



Key Topic 2: Cold War crises, 1958–70



	Crisis 1: The Berlin Crisis – 1961	Crisis 2: The Cuban Missile Crisis – 1962	Crisis 3: Czechoslovakia - 1968
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refugee problem in Berlin - It was estimated that 2.7 million people had crossed from East to West Berlin between 1945 and 1960 as the West had a better standard of living. The East was suffering a 'brain drain' as these educated men and women left to make new lives in the West. • Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum (1958) – Khrushchev gave the USA a 6 month ultimatum to get out of Berlin or go to war. • The Summit meetings of 1959–61 - In 1959 there were two summit meetings at Geneva and Camp David to negotiate what to do with Berlin. • The USA and USSR then met in May in 1960 at Paris to continue negotiations. However, during the discussions an American U-2 spy plane got shot over the USSR and the pilot, Gary Powers was captured and Khrushchev walked out of the talks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuban Revolution - Fidel Castro, a socialist, had overthrown the American-backed leader Batista in 1959. Cuba was only 90 miles off coast of America – they didn't want a socialist (or worse, a communist) country 'in their backyard'. USA tried to ruin Cuba by refusing to buy their main export – sugar. Facing financial collapse, Castro did a deal with the USSR – they would buy Cuba's sugar crop. Cuba nationalised American companies and sold off US-owned property • Bay of Pigs Crisis (April 1961) – America sent in 1400 exiled Cuban rebels to overthrow Castro but they were easily defeated. This was a humiliation for the USA, and just encouraged Castro to turn to the USSR for protection. USSR started shipping weapons and equipment to Cuba. • Missile bases (14 October 1962) – American U-2 spy planes photographed Soviet missile sites on Cuba and Soviet ships on their way to Cuba with missiles on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition in Czechoslovakia to Soviet control led to the Prague Spring. • Dubček (the leader of Czechoslovakia) embarked on a programme of reform that included amendments to the constitution of Czechoslovakia that would have brought back a degree of political democracy and greater personal freedom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oppressive aspects of the Communist party were reduced. ○ Communist Party members in Czechoslovakia were given the right to challenge party policy. ○ End of censorship for the press. ○ The right of Czech citizens to criticise the government. ○ Trade unions were given increased rights to bargain for their members.
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 August 1961 – The East Germans began building a wall around West Berlin. This was initially a barbed wire fence, which was gradually replaced with concrete. • All movement between East and West was stopped. • For several days Soviet and US tanks faced each other across the divided Berlin streets at Checkpoint Charlie. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Days • Kennedy ordered a naval blockade and threatened retaliation if any missile was fired. • The world was on the brink of nuclear war. • Kennedy promised to remove US missiles from Turkey in return for the bases on Cuba being dismantled and the missiles (which were still on their way to Cuba) taken back to the USSR. • 28 October Khrushchev removed the missiles and the crisis was over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dubček assured Moscow that Czechoslovakia would remain in the Warsaw Pact and that they had nothing to worry about with regards to the reforms. • This did nothing to reassure Soviet leader Brezhnev and on the night of August 20th/21st troops from the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia to reassert the authority of Moscow. • The Czech people protested peacefully and put flowers on the tanks! • Dubček was removed from office and his reforms were abandoned.
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flow of refugees was reduced to a trickle. Between 1961 and 1989 (when the wall came down), only 5000 people managed to escape across it. • Western nations were given a propaganda victory, as it seemed that communist states needed to build a wall to stop their citizens leaving. • Kennedy visited Berlin in 1963 and stated "a wall is better than a war". • The wall became a symbol of the division of East and West. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khrushchev seemed to have failed – he had backed down in the face of American pressure. • Kennedy became the hero of the Western world. The public did not know that Kennedy had secretly agreed to remove US missiles from Turkey. • Telephone 'hot line' set up between Moscow and Washington so that the leaders could speak directly. This was to try and head off any future crises before they became serious. • Arms talks began to reduce tension: Limited Test Ban Treaty 1963; the Outer Space Treaty 1967; and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty 1968. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Warsaw Pact remained strong – the USSR thought this was vital to the survival of communism in Europe. • Brezhnev then outlined the Brezhnev Doctrine. This was a Soviet foreign policy which called for the use of Warsaw Pact forces to intervene in any Eastern Bloc nation which was seen to compromise communist rule and Soviet domination, either by trying to leave the Soviet sphere of influence or even moderate its policies International reaction to Soviet measures in Czechoslovakia. • The Western World was once again shocked by the Soviet's use of force against people wanting democracy.