

Why did the Cold War End? - Factor 1 - Detente

As you read highlight the important information. In the column on the left you should write a sub-title for each paragraph. In the column on the right you should summarise what you read.

Choose a sub-title for each paragraph

Détente means an easing of the tension between two countries. There were several reasons why the USA and USSR were keen to improve relations in the 1960s and 70s. The **Cuban Missile Crisis** had brought the superpowers close to nuclear war and they wanted to avoid this at all costs as it would destroy them both. They were spending huge sums on the **arms race** – money which could be better spent on improving the lives of ordinary people. In America and many other Western countries, the **Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)** attracted widespread support. CND wanted all countries to get rid of their nuclear weapons and put pressure on the US Government to disarm. Following the **Vietnam War**, many Americans wanted to avoid foreign wars which encouraged the US Government to seek better relations with the two most powerful communist nations – China and the USSR.

There were many ways that relations improved. Both countries agreed not to help other countries develop nuclear weapons and limit their development of nuclear weapons. The USA agreed to communist China joining the United Nations and a US table tennis team played in China as a good will gesture! The US President met the Chinese leader in Beijing and the USSR leader in Moscow. The USA also accepted Soviet control over eastern Europe and the USSR promised to respect human rights of people living there. In 1975, Russian and American astronauts shook hands in space!

Detente had many limitations. Countries such as China went on to develop nuclear weapons and the USA and USSR did not reduce their nuclear weapons significantly. President Nixon's visits to China may have been largely designed to drive a wedge between China and the USSR, America's main communist rivals. Games of table tennis and handshakes in space have largely been dismissed as propaganda stunts. It was still the stated aim of the USSR to destroy capitalism and spread communism around the world. Then in December 1979, Soviet troops invaded **Afghanistan** to support the communist government, against Muslim rebels. The US Government responded by pulling out of arms reduction talks and **boycotting** the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Détente was over.

Summarise the key points in each paragraph

