

Cold war politics



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Cold War Politics Introduction: Soon after the World War II was over, the American people found themselves involved in a sternums competition with their one-time war ally, the Soviet Union. In fact the relations of these two powers even during the war were marked by an under-current of mutual distrust and jealousy. The delay in the opening of second front, the secrecy over the Atom Bomb, and refusal to invite the Polish provincial government to San Francisco made Soviet Russia suspicious of America. Similarly the western nations felt Russia had acquired considerable territory by declaring war against Japan at the last moment. This mutual distrust assumed the shape of a rivalry between the two countries in the post-World War II period, and is popularly know as cold war - an era of neither peace nor war.

According to Prof. Perkins and Deusen (19985), these differences between the two powers were inevitable because " their objectives were widely different: on one side was the idea of free society, on the other an iron despotism; on one side was an economic system which put the major emphasis on the ingenuity and enterprise of the individual, on the other an economic system in which the state controlled virtually the whole economy" (p. 666).

The Truman Doctrine: The first important step in the direction of combating Communist danger was taken by President Truman in March 1947, to check the ever increasing intervention by the Communists in Greece. The Greeks had been liberated from the Germans in 1944 by the British Troops. In 1946 elections were arranged under an International Commission to install a popular government in the country. In these elections the Rightist Party won a substantial victory. The Russians, who had refused to participate in supervision of election, condemned the election results and instigate the

Communist States of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to engage in constant fighting on the Greek borders and Britain was in the throes of an economic crisis and could not continue to protect Greece, America stepped into the breach. President Truman advocated his famous Truman Doctrine in his message to Congress on March 19, 1947 to seek Congressional sanction of money for assisting Greece and Turkey.

The Congress appropriated \$400,000,000 for economic and military assistance to Greece and Turkey. This aid was promptly rushed to these countries and the two countries were saved from the clutches of Communism and constitutional government established there.

The Marshall Plan: In the meantime as Western Europe, specially Italy, France and Western Germany were suffering from hunger and economic chaos, and there was every possible danger of these nations being taken over by the Communists the best safeguard against this probability was to put these nations on sound economic footing. Accordingly the U. S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall suggested that the countries of Europe should get together and work out plans for their economic recovery. This is popularly known as Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan on the whole proved to be a gratifying success. In the words of Prof. Bailey, " Life-giving American dollars pumped a needed blood transfusion into the economic veins of the anemic Western European nations, and within a few years most of them were approaching or even exceeding their pre-war production figures. The Reds in Italy and France lost some ground and these two vital countries were saved from the creeping paralysis of Communism" (p. 917).

Russian Invasion of Afghanistan and End of the Cold War:

The final cold war was fought in the battleground of Afghanistan between the
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Soviet Union and the United States. In 1979 USSR invaded Afghanistan to prop up a Communist regime. During this war which lasted over 10 years and ultimately ruined the Soviet Union financially, the United States backed 'Mujahedeen' through the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan to help them combat the communist threat.

With Mikhail Gorbachev becoming Soviet leader in 1985, he prioritized withdrawal and Soviet forces from Afghanistan and in May 1988 Afghanistan, Pakistan, the USSR, and the United States signed agreements providing for an end to foreign intervention in Afghanistan, and the USSR began withdrawing its forces. This withdrawal was completed in February 1989. In this war Pakistan played a vital role to check the communist threat to the gulf region through the military and economic aid of the United States. At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, US-Soviet cooperation contributed greatly to the peaceful settlement of a number of local crises. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was completed in April 1989, as a result of the Geneva accords, to which the Soviet Union and the United States were signatories (Vladimir Batyuk, 2007). After crumbling economically the USSR dissolved in 1991 and with the disintegration of the USSR the era of cold war also ended.

Bibliography

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