

The cold war



First Last Dr. First Last 19 April 2008 The Iron Curtain Less than a year after the end of second world war, Churchill gave his famous “ Iron Curtain” speech (Churchill) while on a visit to the US. He cited the growing influence of communism across the world, with the greatest impact taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. While communism was marginal or in its infancy in the English Speaking world and Far East, Churchill argued that European countries behind the Iron Curtain were not only under the influence of but also under reasonable control of USSR.

Recalling the failure to recognize the disastrous consequences of rising Nazism in the 1930s, he implored the world to be proactively unite and stand guard against rising Communism. The thrust of his call for unity was the English speaking world and the Commonwealth. The US being the biggest power in the world, and English speaking, was a natural ally that he wanted to woo. He indirectly told his American audience that support for communism in many countries was a direct threat to US itself whose influence over the “ free” world would diminish as a result.

Churchill expressed his fear that the emerging polarization between communist and democratic blocs of the world may result in war. He asserted that the Russians, even if they didn’t like war themselves, desired “ indefinite expansion of their power and ideals” and enjoyed “ fruits of war” (Churchill). Indirectly mentioning sea, land and air capabilities of the military, he advised that it was through military strength that a sense of security would prevail. This strength could also provide the negotiation leverage to find a mutually agreeable formula with Russians under the umbrella of United Nations Organizations.

Joseph Stalin, in an interview to Pravda some time later, responded to

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Churchill. At the outset, he termed the idea of a brewing war ludicrous and a product of the mind of someone “ who lost one’s reason” (Stalin).

Picking up cleverly on Churchill’s call for the English speaking world to unite, Stalin termed it as an attempt to create a racial divide, linguistic superiority and a holier-than-thou approach to achieve his goals of fomenting an imaginary war. He compared Churchill’s speech with Hitler’s policies who believed in the superiority of those who spoke the German language.

Stalin recalled in detail the sacrifices Soviet Union had made during the world war and termed them higher than any other country involved in the war. In doing so, he tried to bring home the point that Russia was committed to peace in the world and played a major role in defending freedom in the world against the Nazi onslaught.

In repeated references to Churchill and comparisons with Hitler, Stalin tried to deconstruct and even discredit him. On Churchill’s assertion that communism and the ideas of Left were not developed in Britain, Stalin responded that Churchill with his upper class mannerisms had recently lost elections to Labor which was ironically a Left oriented party. In fact, while acknowledging the overall surge of communism in Europe, he identified it as a result of the social conditions and the recognition and reward by people for communists who bravely stood up against fascist governments.

Works Cited

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