

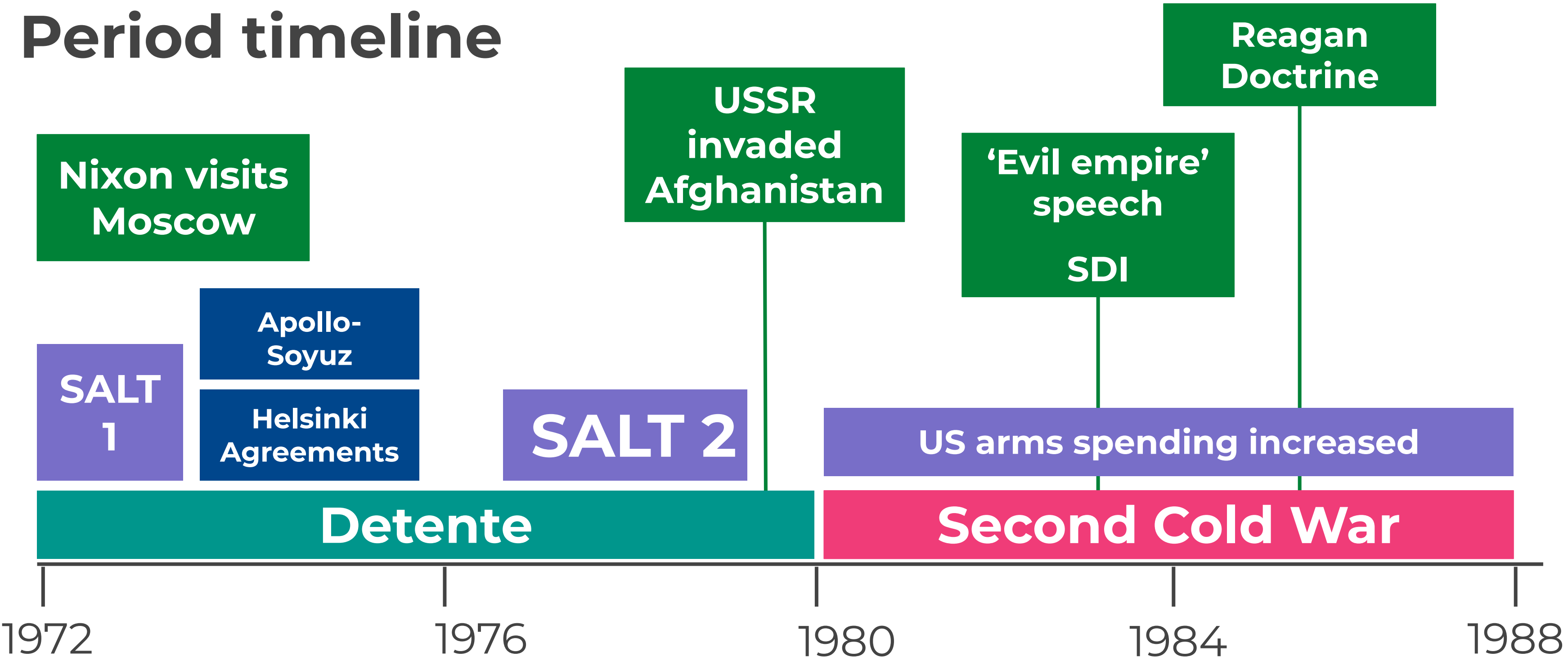
History: The Cold War
Lesson 26 of 30

Worksheet:

Explore the enquiry



Period timeline



WHY DID TENSION DECREASE 1970-79?

1. Detente

Detente was a phase in the Cold War, **mainly in the 1970s**, when there was a **relaxation of tension** as the two sides **focused on common interests** to avoid the possibility of nuclear war and mutually assured destruction. Many of the treaties signed as part of detente were aimed at slowing down the arms race. Even **before the 1970s** which this lesson focuses on, some agreements had been made to control nuclear weapons in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis. For example, the **Test Ban Treaty 1963, the Outer Space Treaty 1967, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968**. These treaties were designed to control nuclear weapons, because there was a belief that the Cuban Missile Crisis had got out of hand and nuclear weapons needed to be restricted and controlled. In the 1970s, instead of working to prove who had the most powerful military, as they had in the early Cold War, based on the principles of deterrence and massive retaliation, the two sides are now focused on avoiding mutually assured destruction by focusing on common interests and relaxing tension between them.



Causes of detente

The Cuban Missile Crisis had escalated partly because of poor communication. This led to the introduction of the Hotline between Moscow and Washington so that issues could be resolved more easily. The arms and space races had developed tension throughout the 1950s and 60s as the superpowers competed to be more powerful and to show that their ideology was best. This all changed after the Cuban Missile Crisis as the world had come so close to nuclear war that the **US and Soviet Union took active steps to slow down the arms race, focus on common interests and reduce tension in the Cold War.**

Soviet reasons for detente

There were **poor living standards** in the Soviet Union and the **economy was not developing**. Nuclear weapons were incredibly expensive and the **Soviets wanted to spend less on weapons** and focus instead on their economy and living standards. They felt that they had **caught up with the US in terms of weaponry and felt safe to spend less on the arms race**. The Vietnam War had also shown that the US army could be beaten and therefore the **Soviets were willing to follow the policy of detente.**



Causes of detente

US reasons for detente

President Nixon was elected in 1968 and had other priorities than Cold War tension. The **Vietnam War was going badly**. Nearly 60,000 US soldiers had died and the war was costing billions of dollars. There were also **social problems in the US**. There were anti-war protests about Vietnam and the **Civil Rights Movement** was demanding more attention. When **Martin Luther King** was assassinated in 1968 there were **riots** across America. **Nixon** was also aware of the cost of nuclear weapons; following detente would mean more money could be spent on the social issues in the US.

Shared reasons

Both countries were **concerned about money**. The price of oil increased in the 1970s, and both superpowers experienced economic problems. **As the arms race was very expensive if they could spend less on weapons they could spend more on their social issues at home.**



Detente Treaties

Year	Agreement	Effect
1963	Nuclear Test Ban Treaty	Signed by the USSR, USA and UK. Banned the testing of nuclear weapons on the ground and in the atmosphere but not underground.
1967	Outer-Space Treaty	Signed by the USSR, USA and UK. Banned the placement and testing of nuclear weapons in space and on the moon.
1968	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty	Agree to stop or limit the spread of nuclear technology to non-nuclear countries. The five recognised nuclear countries were USA, USSR, UK, China and France. No one else could develop nuclear weapons.
1971	Seabed Treaty	Signed by the USSR, USA and UK. Banned the placement of nuclear weapons anywhere on the seabed (the bottom of the sea).
1972	SALT I	Signed by Nixon and Brezhnev in 1972. The first superpower agreement which put limits on nuclear missile numbers. Limits were so high and nothing was said about reducing numbers.
1975	Helsinki Agreement	Three 'baskets' of agreements; European borders, international co-operation, human rights.
1979	SALT II	There was agreement over limiting the production of long-range missiles. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan meant that it was never ratified .



Strengths	Willing to discuss weapons limits, want to avoid war	US and Soviets both had things to be pleased about	Limits on weapons and testing or using new ICBMs	Showed co-operation agreed at Helsinki	Paved the way for better US-Chinese relations	Photos of US-Soviet handshakes were hugely symbolic
Weakness	Just a piece of paper, not cover new weapons, still have plenty	Human rights were an issue - cannot make USSR respect them, they thought would weaken them	Never put into action	Was just one event	Just a propagand a stunt, no real impact	Change in president and attitudes of US politicians and advisors
Decrease tension?	Yes - relations improve	Yes - high point of detente	Failure is a sign of increased tension	Yes - very clear symbol of detente in action	Yes - in the long term	Yes - in the short term



WHY DID TENSION INCREASE AFTER 1979?

1. Invasion of Afghanistan and Carter Doctrine

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to the end of detente because although the Soviets invaded to protect their interests in a country on their border, the **Americans** saw things differently. They **saw the invasion as an attempt by the Soviets to expand Communist influence**, which they had been **working to stop** since containment was embedded in US foreign policy **by the Truman Doctrine** in 1947. President Carter had been urged by his advisers to make a show of US strength to the Soviets and he did so in his reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In **January 1980**, Carter made a speech to the American people which became known as the **Carter Doctrine**. It was modelled on the Truman Doctrine to emphasise its importance. The Carter Doctrine said that *“an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be **repelled by any means necessary, including military force.**”* Carter said that the invasion was the greatest threat to world peace since WW2. As a result, he **withdrew SALT 2 from the Senate** so it was never **ratified**. He **increased military spending and imposed economic sanctions**. He also **provided the mujahideen** (the group fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan) with **money and weapons**.



2. Reagan's 'evil empire' speech National Association of Evangelicals, March 1983

Extract from the 'evil empire' speech

*“So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority... in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride – the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, **to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire**, to simply call the **arms race a giant misunderstanding** and thereby remove yourself from the **struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.**”*

Two years into his presidency, Reagan made a speech to a group of Christian **Evangelicals** – Christians who focus on scripture in the Bible – in which he called the **Soviet Union an 'evil empire' he said that the Cold War was a moral and spiritual fight between right and wrong.** The US was right, the Soviet Union was wrong. Although the speech doesn't come at the beginning of the Reagan narrative, it clearly expresses Reagan's attitude to Communism and therefore is a useful starting point for thinking about how his policies increased tension. The speech showed that Reagan was fiercely anti-Communist and that he believed the Cold War was a moral conflict. It also shows that he blamed the Soviet Union for tension and was suspicious of them. It showed his determination to increase military spending.



3. Increased military spending

When he became president in 1980, **Reagan believed that the United States had grown weak militarily and had lost its position as a leader in world affairs.** Aiming to restore the country to a position of moral as well as military superiority in the world, he called for **massive increases in the defense budget to expand and modernize the military** and urged a more aggressive approach to fighting Communism. Reagan did not just want to contain Communism, or fight back when the US's interests were assaulted – he wanted to **actively try and end the Cold War and Communism.**

Reagan encouraged the US Congress to increase their support of the US armed forces and in **1982, defense spending increased by 13% with another 8% increase in 1983 and 1984.**

The US military also developed **two new pieces of military technology.** The first was the **Trident submarine** which was part of the nuclear deterrence because it could fire ballistic missiles on targets thousands of miles away. The second was the **stealth bomber** which could drop nuclear bombs and also get past air defenses because it was almost impossible to pick up on **radar.** **All this restarted the arms race, increasing tension.**



4. Reagan Doctrine

Reagan's attitude to Communism was expressed in the 'evil empire' speech and he increased military spending as a result of this attitude. He then went even further when, in 1985, he announced the **Reagan Doctrine**. In this speech, Reagan said that the **US would support anti-Communist governments throughout the world**. He then went even further and said that the US would also **support anti-Communist groups**, or **insurgents**, in their **activities against Communist governments**. This was a more **confrontational foreign policy** than Truman who advocated containment, and Carter who said the US would use military force if attacked first. Here, Reagan was advocating **'roll back'** meaning that the number of countries with Communist governments would be reduced.

As a result of this doctrine, the US helped insurgents in Central America, in countries such as El Salvador and Nicaragua. The **US also invaded Grenada and overthrew the Communist government** – a clear example of **'rollback'** and an action that increased tension.

The Reagan Doctrine was an aggressive statement of foreign policy which increased tension in the Cold War as it was actively working against Communism.



5. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

The final policy, and perhaps the most important, was the Strategic Defence initiative, know as **SDI** or Star Wars. This was a **hugely ambitious military project to weaponize space**. It involved putting satellites in orbit around earth that had lasers on them that would shoot down Soviet missiles, creating a **'nuclear umbrella'** that would protect the US from Soviet attack. This **went against the 1967 Outer Space Treaty which had banned weapons in space**.

Reagan talked about SDI and the Soviets knew about it, they didn't know that the weapons system was far from ready. Nonetheless, the knowledge that the **US had found a way to make existing missile technology out of date and useless** came as a massive **shock** to the **Soviets and therefore increased tension**.



6. Soviet response

Reagan knew the Soviet economy was suffering. By increasing US military spending, and supporting anti-Communist groups, Reagan was forcing the **Soviets to respond because they could not just ignore the US increasing the US's action as it threatening to them.** Increasing military spending and SDI **restarted the arms race** with a vengeance and this had a huge impact on Cold War tension and Soviet thinking about the Cold War. In the 1970s the Soviets had felt safe enough to follow a policy of détente because they thought they had caught up with the US in terms of weapons. However, now that their **economy was suffering and the US had increased their spending, the Soviets knew it would cost a huge amount of money to catch up,** money they just did not have. In addition, the Soviets were miles behind the US in computer technology which was essential for the success of a programme like SDI. Therefore, they would have to **catch up in several different areas before they could develop their own version of SDI.** However, the state of the Soviet economy made this impossible. Not only did this increase tension, it **led to a major shift in Soviet thinking** which helped to change Reagan's attitude to the Soviets and ultimately lead to the end of the Cold War.



Glossary

Confrontational - dealing with a situation in an aggressive or argumentative way

Evangelical - a form of Christianity that focuses on Bible scripture

Reagan Doctrine - a statement of US foreign policy made in 1985

Roll back - reducing the number of countries with Communist governments

SDI - a weapons system armed satellites with lasers to shoot down missiles

Nuclear umbrella - the idea of being protected against nuclear weapons

Radar - a system for detecting aircraft using radio waves

Insurgent - a person working against a government or invading force

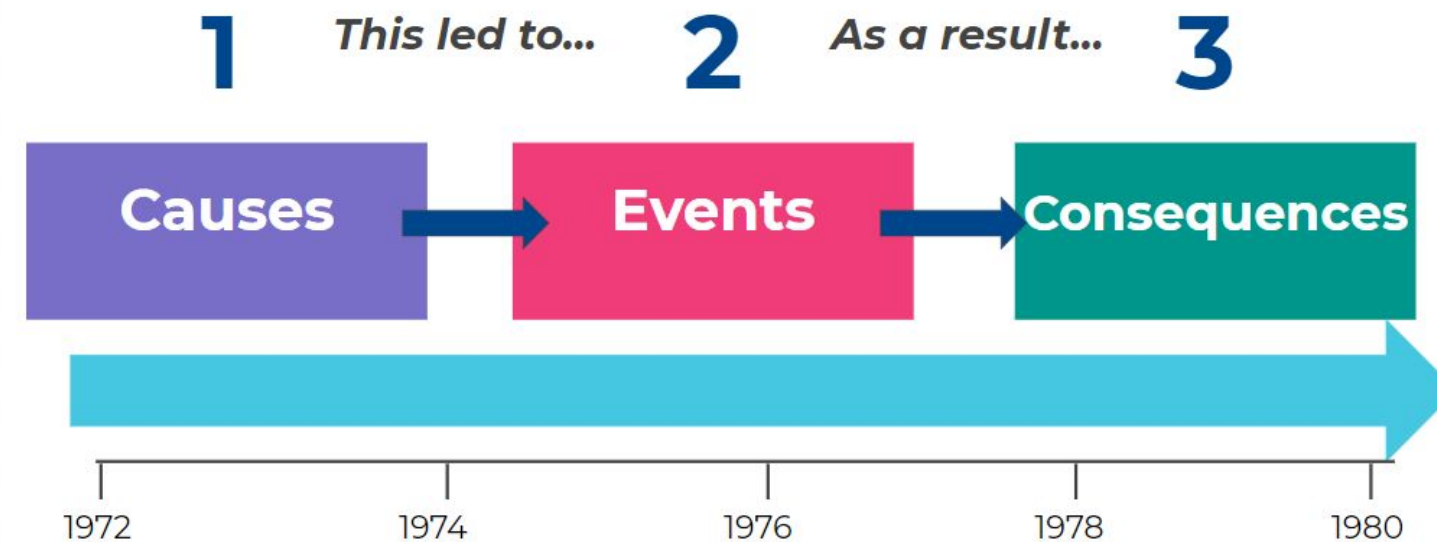
Civil Rights Movement – a protest movement in the United States when African-Americans were protesting for the same rights as other Americans,

Ratified (ratify) - formally accepting and agreeing a treaty eg. SALT 1 or 2



Enquiry questions

1. Write a narrative account to explain the key events of detente 1970-1979



2. Explain why tensions increased after 1979.

Tension increased after 1979 because....[**Hint:** Afghanistan and Reagan]

As a result...[**Hint:** think about what happened **after** each event]

This meant that...[**Hint:** think about the impact on detente and the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union]

Therefore...[**Hint:** think about the big picture, why would the change in relationship increase tension?]

