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Revision Notes for Leaving Cert 2011

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History
Leaving Cert
Prescribed Document
Topic
Cold War- US Economy &
Politics- Vietnam-Moon
Landing

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Introduction

These notes have been created by Mr Barry Finn one of Irelands leading history teachers and a teacher of History at St Columba's College, Co Dublin. The notes are very comprehensive and cover some areas of the Leaving Cert History course in great detail.

Topic 1: DECLINE OF COLD WAR CERTAINTIES

Détente:

- Refers to an easing of tension between the USA & USSR from the mid-1960s until the 1980s.
- Prompted by (1) shock over the “close call” that was the Cuban Missile Crisis, (2) US withdrawal from Vietnam and (3) the soaring cost of the arms and space race was too much of a drain to continue.
- In the immediate aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis a “Test Ban Treaty” was signed in October 1963, followed by a “Non-Proliferation Treaty” in July 1968 – both were aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons as the previous stock-piling would eventually have either led to bankruptcy or all-out war.
- By 1968, Nixon and his security adviser Kissinger wanted closer relations with the USSR, partly due to being distracted with Vietnam and partly due to a feeling it was less interested in spreading communism around the world.
- The USSR under Brezhnev, for its part, was more worried about worsening relations with China.
- Nixon wanted closer links with China too, recognising it as an emerging power in world affairs and also to put pressure on the USSR – the Chinese had developed their own atomic bomb in 1964 – and he made an historic visit to China in February 1972.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT):

Both powers had large stockpiles of both nuclear and conventional weapons (tanks, artillery etc) along with biological and chemical weapons, outlawed by the Geneva Convention.

- SALT began in 1969 in Helsinki – slow progress at first due to 25 years of mutual distrust.
- May 1972 saw Nixon fly to Moscow to sign SALT 1 – the first peacetime visit of a US President to communist USSR.
- SALT 1 had two main components: the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty which limited ABM sites to just two per country and the Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile Treaty which froze both country's number of ICBMs at 1972 levels (USA = 1,054 ICBMs, and 656 SLBMs).
- Exhaustion after Vietnam meant détente was popular in the USA and Nixon visited Moscow again in June 1974, after a visit by Brezhnev to the USA in June 1973, to begin a further round of SALT.
- Gerald Ford, replacing Nixon in September 1974 after the Watergate scandal, made good progress at Vladivostok in drawing up the framework for SALT 2.
- July 1975 saw the Helsinki Final Act recognise Europe's borders as those established after WWII.
- 1975 also saw the Apollo-Soyuz Project marking the pooling of knowledge of space exploration after decades of Cold War rivalry.
- 1976 saw Jimmy Carter replace Ford as President – détente was slowing down but agreement on SALT 2 was still reached in 1979.
- Signed by Brezhnev and Carter in Vienna in June 1979, SALT 2 limited the number of nuclear missiles each side could have to 2,250 of any kind.