

The usa and the ussr

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



The USA and the USSR as World Superpowers, 1945-1991 Harry Truman- President, USA Joseph Stalin, USSR The roots of the Cold War Almost as soon as the Second World War ended, the winners started to argue with each other. In particular, a bitter conflict developed between the USA and USSR. This struggle continued until the late 1980s. Walter Lippmann, an American journalist writing in the 1940s, called it a 'cold war' and the phrase has been widely used since. Historians have produced three conflicting explanations for the start of the Cold War: 1. The USSR was to blame. Stalin planned for a communist take-over of the world. The take-over of Eastern Europe was the first step towards world control. 2. The USA was to blame. Soviet actions were defensive. The USA wanted to control its area of influence but refused to allow the USSR to do the same. 3. Neither side was to blame. The Cold War was based on misunderstanding and forces beyond the control of both sides. Blame for the Cold War The Traditionalists Until the 1960s, most historians followed the official government line — that the Cold War was the direct result of Stalin's aggressive Soviet expansionism. Allocation of blame was simple — the Soviets were to blame! This view of the Cold War has never really gone away, and there have always been people who have seen the Soviet Union as the cause of the confrontation. The Revisionists In 1959, however, William Appleman Williams published his *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. Williams blamed the US for the Cold War. Williams, and the historians who followed him were called the 'revisionists'. This 'revisionist' approach reached its height during the Vietnam War when many people suggested that America was as bad as Russia. Williams argued that America's chief aim in the years after the war was to make sure that there

was an "open door" for American trade, and that this led the American government to try to make sure that countries remained capitalist countries like the USA. Gar Alperovitz, in his book: *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (1965), placed the blame for the Cold War on the Americans for their use of the atomic bomb — he contended that Truman decided to drop the bomb as a means to intimidate the Soviet Union. One of the most extreme revisionists was Gabriel Kolko, who wrote *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy* in 1972. One reviewer of his books says that 'he devoted his entire professional life to blaming the United States for the Cold War', and Kolko suggested that Truman should have given Stalin the atomic bomb in 1945, claimed that Russia treated Poland well in 1945, and blamed South Korea for the Korean War of 1950-3. The Post-Revisionists As time went on, however, a group of historians called the 'post-revisionists' tried to present the foundations of the Cold War as neither the fault of the Americans or the USSR. The first was John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972), who believed that both America and Russia wanted to keep the peace after the war but that conflict was caused by mutual misunderstanding, reactivity, and above all the American inability to understand Stalin's fears and need to defend himself after the war. Martin P. Leffler, in his book: *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War* (1992) saw the Cold War as a clash of two military establishments both seeking world domination. Marc Trachtenberg, *A Contested Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (1999) claimed that the Cold War was really about settling the German question in the aftermath of World War II.

Post-1991 In 1991, Communism in the Soviet Union collapsed. This has allowed historians to get to see the Russian archives, and to investigate what Russia was REALLY about in this period. In *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: from Stalin to Khrushchev*(1997), the Russian historians Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, use de-classified Soviet documents to analyse Stalin's part in causing the Cold War. They reveal a fanatic belief in Communism, lots of personal faults and mistakes, but — above all — a genuine desire to avoid confrontation with the USA. Many of these recent studies of early Cold War history are increasingly portraying the Cold War as a CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES — as a clash between Capitalism and Communism: The long-term causes of the Cold War The roots of the Cold War are to be found in earlier history. One historian said that the Cold War started, not in 1940s but in 1917, when the Russian Revolution took place and Soviet communism was born. By 1917 the USA was the richest country in the world. The two countries were both enormous and both had great natural resources. However, there was no chance of real friendship between them because the leaders of the new Soviet Union had extremely different beliefs from those of American politicians. Not only did American and Soviet leaders disagree totally. Each side was completely convinced that it was right and that other countries around the world should follow their lead. Americans believed that the answer to the world problems was for other people to learn to live in an American way. The Soviet leaders were sure that their communist ideas would eventually spread to every country in the world. As a result the USA and the Soviet Union were very hostile towards each other after 1917. In 1919 the USA joined Britain, France and other countries in an

attempt to destroy Soviet communism by force. They invaded the Soviet Union in support of the White Russians who were engaged in a civil war with the Bolshevik revolutionaries. This use of force failed but the hostility remained. 1945: the breakdown of the wartime alliance The victory over Hitler created new worries for the winners. They had different views as to the future of Europe after the war. Before the end of 1945 deep divisions were emerging between the leaders of the USA and the Soviet Union Why did the wartime alliance fall apart in 1945? The Livadia Palace near Yalta, a summer palace built for Russia's last tsar, Nicholas II. Site of the 1945 Yalta Conference between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill Yalta and the argument over Poland In February 1945 the leaders of Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union met at a place called Yalta. The three leaders were Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. The end of the war was in sight and they met to decide on the shape of the post-war world. Much of their time was spent discussing the future of Poland. They disagreed about how Poland should be governed. Yalta: The Attitude of the leaders - Roosevelt was already very ill- two months later he would be dead. Roosevelt was keen that democracy should be introduced inot eastern Europe. However, he trusted Stalin and wanted to make sure that the USA and the USSR remained on good terms after the war. Churchill was very concerned about the future of Poland and Eastern Europe. He did not trust Stalin. He wanted to stop Stalin from imposing communism on the territory taken by the Red Army. Britain had gone to war in 1939 to help Poland and Churchill did not want to abandon Poland to Soviet control. Stalin was obsessed with the security of the USSR. He wanted the Soviet Union to retain the Polish territory he had taken in 1939 as part of the Nazi-

Soviet Pact. He also wanted to make sure that the new government of Poland would be friendly towards the Soviet Union. - - Yalta, 1945 Summit

Why was Poland the centre of attention at Yalta? Poland was the largest country in Eastern Europe. Its post war settlement was likely to set a pattern for the rest of Eastern Europe but the wartime allies had disagreed strongly about that settlement before Yalta. Two different groups wanted to form the new government for Poland. Each group had a very different relationship with Stalin:

The London Poles When the war broke out, some members of the Polish government fled to London and set up a 'government-in-exile'. They were strongly anti-Soviet. Much of Poland had been in the Russian Empire before 1917. The London Poles were Catholics and many were landowners: they hated both the idea of communism and Stalin because he had carved up their country through the German-Soviet Pact in 1939. In 1943 they were horrified to learn that the Soviet army had executed about 15, 000 Polish officers and buried their bodies at a place called Katyn. Stalin knew that if the London Poles formed a Polish government, it would be hostile to the USSR.

The Lublin Poles In July 1944 the USSR set up its own future government for Poland . This first met at the town of Lublin, and they became known as the Lublin Poles. They were mostly communists and Stalin felt that they could be trusted.

Source -A The Yalta Agreement made the following statement about the future of Eastern Europe. This became known as the Declaration on Liberated Europe: The three governments{USA, USSR, Britain}will assist the people in any European liberated state to form interim governments broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free

elections of governments responsible to the will of the people. Source -B The Yalta agreement included specific plans for the future of Poland. A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of the Western part of Poland. The Provisional Government should therefore be re-organised on a more democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This Polish government shall be pledged to the holding of free elections as soon as possible. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates. The Warsaw uprising The London poles tried to take control of Poland before the Red Army. In August 1944 Polish resistance fighters loyal to London poles attacked German forces in Warsaw. The Soviet army was nearby but did not come to the help of the poles and the Germans crushed the rising. When the Soviet forces entered Warsaw the city was empty. Stalin wanted Lublin Poles to take control. Source -C Warsaw After the Uprising -Soviet army did not come to help The meeting at Yalta The meeting at Yalta, in Soviet Union, took place between 4 and 11 February. The three men were pleased at the way the war was going. President Roosevelt talked about the friendly, 'family' atmosphere of the meeting but beneath the surface, serious disagreements existed. The discussions at Yalta were very wide-ranging but the future of Poland dominated. The three leaders had previously agreed that the Soviet Union would take land from Poland and Poland would, in turn, be given German land. At Yalta they argued about the details and Churchill tried to limit the

changes. He was worried about taking too much land from Germany and said: 'I do not want to stuff the Polish goose until it dies of German indigestion'. There was even greater disagreement about who should govern Poland. Eventually, Roosevelt and Churchill thought they had won a major concession from Stalin: the Soviet leader agreed that the Lublin government should be expanded to include some of the London Poles and he accepted that free elections should be held as soon as possible in Poland. When asked how soon these elections could be held, Stalin replied: 'It should be possible within a month'. THE TERMS OF THE YALTA AGREEMENT The final agreement included a Declaration on Liberated Europe. This stated that each liberated country would be given an emergency government with representatives from any important non-fascist groups and that free elections would be held as soon as possible to set up a democratic government. The borders of Poland were to be altered so that the USSR gained a huge amount of territory from eastern Poland. In return Poland was promised land taken from the eastern part of Germany. The Lublin government in Poland was to be expanded so that it also included some of the London Poles. Free elections would be held in Poland as soon as possible. The British and the Americans held many prisoners of war from Soviet territory. These were men from German occupied lands who had chosen or been forced to join the German Army. At Yalta it was agreed that they would be sent back to the USSR. About 10, 000 of these men were executed on their return and many more were imprisoned. The leaders agreed that Germany should be divided into occupied zones. Churchill argued that there should be a French zone, as well as a British, American and Soviet zone. This was because Churchill was keen

to restore the power of France. Stalin and Roosevelt accepted this suggestion. The USSR agreed to help in the war against Japan. In return the USSR gained control of island territories north of Japan. This turned out to be a very good deal for the USSR because Soviet troops did not have to do very much fighting before the Japanese surrender. The leaders agreed to the setting up of the United Nations. Stalin successfully argued that each country should have a veto on the decisions of the powerful Security Council. YALTA : THE PROBLEMS - The Soviets and the Americans interpreted it differently. The agreement talked about the need for 'democracy' and 'free elections'. For Roosevelt democracy was the American system of free speech. Stalin's idea of democracy was a communist one, in which the communist party represented the people and no opposition was allowed. Yalta raised false expectations in the USA. People expected that Stalin would now allow western -style governments to be set up in Eastern Europe. They were bitterly disappointed when this did not happen. The Agreement tried to achieve compromise over the future Poland. In fact, compromise was not possible. Either Poland was democratic or it was friendly towards the USSR. Leading figures in Polish society were anti-Russian. Stalin knew that he could only make sure that Poland was friendly by destroying free speech. - - Source -D Roosevelt was now dying, but he managed to write a letter of criticism to Stalin: I cannot conceal from you the concern with which I view the development of events since our fruitful meeting at Yalta. So far there has been a discouraging lack of progress made in the carrying out of the decisions we made at the Conference, particularly those relating to the Polish question. I am frankly puzzled as to why this should be and must tell you

that I do not fully understand the attitude of your government. F. D.

Roosevelt, 1 April 1945 Source- E Churchill was not pleased by the news from Poland. He wrote to Stalin on 29 April 1945. The British went to war on account of Poland. They can never feel this war will have ended rightly unless Poland has a fair deal in the sense of independence and freedom, on the basis of freindship with Russia. It was on this that I thought we agreed at Yalta. What was agreed at the Yalta Conference, 1945? ' Germany was to be defeated and then disarmed.' ' Germany (Berlin, Austria and Vienna) divided into four zones of occupation.' ' Germany would have to pay reparations.' ' The zones to be controlled by USA, USSR, Britain and France.' ' Berlin was to be in Soviet zone.' ' Once Germany defeated, Soviet Union to join war against Japan.' ' A United Nations Organisation to be set up to keep the peace.' ' As east European Countries liberated they would be able to hold free elections to set up democratic governments.' 9} ' In Poland free elections were to be held.' 10} ' Eastern Europe was to be a Soviet sphere of influence.' 1} 2} 3} 4} 5} 6} 7} 8} The beginning of the Cold War The term ' Cold War' refers to the period of struggle and conflict between the USA and USSR between 1945-1991. Each of the Superpowers saw the other as a threat to its continued survival and adopted strategies to preserve their positions. The two Superpowers never went to war directly with each other in this period, but became involved in conflicts such as the Korean War where each side stood behind the other nations involved. Therefore this conflict is termed as the Cold War rather than a conventional hot war. There were a number of occasions when it appeared that a hot war would break out between the Superpowers, but thankfully this was avoided. Reasons for the

breakdown of the wartime alliance by 1945 The USSR and the USA both joined the Second World War in 1941, the former on June 22nd following Hitler's Operation Barbarossa and the latter on December 9th following Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbour. In the long run both attacks proved fatal to the aggressor nations; sleeping giants were awoken, the Axis powers were defeated in 1945 and a new world order was created. The USSR and the USA emerged as by far the most powerful nations from the Second World War. The former Great Powers — Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan — were no longer capable of dominating the rest of the world, only the USA and the USSR, the Superpowers, remained unbroken. Source - F Stalin refused to give any ground. In May, Stalin said the Americans were to blame for any bad feelings. At Yalta it had been agreed that the existing government of Poland was to be reconstructed. Anyone with common sense could see that this means that the present{Lublin}government was to form the basis of the new government. No other understanding of the Yalta agreement is possible. The Russians should not be treated as fools. The emergence of rivalry between the Superpowers The USSR was a one party state dominated by Stalin. Individuals did not have the choice to choose alternative politicians in free elections; industry and agriculture was owned by the state. In the 1930s, Stalin had transformed the USSR into a modern industrial state through the Five Year Plans, Collectivisation and the Purges. The transformation had come at a huge cost in human life, but a superpower had been born, capable of defeating Nazi Germany and emerging as a world power. The people of the USSR had experienced foreign invasion in the First World War, during the Civil War 1918-1921 and the Second World War. Stalin

believed that the USA's long-term ambition was to destroy communism, therefore he adopted policies, which he believed would prevent this from happening. The USA was a democratic state, with free elections, freedom of speech and a capitalist economic system. In the 1930s the American people had experienced the Depression and a withdrawal from world politics (isolationism). The Second World War helped to regenerate the USA's industries to such an extent that people's standards of living actually went up during the Second World War. The USA emerged immeasurably more powerful from the war with Germany and Japan. It was clear that the USA could no longer sit on the sidelines in world politics. However, the USA was extremely concerned by the spread of communism in Eastern Europe and the Far East. The USA believed that Stalin wanted to convert the rest of the world to communism. The USA had fought the fascist ideologies of Germany, Italy and Japan, now it was prepared to fight the communist ideology of the USSR. The beliefs and attitudes of Stalin and Truman Stalin's fear of the USA led him to believe that the USSR needed a barrier of territory between Soviet territory and the USA's allies in Western Europe. Stalin feared another anti-communist invasion of Russia from Europe as had occurred in 1918 and 1941. Stalin wanted to create a barrier against the West, a barrier made up of communist run countries in Eastern Europe. The new president of the USA, Harry Truman, saw Soviet domination of Eastern Europe not as an act of defence on Stalin's part, but as an act of aggression. Would this communist take-over spread to Western Europe too? Who was more to blame for starting the Cold War, the USA or the USSR? Explain your answer. 1} ' The West was suspicious of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe. Stalin had

removed non-communist leaders in Poland, replacing them with Communists.

2} Rather than allowing free elections the USSR began to impose Communist rule on the countries it had occupied.' 3} ' Truman was highly suspicious of Stalin's motives. He was much less trusting than Roosevelt had been. Stalin refused to reduce the size of the Red Army, the biggest in the world. In Eastern Europe he believed the Soviet leader intended to set up USSR controlled buffer states.' 4} ' The Western Allies accused Stalin of breaking agreements over Germany. The Western Allies wanted Germany to recover as quickly as possible, realising that it would be a barrier against Communism. The USSR wanted a weak Germany.' 5} ' The USA interpreted the Soviet takeover of eastern Europe as the start of spreading communism around the world and responded with the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan which was to help the vulnerable European economy suffering from the after effects of war. The USSR saw this as a threat.'

OR 1} ' Stalin was annoyed with the USA because Truman had not informed him of the use of the atomic bomb on Japan. Stalin was convinced the US would use the bomb to gain world-wide power and so started work on producing one. This caused the USA to feel threatened'. 2} ' Stalin refused to allow Soviet controlled countries to accept aid as he thought the real purpose was for the USA to build up friendship with European countries'. 3} ' The fact that the USA had the atom bomb encouraged Stalin to rush through the Soviet response and the arms race had started'. 4} ' European countries set up NATO to help each other if attacked by Stalin. Stalin considered this as a threat'. ' The Soviet Union was to blame for the Cold War.'

How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. 1} ' The USA and USSR held different

ideologies of capitalism v communism and actions led to suspicion and hostility.' 2} ' They drifted apart as the war had ended and there was no common enemy.' 3} ' Soviet Union wanted a weak Germany to avoid any future attack.' 4} ' Following Yalta it was expected that there would be free elections in eastern Europe countries after their liberation. The Red Army made sure their new governments were communist controlled.' 5} ' Harmony not helped by politicians such as Churchill and his " Iron Curtain" speech and Truman who was more anti-communist than Roosevelt who had got on reasonably well with Stalin.' 6} ' The USA interpreted the Soviet takeover of eastern Europe as the start of spreading communism around the world.' 7} ' The USA response was the Truman Doctrine that offered support to any free peoples struggling to avoid communism.' 8} ' The Marshall Plan was to help the vulnerable European economy suffering from the after effects of war. Stalin refused to allow Soviet bloc countries to accept aid as he thought the real purpose was for the USA to build up friendships with European countries.' 9} ' To counter the Marshall Plan Stalin set up Cominform to strengthen cooperation between communists and Comecon to develop economic cooperation between communist countries.' Explains reasons with evaluation of ' how far' 8 Might link explanation to lack of trust, lack of willingness to understand each other's point of view or the different ideologies. Candidates may argue that it will depend on which side's point of view you accept. ' It was the Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe that caused the Cold War.' How far do you agree with this statement? 1} ' USSR wanted a weak Germany to avoid any future attack.' 2} ' Following Yalta, it was expected that there would be free elections in eastern European countries

after their liberation. The Red Army made sure their new governments were communist controlled.' 3} ' To counter the Marshall Plan, Stalin set up Cominform to strengthen co-operation between communists and Comecon to develop economic co-operation between communist countries.' 4} ' The USA interpreted the Soviet takeover of eastern Europe as the start of spreading communism around the world.' 5} ' The USA response was that the Truman Doctrine offered support to any free peoples struggling to avoid communism.' 6} ' The Marshall Plan was to help the vulnerable European economy suffering from the after effects of war. Stalin refused to allow Soviet bloc countries to accept aid as he thought the real purpose was for the USA to build up friendships with European countries.' 7} ' The USA and the USSR held different ideologies of capitalism and communism and actions led to suspicion and hostility.' 8} ' They drifted apart as the war had ended and there was no common enemy.' 9} ' Harmony was not helped by politicians such as Churchill and his " Iron Curtain" speech and Truman who was more anti-communist than Roosevelt who had got on reasonably well with Stalin.' Explains with evaluative judgement of ' how far'. Who was more to blame for starting the Cold War, the USA or the USSR? Explain your answer. 1} ' The West was suspicious of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe. Stalin had removed non-Communist leaders in Poland, replacing them with Communists. 2} 'Rather than allowing free elections the USSR began to impose Communist rule on the countries it had occupied.' 3} ' Truman was highly suspicious of Stalin's motives. He was much less trusting than Roosevelt had been. Stalin refused to reduce the size of the Red Army, the biggest in the world. In Eastern Europe he believed the Soviet leader

intended to set up USSR controlled buffer states.' 4} ' The Western Allies accused Stalin of breaking agreements over Germany. The Western Allies wanted Germany to recover as quickly as possible, realising that it would be a barrier against Communism. The USSR wanted a weak Germany.' 5} ' The USA interpreted the Soviet takeover of eastern Europe as the start of spreading communism around the world and responded with the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan which was to help the vulnerable European economy suffering from the after effects of war. The USSR saw this as a threat.' OR 1} ' Stalin was annoyed with the USA because Truman had not informed him of the use of the atomic bomb on Japan. Stalin was convinced the US would use the bomb to gain world-wide power and so started work on producing one. This caused the USA to feel threatened.' 2} ' Stalin refused to allow Soviet controlled countries to accept aid as he thought the real purpose was for the USA to build up friendships with European countries.' 3} ' The fact that the USA had the atom bomb encouraged Stalin to rush through the Soviet response and the arms race had started.' 4} ' European countries set up NATO to help each other if attacked by Stalin. Stalin considered this as a threat' Explains with evaluative judgement of ' more to blame'.