

Inevitability of cold war essay

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



The Cold War, started in the year 1947 up until 1991. It is very well documented in books, documentaries, movies and in many other forms. It was sustained military and political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. It began after the two countries formed an alliance that eventually defeated the Nazi Germany in the Second World War. They were the only two major superpowers, with great political and economic differences. George Orwell an English writer, was the person responsible for coining the name ' Cold War'. Cold War was basically a situation where by the two countries, engaged in a lot threats, but never at any given time confronted one another militarily. Instead of direct military combat, they engaged themselves in psychological war, and proxy wars. These were among the ways through which the two countries tried to assert their global influence or assure themselves of security. Several moments led to tension rising very high, making the two countries almost fight. This very tense moments, would however be followed by cycles of relative calm (Carlton 1988).

There are many factors that facilitated the beginning of the cold war, the central cause being an ideological clash. Differences in political philosophies (outlook on life) made it that cold war would have to take place at some point in time. Both countries thought that their own political outlook was superior to the other and thus it should be adopted globally. The two philosophies were founded on different beliefs. From the United States corner, capitalism was what they supported. Capitalism espoused that most resources should be left to private ownership since private companies and individuals could better manage those resources. On the other hand, the

Soviet Union was in support of communism. Communism advocated for a government controlled economy where everything, ranging from wealth to resources, are controlled by the central government. A tug of war was thus inevitable. For instance, with the Soviet Union advocating for communism the United States so it as a barbaric way of life. They could not understand why the resources had to be government controlled instead of leaving them to private ownership. With the Americans stand the Soviet Union saw societal problems that could occur. For instance, they thought that the move could only cause a rift in society. This is because with continued use of national resources, some people would get richer than others, thus creating a gap between the poor and the rich. They thought that the resources should be shared equally among the community members. The Soviet Union practiced dictatorship while with the Americans they wanted democracy. This would ensure that freedom for all was available translating into healthy and a competitive economy. These differences provided the platform for confrontation. With each country out to support its respective ideology, tension ensued between the two superpowers (Gaddis 2001).

The other cause of Cold War was the extreme antipathy between the two leaders. Truman had a personal dislike for Stalin. After the death of Roosevelt, Truman who was then the vice president ascended to the office of the president. This meant that he was in charge of whatever Roosevelt had left incomplete. Stalin and Truman had to work closely with each other to ensure détente was maintained. Having little direct knowledge of whatever Roosevelt had been doing, Truman had a hard time in trying to bring his own style and personality to bear on the negotiations. Truman viewed Stalin as a

genocidal dictator. To give Stalin his due however, in the Soviet culture it was to be expected that anybody who ruled over the land was to be dictator. This did not go down well with Truman who was himself a staunch humanitarian democrat. He did not approve of dictators and dictatorship whatsoever but rather was of the idea that every country should be a democracy (Gaddis 2001). Truman also saw Stalin as 'greedy'. This was after Stalin took over the eastern part of Germany in order to consolidate himself a bigger empire. This hatred, went a long way in causing the Cold War. This is because most of the decisions and conclusions the two leaders reached were at counter-purposes to each other (Boyle 1993).

The race for atomic weapons (arms race) was the third cause of the cold war. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by America, as demonstrated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II, caused great fear in the Soviet Union. The Soviet union at some point were angered by the United States for not sharing their secrets about atomic bombs seeing as they were allies during the recently concluded World War II. This caused them to develop their own atomic weapons, and in 1949 they detonated a nuclear bomb (Sherwin 1975). This then led to the development of even more weapons of greater destructive capability, case in point being the hydrogen bomb, as each country tried to outdo the other. The Cold War then became a nuclear arms race for the two countries. This culminated in the Cuban missile crisis, where Soviet intermediate ballistic missiles that were capable of carrying a nuclear payload were photographed by a United States U2 spy plane in Cuba (Carlton & Levine 1998). The US threatened to invade Cuba and forced the Soviet Union to remove the missiles. America had promised

to retaliate by firing its nuclear weapons at the Soviet Union if the Soviets fired at the USA from Cuba. In fact, the targeting and systematic destruction of nuclear arsenal and even the threat of doing so by either nation, was considered an act of war. This was the policy of mutually assured destruction. This particular confrontation was the closest the world came to all out nuclear war. Fortunately, saner heads prevailed and the serious crisis was averted. The fear of attack caused the tension between the two to remain very high. As a result, the two continued to build and stockpile a huge arsenal of weapons.

The forth cause of cold war was aims of the Soviet Union. During the Second World War, Stalin and the Hitler led Nazi Germany had signed a peace treaty whereby the two were not supposed to attack each other. However, before the end of the World War Two, Hitler attacked Soviet Union falling to honor his part of the deal. This was after he had defeated a vast majority of the countries in Europe. Hitler attacked the Soviet Union through Poland and came rather close to taking Moscow. As a result, Stalin wanted to make sure that no more attacks could be carried on the Soviet Union heartland in future. In his move to protect the Soviet Union, he proposed a huge reparation from Germany. He also sought to create a 'buffer' region comprised of friendly states to ensure the protection that he very much craved. This however, did not go down well with the other leaders especially Truman. However, Truman saw this as a move by the Soviet Union to take control of a large portion of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, Winston Churchill feared that the Soviet Union presence and influence in Europe would be too strong. Stalin thought that the two were not committed in

overseeing the Soviet Union security. This made the two become suspicious of each other thus creating even more tension (Gaddis 2001).

Fear of attack from both countries also contributed to the cold war. Both being the only superpowers at that time, meant that they were the most equipped countries militarily. Having also fought as a team in the wake of Nazi Germany defeat, both knew each other quite well. They both knew the military capabilities of each other which bred suspicion and consequently fear of each other. They both thought that the other country may attack in search of global influence leading to a rift forming between the two. It was for this reason that the each country wanted to build high end arsenal in preparation for any potential attack. The Soviet Union's control of the Eastern part of Europe sent the wrong signal of their intentions to both the United States and Britain. They saw it as a move to conquer a great area so as to enable them build a stronger military and a larger empire (Anderson 1981). On the other hand, the Soviet Union feared that America might use its influence in the western part of Europe to attack it. The fear of attack from each other only helped heighten the tensions that were already existing. Last but not least, historical resentment was also a cause of cold war. During the Bolshevik Revolution, which took place in 1918, both America and Britain had tried to interfere which led to suspicion between the Russian leaders on one side and the Americans and her allies. During the First World War, the 'big three' (United States, Soviet Union, and Britain) as they were commonly known were allies for seven months. The events that took place after caused mistrust among the three. America and Britain also loathed the Soviet Union for having collaborated with Hitler in attacking Poland (Anderson 1981).

Stalin and Hitler as mentioned earlier, had signed a secret deal to help each other. In 1939 the two came together in the attack on Poland. Though the alliance never lasted for long, Americans were not at ease with the Soviet Union. This mistrust, interference in internal affairs, and formation of alliances made it hard for the two to solve their issues.

After the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, the cold war was inevitable. First of all, there was going to be one undisputed superpower in the world. Both the United States and the Soviet Union wanted to assert their influence in the world on the same scale. It was impossible of any of them to assert the much needed influence without having to defeat the other. The two being militarily very strong, meant that there was no way they were going to use military force in order to attain their goals. It was for this reason that the cold war had to happen. There was only going to be one center of influence as thus both had to 'fight' to attain the crown of world ruler.

Dawning of atomic weapons era also caused tension between the two. As thus, it made the cold war an inevitability. First of all, it would be worth noting that fear existed between the two even before the atomic weapon era dawned. This is because they knew of each other military capabilities having fought together in the defeat of Nazi Germany. With the Americans using their atomic bombs on Japan during world war two, the destruction that followed that they caused made the Soviet Union take note. The Soviet Union knew that America was better equipped than they were. Stalin wanted to acquire atomic weapons as well as an answer to the Americans. After that the two embarked on a journey to acquire bomb making materials. They also tried to sign a German scientist for their missile and nuclear projects. The

acquisition of these atomic weapons only heightened the tension between the two. The thought with the existence of the weapons, their national security was in great danger.

The greed for power by both countries also contributed in the inevitability. The Soviet Union had took control of the Eastern Europe while the United States had the Western Europe. With both countries hungry for power, it meant that at some point in time they would be at loggerheads. America wanted to liberalize the world which would ensure that a market for their manufactured goods was available. They saw a free world where businesses were to thrive due to competition and innovativeness, rather than a world where government was in charge of everything. It was only by having the numbers behind them that could ensure they acquired power they all craved for. This meant that the world was divided and for one to assert her global influence, it was of the essence to try and control the remaining part.

Lastly, these two countries had a very long history. This is the same history that made them perceive the other differently. For instance, in 1918 during the Russian Revolution both the United States and Britain somehow interfered with it. This made the Soviet Union hold grudges against the two. On the other hand, the United States always remembered that the Soviet Union had signed a secret pact with Germany's Hitler. Due to these events there was a sense of mistrust that ensued between the two. As such, this mistrust like the other aforementioned factors made it impossible for the two to steer clear of a confrontation.

Social constructivism can be defined as sociological theory of knowledge applying the general philosophical constructivism into social settings,

wherein groups learn from one another, and collaboratively come up with a new small culture of shared artifacts and meanings. Social constructivism deals in the general behavior to make or construct strict or loose or any other construction within a law. Basically, social constructivism is about hostilities that do not involve physical warfare, but rather psychological warfare that is necessarily an ideological one. Case in point, the United States and the Soviet Union did not at any point in time during the cold war fight each other. Instead, their warfare was mostly psychological and proxy based. They supported different regimes over the years. For instance, the United States sent its soldiers to the Vietnam and Korean War.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union sent its soldiers to Afghanistan. Both the United States and the Soviet Union supported the opposing sides in each war. The support came in form of finances and fire arms. It was a way of making it difficult for any side between the two to win. Consequently, losing to an inferior opponent was a shameful and dealt psychological blow to the other side. For instance, the Soviet Union lost their war to Afghanistan which was truly an inferior opponent. The loss was a national shame which was exponentially exploited by the United States.

Additionally, the acquisition of nuclear weapons created much fear between the two. Atomic weapons create fear in a countries enemies. The very idea of the kind of destruction that nuclear bombs wreck in a country will make anybody wilt before you. They are mostly used as a deterrent because as Nagasaki and Hiroshima proved they can utterly decimate a country. The doctrine of the mutually assured destruction; that is, if you strike us we will retaliate in equal measure. This was the one thing that assured that the two

countries would not fight directly. This is because neither the Soviet Union nor the United States had the capability to defend itself from any potential attack. Thus in this case, the nuclear weapons were used as a psychological deterrent for war. That is why when the Soviet Union learned that the United States had nuclear bombs, they had to find a way to acquire some, too.

The cold war was a long time due to the fact that both the United States and the Soviet Union wanted to spread their ideology and thus increase their influence on world affairs. Though the two countries used different means of achieving their goals, their aims were not worlds apart. Looking at the way the United States offered to help the western European countries through the Marshal plan, their ultimate aim was to help them rebuild their economies and thus become a bigger market for American made goods. This would help the United States have more say in that part of the world. On the hand, the Soviet Union though of increasing their say in European affairs through force. Later, Lenin realized that a softer non-military approach could be adopted.

Gaining control over any country would have given either of them access to raw materials, thus increasing their respective industrial capabilities. Given all this, it was clear that these two countries would at some point in time be at loggerheads with each other. It was a confrontation that had been foreseen by the great French seer Alexis de Toqueville. He correctly predicted the two confronting each other due to the influence both enjoyed. It is not until 1991 that the cold war completely died. However, the effects of the war are still witnessed and will continue being witnessed even in the years to come.

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