Détente
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Détente is a term used to describe the reduction in tension between the Soviet Union and the United States of America that occurred in the late 1960’s and lasted for around ten years.
The leaders of both ‘super powers’ – Leonid Brezhnev (Soviet Union), Lyndon Johnson and later Richard Nixon (USA) had financial reasons for wanting to reduce defence spending.

- Brezhnev felt the economic burden was unsustainable
- The Vietnam War had drained the American economy
- Johnson wanted to expand the American welfare state.
Ostpolitik was the policy initiated by Willy Brandt who was the Chancellor of West Germany in the late 1960’s. He was active in creating a degree of improvement in relations with East Germany, the Soviet Union, Poland and other Eastern Bloc countries.
SALT 1 & 2

SALT – Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty

A series of meetings for SALT 1 began in November 1969 and continued until May 1972. Richard Nixon (USA) and Leonid Brezhnev (Soviet Union) reached an agreement on the limitation of strategic ballistic Missiles.

SALT 2 talks began in November 1972. Outline agreement was proposed in 1974 between Brezhnev and President Gerald Ford. This agreement set out equal limits for missile launchers and strategic bombs but left out Cruise missiles.
Helsinki Agreement

In 1971 the Warsaw pact countries proposed a conference with NATO to discuss European security.

A series of meetings and discussions followed from 1971 to 1975 when an agreement was reached.

This agreement covered three ‘baskets’

6. An acceptance that the borders of European countries could not be altered by force.

7. The promotion of links and exchanges across the Iron Curtain

8. An agreement to respect human rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of movement across Europe.
The Strategic Defence Initiative was commonly referred to as Star Wars after the popular science fiction films of the time. This initiative was proposed by President Reagan in 1983. The intention was to use ground based and space based systems to protect the USA from attack by strategic nuclear ballistic missiles. It was envisaged that this system would create in outer space, a curtain of x-ray lasers that would deflect any nuclear ballistic attack on America. SDI was never fully developed or deployed but the research and technological development that took place influenced some of the missile systems in use today.
This split became a major diplomatic conflict between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union - Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin.

Mao respected Stalin even though he ignored many of his requests and Mao was infuriated when Khrushchev denounced Stalin during his ‘Secret Speech’.

Mao was offended when the Soviets refused to honour their commitment to help China develop nuclear weapons and he felt Khrushchev was accommodating Western demands following the summit meeting held between Khrushchev and Eisenhower.

By 1965 the Sino –Soviet split was an established fact and the onset of Mao’s cultural revolution severed contact between China and most of the rest of the world.
Sino – American Alliance

From the creation of the PRC in 1949, the regime was not recognised by the USA. Despite this a series of meeting did take place between the two governments beginning in 1954 and continuing until 1970.

Following the incident between the table tennis teams of both countries in 1971, tensions began to ease.

In 1972, following on from intense diplomatic negotiations the American President Richard Nixon made an official visit to China.

By 1979, full diplomatic relations had been established between America and China.