

TO THE BRINK OF NUCLEAR WAR: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS c.1945-1963

ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR 1945-48

Interpreting the Cold War

Orthodox

Anti-Soviet belief, believed the Soviets were:
Overly suspicious of West which lead to expansionism
Trying to expand in accordance with Marxist theory
Violating Potsdam agreements, imposing society control, plotting to spread communism

Revisionist

Believe the USA are responsible largely due to dollar diplomacy
US foreign policy dictated by self interest
A few say dropping bombs onto Hiroshima/Nagasaki used as a warning to to intimidate Soviets

Post-revisionist

Argue neither side are responsible
War of misconceptions
Both sides improvising not following a plan of action
War of action and reaction

Conflicting ideologies

Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War

The revolution in 1917 brought about fears of communism spreading, particularly due to Lenin's open advocating of World Revolution. The West's support of the anti-communist 'Whites' in The Civil War showed how Lenin's ideas were a threat to Western ideology and set the stage for further tension to arise as Stalin would later remember and resent the US/British intervention in this conflict.

Wilsonian Liberalism

Based on the beliefs founded by President Wilson at the same time as the Bolshevik revolution: encouraged self determination, open markets and collective security based on the league of nations, viewed by the Bolsheviks as a tool of world capitalism and therefore a threat.

Communism vs. Capitalism

Communism and capitalism were basically the antithesis of one another;
Communism believed in state ownership
Capitalism believed in private ownership
The USSR opposed multi-party states and restricted freedom of speech
The USA increasingly encouraged freedom of speech =, democracy and liberation of the press

WWII

The Grand Alliance January 1942

Formed out of necessity and thanks to the common enemy of Hitler's Germany, but built on shaky ground with multiple strains.

The Second Front and Ideological Suspicion

The USSR faced over 80% of military effort from the Nazi's, so Stalin demanded the Allies opened a Second Front. Instead, they invaded North Africa and Italy first - Stalin suspected this was to make the USSR weak. Stalin also had concerns over Roosevelt's 'Open Door' policy based on the 'Free World.'

Legacy of the War

The power vacuum left by the defeat of the Nazi's in September 1945 meant huge areas of Europe had been liberated with no leader. The differing ideas as to what should happen next was essentially the immediate reason for the Cold War.

Soviets suffered a loss of 20 million men, USA a loss of 400,000

2nd time in the 20th century that Germany had invaded Russia (determination for this not to happen again)

Tehran November 1943

The Big Three (Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill) met to discuss the state of the War and post War actions.

Germany

The Big Three were only agreed that 'unconditional surrender' was the objective.

USSR wanted high reparations

However, the USA was cautious due to ToV - Stalin viewed this cautiousness as the US attempting to make Germany strong again so USSR would be under threat.

A date for the second front was set to quell Stalin's concerns

Poland

Stalin's concern for security led him to demand territory from Poland and a pro-Soviet government there.

It was agreed the USSR would keep territory seized in 1939 - this move was later to be revealed a big mistake
Poland to be compensated with land from Germany

Eastern Europe

Stalin wanted a Soviet sphere of influence in the East, which was reluctantly agreed upon by USA/UK.

In return, sphere of influence in West

Japan

Stalin refused to open a 'second front' in Japan until the World War was over.

UN

All agreed in principle to the US idea of a United Nations, though nothing was made official.

Why was Poland so important?

Poland had been the reason for UK's declaring war; it had therefore become a matter of honour for the UK. They didn't want to 'abandon' Poland to USSR

Poland was the largest EE country so it was likely to dictate the majority of EE decisions

Poland served as a historical corridor for forces attempting to invade Russian territory. Traditionally hostile to Russia

Yalta February 1945

The Big Three met at Yalta 4th - 11th February to discuss post War Europe and build upon decision made at Tehran. By this time, the USSR stood as a military superpower that was more than capable of finishing Germany on her own. The concessions made by the US and UK were reflective of this.

Poland

Poland was discussed at seven of the eight plenary sessions.

In August 1944, Stalin had refused to help Polish troops against the Nazis and nearly 200,000 Polish people were killed. Stalin didn't want Poland to be strong, as they could then rise against him, and fighting with the Nazis made them weak.

The most the negotiations at Yalta could achieve was superficial harmony as the events of 1944 had created a sense of bad blood, which was to last as Stalin revealed himself as resolute and unshakeable in his desires.

The London Poles had made clear they would only accept a negotiation with the Soviets because the USSR still had thousands of Polish PoW; they demanded their release, the recognition of the Polish government in exile and the restoration of old Polish Soviet boundaries before agreeing to anything

Soviets would not concede, and the agreements made at the Tehran Conference of 1943 meant the USA/UK had very little power in changing their minds

It was decided that Poland would be under Soviet influence but that free elections would be held there. Stalin agreed that some London Poles could join Lublin gov. In reality, this would not happen.

War Criminals

Nazi war criminals were to be tried in International Courts of Justice.

United Nations

Conference at San Francisco April 1945 agreed on.

Symbol of peace

USSR one of the biggest signatories

Four Zones

Germany was to be split into four zones, as was Berlin. Each zone would be occupied by one of the allies with the intention of Germany eventually reunifying. However, there will still disputes over reparations.

Japan

USSR to declare War on Japan three months after the end of the War.

Soviet sphere

Stalin promised free elections and democracy in Soviet sphere

Fundamental ideas of democracy differed - the USSR saw Communism as democratic because it was 'for the people'

Interpretation

At the time, the agreements made at Yalta were considered relatively successful and Roosevelt commented that there was a 'friendly atmosphere' to the conference.

Historians now view Yalta as an attempt by the West to mitigate the reality of the Soviet control of the East as the agreements were actually largely dictated by the USSR, due to their upper hand in the War. Yalta also revealed the self-interest of the countries involved and the importance of Poland as a point of tension in post-War negotiations.

Potsdam & the breakdown of the Grand Alliance July 1945

At Yalta, the agreements made meant there was a sense of hope surrounding negotiations. However, a lot had changed between Yalta and Potsdam:

Poland - no free elections had been held and the Red Army troops remained. On the 16th March Polish leaders went to have talks with the USSR, and were never seen again. London poles had been denied part in the Lublin government and on the 5th July Western allies had recognised Poland's largely communist government with little say in the matter.

Roosevelt died in April 1945, replaced by Truman, who was more hard-line and anti-communist

Roosevelt more experienced in foreign policy and more diplomatic

Truman far less certain about USSR and USA getting along

Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister said of a conversation with Truman, in which he insisted the Soviets carry out agreements at Yalta 'I have never been talked to like that before in my life'

Churchill replaced by Attlee

Poland

Borders were finalised to the dismay of the Western allies.

German Reparations

Reparations would be taken from each zone as the respective powers saw fit. Production would be limited.

\$10 billion also to be sent to the Soviet Union in machinery

Economics

USSR wanted to play a part in the running of the rich German area alongside a quarter of industrial equipment from Western Zones. The US rejected both of these ideas.

Stalin protested that this was going against earlier pledges

Japan

Stalin wanted to share in the occupation of Japan - this idea was also firmly blocked by Stalin

Eastern Europe

West wanted a say in affairs of Eastern Europe, Stalin rejected.

The Atomic Bomb

On July 24th, Truman took Stalin aside to tell him about the Atomic bomb which the US now possessed.

That night, Stalin sent a telegram to Russia telling those working on the atomic bomb to hurry up - he clearly saw this as a threat and therefore kick started what would be known as the 'arms race'

Truman's release of this information during the conference could be seen as a method to make Stalin more amenable in Europe

On the 6th August, 4 days after the conference, the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, followed by Nagasaki on the 9th

Stalin was prevented from joining war on Japan and taking spoils of war.

Soviets interpreted the use of the atomic bomb as a threat to the USSR, deeming the use of the second atomic bomb in Japan as militarily unnecessary

Potentially proved the paranoia of the US

Growing Tensions

The Secret Telegrams

Long telegram (US) Feb. 1946

George Kennan, the American ambassador in Moscow sends an 8,000 word Telegram to Truman, which states that Stalin wants to destroy, Capitalism and is building up military power. He urges that the Soviets can and should be beaten

Helps to shape American foreign policy of containment

NOVIKOV'S TELEGRAM (USSR) Sep. 1946

Stalin receives word from Novikov that the USA want to dominate the world and are preparing for war. Novikov stresses the strength and danger of the US, and the comparative weakness of the Soviet Union.

Shapes policy of boosting economy

The Iron Curtain Speech Mar 1946

At a famous speech in Fulton in the USA on 5th March 1946, Churchill observed that an 'iron curtain has descended across the continent'

Soviet Expansion

Satellite states

A satellite state is a country officially independent but controlled by another country in reality. The USSR created many satellite states following the end of World War II. These satellite states were Stalin's idea of 'buffer zones' - he would have argued these were 'Soviet-friendly' states.

Dispute between Historians, Revisionists believe the USSR were genuinely trying to defend themselves and were

insecure in their position in Europe due to the events of the 20th century so far. Whereas, historians such as Samuel Sharp saw Soviet expansion as an aggressive attempt at the total spread of communism throughout Europe.

Effect of WWII

States and societies were shattered:

- Elites discredited
- Economies destroyed
- Legacies of ethnic warfare and border conflicts (should borders made in war be left?)
- Hopes for a fresh start
- Intensive political struggles
- Capitalism ideas in deep crisis and social ideas popular: many were aware social reform was necessary

Left wing parties (agrarian socialists, social democrats, communists) favoured and dominated the political scene of most countries. Even without the USSR, countries would probably have leant to the left in this time of crisis due to popular ideas of democracy, reforms and punishment of collaborators of the war; in many ways, the defeat of extreme Right wing politics in Nazi Germany empowered the Left.

Percentage agreement 1944

Stalin was lead to believe by the percentage agreement between himself and Churchill in Moscow, Oct. 1944 that he had some 'entitlement' to the countries. He used this unofficial agreement to his advantage in consolidating Eastern European control.

Take over 1945-47

As countries were liberated from Germany, the Red Army troops (about 11 million) remained stationed in Eastern Europe and ensured governments friendly to the USSR replaced the Germans. Stalin ensured governments were coalitions, meaning the communist party would always have a say. Gradually, the communist party would infiltrate the key areas of government and security organisations. When elections took place, the Communist Party used any means necessary to discredit and frighten opponents. As the Cold War intensified, so did Stalin's enforcement off communist regime in the Eastern European block.

BULGARIA

Fixed elections, one party state established in 1946

POLAND

Fixed elections, which went against agreements of conferences, established communist government in 1947, which took its orders from Stalin.

HUNGARY

Communist party took large share of the vote in 1947 and took over government. All other parties then banned and Rakosi established a communist regime.

ROMANIA

November 1946 elections, communists had established a large majority and set up a government, which forced the abdication of the King.

YUGOSLAVIA

Led by Tito, Yugoslavia underwent its own communist revolution based on the Stalinist model in the USSR, and implemented communist regimes. However, Tito didn't agree with Stalin's imposing policies so after long hostilities Yugoslavia was expelled from Cominform. Yugoslavia survived as a communist country as the US still supported Yugoslavia economically as they knew it was not a threat to the US, and possibly to annoy Stalin.

CZECOSLOVAKIA - The Czech crisis

At first peaceful, hoped to remain a bridge between East and West. However, the Marshall Plan and Cominform meant they were forced to take sides. Stalin ordered Gottwald, communist leader, to remove opposition. 1948, The Communists launched a coup d'état and all opposition was removed. A leading opponent, Masaryk, was found dead - he had been thrown from the window of his office.

This was the end to the last remaining hopeful democratic country

The US saw it as a symptom of Soviet aggression and communist expansion

The Truman Doctrine March 1947

GREECE CIVIL WAR

Feb 1947, the British informed US that they were forced to pull out of providing aid to Greece in the Royalists fight against the communists due to near bankruptcy. Truman felt he must act quickly to strengthen non-communist forces in areas, such as this, that were vulnerable to Soviet pressures

On 12th March 1947, in a speech to congress, which was to become known as the Truman Doctrine, Truman stressed the seriousness of the international situation and how Europe was increasingly becoming divided into two blocs; Congress voted for \$400 million to be sent to Greece and Turkey,

Initially, Stalin brushed this speech off as propaganda, but it was soon to become an important development in American foreign policy leading to the 'Marshall Plan'

Created the language through which Americans world view the world

Marshall Aid

George Marshall visited Europe in April 1947 and was shocked at the amount of damage. In June, Marshall gave the first speech in which he said the US would give money and equipment to help countries rebuild. By 16th July, negotiations began in Paris surrounding the Marshall Plan. Stalin forced Eastern European states to boycott. The plan triumphed in Western Europe, but failed to penetrate the Iron Curtain.

Marshall claimed the policy was not directly against any regime but 'against hunger, poverty, and chaos' desperation Churchill said it was the most 'unselfish' thing in all of History

USA had selfish intents - a bankrupt Western Europe could not trade and may be susceptible to a communist takeover

Caused issues with Stalin because the aid was only in return for 'economic cooperation' and the US planned to extend aid to Germany, which Stalin thought undermined his position there.

To the Soviets, this was just another example of American Imperialism

Cominform (1947-56)

The USSR retaliated to the Marshall plan by setting up Cominform on the 5th October 1947; an organisation to co-ordinate communist parties throughout Europe.

Comecon (1949-91)

Organisation made in retaliation, provided economic assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe.

Division of Europe even more obvious.

EMERGENCE OF THE COLD WAR 1948 - 53

Berlin Blockade

German Problem

Due to the agreements made at Yalta and Potsdam, which stated that the measures taken in Germany would to be permanent, relations in Germany would remain a problem.

Talks in Moscow and London in 1947 over Germany broke down

In US interest to have stronger economy there; trade

In USSR interest to have a weak economy; didn't want a repeat of the suffering caused during two world wars

Berlin was an area of importance as it was the capital of Germany, thus where much of the cold War tensions manifested themselves.

Trizonia

The British and US zones emerged to create 'Bizonia,' in January 1947, France was to join them and create 'Trizonia.' Thanks to the Marshall Plan, the Western zone of Germany and Berlin became more prosperous. By 1948, the differences in standards of living between East and West were embarrassingly obvious, the new Deutschemark, introduced in June 1948, was created in hope to provide economic stability and aid recovery. For Stalin, this was the last straw.

Stalin didn't want Germany to receive Marshall Aid

The D-mark could have caused a complete collapse of Eastern currency

The Blockade

In June 1948, Stalin severed all road, rail and canal links with West Berlin.

US saw this as the beginning of an attack on West Germany

Clay, US commander in Berlin, said he would 'fight his way out' but was ordered not to by Truman

Berlin Airlift

The West responded to the blockade by organising an airlift of supplies. An expected 2 million tons of supplies were flown in over the period, an incredibly expensive and well-organised feat.

Stalin forced to concede May 1949

NATO April 1949

Encouraged by the blockade and the situation in much of Eastern Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, the US felt they needed a more coordinated response to Soviet aggression. In April 1949, talks began with the result of NATO, a defensive organisation with an agreed alliance between Western powers.

Stalin viewed as deliberately provocative

Arms Race

Continued with the USSR's explosion of an Atomic bomb in August 1949.

FRG/GDR 1949

The Berlin Crisis also saw the end to any hope of reunification. In May 1949, Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was founded followed by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in October of the same year.

Japan

Re-construction of Japan

General Douglas MacArthur effectively in charge. New constitution: gave women the vote, Japan to foreswear war in exchange for the US becoming their defence force

China

CCP

Mao says doesn't have to be one party

- Had greatly increased with an army of nearly a million as KMT was suffering

KMT

- Creates vacuum, one party, abuses civil rights of people

- Suffered series of defeats
- High inflation and governmental corruption in areas it governed
- Undermined Chiang

Cairo Conference 1943

Between Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-Shek

Established that the US would continue to send aid to Chiang Kai-Shek and that he was a key ally

US offered Chiang rule over Indochina, which he publicly denied

Shows how US opinion was that all of Asia were the same

The US continued to support the Nationalists with diplomatic pressures and aid, but only to an extent. They were forced to stop

Yalta conference (effects)

USSR/USA Intervention

USA support Nationalists with diplomatic pressures and money but only to an extent

Stopped supporting due to his corruption, sent 3 billion dollars between 1945-1949

Mao takes control

People's republic of China take power 1949, the old Republic of China retreated to Taiwan

Effects

The triumph of communist forces in China under Mao Zedong altered the path of the cold war dramatically because the USSR gained a new and powerful ally in eastern Asia, which could now put pressure on the USA, and its allies.

McCarthyism 1950

The Red Scare

By the end of his presidency, Truman had founded loyalty programmes in 39 states, and issued an Executive order, which established loyalty checks on all government officials.

HUAC

Formed in 1938, The House Un-American Activities Committee served as a platform to denounce communist intentions

In 1947 began hearings to expose Communist influence in American life

Between 1947 and 1951, loyalty boards forced nearly 3,000 government employees to resign and further 300 were sacked due to disloyalty

Alger Hiss

Alger Hiss was a US liberal official accused of being a communist spy in 1948 and convicted of this charge in 1950, sentenced to 5 years of prison.

Identified by Whittaker Chambers, former Soviet spy

Most liberals believed this claim was false and part of a conservative plan to tarnish liberalism

Fears grew that the Democratic administration was teeming with communists

Hiss' verdict encouraged conservatives to seek out more liberals who may be pro-communist

McCarthy

February 1950, Joseph McCarthy announced he had a list of 205 communists that worked in the state department

No supporting evidence, dismissed by the Senate

Hollywood paid to produce anti-communist films,

NSC-68

The Korean War 1950-53

Post WWII

Following the defeat of Japan, the USA and USSR agreed for the North and South to be split along the 38th parallel. USA troops went to the South and USSR to the North. It was not supposed to be permanent, however Korea became mixed in general post-War bitterness between the Cold War powers and an agreement could not be made. South elected a

Events

Kim Il Sung invaded the South

Truman thought this had been pushed by Stalin and saw it as a 'challenge to the free world'

Went to the UN for support and under the pretence of a 'UN police force' the US entered South Korea in September 1950

The US made up the bulk of the UN army with 300,000 troops

Syngman Rhee (South Korean leader) was arguably a puppet of US motives - lived in the US for 40 years.

November 1st 1950 China joined the War

More bombs dropped in Korea than dropped in all of WWII

Fought to a stale mate reached at the end of 1950

Armistice agreed after death of Stalin

Why did Kim Il Sung invade?

Encouraged by the international scene:

Encouraged by Stalin's shift in indirectly supporting Sung

Significance of Treaty of Friendship 1950 and USSR's atomic bomb

Supplied tanks and equipment

Communist takeover in Korea would strengthen Russia's position in the Pacific and make up for failure in Berlin

Kim Il Sung's own idea spurred on by the success of the Chinese communist government.

Threatened:

Why did the US join?

UN collective intervention was realistically largely American, but why did they join?

US monopoly, scared of spread of communism

Pressure to assert US authority after 'loss of China'

McCarthyism

Why did China join?

As the US continued to 'roll back' communism, they got closer to the Yalu River.

Significance

Costly

Over 30,000 US troops killed and 100,000 injured

Over 4 million Koreans killed, mostly civilians

First 'direct conflict' of the Cold War

Showed the success of containment

Some Americans saw it as a weak move

McCarthy argued that the dismissal of MacArthur was one of communism 'greatest victories' over the US

Wanted to go further and 'roll back' rather than just contain

Helped Eisenhower win the election as he promised a quick way out of Korea.

THE RISE AND FALL OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE 1953-57

Change in policy

Eisenhower's new look

Massive retaliation
ROLL BACK

End of Korean War

Death of Stalin

Khrushchev

Warsaw Pact 1955

Reaction to NATO.

Secret Speech February 1956

Leaked to Eastern European countries by the US, Khrushchev's secret speech

SEATO

Successful?

No. Never really amounted to anything

Geneva Agreements July 1954

Poland June 1956

Effect of De-Stalinisation

Following the death of Stalin, the communist regime in Poland relaxed somewhat

Events

Uprising of Polish industrial workers in Poznan

Results

Khrushchev allowed some reforms

The Hungarian Rising October - November 1956

Why did Khrushchev act the way he did?

Despite talk of destalinization and establishing peaceful co-existence, Hungary seemed to be too far for Khrushchev

Convinced Britain would be successful in Egypt and that a further failure in Hungary would mean Soviet power and prestige may never recover

Khrushchev to the central committee of USSR 'if we depart from Hungary, it will give a great boost to the Americans, English and French - the imperialists'

USA Reaction

USA did not interfere in Hungary

Arms Race - wasn't worth risking nuclear war

Suez Crisis - busy elsewhere

THE SECOND COLD WAR 1958-62

The First U2 Crisis

The Berlin Crisis 1961

Airlift established Berlin as a key point of conflict.

East German strikes 1953

Many people left for the West through Berlin (1950 198000, 1951 165000 1952 182000). Khrushchev's policy of desalinisation only threw the East into more confusion

Khrushchev adopted 'new course,' which was supposed to provide people with more consumer goods, and withdrew recent price increases

Building workers in eastern Berlin confronted by 10% production quota increase

On the 16th June 1953 these workers went on strike

350 towns and cities across GDR also strike against the poor conditions in East Germany

East German government put down uprising, hundreds lost their lives

In 1953, 332,000 more would leave for the west

Iron Fist

Many people were not happy with the living standards in East Germany/Berlin and lived under an 'iron fist' (similar to reasons for Hungarian and Polish Uprisings of 1956)

Religion restricted

No privacy
No western facing TV sets
Historic buildings fell, new faceless identical blocks put up
Erich Honecker

Conflicting ideas West/East

West wanted to keep control of West Germany and to see a united democratic Germany whereas the East wished to maintain control, have the West recognise them as an independent state and stop the flood of refugees especially the skilled and professional ones as they were desperately needed in the East.

1958 - Soviet Demands

Recognise GDR
Withdraw troops from western Berlin
Hand access routes to East Germany over

Hallstein Doctrine

Stated that if any country recognised the GDR as an official state the US would end diplomatic relations with them.

Vienna

June 4 1961 K&K met in Vienna
Khrushchev used Germany as a condition in immediate peace treaty

The Wall

13th August 1961 barb wired wall up, border completely closed and all of West Berlin encircled apart from access points.
Against the four power agreement reached in Paris on 20 June 1949

Cuban Missile Crisis 1962

Batista 1953-58

Under Batista, American corporations/individuals owned almost half of Cuba's sugar plantations and the majority of its ranches, mines and utilities
Did very little to resist, compliment with American wishes
Anti-communist
Supported by USA
Cubans viewed Batista as a corrupt and oppressive dictator

Fidel Castro 1959

The revolution in Cuba saw Castro, a Communist nationalist, although he did not profess to being so, overthrow Batista in January 1959 through popular revolt.
Cuban people loved him
Disapproved of American involvement in Cuban business
Felt he could only be loyal to the Americans or to the Cubans, did not want prominent American interference

Bay of Pigs 1961

The US trained Cuban exiles to go back into Cuba and eventually 1400 enter
Castro is aware so sends massive 20000 troops to attack the invaders

13 days - October 1962

Khrushchev gained knowledge of US missiles in Turkey and, encouraged by the Arms Race, saw fit to have an equal balance of weaponry so placed missiles on Cuba.
This meant they would have first strike ability
Decided to 'quarantine' blockade was an act of war
Prepared for war, 180,000 troops moved closer to Cuba in Florida
After 2 letter correspondence, removed missiles from turkey and soul and not invade
Missiles in turkey
Amazing propaganda for both sides
Nobody in US knew about missiles in turkey

Resolution & Thaw

Resolved without conflict by two messages from Khrushchev
Direct hotline set up between the Kremlin and the Pentagon
Recognition of how destructive bad relations could be

The Arms and Space Race (so far)

A Timeline

USA atomic bomb - 1945
USSR atomic bomb - 1949
USA hydrogen bomb - 1952
USSR lithium bomb - 1952
US ICBM - 1957
USSR launch first satellite - 1957
USSR launch first man - 1961
USA land on moon - 1969

Eisenhower

Saw as deterrence - brinkmanship

Espionage

Arms Race as a Restraint

The Arms Race could be viewed as a restraint on the aggression of the Cold War:
Danger of nuclear weapons meant super powers respected one another policies
Stayed out of each others affairs, e.g. the US did not help Hungarian rebels
MAD

Both the Berlin and Cuba crises were resolved without force because both powers knew the extent of three and didn't want to face nuclear war
JFK ignored advice to bomb USSR
Allowed the superpowers to see their errors and co-operate
Nuclear test ban treaty 1963, nuclear non-proliferation treaty 1968

Arms Race as an Instigator

Continued despite weak economics
Caused Cuban missile crisis

The Emergence of the Vietnam War

Franco-Vietnamese War

As the Pacific war turned against the Japanese, the French government and various Vietnamese nationalist groups (the most powerful of which was Ho Chi Minh's Communist party) jockeyed for power. They continued to do so after the Japanese surrender, with large-scale war breaking out between them in **late 1946**. Stalin showed little interest in Southeast Asia, and refused to recognise Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam proclaimed in **September 1945**, as European issues took his attention and he was distrustful of Ho Chi Minh (too independent and nationalist-orientated). Stalin offered neither material nor diplomatic support to the Vietminh and actually endorsed the French Communist party's backing of the first war budget.

The Effects of Cold War

Soviet-American relations had deteriorated sharply in **1946 and early 1947** thanks to issues over European reconstruction, the division of Germany, Iran, and the civil war in Greece. By spring 1947, Soviet hostility shaped American policy. Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, the French high commissioner, shifted the French public diplomacy in order to fit this new American mood. He insisted that Ho and the Vietminh were Stalin's pawns in a struggle for world supremacy and that Indochina was where the West must make a stand. Encouraged belief that Indo-China was a further example of the 'international Communist conspiracy'

Despite the State dept. finding no evidence of mass popular support for Communism, and further that it was not an ideological war but a desire for independence and hatred of the French that drove the unrest, US decision making proceeded on the basis of worst-case assumption and anti-Soviet policy. James Patterson 'Preventing communism... remained the guiding star of American policy'

The Domino Theory employed by the US throughout Asia meant that they saw it necessary to prevent communism in Vietnam, as other Asian countries would fall
US felt that losing Indochina to Communism could upset the strategic balance in Southeast Asia as well as harming the economic recovery of Japan and other key allies.

The importance of Japan to the US proved how much they wanted to keep Asia friendly.

In **August 1953**, Eisenhower declared: "If Indochina goes, several things happen right away. The Malayan peninsula, the last little bit of the end hanging on down there, would be scarcely defensible ... all India would be outflanked. Burma would certainly, in its weakened condition, be no defence."

Continued this theorising despite no countries 'falling to Communism following another country - e.g. no domino action after China turning Communist.

Americans also feared the effects in France itself of a French defeat in Indochina

- Enhance the prestige of Soviet-supported French Communist Party

USA/USSR intervention

Truman's government ruled out direct assistance in Vietnam. However, the administration was aware that unrestricted US economic assistance to France (\$1.9b between July 1945-48) was being used to pay war costs and French messages were always answered. Whereas, they ignored all messages from Minh, who modelled declaration of independence off the US and several times in **1945-46** pleaded for US help.

The success of Mao Zedong's communists in **October 1949** meant the DRV had a friendly Gov. across the Northern frontier. In **early 1950**, both China and Russia extended diplomatic recognition to Ho, followed by Mao providing arms, advisers and training.

- In addition to Mao in China, there were Communist-led rebellions in Indonesia, Burma, Malaya and the Philippines. Despite all failing, their existence fuelled Western fears of Communist takeover.
- Truman also experienced blame for the success of communism in China, for 'abandoning' Chiang Kai-shek

The US chose this time to declare open support of the anti-Vietminh effort. In early March, they pledged military and economic assistance, a decision solidified by the outbreak of the Korean War in late June.

- Despite growing prepossession for French withdrawal in Indochina, the US continued to press for French victory. By the **Spring of 1954**, 3/4 of financial cost was being provided by the US (approx. \$3bil)
- The 'who lost China?' question spurred on Eisenhower domestically to join the war.

Dien Bien Phu and Geneva Summits

On **7th May 1954**, Giap's forces overran the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu. The following day, ceasefire talks began in Geneva. Many NATO and neutralist Asia states wanted an end to the fighting, as they saw it be detracting from domestic issues. Both China and the Soviet Union also saw much to gain from the end of the war; Moscow felt more fighting would increase Chinese/American influence, and Beijing knew they would no longer have the match the military aid of the US.

The Vietminh and the Americans were less enthusiastic, unwilling to compromise. The French refused to continue the war as the Americans wished, however, and after ten weeks a peace settlement was signed.

- Vietnam partitioned down the seventeenth parallel pending nationwide elections.
- North to Vietminh, South to American-backed Diem.

Diem

Refuses to hold elections in 1955, seizes control, resistance begins supported by the north

Eisenhower decides to ignore Geneva summits and support Diem, as he is fully aware that Minh would win the elections if not

International powers didn't interfere; Khrushchev focused on 'peaceful coexistence,' Britain could not risk fall out with US, Chinese largely unbothered.

The July 1956 deadline for national elections in Vietnam came and went with no balloting taking place.

Many powers seemed happy to keep country divided. As American aid and influence poured into south Vietnam US officials spoke of a 'Diem miracle' and South Vietnam being a 'showcase.' However, these appearances were deceptive. Diem's policies, which favoured a catholic minority, alienated many and US presence undercut Saigon's Gov. legitimacy.

By 1957, a guerrilla insurgency arose in the South to challenge Diem's rule, which was shortly after supported by the North Vietnamese. Until 1961 Hanoi emphasised the political over military struggle but in January the DRV

Politburo asserted, “the revolution in the South is moving along the path toward a general insurrection with new characteristics, and the possibility of a peaceful development of the revolution is now almost non-existent.”

This was a turning point in the war, as military struggle was now placed on equal footing with political struggle.

Kennedy's Vietnam

Kennedy

Suggestion that he was more interested in Vietnam than his predecessors

- Brought up catholic, anti communist
- Criticised Truman for losing in China

Campaign rhetoric

- Limited his foreign policy
- Duty bound to increase defence expenditure and foreign involvement

Youth and inexperience

- Sensitive to references, wanted to prove himself

Laos

Laos was declared neutral in Geneva conferences in 1954. Washington therefore sent aid and adviser personnel to try to secure a pro western rule there. The Vietnamese countered by setting up the Pathet Lao in the east who by Kennedy's inauguration were emerging victorious. JFK was urged to intervene militarily but demurred, instead option to back Soviet-sponsored initiative to convene a new Geneva conference on Laos. In July 1962, a deal was signed, removing Laos as a cold war hot spot.

Kennedy's diplomacy had opened him up to charges of being 'soft on communism,' alongside being attacked for the failures of the Cuban Missile crisis.

Escalation

Kennedy was now determined to stand firm in Vietnam.

- The administration consequently stepped up aid dollars to the Diem regime, increased the air-dropping of raiding teams into North Vietnam and launched crop destruction by herbicides to starve the Vietcong and expose their hiding places.
- Kennedy also strengthened military presence. By 1963 more than 16,000 military advisers were in the country, some authorised to take part in combat.

Opposition to Diem increases

Peasants objected to programs that removed them from homes, and Buddhist monks (protesting Diem's religious persecution) ignited themselves in Saigon. Intellectuals complained Diem countenanced corruption in his Gov. concentrated power in hands of family/friends and jailed critics in order to silence them.

Eventually, US officials encouraged dissident ARVN generals to remove Diem and his influential brother Ngo Dinh Nhu.

- Nov 1st 1963, coup against Diem and his brother.