

The Cold War

The 20th Century since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes (1945–Present)



Origins

Early conflicts

A global battlefield

A changing world

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will have learned about the changes in the Cold War and how these were reflected in a changing world:

- Realpolitik and détente
- Renewal of the arms race
- Internal changes in the Soviet Union
- The end of the Cold War.



Although China and the Soviet Union had signed the **Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance** in 1950, by the end of the decade the two countries had begun to diverge.

Ideological differences and interpretations of Marxist doctrine led to problems. In 1961, Chinese Chairman **Mao Zedong** denounced Soviet leader **Nikita Khrushchev** as a revisionist. Along with border disputes, this caused the **Sino-Soviet split**.

This split between the two leading communist powers meant that the rest of the communist world aligned themselves with one or the other.





Richard Nixon became U.S. president in 1968 with clear foreign policy goals. He exercised very tight personal control over his foreign policy and relied heavily on National Security Advisor **Henry Kissinger**, frequently using secret diplomacy to achieve his goals.

Nixon and Kissinger practised **realpolitik** – dealing with foreign policy in a practical manner rather than on the basis of ethics, morality or ideology. This also contributed towards **détente**.



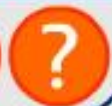
How did Nixon's policy differ from what came before?



Realpolitik brought about a change in diplomacy and attitudes between countries in international relations. Press the buttons to find out about two of the key policies pursued by the U.S., **rapprochement** and **détente**.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Why else did both sides seek détente?



SALT I was a landmark event, changing U.S.-Soviet relations. It had some successes but did not end the arms race. Drag each statement to the correct place, depending on whether it was achieved or not achieved by SALT I.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Do you think SALT I was a success?



Throughout the 1970s, détente increased between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Presidents Ford and **Jimmy Carter** followed Nixon's policies as fears about Soviet aggression waned and cooperation between the countries increased.

Negotiations on a new treaty began in 1977 and in June 1979 Carter and Brezhnev signed **SALT II**. This banned new missile programs and reduced nuclear weapons in real terms.



Unfortunately, Congress never ratified SALT II, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 to fight an anticommunist uprising. This ended a decade of détente.

To what extent do you think détente was a success?



In the 1970s, Poland faced a mounting economic crisis. Living costs were rising but wages were not, and bad harvests meant that food was scarce.

Solidarity was a labor movement led by **Lech Walesa** that started at the Gdansk shipyards in 1980. It quickly spread around the country, with one third of Polish workers joining.



Due to the size of the movement and the economic problems, the government had to acknowledge Solidarity's demands and promised further reforms.

How do you think the Soviet Union reacted to this?



Ronald Reagan became U.S. president in 1981. He vowed to win the Cold War and adopted a strategy of **rollback** – forcing change within the policies and outlook of a foreign country.

“The Soviet Union is an Evil Empire, and Soviet communism is the focus of evil in the modern world.”

Reagan rejected détente and returned to a more ideological anticommunist position. He increased the **arms race** and created a renewed image of U.S. power on a global scale.



Why did the U.S. change to a new strategy?



Changes in the Soviet Union



In 1985, **Mikhail Gorbachev** became the Soviet Union leader. He realized that military spending was crippling the Soviet economy. In 1986, he implemented three key new policies:

- **glasnost** – more openness in the exchange of information
- **perestroika** – a restructuring of the economy, allowing for limited private ownership
- **demokratizatsiya** – an expansion of voting opportunities in the Soviet Union.



How did these policies change the Soviet Union?



Gorbachev realized that internal reforms were necessary to restructure Soviet economics and politics. While his policies were successful, they also had unintended consequences.



The U.S. acknowledged the Soviet Union's change, but remained skeptical about them. In a move towards détente, Reagan and Gorbachev met four times from 1985 to 1988 to talk about policy and reduce the arms race.

What does the cartoon suggest about the changes?



Revolution in Europe

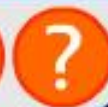


In 1989, peaceful rebellions took place throughout Eastern Europe, overthrowing their communist governments. The Soviet Union was unable and unwilling to use military strength to maintain their satellite states.

Can you match the countries to the methods by which the communist governments were replaced?

Press **start** to begin.

start



Did these events signal the end of the Cold War?



The Berlin Wall was opened on November 9, 1989 and East Germany opened its borders. The fall of the Wall paved the way for German reunification.

In May, 1990, East and West Germany were reunified for the first time since 1946. **Helmut Kohl** became the first Chancellor of the reunited Germany.



The Soviet Union struggled to cope with the changes. In June 1991, **Boris Yeltsin** was elected President of Russia. On December 21, 1991, under pressure from individual republics, especially Russia, Gorbachev was forced to resign. This dissolved the Soviet Union and ended the Cold War.

How did the end of the Cold War affect the world?



How was the Cold War won?



The Cold War ended in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This left the U.S. as the world's dominant power.



The U.S. won the Cold War because the Soviet Union could not keep up in the arms race in the 1980s.

The Cold War ended due to the internal reforms in the Soviet Union leading to the system collapsing.



Which opinion do you agree with more?



The Cold War was a very complex issue and there are many possible viewpoints. Read these students' opinions on the Cold War and decide how much you agree with them. You should justify your answers.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Test your understanding of the Cold War
by recapping key terms and important
people using this glossary.

Press on the tabs and then each term to
see a definition.

Press **start** to begin.

start

