

The end of the Cold War, 1979-1991

By the end of this spread you should be able to describe and explain:

- 1 the breakdown of detente in 1979
- 2 a its re-emergence in 1985
- b the roles of Gorbachev and Reagan
- 3 the results of detente, 1985-1991
- 4 the end of Soviet control

Fig. 1 The war in Afghanistan



The war

- 1 Villages and towns devastated by superior Soviet firepower.
- 2 Over 1 million people killed, mostly Afghan civilians. Over 5.5 million Afghan refugees fled to Iran and Pakistan.
- 3 By 1988 Mujaheddin (resistance fighters), using guerrilla tactics, controlled 75% of the country.
- 4 In 1989 Soviet forces withdrew.

The American response President Carter said that the invasion had completely changed his view of the USSR. He took several anti-Soviet measures:

- 1 He suspended ratification of SALT II by the US Senate.
- 2 He ordered US athletes to boycott the 1980 Olympic Games due to be held in Moscow.
- 3 He started to rearm.

A 'Second' Cold War, 1979-1985

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

- 1 In December 1979 Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in order to keep a pro-Soviet government in power there.
- 2 The invasion was condemned by a large majority in the United Nations General Assembly.
- 3 It put an end to Superpower detente which was already under strain (page 81).

Afghanistan

- 1 A country of many tribes, strongly Islamic.
- 2 Under Soviet influence since 1947.
- 3 In 1978 a Communist régime took power but met strong opposition from the Afghan people.
- 4 In 1979 the USSR persuaded the prime minister to 'invite' it to invade.

The USSR

The Soviets wanted to keep control of Afghanistan because:

- 1 They had rights to gas fields there.
- 2 American influence was growing in Pakistan.
- 3 They wanted to ensure that it did not become a fundamentalist Islamic state like Iran in order to
 - a avoid a ring of Islamic states to the south.
 - b prevent Islamic minorities within the USSR from being tempted to break away too.

Reagan's policy change

In 1980 Ronald Reagan replaced Carter as US President. Reagan believed that detente had caused the USA to lose ground to the USSR. He returned to an aggressive anti-Soviet foreign policy, which included

- 1 expanding the USA's armed forces
- 2 basing new modern missiles (e.g. Pershing 2 and Cruise) in those European countries which wished to accept them
- 3 in 1981 imposing economic sanctions on Poland and the USSR when General Jaruzelski declared martial law in Poland (page 83)
- 4 launching the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). Nicknamed 'Star Wars' this was an expensive programme to develop anti-missile weapons using laser beams. If successful, it would mean the USA could not be the victim of a 'first strike'.

Detente again, 1985-1991

New Soviet attitudes

In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev inherited a serious situation at home when he became leader of the USSR. In response he planned a series of reforms (page 85). In order to carry them out Gorbachev had to change Soviet foreign policy.

Reagan's choices

Action	Possible result
Refuse detente and refuse to help Gorbachev.	This would weaken the USSR and make it cut military spending; but it might also cause Gorbachev to be replaced by a hardline leader hostile to the West.
Return to detente and help Gorbachev.	This ran the risk that the USSR might not cut its arms spending that much. Thus the West would be helping the USSR remain militarily effective.

Reagan's Decision

- 1 Reagan decided to
 - a continue to treat the Soviet military threat seriously and to follow a strong defence policy. This might force Gorbachev to make concessions in arms reduction.
 - b at the same time respond positively to Gorbachev's offer of detente.
- 2 When Reagan and Gorbachev met they got on very well. This helped detente to develop quickly.

What was achieved?

- 1 The Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (1987). The Superpowers agreed to eliminate all intermediate missiles in Europe within three years.
- 2 Talks made progress on the reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces.
- 3 a Talks on long range missiles (formerly SALT talks) were renamed Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).
- b They led to the 1991 START Treaty which agreed significant reductions in weapons.

Gorbachev's aims

- 1 Withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan
- 2 Reduce Soviet aid worldwide
- 3 Improve relations with China
- 4 Seek detente with the USA in order to
 - a reduce defence spending
 - b borrow money from Western banks to pay for imported food, raw materials and equipment
 - c persuade Western firms to build factories in the USSR

The end of Soviet control, 1989-1991

- 1 In 1989
 - a Soviet control of Eastern Europe collapsed (pages 84-85).
 - b Gorbachev and US President George Bush, Reagan's successor, announced the end of the Cold War.
- 2 a In 1991 the USSR itself dissolved when Gorbachev could no longer control the pressure for independence from the nationalist movements in its fifteen member republics.
- b It was replaced by a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with the Russian Republic as the dominant member.

- 1 The years 1979-1985 are often called a 'second Cold War'?
 - a Why do you think this is?
 - b Is it an appropriate description?
- 2 Make a two-column chart to show what a Reagan b Gorbachev did to help to restore detente after 1985?