101][102][103][104]</sup> To Stalin's surprise,<sup>[14]</sup> the UN Security Council backed the defense of South Korea, though the Soviets were then boycotting meetings in protest that Taiwan and not Communist China held a permanent seat on the Council.<sup>[105]</sup> A UN force of personnel from South Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Canada, Colombia, Australia, France, South Africa, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Belgium, New Zealand and other countries joined to stop the invasion.<sup>[106]</sup>



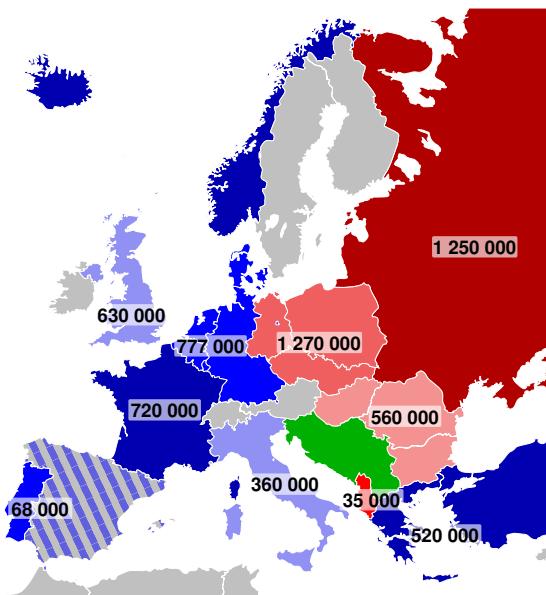
*General Douglas MacArthur, UN Command CiC (seated), observes the naval shelling of Incheon from the USS Mt. McKinley, September 15, 1950.*

Among other effects, the Korean War galvanised NATO to develop a military structure.<sup>[107]</sup> Public opinion in countries involved, such as Great Britain, was divided for and against the war. Many feared an escalation into a general war with Communist China, and even nuclear war. The strong opposition to the war often strained Anglo-American relations. For these reasons British officials sought a speedy end to the conflict, hoping to unite Korea under United Nations auspices and withdrawal of all foreign forces.<sup>[108]</sup>

Even though the Chinese and North Koreans were exhausted by the war and were prepared to end it by late 1952, Stalin insisted that they continue fighting, and the Armistice was approved only in July 1953, after Stalin's death.<sup>[30]</sup> North Korean leader Kim Il Sung created a highly centralized, totalitarian dictatorship – which continues to date – according himself unlimited power and generating a formidable cult of personality.<sup>[109][110]</sup> In the South, the American-backed strongman Syngman Rhee ran a significantly less brutal but deeply corrupt and authoritarian regime.<sup>[111]</sup> After Rhee was overthrown in 1960, South Korea fell within a year under a period of military rule that lasted until the re-establishment of a multi-party system in the late 1980s.

## 5 Crisis and escalation (1953–62)

Main article: Cold War (1953–1962)



*NATO and Warsaw Pact troop strengths in Europe in 1959*

### 5.1 Khrushchev, Eisenhower and de-Stalinization

In 1953, changes in political leadership on both sides shifted the dynamic of the Cold War.<sup>[112]</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated president that January. During the last 18 months of the Truman administration, the American defense budget had quadrupled, and Eisenhower moved to reduce military spending by a third while continuing to fight the Cold War effectively.<sup>[14]</sup>

After the death of Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev became the Soviet leader following the deposition and execution of Lavrentiy Beriya and the pushing aside of rivals Georgy Malenkov and Vyacheslav Molotov. On 25 February 1956, Khrushchev shocked delegates to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party by cataloguing and denouncing Stalin's crimes.<sup>[113]</sup> As part of a campaign of de-Stalinization, he declared that the only way to reform and move away from Stalin's policies would be to acknowledge errors made in the past.<sup>[68]</sup>

On 18 November 1956, while addressing Western ambassadors at a reception at the Polish embassy in Moscow, Khrushchev used his famous "Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you" expression, shocking everyone present.<sup>[114]</sup> He later claimed that he had not been talking about nuclear war, but rather about the historically determined victory of communism over capitalism.<sup>[115]</sup> In 1961, Khrushchev declared that even if the USSR was behind the West, within a decade its hous-

ing shortage would disappear, consumer goods would be abundant, and within two decades, the “construction of a communist society” in the USSR would be completed “in the main”.<sup>[116]</sup>

Eisenhower's secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, initiated a “New Look” for the containment strategy, calling for a greater reliance on nuclear weapons against US enemies in wartime.<sup>[68]</sup> Dulles also enunciated the doctrine of “massive retaliation”, threatening a severe US response to any Soviet aggression. Possessing nuclear superiority, for example, allowed Eisenhower to face down Soviet threats to intervene in the Middle East during the 1956 Suez Crisis.<sup>[14]</sup> U.S. plans for nuclear war in the late 1950s included the “systematic destruction” of 1200 major urban centers in the Eastern Bloc and China, including Moscow, East Berlin and Beijing, with their civilian populations among the primary targets.<sup>[117]</sup>

## 5.2 Warsaw Pact and Hungarian Revolution

Main articles: Warsaw Pact and Hungarian Revolution of 1956

While Stalin's death in 1953 slightly relaxed tensions, the



*Map of the Warsaw Pact countries*

situation in Europe remained an uneasy armed truce.<sup>[118]</sup> The Soviets, who had already created a network of mutual assistance treaties in the Eastern Bloc by 1949,<sup>[119]</sup> established a formal alliance therein, the Warsaw Pact, in 1955.<sup>[30]</sup>

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 occurred shortly after Khrushchev arranged the removal of Hungary's Stalinist leader Mátyás Rákosi.<sup>[120]</sup> In response to a popular uprising,<sup>[121]</sup> the new regime formally disbanded the secret police, declared its intention to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and pledged to re-establish free elections. The Soviet army invaded.<sup>[122]</sup> Thousands of Hungarians were arrested, imprisoned and deported to the Soviet Union,<sup>[123]</sup> and approximately 200,000 Hungarians fled Hungary in the chaos.<sup>[124]</sup> Hungarian leader Imre Nagy and others were executed following secret trials.<sup>[125]</sup>

From 1957 through 1961, Khrushchev openly and repeatedly threatened the West with nuclear annihilation. He claimed that Soviet missile capabilities were far superior to those of the United States, capable of wiping out any American or European city. However, Khrushchev rejected Stalin's belief in the inevitability of war, and de-

clared his new goal was to be “peaceful coexistence”.<sup>[126]</sup> This formulation modified the Stalin-era Soviet stance, where international class struggle meant the two opposing camps were on an inevitable collision course where communism would triumph through global war; now, peace would allow capitalism to collapse on its own,<sup>[127]</sup> as well as giving the Soviets time to boost their military capabilities,<sup>[128]</sup> which remained for decades until Gorbachev's later “new thinking” envisioning peaceful co-existence as an end in itself rather than a form of class struggle.<sup>[129]</sup>

The events in Hungary produced ideological fractures within the communist parties of the world, particularly in Western Europe, with great decline in membership as many in both western and communist countries felt disillusioned by the brutal Soviet response.<sup>[130]</sup> The communist parties in the West would never recover from the effect the Hungarian Revolution had on their membership, a fact that was immediately recognized by some, such as the Yugoslavian politician Milovan Đilas who shortly after the revolution was crushed said that “The wound which the Hungarian Revolution inflicted on communism can never be completely healed”.<sup>[130]</sup>

America's pronouncements concentrated on American strength abroad and the success of liberal capitalism.<sup>[131]</sup> However, by the late 1960s, the “battle for men's minds” between two systems of social organization that Kennedy spoke of in 1961 was largely over, with tensions henceforth based primarily on clashing geopolitical objectives rather than ideology.<sup>[132]</sup>

## 5.3 Berlin Ultimatum and European integration

Main article: Berlin Crisis of 1961 § Berlin ultimatum

During November 1958, Khrushchev made an unsuccessful attempt to turn all of Berlin into an independent, demilitarized “free city”, giving the United States, Great Britain, and France a six-month ultimatum to withdraw their troops from the sectors they still occupied in West Berlin, or he would transfer control of Western access rights to the East Germans. Khrushchev earlier explained to Mao Zedong that “Berlin is the testicles of the West. Every time I want to make the West scream, I squeeze on Berlin.”<sup>[133]</sup> NATO formally rejected the ultimatum in mid-December and Khrushchev withdrew it in return for a Geneva conference on the German question.<sup>[134]</sup>

More broadly, one hallmark of the 1950s was the beginning of European integration—a fundamental by-product of the Cold War that Truman and Eisenhower promoted politically, economically, and militarily, but which later administrations viewed ambivalently, fearful that an independent Europe would forge a separate détente with the Soviet Union, which would use this to exacerbate Western disunity.<sup>[135]</sup>



*The maximum territorial extent of countries in the world under Soviet influence, after the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and before the official Sino-Soviet split of 1961*



*1961 Soviet postage stamp demanding freedom for African nations*

## 5.4 Competition in the Third World

Main articles: 1953 Iranian coup d'état, 1954 Guatemalan coup d'état, Congo Crisis, Decolonization and Wars of national liberation

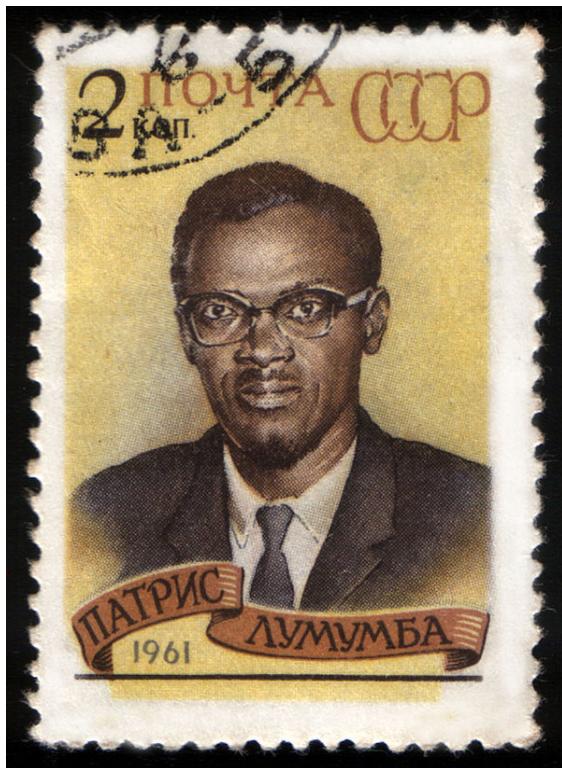
Nationalist movements in some countries and regions, notably **Guatemala**, **Indonesia** and **Indochina** were often allied with communist groups, or perceived in the West to be allied with communists.<sup>[68]</sup> In this context, the United States and the Soviet Union increasingly competed for influence by proxy in the Third World as **decolonization** gained momentum in the 1950s and early 1960s;<sup>[136]</sup> additionally, the Soviets saw continuing losses by imperial powers as presaging the eventual victory of their ideology.<sup>[137]</sup> Both sides were selling armaments to gain influence.<sup>[138]</sup>

The United States made use of the **Central Intelligence Agency** (CIA) to do away with a string of unfriendly Third World governments and to support allied ones.<sup>[68]</sup> In 1953, President Eisenhower's CIA implemented **Operation Ajax**, a covert operation aimed at the overthrow of the Iranian prime minister, **Mohammad Mosaddegh**. The popularly elected and non-aligned Mosaddegh had been a Middle Eastern nemesis of Britain since nationalizing the British-owned **Anglo-Iranian Oil Company** in 1951. **Winston Churchill** told the United States that Mosaddegh was "increasingly turning towards communism."<sup>[139][140][141][142]</sup> The pro-Western shah, **Mohammad Reza Pahlavi**, assumed control as an autocratic monarch.<sup>[143]</sup> The shah's policies included the banning of the communist **Tudeh Party** and general suppression of political dissent by **SAVAK**, the shah's domestic security and intelligence agency.

In Guatemala, a CIA-backed military coup ousted the left-wing President **Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán** in 1954.<sup>[144]</sup> The post-Arbenz government—a military junta headed by **Carlos Castillo Armas**—repealed a progressive land reform law, returned nationalized property belonging to the **United Fruit Company**, set up a National Committee of Defense Against Communism, and decreed a Preventive Penal Law Against Communism at the request of the United States.<sup>[145]</sup>

The non-aligned Indonesian government of **Sukarno** was faced with a major threat to its legitimacy beginning in 1956, when several regional commanders began to demand autonomy from **Jakarta**. After mediation failed, Sukarno took action to remove the dissident commanders. In February 1958, dissident military commanders in Central Sumatra (Colonel Ahmad Hussein) and North Sulawesi (Colonel Ventje Sumual) declared the **Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia-Peresta Movement** aimed at overthrowing the Sukarno regime. They were joined by many civilian politicians from the **Masyumi Party**, such as **Sjafruddin Prawiranegara**, who were opposed to the growing influence of the communist **Partai Komunis Indonesia** party. Due to their anti-communist rhetoric, the rebels received arms, funding, and other covert aid from the CIA until **Allen Lawrence Pope**, an American pilot, was shot down after a bombing raid on government-held **Ambon** in April 1958. The central government responded by launching airborne and seaborne military invasions of rebel strongholds **Padang** and **Manado**. By the end of 1958, the rebels were militarily defeated, and the last remaining rebel guerilla bands surrendered by August 1961.<sup>[146]</sup>

In the **Republic of the Congo**, newly independent from Belgium since June 1960, the CIA-cultivated President **Joseph Kasa-Vubu** ordered the dismissal of the demo-



1961 Soviet stamp commemorating Patrice Lumumba, prime minister of the Republic of the Congo

critically elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and the Lumumba cabinet in September; Lumumba called for Kasa-Vubu's dismissal instead.<sup>[147]</sup> In the ensuing Congo Crisis, the CIA-backed Colonel Mobutu quickly mobilized his forces to seize power through a military coup d'état.<sup>[147]</sup>

In British Guiana, the leftist People's Progressive Party (PPP) candidate Cheddi Jagan won the position of chief minister in a colonially administered election in 1953, but was quickly forced to resign from power after Britain's suspension of the still-dependent nation's constitution.<sup>[148]</sup> Embarrassed by the landslide electoral victory of Jagan's allegedly Marxist party, the British imprisoned the PPP's leadership and maneuvered the organization into a divisive rupture in 1955, engineering a split between Jagan and his PPP colleagues.<sup>[149]</sup> Jagan again won the colonial elections in 1957 and 1961; despite Britain's shift to a reconsideration of its view of the left-wing Jagan as a Soviet-style communist at this time, the United States pressured the British to withhold Guyana's independence until an alternative to Jagan could be identified, supported, and brought into office.<sup>[150]</sup>

Worn down by the communist guerrilla war for Vietnamese independence and handed a watershed defeat by communist Viet Minh rebels at the 1954 Battle of Điện Biên Phủ, the French accepted a negotiated abandonment of their colonial stake in Vietnam. In the Geneva Conference, peace accords were signed, leaving Vietnam divided between a pro-Soviet administration in North Viet-

nam and a pro-Western administration in South Vietnam at the 17th parallel north. Between 1954 and 1961, Eisenhower's United States sent economic aid and military advisers to strengthen South Vietnam's pro-Western regime against communist efforts to destabilize it.<sup>[14]</sup>

Many emerging nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America rejected the pressure to choose sides in the East-West competition. In 1955, at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, dozens of Third World governments resolved to stay out of the Cold War.<sup>[151]</sup> The consensus reached at Bandung culminated with the creation of the Belgrade-headquartered Non-Aligned Movement in 1961.<sup>[168]</sup> Meanwhile, Khrushchev broadened Moscow's policy to establish ties with India and other key neutral states. Independence movements in the Third World transformed the post-war order into a more pluralistic world of decolonized African and Middle Eastern nations and of rising nationalism in Asia and Latin America.<sup>[14]</sup>

## 5.5 Sino-Soviet split

Main article: Sino-Soviet split

The period after 1956 was marked by serious setbacks for the Soviet Union, most notably the breakdown of the Sino-Soviet alliance, beginning the Sino-Soviet split. Mao had defended Stalin when Khrushchev attacked him after his death in 1956, and treated the new Soviet leader as a superficial upstart, accusing him of having lost his revolutionary edge.<sup>[152]</sup> For his part, Khrushchev, disturbed by Mao's glib attitude toward nuclear war, referred to the Chinese leader as a "lunatic on a throne".<sup>[153]</sup>

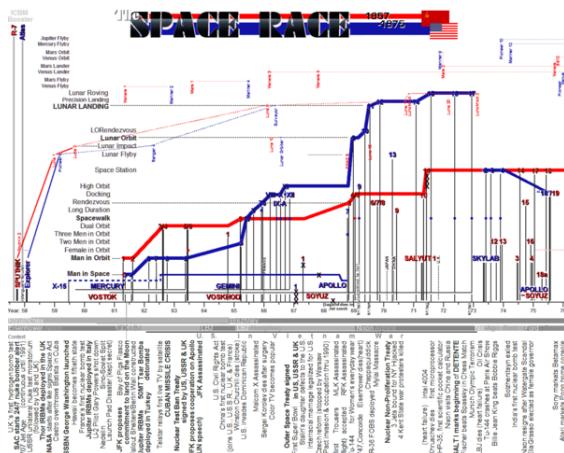
After this, Khrushchev made many desperate attempts to reconstitute the Sino-Soviet alliance, but Mao considered it useless and denied any proposal.<sup>[152]</sup> The Chinese-Soviet animosity spilled out in an intra-communist propaganda war.<sup>[154]</sup> Further on, the Soviets focused on a bitter rivalry with Mao's China for leadership of the global communist movement.<sup>[155]</sup>

Historian Lorenz M. Lüthi argues:

The Sino-Soviet split was one of the key events of the Cold War, equal in importance to the construction of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Second Vietnam War, and Sino-American rapprochement. The split helped to determine the framework of the Second Cold War in general, and influenced the course of the Second Vietnam War in particular.<sup>[156]</sup>

## 5.6 Space race

Main article: Space Race



*Charting the progress of the Space Race in 1957–1975.*

On the nuclear weapons front, the United States and the USSR pursued nuclear rearmament and developed long-range weapons with which they could strike the territory of the other.<sup>[30]</sup> In August 1957, the Soviets successfully launched the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)<sup>[157]</sup> and in October, launched the first Earth satellite, Sputnik.<sup>[158]</sup> The launch of Sputnik inaugurated the Space Race. This culminated in the Apollo Moon landings, which astronaut Frank Borman later described as "just a battle in the Cold War."<sup>[159]</sup>

## 5.7 Cuban Revolution and the Bay of Pigs Invasion

Main articles: Cuban Revolution and Bay of Pigs Invasion

In Cuba, the July 26 Movement seized power in Jan-



*Flag of the 26 July Movement.*

uary 1959, toppling President Fulgencio Batista, whose unpopular regime had been denied arms by the Eisenhower administration.<sup>[160]</sup>

Diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States continued for some time after Batista's fall, but President Eisenhower deliberately left the capital to avoid meeting Cuba's young revolutionary leader Fidel Castro during the

latter's trip to Washington in April, leaving Vice President Richard Nixon to conduct the meeting in his place.<sup>[161]</sup> Cuba began negotiating arms purchases from the Eastern Bloc in March 1960.<sup>[162]</sup>

In January 1961, just prior to leaving office, Eisenhower formally severed relations with the Cuban government. In April 1961, the administration of newly elected American President John F. Kennedy mounted an unsuccessful CIA-organized ship-borne invasion of the island at Playa Girón and Playa Larga in Las Villas Province—a failure that publicly humiliated the United States.<sup>[163]</sup> Castro responded by publicly embracing Marxism-Leninism, and the Soviet Union pledged to provide further support.<sup>[163]</sup>

## 5.8 Berlin Crisis of 1961



*Soviet and American tanks face each other at Checkpoint Charlie, on October 27, during the Berlin Crisis of 1961*

Main articles: Berlin Crisis of 1961, Berlin Wall and Eastern Bloc emigration and defection

The Berlin Crisis of 1961 was the last major incident in the Cold War regarding the status of Berlin and post-World War II Germany. By the early 1950s, the Soviet approach to restricting emigration movement was emulated by most of the rest of the Eastern Bloc.<sup>[164]</sup> However, hundreds of thousands of East Germans annually emigrated to West Germany through a "loophole" in the system that existed between East and West Berlin, where the four occupying World War II powers governed movement.<sup>[165]</sup>

The emigration resulted in a massive "brain drain" from East Germany to West Germany of younger educated professionals, such that nearly 20% of East Germany's population had migrated to West Germany by 1961.<sup>[166]</sup> That June, the Soviet Union issued a new ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of Allied forces from West Berlin.<sup>[167]</sup> The request was rebuffed, and on 13 August, East Germany erected a barbed-wire barrier that would eventually be expanded through construction into

the Berlin Wall, effectively closing the loophole.<sup>[168]</sup>

## 5.9 Cuban Missile Crisis and Khrushchev ouster

Main articles: Cuban Project and Cuban Missile Crisis  
Continuing to seek ways to oust Castro following the Bay



*A United States Navy P-2 of VP-18 flying over a Soviet freighter during the Cuban Missile Crisis.*

of Pigs Invasion, Kennedy and his administration experimented with various ways of covertly facilitating the overthrow of the Cuban government. Significant hopes were pinned on a covert program named the Cuban Project, devised under the Kennedy administration in 1961.

In February 1962, Khrushchev learned of the American plans regarding Cuba: a “Cuban project”—approved by the CIA and stipulating the overthrow of the Cuban government in October, possibly involving the American military—and yet one more Kennedy-ordered operation to assassinate Castro.<sup>[169]</sup> Preparations to install Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba were undertaken in response.<sup>[169]</sup>

Alarmed, Kennedy considered various reactions, and ultimately responded to the installation of nuclear missiles in Cuba with a naval blockade and presented an ultimatum to the Soviets. Khrushchev backed down from a confrontation, and the Soviet Union removed the missiles in return for an American pledge not to invade Cuba again.<sup>[170]</sup> Castro later admitted that “I would have agreed to the use of nuclear weapons. ... we took it for granted that it would become a nuclear war anyway, and that we were going to disappear.”<sup>[171]</sup>

The Cuban Missile Crisis (October–November 1962) brought the world closer to nuclear war than ever before.<sup>[172]</sup> The aftermath of the crisis led to the first efforts in the nuclear arms race at nuclear disarmament and improving relations,<sup>[118]</sup> although the Cold War’s first arms control agreement, the Antarctic Treaty, had come into force in 1961.<sup>[173]</sup>

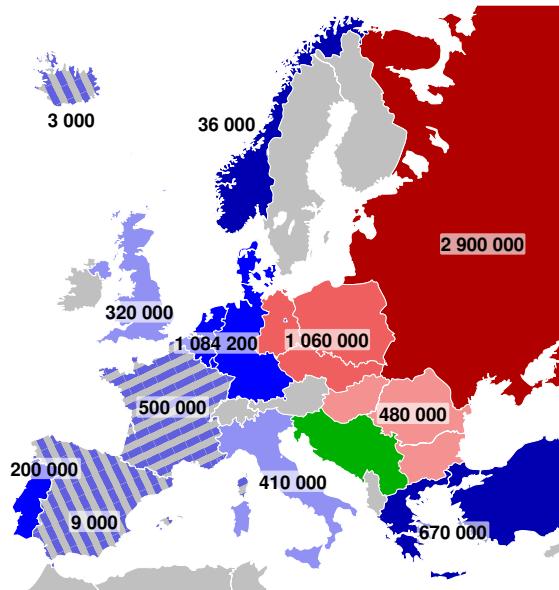
In 1964, Khrushchev’s Kremlin colleagues managed to oust him, but allowed him a peaceful retirement.<sup>[174]</sup> Ac-

cused of rudeness and incompetence, he was also credited with ruining Soviet agriculture and bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war.<sup>[174]</sup> Khrushchev had become an international embarrassment when he authorized construction of the Berlin Wall, a public humiliation for Marxism–Leninism.<sup>[174]</sup>

## 6 Confrontation through détente (1962–79)

Main article: Cold War (1962–1979)

In the course of the 1960s and 1970s, Cold War par-

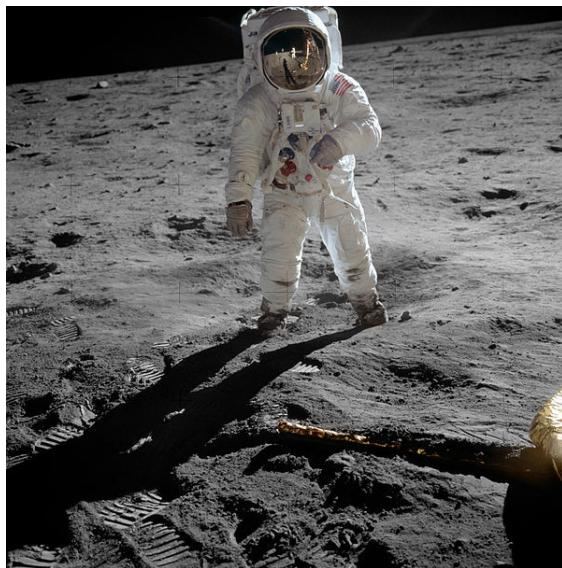


*NATO and Warsaw Pact troop strengths in Europe in 1973*



*United States Navy F-4 Phantom II intercepts a Soviet Tupolev Tu-95 D aircraft in the early 1970s*

ticipants struggled to adjust to a new, more complicated pattern of international relations in which the world was no longer divided into two clearly opposed blocs.<sup>[68]</sup> From the beginning of the post-war period, Western Europe and Japan rapidly recovered from the destruction of World War II and sustained strong economic growth



*The United States reached the moon in 1969—a milestone in the space race.*

through the 1950s and 1960s, with per capita GDPs approaching those of the United States, while **Eastern Bloc** economies stagnated.<sup>[68][175]</sup>

As a result of the 1973 oil crisis, combined with the growing influence of Third World alignments such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Non-Aligned Movement, less-powerful countries had more room to assert their independence and often showed themselves resistant to pressure from either superpower.<sup>[98]</sup> Meanwhile, Moscow was forced to turn its attention inward to deal with the Soviet Union's deep-seated domestic economic problems.<sup>[68]</sup> During this period, Soviet leaders such as Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin embraced the notion of *détente*.<sup>[68]</sup>

## 6.1 French NATO withdrawal

Main article: **NATO** § French withdrawal from NATO command

The unity of NATO was breached early in its history, with a crisis occurring during **Charles de Gaulle**'s presidency of France from 1958 onwards. De Gaulle protested at the United States' strong role in the organization and what he perceived as a special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. In a memorandum sent to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on 17 September 1958, he argued for the creation of a tripartite directorate that would put France on an equal footing with the United States and the United Kingdom, and also for the expansion of NATO's coverage to include geographical areas of interest to France, most notably **French Algeria**, where France was waging a counter-insurgency and

sought NATO assistance.<sup>[176]</sup>

Considering the response given to be unsatisfactory, de Gaulle began the development of an **independent French nuclear deterrent** and in 1966 withdrew from NATO's military structures and expelled NATO troops from French soil.<sup>[177]</sup>

## 6.2 Czechoslovakia invasion

Main articles: **Prague Spring** and **Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia**

In 1968, a period of political liberalization in **Czechoslovakia** called the **Prague Spring** took place that included "Action Program" of liberalizations, which described increasing freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of movement, along with an economic emphasis on consumer goods, the possibility of a multiparty government, limiting the power of the secret police<sup>[178][179]</sup> and potentially withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact.<sup>[180]</sup>

In answer to the Prague Spring, the Soviet army, together with most of their Warsaw Pact allies, invaded Czechoslovakia.<sup>[181]</sup> The invasion was followed by a wave of emigration, including an estimated 70,000 Czechs and Slovaks initially fleeing, with the total eventually reaching 300,000.<sup>[182]</sup> The invasion sparked intense protests from Yugoslavia, Romania and China, and from Western European communist parties.<sup>[183]</sup>

## 6.3 Brezhnev Doctrine

Main article: **Brezhnev Doctrine**

In September 1968, during a speech at the Fifth Congress



*Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon during Brezhnev's June 1973 visit to Washington; this was a high-water mark in détente between the United States and the Soviet Union.*

of the Polish United Workers' Party one month after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev outlined the **Brezhnev Doctrine**, in which he claimed the right to violate the sovereignty of any country attempting to replace

Marxism–Leninism with capitalism. During the speech, Brezhnev stated:<sup>[180]</sup>

When forces that are hostile to socialism try to turn the development of some socialist country towards capitalism, it becomes not only a problem of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries.

The doctrine found its origins in the failures of Marxism–Leninism in states like Poland, Hungary and East Germany, which were facing a declining standard of living contrasting with the prosperity of West Germany and the rest of Western Europe.<sup>[184]</sup>

#### 6.4 Third World escalations

See also: United States occupation of the Dominican Republic (1965–1966), Indonesian killings of 1965–1966, Vietnam War, 1973 Chilean coup d'état, 1973 Uruguayan coup d'état, 1976 Argentine coup d'état, Operation Condor, Six Day War, Task Force 74, War of Attrition, Yom Kippur War, Ogaden War, Angolan Civil War, Indonesian invasion of East Timor, Reeducation camp, Vietnamese boat people and Stability-instability paradox

Under the Lyndon Johnson Administration, which



*Alexei Kosygin (left) next to US President Lyndon B. Johnson (right) during the Glassboro Summit Conference*

gained power after the assassination of John Kennedy, the U.S. took a more hardline stance on Latin America—sometimes called the "Mann Doctrine".<sup>[185]</sup> In 1964, the Brazilian military overthrew the government of president João Goulart with U.S. backing.<sup>[185]</sup> In late April 1965, the U.S. sent some 22,000 troops to the Dominican Republic for a one-year occupation in an invasion codenamed **Operation Power Pack**, citing the threat of the emergence of a Cuban-style revolution in Latin America.<sup>[14]</sup> Héctor García-Godoy acted as provisional president, until conservative former president Joaquín Balaguer won the 1966 presidential election against non-campaigning former President Juan Bosch.<sup>[186]</sup> Activists

for Bosch's **Dominican Revolutionary Party** were violently harassed by the Dominican police and armed forces.<sup>[186]</sup>

In Indonesia, the hardline anti-communist General Suharto wrested control of the state from his predecessor **Sukarno** in an attempt to establish a "New Order". From 1965 to 1966, the military led the mass killing of an estimated half-million members and sympathizers of the **Indonesian Communist Party** and other leftist organizations.<sup>[187]</sup>

Escalating the scale of American intervention in the ongoing conflict between **Ngô Đình Diệm**'s South Vietnamese government and the communist National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NLF) insurgents opposing it, Johnson deployed some 575,000 troops in Southeast Asia to defeat the NLF and their North Vietnamese allies in the **Vietnam War**, but his costly policy weakened the US economy and, by 1975, ultimately culminated in what most of the world saw as a humiliating defeat of the world's most powerful superpower at the hands of one of the world's poorest nations.<sup>[14]</sup> North Vietnam received Soviet approval for its war effort in 1959; the Soviet Union sent 15,000 military advisors and annual arms shipments worth \$450 million to North Vietnam during the war, while China sent 320,000 troops and annual arms shipments worth \$180 million.<sup>[188]</sup>

In **Chile**, the Socialist Party candidate Salvador Allende won the presidential election of 1970, becoming the first democratically elected Marxist to become president of a country in the Americas.<sup>[189]</sup> The CIA targeted Allende for removal and operated to undermine his support domestically, which contributed to a period of unrest culminating in General **Augusto Pinochet**'s coup d'état on 11 September 1973. Pinochet consolidated power as a military dictator, Allende's reforms of the economy were rolled back, and leftist opponents were killed or detained in internment camps under the **Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA)**.



*Henry Kissinger, who was US National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under Presidents Nixon and Ford, was a central figure in the Cold War while in office (1969–1977).*

The Middle East remained a source of contention. Egypt, which received the bulk of its arms and economic assis-

tance from the USSR, was a troublesome client, with a reluctant Soviet Union feeling obliged to assist in both the 1967 Six-Day War (with advisers and technicians) and the War of Attrition (with pilots and aircraft) against pro-Western Israel.<sup>[190]</sup> Despite the beginning of an Egyptian shift from a pro-Soviet to a pro-American orientation in 1972 (under Egypt's new leader Anwar El Sadat),<sup>[191]</sup> rumors of imminent Soviet intervention on the Egyptians' behalf during the 1973 Yom Kippur War brought about a massive American mobilization that threatened to wreck détente.<sup>[192]</sup> Although pre-Sadat Egypt had been the largest recipient of Soviet aid in the Middle East, the Soviets were also successful in establishing close relations with communist South Yemen, as well as the nationalist governments of Algeria and Iraq.<sup>[193]</sup> Indirect Soviet assistance to the Palestinian side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict included support for Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).<sup>[194]</sup> According to historian Charles R. H. Tripp, the Iraqi Ba'athist coup of 1968 upset "the US-sponsored security system established as part of the Cold War in the Middle East. It appeared that any enemy of the Baghdad regime was a potential ally of the United States." From 1973 to 1975, the CIA colluded with the Iranian government to finance and arm Kurdish rebels in the Second Kurdish-Iraqi War to weaken Iraq's Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr.<sup>[195]</sup>



*American prisoner of war speaking with a North Vietnamese Army officer, 1973*

In Africa, Somali army officers led by Mohamed Siad Barre carried out a bloodless coup in 1969, creating the socialist Somali Democratic Republic. The Soviet Union vowed to support Somalia. Four years later, the pro-American Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in a 1974 coup by the Derg, a radical group of Ethiopian army officers led by the pro-Soviet Mengistu Haile Mariam, who built up relations with the Cubans and Soviets.<sup>[196]</sup> When fighting between the Somalis and Ethiopians broke out in the 1977–1978 Somali-Ethiopian Ogaden War, Barre lost his Soviet support and turned to the Safari Club—a group of pro-American intelligence agencies including Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—for support and weapons.<sup>[197]</sup> The Ethiopian military was supported by Cuban soldiers along with Soviet military advisors and armaments.<sup>[198]</sup> Carter remained mostly

neutral during the conflict, insisting that Somalia was violating Ethiopian sovereignty. Carter initiated military cooperation with Somalia in 1980.<sup>[199]</sup>

The 1974 Portuguese Carnation Revolution against the authoritarian *Estado Novo* returned Portugal to a multi-party system and facilitated the independence of the Portuguese colonies Angola and East Timor. In Africa, where Angolan rebels had waged a multi-faction independence war against Portuguese rule since 1961, a two-decade civil war replaced the anti-colonial struggle as fighting erupted between the communist People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), backed by the Cubans and Soviets, and the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), backed by the United States, the People's Republic of China, and Mobutu's government in Zaire. The United States, the apartheid government of South Africa, and several other African governments also supported a third faction, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Without bothering to consult the Soviets in advance, the Cuban government sent a number of combat troops to fight alongside the MPLA.<sup>[200]</sup> Foreign mercenaries and a South African armoured column were deployed to support UNITA, but the MPLA, bolstered by Cuban personnel and Soviet assistance, eventually gained the upper hand.<sup>[201]</sup>

During the Vietnam War, North Vietnam invaded and occupied parts of Cambodia to use as military bases, which contributed to the violence of the Cambodian Civil War between the pro-American government of Lon Nol and Maoist Khmer Rouge insurgents. Documents uncovered from the Soviet archives reveal that the North Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1970 was launched at the request of the Khmer Rouge after negotiations with Nuon Chea.<sup>[202]</sup> US and South Vietnamese forces responded to these actions with a bombing campaign and ground incursion, the effects of which are disputed by historians.<sup>[203]</sup> Under the leadership of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge would eventually kill 1–3 million Cambodians in the killing fields, out of a 1975 population of roughly 8 million.<sup>[204]</sup> Martin Shaw described these atrocities as "the purest genocide of the Cold War era."<sup>[205]</sup> Vietnam deposed Pol Pot in 1979 and installed Khmer Rouge defector Heng Samrin, only to be bogged down in a guerilla war and suffer a punitive Chinese attack.

## 6.5 Sino-American rapprochement

Main article: 1972 Nixon visit to China

As a result of the Sino-Soviet split, tensions along the Chinese–Soviet border reached their peak in 1969, and United States President Richard Nixon decided to use the conflict to shift the balance of power towards the West in the Cold War.<sup>[206]</sup> The Chinese had sought improved relations with the Americans in order to gain advantage over the Soviets as well.



*Richard Nixon meets with Mao Zedong in 1972.*

In February 1972, Nixon announced a stunning rapprochement with Mao's China<sup>[206]</sup> by traveling to Beijing and meeting with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. At this time, the USSR achieved rough nuclear parity with the United States; meanwhile, the Vietnam War both weakened America's influence in the Third World and cooled relations with Western Europe.<sup>[207]</sup> Although indirect conflict between Cold War powers continued through the late 1960s and early 1970s, tensions were beginning to ease.<sup>[118]</sup>

## 6.6 Nixon, Brezhnev, and détente



*Leonid Brezhnev and Jimmy Carter sign SALT II treaty, June 18, 1979, in Vienna*

Main articles: Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, Vladivostok Summit Meeting on Arms Control, Helsinki Accords and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Following his China visit, Nixon met with Soviet leaders, including Brezhnev in Moscow.<sup>[208]</sup> These Strategic Arms Limitation Talks resulted in two landmark arms control treaties: **SALT I**, the first comprehensive limitation pact signed by the two superpowers,<sup>[209]</sup> and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which banned the devel-

opment of systems designed to intercept incoming missiles. These aimed to limit the development of costly anti-ballistic missiles and nuclear missiles.<sup>[68]</sup>

Nixon and Brezhnev proclaimed a new era of "peaceful coexistence" and established the groundbreaking new policy of *détente* (or cooperation) between the two superpowers. Meanwhile, Brezhnev attempted to revive the Soviet economy, which was declining in part because of heavy military expenditures.<sup>[14]</sup> Between 1972 and 1974, the two sides also agreed to strengthen their economic ties,<sup>[14]</sup> including agreements for increased trade. As a result of their meetings, *détente* would replace the hostility of the Cold War and the two countries would live mutually.<sup>[208]</sup>

Meanwhile, these developments coincided with the "Ostpolitik" of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt.<sup>[183]</sup> Other agreements were concluded to stabilize the situation in Europe, culminating in the Helsinki Accords signed at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975.<sup>[210]</sup>

## 6.7 Late 1970s deterioration of relations

In the 1970s, the KGB, led by Yuri Andropov, continued to persecute distinguished Soviet personalities such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov, who were criticising the Soviet leadership in harsh terms.<sup>[211]</sup> Indirect conflict between the superpowers continued through this period of *détente* in the Third World, particularly during political crises in the Middle East, Chile, Ethiopia, and Angola.<sup>[212]</sup>

Although President Jimmy Carter tried to place another limit on the arms race with a **SALT II** agreement in 1979,<sup>[213]</sup> his efforts were undermined by the other events that year, including the Iranian Revolution and the KGB-backed<sup>[214]</sup> Nicaraguan Revolution, which both ousted pro-US regimes, and his retaliation against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December.<sup>[14]</sup>

## 7 "Second Cold War" (1979–85)

Main article: Cold War (1979–1985)

The term *second Cold War* refers to the period of intensive reawakening of Cold War tensions and conflicts in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Tensions greatly increased between the major powers with both sides becoming more militaristic.<sup>[10]</sup> Diggins says, "Reagan went all out to fight the second cold war, by supporting counterinsurgencies in the third world."<sup>[215]</sup> Cox says, "The intensity of this 'second' Cold War was as great as its duration was short."<sup>[216]</sup>

## 7.1 Soviet war in Afghanistan

Main articles: War in Afghanistan (1978–present) and Soviet war in Afghanistan

In April 1978, the communist People's Democratic Party



*President Reagan publicizes his support by meeting with Afghan Mujahideen leaders in the White House, 1983*

of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power in Afghanistan in the Saur Revolution. Within months, opponents of the communist government launched an uprising in eastern Afghanistan that quickly expanded into a civil war waged by guerrilla mujahideen against government forces countrywide.<sup>[217]</sup> The Peshawar Seven insurgents received military training and weapons in neighboring Pakistan and China,<sup>[218][219]</sup> as well as weapons and billions of dollars from the United States, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia,<sup>[219]</sup> while the Soviet Union sent thousands of military advisers to support the PDPA government.<sup>[217]</sup> Meanwhile, increasing friction between the competing factions of the PDPA – the dominant Khalq and the more moderate Parcham – resulted in the dismissal of Parchami cabinet members and the arrest of Parchami military officers under the pretext of a Parchami coup. By mid-1979, the United States had started a covert program to assist the mujahideen.<sup>[220]</sup>

In September 1979, Khalqist President Nur Muhammad Taraki was assassinated in a coup within the PDPA orchestrated by fellow Khalq member Hafizullah Amin, who assumed the presidency. Distrusted by the Soviets, Amin was assassinated by Soviet special forces in December 1979. A Soviet-organized government, led by Parcham's Babrak Karmal but inclusive of both factions, filled the vacuum. Soviet troops were deployed to stabilize Afghanistan under Karmal in more substantial numbers, although the Soviet government did not expect to do most of the fighting in Afghanistan. As a result, however, the Soviets were now directly involved in what had been a domestic war in Afghanistan.<sup>[221]</sup>

Carter responded to the Soviet intervention by withdrawing the SALT II treaty from the Senate, imposing embargoes on grain and technology shipments to the USSR, and demanding a significant increase in military spending, and further announced that the United States would

boycott the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. He described the Soviet incursion as “the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War”.<sup>[222]</sup>

## 7.2 Reagan and Thatcher

Further information: Reagan Doctrine and Strategic Defense Initiative

In January 1977, four years prior to becoming pres-



*Thatcher's Ministry meets with Reagan's Cabinet at the White House, 1981*

ident, Ronald Reagan bluntly stated, in a conversation with Richard V. Allen, his basic expectation in relation to the Cold War. “My idea of American policy toward the Soviet Union is simple, and some would say simplistic,” he said. “It is this: We win and they lose. What do you think of that?”<sup>[223]</sup> In 1980, Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election, vowing to increase military spending and confront the Soviets everywhere.<sup>[224]</sup> Both Reagan and new British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher denounced the Soviet Union and its ideology. Reagan labeled the Soviet Union an “evil empire” and predicted that Communism would be left on the “ash heap of history”.<sup>[225]</sup>

By early 1985, Reagan's anti-communist position had developed into a stance known as the new **Reagan Doctrine**—which, in addition to containment, formulated an additional right to subvert existing communist governments.<sup>[226]</sup> Besides continuing Carter's policy of supporting the Islamic opponents of the Soviet Union and the Soviet-backed PDPA government in Afghanistan, the CIA also sought to weaken the Soviet Union itself by promoting political Islam in the majority-Muslim Central Asian Soviet Union.<sup>[227]</sup> Additionally, the CIA encouraged anti-communist Pakistan's ISI to train Muslims from around the world to participate in the jihad against the Soviet Union.<sup>[227]</sup>

### 7.3 Polish Solidarity movement and martial law

Main articles: Solidarity (Polish trade union) and Martial law in Poland

Further information: Soviet reaction to the Polish crisis of 1980–1981

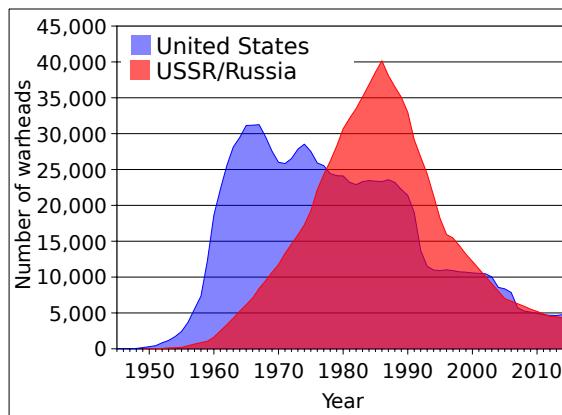
Pope John Paul II provided a moral focus for anti-communism; a visit to his native Poland in 1979 stimulated a religious and nationalist resurgence centered on the Solidarity movement that galvanized opposition and may have led to his attempted assassination two years later.<sup>[228]</sup>

In December 1981, Poland's Wojciech Jaruzelski reacted to the crisis by imposing a period of martial law. Reagan imposed economic sanctions on Poland in response.<sup>[229]</sup> Mikhail Suslov, the Kremlin's top ideologist, advised Soviet leaders not to intervene if Poland fell under the control of Solidarity, for fear it might lead to heavy economic sanctions, representing a catastrophe for the Soviet economy.<sup>[229]</sup>

### 7.4 Soviet and US military and economic issues

Further information: Brezhnev stagnation, Strategic Defense Initiative, RSD-10 Pioneer and MGM-31 Pershing

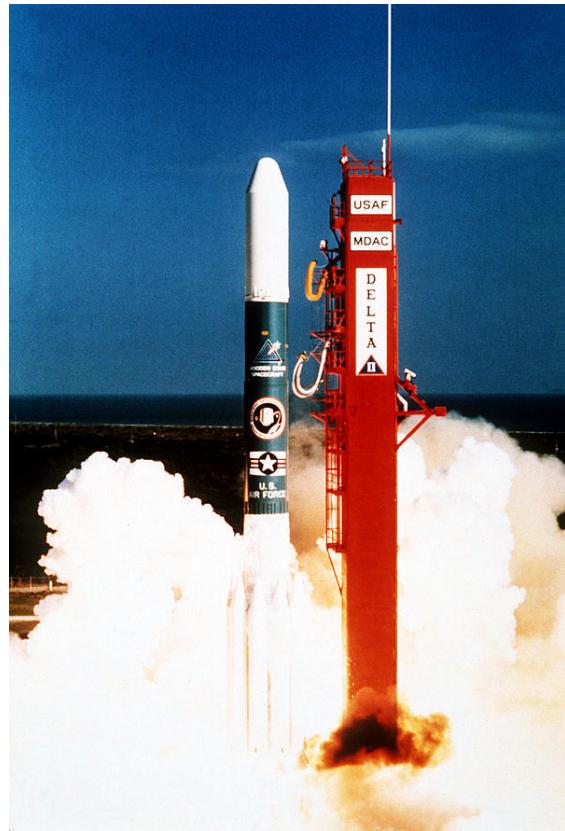
Moscow had built up a military that consumed as much



US and USSR/Russian nuclear weapons stockpiles, 1945–2006

as 25 percent of the Soviet Union's gross national product at the expense of consumer goods and investment in civilian sectors.<sup>[230]</sup> Soviet spending on the arms race and other Cold War commitments both caused and exacerbated deep-seated structural problems in the Soviet system,<sup>[231]</sup> which saw at least a decade of economic stagnation during the late Brezhnev years.

Soviet investment in the defense sector was not driven by military necessity, but in large part by the interests of massive party and state bureaucracies dependent on the



Delta 183 launch vehicle lifts off, carrying the Strategic Defense Initiative sensor experiment "Delta Star".

sector for their own power and privileges.<sup>[232]</sup> The Soviet Armed Forces became the largest in the world in terms of the numbers and types of weapons they possessed, in the number of troops in their ranks, and in the sheer size of their military-industrial base.<sup>[233]</sup> However, the quantitative advantages held by the Soviet military often concealed areas where the Eastern Bloc dramatically lagged behind the West.<sup>[234]</sup>

By the early 1980s, the USSR had built up a military arsenal and army surpassing that of the United States. Soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, president Carter began massively building up the United States military. This buildup was accelerated by the Reagan administration, which increased the military spending from 5.3 percent of GNP in 1981 to 6.5 percent in 1986,<sup>[235]</sup> the largest peacetime defense buildup in United States history.<sup>[236]</sup>

Tensions continued intensifying in the early 1980s when Reagan revived the B-1 Lancer program that was canceled by the Carter administration, produced LGM-118 Peacekeepers,<sup>[237]</sup> installed US cruise missiles in Europe, and announced his experimental Strategic Defense Initiative, dubbed "Star Wars" by the media, a defense program to shoot down missiles in mid-flight.<sup>[238]</sup>

With the background of a buildup in tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the deployment



After ten-year-old American Samantha Smith wrote a letter to Yuri Andropov expressing her fear of nuclear war, Andropov invited Smith to the Soviet Union.

of Soviet RSD-10 Pioneer ballistic missiles targeting Western Europe, NATO decided, under the impetus of the Carter presidency, to deploy MGM-31 Pershing and cruise missiles in Europe, primarily West Germany.<sup>[239]</sup> This deployment would have placed missiles just 10 minutes' striking distance from Moscow.<sup>[240]</sup>

After Reagan's military buildup, the Soviet Union did not respond by further building its military<sup>[241]</sup> because the enormous military expenses, along with inefficient planned manufacturing and collectivized agriculture, were already a heavy burden for the Soviet economy.<sup>[242]</sup> At the same time, Saudi Arabia increased oil production,<sup>[243]</sup> even as other non-OPEC nations were increasing production.<sup>[244]</sup> These developments contributed to the 1980s oil glut, which affected the Soviet Union, as oil was the main source of Soviet export revenues.<sup>[230][242]</sup> Issues with command economics,<sup>[245]</sup> oil price decreases and large military expenditures gradually brought the Soviet economy to stagnation.<sup>[242]</sup>

On 1 September 1983, the Soviet Union shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, a Boeing 747 with 269 people aboard, including sitting Congressman Larry McDonald, when it violated Soviet airspace just past the west coast of Sakhalin Island near Moneron Island—an act which Reagan characterized as a "massacre". This act increased support for military deployment, overseen by Reagan, which stood in place until the later accords

between Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>[246]</sup> The Able Archer 83 exercise in November 1983, a realistic simulation of a coordinated NATO nuclear release, was perhaps the most dangerous moment since the Cuban Missile Crisis, as the Soviet leadership feared that a nuclear attack might be imminent.<sup>[247]</sup>

American domestic public concerns about intervening in foreign conflicts persisted from the end of the Vietnam War.<sup>[248]</sup> The Reagan administration emphasized the use of quick, low-cost counter-insurgency tactics to intervene in foreign conflicts.<sup>[248]</sup> In 1983, the Reagan administration intervened in the multisided Lebanese Civil War, invaded Grenada, bombed Libya and backed the Central American Contras, anti-communist paramilitaries seeking to overthrow the Soviet-aligned Sandinista government in Nicaragua.<sup>[98]</sup> While Reagan's interventions against Grenada and Libya were popular in the United States, his backing of the Contra rebels was mired in controversy.<sup>[249]</sup>

Meanwhile, the Soviets incurred high costs for their own foreign interventions. Although Brezhnev was convinced in 1979 that the Soviet war in Afghanistan would be brief, Muslim guerrillas, aided by the US, China, Britain, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan,<sup>[219]</sup> waged a fierce resistance against the invasion.<sup>[250]</sup> The Kremlin sent nearly 100,000 troops to support its puppet regime in Afghanistan, leading many outside observers to dub the war "the Soviets' Vietnam".<sup>[250]</sup> However, Moscow's quagmire in Afghanistan was far more disastrous for the Soviets than Vietnam had been for the Americans because the conflict coincided with a period of internal decay and domestic crisis in the Soviet system.

A senior US State Department official predicted such an outcome as early as 1980, positing that the invasion resulted in part from a "domestic crisis within the Soviet system. ... It may be that the thermodynamic law of entropy has ... caught up with the Soviet system, which now seems to expend more energy on simply maintaining its equilibrium than on improving itself. We could be seeing a period of foreign movement at a time of internal decay".<sup>[251][252]</sup>

## 8 Final years (1985–91)

Main article: Cold War (1985–1991)

Further information: Reagan Doctrine

### 8.1 Gorbachev reforms

Further information: Mikhail Gorbachev, perestroika and glasnost

By the time the comparatively youthful Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary in 1985,<sup>[225]</sup> the Soviet economy was stagnant and faced a sharp fall in for-



Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan sign the INF Treaty at the White House, 1987



Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988.

ign currency earnings as a result of the downward slide in oil prices in the 1980s.<sup>[253]</sup> These issues prompted Gorbachev to investigate measures to revive the ailing state.<sup>[253]</sup>

An ineffectual start led to the conclusion that deeper structural changes were necessary and in June 1987 Gorbachev announced an agenda of economic reform called *perestroika*, or restructuring.<sup>[254]</sup> Perestroika relaxed the production quota system, allowed private ownership of businesses and paved the way for foreign investment. These measures were intended to redirect the country's resources from costly Cold War military commitments to more productive areas in the civilian sector.<sup>[254]</sup>

Despite initial skepticism in the West, the new Soviet leader proved to be committed to reversing the Soviet Union's deteriorating economic condition instead of continuing the arms race with the West.<sup>[118][255]</sup> Partly as a way to fight off internal opposition from party cliques to his reforms, Gorbachev simultaneously introduced *glasnost*, or openness, which increased freedom of the press and the transparency of state institutions.<sup>[256]</sup> *Glasnost* was intended to reduce the corruption at the top of the Communist Party and moderate the abuse of power in the Central Committee.<sup>[257]</sup> *Glasnost* also enabled increased contact between Soviet citizens and the western world, particularly with the United States, contributing to the accelerating détente between the two nations.<sup>[258]</sup>

## 8.2 Thaw in relations

Further information: Reykjavík Summit, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, START I and Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany  
In response to the Kremlin's military and political con-



The beginning of the 1990s brought a thaw in relations between the superpowers.

cessions, Reagan agreed to renew talks on economic issues and the scaling-back of the arms race.<sup>[259]</sup> The first was held in November 1985 in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>[259]</sup> At one stage the two men, accompanied only by an interpreter, agreed in principle to reduce each country's nuclear arsenal by 50 percent.<sup>[260]</sup> A second Reykjavík Summit was held in Iceland. Talks went well until the focus shifted to Reagan's proposed Strategic Defense Initiative, which Gorbachev wanted eliminated. Reagan refused.<sup>[261]</sup> The negotiations failed, but the third summit in 1987 led to a breakthrough with the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). The INF treaty eliminated all nuclear-armed, ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers (300 to 3,400 miles) and their infrastructure.<sup>[262]</sup>

East-West tensions rapidly subsided through the mid-to-late 1980s, culminating with the final summit in Moscow in 1989, when Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush signed the START I arms control treaty.<sup>[263]</sup> During the following year it became apparent to the Soviets that oil and gas subsidies, along with the cost of maintaining massive troops levels, represented a substantial economic drain.<sup>[264]</sup> In addition, the security advantage of a buffer zone was recognised as irrelevant and the Soviets officially declared that they would no longer intervene in the affairs of allied states in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>[265]</sup>

In 1989, Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan<sup>[266]</sup> and by 1990 Gorbachev consented to German reunification,<sup>[264]</sup> the only alternative being a Tiananmen scenario.<sup>[267]</sup> When the Berlin Wall came down, Gorbachev's "Common European Home" concept began to take shape.<sup>[268]</sup>

On 3 December 1989, Gorbachev and Reagan's succes-

sor, George H. W. Bush, declared the Cold War over at the **Malta Summit**,<sup>[269]</sup> a year later, the two former rivals were partners in the **Gulf War** against Iraq.<sup>[270]</sup>

### 8.3 East Europe breaks away

Main article: Revolutions of 1989

By 1989, the Soviet alliance system was on the brink



*The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.*

of collapse, and, deprived of Soviet military support, the communist leaders of the **Warsaw Pact** states were losing power.<sup>[266]</sup> Grassroots organizations, such as Poland's **Solidarity** movement, rapidly gained ground with strong popular bases. In 1989, the communist governments in Poland and **Hungary** became the first to negotiate the organizing of competitive elections. In **Czechoslovakia** and **East Germany**, mass protests unseated entrenched communist leaders. The communist regimes in **Bulgaria** and **Romania** also crumbled, in the latter case as the result of a **violent uprising**. Attitudes had changed enough that US Secretary of State James Baker suggested that the American government would not be opposed to Soviet intervention in Romania, on behalf of the opposition, to prevent bloodshed.<sup>[271]</sup> The tidal wave of change culminated with the fall of the **Berlin Wall** in November 1989, which symbolized the collapse of European communist governments and graphically ended the **Iron Curtain** divide of Europe. The 1989 revolutionary wave swept across Central and Eastern Europe peacefully overthrew all the Soviet-style communist states: East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria;<sup>[272]</sup> Romania was the only Eastern-bloc country to topple its communist regime violently and execute its head of state.<sup>[273]</sup>

### 8.4 Soviet republics break away

Further information: **Economy of the Soviet Union** and **Baltic Way**

In the USSR itself, *glasnost* weakened the bonds that held

the Soviet Union together<sup>[265]</sup> and by February 1990, with the dissolution of the USSR looming, the **Communist Party** was forced to surrender its 73-year-old monopoly on state power.<sup>[274]</sup> At the same time freedom of press and dissent allowed by *glasnost* and the festering "nationalities question" increasingly led the Union's component republics to declare their autonomy from Moscow, with the **Baltic states** withdrawing from the Union entirely.<sup>[275]</sup>

### 8.5 Soviet dissolution

Further information: January 1991 events in Latvia, 1991 Soviet coup d'état attempt, History of the Soviet Union (1982–1991) and Dissolution of the Soviet Union  
Gorbachev's permissive attitude toward Central and



*Commonwealth of Independent States, the official end of the Soviet Union*

Eastern Europe did not initially extend to Soviet territory; even Bush, who strove to maintain friendly relations, condemned the January 1991 killings in **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, privately warning that economic ties would be frozen if the violence continued.<sup>[276]</sup> The USSR was fatally weakened by a **failed coup** and a growing number of Soviet republics, particularly Russia, who threatened to secede from the USSR. The **Commonwealth of Independent States**, created on 21 December 1991, is viewed as a successor entity to the Soviet Union but, according to Russia's leaders, its purpose was to "allow a civilized divorce" between the **Soviet Republics** and is comparable to a loose **confederation**.<sup>[277]</sup> The USSR was declared officially dissolved on 25 December 1991.<sup>[278]</sup>

## 9 Aftermath

Main article: Effects of the Cold War

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia drastically cut military spending, and restructuring the economy left millions unemployed.<sup>[279]</sup> The capitalist reforms culminated in a recession in the early 1990s more severe than the **Great Depression** as experienced by the United States and Germany.<sup>[280]</sup>

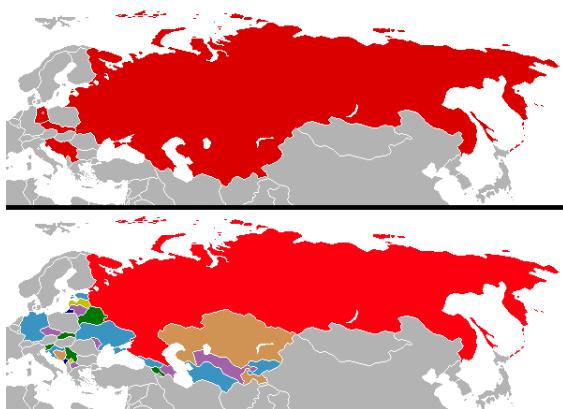
The Cold War continues to influence world affairs. The post-Cold War world is considered to be **unipolar**, with the United States the sole remaining **superpower**.<sup>[281][282][283]</sup> The Cold War defined the political role of the United States after World War II—by 1989 the United States had military alliances with



*Spetsnaz soldiers during the 1992 civil war in Tajikistan*

50 countries, with 526,000 troops stationed abroad,<sup>[284]</sup> with 326,000 in Europe (two-thirds of which in west Germany)<sup>[285]</sup> and 130,000 in Asia (mainly Japan and South Korea).<sup>[284]</sup> The Cold War also marked the zenith of peacetime military-industrial complexes, especially in the United States, and large-scale military funding of science.<sup>[286]</sup> These complexes, though their origins may be found as early as the 19th century, snowballed considerably during the Cold War.<sup>[287]</sup>

Cumulative U.S. military expenditures throughout the entire Cold War amounted to an estimated \$8 trillion. Further nearly 100,000 Americans lost their lives in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.<sup>[288]</sup> Although Soviet casualties are difficult to estimate, as a share of their gross national product the financial cost for the Soviet Union was much higher than that incurred by the United States.<sup>[289]</sup>



*Changes in national boundaries after the end of the Cold War*

In addition to the loss of life by uniformed soldiers, millions died in the superpowers' proxy wars around the globe, most notably in Southeast Asia.<sup>[290]</sup> Most of the proxy wars and subsidies for local conflicts ended along with the Cold War; interstate wars, ethnic wars, revolutionary wars, as well as refugee and displaced persons crises have declined sharply in the post-Cold War years.<sup>[291]</sup> Left over from the Cold War are numbers stations, which are shortwave radio stations thought to be

used to broadcast covert messages, some of which can still be heard today.

The aftermath of Cold War conflict, however, is not always easily erased, as many of the economic and social tensions that were exploited to fuel Cold War competition in parts of the Third World remain acute. The breakdown of state control in a number of areas formerly ruled by communist governments produced new civil and ethnic conflicts, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. In Central and Eastern Europe, the end of the Cold War has ushered in an era of economic growth and an increase in the number of liberal democracies, while in other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, independence was accompanied by state failure.<sup>[10]</sup>

## 9.1 In popular culture

See also: Culture during the Cold War

During the Cold War itself, with the United States and the Soviet Union invested heavily in propaganda designed to influence the hearts and minds of people around the world, especially using motion pictures.<sup>[292]</sup>

The Cold War endures as a popular topic reflected extensively in entertainment media, and continuing to the present with numerous post-1991 Cold War-themed feature films, novels, television, and other media. In 2013, a KGB-sleeper-agents-living-next-door action drama series, *The Americans*, set in the early 1980s, was ranked #6 on the Metacritic annual Best New TV Shows list and is in its second season.<sup>[293]</sup> At the same time, movies like *Crimson Tide* (1995) are shown in their entirety to educate college students about the Cold War.<sup>[294]</sup>

# 10 Historiography

Main article: Historiography of the Cold War

As soon as the term "Cold War" was popularized to refer to post-war tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, interpreting the course and origins of the conflict has been a source of heated controversy among historians, political scientists, and journalists.<sup>[295]</sup> In particular, historians have sharply disagreed as to who was responsible for the breakdown of Soviet-US relations after the Second World War; and whether the conflict between the two superpowers was inevitable, or could have been avoided.<sup>[296]</sup> Historians have also disagreed on what exactly the Cold War was, what the sources of the conflict were, and how to disentangle patterns of action and reaction between the two sides.<sup>[10]</sup>

Although explanations of the origins of the conflict in academic discussions are complex and diverse, several general schools of thought on the subject can be identified.

Historians commonly speak of three differing approaches to the study of the Cold War: “orthodox” accounts, “revisionism”, and “post-revisionism”.<sup>[286]</sup>

“Orthodox” accounts place responsibility for the Cold War on the Soviet Union and its expansion further into Europe.<sup>[286]</sup> “Revisionist” writers place more responsibility for the breakdown of post-war peace on the United States, citing a range of US efforts to isolate and confront the Soviet Union well before the end of World War II.<sup>[286]</sup> “Post-revisionists” see the events of the Cold War as more nuanced, and attempt to be more balanced in determining what occurred during the Cold War.<sup>[286]</sup> Much of the historiography on the Cold War weaves together two or even all three of these broad categories.<sup>[30]</sup>

## 11 See also

- Canada in the Cold War
- Cold War (TV series)
- Culture during the Cold War
- Danube River Conference of 1948
- Index of Soviet Union-related articles
- List of Soviet Union–United States summits
- McCarthyism
- Mutually assured destruction
- Post–World War II economic expansion
- Soviet Empire
- Soviet espionage in the United States
- Timeline of events in the Cold War
- World War III
- Cold War II
- Category:Cold War by period

## 12 Footnotes

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- [21] Gaddis 1990, p. 176
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- [23] Heller, p. 27. “From the Soviet perspective, a post-war period of peace and reconstruction was indispensable. Therefore, the continuation of cooperation and peaceful relations with its wartime allies, the United States and Great Britain, was greatly to be desired.”
- [24] Plokhy 2010
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## 14 External links

### Archives

- An archive of UK civil defence material
- Post-Cold War World Economy from the Dean Peter Krogh Foreign Affairs Digital Archives
- CONELRAD Cold War Pop Culture Site
- CBC Digital Archives – Cold War Culture: The Nuclear Fear of the 1950s and 1960s
- The Cold War International History Project (CWIHP)
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- Select “Communism & Cold War” value to browse Maps from 1933-1982 at the Persuasive Cartography, The PJ Mode Collection, Cornell University Library

### Bibliographies

- Annotated bibliography for the arms race from the Alsos Digital Library

### News

- Video and audio news reports from during the cold war

### Educational Resources

- *Minuteman Missile National Historic Site: Protecting a Legacy of the Cold War*, a National Park Service Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) lesson plan
- Electronic Briefing Books at the National Security Archive, George Washington University

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## 15.2 Images

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