

GCSE History: The Cold War

Topic 2: Three Cold War Crises

Summary

The 1960s saw the height of Cold War tensions in 3 crises: the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missiles Crisis and the Prague Spring/Invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Berlin Wall, 1961

Like Stalin, Khrushchev hated West Berlin as it advertised capitalism and allowed people to flee communism. After failed talks with both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, Khrushchev ordered the building of the Berlin Wall, splitting the city into 2 from 1961 until 1989. Kennedy criticised the USSR, but could not prevent it without risking a larger conflict.

Cuban Missiles Crisis, 1962

In 1962, the USA discovered that Cuba had Soviet nuclear missiles which could hit most US cities. Kennedy blockaded Cuba, and the world came close to World War III and nuclear devastation. Tense discussions eventually ended the crisis, and several agreements like the Test Ban Treaty were made. However, Khrushchev's reputation as a strong leader was ruined, and he was replaced by Brezhnev in 1964.

Prague Spring and Invasion of Czechoslovakia. 1968

Relations between USA and USSR under Brezhnev improved to begin with, but he was faced with a similar problem that Khrushchev had in Hungary in 1956. Czechoslovakia's new leader, Alexander Dubcek, promised to bring reforms like free elections and introducing capitalist ideas. The USSR and Warsaw Pact invaded, and Dubcek was removed from power. The Brezhnev Doctrine stressed that no East European country would be allowed to become less communist or leave the Warsaw Pact.

Other Resources

GCSEPod: <https://members.gcsepod.com/shared/podcasts/title/10647/65377>

BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zyt42p3/revision/1>

St Ivo lessons: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bgggr3yK-mg&list=PLUXryp00aNNWSxVc1yG3-zvga_WuLUtF&index=11



Dwight Eisenhower
1953-61



John Kennedy
1961-63



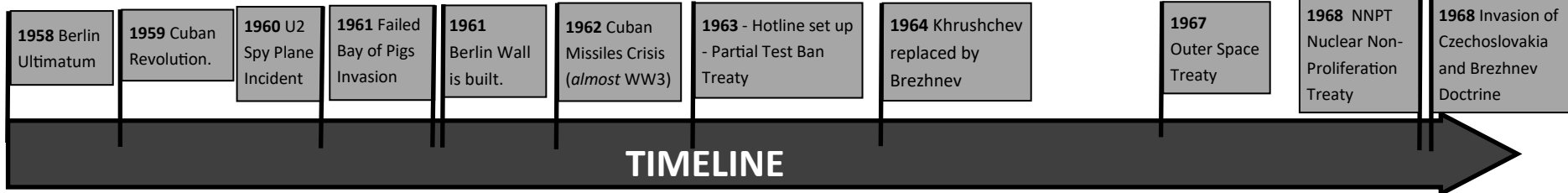
Nikita Khrushchev
1953-64



Lyndon Johnson
1963-68



Leonid Brezhnev
1964-82



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Key Figures	
Dwight E Eisenhower	US President from 1953-1961. He continued the Truman Doctrine but failed to find a solution before the Berlin Wall was built. He also increased US involvement in the war in
John F Kennedy	US President from 1961-1963, during the building of the Berlin Wall and Cuban Crisis. He was assassinated and replaced by his Vice President, Lyndon B Johnson. Both
Nikita Khrushchev	Soviet leader from 1953-1964. He was the main force behind the Berlin Wall and Cuban Missiles Crisis. However, he was highly criticised in the USSR and replaced by Brezhnev.
Walter Ulbricht	Leader of East Germany from 1950-1971. Ulbricht was highly supportive of the USSR's harsh form of communism. He famously said "Nobody has the intention of building a
Leonid Brezhnev	Soviet leader from 1964-1982. Worsened tensions with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In the 1970s, he worked closely with US Presidents, before invading Afghanistan in 1979!
Antonín Novotný	The leader of Czechoslovakia from 1953-1968. He was a hardline communist, but could not stop calls for reform during the Prague Spring. He was replaced by Dubcek.
Alexander Dubček	The leader of Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring 1968. He promised "socialism with a human face" (a less strict kind of communism, e.g. allowing free elections)
Gustáv Husák	The leader of Czechoslovakia from 1969-1989, replacing Dubcek and undoing the promised reforms. He ruled until the Velvet Revolution (and end of communism) in 1989.

Challenge

How far was the Berlin Wall caused by the Potsdam Agreements?

In a world where both sides have nuclear weapons, is MAD a sensible policy?

How did the lack of US intervention in Czechoslovakia help and hurt the Cold War?

Key Vocabulary	
Potsdam Agreement	1945. The 'main' agreement was that both Germany and Berlin would be split into 4, with <i>joint agreements</i> for its future.
'window to the west'	Life in West Berlin was generally much better than in East Berlin. This advertised capitalism and hurt communist propaganda.
Brain Drain	Up to 4 million East European workers (from doctors to builders) left through West Berlin, massively damaging the East's economy
Berlin Ultimatum	Khrushchev threatened 'action' if the USA/Britain/France did not leave West Berlin and allow it to rejoin East Berlin.
U2 Spy Plane	Hi-tech plane that could fly 20km in the air to take photos. One was shot down before the Berlin Wall, and in the Cuban Crisis.
Cuban Revolution	1959. The US-backed dictator of Cuba (Batista) was overthrown. He was replaced by socialist/communist Fidel Castro.
Bay of Pigs invasion	USA's failed plan to remove Castro as the leader of Cuba. Deeply embarrassed Kennedy, and caused Castro to support the USSR.
MAD	' M utually A ssured D estruction' was the doctrine that neither side would use nuclear weapons as both would be destroyed.
blockade	Kennedy sent a ring of warships around Cuba to prevent further weapons/missiles being sent there. Technically this was illegal.
The Hotline	One of the changes after Cuba was a direct line set up between Washington and Moscow so the leaders could talk in a crisis.
Prague Spring	Similar to Hungary in 1956, in 1968 Czechoslovakia saw a wave of protests about communism, with promises of reform.
Invasion of Czechoslovakia	1968. The Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries invaded in order to remove Dubcek and keep it strongly communist.
Brezhnev Doctrine	After the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev stated that no country to leave the Warsaw Pact or become less communist.

