

Canada, the united states and the cold war essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



After the end of World War Two, the world was split into two, east and west. This marked the beginning of an era called the Cold War. The Cold War was the most subtle war in history, but the world came very close to a nuclear war that had the potential to inevitably wipe out mankind.

The two main opponents in this war were the Soviet Union and the United States. With Canada being the United States neighbour to the north and close to The Soviet Union geographically, Canada allied itself with the United States. This union cause a lot of political trauma, but it brought a lot of new technology to Canada and helped strengthen our relationship with the United States. Therefore Canada did ally with the United States, but at the same time Canada remained a sovereign nation and remained able to make its own independent decisions despite being allied with one of the world's superpowers. Canada lies right between the United States and the Soviet Union, so Canada was caught right between this arms race and tensions between the two countries. Although mostly siding with the United States, Canada often did not agree with the American's policy and often had good relationships with countries that the United States were not on good terms with. An example of this is Canada and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and his relationship with Fidel Castro and Cuba.

Amidst the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis which occurred on October 15th 1962 was the closest the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union came to nuclear war. This conflict took place over a course of fourteen days, and was the peak of the Cold War, because during those fourteen days, both the Americans and the Soviets had their fingers on their triggers and the entire world was watching as the worlds first nuclear war

was nearly about to start, which could have very easily caused the end of the world. This crisis would forever go down in history as the event that nearly made a Cold War, hot. This crisis began because the Soviet Union was sending ships with nuclear warheads, soldiers and supplies to build nuclear missile sites. This operation was created by the Russian Premier, Nikita Khrushchev and was to intimidate the United States and have nuclear missiles pointing at them as the Americans had nuclear missile sites in Turkey which had the ability to strike the Soviets. The Cubans, being communists and allies with the Soviets, allowed them to have missile sites in their country. This crisis was a close call, but because of the work done by President John F.

Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, the issue was resolved. But the Americans did not trust the Cubans at all, because of their feelings on communism and how they had assisted the Soviets against them. Therefore the Americans severed all ties with Cuba and made all trade to the country illegal, as well as American citizens where disallowed to travel there, and this situation remains today.

But on January 26th, 1976 Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, despite being allied with the United States and being a part of N. A. T. O, embarked on a three day trip to Havana, Cuba to visit Fidel Castro . This trip was highly controversial as both countries were allied with the two opposing superpowers during the Cold War, but both Trudeau and Castro were friends during this time, and when Trudeau died on September 28th 2000 , Castro

attended his funeral in Montreal. This relationship between Trudeau and Castro identified Canada as an independent nation.

Another relationship that Canada had with a country that United States was not on good terms with was that of China, with Trudeau making an official visit to China, something that at the time, the Americans would never do. Canada was allied with the United States, but at the time Trudeau established a friendship with the leader of the United States' enemy, making Canada an independent nation, able to make its own decisions during this Cold War era. Canada, despite having good relations with Cuba and China, also assisted the Americans significantly throughout the Cold War era. With Canada being close to the Soviets geographically, any attack made by them, whether it was a nuclear strike or an air invasion, they would have to go near or over Canadian airspace in order to attack. Therefore Canada and the United States reached an agreement to create an organization which would control Aerospace in North America.

This U. S-Canadian organization was called NORAD (The North American Aerospace Defence Command) and was founded on May 12, 1958 . This organization would detect man-made objects coming into North American airspace, such as Soviet bombers or nuclear warheads. This organization uses aircraft to protect North America from attack. While NORAD would control the skies of North America, it would also monitor the Maritime regions as well. Previous to the establishment of this organization, Canada and the United States also agreed to a long series of radar stations in the Canadian arctic. Known as the DEW line (Distant Early Warning), these radar

stations would be used to detect Soviet aircraft coming into North American Airspace. In addition to this DEW Line, which stretched from Alaska to Greenland, Canada also had two more lines of radar stations called “ The Mid-Canada Line”, and “ The Pine Tree Line”.

These radar stations were constructed during the Cold War Era to protect North America from potential Soviet invasion, though the radar lines became obsolete with the invention of Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), which could pass the radar stations, as the stations were designed to detect Soviet bombers that would carry such nuclear weapons the Americans were afraid of. Both Canada and the United States recognized the threat of nuclear war and the Soviet capability of such weapons and organizations and stations were created and constructed by American-Canadian alliances and this was important to Canada’s relationship with the United States. Therefore Canada assisted the Americans significantly as allies in their dispute against the Soviets. The next significant issue regarding the Cold War and Canada-U. S. relations is that of the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was an inner Cold War military conflict which involved the United States protecting democratic South Vietnam from being taken over by the Communist North Vietnam. This war was highly controversial in the United States and around the world during this era. The Vietnam War was the longest war in American history and was a significant Cold War event . The war was a war against communism, which was the Americans’ main focus during the Cold War. The idea of Anti-communism was a very prominent ideal that the Americans followed during the Cold War. During the Cold War, even speaking the word

communism in the United States was a bad thing, because the American government and the vast majority of American people were so against it.

The American military was particularly anti-communist which led to the Americans' involvement in the Korean, and Vietnam War. An example of this anti-communism in the American military happened during the Korean War. America's main general of the United Nations (which consisted mostly of Americans) during the Korean War was a man named Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur was very anti-communist and when his forces got near the Yalu River separating North Korea from China, MacArthur had been ordered not to cross the Yalu River into China, but MacArthur insisted on an attack on China in order to deal with the communists and to eliminate them. He was then fired as commander, but his stance against communism was not uncommon in the United States during the Cold War. In Canada, however, such views of anti-communism did exist, but were not as prominent during the Cold War era, as Canada didn't wage war on communist states or countries like the Americans did, therefore proving Canada as an independent nation during the Cold War.

Another anti-communist war involving the U. S. was the Korean War in the early 1950's which was similar to the Vietnam war, where the northern communist country wanted to take over the democratic south. In Korea, the Americans fought on the side of the South Koreans in order to stop them from being taken over by communist North Korea. This was a three year war which ended with the deaths of thousands but had halted the spread of communism. Similar to Vietnam, the Americans were there to stop the

spread of communism, and were willing to sacrifice billions of dollars and the lives of thousands of American soldiers to stop this spread of communism. On the other hand, with Vietnam being close to them, the Soviets supplied the North Koreans with weapons and supplies to help them in their war against the United States.

This was even more evident in the Vietnam War, as the North Vietnamese used a lot of Soviet aircraft, such as the Soviet MIG fighter jet, and small arms such as the Ak-47. But Canada, being allied with the United States, was somewhat obligated by the Americans to assist them in this war against communism, similar to the Soviets helping the North Koreans and the North Vietnamese in their wars against the Americans, and to a certain extent, Canada helped the Americans. During the Korean War, thousands of Canadians assisted in the war effort that was made up of mostly American forces. But similar to Canada's relations with Cuba and Castro, Canada was not afraid to be independent and go against the wishes of the Americans. This was the case in the Vietnam War as Canada did not participate in the war which caused Canada-U. S. relations to deteriorate somewhat.

Throughout the entire war, Canada faced a lot of criticism from the Americans in regards to their war in Vietnam. Canada had chosen not to get involved in the war, which made the American government upset. But the main issue was that of groups of men called " Draft Dodgers". During the Vietnam War, two million, two hundred and fifteen thousand men were drafted into the United States military for the war in Vietnam . During this time of conscription, up to one hundred thousand men, eligible for draft fled

the United States to avoid being killed in the jungles in Vietnam . A large majority of these men fled to Canada and the Canadian government accepted them into the country to avoid draft. This caused a huge uproar in the United States because they accused Canada of assisting their potential soldiers escape military service. Canada, on the other hand, had a lot of its own men joining the United States army to fight in Vietnam and a lot of these Canadian soldiers were unappreciated, unrecognized, and overlooked in the overall war effort.

But Canada, as an independent nation, was able to make its own decision in the matter and allowed many Americans come to Canada and not participate in America's war in Vietnam. Another aspect to the cold war is that of political alliances. During the Cold War era, countries from around the world formed military alliances with one another in order to have strength in numbers, and to protect one another if one country in the alliance was attacked.

The world after the Second World War was split into two parts, the west being the democratic side of the world and the east being the communist side of the world. Both these parts of the world were quite different politically and both sides had nuclear capabilities. Treaties were signed between eastern and western countries to have as many allies as possible in the event of the Cold War heating up. One of these military alliances that was formed during the Cold War was NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This treaty, which was signed on April 4th 1949, formed a military alliance between western countries. These countries included:

Canada, the United States, Iceland, Denmark, France, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Portugal and The Netherlands. Canada was one of the principal countries that initiated this alliance and did not just want the alliance formed to rally against the Soviets like other countries, but saw it as an important step in creating peace. Similar to NATO, the Soviets in response to this treaty, came up with their own military alliance treaty with other eastern countries.

This treaty was known as the Warsaw Pact, and was signed on May 14th 1955. Countries that signed this treaty were: the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Poland and Romania. The Soviets sought to have this alliance with other eastern countries, in response to the NATO treaty in order to protect itself from western powers. This was also the case with the United States and Britain, who especially wanted to join together and work with other western countries against the Soviets. A famous quote made by Lord Ismay, the first Security General for NATO, stated that the purpose of NATO was " To keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.

" This quote shows that the treaty was signed as deterrent against the Soviets, but Canada didn't necessarily want to join the organization because of this. Canada didn't share the same desire to hate the Soviets and to rally against them as the Americans did, but Canada did see the Soviets as a potential threat and did have concern about them, once again showing Canada's loyalty, but its independence at the same time. Canada did ally with the United States, but at the same time Canada remained a sovereign nation and remained able to make its own independent decisions despite

being allied with one of the world's superpowers. The Cold War was a very subtle war in terms that there wasn't an outright war between the Soviets and the Americans, but during events like the Cuban Missile Crisis, there was nearly an all out nuclear war between the two superpowers. Canada, being geographically between the Americans and the Soviets, became a middle power during the Cold War era.

Though Canada mostly sided with the Americans as an ally, Canada was not afraid to go and do things such as befriend nations that were considered to be enemies by the Americans and stay out of war. During the cold war, the Americans largely participated in the Korean War and the war in Vietnam. Both wars claimed the lives of thousands of Americans and cost the American government billions of dollars, but it was all based around the Americans idea of Anti-Communism and the fight against it, no matter what the cost. Canada was expected as America's ally to fight in these wars, and although Canada did participate during the Korean War, it stayed out of the Vietnam War as it was simply just America's war against communism, a view that Canadians didn't necessarily agree with.

During the Cold War, Canada was caught in between a war between two superpowers the world had never seen before, but Canada and Canadians managed to keep their own identity and practise their own ideas that would, in turn, have a significant impact, not just on Canada, but the world today.

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