

BBC Bitesize GCSE History – Cold War and Vietnam

Episode 1 – Conflicting ideologies and increasing tensions.

Announcer: BBC Sounds, music, radio, podcasts.

Katie: I'm history podcaster Katie Charlwood.

Datshiane: And I'm history graduate and TV and radio presenter Datshiane Navanayagam.

Katie: And this is Bitesize GCSE History.

Datshiane: This is the first episode in a seven-part series on the Cold War and Vietnam War.

Katie: Throughout this series, we'll be looking at the key moments in the Cold War, the effects and lasting impact in Europe and the rest of the world.

Datshiane: We'll see a recurring theme which will link this topic together, which is the political ideologies of communism and capitalism.

Katie: As well as the proxy wars and the nuclear arms race, which we'll look at in subsequent episodes.

Datshiane: But this episode we'll start with the beginnings of the Cold War, looking at the alliances that formed after the Second World War and their conflicting ideologies.

Katie: There were three important conferences, all of which were significant to the Cold War, and in this episode we'll focus on the first of those in Tehran.

Datshiane: We'll be hearing from our Bitesize time travelling reporter who we'll be sending back in time to report from a key moment in the history of the Cold War.

Katie: Along the way, on our journey, we'll be sharing revision hints as well as essay and exam tips and we'll end with a quick summary of the main facts.

Datshiane: So, grab a pen or pencil to make those all-important revision notes, and we're always here, so feel free to press stop and rewind whenever you need to.

Katie: So, let's talk about those ideologies, because at the heart of the Cold War are two conflicting ideologies, those being capitalism and communism. The United States of America and its allies, including Britain, followed capitalism whilst the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the USSR, was communist.

Datshiane: Katie, can you describe the key differences between capitalism and communism?

Katie: This is one of those describe questions asking you to demonstrate your knowledge that we'll look at in the series on exam skills. Have a listen back to that if you need some tips and it might be useful to make some notes.

Datshiane: Exactly. So, capitalism and communism are two distinct economic and political ideologies, and they've shaped societies in different ways.

Katie: Yes, capitalism is an economic system based on private ownership of resources. That means the money you earn is yours to spend on what you want. In capitalism, individuals own property and businesses, which they operate for a profit.

Datshiane: Whereas in communism the resources and means of production are owned by the state or the community as a whole, with the goal of reducing inequalities. The economy is controlled by the state, who decide what to produce, how much and at what price.

Katie: Right, let's simplify this economic difference a little. Maybe you get a summer job. In a capitalist setting you get paid for the hours you work, and you're motivated to work harder since you'll make more money based on your effort. You can then use your earning for whatever you like, such as buying clothes or that shiny new phone.

Datshiane: Whereas in the communist setting you might have applied to the state for a summer job and they have decided where you will work, your pay is decided centrally, and regardless of how many hours you work or how much effort you put into your job, you're going to get paid the same as everyone else employed in the same place, even up to the highest managers.

Katie: And those are just the economic differences, but there are political and social differences as well. Capitalist governments are democratically elected in multi-party elections. There is emphasis on

individual rights and free speech is championed. Different parties advertise on TV and social media and there are often public debates.

Datshiane: In comparison, communist governments tend to be undemocratic single-party states. Elections might be held, but there is only one party on the ballot or if there are other parties, the voting is rigged. The government controls the media as well as imposing censorship on free speech.

Katie: You can see that these two ideologies are in conflict, as capitalism emphasises individual freedom, wealth accumulation and democracy, while communism prioritises equality, communal ownership and state control. Head over to the Bitesize website for more on the differences between these ideologies.

Katie: So, two ideologies which are polar opposites of each other, and these fed into the initial causes of the Cold War itself, for which we must go back to World War II in Europe.

Datshiane: The USA along with Britain fought with the USSR, despite their ideological differences against Nazi Germany. This was the so-called Grand Alliance formed during the war in 1941.

Katie: This alliance was fragile as the three powers had conflicting ideologies and long-term goals that ultimately led them from being allies to being enemies.

Datshiane: You may be asked to write about how these differences led to the Cold War, so grab a pencil, pen or other digital device and make some revision notes if it's helpful.

Katie: We've already seen that the United States and Britain were capitalist democracies, and the USSR was a communist state, but there were other tensions beneath the surface.

Datshiane: Too right. Although they cooperated against Hitler, the Allies were distrustful of each other. The USSR was taking heavy losses on the Eastern Front and Joseph Stalin, the leader of the USSR, thought that the USA and Britain were delaying opening up a second front in Western Europe. He supposedly said: 'To the defeat of Naziism the British gave time, the Americans gave money, and the Soviet Union gave blood.'

Katie: The USA and Britain feared that the USSR'S intentions were not just about defeating Germany, but about spreading communism across Europe.

Datshiane: Between the 28th of November and the 1st of December 1943, the three leaders of this Grand Alliance met in person for the first time at a conference in Tehran in Iran. They were the USSR President Joseph Stalin, American President Franklin D Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Katie: Let's hear from our time-travelling reporter Jordan, who is at the Tehran Conference in 1943.

Jordan: I'm standing outside the building where three of the most powerful leaders of the world, Winston Churchill, Franklin D Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin, have been planning the next phase of World War II. This is a defining moment, the Allies' strategy to defeat Hitler is coming into focus. As Churchill and Roosevelt push for a direct assault on Nazi Germany, Stalin has his eyes set on control over Eastern Europe, but for now they're showing a united front and today they signed a historic declaration stating their aim. In it they say: 'We are sure that our concord will win an enduring peace. We recognise fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the united nations to make a peace which will command the goodwill of the overwhelming mass of the people of the world and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations. *[applause]* There's a sense that the future of the world is being drawn right here, and it's not just about defeating Hitler, but is it to be a peaceful future through all the united nations or will there be new tensions set from differing ideologies? This is Jordan reporting from Tehran, December 1943. Back to the Bitesize studio.

Katie: Thanks, Jordan. Although the Tehran Conference showed unity, it also revealed all those underlying tensions and ideological differences that contributed to the Cold War. It was also one of three conferences attended by the leaders of the Grand Alliance. We'll be looking at Yalta and Potsdam in the next episode.

Datshiane: It's not making time again as that Tehran conference was significant in shaping post-war Europe, as well as exposing the tensions at the heart of the Grand Alliance and this may be something that you're asked to write about in an exam. Remember that a significance question is asking you to show your knowledge and the impact or consequences of an event. If you like spider diagrams, well, this is a great time to make one.

Katie: OK, at Tehran, Britain and the USA agreed to launching that Western offensive that Stalin was desperate for. This was important because it temporarily built trust between the USSR and the Allies.

Datshiane: But although the leaders agreed on the need to defeat the Nazis, there was disagreement on how to manage a post-war Germany. Listen back to the episodes in the series on the denazification of Germany or head over to the Bitesize website for more details.

Katie: The USSR claimed it wanted to secure its western borders by controlling Poland and other Eastern European countries, thereby creating the USSR-aligned satellite states.

Datshiane: This expansion of USSR influence was in turn a significant factor in the breakdown of Allied relations as the West saw it as the start of USSR imperialism.

Katie: And there was another important outcome from the Tehran Conference, one that Jordan hinted at in his report. This was plans to create a new international organisation to help maintain peace after the war, and this became the United Nations.

Datshiane: In their signed declaration at the end of the Tehran Conference the three leaders said: 'We came here with hope and determination. We leave here friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose.'

Katie: So, if you were asked a question about the Tehran Conference and how it contributed to the Cold War, you can use your knowledge of those ideological differences, the conflicting visions of post-war Germany and USSR creation of satellite states as a basis for an answer.

Datshiane: Each of those points could be a short paragraph. Use evidence to explain the point. Things like a source quote can be really useful to include here and then say how this links back to the question. Katie, give us an example.

Katie: Of course. The Tehran Conference revealed the Allies' fundamentally different political ideologies and goals. That's my point. And the evidence to explain my point and link back to the question might be - Roosevelt and Churchill became suspicious of Stalin's intentions to extend the USSR's buffer zones in Eastern Europe. In his memoirs Churchill wrote that:

Churchill: It was clear to me that Stalin's idea *[crosstalk]*

Katie: 'It was clear to me that Stalin's idea of friendly neighbours was entirely different from ours. We wanted to see nations free to govern themselves, while Stalin's view was to secure satellite states.' This highlighted a key ideological divide that would later shape the Cold War.

Datshiane: Nice source quote there. You might want to end with a short conclusion. So Katie, what would your conclusion say?

Katie: Hmm, something like: Although it was primarily focused on military cooperation, the Tehran conference exposed deep-seated ideological differences and competing visions for post-war Europe and so it contributed to the Cold War tensions to a significant extent.

Datshiane: Have a go yourself after the podcast, and you can listen back to the exam skills series if you need hints on answering GCSE history questions.

Katie: All right Datshiane, time for a quick test. Three questions, five seconds to write those answers down. Here goes. What was the Grand Alliance?

Datshiane: The Grand Alliance was a military coalition formed during World War II, made up of the USA, the USSR and Britain.

[correct bell sounds]

Katie: Great, and what is a key political difference between capitalist and communist systems?

Datshiane: So, the capitalist systems have multiple political parties and democratic elections, whilst communist systems often have a single party state with no democratic elections.

[correct bell sounds]

Katie: And what is a key economic difference between capitalist and communist systems?

Datshiane: In communism, all property is owned by the state, whereas in capitalism property is privately owned.

[correct bell sounds]

Katie: Brilliant. Well done if you got all three, but if you didn't, don't worry. Just rewind, have another lesson or head over to the Bitesize website. Summary time. Datshiane, it's over to you.

Datshiane: The seeds of the Cold War were sown in the Grand Alliances formed during the Second World War and their conflicting ideologies, which we're going to return to again and again in this series.

Katie: Capitalism in the United States and Britain.

Datshiane: And Communism in the USSR.

Katie: The Tehran Conference in 1943 was the first meeting of the Big Three, leaders of the Grand Alliance.

Datshiane: It was a key step in winning the war but marked the start of tensions that would later fuel the Cold War.

Katie: And in the next episode, we'll look at how the Cold War developed with two post-war conferences in Yalta and Potsdam.

Datshiane: But Katie, which of the Big Three leaders will turn up? That's a cliffhanger.

Katie: Guess you'll just have to find out. Bye for now.