

The Crumbling Alliance

After World War II two powers, the United States and the Soviet Union became the world superpowers. These two countries had the economic resources and military force to dominate the globe. During the war, the Soviet Union and the west had cooperated to defeat Nazi Germany. By 1945 this wartime alliance was crumbling. Conflicting ideologies and mutual distrust divided the Allies and would lead to a state of tension and hostility among nations without armed conflict also called a Cold War.

Origins of the Cold War

Stalin wanted to spread Communism into Eastern Europe. He also wanted to create a buffer zone as a defense against Germany. Stalin was always worried about Germany's military power. Russia has had a history of being attacked from the east, and at the end of World War II Russian soldiers forced Germany out of the east. By doing this Stalin was leaving behind occupying forces. Roosevelt and Churchill did not agree to this and made him promise that "free elections" would take place in Eastern Europe. Stalin ignored this request and installed Communist governments in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European countries. By 1946, almost all of Eastern Europe was under Stalin's control.

1. What is a Cold War?
2. Why did Churchill and Roosevelt want free elections for Eastern Europe? What were they afraid of?

The Cold War Heats Up

Winston Churchill had long distrusted Stalin. Early in 1946, on a visit to the United States, he warned of the new danger facing the world, and that was Stalin and his communist allies. Churchill's "iron curtain" of soviet satellites became a symbol of the Cold War. It expressed the growing fear of Communism. More important it described the division of Europe into an "eastern" and "western" bloc. In the East were the Soviet-dominated, communist countries of Eastern Europe. In the West were the western democracies, led by the United States.

1. What is the iron curtain?

Containment

President Truman saw communism as an evil force threatening countries around the world. To deal with the threat of communism, the U.S abandoned its policy of isolationism. Unlike WWI where the U.S withdrew from global affairs, the Cold War put the U.S in the leading role on the world stage. On March 12, 1947, Truman outlined the Truman Doctrine

"I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures...The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedom."

This document made it clear that the United States would resist Soviet expansion in Europe or elsewhere in the world. Truman sent military and economic aid to the countries that the Soviet Union was pressuring into joining them. Truman also came up with the idea of containment, which limited communism to the areas already under Soviet control.

1. What was the purpose of the Truman Doctrine?
2. What is Containment?

Division in Germany

After World War II Germany became another focus of the Cold War. Germany was split into four parts. The Soviet Union controlled the East, which included Berlin. The other parts were given to France, Great Britain and the U.S. The Western democracies put their three parts together as one united part. The Russians forced Germans in the east to dismantle factories and other resources. The western democracies however united their zones and encouraged the Germans to rebuild industries. Germany was therefore divided.

1. Why did Russia want to keep their German zone weak?

Berlin Airlift

Stalin's resentment at western moves to rebuild Germany prompted a crisis over Berlin. All four Allies occupied the former capital even though it lay in the Soviet zone. In 1948, Stalin tried to force the Allies out of Berlin by sealing off all railroads and highways into the western sector of Berlin. The western powers responded with around-the-clock airlifts. For almost a year cargo planes supplied West Berliners food and fuel. The success of the airlift forced the Soviets to stop the blockade.

2. Why did Stalin block off parts of Berlin?
3. Explain the Berlin airlift?

New Military Alliances

In 1949, as tensions grew, the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France and seven other Western European countries formed a military alliance. It was called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO. Members of NATO pledged to help one another if any one of them was attacked.

In 1955 the Soviet Union responded by forming its own military alliance, known as the Warsaw Pact. It included the U.S.S.R, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and four other satellite states in Eastern Europe. Unlike NATO, the Warsaw Pact was used by the Soviets as a weapon to keep the satellites in order.

1. What is NATO? What is its purpose?
2. What is the Warsaw Pact? What was its purpose?

Arms Race

Each side in the Cold War armed itself to withstand an attack by the other. At first, the United States, which had the atomic bomb, held an advantage. But Stalin's top scientists were under orders to develop an atomic bomb. When they succeeded in 1949, the arms race was now on.

For four decades, the superpowers spent billions of dollars to develop new, more deadly nuclear and conventional weapons. As the money spent on new military equipment and new ways of using these weapons, the global powers were now in a state of global terror.

3. What is an arms race?
4. Why were the superpowers competing for these new weapons?

Korean War

At the end of World War II, Korea was divided at the 38th parallel into Soviet (North Korean) and U.S. (South Korean) zones of occupation. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea. The North Koreans wanted to unify all of Korea under communism. On June 27, U.S. President Truman authorized the use of American land, sea, and air forces in Korea.

This war was fought for a little over three years but after much difficulty and nuclear threats by Eisenhower, an armistice agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. Casualties in the war were heavy. U.S. losses were placed at over 54,000 dead and 103,000 wounded, while Chinese and Korean casualties were each at least 10 times as high.

1. Why did the Korean War take place?

Joseph McCarthy

In the 1940s and '50s, the Cold War was fought through fear and persecution on both sides of the globe. In the United States, anti-communism became harsh. A politician named Joseph McCarthy led a campaign against Communist rebellion in the early 1950s. He accused many people of being communists, but his accusations were never validated. His accusations made many people believe that the U.S was full of communists. He ruined many careers because of his allegations but none of them were proven. He did however scare the people of the U.S into thinking that many people were communist sympathizers.

2. Why would McCarthy and his allegations scare some Americans?

The Rosenberg's

The Rosenberg case was a lengthy and controversial espionage case in U.S. history. In 1950, the FBI arrested Julius Rosenberg and his wife Ethel they were indicted for conspiracy to transmit classified military information to the Soviet Union. Both Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were found guilty and received the death sentence. The Rosenberg's were executed on June 19, 1953. They became the first U.S. civilians to suffer the death penalty and although some were sympathetic to the Rosenberg's this case helped focus attention on a possible internal communist threat.

1. Who were the Rosenberg's? Why did they receive the death penalty?

Space Race

World War II proved to be a conflict in which the world's technological abilities were put to the test. Following the conclusion of this conflict, the United States and the USSR began doing long-range missile testing. As a result of this, Sputnik was launched. The launch of Sputnik proved to be a significant victory for the Soviets during the Space Race. In 1958, the United States put a satellite in orbit. Several years later, John F. Kennedy set a goal of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong took mankind's first steps on another heavenly body. In the following two and a half years, twelve American men would set foot on the moon. Not only did these landings represent a US victory over the Soviets, but also a technological triumph that proved to the US and the rest of the world that any thing was possible with technology

1. Why did the US and the Soviets get involved in a space race?

Berlin Wall

Nikita Khrushchev the Premier of Russia, issued an ultimatum to the three western powers, giving them six months to turn West Berlin into a "demilitarized free city", if they did not he would sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany. The border between East and West Berlin is opened and daily half a million people cross the border from one part of the city into the other. The leaders of the Communist parties decide to close the open border between East and West Berlin.

In the afternoon of August 12 at 4 p.m. they closed the border. The next Sunday at midnight the army, police began to wall the city. The wall was entirely for domestic use, being designed not to stop people getting in but to prevent them getting out. The wall took more than 28 years to build.

1. Why do you think Khrushchev wanted Berlin demilitarized?
2. What was the purpose of the Berlin Wall?

Castro and the Bay of Pigs

Castro led a revolutionary revolt in Cuba in 1959. Castro began confiscating property owned by the US. The US and Cuba went back and forth banning each other's goods. In February 1960 Cuba signed an agreement to buy oil from the USSR. Cuba began to establish closer ties with the Soviet Union. A variety of pacts were signed between Castro and Nikita Khrushchev, allowing Cuba to receive large amounts of economic and military aid from them.

The Bay of Pigs Invasion was a US-planned landing by armed Cuban exiles in southwest Cuba in an attempt to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro in 1961 and marked the climax of anti-Cuban US actions. But this attempt failed.

1. Describe the relationship between Cuba and Russia?
2. What was the Bay of Pigs? What was the result?

Cuban Missile Crisis

In 1962, the Soviet Union was building secret missile bases in Cuba, a mere 90 miles off the shores of Florida. In addition to demanding that Russian Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev remove all the missile bases and their deadly contents, Kennedy ordered a naval quarantine (blockade) of Cuba in order to prevent Russian ships from bringing additional missiles and construction materials to the island. On October 28, the Russian Premier conceded to President Kennedy's demands by ordering all Soviet supply ships away from Cuban waters and agreeing to remove the missiles from Cuba's mainland.

1. Why do you think Khrushchev wanted to build missile silos in Cuba?
2. What was the end result?

Vietnam War

After the Second World War, France attempted to re-establish control over Vietnam. The French and the North Vietnamese led by Ho Chi Minh fought until 1954 when the French were forced to surrender. Members of the U.S, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France met to decide the fate of Vietnam. After much negotiation the following was agreed:

- (1) Vietnam would be divided at the 17th parallel;
- (2) North Vietnam would be ruled by Ho Chi Minh; communist
- (3) South Vietnam would be ruled by Ngo Dinh Diem, democrat

The split of Vietnam was necessary because the U.S saw Asia as a domino theory; if one country were to fall to communism all Asian countries could fall. The US stood behind Diem but in November 1963, Diem was overthrown and killed. Ho Chi Minh and the North were now pressing the South into changing to a communist government. Minh supported the NLF, and the United States did not want the NLF supported at all because of their terrorist activities.

1. What is a Domino Theory?

2. Who is Ho Chi Minh?

The War Begins

In the Gulf of Tonkin, the U.S was to send destroyers into North Vietnamese waters to obtain information on their naval defenses. On August 2, 1964, a US destroyer was fired upon in the Gulf of Tonkin. In retaliation, the U.S fired back and the conflict began.

Lyndon Johnson ordered the bombing of North Vietnamese torpedo-boat bases and oil-storage depots. The United States started to organize troops to send into Vietnam. On March 8, 1965 troops began arriving. The war was long a dragged out for many years. The U.S people hated the war and did a lot to try to stop the war. The United States was tired of fighting the war and eventually called it quits. The U.S could no longer help the South Vietnamese and left the war.

The NLF arrived in Saigon on April 30, 1975. After declaring that Vietnam was now a united country, Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established in July 1976. Communist governments were also set-up in Laos and Cambodia.

Between 1961 and 1975 an estimated 10% of the people living in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos had died. In the same period, 56,869 US troops were killed and another 153,329 were seriously wounded. The long-term psychological damage to the three million soldiers who fought in Vietnam and the resulting social problems are still being counted

1. Why do you think the U.S left the war?

2. What happened at the end of the war?

War in Afghanistan

Afghanistan hit the world's headlines in 1979. Thousands of Afghanistan Muslims joined the Mujahdeen. They declared a jihad - a holy war - on the supporters of the communist government. This extended to the Russians who were in Afghanistan trying to maintain the power of the government.

The Mujahdeen were equipped with old rifles but had knowledge of the mountains and the area. The Russians resorted to using napalm, poison gas and helicopter gun ships against the Mujahdeen. By 1982, the

Mujahdeen was winning despite fighting the might of the world's second most powerful military power. The war in Afghanistan showed the world just how poor the Russian military was.

1. Who are the Mujahdeen? What happened at the end of the war?

Star Wars

By the 1980's both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were mostly done with stockpiling weapons. One plan of action was the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) or "Star Wars". This plan was to have several laser satellites orbit the planet that could shoot down any missiles launched at the US. The United States pooled billions of dollars into this project, and the Soviets followed suit. However, the project proved impossible. Both the United States and Soviet governments lost billions, resulting in economic recessions for each. However, with the US's superior economy, it was able to escape the recession virtually unscathed. The U.S.S.R. could not pull out of this economic slump, and the nation collapsed.

1. What was the Star Wars plan?
2. What happened because of this plan to both countries?

Russia's New Beginning: Mikhail Gorbachev

In 1985 a new leader emerged in Russia, his name was Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev was eager to reform inefficiencies in government and the economy. These changes however might have been the undoing of the Soviet Union. The Gorbachev Revolution wanted to end Cold War tensions between the U.S and Russia. He also signed arms control treaties with the U.S. These were some of his foreign policies. Gorbachev was not only focused on world problems, he dealt with ones at home too.

In Russia, Gorbachev launched an effort of reform. The first reform was called Glasnost or openness. He ended censorship, and encouraged people to publicly discuss the problems that the country was having. Second was the restructuring of government and the economy, called perestroika. By streamlining government and reducing the size of the body of non-elective government officials, he hoped it would boost efficiency and output. Factory managers were put in charge of production and farmers received more land to plant, producing more food to sell for themselves.

Such rapid change brought economic turmoil. Shortages grew worse and prices soared. Factories that could not survive without government assistance closed. Glasnost caused unrest in Russia. The republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regained full independence. These countries followed by Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and East Germany broke free from Soviet control. This caused more unrest in the Russian Republics and Gorbachev resigned as president in 1991. The Soviet Union was no more.

1. What is glasnost? What is perestroika?
2. What were the results of Gorbachev's plans?
3. What happened to Russia in the end?