



THE COLD WAR IN THE 1960s

Told from the perspectives of the USA and Soviet Union





The Cold War in the 1960s

Source 1: A cartoon by Stuart McDonald, for the Grand Forks Herald, featuring Khrushchev and Uncle Sam, 1962





The Cold War in the 1960s

Source 2: US poster condemning the (North) Korean Communists' invasion of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), 1950





The Cold War in the 1960s



Source 3:
“We will not
allow war”,
Soviet-era
poster from
Estonia, which
was then part
of the USSR



The Cold War in the 1960s

Source 4: Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes, 1970

Everyone agreed that America would not leave Cuba alone unless we did something. We had an obligation to do everything in our power to protect Cuba's existence as a socialist country and as a working example to other countries of Latin America ... I had the idea of installing missiles with nuclear warheads in Cuba without letting the United States find out they were there until it was too late to do anything about them ... My thinking went like this: if we installed the missiles secretly and then if the United States discovered the missiles were there after they were already poised and ready to strike, the Americans would think twice before trying to liquidate our installations by military means ... The Americans had surrounded our country with missile bases and threatened us with nuclear weapons, and now they would learn just what it feels like to have enemy missiles pointing at you ... I want to make one thing absolutely clear. We had no desire to start a war. Only a fool would think that we wanted to invade the American continent from Cuba. We sent the Americans a letter asking the president to promise there would not be an invasion of Cuba. Finally Kennedy gave in and agreed to make such a promise. It was a great victory for us, though, a triumph of Soviet foreign policy. A spectacular success without having to fire a single shot.



The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961



Source 5: A photograph showing East German soldiers using guard dogs to track down individuals attempting to escape to West Berlin, October 1961



The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961

Source 6: US President Kennedy, private conversation to advisors, 1961

For eight days after the border was closed and as the barbed wire fence was replaced by a concrete wall, Kennedy did not say a word in public about what was happening in Berlin. Not did he allow any statement on the subject to be issued in his name... Privately Kennedy told his aides "Why would Khrushchev put up a wall if he really intended to seize West Berlin? There wouldn't be any need of the wall if he occupied the whole city. This is his way out of his predicament. It is not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war."

The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961

Source 7: Letter from Walter Ulbricht, leader of East Germany to Khrushchev, 15 September 1961

After the closing of the border, suddenly there was still present in the East German capital even in the evenings, enough meat of the best quality, while before, especially on weekends, it was already sold out by midday. We also do not have any more problems with bread or butter in the capital. Even the women are satisfied that they can now go to the hairdresser's, since until now the big hair dressing salons were occupied by West Berlin women. In West Germany, the defense measures of August 13 also led to a sobering up among a part of the bourgeoisie. ... The strengthening of the workers-and-peasants state of East Germany and the victory of socialism is the basic condition to overcoming the imperialist past and present in all of Germany and to establishing a militarily neutral and flourishing Germany. We assess the situation such that East Germany will be strengthened further. In this we must see that also when the borders are closed the competition with West Germany will continue. Thus, we must overcome in the next years the losses which we have suffered because of West Berlin aggression; we must carry out economic cooperation with the USSR consistently, and reach the figures of the Seven-Year Plan again in 1963.



The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961

Source 8: GDP figures for East and West Germany from 1950 and 1973, 'Development Centre Studies the World Economy', Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation And Development, 2006

GDP in million 1990 international dollars

West Germany

East Germany

1950

213 942

51 412

1973

814 786

129 969



The Cuban missile crisis in 1962

Source 9: US Intelligence map showing missile ranges from Cuba to the US, 1962





The Cuban missile crisis in 1962

Source 10: US President Kennedy, speech to the nation,
October 1962

Good evening my fellow citizens:

Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island Cuba. The purpose of these can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere...

This urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base by the presence of these large, long range, and clearly offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas...

For many years, both the Soviet Union and the United States.. have deployed strategic nuclear weapons with great care, never upsetting the precarious status quo which insured that these weapons would not be used in the absence of some vital challenge. Our own strategic missiles have never been transferred to the territory of any other nation under a cloud of secrecy and deception, and our history - unlike the Soviets since the end of World War II - demonstrates that we have no desire to dominate or conquer any other nation or impose our system upon its people...

Acting therefore in the defence of our own security and of the entire wWestern Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution...I have directed that the following steps be taken immediately...



The Cuban missile crisis in 1962

Source 11: Record of Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and Prime Minister of Cuba Fidel Castro", September 20, 1960

F. Castro ...If imperialist countries do not change their position, they have no future. People all over the world will regard us more and more favorably. The imperialists are trying to create a coalition against us in the UN, but they will not be able to. They have nothing to counter the compelling and persuasive arguments of Chairman Khrushchev. People do not want war; consequently the peaceful aspirations and efforts of the Soviet government are recognized worldwide. The struggle for peace is a very strong argument.

N.S. Khrushchev replied that imperialist powers think they still have control over us, that they can do whatever they want. However, the imperialists can no longer dictate their terms to us, either militarily or economically. We are not dependent on them for anything. We are developing our economy and technology completely independently, and this is the most important thing. Our ideas have always been stronger, and now they are backed by material and technical factors. One must always have the means to support one's ideas, and we have these means.

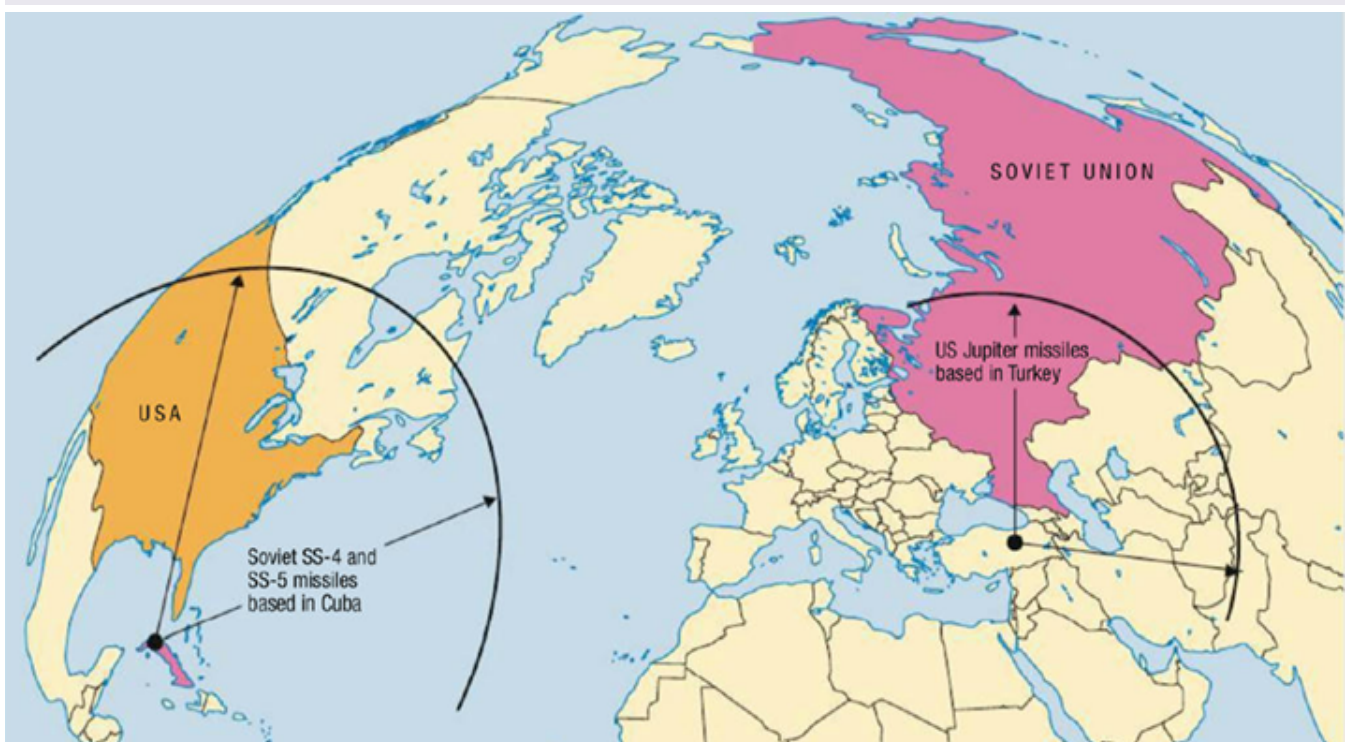
Our politics, our slogans are clear and relevant to all people – peace, friendship, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

F. Castro said that this is the most persuasive argument. People understand this very well and that is why they have a high regard for us, despite the position of the U.S. State Department.



The Cuban missile crisis in 1962

Source 12: Range of US Jupiter missiles, installed in 1959 and Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missiles, installed in 1962





The start of the Vietnam war in 1965

Source 13: Lyndon B. Johnson, “Peace Without Conquest” Speech delivered at Johns Hopkins University on April 7, 1965

Why must this nation hazard its ease, its interest, and its power for the sake of a people so far away? We fight because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny, and only in such a world will our own freedom be finally secure. This kind of world will never be built by bombs or bullets. The world as it is in Asia is not a serene or peaceful place. The first reality is that North Viet-Nam has attacked the independent nation of South Viet-Nam. Its object is total conquest. . . . And it is a war of unparalleled brutality.

The confused nature of this conflict cannot mask the fact that it is the new face of an old enemy. Over this war—and all Asia—is another reality: the deepening shadow of Communist China. The rulers in Hanoi are urged on by Peking. This is a regime . . . which is helping the forces of violence in almost every continent. The contest in VietNam is part of a wider pattern of aggressive purposes.

Around the globe from Berlin to Thailand are people whose well-being rests in part on the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked. To leave Viet-Nam to its fate would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of an American commitment and in the value of America’s word. The result would be increased instability, and even wider war. There are those who wonder why we have a responsibility there. Well, we have it there for the same reason that we have a responsibility for the defense of Europe. World War II was fought in both Europe and Asia and when it ended we found ourselves with continued responsibility for the defense of freedom.

Our resources are equal to any challenge because we fight for values and we fight for principle, rather than territory or colonies, our patience and our determination are unending...



The start of the Vietnam war in 1965

Source 14: Paper Prepared by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, March 1965

ACTION FOR SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US aims:

- 70%—To avoid a humiliating US defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor).
- 20%—To keep South Vietnam and adjacent territory from Chinese hands.
- 10%—To permit the people of South Vietnam to enjoy a better, freer way of life.
- Also—To emerge from crisis without unacceptable taint from methods used.

2. Communist moves:

USSR and China may stir trouble in Berlin, Korea, Laos, etc....



The start of the Vietnam war in 1965

Source 15: Soviet stamp from 1968 that reads "Solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people", a red hand shields the world from war





The start of the Vietnam war in 1965

Source 16: Views Expressed by Leonid Brezhnev in "Lê Thanh Nghị, 'Report on Meetings with Party Leaders of Eight Socialist Countries'", 1965

We are in total agreement with the policies and positions of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Workers' Party. There is nothing with which we disagree. It is our sincere desire to support you politically and to help you with weapons. We only want to help you win your struggle...

I would like to thank our Vietnamese comrades for their assessment of Soviet aid as being excellent. We know that our aid does not meet 100 percent of Vietnam's requirements. We are serious in wanting to find out how we can give you more military help...

It is my personal opinion that, in addition to the correct military measures that you comrades are now carrying out, you should also expand your campaign directed against the American imperialists to the entire world. That is something that is extremely essential. The Soviet Union is currently doing a great deal in this area. Every time delegations from capitalist countries or from nationalist countries visit the Soviet Union, we always use these opportunities to gather support and forces for the anti-imperialist front. We have also held discussions with other Communist Parties and the other socialist countries about doing things along this same line.



The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968

Source 17: Crowd of protesters surrounding a tank in Prague, 1968





The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968

Source 18: Extracts from the Minutes of the U.S. National Security Council meeting on the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, August 20, 1968

President Johnson: I asked you to come here because of the alarm of the last few hours. Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin called me late today with a very "urgent" message ... He said they were invading Czechoslovakia because the Czechs had asked them to come in. I notified the Secretary of State and called this National Security Council meeting to analyze these actions and try to determine what our national interest is.

Secretary of State Clifford: Czechoslovakia is just one piece on the chessboard. This march will have an effect on Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary. We must visualize what effect this will have on other countries.

General Wheeler: There is no military action we can take. We do not have the forces to do it ... They have had CPX [large military exercise] exercise and troops on the border. I think this message is an insult to the United States. They say keep your hands off.

Vice President Humphrey: We need to show caution. The Czechs have touched the heart of the Communist revolution. All you can do is snort and talk...



The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968

Source 19: The results of an opinion poll of the Russian public about the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was conducted in March 2018 by the non-governmental polling and research organization, the Levada Center

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS OF VIEW IS CLOSEST TO YOUR OWN? (*respondents were presented with a card; one answer; ranked in descending order according to March 2018*)

	Jul. 03	Jul. 13	Mar. 18
It was necessary to maintain order and prevent bloodshed in Czechoslovakia	14	14	16
It was necessary, and if it hadn't been done, Western troops would have entered Czechoslovakia	13	10	15
The entry of troops and the arrest of the "highest ranks" of the CPC were necessary to preserve the socialist order in Czechoslovakia	16	9	9
This was a criminal aggression against a neighboring country and interference in its internal affairs	7	7	6
These events showed that Soviet-style socialism was incompatible with democracy	4	7	4
This was a result of conflict among the Czechoslovakian leadership	5	3	—
This was a result of conflict between the leadership of Czechoslovakia and the USSR.	6	3	—
I don't remember, I know nothing about it	14	23	28
It is difficult to say	23	23	22



The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968

Source 20: The Brezhnev Doctrine, as articulated in a speech by Brezhnev at the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party, November 13, 1968

The peoples of the socialist countries and Communist parties certainly do have and should have freedom for determining the ways of advance of their respective countries. However, none of their decisions should damage either socialism in their country or the fundamental interests of other socialist countries, and the whole working class movement, which is working for socialism. This means that each Communist party is responsible not only to its own people, but also to all the socialist countries, to the entire Communist movement. Whoever forget this, in stressing only the independence of the Communist party, becomes one sided. He deviates from his international duty....Czechoslovakia's detachment from the socialist community, would have come into conflict with its own vital interests and would have been detrimental to the other socialist states. Such "self determination," as a result of which NATO troops would have been able to come up to the Soviet border, while the community of European socialist countries would have been split, in effect encroaches upon the vital interests of the peoples of these countries and conflicts, as the very root of it, with the right of these people to socialist self determination. Discharging their internationalist duty toward the fraternal peoples of Czechoslovakia and defending their own socialist gains, the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist states had to act decisively and they did act against the antisocialist forces in Czechoslovakia.