**In A Nutshell - Cold War to Détente**

1. **Who was responsible for the Cold War?**

**Historical interpretations**

* **The Orthodox School**

Popular until the 1970s with historians such as W. H. McNeill in *America, Britain and Russia, Their Co-operation and Conflict 1941-6*, 1953. This blamed the Cold War on Soviet expansionism.

* **The Revisionist School**

Very much influenced by those in USA who criticised US involvement in war in Vietnam in the 1960s. Historians such as G. Kolko and G. Alperowitz blamed the Cold War on the provocative actions of the USA.

* **The Post-Revisionist School.**

1970s move away from blaming either side. Historians taking a more detached view and looking at range of causes. E.g. D. Kergin *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State,* 1977.

**Introduction: Causes of the Cold War**

**Long term causes**

* **Bolshevik Revolution**. This brought conflict with the West due to fears of the spread of communist ideas especially as Lenin advocated world revolution.
* **Wilsonian Liberalism**. This conflicted with Bolshevism. It was based on his belief in national self-determination with no government imposed on national groups, open markets and collective security based on the League of Nations. The Bolsheviks saw all these as tools of world capitalism.
* **Stalin** remembered and resented US and British intervention in the Civil War in support of the Bolshevik opponents, the Whites. He was also suspicious of the Anglo-French policy of appeasement in the 1930s towards Nazism and Fascism. Were the West intending to use Nazism against the Soviet Union?
* **Economic differences**. Marxism blamed the division of society on capitalism and private ownership and wanted state ownership of all businesses and land. This was the antithesis of the US economy which was based on private enterprise.
* **Political differences**. The USA increasingly championed liberal democracy based on freedom to vote, of speech, of worship and of the press. Communism opposed multi-party states which created conflict and divisions and believed in a on-party state ruling on behalf of the people.

**The Second World War**

* **The Grand Alliance** was borne out of necessity – The USA, USSR and Britain allied against the Axis Powers. There were several strains in the Alliance.
* **Stalin** was furious at the delay in opening up a second front against Germany until June 1941. He believed that the West wanted to see the Soviet Union defeated by Nazi Germany.
* **Poland** increased the East-West differences. Britain had gone to war to maintain Polish independence. Stalin, on the other hand, had no intention of accepting an unfriendly government in Warsaw.
* Strategically, **Soviet control of Poland** was vital to prevent future invasions. Britain and the USA were appalled when, in August 1944, the Warsaw uprising took place and the Soviet army, which had reached the River Vistula outside Warsaw, did nothing to help.
* Many in the USA, especially **Harry Truman**, the Vice-President, hated communism and disliked working closely with the USSR.

**The legacy of the Second World War**

This was the immediate reason for the Cold War.

* The power vacuum created by the defeat of Nazi Germany. Huge areas of Europe had been liberated. What form of government and economy would they have?
* The USA wanted the liberated countries to be given freedom of choice over government and economy. In the huge areas of eastern Europe occupied by the Red Army, Stalin favoured Soviet type regimes. Stalin made this clear in 1945: ‘whoever occupies a territory imposes his own social system. It cannot be otherwise’.
* Distrust and suspicion on both sides fuelled by western support for the Whites during the Russian Civil War and western dislike of Stalin’s purges of the 1930s.
* This was intensified by the US decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan in 1945. Stalin was furious at not being consulted. It also sent out a clear message about the military superiority of the USA.

**Soviet attitudes in 1945**

**To what extent was the Soviet Union responsible for the Cold War?**

* **The traditional view blamed Stalin and Soviet expansionism when the USSR imposed Soviet style regimes on Eastern Europe.**
* Stalin’s aims were more complicated that this. He was determined to maintain the security of the Soviet Union and prevent a future invasion.
* Over 20 million Soviet citizens were killed during the Second World War. He wanted to create Soviet controlled buffer zones in Eastern Europe but for survival rather than world revolution and the spread of communism. Expansionism was not his primary objective.

**US attitudes in 1945**

* Roosevelt had been prepared to co-operate and compromise with Stalin especially over the future of eastern Europe.
* He died in April 1945 and was replaced by Harry Truman who was greatly influenced by anti-communist groups in the USA and was very suspicious of Stalin’s motives.
* The *Long Telegram* of 1945 seemed to confirm all Truman’s suspicions. It was written by George Kennan, the USA’s Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Moscow. He saw Stalin as aggressive and insisted that only a hard-line approach would prevent Soviet expansion.
* Truman adopted a hard-line or ‘Iron Fist’ approach as a reaction to the failure of appeasement in the 1930s to stop Nazi expansionism.
* The US failed to understand Stalin’s obsession with security against attack. Instead they were influenced by the Comintern and the desire of the USSR to encourage world revolution.
* This seemed confirmed by Soviet attempts to impose governments on eastern Europe. An expansionist and aggressive Soviet foreign policy was viewed as the product of the totalitarian regime in the USSR.
* US industry pressurised the government to protect its markets in Europe against the spread of communism.

**When did the Cold War start?**

Historians differ on this.

* For historians such as Arthur Schlesinger, who see the Cold War as a clash of rival ideologies, it began with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.
* Others, such as William A. Williams, believe it was caused by the US decision to take a major role in world affairs in 1945.
* J. R. Starobin and other post-revisionists believe that negotiation and compromise were still possible in 1945 but broke down in the ensuing two years. The Cold War began properly in 1947.

**How did the Cold War develop, 1945-7?**

By 1947 there was a deep rift between East and West due to differences over the future of Germany, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

The first real signs of differences occurred at the allied conferences of 1945.

**Yalta, February 1945**

* They agreed on the setting up of the United Nations, the post-war partition of Germany and the principle of free elections in eastern Europe.
* There was some disagreement over Poland. Stalin had set up a communist government at Lublin but agreed to the demands from the West for free elections in return for keeping the parts of Poland occupied in 1939.

**Potsdam, July 1945**

* Relations were far less cordial. Truman was now President and distrusted Stalin.
* The USA and Britain were annoyed at Stalin’s actions in eastern Europe. Communist groups were being positioned in important government roles. Soviet influence was expanding in Poland where there seemed little chance of free elections.

**The Atomic bomb**

Worsened the distrust between the two sides.

* Stalin was furious that he had not been consulted.
* Truman saw this as an ideal opportunity to show the military strength of the USA and, at the same time, make Stalin more amenable in Europe.

Attitudes continued to harden in 1946 due to:

* Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech, March 1946. Churchill delivered the speech at Fulton, Missouri and insisted that an iron curtain had descended across Europe from ‘Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic’ and stressed the need for an alliance between Britain and the USA to prevent further Soviet expansion.
* Truman reiterated his iron fist approach. ‘Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making’.

**The Truman Doctrine**

Soviet support for communism in Greece seemed to confirm the worst suspicions of the West.

* Post war Greece saw a struggle between the British sponsored royalist government and communists who were strong in the countryside.
* In February 1947, Britain, almost bankrupt, told the US government that it could no longer maintain troops in Greece.
* In March Truman issued a statement known as the Truman Doctrine. ‘It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure’.
* Although its immediate aim was to support the Greek government, it had important long term implications. Truman was not prepared to allow communism to triumph. Whenever there was a straight choice between communism and democracy, the USA would intervene against communism.
* The USA was assuming the role of the ‘policeman of the world’ to stop the spread of communism.
* US aid of $400,000,000 was enough to defeat the communists in Greece.

**Marshall Aid**

This was USA aid to those countries in Europe devastated by the Second World War. It furthered the divisions between East and West. It was offered in 1947 just months after the Truman Doctrine.

* Although applicable to all countries affected by the war, those of eastern Europe did not apply as they would have to open up their economies to US capitalist interests.
* To the Soviet Union it was a deliberate attempt by the USA to extend their political and economic influence into western Europe, another example of American imperialism.
* The USSR retaliated by setting up the Cominform, an organisation to co-ordinate communist parties throughout Europe, and the Comecon, an organisation to provide economic assistance to the states of eastern Europe.
* Churchill believed the Marshall plan was ‘the most unselfish act in history’. It was not. The USA was trying to protect its economic and political interests in Europe. A bankrupt western Europe would not be able to trade with the USA and might well be susceptible to a communist takeover.
* Again, who was responsible for the escalation of the Cold War, 1945-7. Stalin and his policies in Poland and Eastern Europe or the USA with the atomic bomb, Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan?

**B: The Soviet ‘takeover’ of Eastern Europe**

**Stalin’s motives**

Two very different views.

* Historians such as Samuel Sharp and F. Shuman, believe he was following the traditional expansionist policies of the Tsars.
* Revisionists believe his motives were far more defensive and involved the security of the USSR.

**Defensive**

This was due to the weakness of the Soviet Union in 1945.

* Militarily Stalin felt threatened by the USA especially after the use of the atomic bomb.
* Economically, the USSR was weak after 4 years of war.
* The war had resulted in the deaths of 20 million Soviet citizens, the highest of any countries involved in the wars.
* Poland was traditionally hostile to Russia and would need to be controlled.
* Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria had all allied with Nazi Germany.
* Stalin therefore wanted a series of buffer states to secure the USSR against possible future western invasions.
* The USA failed to understand Stalin’s defensive motives and saw this as evidence of Soviet expansionism.

**Buffer states**

Stalin’s views appear to have changed between 1945 and 1947.

* In 1945 he appeared willing to accommodate the west and accept limited free elections in eastern Europe. Indeed he did not believe communism would suit countries such as East Germany.
* By 1947 he realised that he could only maintain control through the imposition of Soviet style regimes.

**Soviet policies 1945-8**

**‘Takeover’ 1945-7**

* About 11 million Red Army troops were stationed in eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War. This number was reduced over the next two years although sixty divisions were left to police the area.
* Pro-communist governments were set up in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania.
* This normally followed the same pattern with the Soviet Union forcing communist politicians into positions of authority, especially minister of the interior and elections then manipulated to ensure communist success.

**Czechoslovakia, 1948**

* By 1948 Czechoslovakia was the only remaining democratic country in eastern Europe. Elections were due to be held but the communists were unpopular as the Czechs had not been allowed Marshall Aid.
* There was a communist takeover. The police was purged and non-communist political leaders purged. The leading non-communist in the government, Jan Masaryk, was arrested and died in custody.
* President Benes was forced to resign and was replaced by the communist, Gottwald.

**Nato and the Warsaw Pact**

These two organisations symbolised the Cold War, the divisions between East and

West.

**Nato, 1949**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was set up in 1949.

* This came about as a direct result of the Berlin crisis of 1948-9. The crisis showed the need for the western powers to work together against communism.
* It involved the USA in a military alliance in peacetime. There would be no return to isolationism.
* An attack on one member would be seen as an attack on all.
* A NATO command was set up to co-ordinate the defence of its members.
* To Stalin, this was a deliberately provocative act by the West.

**The Warsaw Pact, 1955**

* The Soviet equivalent of NATO. It was an agreement to co-ordinate the defence of eastern Europe.
* It was set up after West Germany was admitted to Nato in 1955. It should the depth of fear that the Soviet government had of a possible revival of German militarism.
* If one member was attacked the others would come to their aid.
* The Pact’s headquarters was in Moscow under a Soviet Supreme Commander.
* This strengthened Soviet military control over eastern Europe. Soviet troops were stationed across the buffer states.

**2: Was the Cold War more about containment or supremacy?**

**The nature, ideology and propaganda of the ‘Cold War’**

The term ‘Cold War’ was first used by the US columnist Walter Lippmann to describe East-West tension. This was because there was no major, direct conflict or ‘hot war’ between the USSR and the USA. What were the features of this Cold War?

**Ideological conflict**

* Several historians, such as Norman Graebner and Hans J. Morganthau, have tried to play down the role of ideology in the Cold War. They insist that this was merely an excuse. The real issue was great power rivalry, such as that before the First World War, on a world-wide scale.
* This too easily dismisses ideology. On the one side, successive Soviet leaders believed, implicitly, in communism, central state control and the one party state. To the USSR, democracy was an expression of the people’s will and freedom which could only be achieved through socialism.
* Similarly, US presidents totally believed in the superiority of capitalism, private enterprise, liberal democracy and freedom of political expression.

**Economic measures**

These played an important role in accentuating East-West differences and in extending the Cold War.

* The USA used Marshall Aid to ensure the recovery of western Europe, tie their economies more closely to that of the USA, and prevent the growth of communism. This certainly worked in France and Italy.
* The Soviet Union used Comecon to extend its economic influence over eastern Europe, although not in such a positive manner.
* East Germany was systematically stripped of its industrial plant while Comecon was used by the USSR to exploit the economic resources of its satellite states.
* Both countries also offered economic aid to Third World countries in order to extend their influence and encourage their system of government.
* The Soviet Union was especially successful in African states such as Egypt and Angola who were more responsive to the anti-colonial stance of the USSR who encouraged African leaders to nationalise foreign businesses.

**Propaganda**

This was used by both sides to widen support in their own country and spheres of influence.

* US propaganda stressed the values of freedom, democracy, private enterprise and attacked the ‘evils’ of communism – lack of religious freedom was seen as ungodly, communists were portrayed as rude, humourless and cruel to animals.
* The US government set up the United States Information Agency to spread its views across 150 countries. Its message was conveyed in over 70 languages using radio stations such as Voice of America. Truman set up the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs to further this process.
* America also made use of the film industry. Films such as *The Red Menace* and the *Iron Curtain*, did much to promote anti-communist feeling in the USA and western Europe.
* Stalin used propaganda to develop a siege mentality. The USSR faced the threat of western invasion.
* ‘Zhdanovshchina’, named after Andrei Zhdanov, a member of the Politburo, laid down strict guidelines for literature and other arts. Films were also used to promote the communist view and foreign films were banned.
* From 1948 the USSR jammed foreign stations in order to limit western influence and propaganda. There was strict control of all the media with the main news agency, *Tass,* controlled by the state. Over 70% of those who worked for *Tass* were secret agents.
* Soviet propaganda was not as successful abroad because of their technological backwardness compared to the USA.

**The use of espionage**

* Soviet espionage was organised by the KGB (State Security Committee) which was set up in 1954. Its membership rose to half a million.
* Soviet agents played an important role in securing the secrets of the atomic bomb. This enabled the Soviet Union to test its first bomb in 1949, several years ahead of schedule. Spies such as Julius Rosenberg and Harry Gold provided atomic secrets to the USA.
* US espionage was organised by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) set up by Truman in 1947. Its operations were greatly expanded under President Eisenhower.
* CIA successes include discovering Soviet missile sites on Cuba in 1962 and supporting the overthrow of the left wing government of Allende in Chile in 1973.
* Failures include the abortive Bay of Pigs operation in Cuba in 1962 and the shooting down of a U2 plane over the Soviet Union in 1960.

**The arms race**

* The arms race played a very important part in the Cold War:
* It increased tension between the Superpowers.
* It brought severe economic strain on both the USA and USSR.
* Paradoxically, it may well have prevented a major war between the two countries.

**What caused the arms race?**

* Arms were viewed as necessary to safeguard the interests of East and West.
* The development of the atomic bomb sparked off a nuclear arms race. Each side was determined to keep ahead of the other in the development of weapons of mass destruction.
* The US Star Wars initiative of the 1980s by which defence systems were located in space brought an end to the race. The USSR could not afford to match such a programme.
* Military influence in each country pressurised successive governments to maintain the arms race. Khrushchev was forced to resign in 1964 when he attempted to slow it down.
* Powerful economic/industrial concerns benefited from the manufacture of arms and wielded considerable control over politics, especially in the USA. Eisenhower’s concerns about arms spending floundered due to powerful industrial opposition.

**What impact did the arms race have?**

The arms race increased rather than reducing rivalry and insecurity.

* Stalin was convinced that the USA used the atomic bombs on Japan as a warning to the Soviet Union. The USSR felt especially vulnerable in the years 1945-9 until they had developed their own atom bomb.
* By 1957 the USA was convinced that the USSR had pulled ahead especially after the launching of Sputnik. The result was a massive build up of US missiles.
* At the end of the 1960s the USA developed the Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) which increased the chances of nuclear missiles hitting their intended target. The USSR developed its own MIRV programme.
* The danger of initiating nuclear war acted as a restraint on both sides. Limited war, such as in Korea and Vietnam, was used to avoid direct confrontation.
* In the 1950s the USA developed the tactic of brinkmanship, of being prepared to go to the brink of a nuclear war in order to stop enemy aggression. This was shown most significantly in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
* In the 1970s both sides had enough weapons to totally destroy each other. This led to MAD (Mutually Aided Destruction). A more flexible range of responses was necessary.
* As nuclear weapons became more destructive, they became less usable.
* The arms race also provided one of the reasons for ending the Cold War because it bankrupted the USSR and prompted the political events of the late 1980s.

**The major crises, 1948-63**

**General reasons for tension**

**The ‘German problem’**

The status of Germany in the post-war world and the unique problem of East and West Berlin caused friction between the two superpowers more especially the Berlin Crisis of 1948-9 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

**The rise of communism in the Far East**

The USA fears of communism expansion in the Far East intensified due to:

* 1949 the emergence of communist China.
* The invasion of South Korea by the communist north. The Americans were convinced that Stalin was behind the attack.
* The rise of communism in Vietnam in the early 1950s.

**The effects of de-Stalinisation in the 1950s**

* Khrushchev’s attempts at de-Stalinisation encouraged movements for reform in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland and Hungary.
* The ruthless way in which the Soviet Union crushed these revolts, especially in Hungary, shocked Western public opinion.

**The arms race**

By the end of 1955 both the USA and USSR had the hydrogen bomb. The race continued over the next decade with the USA convinced they had fallen behind when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik.

**The Berlin Crisis, 1948-9**

This was the first major crisis of the Cold War and illustrated the central problem of Germany.

**Causes**

* The West now favoured a strong, revived Germany as a barrier to Soviet expansion. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, wanted to keep Germany weak.
* These differences were shown in Berlin. West Berlin benefited from Marshall Aid and quickly recovered and began to prosper. East Berlin, like the rest of East Germany, was plundered by the USSR and not allowed Marshall Aid. Conditions were poor.
* In 1947-8 the three western zones were united economically to aid recovery.
* As a symbol of increasing prosperity the allies decided to introduce a new Deutschmark. This was the last straw for Stalin.
* In June 1948 he severed all road, rail and canal links with West Berlin.
* The USA believed this was the first stage to Stalin forcing them out of West Germany. This was unlikely.

**Results**

* The West organised an airlift of supplies to West Berlin. All food and fuel supplies for over 2 million Berliners were flown into the city. By May 1949 Stalin had conceded defeat and lifted the blockade.
* The Berlin crisis showed the need for a co-ordinated defence strategy by the West and the formation of NATO.
* It ended any hope of reunification between East and West Germany. In August 1949 the three western zones of Germany joined together to become the Federal Republic of Germany.
* In response, the Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic.
* Relations between the USSR and USA reached an all time low in 1949.
* The creation of NATO meant that US forces were sent to Europe and the Iron Curtain now became a front line.

**Hungary, 1956**

**Causes**

* Hungarian reformers were encouraged by Khrushchev’s policy of de-Stalinisation and believed it was the time to demand change.
* Also encouraged by events in Poland where the workers rioted, demanding an end to food shortages and an end to communism. The rioters were crushed but the Polish government appointed a moderate communist leader in an attempt to calm tensions.
* Hungarian reformers started demonstrations in order to put pressure on the government to reform. The hard-line Hungarian government of Gero could not control the resulting violence.

**Events**

* Soviet troops stationed in Budapest were forced to leave the city. Under Soviet pressure, Gero was replaced by the more moderate Nagy, who the Soviet leaders believed would make only moderate demands.
* Khrushchev withdrew Soviet forces in an effort to achieve a peaceful solution.
* Nagy was forced by reformers to bring in more extreme reforms such as multi-party democracy and to leave the Warsaw Pact.
* This was too much for the USSR who sent in troops and tanks and replaced Nagy with Kadar.
* Over 35,000 Hungarians, including Nagy, lost their lives during the uprising. It was crushed with great brutality by the Soviet Union.

**Importance**

* It showed that the Soviet Union was vulnerable to demands for liberalisation in eastern Europe especially in the wake of de-Stalinisation.
* It also demonstrated the Soviet determination to maintain its control over the satellite states.
* Western public opinion was shocked by the brutality of the Soviet response but the West did not intervene.
* This established the unwritten rules of the Cold War. Not to interfere in the other superpower’s area of influence. In any case Britain and France were preoccupied by the Suez Crisis.

**The Berlin Crisis, 1961**

**Causes**

* East and West had failed to find a permanent solution to the problem of Berlin. West Berlin continued to prosper in marked contrast to the poverty stricken East Berliners.
* Many East Germans fled to the West. By July 1961, 30,000 East Germans were fleeing each month and many of these were young and skilled. Since 1949 3 million had left East Berlin and the country could not maintain this level of loss.
* West Berlin also highlighted the prosperity of capitalism and the inadequacies of communism.

**The Berlin Wall**

* The East German leader, Walter Ulbricht, had demanded this for several years but Khrushchev had refused. Instead, in 1958, he demanded that Berlin become a free city with the existence of East Germany recognised formally by the west.
* The West was unwilling to give up West Berlin due to its unique propaganda value as a symbol of capitalist progress.
* In 1960 restrictions on travel between the four sectors were imposed by the East Germans for the first time.
* Khrushchev tried again with President Kennedy in June 1961, at the Vienna Summit. Kennedy refused to agree.
* Khrushchev now accepted Ulbricht’s solution and in August security constructions of the borers’ were built in a military-style operation.
* The Berlin Wall was a huge concrete structure over three metres high which now effectively divided East and West Berlin.

**Importance**

* The West used it to fuel anti-communist propaganda, referring to it as the ‘wall of shame’ designed to cordon off the inferior communist part of the city. It was a symbol of the bankruptcy of the Soviet bloc.
* It stopped the flood of refugees from east to west although some 5000 risked their lives escaping over or under the wall, of which 191 died.
* Although the Wall was condemned by the West, once again the USA did not directly intervene to prevent its construction.

**Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962**

**Long-term causes**

* Cuba was regarded as a US sphere of influence. Cuba’s economy was based on the production and export of sugar, much of which was grown on US owned plantations. Since 1933 the government had been in the hands of the US sponsored dictator, Fulgencia Batista.
* There was much hostility to Batista’s corrupt and harsh government. Fidel Castro led a successful rebellion and in January 1959 Batista fled the country.
* At first Castro seemed to be a liberal nationalist but he was refused aid by the USA, which then cut sugar imports by 95%. In 1960 a deal was struck with the Soviet Union for a million tonnes of sugar exports every year.
* In December 1961 Castro announced his adoption of communism. This increased East-West tension.
* The USSR exploited the situation to establish influence in Cuba whilst the USA could not easily accept a communist regime, under Soviet influence, so close to the US mainland.
* President Kennedy wrongly agreed to the Bay of Pigs operation in 1961 in an attempt to overthrow the Castro regime. It was a total disaster, convincing Castro that the USA were working to overthrow his government and driving him closer to the Soviet Union.

**Immediate causes, 1962**

* In October, 1962, US spy planes brought back photos of missile bases under construction in Cuba for Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles. Kennedy set up the executive committee of the US National Security Council, known as ‘ExCom’, to discuss US options.

**Kennedy’s motives**

* Kennedy was determined to make a stand and even risk nuclear war. The missiles could reach most of the large cities of the USA as well as the US space centre at Cape Canaveral.
* The USA feared the domino effect in South and Central America. Communism in Cuba might lead to communism elsewhere.
* The USA regarded Cuba, Central and South America as their area of influence. The Soviet Union had broken the unwritten code of the Cold War by intervening in a US area of influence.
* Kennedy was under pressure due to the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation and his failure to take action against the construction of the Berlin Wall. He desperately needed a diplomatic success.

**Khrushchev’s motives**

* He underestimated Kennedy, believing he would back down as he had over Berlin in 1961.
* The USA had built missile bases in Turkey, close to the USSR. Therefore Khrushchev felt justified in setting up the sites in Cuba.
* He accepted Castro’s conviction that the USA was determined to overthrow Cuba’s communist government.

**The events of the crisis, October 1962**

* Kennedy had several options including military action against Cuba. Instead he decided to blockade Cuba. On 22 October he announced a ‘quarantine zone’ round Cuba. IF any Soviet ships entered this zone, action would be taken.
* On the same day Soviet ships stopped and turned away from Cuba. Kennedy now began plans for an immediate invasion of Cuba.
* The crisis was defused by two messages from Khrushchev. The first one agreed to remove the missiles if the USA promised not to invade Cuba. The second asked the USA to withdraw its missiles from Turkey. In public, Kennedy accepted the first and, privately, agreed to the second.

**Results of the crisis**

* Cuba was driven even closer to the Soviet Union and continued to seek aid and support.
* It provided a much needed diplomatic success for Kennedy although the agreement over Turkey was kept secret until 1968. In addition Kennedy had to accept the Castro regime and Soviet influence over the island. The Cuban Crisis brought home the dangers of communism spreading to US backyard.
* The Crisis was the climax of the US policy of brinksmanship. Nevertheless, Kennedy maintained the option of compromise.
* Khrushchev was seen to have backed down over Cuba and was never forgiven by the Soviet armed forces. This was one of the reasons for his dismissal in 1964.
* Both sides realised the need for improved communications between the two superpowers. A ‘hot line’ was established allowing immediate contact between the US and Soviet leaders.
* The two sides were determined to limit the possibility of nuclear destruction leading to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963. This banned the testing of nuclear weapons above ground and under water.
* The crisis encouraged both sides to avoid confrontation in the future and led to Détente or a more permanent relaxation of tensions.
* It also highlighted the importance of the role of individuals in the Cold War. The crisis was very much the product of Khrushchev’s decision to support Cuba and Kennedy’ determination not to back down.

**CONFLICT IN THE CONGO**

**THE KOREAN WAR**

**B: Détente: from Cuba to Afghanistan.**

The 1970s saw a more permanent relaxation of tension between East and West known as Détente.

**Causes of Détente**

**The fear of war.**

This was highlighted in the 1960s by two developments.

* The Cuban Missile Crisis when Kennedy had been prepared to use US nuclear missiles if Soviet missile bases were not withdrawn from Cuba.
* The arms race. By 1969 both sides had enough nuclear weapons to destroy each other. This did act as a deterrent but this balance was not permanent as each side tried to force ahead in the arms race.

**The needs of the USSR.**

* A continuation of the peaceful coexistence policy followed by Khrushchev in the 1950s.
* Economic pressures. The Soviet economy could not maintain the cost of the arms race. There was increasing pressure within the USSR for a better standard of living, especially more consumer goods. This would mean diverting industrial capacity away from armaments. This, in turn, meant tried to reach agreement with the USA for arms limitations.
* The Soviet Union wished to access western technology and grain supplies.

**The needs of the USA**

* Plans for social reform in the 1960s had been undermined by arms spending and involvement in the war in Vietnam. Détente would allow reduced defence spending and the tackling of urgent social problems.
* Vietnam War had shown the limitations of US attempt to hold back communism. Majority of Americans would no longer accept direct military intervention. More might be achieved through negotiation and confrontation.
* President Nixon and Henry Kissinger keen to reduce US commitments and spending and were practical politicians who realised need for new policy. Also realised could exploit Sino-Soviet rivalry.

**China**

* Sino-Soviet relations had deteriorated under Khrushchev especially as Mao did not agree with his policies of destalinisation and peaceful coexistence.
* By 1964 China had developed its own atomic bomb and was encouraging Rumania to adopt a more independent line of Moscow.
* Détente provided the USA with an opportunity to reduce Soviet influence in China.

**Europe**

* Willy Brandt, Chancellor of West Germany, began a policy of *Ostpolitik*, which involved communicating with Eastern Europe and East Germany, in an attempt to break down barriers and reduce East/West tension.
* Brandt’s policy encouraged other countries to open up relations e.g. France and Rumania.

**Improved relations between USA and USSR**

**SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty).**

Signed in May 1972 the two sides reached agreement in three areas:

* The USA and USSR agreed to a limit of two ABM (anti-ballistic missile) sites each. This maintained the deterrence principle.
* Limits were placed on the number of ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) and SLBMs (Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles).
* This was an important step towards limiting nuclear weapons. However it did not include the MIRV’s which carried multiple warheads.
* The Basic Principles Agreement laid down important rules for conducting nuclear warfare. Both sides pledged ‘to do their utmost to avoid military confrontations’ and ‘to exercise restraint’ in international affairs.
* The SALT treaties showed a willingness to move away from dangerous confrontation.
* USA/USSR trade increased as a result of the treaties, especially the export of US grain to the Soviet Union.
* The leaders of the two sides exchanged visits, with Nixon going to Moscow in 1972 and Brezhnev to Washington the following year.

**The Helsinki Agreement, 1975.**

This came out of the Helsinki Conference of 1973-5 attended by 33 states representing the two blocs.

* The Western bloc recognised the existence of the Soviet bloc in eastern Europe.
* Trade and technology exchanges to promote links across the Iron Curtain.
* The Soviet Union agreed to respect human rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of movement across Europe.
* The West hoped this would undermine Soviet control of eastern Europe. In practice there was little progress in the Soviet bloc.

**SALT II**

SALT I had been an interim treaty.

* President Gerald Ford negotiated SALT II which set a limit for missile launchers and strategic bombers but did not include cruise missiles.
* It brought heavy criticism from the right wing in the USA.
* President Jimmy Carter re-negotiated SALT II between 1977 and 1979. It was highly technical and too complex for most people. It did not survive the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

**Other achievements of détente**

**US-China relations.**

* These improved as it became obvious that the USA under Nixon were reducing their involvement in the war in Vietnam. Nixon visited China in 1972 and a US table-tennis team was invited to tour.
* The USA did not object when the Communist China Party was allowed to take up China’s seat in the Security Council of the UN. Taiwan was expelled.

**European Détente**

Brandt’s policy encouraged a series of agreements and treaties between the two blocs.

* Several treaties involved the recognition of the borders of eastern Europe, including the Oder-Neisse line as the border between Poland and Germany.
* The Basic Treaty of 1972 in which West Germany accepted the existence of East Germany and agreed to trade links between the two countries.

**What did Détente achieve?**

**Interpretations**

* Post revisionist historians such as Gordon Craig believe it brought positive benefits to both sides by creating a less dangerous and more useful international relationship.
* Biographers of Nixon and Kissinger have not surprisingly stressed the positive achievements of Détente.
* The right in the USA, represented by historians such as Richard Pipes, are very cynical and critical of Détente. They believe it was a sign of weakness against communism. It prolonged the Cold War by enabling the USSR to limit its arms development.

**General**

* It stabilised East-West relations and greatly reduced the risk of confrontation.
* Little was achieved in arms limitation especially with SALT II.
* The Helsinki agreement was ignored especially over human rights.
* It did not reduce tension or conflict in certain parts of the world. For example Sino-Soviet rivalry continued and the USSR continued to extend its influence in Iran and Afghanistan.
* It collapsed very quickly at the end of the 1970s. It was not the beginning of the end of the Cold War but simply a different method of carrying it out.