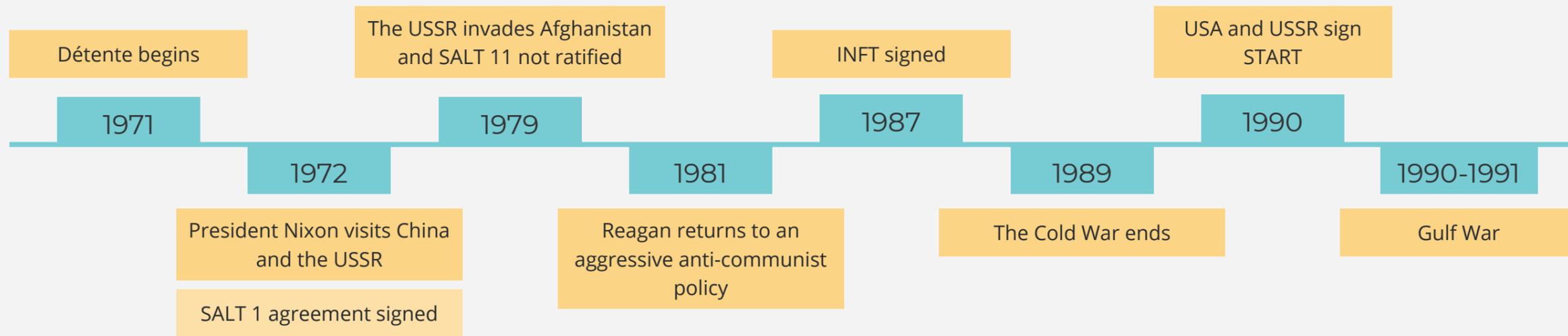


Key Question 7 : What has been the USA's role in the search for peace since 1970?

Timeline of events



Communism didn't fall. It was pushed. - George Bush Snr.

Important concept
 Since 1970 the USA has taken a proactive role in foreign affairs and become the broker of peace initiatives.

Key words

Détente	attempts to reduce tension during the Cold War
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
Helsinki Agreement	a declaration recognising human rights and moves towards better cooperation
"Ping-pong" diplomacy	the exchange of Chinese and American table tennis players which eased relations
Fundamentalism	religious extremism
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative or "Star Wars"
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty
Operation Desert Storm	air offensive launched against Iraq in Jan 1991

Détente and attempts to limit arms

The term **détente** describes the period of thaw in relations between the USA and the USSR between 1971 and 1979 when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.

A second period of détente occurred after 1985.

Reasons –

- to reduce the risk of nuclear war
- to reduce the huge cost of the arms race
- the USA was keen to improve relations with the USSR and China in the hope that both would help in negotiating an end to the war in Vietnam.

Attempts to limit arms –

- the **Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)** had begun in 1969 which led to the signing of the SALT 1 agreement in 1972 which limited the number of intercontinental missiles (ICBMs) and anti-ballistic missiles (ABMs)
- 1975 – the USA and USSR along with 33 other countries made a declaration of human rights known as the **Helsinki Agreements**.

Changing relations with the USSR and China

Changing relations with China

- Relations between China and the USSR had become strained by the end of the 1960s and **Nixon** hoped to take advantage with the aim of improving relations with China in order to help negotiate peace in Vietnam.
- 1971 – **"ping-pong diplomacy"** - the Chinese table tennis team invited the US team to Peking becoming the first US citizens to visit since 1949.
- February 1972 – Nixon became the first US president to visit China.
- trade links improved between the two countries.

Changing relations with the USSR

- December 1979 – the US Senate refused to sign up to **START II** following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- The US Olympic team boycotted the Moscow Games of 1980.
- 1981 – **President Reagan** returned the US to an aggressive, anti-communist stance.
- 1985 – The new Soviet leader **Gorbachev** sought better relations with the USA and in 1987 signed the **Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty**.
- 1990 – **President Bush Snr** and **Gorbachev** began discussions for **Strategic Arms Limitation (START)** which called for the reduction of nuclear weapons over seven years.

The fall of communism and the end of the Cold War

On becoming leader of the USSR in 1985 **Gorbachev** began a process of reform which would lead to the collapse of communism and an end to the **Cold War**.

- 1989 – Gorbachev informed the leaders of the six communist states in Eastern Europe that the Soviet Union would no longer defend them.
- Members of the **Warsaw Pact** were told that they could make changes to their countries without external interference.
- November 1989 – The **Berlin Wall** was taken down and by the end of 1990 democratic governments had been returned in the Eastern bloc.
- Such events served to weaken the USSR and in 1990 the Baltic states declared themselves independent.
- 1991- Gorbachev resigned and the USSR split further into a **Commonwealth of International States**.

Europe was no longer divided between capitalism and communism and the Cold War was at an end.

US involvement in Iran, Iraq and the Gulf War

- The USA became increasingly involved in the Middle East in the 1980s and 1990s.

Iran

- January 1979 – The Shah of Iran, America's closest ally in the region was forced to abdicate.
- Iran fell under the control of a fundamentalist religious leader, the **Ayatollah Khomeini**, demanded an end to Western and more especially, American influence in the region.
- November 1979 – The US embassy in **Tehran** was stormed and 66 Americans were held hostage for 444 days.
- President Carter sanctioned a rescue mission in April 1980 which failed causing relations between the USA and Iran worsened.

The Gulf War (1990-91)

- August 1990 – The Iraqi leader **Saddam Hussein** ordered the invasion of **Kuwait** which threatened US economic interests (oil).
- The USA, Britain and others launched an invasion of Iraq leading to the defeat of Hussein.