The Cold War [1945-1991]: An Ideological Struggle

Soviet & Eastern Bloc Nations ["Iron Curtain"]

GOAL → spread worldwide Communism

US & the Western Democracies

GOAL → “Containment” of Communism & the eventual collapse of the Communist world. [George Kennan]

METHODOLOGIES:

1. Espionage [KGB vs. CIA]
2. Arms Race [nuclear escalation]
3. Ideological Competition for the minds and hearts of Third World peoples [Communist govt. & command economy vs. democratic govt. & capitalist economy] → “proxy wars”
4. Bi-Polarization of Europe [NATO vs. Warsaw Pact]
ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

• After being Allies during WW II, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. soon viewed each other with increasing suspicion
• Their political differences created a climate of icy tension that plunged the two countries into an era of bitter rivalry known as the Cold War

The Cold War would dominate global affairs from 1945 until the breakup of the USSR in 1991
POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

• At the heart of the tension was a fundamental difference in political systems

• America is a democracy that has a capitalist economic system, free elections and competing political parties

• In the U.S.S.R., the sole political party – the Communists – established a totalitarian regime with little or no rights for the citizens

Soviets viewed Marx, Engels and Lenin as founders of Communism
SUSPICIONS DEVELOPED DURING THE WAR

- Even during the war, the two nations disagreed on many issues
- The U.S. was furious that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had been an ally of Hitler for a time
- Stalin was upset that the U.S. had kept its development of the atomic bomb a secret
THE UNITED NATIONS PROVIDES HOPE

- Hopes for world peace were high at the end of the war.
- The most visible symbol of these hopes was the United Nations (U.N.).
- Formed in June of 1945, the U.N. was composed of 50 nations.
- Unfortunately, the U.N. soon became a forum for competing superpowers to spread their influence over others.

The United Nations today has 192 member countries.
The Soviet Union suffered an estimated 20 million WWII deaths, half of whom were civilian.

As a result they felt justified in their claim to Eastern Europe.

Furthermore, they felt they needed Eastern Europe as a buffer against future German aggression.
STALIN INSTALLS PUPPET GOVERNMENTS

- Stalin installed “satellite” communist governments in the Eastern European countries of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and East Germany
- This after promising “free elections” for Eastern Europe at the Yalta Conference

In a 1946 speech, Stalin said communism and capitalism were incompatible – and another war was inevitable
The Bipolarization of Europe
US Cold War Policies

- Anti-Soviet / Anti-Communist
- Free Markets
- Spreading Democracy
- Regional Conflict
- Multilateralism
- Deterrence and Forward Presence
### Bipolarity: The Cold War Balance of Power

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Syria/Egypt</th>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<td>W. Germany</td>
<td>E. Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Britain/France/Japan</td>
<td>Poland/Czech</td>
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| US           | USSR              |
U.S. ESTABLISHES A POLICY OF CONTAINMENT

- Faced with the Soviet threat, Truman decided it was time to “stop babying the Soviets”
- In February 1946, George Kennan, an American diplomat in Moscow, proposed a policy of containment
- Containment meant the U.S. would prevent any further extension of communist rule
### George Kennan [“X Article”]: 
**CONTAINMENT**

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<th>Goals</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Actual Application</th>
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<td>2. Reduction of Soviet ability to project outside power.</td>
<td>Exploitation of tensions in international communism.</td>
<td>Cooperation with communist regimes; [supporting Titoism in Yugoslavia]</td>
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George Kennan ["X Article"]: CONTAINMENT

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Europe was now divided into two political regions; a mostly democratic Western Europe and a communist Eastern Europe.

In a 1946 speech, Churchill said, “An iron curtain has descended across the continent.”

The phrase “iron curtain” came to stand for the division of Europe.
Iron Curtain cartoon, 1946
THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

- The American policy of “containment” soon expanded into a policy known as the Truman Doctrine”
- This doctrine, first used in Greece and Turkey in the late 1940s, vowed to provide aid (money & military supplies) to support “free peoples who are resisting outside pressures”
- By 1950, the U.S. had given $400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey
Free Markets

Strong economy through free markets

Strong middle class and economic and social mobility

Political stability, failure of communist subversion, peace
THE MARSHALL PLAN

- Post-war Europe was devastated economically.
- In June 1947, Secretary of State George George Marshall proposed a U.S. aid package to European nations.
- Western Europe accepted the help, while Eastern Europe (read Stalin) rejected the aid.
- Over the next four years 16 European countries received $13 billion in U.S. aid.
- By 1952 Western Europe’s economy was flourishing.

The Marshall Plan helped Western Europe recover economically.
Marshall Plan aid sent to European countries
Marshall Aid cartoon, 1947

Can He Block It?
At the end of the war, Germany was divided among the Allies into four zones for the purpose of occupation.

The U.S., France, and Great Britain decided to combine their 3 zones into one zone – West Germany, or the federal Republic of Germany.

The U.S.S.R. controlled East Germany, or the German Democratic Republic.

Now the superpowers were occupying an area right next to each other – problems were bound to occur.
BERLIN AIRLIFT – 1948

• When the Soviets attempted to block the three Western powers from access to Berlin in 1948, the 2.1 million residents of West Berlin had only enough food for five weeks, resulting in a dire situation.

Like the whole of Germany, the city of Berlin was divided into four zones.
Not wanting to invade and start a war with the Soviets, America and Britain started the Berlin airlift to fly supplies into West Berlin.

For 327 days, planes took off and landed every few minutes, around the clock.

In 277,000 flights, they brought in 2.3 million tons of food, fuel and medicine to the West Berliners.
SOVIETS LIFT BLOCKADE

- Realizing they were beaten and suffering a public relations nightmare, the Soviets lifted their blockade in May, 1949.

On Christmas 1948, the plane crews brought gifts to West Berlin.
NATO FORMED

- The Berlin blockade increased Western Europe’s fear of Soviet aggression
- As a result, ten West European nations joined the U.S and Canada on April 4, 1949 to form a defensive alliance known as the North American Treaty Organization

[MULTILATERALISM]
NATO initiated as a result of a Soviet coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948.