

IB HISTORY

Cold War

Syllabus Outlines

The impact of two leaders, each chosen from a different region, on the course and development of the Cold War

The impact of Cold War tensions on two countries (excluding the USSR and the US)

Cold War crises case studies: detailed study of any two Cold War crises from different regions: examination and comparison of the causes, impact and significance of the two crises

Impact of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev on the course and development of the Cold War

Introduction

- Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States from 1981 to 1989
- Mikhail Gorbachev was the General Secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991
- Thesis Statement:

P1: Ronald Reagan increased tensions in the Cold War

- Stated in 1981 that the Soviet Union used détente “to pursue its own aims” and to “reserve the right to commit any crime”
- Stated in 1983 that the USSR was an ‘evil empire’
- Believed that the USSR should be exposed to a ‘systematic challenge’ by which new American weapons should:
 - Be difficult for the Soviets to counter
 - Make Soviet weapons obsolete
 - Place pressure on the Soviet economy
- The Reagan administration began the largest peacetime military build-up in US history
 - Increased the military budget by 13% in 1982
 - Between 1981 to 1988, military spending went from \$117 billion per year to \$290 billion
- Began the Strategic Defence Initiative (Star Wars project) in 1983
 - Aimed to develop a shield protecting the US in space
 - Was part of the systematic challenge
- In October 1983, Reagan ordered forces to invade Grenada, in which a Communist revolution had occurred in 1979
 - It was the first military operation conducted by US forces since the controversial Vietnam War
 - Resulted in a US victory, but the death of 19 soldiers and 116 wounded
- When Gorbachev proposed a 50% reduction of all long-range missiles and asked for the abandoning of the Star Wars project in 1986, Reagan denied as they had invested too much already

P2: Ronald Reagan decreased tensions in the Cold War

- Constructive dialogue between the Russians was difficult for Reagan as between 1982 to 1985, three Soviet General secretaries passed away
 - This made it difficult to organise summit meeting,
 - This gives an excuse for Reagan not promoting peace
 - However, an open-minded Gorbachev coming into power in 1985 allowed for Reagan to follow through with peace talks
- Author Sam Olofsson states that Reagan “genuinely feared a nuclear showdown”

- Reagan thus proposed the ‘zero-option’ solution, which was a vision of eliminating all nuclear weapons everywhere
- At the Washington Summit of 1987, Reagan invited Gorbachev to the White House and both signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF Treaty)
 - INF Treaty stated that all missiles based on and in Europe and Asia, with a range between 500 to 5,500 kilometres should be destroyed within the next three years
 - This ended a dispute which had lasted over 10 years
- When Reagan visited Moscow in 1988, a journalist asked him if he still considered the Soviet Union the evil empire
 - He replied by stating: “No, I was talking about another time, another era”

P3: Mikhail Gorbachev decreased tensions in the Cold War

- Gorbachev came into power at the relatively young age of 54 in 1985
- He introduced a number of breathtaking reforms both domestically and internationally
- Gorbachev’s plan for reconstruction contained two main points
 - Cooperation with the West to end the Cold War in order to reduce the costs of the arms race
 - A reconstruction of the Soviet empire
 - Glasnot = openness
 - Perestroika = restructuring
 - Demokratizatsiya = democratisation
- Gorbachev visited France as his first trip to the West as Soviet leader
 - He proposed that the superpowers should reduce their strategic weapons by 50%
- Gorbachev and Reagan met annually in four different summits
 - Geneva, Switzerland in 1985
 - No major agreements were made except for the fact they agreed to meet again
 - Was important in establishing relations as it was first summit in 5 years
 - Reykjavik, Iceland in 1986
 - Gorbachev announced he was prepared to withdraw his SS-20 missiles from Europe if the US withdrew their Pershing and cruise missiles
 - Gorbachev accepted Reagan’s ‘zero-option’ solution
 - Proposed a 50% reduction of all long-range missiles
 - Shocked the Americans by proposing the abolishment of all nuclear weapons within 10 years
 - Washington, USA in 1987
 - The INF treaty was signed
 - All missiles based on land in Europe and Asia with a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres should be destroyed
 - Moscow, Russia in 1988

- Ended the war in Afghanistan
 - Announced that Soviet armed forces should be reduced by 500,000 without any demands on US reductions
- Gorbachev denounced the Brezhnev Doctrine of interfering in the internal affairs of satellite states in 1988
 - In 1989, Poland began free elections and was the first country in the Eastern Bloc to get a non-communist Prime Minister in a win of 99 out of 100 seats
 - Hungary then announced that the Iron Curtain would be opened
 - By the end of the year, satellite states Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania all denounced communism
 - The Cold War had ended
- ‘Gorbymania’ swept the world as the term coined for the enthusiasm for Gorbachev’s changes
 - However, USSR communist hardliners saw it as a betrayal of the Soviet Union and the sacrifices its people had in WWII
- In 1990, Gorbachev was elected as the president of the USSR
 - However, the country began to fall apart as the economy skyrocketed downwards due to the loss of the satellite states
 - There were severe shortages of food and basic supplies
- In 1991, there was a Soviet coup against Gorbachev in a last ditch attempt to reinstate communism
 - Boris Yeltsin took leadership against the coup and overcame it
 - The failure of the coup was seen as a collapse of the old system
- By 25 December, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as a President without a country and Yeltsin became the President of Russia after the USSR ceased to exist by 31 December, 1991

Conclusion

- Reagan was far more aggressive at the beginning but after the appointment of Gorbachev, began to slow down and turned more passive
 - Many have argued that his policies and a substantial increase in military expenditure caused the fall of the Soviet Empire
 - It must be emphasised however that the Soviet Union did not accelerate military spending after Reagan’s military build-up started
 - Reagan, a fierce anti-communist, must be credited for building a constructive dialogue when Gorbachev came to power
- Some historians argue that it was Reagan’s systematic challenge which finally caused the fall of the empire
 - However, this has been contradicted by those who argue that the USSR did not respond with a military build-up, during the first Reagan years
 - Most tend to argue that the fall of the empire was mainly due to internal weaknesses of the Soviet system
- On the other hand, Gorbachev wanted to reform the Soviet system in order to make it survive
 - For different reasons, this failed and the empire collapsed

- The war in Afghanistan was brought to an end, Soviet control of satellite states in Eastern Europe ended and the USSR ceased to exist
 - Thus, it can be argued that he was the most significant individual in ending the Cold War
- Therefore, Gorbachev and Reagan ended a conflict which lasted for more than 40 years, together

CLASS OF RUKHS

The Impact of Cold War tensions on Cuba and West Germany

P1: Impact of Cold War on Economy

- Cuba
 - As a result of Cold War tensions, Cuba turned to the Soviets for economic aid
 - The US had refused to support Castro's regime and had issued trade embargoes on Cuba
 - Following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, Castro announced that he was a Marxist-Leninist and Cuban-Soviet relations increased
 - This resulted in an over-dependence on Soviet support and almost caused the Cuban economy to collapse when the Soviets withdrew this aid
 - The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was an example of Cold War tensions escalating in Cuba
 - This meant that the US could never be interested in supporting Cuba economically, worsening their relations due to their differences in ideology
 - In line with Cuba's communist ideology, they sought help from the USSR, thus helping the Cubans
 - However, in the later years when Cold War tensions declined, the Soviet interests in Cuba decreased, causing the Cuban economy to almost collapse
 - Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba had its GDP decline by 35% due to a loss of 80% of its trading partners and Soviet subsidiaries
 - Cuba's main export had always been sugar, and the loss of the Soviet subsidiaries resulted in a collapse in world sugar prices
 - Cuba had gas, oil, electricity and water shortages for the next 5 years until it began to recover economically
 - Thus, the Cold War had a negative effect on the Cuban economy
- West Germany
 - The end of World War II saw Germany split into West and East Germany
 - Under leader Konrad Adenauer, West Germany experienced an economic miracle, which was due to the Cold War
 - Aid from the Marshall Plan strengthened Adenauer's political position and created a sense of national stability that encouraged economic growth
 - The Korean War (1950 – 1953) led to a great demand for German steel and manufactured goods, which further bolstered the economy
 - The fact that West Germany had support from Britain, France and the US, due to their zones of occupation, helped the increase in economy
 - The strong growing economy guaranteed political stability and caused a mass exodus of East Berliners, including many skilled workers
 - By 1973, West Germany with only 1.26% of the world's population, had the fourth largest GDP in the world, with 994 billion
 - This remarkable change was known as the *Wirtschaftswunder*, or economic miracle of West Germany
 - Thus, the Cold War had a positive effect on West Germany's economy

P2: Impact of Cold War on Foreign Policy

- Cuba
 - Castro felt that he had been a used 'pawn' in the superpower game during the Cuban Missile Crisis
 - This motivated him to follow a more independent path
 - However, he ultimately followed the USSR's foreign policy because of Cuba's economic dependence on the USSR
 - Cuba's foreign policy focused on giving Cuban support to communist groups worldwide struggling against imperialism around the globe
 - This occurred in two areas, Latin America and Africa
 - In 1979, Cuba supported the leftist party in the Nicaraguan Revolution and aided in their overthrow of the dictatorial regime
 - During the mid-1970's, Cuba had been involved in 17 African nations and 3 African insurgencies
 - Sent 17,000 troops to Angola to offer advice and experience on how to fight during the Angola Civil War
 - The Cubans and Soviets led the communists to victory whilst the American-supported democrats lost
 - Castro gave support to leftist forces in Mozambique who were also victorious
 - Castro also sent another 17,000 troops to fight in Ethiopia against Somalia in the Ogaden War
 - Ethiopia won and became a pro-Soviet socialist republic
 - Thus, Cuba played an important role in the victory of pro-Soviet forces in Africa during this period
 - This led to Cuba being praised by Nelson Mandela, who stated that "Cuban internationalists have done so much for African independence, freedom and justice"
- West Germany
 - The breakout of the Korean War in 1950 showed West Germany the dangers of one side of a divided country attacking the other
 - This seemed possible to happen in Germany, as the tension at Checkpoint Charlie in 1961 had shown during the Berlin Crisis
 - In response, Adenauer began to argue for the creation of an 'armed security police' that would maintain internal security and protect their borders
 - In the 1970's, a period of détente was established in the Cold War
 - This easing of tensions between the USA and the USSR translated to the situation in Germany
 - The newly appointed Chancellor of West Germany, Willy Brandt, introduced *Ostpolitik*, a foreign policy that would encourage the opening of channels between the East and the West
 - This recognised the existence of the two states and allowed them to agree to exchange representatives to ease travel restrictions between the two Germany's
 - Additionally, the policy would aim to accept the status quo of European borders

P3: Impact of Cold War on Internal Politics

- Cuba
 - The hostility of the US towards Cuba gave Castro a means to gain popularity
 - He argued that internal unity was needed to combat external threat
 - The US had always felt threatened by the presence of a communist state in its sphere of influence
 - This was manifested in the Bay of Pigs invasion, an attempt to rid Cuba of Castro's government by the US
 - On 17 April, 1961, a CIA plan approved by Eisenhower, trained Cuban refugees to invade Cuba
 - This was known as the Bay of Pigs and was an absolute failure
 - Over 1200 of the original 1400 invaders were captured and ransomed back for over \$50 million worth in resources
 - Castro's success in this increased his popularity and allowed him to appeal to nationalistic sentiments and call for Cuban unity
 - The emphasis on the need for unity came via speeches and Cuban propaganda
- West Germany
 - Cold War tensions contributed to the longevity of Adenauer's position as Chancellor of West Germany for 14 years
 - Germans voted for the stability he represented
 - Given the strong anti-communist sentiments of the 1950's, the Christian social and democratic union coalitions were more attractive than more left-wing parties
 - This is significant as if it had not been for the Cold War tensions, Adenauer would've likely lost popularity
 - He faced criticism for his policies as he believed the best path for West Germany was to win the support of the Western world and befriend the French
 - This was rejected by many hard-liners as the French had always been an arch-rival through the World Wars and the Franco-Prussian War of 1871
 - Adenauer was not interested in reunifying Germany, which was a huge priority to the German people
 - This criticism only intensified when Western occupation ended, and Western Germany became an independent state, further reducing chances of a reunification with East Germany
 - In East Germany, the people had no choice, so Ulbricht's position was unnegotiable

Berlin Crisis (1958 - 1961) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)

Berlin Crisis

- The end of the Second World War saw the city of Berlin divided between the four powers, Britain, France, USA and USSR
 - The USSR controlled East Berlin whilst the Allied powers shared control over West Berlin
 - West Berlin was a democracy whilst East Germany was a Stalinist and authoritarian state
 - Germany was also split, with the Allies controlling West Germany whilst the USSR controlled East Germany, with the capital city of Berlin being located 100 miles deep in the Soviet's side
 - West Germany had a larger population, industrial output and received financial aid from the Marshall Plan
 - Standard of living rapidly increased in the West during the 1950's and 1960's
- Walter Ulbricht was the leader of East Germany and introduced socialism, which resulted in a disaster for the economy and a mass exodus whereby East Germans fled to the West via Berlin
 - Between 1949 and 1961, 2.6 million East Germans fled the country with an average of over 200,000 per year
 - A solution was needed as the East German state would collapse if it continued
 - Additionally, the difference between the East and the West with its capitalist prosperity, was an embarrassment to the communist regime
 - Ulbricht was pressuring Khrushchev into unifying the country of Germany, a pitch that was rejected at the Geneva Summit in 1955 and in a meeting between Khrushchev and Eisenhower in 1959
 - In November 1958, Khrushchev issued the Western powers a six-month ultimatum to withdraw from West Berlin and make it a free and demilitarized city
- Tensions between the two countries were also increased with the U-2 incident in which an American high-altitude reconnaissance plane was shot down by the Soviet Union in May 1960
 - Americans claimed it was a weather plane but were exposed when the pilot confessed to the Soviets
 - Eisenhower refused to apologize, and Khrushchev cancelled Eisenhower's planned visit to Moscow, which further rose tensions
 - Khrushchev however agreed to postpone his Berlin ultimatum, but was brought up again after John F Kennedy was appointed in 1961
- After Khrushchev failed to follow through, he agreed with Ulbricht to begin construction on the Berlin Wall on August 1961, the day after 4000 people fled the city
 - They did this because they needed a solution to the refugee crisis and would ease tension to the US

- However, the tension continued and at one stage in October 1961, US and Soviet tanks were within 100 yards on either side of the incomplete Berlin Wall at Checkpoint Charlie, aiming at each other
- This tension was eventually diffused when US and Soviet representatives agreed to withdraw their weapons, orchestrated by Robert F. Kennedy
- **Impact and Significance of the Berlin Crisis**
 - Was an overall victory for US containment and a clear failure for Khrushchev
 - The Allies maintained control over West Germany and ensured that West Berlin would stay politically, socially, economically and technologically advanced over East Berlin
 - The US had prevented Germany from becoming a communist state, which would have significantly increased the Soviet's sphere of influence
 - Kennedy had survived his first test after the Bay of Pigs fiasco and had increased his reputation
 - Despite their failure to assert Soviet dominance, Khrushchev concluded that "it was a great victory for us"
 - The problem of refugees and mass exodus had been solved, which was the main issue from the beginning
 - Berlin ceased to be a major pressure point in US-Soviet relations which allowed the Russians to focus on other main issues
 - However, the Berlin Wall had become a symbol for communist oppression and was thus a propaganda failure for the Germans
 - Over the next 30 years, hundreds were killed trying to defect to the West
 - When the Soviet Union collapsed, the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolized the end of the Cold War

Cuban Missile Crisis

- Cuba is a Latin American country that lies 90 miles off the coast of Florida, thus right within the American sphere of influence
 - Therefore, any government within Cuba, should reflect its interests
- Fidel Castro led the Cuban Revolution and overthrew the ruling regime in 1959, being the leader of the country
 - Castro went to the US and asked for economic assistance for reforms he believed Cuba needed
 - Eisenhower refused to meet him, which resulted in Castro nationalizing American industries and companies
 - In October 1960, the US responded with a trade embargo, which was a serious threat to the financial security of the Castro regime
 - Thus, Castro turned to the USSR and signed trade agreements and formed diplomatic relations
- When Kennedy was appointed in 1961, he inherited from the previous administration, a plan from the CIA to attack Cuba with the help of Cuban exiles
 - The US trained the exiles, financed the operation and provided the necessary equipment for an attack to spur a spontaneous revolt in Cuba

- This attack became known as the Bay of Pigs in 17 April 1961, and was a massive failure and a huge humiliation for the US government
- Over 1200 of the original 1400 invaders were captured and were ransomed for over \$50 million worth in resources
- Kennedy was blamed for the fiasco and thus became obsessed with restoring his reputation
- In December 1961, Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist, as he realised that the US government was determined to overthrow him
- Castro pressured Khrushchev into providing more security from the US, and thus responded by placing nuclear ballistic missiles on Cuba
- Khrushchev did this for multiple reasons
 - He wanted to protect the Cuban revolution
 - He aimed to reduce his nuclear inferiority as the US had produced far more nuclear weapons, and he wanted to balance the power
 - The US had nuclear missiles in Turkey and were within striking distance of Moscow, so thus Khrushchev was levelling the playing field
 - A communist-controlled Cuba would provide the USSR with a springboard to spread communism in underdeveloped countries in Latin America, which would place pressure on the USA
 - He could claim that he wanted to protect a small state against a superpower, which would strengthen his position in the Third World
 - It would put him in a bargaining position with the US, as Khrushchev stated in his memoirs, “if Russian blood was shed in Cuba, American blood would surely be shed in Germany”, as he referred to the Berlin crisis
 - To show toughness to his critics in China and his own country, as his domestic and foreign policy had been heavily criticized
 - Wanted to redeem himself after his failure in the Berlin crisis
- The crisis officially began on October 14 when American U2 spy-planes established evidence of a Soviet missile base in Cuba
 - The following 13 days were a period of increased tension as Kennedy announced a quarantine around Cuba to the American public
 - Khrushchev had ignored the quarantine and Soviet ships were heading straight for Cuba
 - The world was closer to nuclear warfare than ever before
 - After days of diplomacy, the Soviet ships turned around and the crisis ended on October 24
 - A few days later, Khrushchev sends a telegram to Kennedy stating that he would remove his missiles from Cuba in return for the US not invading Cuba, later adding that he should also remove the missiles from Turkey
 - Kennedy accepts the first offer but rejected the second publically
 - However, his brother Robert F Kennedy accepted the second offer secretly and the world was under the impression that the US had won without any losses
- Impact and Significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis

- Khrushchev claimed victory, as the US had promised not to invade Cuba, which guaranteed an existence of socialist Cuba in the Soviet sphere of influence
- This forced the US to tolerate a communist state in the Caribbean, however, the trade embargoes were maintained
- However, Castro was furious over Khrushchev's handling of the affair, as he was not consulted about the deals, and was left with US missiles on Guantanamo Bay
- Kennedy had redeemed himself and had his personal prestige increased
- Khrushchev however, had been humiliated, despite his claim for victory, which contributed to his fall from power and was forced to resign in 1964
- China saw that the USSR's unwillingness to challenge the US as final proof that the Soviets had ceased to be a revolutionary state
- This causes Sino-Soviet relations to further deteriorate
- Orthodox historians argued that Kennedy was a skillful leader in times of crisis
- Revisionist historians state Kennedy risked a nuclear war over Cuba for domestic political gains, and thus he was acting irresponsible
- It can be stated that it was the US's refusal to aid Castro financially in his early years as leader of Cuba that was the root of the entire crisis
- If the US had supported his regime, the crisis would have never happened, and Castro would not have turned to communism
- However, it was later revealed that as a student, Castro had read The Communist Manifesto written by Karl Marx and was firm believer in the ideology
- Thus it was Castro's plan all along to transition Cuba into a communist state, but was just simply catalyzed by the US's refusal to cooperate