

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

THE COLD WAR

From political standoffs to the threat of nuclear destruction, we explore the bitter conflict that lasted for nearly half a century




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HISTORICAL CONSULTANT FOR THIS MONTH'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE



MICHAEL GOODMAN is professor of intelligence and international affairs and head of the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He has published widely in the field of intelligence history and scientific intelligence.

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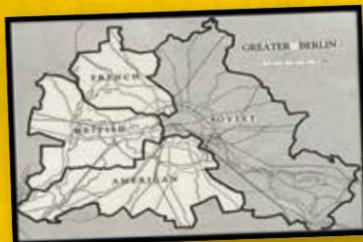
TENSIONS, TESTS AND TREATIES

The dust of a world war had barely settled when a new conflict emerged that threatened nuclear annihilation. We chart the key events that kept the Cold War cold...

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

8 MAY 1945

▼ World War II ends in Europe and the victorious Allied powers of the US, UK, France and Soviet Union divide Germany into four occupation zones. Although Berlin falls entirely within the Soviet zone, the city is also divided between the powers.



9 FEB 1946

▼ Soviet premier Joseph Stalin (*pictured*) delivers a speech boldly espousing the communist system, while blaming capitalism for the war and all future conflicts. The following month, the former British prime minister Winston Churchill gives a speech in which he describes the Soviet communist threat as an "iron curtain" descending across Europe.



12 MAR 1947



▲ The Truman Doctrine promises US economic and military aid to countries at risk of Soviet expansion.

3 APR 1948

► Named after the US secretary of state, the Marshall Plan comes into effect to assist in the rebuilding of 17 European countries – and so stop them falling to communism. Over the next few years, \$13bn is raised.



24 JUN 1948

Amid rising tensions over the future of Germany, Stalin cuts off rail, road and canal access to western Berlin (presently controlled by the US, UK and France), starting the Berlin Blockade. The western powers resort to supplying their sectors by air.

4 APR 1949

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or Nato, is established as a military alliance between 12 nations against the Soviet threat, mostly European but including the US and Canada.

MAY 1949

Despite the blockade, the western powers consolidate their zones, leading to the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany. Later that year, the German Democratic Republic – East Germany – follows.

12 MAY 1949



▲ The Soviet Union lifts the Berlin Blockade, sparking celebration in West Berlin and across West Germany.

29 AUG 1949

▼ The Soviets test their first successful atomic bomb, ending the US monopoly on nuclear weapons.



AUG 1964

After US ships are attacked by North Vietnamese warships in the Gulf of Tonkin, President Lyndon B Johnson orders bombings of North Vietnam and commits American forces to the Vietnam War. Troops will remain until 1973.

OCT 1962

▼ The Cuban Missile Crisis threatens to escalate into nuclear war – in the end, the only casualty is a U2 spy plane pilot.



13 AUG 1961

By dawn, the first sections of the Berlin Wall have been constructed, closing the border between East and West Berlin. Families are split, many people can no longer get to their jobs, and the city becomes a Cold War frontline.

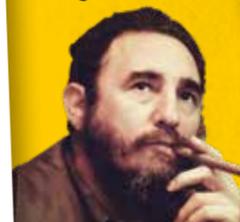
5 MAY 1961

► The first US astronaut, Alan Shepard – one of NASA's Mercury Seven – is launched into space. A few weeks later, President John F Kennedy commits the nation to the goal of putting a man on the Moon "before this decade is out".



17 APR 1961

▼ The US launches the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion to topple Fidel Castro's nascent regime in Cuba.



12 APR 1961



▲ Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human to journey into space.

4 OCT 1957

▼ *Sputnik 1*, the first artificial satellite in Earth's orbit, is launched by the Soviets.



14 MAY 1955

In response to West Germany joining Nato, the Warsaw Pact is created as a defence treaty between the Soviet Union, East Germany and other Soviet satellite states, including Poland.

25 JUN 1950

▼ With Soviet and Chinese backing, communist North Korea invades South Korea. The South is supported by the United Nations, which sends in troops. An armistice in July 1953 brings the hostilities to an end, but the nations remain divided.



20 JUL 1969

◀ Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin become the first humans to step foot on the Moon. The success of the Apollo 11 mission, watched by millions across the globe, signals US victory in the Space Race.



26 MAY 1972

▼ Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) lead to a treaty signed by US President Richard Nixon and Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev to limit their antiballistic missile capabilities.



24 DEC 1979

Soviet forces invade Afghanistan in order to back the communist regime against a band of Islamist insurgents called the *mujahideen*. It results in a prolonged guerrilla war, and a dismal Soviet failure.

23 MAR 1983



▲ US president Ronald Reagan announces the 'Star Wars' missile defence system, designed to protect the US from nuclear attack.

15 FEB 1989

▼ Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan is completed.



9 NOV 1989

▼ After separating East and West Germany for almost 30 years, the Berlin Wall finally falls.



3 DEC 1989

After two days of talks at the Malta Summit, US President George HW Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev declare an end to the Cold War.

3 OCT 1990

As communist regimes crumble across Europe, Germany is reunified.

DEC 1991

▼ The Soviet Union ceases to exist.



EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COLD WAR

Professor Michael Goodman answers key questions about the decades-long rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union

Q: What was the Cold War and why do we refer to it as such?

A: To put it simply, the Cold War was a political, ideological and economic conflict that broke out in the years after World War II and lasted up until 1991. The two main protagonists were the United States and the Soviet Union, along with their respective allies (the western and eastern blocs). Of course, it was much more complex than that.

As to the name: a war will turn 'hot' when it involves open fighting, whereas a 'cold war' is a battle of ideology. The Cold War of the second half of the 20th century did, in various instances, become a physical conflict as there were lots of wars by proxy, such as in Korea and Vietnam. But fundamentally it remained peaceful and certainly was not what the two world wars had been.

Q: What were the ideologies of the two opposing sides?

A: The United States, and its chief ally Britain, were capitalist and democratic countries, while the Soviet Union was a communist state – the first significant communist country to come out of World War I. The Soviet ideal was an internal system for making life more equitable and level, but more broadly there was a belief that if communism was to succeed then the Russians would have to export that mentality to other countries around the world.

So, in the interwar years – particularly after Joseph Stalin came to power – the idea of a global communist revolution took hold. This was strongly opposed by the west, but the two sides would become allies in World War II (see page 38). In the aftermath of the war, Soviet expansion took on a renewed vigour and became more overt: not just in a political-ideological way, but increasingly



ABOVE: World War II allies Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin (left to right) at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. East and west would soon become bitter rivals, however

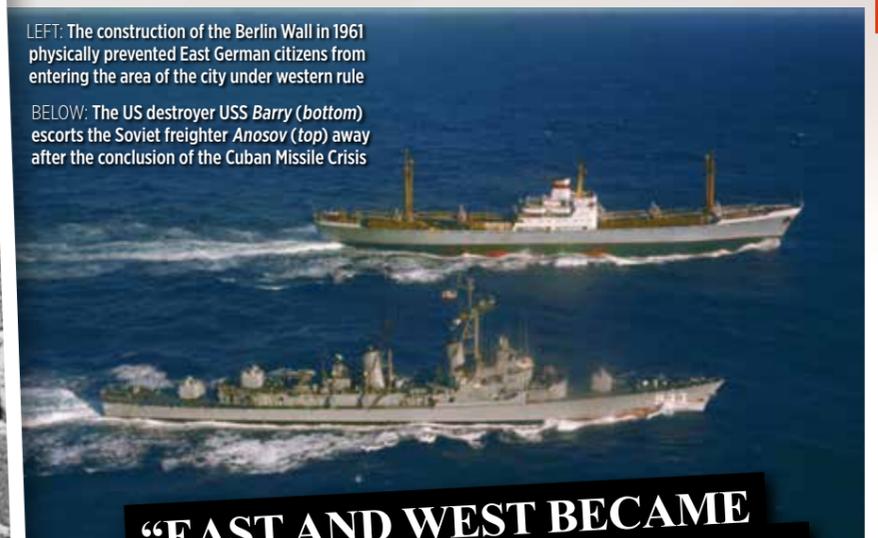
LEFT: An American propaganda poster, dated c1920, offers an alarming depiction of life under communist rule. Long before the Cold War, the US sought to halt the spread of the ideology

FAR LEFT: A Soviet image from the late 1940s warns the Americans not to meddle with atomic weapons



LEFT: The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 physically prevented East German citizens from entering the area of the city under western rule

BELOW: The US destroyer USS Barry (bottom) escorts the Soviet freighter Anosov (top) away after the conclusion of the Cuban Missile Crisis



“EAST AND WEST BECAME EMBROILED IN A BATTLE FOR IDEAS, FOR PEOPLE, FOR LAND AND FOR TERRITORY”

in a military way, too. The east and west became embroiled in a battle for ideas, for people, for land and for territory. And later, this battle would become characterised by the threat of nuclear war.

Q: Was the Cold War inevitable after World War II?

A: The answer to this question is more complex than a simple 'yes' or 'no'. On one level, there were substantial differences in the aftermath of World War II that had not existed at any previous time in history. Take Germany: the four great powers who had won split the country into four zones, with the capitalist nations (the United States, Britain and France) combining their zones into what became West Germany. The Soviets took East Germany. So, in one country, there was a stark division in politics, ideology, economy and allegiances. The hope that these two sides of Germany could live perfectly harmoniously was, at best, naive.

But one issue that pervaded the Cold War was trying to understand what was going on: the perception versus reality. One of the main difficulties that the west faced after the war was knowing what the Russians were up to. Stalin and the Kremlin were fearful of a German invasion; a common fear for the Russians as they had been invaded numerous times in the preceding centuries. American, British and other western diplomats began focusing on

the question 'Is Stalin trying to expand the communist revolution outward, to make states to the west of the Soviet Union communist?' Or was his intention, as others believed, to create a buffer zone between Germany in the centre of Europe and the Soviet Union?

Events from 1947 onwards made the Russians show their hand, and that's when the Cold War became a more crystallised conflict.

Q: How long after the start of the Cold War did the public know it was happening?

A: Between the end of the war in 1945 and 1947, not much happened. Countries were preoccupied with their own economies and with other forms of rebuilding after years of destruction. The big change came in 1947. First, there was the Truman Doctrine, launched by US president Harry Truman in reaction to what he perceived as a communist threat to Greece and Turkey (see page 40). This was essentially a promise that the US would come to the rescue of any country who was fighting political oppression. It didn't name the Soviet Union directly, but it was a clear statement of intent: "We, the US, will support anyone standing up to the Russians."

The Truman Doctrine was followed a few months later by the Marshall Plan, named after the then-US secretary of state George Marshall, which promised enormous amounts of economic aid

to these countries (see page 44). What you had with both of these was a political commitment to defend Europe (and other countries more broadly) against the Soviets. This was followed two years later with the creation of Nato.

So, by the late 1940s, the public was certainly aware that there was a growing antagonism between the US and the Soviet Union, if not a conflict.

Q: How close did the Cold War get to becoming 'hot'?

A: Arguably, the prospect of a nuclear war was actually less close than people appreciated, and feared, at the time. But a fundamental concern during the Cold War was misperception: if one side

Greek dockers unload sacks of American flour provided as part of the Marshall Plan. The US scheme was designed to help Europe recover from the economic damage of WWII – although there was a crucial ulterior motive





◀ got it wrong in their judgment of what the other was up to, it had the potential to lead to a severe miscalculation that would result in a direct war – a nuclear war, at that. The closest that they came was the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 (see page 46). This was a reasonably short-lived episode where the Russians secretly transported a huge number of nuclear missiles to Cuba, an island around 90 miles off the coast of Florida. Cuba was a communist country led by Fidel Castro, a great friend of the Soviet Union. After American intelligence spotted the missile sites on the island, a tense 13-day standoff followed. There

were calls for an invasion, and, famously, Curtis LeMay, head of Strategic Air Command (one of the US's nuclear arms) – a characteristic, cigar-chomping Air Force man – just said, “Let’s bomb them!” Fortunately, saner heads prevailed. Under President John F. Kennedy, there was instead a blockade, which stopped more Russian ships getting in, and clandestine negotiations. Eventually, an agreement was reached whereby the missiles would be dismantled and removed.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was regarded at the time as the moment the world stepped back from the brink, and is still remembered as such to this day.

ABOVE: President John F. Kennedy signs a proclamation enacting an arms quarantine on Cuba, preventing “all offensive military equipment” from entering the island

TOP: Cuban leader Fidel Castro (left) embraces Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev in 1960

ABOVE RIGHT: Soviet double agent Oleg Gordievsky would later help Britain and the US make tricky policy decisions in the 1980s



Q: How did the US resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis?

A: It is with the benefit of hindsight that there is a greater understanding of the stand-off between Kennedy and the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev. The latter was notorious for using bluff as a main method of dealing with people, so he was unlikely to back down publicly in October 1962, despite the scale of the American anger at having missiles so close to their mainland. There was a great sense that this could all-too easily lead to an escalation of the Cold War.

Yet the tense situation was diffused with help from a Soviet spy: a colonel in military intelligence named Oleg Penkovsky, who passed information to the Americans and British about the missiles and the Soviet nuclear programme. Thanks to this, the Americans knew that Khrushchev’s policy was based on bluffing, and that the best way of dealing with a bully like that was to stand up to him. That’s what Kennedy did, and Khrushchev backed down. In return, the Americans secretly agreed to remove their missiles in



A mushroom cloud rises into the skies following the first US hydrogen bomb test, 1952. Both sides added new weapons to their arsenal as the Cold War evolved

Turkey, the presence of which had partly prompted the Russians to send missiles to Cuba in the first place, in a sort of *quid pro quo*.

One intriguing detail, which didn’t come out until the 1990s, was that in addition to the missiles that the Americans had known about on Cuba – had tracked and watched being dismantled – the Russians had actually managed to get some tactical nuclear weapons onto Cuba. These were never spotted by the Americans.

Q: What was the significance of espionage in the Cold War?

A: Policymakers in both the east and west continuously supported and financed their intelligence communities throughout the Cold War; clearly it was felt there was a great need for the information they provided and the misinformation they spread to the other side. There were a number of episodes that were a direct consequence of the information gained through espionage. For example, technical intelligence acquired by the Russians – such as blueprints during World War II from a variety of different scientists – influenced the way they built their atomic bomb.

Then there was the intelligence passed on to the British by Russian double-agent Oleg Gordievsky. In particular, he was good at sharing information about the mentality of the Kremlin. In the early 1980s, Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the



A crowd gathers in Moscow to celebrate the failure of a hardline communist attempt to topple Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev, August 1991. Within months, however, the Soviet Union had been dissolved

“TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE ACQUIRED BY THE RUSSIANS INFLUENCED THE WAY THEY BUILT THEIR ATOMIC BOMB”

Soviet Union from 1964 until his death in 1982, was by then an old man and hugely paranoid. He heard US president Ronald Reagan’s speeches calling Russia “the evil empire” and became convinced that the west was going to launch a nuclear strike. Gordievsky’s intelligence prompted the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, to tone down her rhetoric about the Russians and also to convince Reagan – with whom she had developed an extremely close relationship – to change his speeches. So, this is a key example of where you can almost draw a direct line between espionage information and a change in policy.

Q: How did the way in which wars were fought change in the second half of the 20th century?

A: One of the biggest innovations of World War II was the construction of the atomic bomb. Fundamentally, it arose out of a fear that the Germans would be the first to develop this technology. The atomic bomb was one of the biggest secrets of the war – the science behind it and the fact it was being constructed on such a massive scale – and the dropping

of bombs on Japan was a real watershed moment. It changed warfare. So, as the antagonism between the east and west grew during the postwar period, one of the key questions for the Americans and their allies was: when will the Russians get the atomic bomb and how will that change warfare? It was assumed from the outset that any future war would be a nuclear war.

Q: Who ‘won’ the Cold War?

A: The easy answer is: the west won. The Cold War ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union; the Soviets’ political-ideological system imploded, as did all the countries that were allied with them – they became independent and shed their Soviet allegiances. Of course, there’s a much more complex answer to the question, but I think on a basic level, as an ideological political conflict, you can say the Soviet system lost. ◉

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US and Soviet troops join hands across the River Elbe in April 1945. Five days after the sides first converged, Hitler killed himself in his bunker in Berlin



FROM FRIENDS TO ENEMIES

After uniting to defeat the Nazis, east and west were soon divided once more

It was the mother of all PR opportunities. A photo call from the heavens. On 26 April 1945, an American 2nd lieutenant called William Robertson shook hands with a Soviet counterpart, Alexander Sylvashko, on the banks of the River Elbe in front of assembled cameramen. A day earlier, near the very spot where Robertson and Sylvashko embraced, an American patrol had made contact with Soviet soldiers for the very first time during the campaign to wrestle back Europe from the Nazis. Now, to mark this momentous occasion, Robertson and Sylvashko exchanged pleasantries to the click of cameras and the hum of news reports being relayed back to Washington and Moscow.

The convergence of American and Soviet troops south of Berlin was a moment of huge military significance. With German armies now cut in two, the final defeat of Adolf Hitler's forces lay just a few short days away. Yet this was a meeting of enormous symbolism, too.

For month after bloody month, the armies of the United States, the Soviet Union and their allies had battled their way across Europe with one common purpose – to defeat Nazism. Their meeting on the Elbe that spring day was emblematic of what could be achieved when the world's two rising superpowers stood side by side. Robertson and Sylvashko may have been the faces of different cultures and competing ideologies, but when the US and Soviet Union joined forces, no nation could stand in their way.

Fast forward two years, and another American commanded the world's attention. Yet this one wasn't embracing a Soviet brother-in-arms – and the smiles and amity had been replaced by stony-faced defiance.

The American in question was President Harry S Truman, and the words he uttered on that day – 12 March 1947 – opened a grim new chapter in global geopolitics. Speaking to a joint session of Congress, Truman accused the Soviet

Union of running dictatorial communist regimes and of stifling the world economy. He brandished communism as a threat to the way of life that Americans cherished – one “based upon the will of the majority” and “individual liberty”. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, relied upon “terror and oppression”. Henceforth, Truman went on, it would be the United States' policy to contain that threat wherever possible.

REVOLUTIONARY ROOTS

The president's speech – unveiling the Truman Doctrine (see page 40) – marked the moment when the world entered a terrifying new period of its history, one defined by two armed camps living in the shadow of nuclear armageddon. That period is, of course, the Cold War.

So, where had it all gone wrong? How did we get from Robertson to Truman? If you're trying to unearth the roots of the Cold War, you need to go much further back than the famous photo opportunity on the Elbe. In fact, it could be argued that you need to rewind the clock all the way back to 1917, and the ascent to power in Russia of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov – better known as Lenin – at the head of the first great state-wide example of communist rule.

From the rise of Lenin, it soon became clear that communism and capitalism were incompatible – often directly competing – political and economic

ABOVE: US soldier William Robertson (left) embraces Soviet counterpart Alexander Sylvashko. The meeting was used to symbolise the friendship between the men's nations

BELOW: The Russian Revolution and the rise of Lenin lay the foundations for future discord between east and west



ideologies. The prewar economies of capitalist nations such as Britain, France and the United States were relatively free from state control. Their governments were democratically elected and freedom of speech was, for the most part, treasured. Lenin's Soviet Union offered a very different model of governance: strict control from the centre, and both the economy and society held in the ruling party's vice-like grip.

This very fact was always going to set the Soviet Union on a collision course with the capitalist west. And so it proved in the Russian Civil War of 1918–21, when a coalition of western nations sent troops to support the White Army's attempts to eject Lenin from power. These attempts failed. Yet the die had been cast. Throughout the 1920s, many in the west regarded communism as a severe threat. In the figure of Joseph Stalin – who became Soviet leader in the power struggle following Lenin's death in 1924 – they'd find this mistrust and enmity returned with interest.

But on 22 June 1941, nearly two years into the war in Europe, Stalin and the western powers were thrown together by the German invasion of the Soviet Union. As British prime minister Winston Churchill, one of communism's most vocal detractors, put it, “If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.” East and west had a common enemy now. It served both parties to join forces and ally against Nazism.

ULTERIOR MOTIVES

Yet even at the height of that conflict, tensions never abated. In fact, one important staging post on the road to the Cold War was Britain and America's failure to open up a second front in the west in 1943 to take the pressure off the Red Army in the east. The British and Americans may have had good reason not to storm western Europe until June 1944 (with the D-Day landings) but for an increasingly paranoid Stalin (who said of Churchill that he was “the kind of man who will pick your pocket for a kopek if you don't watch him”), it appeared to confirm a long-held suspicion: the western allies were happy to stand aside and watch the Germans and Soviets slug it out before sweeping east once they'd fought themselves to a standstill.

This scenario coloured much of the Soviet leader's thinking as victory over Germany appeared ever more inevitable in 1944 and 45. He increasingly saw war with the Nazis as the precursor to another conflict – this time with Britain and America. Stalin's determination to hold on to the Red Army's conquests

in eastern Europe as a bulwark against future western aggression – and Britain and America's determination to stop him doing this – hung heavy in the air as the leaders of the three Allied nations convened for a conference in the leafy city of Potsdam, just outside Berlin, in July and August 1945.

As Stalin, Churchill and Truman dined on such culinary delights as hot turtle soup, fried sole and Scotch woodcock, they attempted to hammer out a future for postwar Europe. That they did, agreeing – among a raft of commitments – to divide Germany into four zones, administered by the Soviets in the east, and the United States, Britain and France in the west. This couldn't mask the fact, however, that Stalin's relationship with his counterparts was unravelling.

The Soviet leader's intentions towards eastern Europe wasn't the only issue casting a long shadow over Potsdam, for it was during that conference that Truman casually informed Stalin that the Americans had developed “a new weapon of unusual destructive force”: the atomic bomb.

That weapon perhaps did more than any other factor to define the Cold War. The British and Americans reasoned that the shock of the destruction of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would pressurise Stalin into relinquishing his hold over eastern Germany and eastern Europe (Churchill went as far as to note that the west now “had something in our hands which would redress the balance with the

Churchill addresses students in Missouri in 1946 – a speech in which he first publicly used the term ‘Iron Curtain’ to describe the new geopolitical divide



DID YOU KNOW?
DRUNK ON POWER
Despite their dislike of each other, Churchill and Stalin once bonded over a drinking session that lasted until 3am. According to files released in 2013, a “merry” meeting between the leaders in 1942 saw them enjoy “innumerable bottles” together.

Russians”). It was a severe miscalculation. Stalin reacted with anger, not fear, and accelerated his own nuclear programme that sparked a terrifying new arms race.

At the climax of the Potsdam Conference, Truman suggested that the three nations meet again in Washington, a gathering Clement Attlee (who replaced Churchill as British prime minister in 1945) said he hoped would represent “a milestone on the road to peace between our countries and in the world”. It was not to be. It soon became clear that Stalin was to renege on his commitment to offer self-determination to the people of eastern Europe – a development that led to Winston Churchill's declaration in 1946 that Soviet communism had lowered an “iron curtain” across much of Europe.

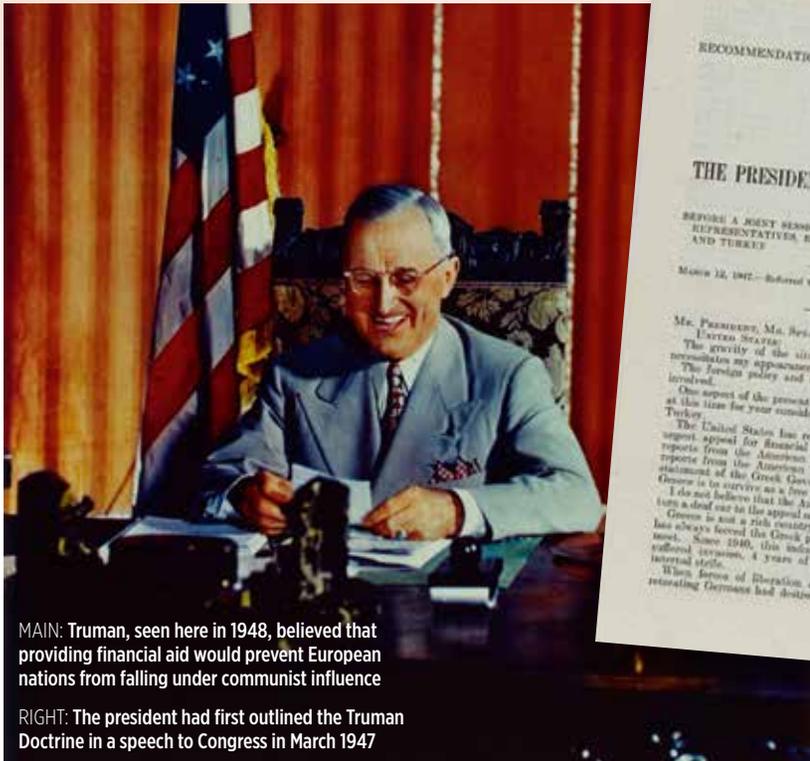
It was a year later – with Europe divided between the capitalist west and communist east and flashpoints beginning to spark across the globe – that Truman announced to Congress America's attention to actively contain communism wherever it encountered it. The Cold War, 30 years in the making, had begun.

WORDS: SPENCER MIZEN

“IT WAS A SEVERE MISCALCULATION: STALIN REACTED WITH ANGER, NOT FEAR”

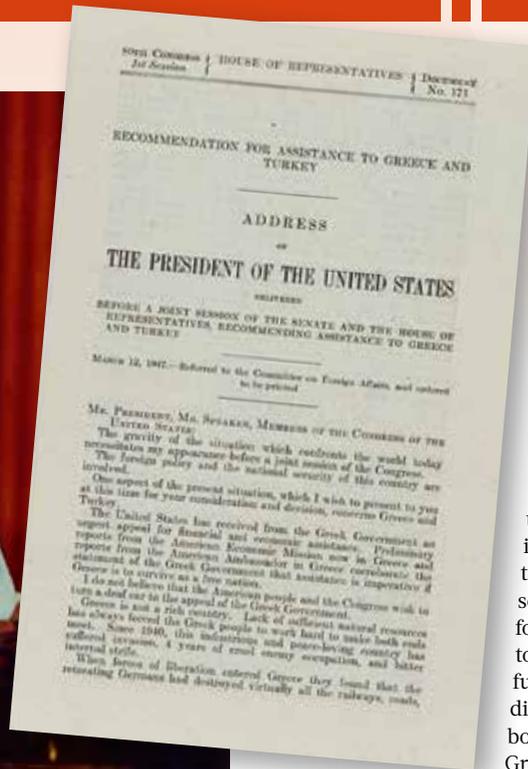


Churchill, Truman and Stalin (left to right) at Potsdam in 1945. Despite the trio's outward display of unity, their alliance was already fraying



MAIN: Truman, seen here in 1948, believed that providing financial aid would prevent European nations from falling under communist influence

RIGHT: The president had first outlined the Truman Doctrine in a speech to Congress in March 1947



and spreading quickly. “The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. I must also state that, in a number of other countries, there have been similar developments.” It was, he stressed, time to act.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE

Explicitly framing his argument in terms of American interests (the third sentence of his speech had invoked “the national security of this country”), Truman managed to secure \$400m in aid from Congress for Greece and Turkey – equivalent to more than \$5bn today. This funding helped to successfully dissolve the communist threat in both cases. Indeed, five years later, Greece and Turkey both pledged their allegiance to the US by joining Nato.

Having nullified unwanted influence in a vulnerable corner of Europe, Truman would certainly agree that that was money well spent.

The success of the Truman Doctrine in southeast Europe led to its adoption by the US government beyond this particular continent. The world saw it as a commitment by Washington to intervene where it was believed free people were being subjugated – and without the turmoil that a heavy US military presence might bring to bear on a delicate situation. And the world knew what the doctrine fundamentally meant: it became shorthand for guaranteed American opposition to any spread, or any threatened spread, of communism, anywhere on the planet.

By adopting this role as the ‘policeman’ of the free world, it was only a short step for the US to extend the policy and intervene militarily – as would soon be witnessed in Korea and Vietnam. **⊙**

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

Greece and Turkey officially became members of Nato in 1952, proving Truman’s strategy to be effective



CONTAINING THE THREAT

President Truman was willing to go to great lengths to halt the spread of communism – and in Greece and Turkey, he succeeded

While the Marshall Plan (see page 44) attempted to bolster the economies and domestic harmony of European countries after World War II, the Truman Doctrine was the United States foreign policy initiative aimed at keeping these states free from physical attacks by “armed minorities or by outside pressures”. No redrawing between the lines was necessary. This was the US’s clearly stated intention of ensuring that communist forces would not interfere with or undermine the sovereignty of its allies. This was unlikely to involve direct military action from the US, but instead would take the form of financial aid packages for countries attempting to withstand communist uprisings.

President Harry S Truman announced the doctrine before a joint session of Congress in March 1947, specifically asking for the two Houses to agree to support packages for Greece and Turkey, both of whom – with their funding from the UK government having dried up – were facing extraordinary pressure from communist influence. Greece was in the middle of a bitter civil war, waged by left-wing guerrillas against the government of King George II, while Turkey was bowing to pressure from the Soviet Union for shared control of the strategically important Dardanelles Straits.

Truman emphasised how time was of the essence, and how relying on the still-new United Nations to collectively act and swiftly respond was unrealistic. The threat was spreading –

PRESIDENTS AND PREMIERS: MAJOR PLAYERS OF THE COLD WAR

With the fate of the world on the line, tremendous responsibility fell to a handful of leaders in the second half of the 20th century

THE WEST

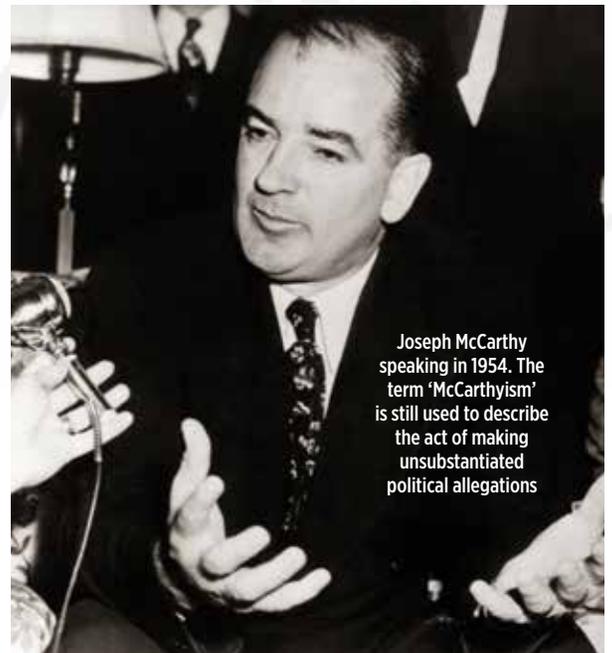
JOHN F KENNEDY

▼ Elected in 1960, John F Kennedy came to the presidency determined, despite his youth, to be the strong leader the United States needed to go toe-to-toe with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev. His strategy would not be all-out aggression, though, but 'flexible response', where any political, economic and military option was preferable to nuclear war. He had previously spoken of cutting the perceived missile gap and building the defence forces, and, in office, he increased US involvement in Vietnam, visited West Berlin, and set the nation off on the race to the Moon.

Cuba became a chief source of alarm for JFK. In April 1961, he launched the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion to try and overthrow Fidel Castro's left-wing regime – a move that led the Soviets to send the nuclear weapons that precipitated the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 (see page 46). JFK kept a cool head throughout the 13-day standoff and negotiated a peaceful resolution, which he followed by signing the Limited Test Ban Treaty. Just a few months later, he would be assassinated.



JFK successfully handled the Cuban Missile Crisis amid public pressure urging both restraint and aggression



Joseph McCarthy speaking in 1954. The term 'McCarthyism' is still used to describe the act of making unsubstantiated political allegations

JOSEPH MCCARTHY

▲ A Republican senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy came to prominence in the early 1950s when he claimed that the State Department had been infiltrated by communist spies. Despite offering no evidence and facing fierce opposition from other politicians, including President Eisenhower, he struck a nerve at a time when the postwar 'Red Scare' was at its height. In 1953, he was made chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, with the power of launching what amounted to witch hunts to root out any communists.

But McCarthy's popularity was short-lived. In 1954, public opinion turned on him after his hearings against the Army were televised – and millions of Americans could see his bullying tactics on full display. Matters were then made worse when the journalist Edward R Murrow broadcast a series of exposés attacking him and his anti-communist crusade on his show, *See It Now*. In the end, McCarthy's fellow senators took the drastic measure of censuring him.

RONALD REAGAN



◀ A fervent anti-communist, former actor Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980 and immediately set about increasing military expenditure and modernising the armed forces, signalling an escalation of the Cold War not seen under the détente of his predecessors. He labelled the Soviet Union an “evil empire” and instigated the Reagan Doctrine, whereby the US would support resistance

movements to “roll back” Soviet-backed regimes around the world. In his efforts, he was aided by his ‘special relationship’ with the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher.

One of his proposals was a space-based missile defence system, officially called the Strategic Defence Initiative but widely known as ‘Star Wars’. This was condemned as a dangerous acceleration of the arms race. But US-Soviet relations improved dramatically in Reagan’s second term after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. The two leaders would sign the INF Treaty in 1987, agreeing to eradicate their intermediate-range land-based missiles, and at a speech at the Berlin Wall Reagan laid down the challenge: “Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” The end of the Cold War is often marked by its fall in 1989.

GEORGE F KENNAN



◀ American diplomat George F Kennan introduced the policy of ‘containment’ that inspired the Truman Doctrine and US foreign policy towards the Soviets for decades. While working in Moscow, Kennan sent his ‘Long Telegram’ in February 1946, arguing that Soviet expansionist aims had to be contained if the spread of communism was to be curbed.

WILLY BRANDT



◀ Willy Brandt became a famous Cold War leader as mayor of West Berlin (1957–66), where he witnessed the Wall go up and stood against Soviet aggression. But when he became chancellor of West Germany, he sought to improve relations with the East with his policy of *Ostpolitik*, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971.

HENRY KISSINGER



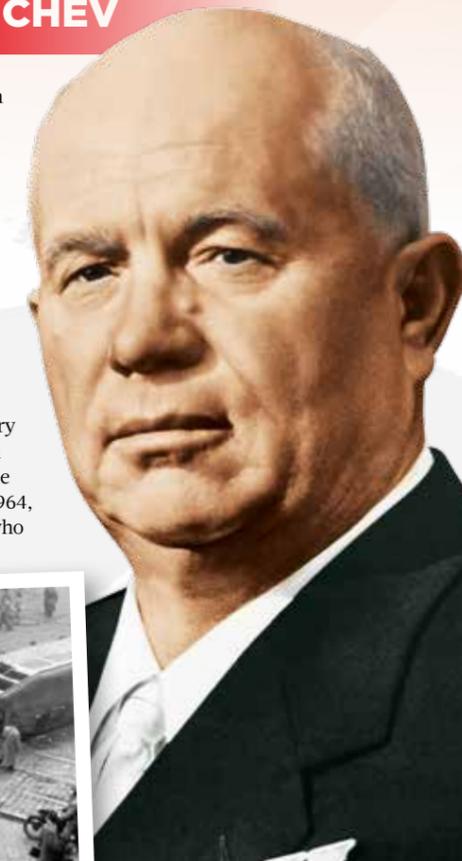
◀ A dominant, if controversial, force in shaping US foreign policy, German-born American Henry Kissinger served as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State in the administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. He was a proponent of détente, opened relations with China, and helped negotiate the end of US involvement in Vietnam.

MARGARET THATCHER



◀ Dubbed the ‘Iron Lady’ by the Soviet media, Britain’s first female prime minister (1979–90) was an unmoving anti-communist who increased the nation’s nuclear arsenal. Initially forming a united conservative front alongside US president Ronald Reagan, she recognised the chance to bring about the end of the Cold War by working with Mikhail Gorbachev.

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV



▼ Nikita Khrushchev emerged from the power vacuum after Joseph Stalin’s death in March 1953, becoming first secretary of the Communist Party in November that year and premier of the Soviet Union in March 1958. Despite his decades as a zealous member of the former regime, he denounced Stalin and launched a period of ‘de-Stalinisation’. Instead, Khrushchev looked to raise Soviet living standards, promote production, and invest in the Space Race.

However, Khrushchev could also display his authoritarian side – particularly with his brutal crushing of an uprising in Hungary in 1956 – and when it came to foreign policy, he became known for talking big, telling a group of western ambassadors “We will bury you!” during a reception in Poland. Although the Cuban Missile Crisis passed without incident, Khrushchev came off second-best and his leadership failed to recover. In 1964, he was ousted by a group headed by Leonid Brezhnev, who went on to rule for 18 years.



When Hungarians embarked on nationwide demonstrations against Soviet rule in 1956 (left), Khrushchev sent in tanks to put down the revolt

MAO ZEDONG



◀ The founder of communist China and its chairman until his death in 1976, Mao’s rule – with the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution – resulted in millions of deaths within his borders. He also divided the communist world during the Cold War by splitting, in the 1950s and 60s, from the Soviets.

HO CHI MINH



◀ Having led the Vietnamese independence movement since 1941, Ho Chi Minh became leader of North Vietnam in 1945 and, determined to unite the country under communism, waged war on the South. This brought the US into a prolonged, damaging and humiliating conflict, from which the North emerged victorious. The captured South Vietnamese capital, Saigon, was renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

FIDEL CASTRO



◀ In 1959, Fidel Castro overthrew the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista and went on to create the first communist state in the western hemisphere. Cuba would be a constant thorn in the side of the US and Castro’s good relations with the Soviets led to nuclear weapons being placed on the island in 1962. His rule would last until 2008, when he resigned due to failing health.

SERGEI KOROLEV



◀ Rocket engineer Sergei Korolev was the architect of the Soviet Union’s intercontinental ballistic missile and space programmes, and was instrumental in both the launch of the *Sputnik 1* satellite in 1957 and the *Vostok* project that put Yuri Gagarin into orbit in 1961. So important was Korolev that his identity was a closely guarded state secret, and he was merely referred to as the ‘Chief Designer’.

WORDS: JONNY WILKES

THE EAST

ERICH HONECKER

◀ In 1929, a young Erich Honecker joined the German Communist Party. Arrested and sentenced to hard labour after the Nazis came to power, he was freed by the Red Army in 1945 and looked to be part of the new communist government in Germany’s Soviet zone. It was in his role of security secretary that, in 1961, he oversaw the construction of the Berlin Wall and implemented the ‘order to fire’ on anyone trying attempting defect from East to West.

In 1971, Honecker took over as leader of all East Germany with the

backing of the Soviet leadership. While he attempted to improve living standards and even encouraged a level of consumerism more akin to western capitalism than communism, Honecker still presided over an oppressive regime. He rejected the reforms coming from Mikhail Gorbachev’s government and fiercely opposed pro-democracy demonstrations within East Germany.

Eventually, he was forced to resign in 1989 – the same year that the wall he had built came down.

Honecker oversaw construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961



Honecker stood trial for human rights abuses following his downfall, but proceedings were dropped after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV



▼ The last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev was willing to do things that none of his predecessors had done in order to rejuvenate the economy, modernise the country, and improve relations with the west. He signed the INF Treaty with US president Ronald Reagan and ended the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, but it was his two major domestic reforms that defined his rule.

One was the policy of *glasnost* (openness), which encouraged greater freedom of speech and the press, and scrutiny of politicians without fearing arrest by the secret police, the KGB. The other was *perestroika* (restructuring), an attempt to decentralise the economy and democratise the political system. Gorbachev was met with opposition from Communist Party members unwilling to relinquish any of their power – he was even briefly overthrown in 1991 – but his policies were celebrated in the west. His tenure would lead to the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the collapse of communist regimes, the reunification of Germany, and the end of the Cold War.

Mikhail Gorbachev’s rule ushered in a new period of cooperation with the western world

MONEY AND POWER

In 1947, the US pledged billions of dollars to help rebuild war-torn Europe – but the Soviets sensed an ulterior motive

“It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health to the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.”

When United States secretary of state George C Marshall delivered these words, in a speech at Harvard University in June 1947, he was sketching out the framework of a widespread package of aid to a Europe devastated by six years of war. The Marshall Plan carried echoes of Franklin D Roosevelt’s New Deal, which had accelerated the US’s economic recovery after the Wall Street Crash and the subsequent Great Depression. This time, the focus was the re-establishment – both economically and politically – of the war-battered great states of Europe.

Marshall’s speech emphasised that economic prosperity was the foundation for political peace, explaining that the US was keen to provide “friendly aid” to help rebuild both infrastructure and economies. He even left the door open for the Soviet Union and its satellite states in the eastern bloc to be recipients of the programme. “Europe as a whole” should benefit, he declared, while also advocating the removal of trade barriers.

The Soviet Union, sensing – not without foundation – that the Marshall Plan was an attempt on the US’s part to secure geopolitical favour across Europe and to arrest the westwards spread of communism, declined the invitation, while also forbidding the countries within its sphere of influence from accepting aid from across the Atlantic. Indeed, the Soviet Union countered with its own recovery programme for the region: the Molotov Plan.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

The initial tranche of US aid – \$5bn split unevenly across 16 European states – was agreed by President Harry S Truman in April 1948. Despite there being a Democrat in the White House and the Republicans running Congress, the Marshall Plan received bipartisan support in Washington. Its politicians were united in believing that economic prosperity across western Europe was



ABOVE: The Marshall Plan provided nations with much-needed agricultural equipment



RIGHT: Greek women are seen hard at work in a fish cannery funded by the scheme

the best weapon with which to neutralise any expansionist impulses coming out of Moscow. In all, the plan delivered over \$13bn in aid – the equivalent of more than \$150bn today. The UK received the most (around 24 per cent), with West Germany in receipt of nearly 11 per cent, France just over 20 per cent and the remainder shared by the other 13 countries.

The Marshall Plan lasted until late 1951, when it was replaced by the Mutual Security Plan – a more overt name for arguably the biggest underlying purpose of the whole endeavour: political stability in western Europe. The plan had almost certainly fulfilled its twin political and economic intentions – solidifying the US’s European allies against Soviet influence and kick-starting national economies. By the time the plan was phased out, all of the recipient countries were reporting their economies to be at a stronger and more advanced level than in 1938, before the war. Postwar regeneration would have occurred without this American intervention, but it’s questionable whether such widespread recovery would have been so rapid without the Marshall Plan’s large-scale funding accelerating matters. ●

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

LEFT: US secretary of state George C Marshall (1880–1959) – the Marshall Plan’s chief architect and namesake

BELOW: UK officials await the first shipment of Caribbean sugar to be delivered to Britain under the plan





ABOVE: Cuban exiles train for the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961

LEFT: The front page of the US Daily News reports on Fidel Castro's overthrow of Fulgencio Batista in 1959

FAR LEFT: The cosy relationship between Castro (left) and Nikita Khrushchev (right) had caused alarm in the US

CHAOS IN CUBA

When one of the US's closest neighbours agreed to host Soviet nuclear missiles, it triggered the most dangerous crisis in world history

In October 1962, the world held a collective breath as the US and the Soviet Union teetered on the brink of nuclear war. The Cuban Missile Crisis, as it became known, lasted less than a fortnight, but it was the closest the two great superpowers came to direct confrontation.

The tensions that had led to the crisis had been building for some time. Cuba, which is just 90 miles from the coast of Florida, had previously been a close ally of the US, with the Americans having a large business presence on the island. On 1 January 1959, however, the relationship was thrown into turmoil when the Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista, was toppled in a revolution. Whereas the US had backed Batista due to his staunch opposition to communism, the country's new leader, Fidel Castro, wanted to eradicate the US presence on the island altogether, seeking to create a government that would serve the nation's poor.

Castro set about implementing socialist reforms, nationalising many US-owned businesses and gaining the support of the Soviet Union in the process. This only seemed to confirm US fears that its

neighbour had ambitions of becoming a fully-fledged communist state – at a time when the US foreign policy was focused on stopping communism from spreading. By January 1960, President Dwight D Eisenhower had severed all diplomatic ties with Castro, and the US government set about finding a way to get rid of him.

A FAILED INTERVENTION

In April 1961, after months of planning, Eisenhower's successor John F Kennedy sanctioned a covert invasion of Cuba in a bid to overthrow Castro. Rather than using their own forces, the Americans would sponsor an army of 1,500 Cuban exiles to land on an area of coastline known as the Bay of Pigs and provoke an anti-communist uprising. Comprising members of political groups bitterly opposed to the Castro regime, the CIA-trained troops would be assisted by air strikes on Cuban military targets.

It was a total failure. The force proved no match for Castro's 20,000-strong army, and three days after the invasion began, more than 100 exiles had been killed, with the survivors surrendering or fleeing. The defeat humiliated the US, and Kennedy

was now viewed by the Soviet Union as an aggressor – albeit a failed one.

The Americans' worries were far from over, however. In the summer of 1962, Castro secretly agreed to allow the Soviets to house nuclear missiles on the island, along with more than 40,000 troops. The move would not only help the Soviet Union to remedy its 'missile gap' with the US – which already had stockpiles of nuclear missiles in Europe – but also reduce the chances of Castro facing an

Cuban troops man an anti-aircraft gun in readiness for a US invasion. Castro had demanded that the Soviets launch an immediate nuclear strike on the US should such an event occur



American invasion. The warheads would be capable of reaching the eastern US in a matter of minutes, and the Soviets mistakenly assumed that the Americans would not dare intervene once they discovered the arsenal's existence.

It wasn't a secret for long. On 14 October 1962, a US spy plane captured images of a possible nuclear missile launch site under construction on the west of the island. After scrutiny of the photographs proved initial suspicions to be correct, Kennedy was notified two days later – and he set to work.

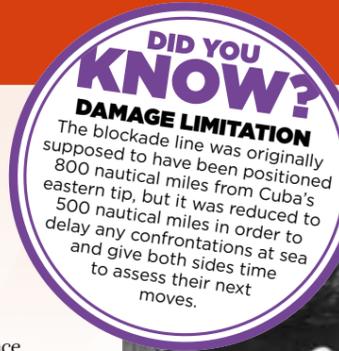
GOING INTO QUARANTINE

Keeping the revelation hidden from the US public, Kennedy enlisted a group of his most trusted advisors and National Security Council members to help formulate a response, and by 22 October, he had made his decision. Having resisted calls to launch air strikes, he ordered the US Navy to impose a blockade, euphemistically labelled a 'quarantine'. Although ships carrying basic necessities such as food would be allowed to pass through unhindered, any Soviet vessels that approached the edge of the blockade line – an arc positioned 500 nautical miles from Cuba's eastern tip – would be stopped and searched for weapons.

It was at that point that Kennedy also decided it was time to reveal to the public what was unfolding. That evening, he made an extraordinary address on US television, disclosing the "unmistakable evidence" of Soviet missiles on Cuba and declaring that a "full, retaliatory response" would rain down on the Soviet Union should the weapons be used. What had been a clandestine affair was now out in the open, and the world awaited the Soviets' reply.

It soon arrived. On 24 October, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev described the blockade as an "act of aggression" and stated that Soviet ships would be instructed to ignore it. With US intelligence indicating that the launch sites on Cuba were nearing operational readiness, escalation seemed inevitable.

Over the coming days, further exchanges between the Soviet Union and the US followed, with each side blaming the other for the situation. The crisis nearly reached breaking point when possible missile-carrying ships were reported to be nearing the blockade line – before turning around. Realising the gravity of what had happened, US secretary of state Dean Rusk is said to have remarked: "We're eyeball to eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked."



"KHRUSHCHEV PROMISED TO REMOVE THE MISSILES IF THE US PLEDGED NOT TO INVADE"

ABOVE: Federico Fidel Fernandez, a Cuban refugee living in Miami, watches Kennedy's 22 October address revealing the existence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba

ABOVE RIGHT: A member of the US State Department gives a presentation showing the location of the first Soviet missile launch site to be discovered

In truth, the vessels had been a considerable distance from Cuba when they changed course, but the Soviets' apparent reluctance to break the blockade proved that Kennedy's 'quarantine' was working. Indeed, it appeared that Khrushchev was capitulating; on 26 October, he sent a message to the president, promising that he would be willing to remove the missiles already located on the island if the US pledged not to invade.

DEMANDS AND DECISIONS

But there was another twist in store. The following morning, a second message arrived from Khrushchev. Taking on a more aggressive tone than the first, the Soviet leader made another demand: the US would have to remove its own nuclear missiles from Turkey if a settlement was to be reached. To make matters worse, news arrived that a US spy plane had been shot down over Cuba, killing the pilot – a development that led some of Kennedy's colleagues to call for immediate military action.

Yet Kennedy kept his cool. It was decided that he would only respond to the first message, but send his brother – Attorney General Robert F Kennedy – to meet with Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington DC. There, he would inform Dobrynin that the US had already planned to remove the Turkish missiles, but that the Soviets must keep the information secret.



It was a bold gambit, but the Soviets agreed. On 28 October, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union's nuclear missiles would be removed from Cuba, and that the US had promised not to launch an invasion in return. The crisis was over. During a broadcast, Khrushchev addressed his American counterpart directly: "We must not allow the situation to deteriorate... we must see it that no other conflicts occur which might lead to world nuclear war."

By late November 1962, the last of the Cuban missiles had been shipped back to the Soviet Union, and by April 1963, the US had quietly removed its own missiles from Turkey. Sobered by how close they had come to nuclear conflict, a phone line was installed between the White House and the Kremlin, making it easier to prevent future escalations. The aftermath of the crisis also led to the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, which saw more than 100 nations agree to stop carrying out tests of nuclear weapons above ground.

For much of its duration, the Cold War remained frosty. But during those 13 days in October 1962, the conflict came perilously close to becoming hot. **WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS**

A CULTURE OF FEAR

The ever-present threat of nuclear war changed the lives of millions of people

From the moment the US detonated an atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August 1945, the prospect of a force so destructive that it could wipe out entire cities in a heartbeat became a worrying reality: mankind had entered a new age of nuclear anxiety.

As allies became enemies and the US and Soviet Union edged closer to engaging in a 'hot' war, fears of an atomic attack permeated all aspects of life, spilling over into music, film, literature and art as people struggled to make sense of the dark cloud of nuclear annihilation that seemed to loom over them.

Alongside subjects such as mathematics and science, American schoolchildren were taught to 'duck and cover' in order to survive a nuclear attack; the Soviet Union organised compulsory public training and drills in case of a similar strike by the US; while all across western Europe, civil defence preparations were being made should the worst happen - from issuing pamphlets on life under fall-out conditions, to creating blast shelters, disseminating public information films, stockpiling food, and more.

Here are just a few of the ways that nuclear anxieties manifested themselves during the Cold War...

FILM

▼ The Cold War inspired countless films on both sides of the ideological divide, translating the anxieties of the period into spy movies, science fiction, crime films and more.



DID YOU KNOW?
ULTIMATE LIE-IN
 In March 1969, newlyweds John Lennon and Yoko Ono spent a week in bed at the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel as a peaceful protest against the Vietnam War. Dressed in pyjamas, they took questions from the press between 9am and 9pm each day.

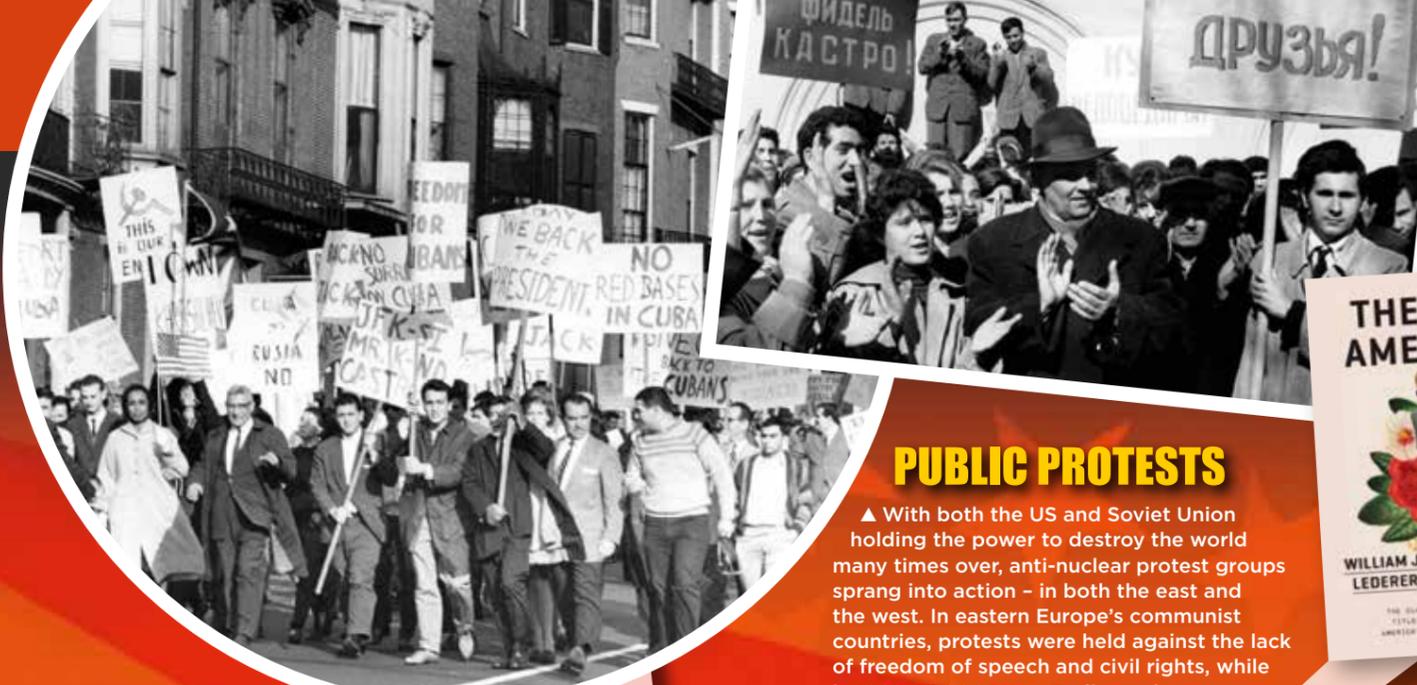


MUSIC

◀ Music provided a tool for artists to protest against many of the political decisions that were made during the Cold War (such as John Lennon's anti-Vietnam War song 'Give Peace a Chance'). But it was also used by the US to promote American values across the world. In the 1950s and 60s, 'jazz ambassadors' such as Louis Armstrong (left) were sent on overseas tours in a bid to counter Soviet criticisms of racial inequality in the US and help improve its public image.

CIVIL DEFENCE

▶ In the 1950s, as the threat of nuclear war loomed large, some families built fallout shelters in basements and gardens, stockpiling them with everything they might need to survive an attack - from medicine to food. Community shelters were also constructed beneath official buildings, with some capable of protecting thousands of people.



PUBLIC PROTESTS

▲ With both the US and Soviet Union holding the power to destroy the world many times over, anti-nuclear protest groups sprang into action - in both the east and the west. In eastern Europe's communist countries, protests were held against the lack of freedom of speech and civil rights, while in 1968, 10,000 West Berlin students held a sit-in against US involvement in Vietnam. Mass protests took place all over the world - from Canada to Amsterdam.

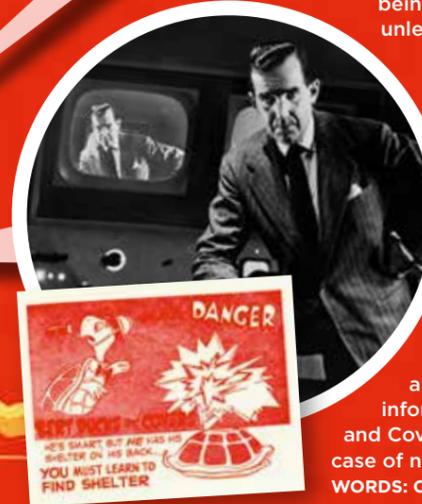


LITERATURE

▲ As it did for music and film, the Cold War had a profound influence on literature. The 1950s saw an explosion in science fiction as fears of global annihilation translated into alien beings and monstrous creatures unleashing all manner of terrors on humankind.

TELEVISION

◀ Television coverage of the conflict - such as the CBS series *See It Now* (left) which ran from 1951-58, was extensive and became a propaganda tool. But TV could also be used as a way of sharing essential information, such as the 'Duck and Cover' safety campaign in case of nuclear attack. © WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN



BIG NUMBERS

200,000

The estimated number of private nuclear fallout shelters built across the US by 1965

>20 billion

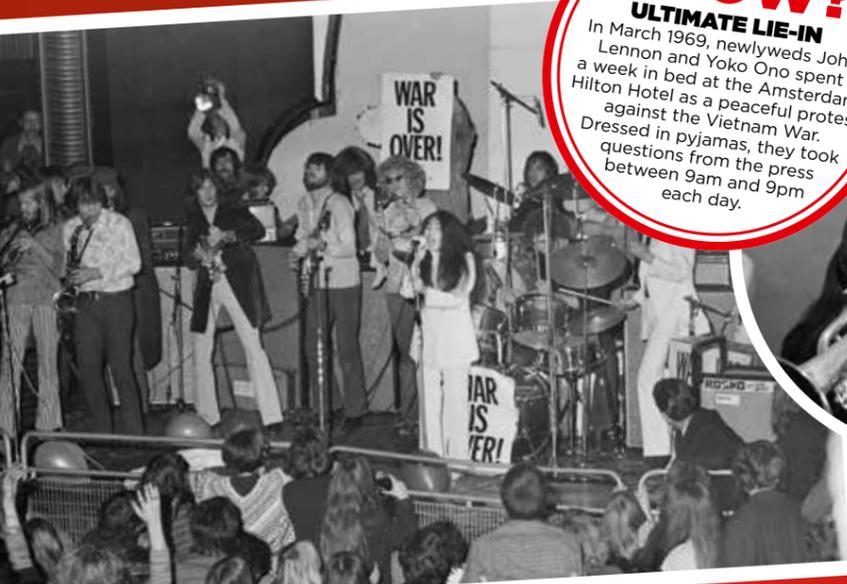
The number of bulgur wheat biscuits (dubbed the 'All-Purpose Survival Cracker') produced in the US between 1958 and 1964

450

The number of caves around the US identified by the Army Corps of Engineers as being able to house atomic refugees

12.5

The space, in square feet, allocated per person in mass fallout shelters, as recommended by the US Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization in June 1959

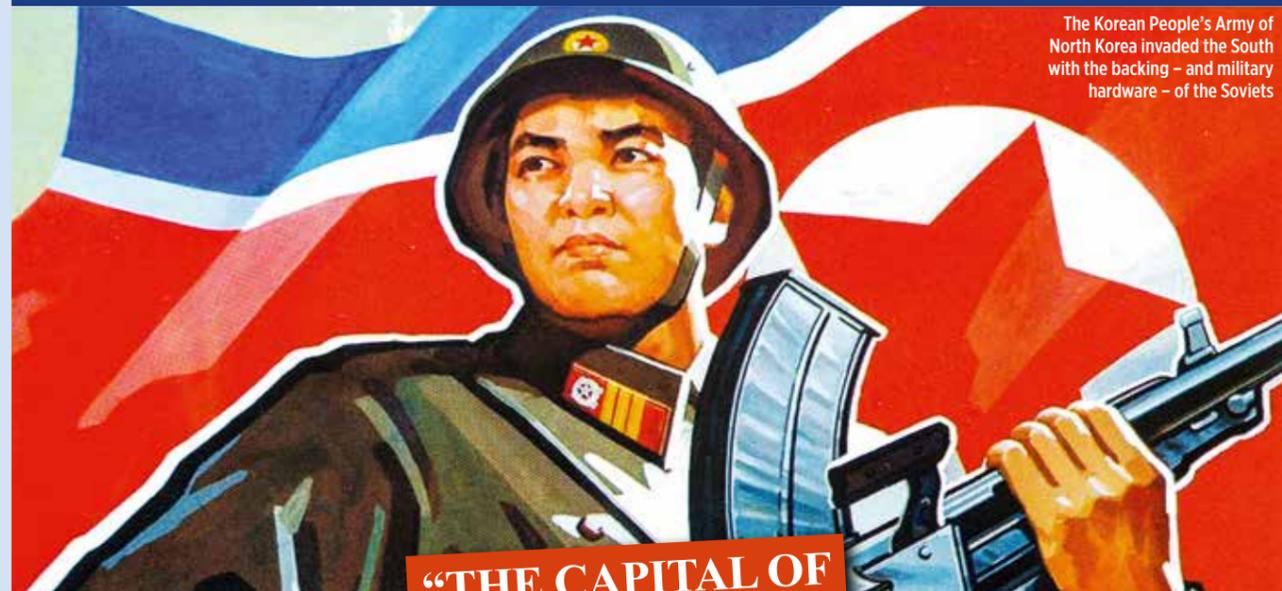


GETTY IMAGES/XB/ALAMY X3

PROXY WARS: HOW THE EAST AND WEST FOUGHT

While direct engagement threatened full-blown nuclear conflict, the United States and Soviet Union still found ways to do battle as the Cold War spilled into other countries all over the world

THE KOREAN WAR, 1950–1953



The Korean People's Army of North Korea invaded the South with the backing – and military hardware – of the Soviets

“THE CAPITAL OF SOUTH KOREA, SEOUL, CHANGED NO FEWER THAN FOUR TIMES”

After Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, Korea – which had been under Japanese control since 1910 – was divided into two zones along the 38th Parallel. The United States administered the southern half, while the north came under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Union. The intention was for reunification, but the Cold War escalated and this never happened. Instead, in 1948, two separate states were established along clear ideological lines. The Republic of Korea (South) embraced capitalism, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North) became a communist regime.

Both wished for a unified country – as long as it was on their ideological terms, so tensions were sharp and ever-present. Then in the spring of 1950, Soviet premier

Joseph Stalin and Chinese chairman Mao Zedong approved an invasion of the South by North Korea. The aggression was denounced by the United Nations, which sent soldiers to defend the South. By October 1950, the forces of the newly formed United Nations Command – approximately 90 per cent of which were American – had not only pushed North Korea back out, but had invaded the North themselves.

However, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army then entered the fray, forcing the UN forces into a retreat and, before the end of the

year, had made its own way into the South. In the ensuing hostilities, the South Korean capital Seoul changed hands no fewer than four times.

A series of offensives and counter-offensives meant that eventually both sides were occupying positions similar to where they began: the war on the ground became entrenched, with few territorial gains by either side. However, the heavy US bombing of North Korea meant their jets were engaged in aerial warfare with Soviet planes (the latter operating covertly).

An armistice agreement was eventually signed in July 1953, but not before at least 2.5 million people had lost their lives. While it created a wider border between the two countries – the Demilitarised Zone – it wasn't a peace treaty. Nearly 70 years on, North Korea and South Korea technically remain at war.

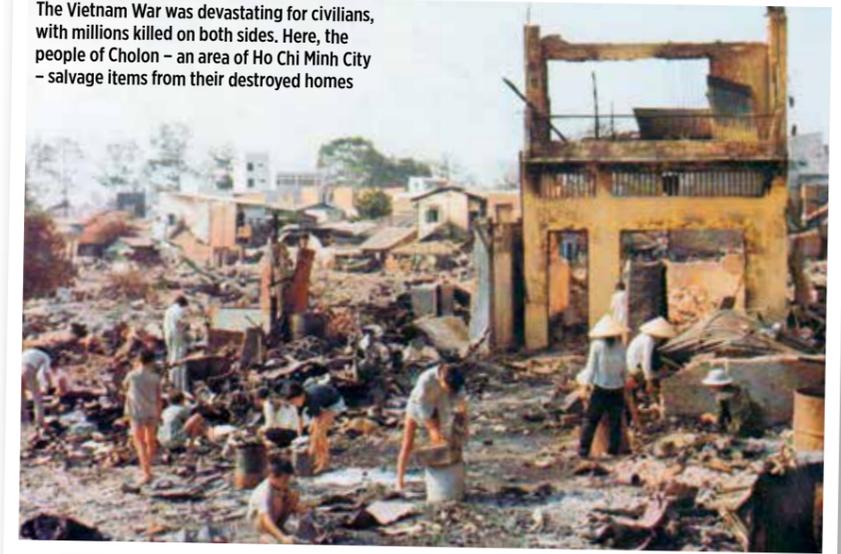
THE VIETNAM WAR, 1954–1975

ostensibly a war between North and South Vietnam, the involvement to varying degrees of the superpowers – chiefly the United States in a bid to prevent communist expansion – ensured that the conflict resonated across the world.

In 1954, the French rule of Indochina, a region comprising Cambodia, Laos and parts of Vietnam, ended after the battle of Dien Bien Phu. The Soviet-inspired independence organisation, Viet Minh, under the control of Ho Chi Minh, took control of northern Vietnam. The subsequent Geneva Accords divided the country along similar lines to the split in Korea: Ho's communist regime ruled the North, while the South, under the European-educated Emperor Bao Dai, remained pro-west.

Elections to decide the country's future were planned for 1955, but before then Bao's prime minister Ngo Dinh Diem seized control and declared the Republic of Vietnam in the South, with himself as president. With substantial military resources from the US, Diem suppressed those who were supportive of the regime in the North. After multiple instances of torture and executions, the pro-North sympathisers – dubbed the Viet Cong – began fighting back in an insurgency. This rattled the Americans, fearful of other countries in southeast Asia converting to communism should Vietnam be unified under Ho Chi Minh. With this 'domino theory' as a mandate, President John F Kennedy increased aid to the South, largely in weaponry and personnel.

The Vietnam War was devastating for civilians, with millions killed on both sides. Here, the people of Cholon – an area of Ho Chi Minh City – salvage items from their destroyed homes



The situation became more unstable after Diem's assassination in November 1963, the same month in which Kennedy was killed. The new US president, Lyndon B Johnson, increased American military might in the region, then, when US ships were torpedoed in the Gulf of Tonkin the following August, he ordered the bombing of North Vietnam. Soon, American combat troops were on the ground – nearly 300,000 by 1966.

Over the next few years, a 'guerrilla war' was fought against the US and South Vietnam by the Viet Cong – supported by the Soviet Union

and China – which resulted in heavy US casualties. It became clear that victory was not possible: an anti-war movement flourished back home, while more than half a million disillusioned troops had deserted by 1973. That year, the US and North Vietnam agreed a peace agreement and President Richard Nixon withdrew his troops. The war continued for another two years before the North captured the South's capital, Saigon, and unified the country. As with the Korean War, the death toll stretched into the millions, both military and civilian.

THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, October 1973

On 6 October 1973, a surprise attack on Israeli forces by a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria was launched on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. The attacks were on two fronts: the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights, both of which had been invaded by Israel six years earlier. The coalition's initial advances – the Egyptians on the former front and the Syrians on the latter – were, after a few days of fighting, neutralised by a strong Israeli counter-offensive that saw the Syrian capital Damascus being shelled.

The US was taken by surprise by the outbreak

of the fighting, but, even then, believed the invasions would be quashed within days. When it became clear this wouldn't be the case, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger argued for the US to resupply Israeli militarily. The Soviet Union was doing likewise for the Arab states and there was consternation in Washington that this might have included nuclear weaponry, causing the US government to go to DEFCON 3. After a ceasefire on 25 October, diplomacy eventually won the day, with the 1978 Camp David Accords opening the way for the Egypt-Israel peace treaty which eventually returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.

Israeli troops in the Yom Kippur War. Their army was resupplied by the US, and their enemy by the Soviets





Huge numbers of Ethiopians poured into refugee camps to escape the civil war and oppressive regime headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam (below left) from 1977 to 1991

THE ETHIOPIAN CIVIL WAR, 1974–1991

In 1974, the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in a coup, with the new regime, the Derg, installing a Marxist-Leninist state under a junta. The Soviet-backed Derg was brutal, launching a campaign of Qey Shibir (Red Terror) against competing groups that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. Across Ethiopia, groups of differing ideologies came together in their opposition to the regime and took up armed resistance. While incoming US president Jimmy Carter did not advocate military intervention, he condemned the

actions of Derg dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam and brought a halt to the aid the country had received under Richard Nixon's administration.

It wasn't just internal pressures the Derg faced: neighbouring Somalia invaded Ethiopia in an attempt to capture the Ogaden region, causing Mengistu to request assistance from the Soviet Union. Despite this, Carter elected to take no further action, reluctant to start a third world war over a regional dispute in northeast Africa, many thousands of miles from the US's backyard.

THE SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR, 1979–1989

When it came to one of the two superpowers being drawn into a long and debilitating guerilla conflict, the Americans had Vietnam and the Soviets had Afghanistan. In the late 1970s, the latter country was run by a communist government, having overthrown the centrists in 1978, but had little domestic support among the largely rural population for its modernising social reforms and subjugation of dissenting voices. As a result, many rebellious factions sprang up: Islamist in make up, they became collectively known as the *mujahideen*.

The regime also had to contend with an internal fissure since power was being

shared by two Marxist-Leninist groups, the Khalq (People's) and Parcham (Banner) parties. So in December 1979, some 30,000 Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan to bolster their friendly government by ending the reign of Khalqist Hafizullah Amin and installing the Parcham leader Babrak Karmal. The invasion was met by condemnation and sanctions by the international community, and prompted the US boycott of the Moscow Olympics the following year.

This wasn't the only American action, as they led the west's support of the *mujahideen* and supplied anti-aircraft missiles to neutralise the Soviet air threat. A stalemate ensued as Soviet troops could not gain an advantage in the unforgiving Afghan terrain. Almost 10 years after it started, the war finally ended – with the Soviet Union on its last legs – after Moscow signed an accord with Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US.



A *mujahideen* fighter demonstrates the use of a surface-to-air missile. The Soviet-Afghan War turned into the USSR's very own Vietnam crisis

THE 'CONTRA WAR' IN NICARAGUA, 1979–1990

Todos tenemos un puesto en la defensa de la patria!!



A Sandinista propaganda poster bearing the message "We all have a position in the defence of the homeland!!" – a warning to the contras who were attempting to overthrow Nicaragua's socialist regime

At the culmination of the Nicaraguan Revolution, in 1979, the socialist Sandinistas overthrew the ruling Somoza dynasty and put in place the Junta of National Reconstruction. Within a few months, the Soviet Union had become an official ally of the Central American country, providing diplomatic, economic and military assistance.

Throughout the 1980s, however, a loose amalgam of right-wing, counter-revolutionary groups – known as the contras – carried out a bloody opposition to the government, with the training and funding of the CIA. Despite US support, the contras often employed terrorist tactics and carried out heinous human rights atrocities. Although downplayed by Ronald Reagan's administration, which had been vocal in its support of the contras, revelations of such abuses provoked the ire of the US Congress, which removed all funding by 1985.

However, the Americans went on covertly financing the contras. The National Security Council got the money through third parties; the source being anything from the proceeds of drugs trafficking to the illicit sale of weapons to Iran. Indeed, the latter was overseen by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, who became an infamous international figure during the Iran-Contra scandal of the late 1980s. ◉

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

"THE CONTRAS OFTEN EMPLOYED TERRORIST TACTICS AND CARRIED OUT HEINOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES"

PROFESSOR MICHAEL GOODMAN ON THE LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR



While the Cold War might be over, it is as relevant today as it always has been



For five decades, the Cold War dominated the lives of politicians, military figures, intelligence officers and the general public. The battle – between east and west, between the Soviet Union and the United States, between communism and capitalism – was all encompassing. Essentially an ideological division, it invariably spread into politics, military, economic and religious concerns. The contest became global in nature with huge numbers of countries in every continent declaring a policy of support for one side or another, or one of neutrality. Like the two world wars that had preceded it, the Cold War divided up the globe and touched billions of people. But there was a dichotomy at the heart of the Cold War. While it was fundamentally not about fighting, its central characteristic was a military one: a perpetual and existential risk of nuclear conflict that was all pervasive.

With the tumbling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, the threat of nuclear war seemed to disappear overnight. All of a sudden, the military contest had ended as quickly as the political one had. People across eastern Europe were suddenly freed of the oppressive, authoritarian rule that had characterised life for much of the 20th century. For three decades after that point, state-on-state conflict in Europe – where much of the Cold War had been focused – seemed a thing of the past, and new concerns, such as terrorism and organised crime, served to unite the former enemies.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has changed all of that. This is not Cold War 2.0, as many commentators have argued. The battle is not between east and west, and it is not an ideological one. But the military threat has resurfaced, and with it, a reminder of the value of alliances, such as Nato, that defined the opposing Cold War blocs. The experiences of the Cold War are therefore hugely important for today and there are a great many lessons that we can identify, even if the situations are not directly comparable.

For a brief period in the 1990s, the Russians opened their Cold War archives and huge efforts were undertaken to redress the previous historical writing, which had very much viewed things through a western prism. That avenue has long since closed and is unlikely to reopen anytime soon. Increasingly, the Cold War is being looked at within the global prism in which it existed. While the protagonists were the two main superpowers, people in the Middle East, Far East and Africa were just as affected, and their stories and history is slowly beginning to emerge. Similarly, the military, economic and political landscape has been fairly well documented, but the role of the intelligence services in supporting decision-making is only now beginning to come to light.

While the Cold War might be over and, for many, a distant memory, its legacy and history is as relevant today as it has always been. ○

MICHAEL GOODMAN is professor of intelligence and international affairs and head of the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He has published widely in the field of intelligence history and scientific intelligence



Events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall seemed to remove the threat of nuclear war overnight, says Goodman

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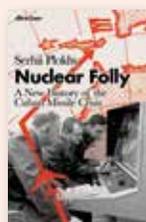
BOOKS



Spying on the Nuclear Bear: Anglo-American Intelligence and the Soviet Bomb

By Prof Michael Goodman
(Stanford University Press, 2008)

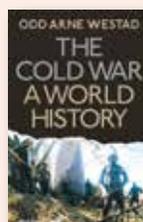
Through oral testimony and archival research, Goodman provides an account of British and US intelligence on the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons programme between 1945 and 1958.



Nuclear Folly: A New History of the Cuban Missile Crisis

By Prof Serhii Plokhy
(Allen Lane, 2021)

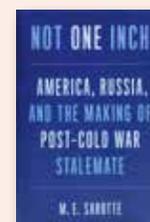
Plokhy traces the tortuous decision-making and calculated brinkmanship of John F Kennedy, Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro, as well as the role of their advisors and commanders on the ground, during the Cuban Missile Crisis.



The Cold War: A World History

By Prof Odd Arne Westad
(Allen Lane, 2017)

Westad's grand narrative of the Cold War illustrates its ideological, geopolitical, technological and economic dimension, and sets it within the greater landscape of world history.



Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate

By Prof Mary Elise Sarotte
(Yale University Press, 2022)

Based on more than a hundred interviews and on secret records of White House-Kremlin contacts, Sarotte reveals how the US overcame Russian resistance in the 1990s to expand Nato.

ON THE BBC



► Cold War: Stories from the Big Freeze

bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07kfs3r
Across two series, and using interviews collected by the BBC, Dr Bridget Kendall traces the crucial turning points of the Cold War.



► The World That Came in From the Cold

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Discover how the Yalta Conference in 1945 between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, and the Malta Summit in 1989 between Bush and Gorbachev, framed the Cold War.



► The Cuban Missile Crisis: As Seen From Moscow and Havana

bbc.co.uk/programmes/b039kv61
Allan Little pieces together the "untold" side of the Cuban Missile Crisis, featuring interviews with Soviet and Cuban insiders who were present at the time.

ONLINE AND AUDIO



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Dr Susan Williams discusses the US's covert programme to undermine the leaders of newly independent African nations in the 1950s and 1960s. Listen at bit.ly/3MM3eTm

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Professor Michael Goodman responds to listener questions on the decades of geopolitical tension in the second half of the 20th century. Listen at bit.ly/3xjgKrQ

WATCH



Bridge of Spies (streaming online)

Tom Hanks and Mark Rylance star in this Steven Spielberg-directed thriller from 2015 based on the true story of an American and Soviet prisoner exchange.



The Courier (streaming on Amazon Prime)

This Cold War drama, released in 2020, stars Benedict Cumberbatch as British businessman Greville Wynne, who unwittingly became caught up in the Cuban Missile Crisis.