

# Causes of war: an analysis of the cold war its causes and consequences

[Business](#)



Just like politics war is as old as humanity itself. This paper seeks to give an in depth analysis the cold war in terms of its causes and consequences both to the key protagonists and to the allied states. In order to understand what war entails it will be imperative that we look at the various definitions of war that have been advanced over time and relate the same to the current prevailing circumstances. The writer also aims to establish whether the justifications of the cold would stand the test of time today in a world that is sophisticated in terms of technology and intellectual capability of each state. In this the writer seeks to delve into the theories of war and try to align the same with the causes of the cold war to see if there was any justification at all if any for the cold war.

In conclusion the writer seeks to give recommendations on accepted modes of dispute resolution as well answer the question on whether the cold war is in existence today. DEFINITION OF WAR There is no universally accepted definition of war as it remains a fluid concept. This is due to the competing theoretical assumptions that underwrite data collections and establish their selection criteria. The definitions differ depending on various factors such as the actors, the actions that amount to war and the causes precipitating the armed violence. Clausewitz states that war is the continuation of political intercourse with addition of other means[1].

He goes on to state that war is a tool that is used to impose ones will on the adversary and to compel the adversary to submit. Quincy Wright regards war as a conflict among political groups especially sovereign states, carried on by armed forces of considerable magnitude for a considerable period of time[2].

That it is a form of conflict in which violence is both central and enduring and <https://assignbuster.com/causes-of-war-an-analysis-of-the-cold-war-its-causes-and-consequences/>

to which the political goal(s) are evident and in which states are likely to be involved in some capacity though not exclusively or even centrally. A conflict on the other hand is an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other[3]. The difference between a conflict and war is that the later has a threshold of at least 1000 deaths[4].

The above definitions give us war in its aggressive nature but as we shall see later in this paper acts of war may also involve the application of other coercive strategies such as economic sanctions and psychological pressure as was the case in the cold war. The slogan in a situation of war is that enemies are neither treated as people to love nor as human beings with rights to respect but as things. Suffering, death and destruction are inflicted in order to attain political objectives[5]. A war preparation relies on social, economic, political and ideological mobilizations of society in which moral values, emotional appeals and behavioral expectations are manipulated to shape mass attitudes and policy towards war. There are various types of war that have been experienced over time but for the purpose of this paper we shall restrict ourselves to the ideological type. The cold war was mainly a war of the mind based on mutual hostility and fears of the protagonists wedged on ideological intensity.

It was about power beyond the borders of the protagonists. At no point did it get physical between the United States and the Soviet Union instead it was fought by proxy and by the allied states. The other types of war are derived from their intensity, the parties involved and the affected places as well the

reasons for the war. The other types of war if I may mention a few are Small scale wars[6] which are fought to achieve limited goals and upon achievement it ends characterized by the utilization of lightly destructive weapons. When Ethiopia invaded Somali in 2007 to secure her territory the war ended upon Ethiopia's acquisition of the same.

A Total war is characterized by intensive fighting until one party gives in. the Second World War ended after Germany was defeated or it conceded defeat whichever came first. Regional wars are fought on the basis of balance of power within a specific security complex. A good example would be the long standing dispute between Palestine and Israel over the control and ownership of the Gaza strip and other settlements. Civil wars normally occur within the same state and are wedged by a dissatisfied group on how affairs of the state are run. An example would be the 1994 Rwandan genocide that started as a dislike for one another between two ethnic groups the Hutu and the Tutsis that led to the collapse of the government in Rwanda and created social disorder and massive deaths that were considered crimes against humanity.

When a country decides to fight for its freedom or self governance then this may be referred to as liberation wars. The fight by the Mau Mau in the 1950s to 1963 when Kenya attained her independence may be put in this category. More often than not these wars may be justified but what is not is the means or methods employed by parties towards this noble course. The rules of war are more often not adhered to. THEORIES OF WAR They revolve around three structures of society mainly; political, social and economic spheres. Theory

of Nationalism- This is a collective group of identity that passionately binds diverse individuals into people e.

g. a nation. During the cold war the chief protagonists spread their ideologies throughout Europe and in the long run countries in the western part of Europe aligned themselves with the United States while those on the eastern side got along with the Soviet Union. For the case of the Soviet Union it coerced some countries to join them through threats and the possibilities of an attack if they don't. In Western Europe some countries agreed with the United States simply because it had established itself as a super power and so ensured their security from a soviet attack.

It cannot therefore be said with certainty that there was a common goal. It was a case of who dangled more carrots. Survival for the fittest as advanced by Charles Darwin in his Social Darwinism may have been the key driving force for the 2nd world war where Germany being weak she was eliminated by the United States and the Soviet Union. America knew that it was stronger than the Soviet Union in terms of weapons but the later was stronger in terms of military force so to ensure her survival and relevance in Europe it formed alliances with other countries in Europe. With this it drove the Soviet Union into the brinks of collapse especially with the demolition of the Berlin wall.

From then henceforth traces of the end of the cold war started emerging. A young child would go to any length to defend himself if there is a perceived danger in the vicinity. The child may alarm its mother or throw his limbs to repulse the enemy. So where does a young child without any formal

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knowledge of fighting learn this? The need to defend oneself is natural and comes with the territory in which one is born hence the instinct of aggression. It is this that has led nations to form strong armies with heavy weapons ready for an attack if provoked. It led America to attack North Korea when it invaded South Korea and also prevented the Soviet Union from instigating a war between Greece and Turkey.

In the Just war theory[7] war is allowed in self defense and as an instrument of maintaining social order. Focuses on two doctrines i. e. the justice of war (jus ad bellum) and the justice in war (jus in bello) decisions in war are made by a legitimized body of authority. That the war will be won at a tolerable cost of life. It should be the last resort when other methods of dispute resolution fail.

Non combatants should not be killed. The United Nations[8] backed the move by the United States in going to prevent the invasion of South Korea by communist states such as China and North Korea. Not all rules were adhered to as there were more civilian deaths. There is no proof whatsoever of any dialogue between the parties before resorting to war. The United Nations temporary commission on Korea didn't have any head start as it was repulsed in North Korea. THE COLD WAR 1945-1980s[9] The term cold war is used to refer to the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States.

It is different from a hot war where there is actual warfare and a warm war where there are talks between the parties on a peaceful outcome but the military is fully prepared in readiness for a command to fight. The two didn't fight each other directly but they used nations that subscribed to their

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ideologies to fight on their behalf. It was fought by means of propaganda, economic war and diplomatic rows. The emotions were rooted in the several historical and political differences and were powerfully stimulated by myths which turned hostility into hatred[10]. It began by the declaration of anti-communism by the then president of the US Harry Truman.

The US and the USSR had fought as allies during the World War 2 but their ideas totally changed after the war with the USSR being the socialists while the US the capitalist. The term was used to describe the relationship that existed between the once good friends now turned worst enemies of each other. It is deemed to have begun even much earlier with the Russian regime devoted to spreading communism throughout the industrialized world which was strongly resisted by the US. It started by the resistance o the Russian expansion in Greece and Turkey by America aiding these two countries in military terms to fight off the Soviet Union guerillas. There are several factors have been attributed to rise of the cold war and from the foregoing discussion we can deduce them to three.

It was ideological as both had hard lined criteria for governance for instance in the United States the government is elected by free elections, people can form political parties, the right of assembly, speech and of the press is upheld. In the Soviet Union the government is formed by the communist party. People do not have the rights to form their own political parties, assembly, speech and of the press. That because of these governance systems that were diametrically opposed to each other then there could be little compromise between the US and the USSR. The US was the richest

while USSR had poor economic base. The world today is working towards having democratic states and countries with some form of dictatorship are shined in the international arena e.

g. North Korea. Today we find that international relational among states are of a give and take nature in which various comprised positions are reached. No nation is viewed as being superior to the other in theory the practice is otherwise. This is evident in negotiations that go on in key international organizations such as the United Nations.

The idea of free trade brought in by the United States was viewed as a threat by the Soviet Union which deemed it as a way of maligning its totalitarian regime. The United States was also more economically empowered than Russia which viewed the introduction of a currency in western Berlin as threats to its stronghold in the east of Berlin and an expansion of American capitalism. This was purely misconceived as the economic success of Berlin would have also had apposite impact on East Berlin. In fact many countries today encourage foreign investments to improve their economies. Both parties possessed nuclear weapons, due to this equality in terms of military strength and capacity none of them wanted to be seen junior to the other.

They instead demonstrated their capabilities through fighting in other nations and this led to a lot of power rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Truman doctrine[11] advocated for the support by the united states of nations resisting subjugation by armed minorities and the launch of the Marshall plan in 1947 with the aim of providing aid for economic recovery in Europe but countries would be required to disclose

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their economic records. This did not go well with the USSR who deemed it a plot by the US to interfere with the internal affairs of another state. The Russian influence extended in Eastern Europe with the French and Italians being in the front line. This led to a strong resistance by the US as it saw that Russia's influence would also spread to Western Europe if not controlled and that the Yalta treaty would not be honored.

The US also thought it was the strongest by virtue of its possession of atomic bomb hence it could control the Russian expansion. They could not however go to war because in 1949 Russia developed her atomic bomb hence a war between them would be so disastrous to both of them that they may never recover. That Russia was not cooperative enough and that it had rejected the internationalization of all principal waterways in Europe. THE PHENOMENON OF THE COLD WAR The cold war mainly revolved around Germany and how to deal with her after her defeat in the 2nd world war. Other countries were also affected during this period. The Berlin blockade arose due misinterpretation of principles laid down in the Yalta and Potsdam conferences.

There was a stop to all forms of land traffic between the two berlins. Raw materials could no longer be supplied for the industries in West Berlin. A declaration of democratic West Berlin was made via the London agreement[12]. Due to freeze of land transport by the Soviet Union America had to airlift food and other necessities to residents of West Berlin. Two states arose East and West Germany. I do not seek to belabor the points of

the Korean War as the same have already been discussed but it ended in a stalemate at the 38th parallel.

The Cuban missile crisis was another disaster looming and it had the effect of paralyzing the whole world. Russia sought and was granted Cuba's consent to place her missiles in Cuba. The construction was stopped after several political interventions between Russia and the United States. The concept of mutually assured destruction also arose as neither of the parties was ready for its effects through nuclear retaliation. THE FORMATION OF ALLIANCES The North Atlantic Treaty Organization of April 1949 (N.

A. T. O)[13]It was formed mainly due suspicion of Russia's expansionist moves and for the inclusion of the United States as and her allies in Europe and also to curb the anti-democratic ideology of Russia from spreading. The member states stated that an attack on one of them by Russia would be deemed an attack to all and they would respond with commensurate force. It had a permanent council with representatives from member states. It was for military cooperation as well as cultural and economic cooperation among member states.

Its formation led to the lifting of the Berlin blockade by Russia and the end to communist advancement in Europe. The Warsaw pact of May 1954[14] arose out of the formation of NATO and the admission of West Germany in to it and the approval for her rearmament caused a lot of fear in the Soviet Union which deemed it fit to form a pact with member states for peaceful intentions and defiance in the event of armed aggression. CRITIC OF THE COLD WAR. The fears that the nations had against each other were not

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founded on any tangible evidence. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union intended to use its nuclear weapons against the other. Weapons are not dangerous until they are used.

In fact it was the economies of these two nations that suffered as all their wealth were channeled to building of military capacity for a perceived war that really never occurred. A lot of money was spent by America to sustain countries in Western Europe. The policies that the United States had set forth during were for her own good infighting the Soviet Union and not for the world hence irrelevant. The scarcity of raw materials in the west led to violation of borders as was evidenced in the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. America intervened again on the just war theory backed by the United Nations but her main aim was to secure the oil wells to ensure consistent supply for her industries. It was therefore very selfish.

The sovereignty of states was also disregarded during this period as some were coerced to form alliances and the two protagonists did not bother much about protocol and diplomacy in dealing with other states. The idea of having friendly relations among states is advocated today and diplomacy is key to international relations. The need for economic advancement and emergence of new states has led to formation of new alliances such as the European union, African union etc. the effects of colonization of countries in Africa has led to formation of governments that have borrowed so much on the ideologies of their colonial masters e. g.

Kenya was colonized by the British who were the strongest allies of the United States and Kenya was viewed by the west as strategic location

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against the social tendencies in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and even Somalia. From the above it clear war if need be should be founded on tangible evidence and not mere speculation. That no nation in the world should allow herself to be used as a driving force for the interests of another. The war in Iraq was that of ideology by the united states and as soon as other nations realized this they pulled out, the first one being Britain the key ally to the united states. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The United Nations policies on settlement of disputed by peaceful means must be respected[15].

The membership of the security council of the United Nations should be enhanced to include all continents. Members with veto powers should be increased to give checks and balance on others with the same powers. A leader of a country may not be right at times but they too must seek wider consultations before going to war. At some point the real causes of the cold war were more personal between the two leaders at the time than national. The acquisition of nuclear energy be it for peaceful or military gain by states today is overwhelming and the same must be tempered with requisite control to avert a crisis in the future. The cold war was mainly destructive; it had more disadvantages than advantages.

Alliances are formed convenience as the United States didn't join Britain and France who were her allies during the cold war when they attacked Egypt during the Suez Canal crisis. In conclusion it is evident that wars are not only aggressive but they may be passive and quiet. It is important to note that war or conflict is neither good nor bad but the manner in it is handled

determines whether it is constructive or destructive. Butler INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT in the article the challenges of new wars pg 47 [2] Ibid above pg 48 3]Fisher, Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution Rev. 1985, 2000.

pg 1. [4] Joeng PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES AN INTRODUCTION in the article understanding war pg 53 [5] Ibid above pg 54 [6] Jeong PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES; AN INTRODUCTION pg 58 [7] Ibid pg 62 [8] Poon, THE COLD WAR 1945-1960 pg 13 [9] Ibid above pg 2 [10] Calvocoressi WORLD POLITICS SINCE 1945 pg 3 [11] Poon THE COLD WAR 1945-1947 pg 47, It was declared in 1947 by president Harry Truman [12] The agreement was signed in June 1948 between United States of America, Britain, France and the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. [13] Member states are the United States of America, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Italy, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. It was signed Washington in 1949 with the European headquarters in Paris France [14] Member states were soviet Russia, Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. only Yugoslavia was left out [15] Article 33 THE UN CHARTER CHAPTER VI the pacific settlement of disputes.