

The Cold War

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Info

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Study Part

Factual knowledge

You know how the superpowers tried to cooperate during and at the end of World War II

- The US supported the USSR with equipment for the military during WWII (while the USSR fought the war on behalf of the US, de facto; US entered the war not before 1944) → lend-lease
- Lend-lease
 - › Made the USSR dependent
 - › Attack from both sides on Germany & Japan possible
 - › USSR felt betrayed

You know the background and the reasons and impacts of the Berlin crisis 1948/49

BACKGROUND	REASONS	IMPACTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Germany in 1945: completely destroyed – economically & militarily - Germany completely occupied (four zones + four zones in Berlin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “trizone” (US, GB, F) - Technically neutral zones - Clearly defined borders (which implies smaller Soviet sphere of influence) - Trizone created the “Mark” as a new currency - Trizone collaborating very tightly → Soviets angry & afraid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two German states (BRD, DDR/GDR) formed - Separate currencies - 3 allied zones + 3 sectors of Berlin = BRD - Soviet zone + Soviet sector of Berlin = GDR → Begin of Cold War

You know the foreign policies of the US and the USSR after 1945

- The USSR controlled the countries in their sphere of influence (Eastern Europe)
- The US did everything to fight communism and promote democracy

! You can summarize the three global crises in Korea and Cuba

Korea

- US and USSR divided Korea along the 38th parallel to better fight Japan – intended to be non-permanent, it became permanent nevertheless
- North and South leaders were hostile, North invaded w/o warning on 6/25/50
- South Korea and US fought North, China interferes, UN/US and SK troops pushed back again ... war “ends” (formally still hasn’t) around the 38th parallel

Cuba

- Revolution by Fidel Castro, US was kicked out, USSR could act as helper (thanks to the US)
- Cuban exile fighters led & trained by CIA failed to win back Cuba because JFK cut their air support beforehand
- Soviets began to show off their nuclear weapons on Cuba to the US
- US opted for ignorance-and-blockade strategy
- US promised – if their allies were ok with it – to retreat their weapons from Turkey (and not to attack Cuba, which wasn’t necessary anymore); USSR retreated completely from Cuba, thus gave up their only close location to the US; → balance of terror

Understanding

You can compare the situation and systems of the US and the USSR in 1945

FEATURE	USSR	US
POLITICAL & ECONIMICAL SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communism - Single-party state - Plan economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy - Pluralism - Market economy
FOREIGN POLICY IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passive isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active isolation
ROLE DURING WWII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allied with Germany - Affected in 1941 & entered the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No alliances - Worked together with USSR after 1941 as they shared enemies (Germany & Japan)
IMPACTS OF WWII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Huge losses, around 20M - Lot of destruction - Struggling to rebuild 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No destruction on main land - Lost a few 100k lives - Economically stable - Huge GDP (50% of the world's GDP)
MILITARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong, nuclear monopoly

You can explain how and why the Cold War broke out¹

One might say Berlin Crisis I was the outbreak for the Cold War.

You can compare the crises in Berlin, Budapest and Prague in the context of the Cold War

- In Berlin, the West was heavily involved (air support / Luftbrücke) and to some degree “won”
- Budapest: no Western involvement, Soviet troops killed and imprisoned many, many fled
- Prague: gain no West around (→ “coexistence”), quite similar to Hungary/Budapest, plus the “Hippies movement”, however very little blood shed

! You can explain the behavior of the West during the uprisings in Eastern Europe

→ coexistence

You can explain the term “proxy war”

One superpower (e.g. USA) fought a country (e.g. Vietnam) of the other side, but never the other superpower (e.g. USSR) directly.

! You can explain who fought in Korea and Cuba and what their goals were

- Korea: NK vs. SK; NK was officially supported by China and the USSR supported them with camouflaged equipment; SK was supported by UN/US troops

! You understand why these conflicts are considered typical Cold War conflicts

Interpretation

¹ <http://www.slideshare.net/lennyambrosini/outbreak-of-the-cold-war>

You can compare and assess various theories about the responsibility for the outbreak of the Cold War

Traditional/orthodox view

- US striving for world supremacy
- US having huge array of military equipment & widespread
- USSR being independent
- USSR strengthening democracy in their countries of influence
- "American imperialists are an obstacle"
- US is expansionist

Traditional western view

- USSR is evil, make own people believe that
- USSR is expansionist

Reassessment

- US made several countries dependent on them → USSR "had to" act

Revisionist view

"The revisionist view [...] shifts blame to the United States and her allies in the west, and came about after the war in Vietnam. Before Vietnam, the US was able to claim that all their actions during the Cold War were aimed at containment, or keeping the communist countries from infringing on their sphere of influence, basically meaning trying to keep communism "over there", and not allowing it to move closer to American interests, or take over the world. However, the fact that the US became involved in Vietnam makes that look suspect, as they were fighting communism not in their area of the world, but on the other side of the planet. It's one thing to fight the communists in Cuba, and say you are doing it to keep them out of your back yard, and quite another to fight them on an entirely different continent. The revisionist scholars have mainly argued that the US wanted not only to contain Soviet influence, but also, at the same time, expand US influence in all areas of the world. Part of that has to do with the idea that for capitalism to flourish, you need to have open markets and easy access to raw resources. Scholars, for the first time, started saying that the US was every bit as eager to extend their sphere of influence as far as possible as anyone else. Where before the US had claimed to be responding to Soviet efforts to spread communism, scholars pointed out that it looked like the US was actually aggressively pursuing an agenda of expanding their influence and trying to become a world power. Some scholars also argued that the Soviet Union, rather than trying to spread communism all over the world, was actually trying to set up a buffer zone of communist states to protect themselves from the US. They emerged from WWII fairly beaten down, and they began right away to build their sphere of influence in the east, but the revisionist view states that was because they were afraid that since they were totally weakened by WWII, they were afraid the US would take that opportunity to turn on them and kill communism for good."²

You can compare 1945 with 1918

- Germany was defeated, again
- Germany was completely occupied and formally ceased to exist after 1945

² <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20070220210733AAbAk2Z>

You can assess whether the Cold War was inevitable or not

- The US had military bases everywhere → provocation
 - The US immediately halted all equipment & supplies deliveries to the USSR
 - Late 2nd front
- ➔ Suspicious USSR // the US only acted in its own interest

You can assess the role of the nuclear threat for the Cold War

Although both sides had the means to attack with nuclear weapons (though the US was much closer to the USSR with its allies than vice versa) and threatened the other side to actually deploy and make us of their weapons, both sides were also afraid to use them as this would be the end for *both* of them.

! You can assess the idea of “balance of terror”

Simply put: You buy a new car, I'm jealous, I buy a bigger one, you are jealous, you buy a bigger one, ...