

# Brief history of the nuclear standoff

1945: **U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki**

1949: Soviet Union explodes its first atomic bomb

1957: **Soviets launch *Sputnik*, the first earth-orbiting satellite**

1961: Berlin Wall built. ***Bay of Pigs*** invasion of Cuba fails



1962: Cuban missile crisis

1968: Talks between U.S. and Soviet Union to limit strategic nuclear arsenals and ballistic missile defences cancelled when Moscow invades Czechoslovakia

1972: **President Nixon** and Soviet General Secretary **Leonid Brezhnev** (pictured left) sign **SALT I agreement**, and **Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM)**

1979: **President Carter** withdraws SALT II treaty from Senate consideration in response to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

1982: **U.S.S.R. and U.S. begin Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START)**

1983: **President Reagan** examines feasibility of missile defence programme – the so-called “star wars” scheme

1986: **Agreement to reduce strategic nuclear arms collapses due to Soviet opposition to U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative development**

1987: Reagan and Soviet president **Mikhail Gorbachev** sign INF Treaty, banning ground-launched, medium-range nuclear missiles

1989: **Berlin Wall falls. U.S.S.R. cuts conventional forces in Europe**

1991: **President George Bush Sr.** and Gorbachev sign START I Treaty. Soviet Union disbands

1993: **Bush and Russian president Boris Yeltsin sign START II treaty**

2000: **President Clinton** decides not to deploy national missile defence

Jul 2001: **President George W. Bush** and Russian president **Vladimir Putin** agree to tie Bush's plans for national missile defence (NMD) – which would violate 1972 ABM Treaty – to talks on reducing both nations' nuclear stockpiles

Aug-Sep: U.S. fails to break down Russian opposition to scrapping of ABM

Nov: **Bush and Putin emphasize commitment to nuclear arms reductions, but fail to reach compromise on NMD**

Dec 2001: Bush formally announces U.S. withdrawal from ABM Treaty

