

Domino theory



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Plan of the Investigation This research focuses on whether the domino theory influenced the United States' role during the Cold War. Did domino theory transform United States' opinion about the war, or was it an event that was bound to happen, representing the disagreement between the involved parties? Did the domino theory encourage the United State to participate in the Cold War or was it obvious that US could still engage in the Cold War? Was domino theory a turning point for the United States' participation in the Cold War or did the war happen with no reason? The research is attempting to investigate the correlation between United States, domino theory and the Cold War. Every historical period is marked by turning points. Attempts to pinpoint the exact point of change causes many problems. The overall change is usually contributed by various factors. Therefore it is necessary to investigate one factor at a time. For instance, the Cold War had started before the adoption of domino theory hence it is important to clarify how its emergence and adoption by the United States influenced its participation in the war. To understand how the Cold War progressed, one must investigate how it was before the theory, what happened during the Domino Theory and lastly, what happened to the Cold War after? This will explain to what extent Domino theory was a turning point to the United States' role during the Cold War. It would be important to prove whether or not the domino theory influenced the United States' role during the Cold War. This is because the domino theory came into play in the year 1950 while the Cold War had begun earlier in the year 1947.

Summary of Evidence Cold War Before the domino theory The conflict between the Communist nations (led by the Soviet Union and the democratic nations led by the United States) is referred to as the Cold War. The war was fought by occasional military clashes, economic

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war, propaganda, and diplomatic haggling. In February 24, 1947 when British declared that she halt the much- needed financial and military support to the Greek government, the American alarm of Russian expansion in Europe increased greatly. The Greek government was in danger of overthrow by the communist guerillas. Turkey was also under the threat of the Russian-directed communist guerillas. America did not doubt that Russia domination over Greece and turkey would increase its power. Poor peasants made the population of the Greece and Turkey countries. The Doctrine of Truman was enunciated by President Truman on March 12, 1947. The Doctrine meant the policy of the United States to support free peoples and those resisting subjugation attempts by armed minorities. It was clearly an anti-communist doctrine which led to the declaration of war upon communist Russia by America. Massive military and economic aid to Turkey and Greece followed President Truman speech. In 1948, the American troops in both Greece and Turkey defeated the communist guerillas. A prosperous Europe was considered the most effective barrier to communism by the United States Government. The invitation of the United States to the other European countries for economic reconstruction plans was not accepted by the Soviet Union. This was after a speech by the U. S. Secretary of states, George Marshall on June 4, 1947. The Soviet Union refused to take up the financial aid for several reasons. First Soviet Union considered the disclosure of economic records to American government was as interference by America in the internal affairs of another state. Second, Soviet Union feared that by receiving the American aid, she would be exposed to the risk of being opened to the western influences which she would lead to the weakening of the totalitarian system of government. The Soviet Union believed that the

United States was wooing other nations against communism by offering the financial aid. The Soviet Union forbid her satellite countries to the accept Marshall Aid due to these two reasons. Under the Molotov plan of 1947, the Russian government offered financial aid to her satellites in order to counter the Marshall plan. The United States was clearly leading the western nations in the resistance of expansion of Russian communist activities in Europe with the Truman Doctrine proclamation of March 1947. By this time Cold War had begun (poon, 1).

The cold war was as a result of conflict between capitalism and communism. The ideological causes involve two opposing systems of government represented by the United States and the Soviet Union. Free elections are carried out in the United States to elect the government whereby people have the freedom to voice their political opinions by forming political parties. This is in addition to possessing the rights of assembly, of the press and of speech. On the other hand, the Communist Party forms the government in the Soviet Union whereby people are denied the right of forming their own political parties. Rights of assembly, press and of speech are also denied. Little compromise between the two governments is likely due to the diametrically opposing systems of governments. In terms of economic, there was free trade encouragement by the United States throughout the world while on the other hand, the Soviet Union aimed at shielding off her own sphere from international commerce. Russia feared the risk of being opened to western influences by involving in trade with the West. They feared erosion of the totalitarian regime strength. There was a lot of ill-feeling between the United States and the Soviet Union due to these differences.

Power rivalry is another ideological cause of the Cold War. There was a lot of power sharing between the Soviet Union and the United States after the Second World War when the Europe declined. Conflicts were inevitable as one wanted to be dominant over the other. Domino Theory during the Cold WarThe United States government promoted the 1950s and 1989s foreign policy known as the domino theory. The theory speculated that the surrounding nations would follow in a domino effect once one land in a region became under communism influence. The theory suggests that a small change will cause subsequent changes elsewhere in a linear manner. The theory was applied by the administrations of the United States during the Cold War to explain the requirement for American intervention around the world. In 1947 General Marshall proposed as the first person the idea that communism was a contagious force that spread from country to country. This idea of communism is what was later called domino theory (Bell, 117). This was not applicable to Vietnam until 1950 when Chinese communism was becoming a threat. The Mao Tse Tung's communist victory in China and the start of the communist military campaign in Korea proved to majority in the United States that a Sino-Soviet conspiracy existed against the free world. It was not an isolated case of expansion for the Eastern Europe by the Soviet treatment (Landon, 23). These suspicions were confirmed by the People's Republic of China and the Soviet bloc recognition of the Vietnamese communists as the legitimate government of Vietnam (Bradley, 117). The myth of an international communist conspiracy which was widely believed and hardly questioned was suggested by the absence of any efforts to acquire particular information about the Vietnamese communists (Record, 157). It was not under question whether to contain the

spread of communism during the Cold War but the commitment by United States to anti-communism in Vietnam was not usual in its extent. The British were engaging in a fight in Burma and Malaya at the same time that the French were fighting communism in Vietnam but these campaigns were not supported by United States (Landon, 19). The perception in the United States that it was a key domino in a chain of Southeast Asia explains the special treatment given to Vietnam (Immerman, 9). Vietnam in the year 1941 during the Japanese occupation was seen as a strategic holding position because it was the place in which Japan launched its attack on Southern Singapore, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and The Philippines (Bell, 214). The British who had crucial colonial possessions in the region supported the concern that the regional dominance would happen again if there was triumph in Vietnam by the communists. The French whose motives had been influenced by the desperate yearn for US aid supported the same (Irving, 103). The theory had a lot of influence on the Cold War and any attempts to refute the same could encounter disagreement since evidence has proved that the theory had some impact on the war and it influenced the role of US during the Cold War. Effects of Domino Theory on US

From 1950, the United States' decision making was influenced by the domino theory. This happened until the 60s and 70s when there was dismantling of the assumptions that supported it. By the 1970s, the communist government presence in North Vietnam was preceded by communism spread to half of Laos, and the alliance between Sino and Soviet that was believed to be controlling the Vietnamese communists. This signified a serious division as early as 1956 (Morganthau, 12). It is not even in the early 1950s that the

theory's influence was overwhelming. The administration of President Eisenhower had questioned the domino theory and had made conclusions that it would not be a disaster for Vietnam to lose to the free world and that Cambodia and Laos were in less danger (Immerman, 17). President Eisenhower policies were flexible and cautious although he suggested that Vietnam was an essential domino (Bell, 117). There are other factors that contributed to the making of decisions concerning US policy towards the area, specifically in the very start of US involvement and the following part of the war (Smith, 1). The tension of the war was easing by the year 1953 after the involved parties realized that the weapon that they were using was very harmful and could result into disastrous events causing a lot of human suffering. Domino theory gave United States confidence that it would influence the non-communists into following them. This happened for some nations but in others the US administration faced a lot of rejection as these nations did not believe in communism. Although this happened, the bottom line is that the domino theory influenced the role of United States during the Cold War. The difficulty of explaining the extent to which this influence occurred resulted into this research. Cold War after the Domino Theory

The domino theory came into effect in the year 1950 a time at which the Cold War was coming to an end in the year 1953. The war ended after realization of the disastrous effects it had on the involved parties. Some years later a second Cold war emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The major powers experienced more tensions with both sides becoming more militaristic. Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan during December 1979 so as to support the ex-prime minister Marxist government. This prime minister was assassinated by one of his party rivals that September. This resulted in

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the withdrawal of the SALT 11 treaty from the senate by the US president known as Jimmy Carter who imposed embargoes on grain and technology shipments to the USSR. He also demanded a significant military spending increase in addition to declaring a boycott to the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. Jimmy saw the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as the major peace threat. In the 1980 US presidential election, Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter and vowed to increase the spending of the military and confront the Soviets everywhere. The Soviet Union and all of its ideologies were denounced by both Reagan and Margret Thatcher who was the new British Prime minister. Regan was against Communism and labeled the Soviet Union as an evil empire. Polish solidarity movement was also a major contributor of the second Cold War. Evaluation of Sources The second source is a narration without pictures whose purpose is to show the importance of the domino theory to both United States and the Cold War. This narration is very detailed and supported by a lot of literature review making it reliable for reference. Review of literature that has supported the information provided in the second source give both the historians and the readers' confidence about the information provided. The historians can use this information to assess and form opinions. The narration is self explanatory hence the reader does not require a second party to interpret it thereby reducing the chances of tampering or changing the meaning of the author. There are factors that limit the usefulness of the source. These factors include bias resulting from opinions that are edited to provide continuity and effect. The historians are able to ask what and why questions as a result of selecting and omitting that is necessitated. The second source could be more reliable if pictures or documentaries were included. This is because photographs add to the

understanding of the text and much can be drawn from them even without much thinking and reasoning. Analysis Did domino effect incite the United States role in the Cold War and assist to bring about a halt to the war or did the most influence from the United States prove to those opposed to the Cold War that the parties involved deserved what was coming to them? One must keep in mind that it is very hard to establish turning points in history because there are probabilities of them being wrong and probably invented by historians. It is therefore very hard to establish a turning point unless a historian declares it. In the attempts of answering the question concerning turning points, three types of results emerge. These results include the intangible, tangible, and what is claimed to be a result by people but can't be proved. Following the implementation of the domino theory, the United States was convinced that it would influence the whole world into communism. This followed the previous attempts that saw the start of the Cold War. The emergence of the domino theory gave United States more confidence of implementing the communist idea to the adjacent nations which would later spread to other nations in a linear manner. United State was successful in some parts but in others the idea of communism was harshly rejected. This contributed to the intensification of the Cold War which saw minor nations suffer. The Cold War could have been fought in the absence of the domino theory but its effects could have been lesser as compared to the time when the theory was adopted by the communist nations. The theory intensified the events of the Cold War as all decisions that United States made were guided by the domino theory. At the beginning of the Cold War, communism was the term used before the emergence of the domino theory later in the war. Domino theory acted as a base for the

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events that the communists undertook. Those in support of communism benefited from the aid from the United States while those that rejected it suffered the consequences. The theory was successful in some areas and failed in others due to the strong resistance it encountered. This resulted into intensification of the Cold War because nations were jealous of one another resulting into ideological differences. This explains the extent to which the domino theory influenced the role of United States during the Cold War. One would attempt to explain what could have happened if United State did not adopt the domino theory. This would mean that the Cold War could have ended earlier than it did or may be the effects of the war could have been much less. This is because domino theory was one among the other many factors that contributed to the intensification of the Cold War. Thus its alleviation would mean that the war would have been totally different since domino theory has a lot of influence on the war. Communism was a major issue among the United States and the members of the Soviet Union hence domino theory was very relevant to the events of the Cold War. Domino theory is thus a turning point in the history of the Cold War because it intensified the war as it was considering communism as a perfect idea. This has been proved by the investigation carried out. The domino theory was adopted by the United States in 1950 to guide the administration on how well this foreign policy could guide US and the communist nations influence other non-communist nations. The theory however was not the root cause of the US participation in the Cold War but it served as a catalyst which resulted into the spread of the war. The main turning point for the Cold War seems to be during the domino theory because it gave US more confidence although the war continued to what was known as the second Cold War. The

investigation proves that domino theory influenced the United States' policy during the Cold War although it was not overwhelming. The need to secure Japan and Europe from communism and Indochina was viewed as a crucial tool and dominated the immediate post-war situation. In 1950 domino theory came into existence when the victory of communists in China and subsequent war in Korea were viewed as a Southeast Asia threat.

Eisenhower administration was persuaded by the combination of these factors to initiate aiding the French in their fight. Domino theory had become more prominent by the time the French were defeated and the partitioning of Vietnam into South and North in 1954 by the Geneva agreements had occurred. The United States felt prestigious after committing to defeating the communist guerrillas in South Vietnam and this influenced their decision making which dominated it. Defeat could not be conceded, militarily or ideologically as US pride demanded. Domino theory was a significant influence on US foreign policy regarding Indochina during the Cold War.

There are claims that the domino theory was not a turning point in the Cold War because there are other factors that contributed to the start of the war. Furthermore the war had begun earlier before the adoption of the domino theory by the United States. However, it is undisputed that domino theory affected the role of US in the Cold War. The theory gave US more power and confidence over the other non-communist nations. The theory influenced many nations into communism while others rejected it completely.