

7 origins of Cold War

7 | Origins and development of the Cold War

1945-1955

Impact of WWII on Europe (factors that would later contribute to Cold War tensions)

- 36 million Europeans killed
- Infrastructure of roads, railways, bridges and canals had been destroyed
- No gas, electricity or running water in many areas
- Disease and malnutrition were widespread
- Homelessness — 50 million people had lost/been forced to leave their homes

A new political landscape

- Decline of the Western European powers — Europe, Britain, France and Germany would no longer be dominant players
- Emergence of superpowers — United States and the USSR

EARLY TENSIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND USSR

1 — Competing ideologies

Russia —> communist. The United States feared communism ideologies and felt that communism would threaten their way of life

United States —> democratic. The USSR believed that the US was acting selfishly to build its own economic empire and political influence in the world

2 — Suspicion and mistrust before 1939

- The USSR's communist vision was aligned to the communist manifesto which called for worldwide communist revolutions to overthrow capitalist states, alarming Western European democratic countries
- **Paris peace conference** in 1919 decided Germany would not be broken up to act as a barrier against communism
- **Russia civil war 1918 — 1921**: the whites were supported by US and British troops
- **Red Scare 1920s** —US government arrested and imprisoned many people (usually immigrants from Russia, accusing them of being communist agents)
- **Policy of appeasement 1930s** — to some extent, this policy was driven by fear that the USSR was trying to spread communism by force. The British hoped that Germany would oppose communism. The policy threatened the USSR's security as it seemed to imply that Hitler was allowed to take over Eastern Europe
- **Nazi-soviet non aggression pact 1939** — surprised the world because the USSR had discussed an alliance against Hitler with Britain and France

Yalta and Potsdam

The Yalta Conference, February 1945

At that time, it was obvious that the allies were going to win the war. The USSR and the US dominated the discussions, but had differing views.

	views	reasons
the United states	• Believed in having peace, safety and prosperity in a post war world • Believed that democracy and capitalism is a model for international development. It was also a means to gain political influence and benefit economically through trade • Believed that the recovery of Western Europe was essential for international stability and US prosperity from trade	• alarmed by the Soviet supported communist parties in Eastern Europe who seemed to be making their moves based on the communist manifesto • Trade with Europe was disrupted due to WWII
USSR	• Wanted to establish buffer states to prevent another invasion • Believed that Eastern Europe must remain friendly to the USSR for its own security • Wanted massive war reparations from Germany to repair its own economy and ensure that Germany could not threaten it again	• the USSR was invaded by Germany twice through Poland • WWII resulted in at least 20 million Soviet citizens dead and devastation of the USSR's industries and cities

Agreements during the Yalta Conference

- The USSR to enter the war against Japan once Germany had surrendered
- Germany (and Berlin) to be divided into four zones: US, French, Britain and Soviet
- Nazi war criminals responsible for the holocaust to be tried before an international court
- Countries liberated from German occupation to be allowed to hold **free elections** to choose the government they wanted
- The big three to join the **United Nations**, a new organisation which aimed to keep peace after the war
- Eastern Europe to be a **Soviet sphere of influence** as Stalin was concerned about the future security of the USSR in view of the wartime sufferings it had endured

Disagreements and compromises during the Yalta conference

- Stalin wanted the Soviet border to move westwards into Poland and argued that Poland, in turn, could move its border westwards into German territory
 - Both Churchill and Roosevelt were unhappy with this plan
 - Churchill persuaded Roosevelt to accept it as long as the USSR did not interfere in Greece (Stalin accepted)
- Stalin and Churchill clashed over many issues and their relations remained tense. However, they were careful to put up a United front

- Shortly after the Yalta conference, Churchill wrote to Roosevelt expressing his concerns that the USSR might jeopardize the free world
- In May 1945, Churchill ordered his top military commanders to make plans for a possible future war against the USSR

The Potsdam conference July- August 1945

Important changes

1 — Change in leadership

- USSR led by Stalin
- United States led by Truman
 - Truman was concerned about the potential threat the USSR posed to the security of the world
 - Adopted a more “get tough” approach and challenged Stalin on the big issues
- Britain led by Clement Attlee

2 — increasing Soviet control

- Soviet troops now controlled most of Eastern Europe
 - The red army had liberated the countries of Eastern Europe from the Germans, but instead of withdrawing his troops, Stalin had left them there
 - By **July 1945**, Stalin’s troops effectively controlled the Baltic states, Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc
- **Poland** remained a source of tension amongst the allies
 - Stalin set up a communist government in Poland, ignoring the wishes of the majority of the poles.
 - Also encouraged communists in the other states to take power
 - Broke agreements made during the Yalta Conference (free elections)

3 — The Manhattan project

A further change emerged — since 1941, the United States had been secretly developing a new weapon to end the war (the atomic bomb), which was part of a state funded nuclear development programme called the manhattan project.

The USA kept it a secret from the USSR until the Potsdam conference, where Truman informed Stalin that the USA had successfully tested the atomic bomb. —> Stalin was not surprised when Truman told him about the bomb, since it had been leaked to him.

The USA’s choice to not tell USSR about the bomb earlier further deepened Stalin’s suspicions towards the United States’ intentions

Major disagreements

Disagreement over Germany	Disagreement over Eastern Europe
• Stalin wanted to cripple Germany completely; Truman disagreed as he did not want to repeat the mistake of the treaty of Versailles • Stalin also wanted compensation from Germany; Truman agreed at first, then changed his mind ◦ Stalin thought Truman wanted to protect Germany and became suspicious of him	• at the Yalta conference, it was agreed that Eastern Europe would be a Soviet sphere of influence • To Stalin, this meant that he could set up communist governments loyal to him and keep them under close control ◦ This was more than what Truman had in mind —> he suspected Stalin of wanting to control all of Europe

Worsening relations after Potsdam

Especially after the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan

1 — the atomic bomb

- Truman hoped to intimidate Stalin when revealing the atomic bomb to him
- Stalin was not intimidated — he already knew because of Soviet spies. Stalin had already ordered Soviet technicians and scientists to develop an atomic bomb before the Potsdam conference. By 1949, both superpowers had atomic weapons (atomic parity)

2 — the iron curtain and Soviet control of Eastern Europe

- Stalin was determined to control the governments of Eastern Europe to protect the USSR from future attacks
- Although elections were held, Stalin adopted **salami tactics** and removed political opponents one by one to make sure that communist governments were led by politicians loyal to him
 - The communist takeovers were brutal, by “slicing” through the opposition bit by bit
 - **EXAMPLE:** Jan Masaryk believed passionately in communism, and defeated the communists in several elections. He was found dead in March 1948
- To Stalin, controlling Eastern Europe made sense as it was the traditional route through which enemies from the west attacked Russia. If he controlled the region by creating buffer states, it would be more challenging for others to invade the USSR through it
- To Truman, Stalin’s actions were evidence that he was building an empire
 - Many people in the United States were weary of conflict and dragging the USA into international politics, and argued that Stalin’s actions were none of their concern
 - Truman asked Churchill for help, who was highly respected despite no longer being president
 - Truman arranged for him to give a speech at Missouri, in March 1946 and approved the speech in advance,

- Churchill warned of the dangers of the USSR and first used the term “the iron curtain”
- The iron curtain alarmed many Americans and got Truman the attention and support he wanted in getting the USA more involved in international affairs
- The speech also drew angry responses from the Soviet media and Stalin himself

Developments of the Cold War

1947-1955

1 — Truman doctrine and Containment

- Truman continued to take a tough line against Stalin
- One of the documents that influenced his perception was the **Long Telegram** by George Kennan addressed to Dean Acheson
- It's result was an announcement in March 1947, which became known as the **Truman Doctrine**
 - Truman announced that the USA would provide money, military equipment and advice to democratic countries perceived to be threatened by communist influences
 - It was the beginning of a policy of containment, an attempt to stop the spread of communism. It was introduced as a result of events in **Turkey** and **Greece**
- a) **developments in Turkey and Greece**
- Greece was occupied by the Germans in WWII. After the war it was run by the British until a new government could be set up.
 - The Greek communist party wanted a communist state while the Greek royalist wanted the return of the monarch
 - 1946 | Civil war between the two. The British did not have the resources to control the situation and announced their withdrawal on 24 February 1947 (European country falling to communism)
- In Turkey, Stalin was still trying to gain influence
 - He wanted to get access to the Turkish straits so that Soviet ships could sail from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea
 - Truman was concerned that if turkey became an ally of the USSR, Stalin might use it as a stepping stone to spread communist influence in the Middle East, which was importantly to the USA because of its **oil reserves**
 - To gain the support of the people, Truman exaggerated the scale of threat in Greece and turkey. American newspapers aided his efforts
- In May 1947, the US congress passed the Greece and turkey aid bill, a package of 400 million.
 - It secured turkey as a US ally and propped up the monarchist government
 - However, by exaggerating the threat of the USSR, Truman probably worsened relations between Stalin and himself —> Stalin had actually kept his promise to Churchill in 1945 not to help the communists in Greece

2 — the Marshall Plan

- Truman wanted to use the United States' mighty economic power to prevent the spread of communism. He ordered US Secretary of State, George Marshall, to come up with an economic aid plan.
- June 1947 | Marshall Plan was announced —> \$13 billion into helping Europe economies recover
 - April 1948 | Food, machinery, animals and others were shipped to democratic countries in Europe to attract them to capitalism
- **GOAL**
 - Europe to recover so that its industries had a market to export their goods to
 - Largest aid went to USA's closest allies
 - Countries with no capitalist systems did not receive support

3 — Cominform and Comecon

- Turned Eastern Europe into satellite states (independent country under heavy influence from another country) to form a buffer zone protecting it from Western Europe
- a) **Cominform**
 - Included the leaders of the communist parties in Eastern Europe
 - Published propaganda that would unite communist states in Europe and ensured that satellite states implement a Soviet style communism and trade mainly with other Cominform countries
 - Stalin told Cominform countries which policies they should follow
- b) **Comecon**
 - Set up in response to the Marshall plan to ensure satellite states were free from any kind of control or influence from the United States
 - Idea: trade with Comecon members rather than with the west —> satellite states were promised benefits similar to the Marshall plan
 - Reality: Comecon favoured USSR more —> example, Poland was forced to sell its coal to USSR at 1/10 the price

The Berlin blockade

The issue of Germany (divided into four zones)

Essay questions

- reasons why Berlin blockade happened

Escalation of tensions

Truman began to see Germany as a possible ally against the USSR. Britain and France were also keen for Germany to stop rebuilding its economy, as controlling their zones was a drain of resources. In early 1948, the three combined their zones into the **trizone**. (**Iron curtain**) A new currency was also introduced.

1. Yalta background

- Germany split into 4
- 1948 | trizone formed
- USA poured money into the Marshall aid in West Berlin
- Stalin started to search road and rail traffic into Berlin (limiting resources to West Berlin)

- 23 June | New currency introduced into trizone
- 2. Stalin's concerns
 - To Stalin, it seemed that the United States was rebuilding Germany, and thought to force the allies out of Berlin
 - He believed it was a capitalist plot to lure East Germans to the west
 - He was angry that he wasn't consulted on policies
- 3. Stalin's reactions
 - June 1948 | the Berlin blockade where he cut the rail and road links from the allied zones to West Berlin, as well as disrupted water and power supplies
 - Closed land corridors, halting allied road and rail shipments, then sending them back to their originating zones
 - Shut down thoroughfares and services into West Berlin, closing roads, cutting telephone lines and blocking water supplies
 - Power lines were disconnected
 - Allied sectors were almost completely blockaded, save for the air routes
 - Hoped to force USA and allies to submit and withdraw from their policies
 - Truman countered the blockade by ordering the **Berlin airlift**. The United States West Berlin with coal, food and medicine by air

Reasons for Berlin blockade

1 — differences in aim over Germany between USA and USSR

- Reparations
 - Stalin wanted to economically destroy Germany to bring about Russia's post war economic reconstruction
 - Allies wanted to ensure Germany would recover its economy to prevent it from being attracted to communism
- The two powers could not see eye to eye with each other, leading to **increasing distrust and mutual suspicions**

2 — disagreements over the creation of trizone in Germany

- The trizone came about because Germany had no financial means to bring about economic recovery
- 1948 | Britain, France and USA combined their zones in Germany to rebuild Germany's industries
- The trizone contained 75% of Germany's population and most of its industry —> military threat to Stalin

3 — Stalin's reactions towards the Marshall aid

- USA was determined to contain soviet's expansion in Europe
- Truman wanted West Berlin to remain as a beacon of freedom deep in the Soviet zone
- 31 March 1948 | congress voted for Marshall aid
- Germany would be able to receive USA's assistance
- Immediately, the Russians started searching all road and rail traffic into Berlin

- Stalin did not expect USA assistance for Germany. He viewed the action as the USA using capitalism to undermine soviet policies of keeping their side of Germany poor and weak. He began to look at ways to have greater control over East Berlin

4 — economic disparity between east and west Germany

- Creation of trizone —> pool resources and industries
- June 1948 | new currency without consulting USSR
- Marshall aid
 - With these aids, west Germany began to recover
 - The economic disparity was too embarrassing for Stalin and he wanted to keep the Soviet zone separate
- 24 June | Russians stopped all road and rail traffic into Berlin
- The Soviet Union saw the 1948 Berlin crisis as an attempt to undermine Soviet influence in eastern Germany; Stalin said he was defending the East German economy against the new currency, which was ruining it. The western powers said Stalin was trying to force them out of Berlin

Allied response

- The allies airlifted supplies to West Berlin —> they were cautious that Stalin might interpret the flying of planes over Soviet zones as a signal for war, but Stalin did not shoot down the planes
 - For 10 months, everything from food to fuel were supplied via airlift to three airports in west Germany/Berlin
 - 1.5 million tonnes of goods over 318 days
- 1949 | Stalin reopened all the roads and railways —> west and east Germany were formed
- Germany remained an ongoing source of tension

Results of the Berlin blockade

- Relationship with Russia at its worst
- A big humiliation to Stalin
- A big boost to the morale of the western powers
- Brought about greater coordination to the defences of the western powers with the formation of NATO (north Atlantic treaty organisation)
 - The blockade had revealed the western power's military unreadiness for a war, which frightened them
 - Strengthened the security of Western Europe
 - —> all NATO members agreed to go to war if any member was attacked —> USA made it clear they would intervene in Western Europe

Continuing tensions

1949 — 1955

1949 | USSR announced its own atomic bomb

1949 | China became a communist country; largest population on earth was now ruled by communist leader Mao Zedong

1950 | Korean War

The Warsaw pact, 1955

1953 | Stalin died

1955 | West Germany was invited to join NATO; seen as a threat by the USSR

May 1955 | Warsaw Pact; all communist states of Eastern Europe (except Yugoslavia) joined

- The Warsaw pact strengthened the USSR since it gave it command of all the armies of the satellite states
- Tensions increased; Europe was now divided into two armed camps
- The Warsaw pact was significant because it **entrenched Soviet rule** in Eastern Europe
 - Soviet troops, instead of the respective governments, dealt with protests and uprisings
 - November 1956 | nation-wide revolt in Hungary was forcefully quelled by soviet tanks and troops

Arms race; building of more nuclear weapons

- August 1949 | nuclear bomb tested in Russia
- Truman gave acknowledgment for USA to produce a super home
- February 1950 | China signed treaty of alliance with Russia
- Each side put much energy into plans to stop a possible invasion by the other side

SUMMARY

Reasons for Cold War

1. Competing ideologies
2. History of mistrust
3. Yalta and Potsdam
4. Worsened relations
 - a. Atomic bomb
 - b. Iron curtain and containment

Development of Cold War

1. Truman doctrine, Marshall plan, Cominform and Comecon
2. The Berlin blockade
 - a. Escalation of tensions
 - b. Reasons
 - c. Results
3. Continuing tensions
 - a. Warsaw pact
 - b. Armed race

