Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962
- Cuba is 160km from Florida, formerly an American ally
- In 1959, Fidel Castro overthrew the US-backed dictator
- President Kennedy supplied arms, equipment and transport for 1400 anti-Castro exiles to invade Cuba and overthrow him
- Known as the Bay of Pigs
- After the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Soviet arms flooded into Cuba
- In May 1962 the USSR announced publicly for the first time it was supplying Cuba with arms
- By July 1962, Cuba had the best-equipped army in Latin America
- On September 11 Kennedy warned the USSR that he would prevent ‘by whatever means necessary’ Cuba’s becoming an offensive military base
- 14th October 1962, an American U-2 spy plane flew over Cuba
- It recorded photographs of missile sites in Cuba built by and supplied by the USSR
- Kennedy had five options:
  o Do nothing
  o Surgical Air Attack
  o Invasion
  o Diplomatic Pressures
  o Blockade
- Kennedy chose a naval blockade around Cuba and called on Khrushchev to remove the missiles
- The Soviet ships around Cuba stopped or turned around and observed the blockade
- Khrushchev said that if the USA promised to not attack Cuba and lift the blockade, the missile sites might be removed or destroyed
- Khrushchev also wanted the removal of US Jupiter missiles from Turkey
- An American U-2 Spy plane is shot down over Cuba and the pilot killed
- Kennedy accepts the first Khrushchev letter and ignores the second
- Robert Kennedy, Attorney General, meets with Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly Dobrynin, to discuss the possible removal of USSR’s Cuban missiles and the USA’s Turkey missiles
- Khrushchev removes missiles and Kennedy removes missiles 6 months later
- Both saw how brinkmanship had gotten them so close to war
- Hot line phone set up between Washington and Moscow

The Vietnam War, 1964 – 1972
- The US poured $500 million a year into the French war effort and helped the French to set up a non-Communist government in the south of the country against Ho Chi Minh’s Communists
- The Viet Minh forces had defeated the French in open battle with the help of modern weapons from the USSR and China
- At the 1954 peace conference held in Geneva, the country was effectively divided into North and South Vietnam until elections could be held to decide its future
- The US prevented the free elections as they feared a Communist take-over
- The Domino Theory refers to the idea that if Vietnam fell to Communism, then Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma
- The US helped Ngo Dinh Diem set up the Republic of South Vietnam as he was strictly anti-Communist
- The US supported Diem’s regime with $1.6 billion in the 1950s
- The Viet Cong started a guerrilla war against the South Vietnamese government
- December 1979, USSR sent 85,000 troops into Afghanistan and installed Babrak Karmal as the new President and executed political opposition
- Cited the Brezhnev Doctrine for the invasion and claimed to be stopping the US supported Mujahedeen from taking power
- Soviet intervention caused the Afghan government to become more reliant which weakened the moral authority of the government
- Attacks against the government increased
- Soviets controlled the cities but the Mujahedeen used guerrilla tactics from the countryside
- By 1982 it was realised by the Soviets that they couldn't win the war but continued which proved costly and unpopular as it invoked the Brezhnev Doctrine
- Gorbachev announced a gradual withdrawal in 1988 which was completed by 1989

Cold War Policies of Containment, Brinkmanship, Peaceful Coexistence and Détente

Containment:
- Truman accepted that Eastern Europe had become Communist
- Under the Truman Doctrine, the US were willing to aid countries who were fighting Communism
- Containment aimed to prevent the spread of Communism
- Successes:
  - Korean War: The US attempted to roll back Communism, there was a mutilated success, Communism had been contained, however there was human and economic loss, huge losses of UN forces and Korean civilians
  - Japan: much clearer success, the US occupied Japan after their defeat in 1945, vital strategic area in Asia, its position aided the US policy of containment

‘Containment was driven by self-interest’—William Williams (Revisionist)

Brinkmanship:
- The two powers pushed dangerous events to the brink of disaster
- They did this in order to achieve the most advantageous outcome and also to make sure they weren’t being seen as being weak
- Vital aspect of the US’s policy of Containment as it involved threatening the USSR to back down
- Intimidated Communist States

Peaceful Coexistence (1955-1963):
- Stalin passed away in 1953
- His brutal nature was no longer present
- Khrushchev was more gentle and basically unlike Stalin
- The USSR’s policy of Destalinization
- Khrushchev want to settle the tensions between the USSR and the USA
- He visited Western leaders in the USA in 1959 and 1960
- Indicated that there relationship was improving
- Nixon was the first US President to visit the USSR

Détente (1969-1979):
- The relaxation of tensions
- The relationship between the USA, the USSR and China seemed to improve significantly