

5HD450 Chapters in History of the Cold War

10. New arms race.



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MŠMT
MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY

Tougher stance of the West

- **1981 Ronald Reagan American President**
(1979 Margaret Thatcher British Prime Minister)
- **Both strongly against the USSR and communist ideology**
- **1981 martial law in Poland** as reaction to increasing support for local Solidarity movement – U.S. imposed economic sanctions, no direct Soviet reaction, probably not even intervention
- **1983 USSR shot down Korean Air flight** for violating Soviet airspace – NATO military exercise of simulated nuclear release – USSR feared real nuclear attack



Peace through strength

- **U.S. in favor of fast and low-cost interventions in foreign conflicts** – Lebanon, Grenada, Libya, Nicaragua
- **1985 Reagan Doctrine** – policy of containment + destabilization of existing communist governments + support for anti-communist resistance (Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola)
- Thatcher: *“The West would henceforth regard no area of the world as destined to forego its liberty simply because the Soviets claimed it to be within their sphere of influence. We would fight a battle of ideas against communism, and we would give material support to those who fought to recover their nations from tyranny.”*
- **On-going resistance made USSR withdraw** troops from Afghanistan, troops and advisors from Angola, Vietnamese withdrew from Cambodia

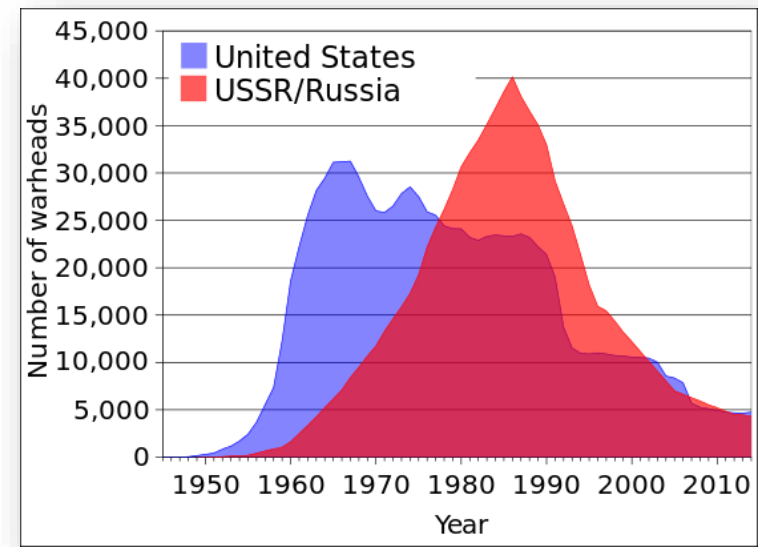


Economic issues in the blocks

- **Since late 1970s USSR and Soviet bloc economies in structural problems; economic stagnation in the 1980s**
 - Unbalanced economic growth
 - High military spending
 - Inefficient planning, low quality of production
 - Not enough resources for further increase in military production
- **Mid-1980s Oil Glut** – more economic problems for the USSR
- **1985 Gorbachev's perestroika** (restructuring), main aim to recover economy, less defense spending = end of arms race
- **U.S. in economic problems (Second Oil Shock) in early 1980s, since 1982 high economic growth**

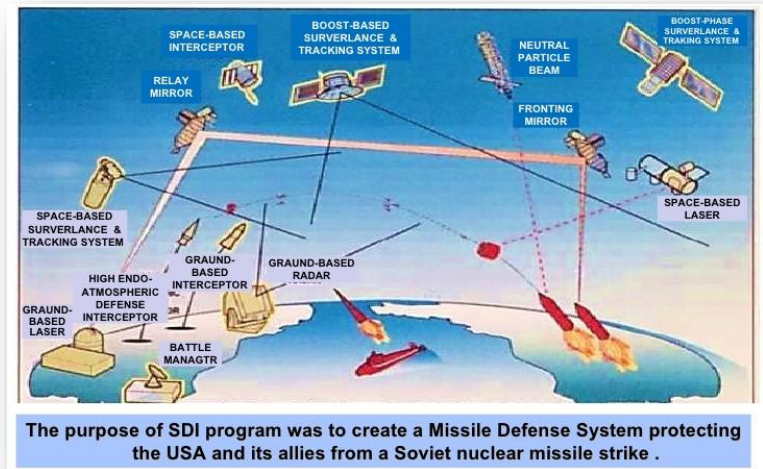
Military Issues

- **Soviet military** – largest in the world by number of soldiers and number and types of weapons in possession, but very expensive (25% of GDP)
- **U.S. military** – huge build-up after beginning of War in Afghanistan
- **Reagan continued intensive military spending** (6,5% of GDP) – largest defense expenditures in the history
- U.S. installed cruise missiles in Western Europe, USSR deployed ballistic missiles aimed at Western Europe
- **American Strategic Defense Initiative**



Strategic Defense Initiative – Star Wars

- 1983 Officially announced
- **1984 Beginning of development of ground-based and space-based defense system that could be used to destroy Soviet nuclear missiles before they reach the U.S.**
- Focused on **strategic defense** instead of formerly prevailing **strategic offense** - mutually assured destruction (MAD)
- Over 100 bln. dollars spent
- **One of the aims was to force the USSR to spend money on counter system – partially successful**
- Very limited success – never finished
- **1993 changed, more regional coverage**



The purpose of SDI program was to create a Missile Defense System protecting the USA and its allies from a Soviet nuclear missile strike .

Thawing in the East–West relations

- **1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became new General Secretary in the USSR**
- **Time for Soviet reforms** - perestroika and glasnost (openness)
- **Basically end of arms race**
- **1985 Geneva talks** on economic issues and decreasing arms race (reduction of nuclear arsenal by 50%)
- **1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty**
– elimination of all nuclear armed, ground launched ballistic and cruise missiles and their infrastructure
- **1991 START I** – reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms (G. H. W. Bush + Gorbachev)



Readings & videos

- Documentaries

BBC Star Wars, Cold War Backyard 1954–1990, MAD 1960–1972

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgSEwz28YR4>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRgwovJn-t0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsSroYTCsUo>

Cold War History Videos

- <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history/videos>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/>

- Specialized Resources / Collections / Cold War Files

- <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project>
- <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collections>
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/themes/world_politics/cold_war/default.stm
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20080411004848/http://www.coldwarfiles.org/index.cfm?thisunit=0&fuseaction=events.list>
- <http://www.avclub.com/special/cold-war/timeline>



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