

Nuclear Arms Race- 1950s

1945- Atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1949- Soviets detonate their first bomb.

1952- USA create the hydrogen bomb with USSR testing theirs in 1953.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

came in to being as both sides knew that each other could lead to destruction of the world, from either land, air or submarine. Both countries spend huge amounts from their defence budgets to **stockpile weapons**. To convince public to support this, the US created the 'missile gap' theory.

Nuclear weapons led to **brinkmanship**, the continuous threat of using nuclear weapons during any event of tension knowing that each side would eventually back down.

USSR creation of **ICBMs**, where they led the stockpile of these, scared USA that now bombs could travel through space to hit targets thousands of miles away.

Propaganda in west heightened fears and tensions as films, and school bomb alerts (duck and cover), always brought attention the threat of nuclear destruction.

Vietnam War, 1950s

Ho Chi Minh leader of Viet Minh who declared a new country independent from France. This was a **failure of Containment**, as US had paid for **75%** of the French attempt to regain control of Vietnam after WW2.

Vietnam split in to two and agreement made at Geneva that Vietnam would hold elections and reunite country. **USA** were concerned Communists would win election so they **ignored elections and set up a new country in the South of Vietnam**.

US put Ngo Dinh Diem in power sending him money, equipment and political experts to help South Vietnam become secure and Capitalist. Ngo Dinh Diem was brutal, and corrupt and did not spend money on rebuilding life for the poor. Led to increase in support for Communists but US still supported Dinh Diem.

US scared of **domino theory** and wanted to heavily fund Dinh Diem, even though he was corrupt, as he hated Communism so the Americans gave money, equipment, military and political experts to the South-. In response, USSR and China were funding and supporting the north

Chinese Revolution, 1950

After a bloody cold war from 1946-49, **Mao Zedong** declared Communist China as a new country. Most **highly populated country** in the world had **now fallen to Communism**= Truman saw this as a **failure of containment** as US had only focussed on Europe.

The West refused to acknowledge Mao and the new China in the UN. For support and protection, China signed the **Treaty of Friendship** with the USSR where China would receive \$300 million worth of aid. Threat to stability of Japan who were rebuilding, and USSR could claim a victory with most populous country in the world becoming Communist.

Korean War, 1950-53

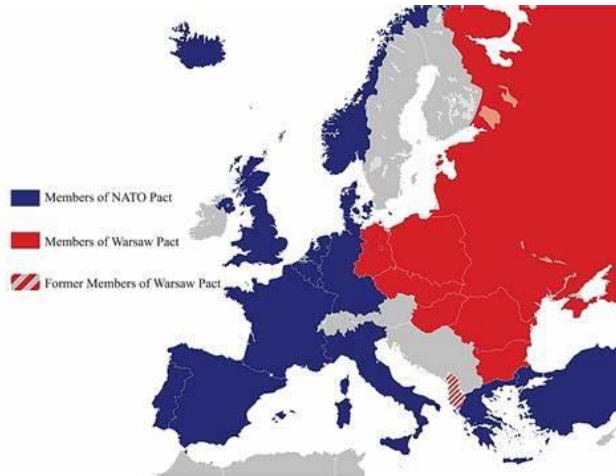
Korea divided into TWO. **North Korea= Communist** and **South Korea= Capitalist**

Kim Il sung led the north and invaded the south in June 1950. USA call for war to end at UN and they vote for immediate withdrawal of Kim's troops as USSR not at UN. **USSR boycotting UN over UN's refusal to recognise Mao's China** so could not veto the decision to get involved in Korea. The UN troops invade to combat Kim's north army.

US, under General MacArthur pushed the Koreans back deep in to norths territory. Chinese support the north, push south and US back and even take Seoul.

1951-MacArthur calls for nuclear weapon to be dropped, he's sacked. War ends with a stalemate.

First war to show US willing to fight to contain Communism and also first proxy war.



Warsaw Pact, 1955

The **USA allowing West Germany into NATO** threatened the USSR as it now made a country on the border of the Communist bloc into a powerful state.

Khrushchev, unhappy with this action, and not wanting to look weak as the new leader set up the **Warsaw Pact** in 1955 as retaliation. The pact was made up of **7 nations**, including **Poland and East Germany** and presented as a collective alliance, just like NATO.

The Pact gave the **USSR control over all militaries** of the countries inside, rather than being a joint equal alliance. Had capabilities of **5.5 million men where the USSR would hold all nuclear weapons**. One wrong step from either the Warsaw Pact or NATO would lead to a world war that would include nuclear weapons.

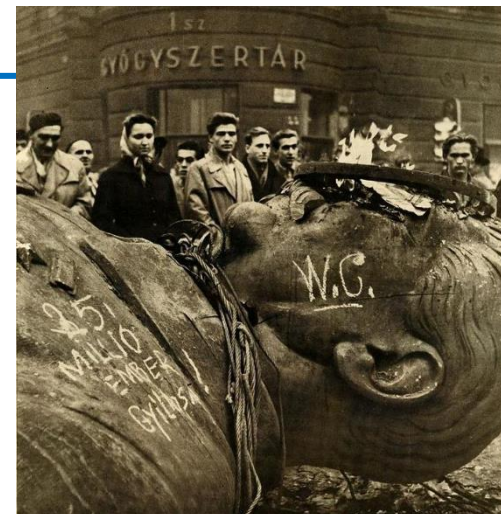
Hungarian revolution, 1956

Students used destalinisation as the opportunity to remove Rakosi. **Nagy** was brought to power to calm the situation, it worked and he introduced greater reforms and freedoms including:

- A government with non-communists
- Releasing religious figures
- Introduction of political parties
- Freedom of speech and the press
- Withdrawal of Soviet troops (*Khrushchev agreed to keep peaceful coexistence a possibility*)
- Introduced democracy and trade unions.

Nagy then **requested removal from Warsaw Pact** and declared Hungary independent. Khrushchev, angry, sent tanks in to deal with protests and quickly retook control of Hungary. **Between 20-50,000 Hungarians were killed** and **200,000 fled as refugees** to the West creating humanitarian crisis.

US did nothing, Hungary was in USSR's sphere of influence and did not want to risk war. UN discussed and demanded USSR's withdrawal from Hungary, USSR vetoed decisions so nothing could be done. **UN was more concerned with events in the Suez Canal.**



Cuban Revolution, 1959

Castro's Revolution

- Castro began opposing **Batista's US-backed dictatorship** in 1953.
- Arrested and sent to **Mexico**; returned in 1956 with **81 supporters**, including **Che Guevara**.
- Launched the '**26 July Movement**', carrying out **guerrilla warfare** against Batista for two years.
- Gained popular support by promising to **reclaim land and businesses** from **American owners** and address **inequality**.
- Aimed to **overthrow Batista** and reduce **US influence** in Cuba.

A New Cuba

- **1 January 1959**: Batista fled; Castro entered **Havana** and established a **new government**.
- Initially, Castro avoided labelling his government as **Communist**, presenting his movement as fighting **corruption** and **dictatorship**.
- Early attempts to build relations with the **US** failed; **Eisenhower** refused to **recognise Cuba** or meet Castro.
- **US hostility** grew, including **criticism** and **trade restrictions**.
- Cuba turned to the **USSR** for support, receiving **oil, loans, and trade agreements** in exchange for **sugar and cigars**.
- Cuba became increasingly **dependent** on the **Soviet Union** economically and politically.

Impacts / East-West Tensions

- **US lost influence** in Cuba; **Soviet influence** grew in the **Western Hemisphere**.
- Cuba became a **Cold War flashpoint**, directly aligning with the **USSR**.
- **Trade embargo** and **economic sanctions** deepened hostility between the **US** and **Cuba**.
- The Cuban Revolution intensified **ideological conflict: capitalism vs socialism/communism**.
- Set the stage for major **Cold War events**, including the **Bay of Pigs invasion (1961)** and **Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)**.

