

A short summary of the cold war 1945-70 essay examples

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



The Cold War began along the dividing lines where the military forces of the Soviets and the Western Allies met in 1945, in West Germany, Japan and South Korea, and these remained in place for decades. Starting in 1947, when the U. S. adopted the containment policy of George Kennan, its main goal was to limit the expansion of the Soviet sphere and roll it back if possible, and with the fall of China in 1949 and the test of the first soviet atomic bomb that year, this policy became global in scope. Throughout the Cold War, from period of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan in 1947 through National Security Memorandum 68 in 1950, the U. S. was attempting to expand its system worldwide, at least outside the Soviet Bloc and China, wherever such expansion was possible (Gaddis 2005). In the Third World, as the periphery or developing world was described during the Cold War, it did attempt to promote capitalist economic development, particularly in East Asia. Latin American was always a lesser priority, unless covert or overt action was required against leftist governments such as Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1960-62 (where the CIA failed to dislodge Fidel Castro), Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973 and Nicaragua in the 1980s (Gleijeses 1999). In this region, however, the standard American foreign policy was to support friendly dictators and local oligarchs, and given the mass poverty and discontent in most of Latin American, it preferred authoritarian, anti-Communist regimes to democratic ones. Africa for the most part remained peripheral to U. S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War, given that it remained mostly a British and French sphere of influence. One notable exception was the Congo in 1960, in which the U. S. cooperated with Belgium in overthrowing as assassinating the leftist nationalist Patrice

Lumumba and installing Robert Mobutu as a friendly dictator.

At times, of course, the friendly authoritarian regimes simply failed and no amount of American support could prop them up. South Vietnam was the most dramatic American failure of the Cold War, where not even 555, 000 ground troops, massive bombing with everything in the arsenal short of nuclear weapons—more tonnage dropped on Indochina than during the entire Second World War—and unlimited economic aid, were able to salvage the client regime the U/S. had established there after the French withdrawal in 1954 (Heinrichs 1994). Another major failure occurred in Iran, where the friendly dictator that the U. S. and Britain had first installed in 1941, and then preserved in power through covert action against a left-wing nationalist government in 1953, was finally overthrown in an Islamic revolution in 1979. On other occasions, the U. S. even supported Third World nationalists against its European allies, most famously when Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956 and Britain, France and Israel occupied Suez. To a surprising extent, the U. S. hegemony was able to accommodate non-Communist nationalism of the Nasserite variety, even when it proclaimed itself to be socialistic or corporatist. When Third World countries attempted to ally with the Soviets, however, the U. S. response was harsh, including covert and overt warfare (Ikenberry 2006).

Works Cited

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