Extension of the Arms Race

*Arms available by 1963 – atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, ICBMs (R7), why differences between the two nations, did the arms race prevent a full-scale conflict?*

Integral part of the cold war – cause of tension and continuation of hostility also led to economic strains and by 1980s deliberately bankrupting the enemy.

Contradictory policies of coexistence and diplomacy whist space race and weapon stockpiling.

March 1954 – USA – lithium based H bomb, 1500 x more powerful than Hiroshima

Sept 1954 – USSR had same

1955 – USSR – airborne H Bomb, 100 x more powerful

1956 – US bought 53 Lock head U2 spy planes stationed in Japan, Turkey and Britain

USA established Strategic Air Command in 1948 under General Curtis LeMay –aim to establish 24 hour readiness to respond to external nuclear threat. LeMay favoured a pre-emtive strike against USSR. By 1957 SAC had all jet force of strategic bombers.

1957 – USSR had a missile delivery system for nuclear warheads

USA - InterContinental Ballistic Missiles and had launched satellite into orbit to try and prove USA in control

Nov 1957 Eisenhower commissioned the Gaither Report to investigate US-Soviet nuclear capability. Were the Soviets catching up?

Concept of ‘Missile Gap’ established. USSR had 100 ICBMs and USA only 30. Eisenhower placed trust on U2 spy planes intelligence which suggested much slower USSR production but he couldn’t reveal his sources without publicly acknowledging espionage.

‘Washington Post’ report USA second class and in danger.

Report recommended $44 billion on nuclear fallout shelters over next 5 years.

Led to National Defense Education Act - $1 billion over 7 years on grants to science, maths and engineering

1957 – Eisenhower reached agreements with Britain at Bermuda that they would have IRBM in Britain and manned by British personnel. In December, similar agreement with NATO

1959 – USA developing new Intermediate range of missiles – Atlas and Titan

1959 – Submarine launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) – Polaris (solid fuel and immediate launch), Thor and Minuteman (ICBM). By 1962 had 8 at sea and able to fire 144 missiles

Soviet SS-6 system was liquid fuel and slow, lacked mobility. Later SS-7 more mobile but only had 4

USSR only small number of long range bombers whereas SAC had hundreds

Eisenhower want ban on atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons – US stopped Oct 1958, USSR copied – beginnings of arms talks

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strategic Bombers | Strategic Bombers | SLBMs | ICBMs | ICBMs |
| Year | 1956 | 1960 | 1962 | 1960 | 1964 |
| USA | 560 | 550 | 145 | 295 | 835 |
| USSR | 60 | 175 | 45 | 75 | 200 |