

Contemporary international problems essay sample

War



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. What were the main features of the Cold War bipolar system? Was it stable? Why or why not?

Cold War bipolar system was the “ zero sum game” where if West won the territory from the free land, the East lost. This was the clash between two super powers Soviets and Americans who never fought directly instead maintained a proxy because they knew it could have lead to nuclear attack and then the existence of both the continents could have been in danger. The numerous island and other small nations who remained neutral between those super powers proves this was a “ loose bipolar” cold war. Both the countries hated each other but did not take a step in any kind of violent acts that could have end their dominance over the world. The cold war was somewhat stable because it stopped the Third World War, which could have lead to the destruction of human civilization and the earth itself. It prevented the nuclear attacks from both sides. Though we know both the countries had to go through other wars like the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Americans in Vietnam, which broke down the Soviet economically and collapsed and Americans had to go through economic crisis as well, but still it balanced itself from attacking one another and saved the world.

2. What new international system is emerging? How can you tell?

After the fall of the Soviet Union, American became the supreme power of the world establishing Unipolar system and dominating the world with nuclear powers and strong economic establishment. In the meantime, other nations like Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and European countries stood up and grew rapidly forming a multi polar system. But still US stayed at top and the

other countries would ask for economic and military support when needed. To stop US from over powering other nations, the small nations will group together and put on a counter weight on US and make it difficult to achieve the goals. One example of this is the recent attack by US on Iraq, where American decided to go on War alone without the support of UN and most of the nations. There is the distribution of power in the international system currently in terms of rich, newly industrialized, and nations at chaos. The globalization has further brought a competitive market in goods, services, ideas and natural resources.

3. What is the difficulty of defining your national interest in any given situation?

National Interest is a very critical subject because it changes according to the time and situation and where it benefits the nation. National Interest for this year may be the mistake for the next year. One example of this is the Iraq war, where US residents believed that going on war with Iraq to dispose the nuclear warheads was their national interest post 9/11; but soon after they realized that Iraq did not possess any kind of mass destructive weapons, people believed it was a mistake. National Interest can be objective and subjective which further makes it difficult to define it.

Objective interest revolves round the areas closer to homeland and its main focus is to stay sovereign whereas, the subjective interest focus on areas away from its geographical location. Iraq war started as the subjective national interest, which questioned many Americans whether they should even focus on that area when it's so far away from home. It is believed that

we go for subjective national interest only when we trade with that part of the world like petroleum products for instance.

4. How were the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and Kennan's "X" article all part of the same policy?

Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and Kennan's "X" articles all came out within the weeks of each other in the year of 1947 and marked the national interest for decades. Truman Doctrines called in the aid to countries under communist threat to establish democratic nations. Marshall Plan called in aid to war torn Europe to reform itself and establish a democratic nation. Similarly, Kennan's "X" article (containment) contains US policy in blocking expansion of Soviet Union, so that it does not form a wide communism around the world and disrupt the expansion of democratic nations. All of the doctrine, plan, and article wanted to stop the spread of communism around the world and support the democratic nations.

5. Could U. S. presidents have decided differently and kept us out of Vietnam? Consider the U. S. political climate of the time.

No, the U. S. presidents could not have decided differently in keeping us out of Vietnam. At the time of Vietnam War, US followed the containment of communism, which forced them to stop any nation from falling under the arms of communism. If a president didn't act to curb the communism and let it spread then they were considered weak and incompetent to stay in power. Eisenhower metaphor of "falling dominoes" strongly proves that US wanted to stop countries from communism. Also, Kennedy had won the election

based on the same doctrine. Covering countries that accepted democratic views with nuclear umbrella and protecting them was the National interest of US foreign policy and still is. Also, US already had 16, 000 troops in Vietnam and were not possible to bring them out without the humiliation of defeat, which forced the preceding presidents to engage in Vietnam War.

6. " Kennedy, not LBJ, committed the United States to Vietnam." Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position.

" Kennedy, not LBJ, committed the United States to Vietnam." This statement is true because before the Presidency of Kennedy, US was not involved fully in the Vietnam war. There were only 685 troops that were sent to Saigon, Vietnam by Eisenhower for training purpose. They were not sent for the war and were set by Geneva Accord. Soon. After Kennedy, took the Presidency, he increased that number to 16, 000 troops and was deployed for live combat which officially entered US to Vietnam War. He disagreed with Eisenhower's passive approach and with confidence in US military strength and blind with anti-communist feelings dragged US into the war. LBJ just followed the Kennedy and with political pressure and in fear of humiliation if withdrawn from the war, he escalated the war secretly with half a million troops to Vietnam.

7. If nuclear deterrence worked during the Cold War, could it now work against a new nuclear state such as North Korea?

Yes, I believe in this statement because deterrence is based on the rationality of the situation and making cost benefit calculations. A nation will

never attack a more powerful nation intentionally and drag itself to threaten its existence. It had worked during Cold War between Soviet and United States and still can under such conditions. It is useless to engage in any war if the cost outweighs the benefits. North Korea is a small state and knows the other nations with U. S. as the protector will impose a high cost in any kind of nuclear engagements. It might be able to do some damage to U. S. but can never match the consequences if engaged in war. This statement is thus true for any state as North Korea or Iran.

8. Why did the collapse of communism not lead to a prosperous and democratic Russia?

By the end of Soviet Union, Russia was economically and politically exhausted. Russians have known little but authoritarian government. Russian since 1991 has seen more democracy than ever, but still under totalitarianism rule of Yeltsin and Putin, the nation has not learnt the way democracy works. Russians still look back nostalgically on the authority and unity of the past. The economy of the country is growing but with lack of foreign investment it still faces hardships. Unhealthy population, poor education, deteriorating infrastructure, and struggle to come in terms of its new status as former super power has drawn back Russia from a prosperous and democratic nation. Russian patrimonies leaders and the people itself still resist to change, which have further halted the democratic atmosphere of Russia.

9. Why did the Soviet Union collapse? Why were we unable to see it coming?

The invasion of Afghanistan caused a heavy casualties and costs which showed weakness in Soviet forces leading to demoralization of the troops. After World War II, the productivity was low and insufficient to support the huge empire. Corruption also played a major role in the collapse of Soviet forces under Brezhnev. Thus, the over expanded empire and insufficient funds to support them through the defective system to added to the collapse of Soviet forces. The halfway reforms that were initiated and the amount of capitals that were invested in nuclear weapons and satellites to stay as the super power added to the downfall of Soviet Union. We were unable to see it coming because we always thought Soviet was more powerful than United States in terms of Nuclear Power and its great size empowered us.

10. What went wrong with the U. S.-Soviet détente under Nixon?

U. S. - Soviet détente under Nixon failed because of many circumstances that played along. First of all the Watergate Scandal forced Nixon to resign from the office which moved the foundation of U. S. - Soviet détente. The House of Congress was not happy with the détente and raised its voices against it and to top the matter worst Russian increased its missile strengths and increased its troops in Eastern Europe. Russian also picked up new clients in the third world. The Republicans of the US failed deceived by this act of Russians. Ultimately, the U. S. - Soviet détente failed.