

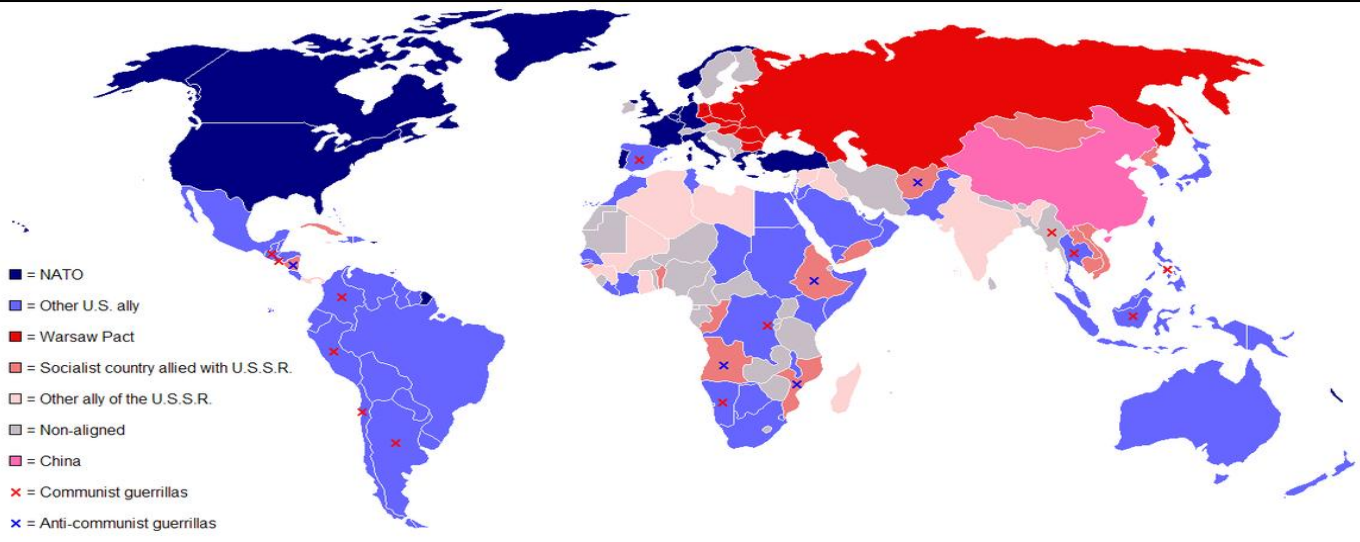


THE COLD WAR KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER



Overview and Map

The Cold War was a long period of open, yet restrained, tension between the democracies of the western world and the communist countries of the east. The democratic west was led by the United States, whilst the communist east was led by the Soviet Union – the two world superpowers at the time. Whilst the two superpowers never directly declared war on one another, they fought indirectly via proxy wars, an arms race, and the space race, in order to gain dominance. The map below shows the extent of their alliances in 1980, towards the end of the Cold War.



Key People

George Marshall – (1880–1959) George Marshall was an American soldier and statesman. He said that an aid programme of \$17 billion was needed to rebuild Europe. At first the US Congress was reluctant to agree, but when communists banned all other political parties and took power in Czechoslovakia, US congressmen changed their minds and approved the plan in April 1948. Marshall Aid was a generous act by the USA but there was an element of self-interest. The USA wanted to create new markets for US goods to prevent another worldwide depression in the wake of war.



Joseph Stalin – (1878–1953) was the Communist leader/ dictator of the USSR during WWII. After the death of the Communist Leader Lenin, Stalin won a vicious grapple for power before eventually establishing himself as a totalitarian dictator. His own policies became known as 'Stalinism.' After World War II, Stalin became committed to taking both political and ideological control of eastern European states, believing this to be integral to creating a buffer between the democratic West. This quest for domination is seen as one of the predominant factors in starting the Cold War.



John F. Kennedy – (1917–1963) Commonly known as JFK, John F. Kennedy was the 35th President of the United States, who served between 1961–1963 at the height of the Cold War. The majority of his presidency involved managing relations with the Soviet Union. He authorized the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, but subsequently helped to diffuse the Cuban Missile Crisis, and made a famous speech about the Berlin Wall as being symbolic of Communist failure. He also expanded the US space programme. He was assassinated in 1963.



Nikita Khrushchev – (1894–1971) Nikita Khrushchev was the successor to Joseph Stalin, who led the Soviet Union between 1953 and 1964 – the tensest years of the Cold War. He was more liberal than his predecessor in domestic policy, and also cut Soviet forces. However, he built up the number of nuclear missiles. He was involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis, when nuclear war between the US and Soviet Union seemed to be imminent. In 1964, he was removed by his colleagues, replaced by Leonid Brezhnev.



Sir Winston Churchill – (1874–1965) was a British politician who served as the Prime Minister between 1940 and 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. He took over after a disastrous start to the war in which Nazi Germany conquered much of Europe. The manner in which he forged crucial alliances with countries like the US and Russia undoubtedly aided the Allies victory. After the war, he was one of the first public figures to hypothesise about the significant dangers of an 'Iron Curtain' descending across Europe.



Fidel Castro – (1926–2016) Fidel Castro was a Cuban communist, revolutionary, and politician, who helped to lead the Communist revolution in Cuba. He was allied with the Soviet Union, and caused grave concern to the US as communism was now in the Americas. The CIA took charge of trying to overthrow Castro's government, using Cuban exiles, but got their strategy disastrously wrong in the Bay of Pigs invasion. Castro became a hero for his victory, and stayed in power right up until 2011.



Major Events

| Event | Image | Description | Date/s | Fact |
|----------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yalta Conference | | The 'Big Three' –Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Yalta in Ukraine, known as the Yalta Conference. They agreed that Stalin would join the war against Japan, countries liberated from occupation would be allowed to choose their government and Germany would be divided into four occupied zones. | 4 th – 11 th February 1945 | Roosevelt and Stalin got on well, but Churchill was wary of the Soviet leader. |
| Potsdam Conference | | The Big Three met again in Potsdam, near Berlin, after Germany's defeat. Although the press spoke of co-operation, relations were tenser than at Yalta. The war was almost over, so there was less pressure to show a united front. Soviet forces controlled most of Eastern Europe and the USA had also tested the atomic bomb. | 17 th July – 2 nd August 1945 | The USA had tested the atomic bomb. President Truman took Stalin to one side to tell him. |
| Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech | | During this period, Churchill lost his position as Prime Minister. However, he remained an influential figure, especially in the USA. He said Stalin and the USSR posed a danger. In March 1946, he made a speech that some historians believe marked the start of the Cold War. It was known as the 'Iron Curtain' speech. | 5 th March 1946 | Churchill was the first to call the divide in Europe the 'Iron Curtain'. |
| Berlin Blockade | | During occupation of post-World War II Germany, the Soviet Union blocked the Western Allies' railway, road and canal access to parts of Berlin under western control, in response to western introduction of the Deutsche mark (new currency). Via the 'Berlin Airlift', Allied planes delivered vital supplies to Berliners. | 24 th June 1948 – 12 th May 1949 | It proved to be a PR disaster for Stalin, who had to remove the blockade in May 1949. |
| The Korean War | | As a result of the Cold War, Korea had split into two states, with both claiming to be the sole legitimate government of all of Korea. This broke into war when communist North Korea (aided by Russia and China) invaded the South (backed by USA). The war eventually ended in stalemate. The country remained divided. | 25 th June 1950 – 27 th July 1953 | As no peace treaty was signed, the countries are still technically at war! |
| The Berlin Wall | | On 2am on Sunday 13 August 1961, East German soldiers erected a barrier along the border between east and west Berlin, ending free movement. The fence was replaced by a wall. Guards kept a look out for anyone trying to cross the barrier. They had orders to shoot anyone trying to defect. | 13 th August 1961 – 9 th November 1989 | In 1961, US and Soviet tanks faced each other at the wall for 16 hours – coming close to war. |
| Cuban Missile Crisis | | The missile crisis was a 13-day confrontation between the USA and the USSR. The USA put missiles in Italy and Turkey, whilst the USSR put missiles in Cuba. It is considered the point at which the Cold War came closest to nuclear war. | 16 th – 28 th October 1962 | Soviet missiles in Cuba were only 90km from Florida in the USA. |
| The Vietnam War | | Vietnam was split – the North (backed Soviet Union) and South (backed by USA) engaged in a war lasting over 19 years. It also sprouted the Laotian and Cambodian Civil Wars, and resulted in all 3 states becoming Communist. It was a deadly war, with around 2 million innocent civilians believed to have perished. | 1 st November 1955 – 30 th April 1975 | Images of napalm-burnt villagers turned public opinion against the war in the USA. |
| The Afghanistan War | | The Afghan War has often been called the USSR's Vietnam. Soviet forces were bogged down for ten years fighting in an extremely difficult terrain against a formidable enemy backed by the USA and wealth of Saudi Arabia. After ten years of fighting and 70,000 Soviet casualties, the USSR withdrew. | 24 th December 1979 – 15 th February 1989 | The conservative, Muslim Afghan people disliked Communism because it was an atheist ideology. |
| Fall of the Berlin Wall | | The Berlin Wall had separated communist eastern section of Berlin Germany from west Berlin since 1961. However, the Soviet Union was beginning to collapse, and was struggling to hold onto East Germany. In November 1989, the Central Committee of East Germany opened up free movement across the wall. In doing so, one of the major symbols of the Cold War itself was abolished. | 9 th November 1989 | On October 3, 1990 Germany was officially reunified into a single country. |

Timeline of Major Events

1945 – Potsdam Conference leads to distrust between the USSR and USA. 1945 – The Iron Curtain divides east from west. 1946 – Policy of containment leads to the Domino Theory. 1947 – The Truman Doctrine pledges to resist Communism. 1948 – Stalin mounts the Berlin blockade in East Germany. 1949 – USSR tests its first nuclear bomb and the arms race begins. 1950–53 – The Korean War. 1955 – The Vietnam War begins. 1957 – The Space Race begins (ends around 1975). 1961 – Berlin Wall erected. 1961 – The Bay of Pigs: botched invasion of Cuba. 1961 – Cuban Missile crisis brings the world close to nuclear war. 1979 – Soviets invade Afghanistan. 1989 – Fall of the Berlin Wall. 1991 – Collapse of USSR. Cold War ends.