

Ex-Soviet leader warns of new Cold War

11th November, 2014



It is 25 years since the Berlin Wall came down. For many, it represented the beginning of the end of communism in Europe and of a world divided by the Cold War. The world stared down the

barrel of nuclear conflict many times, but then hope sprung up as the concrete in Berlin came tumbling down. Two-and-a-half decades on, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev warned that the world is on the brink of a new Cold War. Ironically, he made a speech explaining why in Berlin. He accused the West of not fulfilling the promises it made after 1989. He said that: "The world is on the brink of a new Cold War. Some say that it has already begun." He also criticised the United Nations for doing so little.

The Berlin Wall existed between 1961 and 1990. It completely cut off land access to West Berlin from surrounding East Germany. The western powers of the USA, Germany and France controlled life in West Berlin, while communist East Germany controlled the rest. The barrier included guard towers placed along large concrete walls. Anyone attempting to cross to the west was either shot or arrested by the East German border police. The wall came to symbolise the "Iron Curtain" that separated Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War. In 1989, a series of radical political changes occurred in the Eastern Bloc, which led to the Wall coming down and Germany being reunified in October 1990.

Sources: Reuters / RIA Novosti.ru / Wikipedia

Writing

Countries should follow what the United Nations decides. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

25 years / the beginning of the end / communism / nuclear conflict / speech / promises / land access / barrier / arrested / Iron Curtain / political changes / reunified

True / False

- The fall of the Berlin Wall was the end of the beginning of communism. T / F
- The article said hopes got bigger after the Berlin Wall came down. T / F
- An ex-Soviet leader made a speech in Berlin. T / F
- The ex-Soviet leader said the United Nations hadn't done much. T / F
- The Berlin Wall existed for nearly 30 years. T / F
- The Berlin Wall became a symbol of the "Velvet Curtain". T / F
- One radical change in the Eastern Bloc led to the fall of the wall. T / F
- Germany was reunified in August 1990. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. represented | a. carrying out |
| 2. divided | b. revolutionary |
| 3. former | c. attacked |
| 4. fulfilling | d. encircling |
| 5. criticised | e. symbolised |
| 6. completely | f. resulted in |
| 7. surrounding | g. ex- |
| 8. radical | h. sequence |
| 9. series | i. split |
| 10. led to | j. totally |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you know about the Cold War?
- What do you think of Mikhail Gorbachev's warning?
- How has the world changed since the Berlin Wall came down?
- Why is there such division between nations?
- Who does your country not get on with, and why?
- What are the bad things about a Cold War?
- What more should the West have done to help after 1989?
- What more should the United Nations have done?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. It is 25 years since the | a. fulfilling the promises |
| 2. the beginning of the | b. of nuclear conflict |
| 3. stared down the barrel | c. political changes |
| 4. the world is on the brink | d. guard towers |
| 5. He accused the West of not | e. or arrested |
| 6. It completely cut | f. Berlin Wall came down |
| 7. The barrier included | g. of a new Cold War |
| 8. shot | h. Bloc |
| 9. a series of radical | i. end of communism |
| 10. Eastern | j. off land access |

Discussion – Student B

- What is communism?
- Why is the Cold War returning today?
- What do you think of the name 'Iron Curtain'?
- What political system is best, capitalism or communism?
- Is capital more important than community?
- What do leaders need to do to bring more world peace?
- What changes could stop another Cold War?
- What questions would you like to ask Mikhail Gorbachev?

Spelling

- the beginning of the end of mmsiounmc
- stared down the blarer of nuclear conflict
- Two-and-a-half ascdede on
- not ignlflufli the promises it made
- on the nkrib of a new Cold War
- dirtseiicc (UK) / rzcidceiti (USA) the UN
- The Berlin Wall stixde between 1961 and 1990
- completely cut off land cssaec
- large etcnorec walls
- loeisybms (UK) / iyozselmb (USA) the "Iron Curtain"
- a series of acradil political changes
- Germany being uridienef in October 1990

Answers – Synonym Match

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. e | 2. i | 3. g | 4. a | 5. c |
| 6. j | 7. d | 8. b | 9. h | 10. f |

Role Play

Role A – Increased taxation

You think increased taxation is the most serious political change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so serious. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): the lowering of the voting age, the introduction of military service or martial law.

Role B – Lowering of voting age

You think the lowering of the voting age is the most serious political change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so serious. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): increased taxation, the introduction of military service or martial law.

Role C – Introduction of military service

You think the introduction of military service is the most serious political change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so serious. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): the lowering of the voting age, increased taxation or martial law.

Role D – Martial law

You think martial law is the most serious political change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not so serious. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): the lowering of the voting age, the introduction of military service or increased taxation.

Speaking – Changes

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest political changes at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| • revolution | • coup d'etat |
| • martial law | • start of military service |
| • dictatorship | • increase in taxation |
| • war | • lowering voting age |

Answers – True False

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | F | b | T | c | T | d | T | e | T | f | F | g | F | h | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.