

Cold war impact on us foriegn policy

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



The mentality of the Cold War greatly affected the decisions made by the Presidents that held the office from 1950 to 1974. The main thought that prevailed from the beginning of the Cold War was containment. It was the main goal of the United States to contain the spread of Communism whenever possible. “Brinkmanship” was the first major policy that was employed by the United States in the effort to stop the spread of Communism throughout the world.

President Eisenhower’s Secretary of State John Foster Dulles coined the term “Brinkmanship”, which simply stated means using the military to push things to the brink of war without actually going to war. This was often used to intimidate the Soviet Union into backing down during the early part of the Cold War era. President Kennedy would take a slightly more flexible stance in terms of retaliation should an attack occur. However, it wouldn’t be until President Nixon took office that the metaphorical waters between the US and the Soviet Union would begin to calm.

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In 1957 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles addressed the Associated Press in a speech known as Dynamic Peace. In this speech Secretary Dulles seems to be trying to convince the American public why they must always be prepared to go to war even though it was not what America desired. He also explained how the Soviet Union would not want the free nations of the world to work together to arm themselves and be willing to protect each other from attack. The Soviet rulers understandably prefer that the free nations should be weak and divided, as when the men in the Kremlin stole, one by

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one, the independence of a dozen nations. So, at each enlargement of the area of collective defense, the Soviet rulers pour out abuse against so-called " militaristic groupings. " And as the free nations move to strengthen their common defense, the Soviet rulers emit threats. But we can, I think, be confident that such Soviet assaults will not disintegrate the free world.

Collective measures are here to stay. . . ." Dulles goes on to talk about how the greatest deterrent of war is the retaliatory ability of other nations.

Secretary Dulles then goes on to explain that the United States sought the liberation of the nations under the Soviet Union not to surround Russia with hostile nations but because peace cannot be achieved until all captive nations are set free. President John F. Kennedy would set the tone of his administration's stance on the Cold War and the Soviet Union during his inaugural address.

He asked that the nations of the world to come together to fight " the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself". His address gave realistic expectations by saying that his goals might not even be achieved during his generation's lifetime, but even that possible truth should not discourage the United States or the rest of the world from starting on the road towards peace and freedom for the whole world. In June 1961 President Kennedy met with the Premier of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev.

During this meeting many subjects were discussed, but the most important was Berlin. Even though he allowed himself to be bullied, President Kennedy felt he made it clear to Khrushchev that the United States was not willing to compromise on a withdrawal from Berlin. Only a few short months later East

German authorities would begin to restrict the movements of people from East Berlin into West Berlin. These actions would prompt the United States to send a note to the Soviet Union protesting these actions and asking that the Soviet Union put a stop to it before things got too far out of hand.

The Soviet Union's reply stated that it supported the actions of the East German Government because they were trying to protect themselves from western spies who were trying to undermine the Government. It goes on to talk about how the United States is well aware of these activities and is just trying to shift blame so that the illegal activities of the West could continue. " West Berlin has been transformed into a center of subversive activity diversion, and espionage, into a center of political and economic provocations against the G. D. R. , the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries.

Former and present West Berlin municipal leaders have cynically called West Berlin an ' arrow in the living body of the German Democratic Republic,' a ' front city,' a ' violator of tranquility,' the ' cheapest atom bomb put in the center of a socialist state. '" All of the back and forth between the United States and the Soviet Union would come to a head a little more than a year later with the Cuban Missile Crisis. When the United States government discovered that the Soviet Union was building bases meant to house ballistic missiles President Kennedy had a choice.

He could have very easily used the occasion as justification for an attack on the Soviet Union. But instead he made the choice that kept the world from World War III. Instead of attacking the Soviet Union President Kennedy, on

October 22, 1962, addressed the nation and the world and announced that there would be a blockade on Cuba. This blockade would only turn away ships carrying weapons and not stop ships carrying the necessities that the people of Cuba would need. “ We are not at this time, however, denying the necessities of life as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin blockade of 1948. On October 28, 1962 the confrontation ended with the Soviet Union agreeing to dismantle their offensive weapons in Cuba. As time continued to go by both the United States and the Soviet Union were in positions where a relaxation of the tensions between them was necessary. Soviet leadership felt that the financial costs of the nuclear arms race were unsustainable. The United States was spending millions on the war in Vietnam and trying to extend the welfare state in the country.

The Soviet Union was experiencing troubles in their relationships with China, and they worried that these troubles might lead to an American-Chinese alliance. “ All this is, in the first place, a stab in the back for the heroic Vietnamese people in their struggle against the American aggressors, Imperialist circles fully approve of this line of Mao Tse-tung's group. The Washington Post has said that officials in Washington believe that Mao is serving American interests and they are therefore even thinking of cultivating Maoism as a means of bringing pressure to bear on Moscow.

The magazine United States News and World Report has directly stated in this connection that the United States is gambling on Mao and that American officials tend to prefer a victory for Mao Tse-tung in his struggle to destroy more moderate elements, because that would mean more trouble for Soviet

Russia. " During President Richard Nixon's administration the first steps towards Detente began. The most important part of this was the SALT I treaty of 1972. The conditions of Detente allowed for mutual cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In fact one of the basic principles of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States was that the two nations work together especially in the areas of science and technology. In July of 1975 the United States and the USSR would work together on the Apollo-Soyuz project. Even though the idea of containment was the driving force behind many of the decisions made by US presidents during the Cold War, each President had their own ideas on how best to achieve that containment.

For President Eisenhower the best strategy was " Brinkmanship", while President Kennedy took a slightly more flexible approach. Had Kennedy followed the lines of " Brinkmanship" the Cuban Missile Crisis would most likely have been the start of World War III. President Nixon, due to the changing world and economic climate was able to reach at least some neutral ground with the Soviet Union. The relaxation of tensions in the late 1960s and early 1970s helped to bring about the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.