

NEW LEADERS, NEW IDEAS?

When you have read this chapter you should attempt the following essay question:

- To what extent was there a thaw in the Cold War after 1953?

Timeline of U.S.–Soviet relations 1953–1962

- 1953** Eisenhower **inaugurated** as U.S. President
Death of Stalin, who is succeeded by Malenkov and Khrushchev
Korean armistice
U.S. Secretary of State Dulles announces 'massive retaliation' policy
- 1955** Geneva Summit
Austrian State Treaty ends four-power occupation of Austria
- 1956** Khrushchev denounces Stalin and promotes 'peaceful co-existence' policy
Polish workers revolt
Suez crisis
Soviets crush Hungarian rising
- 1957** USSR announces Sputnik satellite success
- 1958** Khrushchev issues ultimatum to West over Berlin
- 1959** Khrushchev visits USA and meets Eisenhower at Camp David
- 1960** U-2 spy plane shot down and Paris Summit collapses
Kennedy elected U.S. President
- 1961** Khrushchev and Kennedy meet at Vienna Summit
Yuri Gagarin is the first man to make an earth-orbiting space flight
- 1962** Cuban Missile Crisis

Between 1945 and 1950, developments in the Cold War had been affected by events in Europe. After 1950, the course of the Cold War was influenced by other factors, including:

- events in Asia (see Chapters Five and Six)
- the nuclear arms race (See Chapter Ten)
- changes in leadership in the United States and USSR, and a move to establish better relations between East and West. These particular changes will be examined in this chapter.

Eisenhower and Dulles in the United States: roll-back, Brinkmanship and the New Look

Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected U.S. president in 1952. Nicknamed 'Ike', he had a distinguished military background having commanded the Allied armies in Normandy in 1944. After the end of World War Two he served as U.S. Army Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief of NATO.

◀ Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. president from 1953 to 1960.



Eisenhower's background meant that he was unlikely to be criticized as being 'soft on Communism'. In fact both he and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, were strongly anti-Communist. Dulles was vociferous in his condemnation of the Soviet system:

Soviet Communism believes that human beings are nothing more than ... superior animals ... and that the best kind of a world is that world which is organized as a well managed farm is organized, where certain animals are taken out to pasture, and they are fed and brought back and milked, and they are given a barn as shelter over their heads ... I do not see how, as long as Soviet Communism holds those views ... there can be any permanent reconciliation ... This is an irreconcilable conflict.

U.S. Senate, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, on the nomination of Dulles, 15 January 1953

In the 1952 presidential election campaign, Dulles had also talked about 'roll-back', by which he meant **liberating countries currently held by the Soviets in Eastern Europe**, but in reality this never happened. **No attempt was ever made** under Eisenhower to free countries from Soviet control. Although the United States **quietly encouraged rebellions in Eastern Europe** in 1953 and 1956 (see Chapter Sixteen), **it did not use these opportunities to extend the U.S. sphere of influence.**

Rather than carrying out roll-back, under Eisenhower the U.S. administration developed a **policy of containment** it called the 'New Look'. This meant preventing the extension of Soviet Communism outside of the areas where it was already established, in the belief that without any opportunity to expand, the Soviet system would collapse in on itself. Eisenhower put his containment policy into practice by:

- Setting up alliances** to encircle the Soviet Union, for example, **SEATO**.
- Using **military power to protect vulnerable areas**, for example, West Berlin.
- Assisting forces fighting Communism**, for example, Diem's government in South Vietnam.
- Using the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) for **covert operations** more extensively than had been done before (see the box on page 74).
- Initiating an increased reliance on nuclear weapons.** A national security document in 1953 stated 'The U.S will consider nuclear weapons to be available for use as other munitions.' Conventional weapons would thus play a smaller role in defence.
- Brinkmanship.** This involved threats of **massive retaliation** as an instrument of containment. It entailed going to the brink and threatening nuclear war to intimidate the aggressor into backing down.

Dulles explained the policy of Brinkmanship in 1952 in an interview in *Life* magazine:

You have to take chances for peace, just as you must take chances in war. Some say that we were brought to the verge of war. Of course we were brought to the verge of war. The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you cannot master it, you inevitably get into wars. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.

Despite the aggressive nature of Brinkmanship, Eisenhower was also keenly aware of the dangers of nuclear weapons and prepared to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Thus there were U.S.–Soviet Summits in 1955 and 1959.

The activities of the CIA

The CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was set up in 1947 by the U.S. government as an intelligence-collecting body, and it undertook extensive covert anti-Communist activities. Historian John Lewis Gaddis wrote of it:

As the Eisenhower administration took office, the CIA was regularly attempting to infiltrate spies, saboteurs, and resistance leaders into the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. It was financing ostensibly independent radio stations broadcasting to those countries, as well as labor unions, academic conferences, scholarly journals, and student organizations - some of them inside the United States.

From John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (Penguin, 2005), pp.163–4.

The CIA was also involved in the overthrow of governments it considered too left-wing. In 1953 it helped to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran and in 1954 it played a role in overthrowing Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION**Cartoon analysis**

Cartoon by Herblock published in the *Washington Post* in 1956.

- 1 How is Secretary of State Dulles portrayed in this cartoon? Who is he pushing to The Brink? Why does this character look reluctant?
- 2 What do you think the cartoonist's attitude is towards the idea of Brinkmanship?
- 3 Find an example from the previous two chapters of where Dulles can be said to have successfully used Brinkmanship.

Review questions

- 1 How did the new administration's attitude to defence differ from the proposals set out in the Truman administration's NSC-68?
- 2 How was Eisenhower's New Look a) different from and b) similar to the ideas and policies on containment put forward by Truman?

Khrushchev and co-existence

The fact that U.S.–Soviet summits took place during the 1950s was due not only to Eisenhower's willingness to negotiate, but also due to the attitudes of the new leadership in the Soviet Union.

Following the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, and the subsequent removal of Stalin's secret-police chief, Lavrenti Pavlovich Beria, Soviet foreign policy came under the control of George Malenkov who, with **Nikita Khrushchev** and Nicolai Bulganin, formed a collective leadership. Malenkov formulated the idea of a 'New Course' with the West. This was later picked up by Khrushchev who, having won the struggle for leadership, renamed it '**peaceful co-existence**'.

This was a move away from the Leninist doctrine of the inevitability of war. 'Peaceful co-existence' meant that **capitalism and Communism should accept the continuing existence of one another**, rather than using force to destroy each other. Just as the Americans believed that, deprived of opportunities for expansion, Communism would collapse, Khrushchev declared that in any case capitalism would die out due to its own inherent weaknesses. Thus there was no need to risk nuclear war.



Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet leader from 1953 to 1964.

What other factors encouraged a change in international relations?

It was not just Eisenhower and Khrushchev who were keen to avoid a nuclear war. Other world leaders, such as **Winston Churchill**, also supported the idea of **more communication** between East and West in order to avoid a **nuclear holocaust**.

Economic factors also played a role in pushing the two superpowers into a friendlier relationship. In the **USSR**, **approximately one third of the economy was directed towards the military**, while consumer goods were scarce and living standards very low. The economy of the **United States** was in much better shape than that of the Soviet Union, but **12 per cent of the GNP was still spent on the military**. If **improved relations** could lead to a decrease in military spending, this would be **good news for the economies of both countries**.

Also, by **1954 the Korean War had ended**, removing a major source of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION**Review question**

The changed international situation after 1953 has led historians to call this period a 'thaw' in the Cold War. Identify the factors that set the scene for improved relations – or a 'thaw' – between the superpowers after 1953.

East–West relations in the 1950s: the reality

An example of improved U.S.–Soviet relations after 1953 was agreement over Austria. In April 1955, the Soviet Union proposed a formal peace treaty with Austria. The **Austrian State Treaty** ended the **four-power occupation of Austria** and created an independent and neutral country. Following on from this, the **Geneva Summit took place in July 1955**. This was the first meeting of the heads of government of the major powers since 1945. However, little of substance was achieved at this meeting and proposals concerning the arms race and the issue of Germany got nowhere. The table below shows the proposals and responses made by the United States and the Soviet Union at this time:

<p>Soviet Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual disbandment of NATO and the Warsaw Pact • Withdrawal of all foreign troops from Europe followed by the drawing up of a European Security Treaty • Free elections to be carried out for a reunified German government 	<p>U.S. Reaction:</p> <p>Hostile. These ideas were unacceptable to the West European governments, and no agreement was reached on any of these proposals.</p>
<p>U.S. Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'Open Skies' proposal. This meant each side would exchange plans of military installations and allow aerial surveillance of each other's installations. 	<p>Soviet Reaction:</p> <p>Hostile. The Soviets did not even bother to make a formal reply. They dismissed it as 'nothing more than a bold espionage plot' and Khrushchev said it would be 'like seeing into our bedrooms'. However, the United States went ahead and used the U-2 reconnaissance plane (see page 79).</p>

Was the Geneva Summit a failure?

Despite the failure to achieve any concrete progress on Germany or disarmament, the Geneva Summit nevertheless was a breakthrough, in that discussions were carried out in an atmosphere of cordiality. The Summit also led to better relations in terms of trade exhibitions, exchanging of certain scientific information and cultural exchanges. Thus the phrase 'spirit of Geneva' was given to the events surrounding 1955.

Why did East-West tension increase again after 1955?

In February 1956, Khrushchev gave his de-Stalinization speech, which led to challenges to Soviet rule throughout the Eastern bloc (see Chapter Sixteen, page 199). At the same time as Khrushchev faced problems in Hungary, the West was involved in the Suez Crisis (see Chapter Fourteen, pages 172-4). Both of these crises helped to dissipate the good feeling achieved at Geneva. The Suez Crisis also raised fears of growing Soviet influence in the Middle East, and this led to the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957. This clearly stated that the United States would assist any country in the Middle East to fight against Communism.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

The Eisenhower Doctrine: document analysis

There is a general recognition in the Middle East, as elsewhere, that the United States does not seek either political or economic domination over any other people. Our desire is a world environment of freedom, not servitude. On the other hand many, if not all, of the nations of the Middle East are aware of the danger that stems from International Communism and welcome closer co-operation with the United States to realize for themselves the United Nations' goals of independence, economic well-being and spiritual growth. If the Middle East is to continue its geographic role of uniting rather than separating East and West, if its vast economic resources are to serve the well-being of the peoples there, as well as that of others ... then the United States must make more evident its willingness to support the independence of the freedom-loving nations of the area ...

The action which I propose would have the following features.

It would first of all authorize the United States to co-operate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence.

It would, in the second place, authorize the Executive to undertake in the same region programs of military assistance and co-operation with any nation or group of nations, which desires such aid.

It would in the third place, authorize such assistance and co-operation to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism.

From President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'Special Message to Congress, 5 January 1957', Department of State Bulletin XXXVI, 21 January 1957

Question

What message did this Doctrine send to a) the Soviet Union and b) Arab states about American intentions in the Middle East?

The technology race

In addition to this mounting tension between East and West, the Americans now became increasingly worried about a Soviet threat against the United States. On 4 October 1957 the Soviets launched the world's first artificial satellite – Sputnik – 'travelling companion', to be followed a month later by Sputnik II. This sent the Americans into a state of panic as they became convinced of Soviet superiority in missile technology. This impression was reinforced by Khrushchev, who made the most of the situation:

The Sputniks prove that socialism has won the competition between socialist and capitalist countries ... that the economy, science, culture and the creative genius of the people in all spheres of life develop better and faster under socialism.

Khrushchev used every opportunity to insist that he could wipe out any American or European city:

He would even specify how many missiles and warheads each target might require. But he also tried to be nice about it: at one point, while bullying an American visitor, Hubert Humphrey [a senator from Minnesota, who later became vice-president], he paused to ask where his guest was from. When Humphrey pointed out Minneapolis on the map, Khrushchev circled it with a big blue pencil. 'That's so I don't forget to order them to spare the city when the rockets fly,' he explained amiably.

As reported in John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, (Penguin 2005) p.70

The missile gap

The U.S. Congress and the media promoted the idea of a 'missile gap'. This scenario was confirmed by the Gaither Report – the findings of a top-secret investigating committee. The report recommended:

- a vast increase in offensive defence power, especially missile development
- a build-up of conventional forces capable of fighting a limited war
- a massive building programme of fallout shelters to protect U.S. citizens from nuclear attack.

In actual fact, U.S. Air Force U-2 spy planes flying over the Soviet Union had revealed that, despite Khrushchev's threats, there was no missile gap – the Soviet Union did not have more missiles than the USA. Despite this, Eisenhower had to do something to alleviate public anxiety, and so he supported the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958 to promote missile development and space exploration. He also provided federal aid to promote science education in schools.

The space race

The 'space race' was another feature of the Cold War which provided plenty of propaganda opportunities on both sides. Not only was it a race for seeing who could be the first to get into space, it was also linked to missile technology, and thus the arms race. Following the success of Sputnik I and II, the United States launched Explorer I. However, the Soviets successfully put the first man into space when Yuri Gagarin orbited the earth in 1961. One month later the first American, Alan Shepard, flew into space. On 20 July 1969, after expenditure of \$25 billion, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) successfully landed American astronaut Neil Armstrong on the moon. It was an enormous propaganda coup.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Cartoon analysis

Cartoon by Herblock published in the *Washington Post* in 1957.



Question

What is the cartoon suggesting about the American attitudes to science before and after Sputnik?

ToK Time

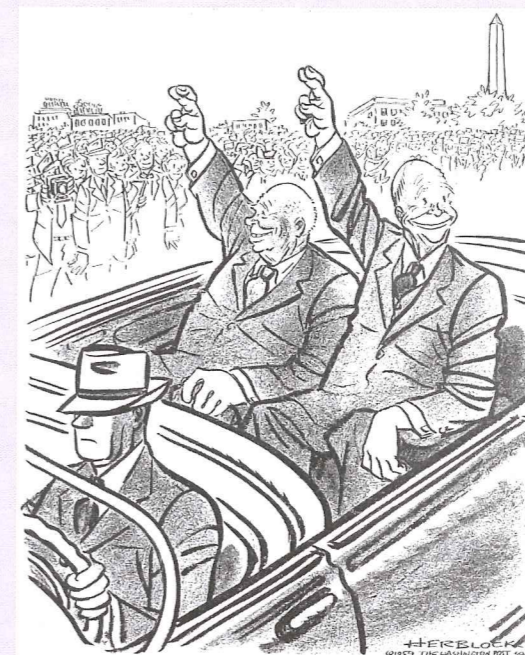
- To what extent do you believe that science, and scientific development, is driven by politics and governments?
- How far is scientific knowledge 'objective' rather than 'subjective'?
- What similarities and differences are there between the scientific methods you use in your Group 4 subjects and the methods used by a historian? Are there links in the ways of knowing that both areas of knowledge use?
- You could attempt to draw a 'visual' representation of the similarities and differences between the 'Historical Method' and the 'Scientific Method' in your ToK journals, for example, a Venn diagram.

How did events of 1958–1960 affect East–West relations?

By 1958 Eisenhower was confident about U.S. nuclear superiority and, therefore, could contemplate initiating a ban on atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. The United States stopped this form of testing in October 1958 and was immediately followed by the Soviet Union. It was hoped that this might lead to a formal test-ban treaty. However, Khrushchev heightened East–West tensions at this time by issuing an ultimatum to the West to leave Berlin within six months (see Chapter Eight). In the face of Western determination to stand firm, Khrushchev had to back down. By the early months of 1959, the Berlin Crisis had subsided and talks began about another summit meeting. Khrushchev accepted an invitation to visit the United States in September 1959 – making him the first Soviet leader to visit the USA – and arranged with President Eisenhower for a summit meeting in Paris, scheduled for May 1960.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Cartoon analysis



This Herblock cartoon shows Eisenhower and Khrushchev together in 1959 in the United States.

Question

Why do you think the cartoonist has shown both leaders crossing their fingers?

The U-2 incident

Again, although the meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev in the United States produced few concrete results, the talks were a success in terms of generating a positive atmosphere, which led people to talk of the 'spirit of Camp David' (Eisenhower's presidential retreat in Maryland). This optimism was short-lived, however, as a few days before the summit meeting convened in Paris, the Soviets announced that an American plane had been shot down over the Soviet Union on 1 May 1960. The Americans tried to claim it was only a weather plane, which had gone off course, but the Soviets were able to reveal that the aircraft was a high altitude, photo-reconnaissance plane. Even more damaging, the pilot, Gary Powers, who had been captured, confessed to the 'spy' nature of his task. Eisenhower then admitted the truth about the U-2 spy planes and took personal responsibility for the incident.

At the Paris Summit, Eisenhower refused to apologize for the U-2 incident – or to condemn U-2 flights – saying that aerial surveillance was 'a distasteful, but vital necessity'. Khrushchev then cancelled Eisenhower's planned visit to the Soviet Union and the meeting broke up with no further progress being made on a settlement for Berlin or a test-ban treaty. By 1962, any 'thaw' that might have been achieved was shown to be quite definitely at an end when the USA and the USSR had their most intense and dangerous conflict yet over Cuba (see Chapter Nine).

Gary Powers, the captured U-2 pilot.

