

## **How did the Arms Race and Space Race intensify the struggle for power in the Cold War?**

On October 4th, 1957, the USSR launched the first ever satellite, Sputnik. It shocked the world, particularly the US. But it was just one in a series of inventions that intensified the Cold War race for power.

In 1945, President Truman dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. The USSR worked hard to catch up. Testing their first bomb in 1949. In time, the US worried they were losing their advantage.

In 1952, the Americans tested the first hydrogen bomb with the USSR following a year later. These weapons were far more powerful than atomic bombs. Intercontinental ballistic missiles could fire nuclear warheads across thousands of miles, and the combination made people fear a destructive war.

Missile technology directly fed into the space race, with the USSR launching Sputnik in 1957. Amid fears they had been overtaken, the US responded with its own satellite in 1958.

These fears grew when Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space in 1961 - another propaganda success for the USSR. But paranoia peaked in 1962 with the Cuban Missile Crisis, where both sides were just minutes away from nuclear strikes.

Kennedy and Khrushchev chose diplomacy over war, in large part because of mutually assured destruction, or M.A.D. The space race continued, with both sides investing huge sums to put a person on the moon.

When Apollo 11 achieved this in 1969, America won a huge propaganda victory for capitalism. Every advancement in the arms and space races fuelled the rivalry between the US and the USSR.