

Cold War Revision Timeline

<u>1945</u>	
<u>YALTA CONFERENCE</u>	The “Big Three” met to sort out what would happen to Europe after the end of the War. Problems arose immediately about the control of Eastern Europe. Stalin agreed to the principle of “free elections” in Eastern Europe. Agreements were also made that divided Germany and Berlin into four sectors own jointly by the major powers.
<u>END OF WW2</u>	Germany unconditionally surrendered in May 1945. The war in Europe had been a very costly one- the USSR had lost millions of soldiers and civilians. The USA had suffered many losses in the final year of the war, as well as thousands of losses in the war in the Pacific.
<u>POTSDAM CONFERENCE</u>	The “Big Three” had changed – Roosevelt had died and was replaced with Truman, and Churchill lost the election and was replaced with Atlee. Stalin began to feel that he was not being shown the respect he deserved, especially by Truman, who attempted to intimidate Stalin with the news of the successful Atomic Bomb test in the USA.
<u>HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI</u>	Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on 6th August 1945 killed 70,000 people within 2 seconds. Second bomb dropped on Nagasaki on 9th August killed 50,000 within 2 seconds. Japan unconditionally surrendered on the 14 th August
<u>DIVISION OF GERMANY</u>	Both Germany and Berlin were divided also. This meant that there was a pocket of Capitalism within the USSR controlled East Germany. Berlin soon became the stage on which the Cold War would be fought.
<u>GRADUAL TAKEOVER OF EASTERN EUROPE</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Albania (1945) – the Communists took power without opposition. Bulgaria (1945) – a left-wing coalition gained power in 1945; the Communists then executed the leaders of all the other parties. Poland (1947) – a coalition government took power in 1945, but the Communists forced the non-Communist leaders into exile. Hungary (1947) – Hungary was invaded by the Russians, and in 1945 the allies agreed that Russian troops should stay there. Rakosi got control of the police, and started to arrest his opponents. Soon Rakosi had complete control over Hungary Romania (1945–1947) – a left-wing coalition was elected in 1945; the Communists gradually took over control. Czechoslovakia (1945–48) – a left-wing coalition was elected in 1945. In 1948, the Communists banned all other parties and killed their leaders. East Germany (1949) – the Russian turned their zone of Germany into the German Democratic republic in 1949.
<u>1946</u>	
<u>IRON CURTAIN SPEECH</u>	<p>Churchill made a simple yet important observation of the new situation in Europe in Foulton, Missouri:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>“An iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the states of ...Eastern Europe... and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence, but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.”</i></p> <p>This event is seen by some as the official beginning of the Cold War.</p>

1947

TRUMAN DOCTRINE	Pledged \$400 million to help Greece and Turkey due to the fact that Britain was no longer in a position to do so. First example of an active US policy to contain and combat threat of Communism in Europe.
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1948

MARSHALL PLAN	Huge pledge of money to help countries that wish to stave off Communism. Over \$16 billion was given to European countries including Britain, France and West Germany. The USA made sure that all countries who took aid were also major trading partners of the USA!
COMINFORM	This was the USSR's reaction to the Truman Doctrine . It was set up to "co-ordinate" Communist groups and parties across Europe.
BERLIN BLOCKADE	In June 1948, Stalin cut all road, rail and canal links with West Berlin in an attempt to stop the revival of Germany under the Marshall Plan. The Allies responded with airlifts of supplies into West Berlin for over 11 months . Despite constant shortages, the city was able to survive due to the 2 million tons of supplies dropped (at great cost to the USA) . By May 1949 Stalin was forced to admit defeat and he lifted the blockade. The West had clearly shown that they will not be intimidated by Stalin and that they were prepared to keep West Berlin at all costs.

1949

COMECON	This was the USSR's reaction to the Marshall Plan – it provided economic assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe.
EAST AND WEST GERMANY	In May 1949, America, Britain and France united their zones into the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). In October 1949, Stalin set up the German Democratic Republic (East Germany or GDR).
NATO	The Berlin Blockade had shown that the West needed a more centrally co-ordinated approach to the threat of Communist expansion. This established military cooperation in the event of war , and included countries such as Britain, USA, France, Canada and Belgium.
CHINA BECOMES COMMUNIST	China had a population of more than 800 million! China would also be a significant stepping stone for further Communist expansion into Asia; the USA worried about the Domino Theory.
USSR GET THE A-BOMB	The USSR secretly tested their first A-Bomb a full six years earlier than the USA had expected them to.

1950

CHINESE-SOVIET TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP	The treaty signed between China and the USSR . This gave £300 million to China as a low-interest loan and in return, China promised to support North Korea in their upcoming invasion of the South
MCCARTHYISM (REDS UNDER THE BED!)	A hunt for the " Reds under the Beds " in the USA. Joseph McCarthy sought to find all Communists in the USA. The hysteria led to the fall of many from positions of power or influence. Many actors, scientists and trade-unionists were "blacklisted" and never worked again.
KOREAN WAR	North Korea invaded the South in June 1950 . After being pushed back to Pusan, the UN became involved and started to chase North Korea back across the 38 th parallel. By the end of the year, China had entered the war on the side of the North. For 2 years, the war there was stalemate . By the end of the war, the divide was in almost exactly the same place as it was before the war. The war claimed over 4 million lives.

1952

<u>USA DETONATE H-BOMB</u>	The Arms Race was taken to a new level with the H-Bomb. It was more than 450 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Nagasaki.
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1953

<u>USSR DETONATE H-BOMB</u>	The USA had believed that the USSR were at least 5 years behind technologically, but they had managed to catch up within nine months.
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1954

<u>VIETNAM (DIEN BIEN PHU)</u>	The French forces in Vietnam were defeated at Dien Bien Phu. The Geneva Conference was dominated with discussions over what to do with Vietnam. It was decided that it would be split temporarily at the 17 th Parallel with elections to follow. The elections never happened.
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1955

<u>WARSAW PACT</u>	This was USSR's response to NATO , formed as a reaction to West Germany being allowed to join NATO.
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1956

<u>HUNGARIAN UPRISING</u>	An uprising by students in Budapest began. The crowds were protesting the harsh Communist dictatorship under the presumed leadership of Imre Nagy . However, Nagy misunderstood the mood of the crowd when he referred to them as " Comrades ". Soon the rebellion got out of hand, and the Russian army was sent in to control the situation. At the first attempt, they left it up to Nagy to organise the stabilisation of the country. Nagy then betrayed the USSR, withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact and appealing to the West for recognition and help . At this point, the USSR sent the army back to Hungary to suppress the revolt once and for all. They sent in 200,000 men and 4000 tanks against the Hungarian population who were armed only with basic rifles and Molotov cocktails. 3000 Hungarians were killed, and Nagy was later executed .
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1957

<u>LAUNCH OF SPUTNIK</u>	Though seemingly insignificant by modern standards, Sputnik was a satellite that was only 22 cm in diameter. All it did was send a continuous "beep" back to Earth, and yet it was a major political triumph for the USSR. As the historian Harold Evans has stated " It suggested that Communism had mastered the universe " One month later, the USSR launched Sputnik II which also carried Laika the dog successfully into space. One month after this, the US made their first satellite launch that reached a grand height of 2 metres of the ground!
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1959

<u>CUBAN REVOLUTION</u>	Led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, the Cuban Revolution disposed of the dictatorial regime of Fulgencio Batista who had been in control of the country since 1933. On 1 st January Batista fled the country and Castro formed a new government. Castro wished to make Cuba independent of US control, and over the next two years introduced various reforms that reduced US influence. These included confiscating the telephone system, oil refineries and other US owned industries as well as confiscating and nationalising land .
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1960

<u>U2 SPY PLANE SHOT DOWN</u>	The USA had developed a spy plane, the U2, which was able to fly above the reach of Soviet missiles and planes, and thus should have been able to fly and spy safely. Gary Powers was flying a mission across the USSR when his plane was shot down. This was a significant political victory for Khrushchev, who was able to highlight the sneaky and underhand elements of the USA, because Eisenhower declared that it was a weather plane that was lost. It was particularly important as it was just before the two powers were due to meet at a peace conference in Paris . Khrushchev was furious at the blatant rudeness and betrayal that the USA had shown, and he stormed out of the conference , and the prospects for the Cold War looked increasingly grim.
<u>PARIS SUMMIT</u>	Khrushchev refused to take part in the talks unless the Americans apologise and cancel all future spy-flights. Eisenhower wouldn't do so, so Khrushchev went home.

1961

<u>BAY OF PIGS</u>	In response to the Cuban Revolution, JFK supported an invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro supporters. The invasion was manned by fewer than 1500 Cuban exiles who were supported by the FBI. The government were hopeful that the invasions would lead to a popular uprising against Castro, however they were greatly mistaken. The invasion failed miserably and was a huge political embarrassment for Kennedy and the USA. To add insult to injury, the USA was forced to pay \$53 million compensation to Cuba to have the captured invaders returned.
<u>BERLIN WALL</u>	West Berlin had constantly been the thorn in the USSR's side, and by 1961, they had lost millions of workers across the borders (The Brain Drain). Khrushchev had to stop West Berlin from undermining the control and power of the USSR. To do so, a wall would be built that surrounded the whole of West Berlin. Work began on a Saturday night in August. People woke up to see a divided Berlin separated by barbed wire and wooden fences that spanned 127.5 miles and were guarded by armed soldiers. The USA, as they did not find out until it was too late. Within a short while, the wall was built up to a height of over three metres with intermittently positioned gun towers . Though obviously an embarrassing situation to be in, the wall did stop the flood of refugees escaping to the West, although about 5000 people risked their lives escaping over, through or under the wall. 191 people died in the process. Kennedy commented that " a wall is better than a war ".
<u>TSAR BOMBA</u>	A Russian bomber drops the Tsar bomb, the largest nuclear weapon ever detonated, in a test over the Arctic Ocean. It is thousands of times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

1962

<u>CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS</u>	This was the most dangerous and tense moment in the whole of the Cold War. The relationship between the USA and Cuba had deteriorated so much that they had looked to the USSR for help. In return for trade, the USSR was placing nuclear warheads and missiles on Cuba, only 60 miles away from mainland USA , meaning 90% of the USA was within range of the missiles that would take only 5 minutes to reach them.
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US U2 flights over Cuba on 16th October had clearly shown that missiles were being placed on Cuba. The US now had various options, including an invasion of Cuba, a direct air-strike and a blockade. They spent 6 days deliberating over the options, and Kennedy himself is reported to have gone from one option to another. His initial reaction was to order a strategic strike, however by the end of this process he chose a blockade which was announced publicly on 22nd October. If any ships entered the “quarantine zone” around Cuba action would be taken. US forces were placed on high alert to level DEFCON 3. 54 bombers each with four nuclear warheads were on standby, 150 intercontinental missiles aimed at the USSR were armed and nuclear Polaris submarines were put to sea.

On 23rd October Khrushchev ordered his ships bound for Cuba not to stop under any circumstances. On 24th October, US forces were put on DEFCON 2. On 26th October Kennedy received a letter from Khrushchev which was an offer: the USSR will remove the missiles if the USA promised not to invade Cuba.

By the 27th October, tensions were at their peak. Cuban forces shot down a U2 Spy Plane and Khrushchev sent another letter to Kennedy making the same offer as before but now adding the removal of missiles from Turkey as an extra condition. Kennedy accepted this offer, as long as the removal of the US missiles from Turkey remained secret. At 10.25 am the Soviet ships stopped and turned away. As Dean Rusk remarked “*We’re eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked!*” That night Khrushchev went on television and announced that the USSR would remove its missiles from Cuba to “*protect world peace*”.

The Cuban Missile Crisis had many significant consequences:

1. **Cuba had now been established** as a Communist country that was still a serious threat to Central and Latin America. The USA now had a thorn in their side.
2. **The USA had gained a great political success**, and Kennedy was seen as having removed the potential danger of Soviet nuclear warheads from “America’s own backyard”.
3. **Khrushchev had negotiated the removal of US missiles from Turkey** as part of the agreement, and Cuba had remained Communist. However, the USSR never forgave Khrushchev for “backing down”, and this was instrumental in his dismissal from the post of Soviet leader in 1964.
4. Despite the use of brinkmanship both leaders showed restraint during the crisis. Both leaders recognised the need for improved communication between the superpowers. **A “hot line” telephone link was established** between Moscow and Washington allowing the two leaders to speak directly.

1963

VIETNAM COUP

South Vietnamese leader **Ngo Dinh Diem**, a corrupt and unpopular ruler, is killed in a military coup carried out with US approval. Rather than improving the situation, Diem's murder plunges South Vietnam even deeper into crisis.

<u>LIMITED TEST BAN TREATY</u>	The United States, Soviet Union, and Great Britain sign the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which bans atmospheric nuclear tests in hopes of slowing the arms race and protecting against nuclear fallout.
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1964

<u>GULF OF TONKIN RESOLUTION</u>	Congress passes the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving President Lyndon Johnson the authority to send American troops to Vietnam and to use " all necessary measures to repel armed attack. "
<u>LEONID BREZHNEV RULES</u>	Leonid Brezhnev replaces Nikita Khrushchev as First Secretary of the Communist Party. Brezhnev will rule the Soviet Union until 1982.

1965

<u>VIETNAM WAR</u>	Under Johnson , the US begins bombing of Vietnam; by 1966 400,000 US troops are in the country.
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1968

<u>CRUSHING OF PRAGUE SPRING IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.</u>	The Prague Spring was a period of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia. It began on 5 January, when reformist Slovak Alexander Dubček came to power, and continued until 21 August when the Soviet Union and members of its Warsaw Pact allies invaded the country to halt the reform. 200,000 Warsaw Pact troops and 2,000 tanks invaded. During the attack, 72 Czechs and Slovaks were killed, 266 severely wounded and another 436 were lightly injured. The invasion was followed by a wave of emigration, unseen before, which stopped shortly after. An estimated 70,000 fled immediately, and the total eventually reached 300,000.
<u>NIXON ELECTED PRESIDENT</u>	In November 1968, Nixon was elected as the new President and immediately began his commitment of ending the war in Vietnam.

1972

<u>DÉTENTE: SALT I TREATY SIGNED (STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS).</u>	After two and a half years of negotiation, the first round of SALT was brought to a conclusion on May 26, 1972, when President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signed the ABM Treaty and the Interim Agreement on strategic offensive arms.
<u>NIXON VISITS CHINA</u>	On February 21st, Nixon arrived in Peking for a seven-day stay. While no major agreements were reached during the summit, it ushered in a new world of diplomacy for the United States. The US table-tennis team go with him leading to ping-pong diplomacy.