The end of the Cold War, 1979-1991

A 'Second' Cold War, 1979-1985

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
1 In December 1979 Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in order to keep a pro-Soviet government in power there.
2 The invasion was condemned by a large majority in the United Nations General Assembly.
3 It put an end to Superpower détente which was already under strain (page 81).

Afghanistan
- A country of many tribes, strongly Islamic.
- 1 in 1978 a Communist regime took power but met strong opposition from the Afghan people.
- In 1979 the USSR persuaded the prime minister to 'invite' it to invade.

The USSR
- The Soviets wanted to keep control of Afghanistan because:
  1. They had rights to gas fields there.
  2. AMerican influence was growing in Pakistan.
  3. They wanted to ensure that it did not become a fundamentalist Islamic state like Iran in order to avoid a ring of Islamic states to the south.
  4. Prevent Islamic minorities within the USSR from being tempted to break away too.

Reagan's policy change
In 1980 Ronald Reagan replaced Carter as US President. Reagan believed that détente had caused the USA to lose ground to the USSR. He returned to an aggressive anti-Soviet foreign policy, which included:
1. Expanding the USA's armed forces
2. Basing new modern missiles (e.g. Pershing 2 and Cruise) in European countries which wished to accept them.
4. Launching the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) nicknamed 'Star Wars' this was an expensive programme to develop anti-missile weapons using laser beams. If successful, it would mean the USA could not be the victim of a 'first strike'.

Detente again, 1985-1991

New Soviet attitudes
In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev inherited a serious situation at home when he became leader of the USSR. In response he planned a series of reforms (page 85). In order to carry them out Gorbachev had to change Soviet foreign policy.

Reagan's choices
- Refuse to negotiate with the USSR and refuse to help Gorbachev.
- Return to detente and help Gorbachev.

Reagan's Decisions
1. Reagan decided to continue to treat the Soviet military threat seriously and to follow a strong defence policy. This might force Gorbachev to make concessions in arms reduction.
2. When Reagan and Gorbachev met they got on very well. This helped détente to develop quickly.

What was achieved?
2. Talks made progress on the reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces.
3. Talks on long range missiles (formerly SALT talks) were renamed Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).
4. They led to the 1991 START Treaty which agreed significant reductions in weapons.

Gorbachev's Aims
- 1 Withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan
- 2 Reduce Soviet aid worldwide
- 3 Improve relations with China
- 4 Seek détente with the USA in order to:
  a. Reduce defence spending
  b. Borrow money from Western banks to pay for imported food, raw materials and equipment
  c. Persuade Western firms to build factories in the USSR

The end of Soviet control, 1989-1991
1. In 1989 a Soviet control of Eastern Europe collapsed (pages 84-85).
2. Gorbachev and US President George Bush, Reagan's successor, announced the end of the Cold War.
3. In 1991 the USSR itself dissolved when Gorbachev could no longer control the pressure for independence from the nationalist movements in its fifteen member republics.
4. It was replaced by a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with the Russian Republic as the dominant nation.

The years 1979-1985 are often called a 'second Cold War'?
- Why do you think this is?
  a. Is it an appropriate description?
  b. Make a two-column chart to show what a Reagan & Gorbachev did to help to restore détente after 1985?