The Cold War

1947-1991
As WWII was fought and was closing, (1) What were the signs that a long-term, Cold War conflict was brewing between the United States and the Soviet Union? (2) What is a “COLD WAR”? (3) What would be the sides of this cold war?
The *Cold War*, often dated from **1947 to 1991**, was a sustained state of political and military tension between powers in the Western Bloc, dominated by the United States with **NATO** among its allies, and powers in the Eastern Bloc, dominated by the Soviet Union along with the **Warsaw Pact**. This began after the success of their temporary wartime alliance against Nazi Germany, leaving the USSR and the US as two superpowers with profound economic and political differences.

The Cold War was so named because the two major powers—each possessing nuclear weapons and thereby threatened with **mutual assured destruction**—never met in direct military combat. Instead, in their struggle for global influence they engaged in ongoing psychological warfare and in regular indirect confrontations through **proxy wars**. Cycles of relative calm would be followed by high tension, which could have led to world war. Some of the tensest times were during the **Berlin Blockade** (*Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines*), the **Korean War**, the **Suez Crisis**, the **Cuban Missile Crisis** (*Khrushchev*), the **Vietnam War** and the **Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan**. The Cold War conflict was expressed through military coalitions, strategic conventional force deployments, extensive aid to client states, espionage, massive propaganda campaigns, conventional and **nuclear arms races**, appeals to neutral nations, rivalry at sports events (in particular the **Olympics**), and technological competitions such as the **Space Race**. The US and USSR became involved in political and military conflicts in the Third World countries of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. To alleviate the risk of a potential nuclear war, both sides sought relief of political tensions through **détente** (*Brezhnev*) in the 1970s.

In the 1980s, the United States increased diplomatic, military, and economic pressures on the Soviet Union, at a time when the communist state was already suffering from economic stagnation. In the mid-1980s, the new Soviet President **Mikhail Gorbachev** introduced the liberalizing reforms of **perestroika** ("reorganization") and **glasnost** ("openness"). Pressures for national independence grew stronger in Eastern Europe, especially Poland. They reached a breaking point when Gorbachev refused to use Soviet troops to support the faltering government of East Germany in late 1989. Within weeks all the satellite states broke free from Moscow in a peaceful **wave of revolutions**. The pressures escalated inside the Soviet Union, where Communism fell and the **USSR was formally dissolved** in late 1991. The United States remained as the world's only superpower.  

-Wikipedia
The Cold War

1947-1991
American Fear of Communism

- Red Scare in US after the Russian Revolution of 1917, and into the early 1920s
- Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 increased distrust.
- WWII alliance was just a temporary halt in generally poor US/Soviet relations
- After the Potsdam Conference Truman decided that Stalin wanted world domination, and that communists were determined to spread their influence throughout the world, perhaps even through worldwide revolution.
The Iron Curtain Fell Over Eastern Europe: 1946-1948

- Stalin went back on his Yalta Conference promises for truly free elections in Eastern Europe.
- Instead, the elections were manipulated by the Soviets, who brought communist dictators to power in the nations of central and Eastern Europe, which became Satellite states of the Soviet Union. (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany)

Churchill’s “Iron Curtain Speech” (March, 1946) “An Iron Curtain has descended across the continent…” called for a partnership of western democracies to halt the further expansion of Communism.

How did this speech help fuel the Cold War?
The Truman Doctrine: March, 1947

In response to (1) a communist uprising against the government in Greece and (2) to Soviet demands for some control over the Turkish Straits, President Truman promised that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”

Without directly calling out the Soviet Union or communism, Truman promised aid to nations struggling against communist movements (from within or from outside), wherever they may occur. The idea behind the Truman Doctrine was containment.
Truman Backed up His Words

- Asked Congress (and got) $400 million in aid to assist the "free people" of Greece and Turkey against "totalitarian" communist movements. **Containment:** the Cold War policy of the United States and its allies to prevent the spread of communism abroad.
The Marshall Plan

- After WWII, Europe lay in ruins, short of food, and deep in debt.
- The 1948 Marshall Plan: gave $12 billion in aid to the countries of Western Europe.
- How did the Marshall plan help contain communism?
- Aid was also offered to the USSR and its Eastern European satellites, but they refused the help. Why?
Crisis 1: The Berlin Airlift

- June, 1948 – May, 1949
- Stalin blockaded West Berlin and cut off all land access (and supplies) to the German city
- For 11 months, day after day, The US flew planes and all the needed supplies into West Berlin
- Stalin decided not to challenge the airlift, and the Soviets finally reopened the highways to Berlin (and the world breathed a sigh of relief).
NATO and the Warsaw Pact

- **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization - April, 1949) - Ten European countries, plus the US and Canada, signed a mutual defense pact to prevent Soviet expansion and protect Western Europe.

- **Warsaw Pact**: Communist military alliance formed in response to NATO to defend Eastern Europe (1955).

- Further divided the world into “East” and “West”.

![Map showing NATO and Warsaw Pact countries](image-url)
Crisis 2: China Became A Communist Country

- After WWII, a savage Civil War broke out between the Communists and the Nationalists in China.
- Despite $400 million US aid and supplies to the Nationalist government (much of which ended up in Communist hands), China became a Communist country under the leadership of Mao Zedong in 1949.
- The US refused to recognize Mao Zedong’s regime in Beijing (The People’s Republic of China) until 1979, supporting the Nationalist government in exile.
- In 1950, Stalin and Mao signed a Soviet-Sino Treaty of friendship, alliance, and mutual assistance.
Korea had been a colony of Japan, but after their WWII loss, US troops occupied territory in the South, while the Soviets occupied the North. By 1949, both occupying forces had left Korea, leaving South Korea ruled by democratic Nationalists and the North under the rule of Communist leader Kim Il Sung. North Korea attacked South Korea on June 25, 1950.
After US protest over this aggressive action, The UN sent a “police action” force (of mostly US Troops) to defend South Korea against N. Korea (containment policy).

The Koreans pushed the Americans back until MacArthur made a gamble and mad an amphibious attack at the Inchon Basin, leading to an American advance almost to the Chinese border.

The Chinese saw this as a threat to their security and jumped in, attacking in November, 1950, and pushing the US forces back to the 38th Parallel.

Huge blowout argument between Truman and MacArthur over the course of the war ensued-Truman wanted MacArthur to fight a limited war, MacArthur wanted to expand the war to eliminate communism in Asia and said so publically. MacArthur was recalled to the US for insubordination, but returned to a hero’s welcome, while Truman was seen by the public as an appeaser… Why?

Peace talks began in July, 1951, but fighting dragged on until July, 1953, when the armistice was signed during Eisenhower’s first year in office.
The Results

- 37,000 American deaths
- 103,000 wounded

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Stalemate and treaty drew the borders right where they had been at the outset of the War.

Containment had worked. Communism had not spread, and a world war had been averted by not expanding the war as MacArthur had suggested.

But Truman and Democrats now seen as “soft on communism”… Enter President Eisenhower and the Republicans

Precedents were set for Presidents sending US troops into battle without an official Congressional declaration of war and for an increase in military spending …up to half of the federal budget by 1960.

Executive Order 9981 – fully racially integrated the military
Dwight David Eisenhower
34th President of the US

- WWII Supreme Commander of Allied Forces & First Supreme Commander of NATO
- Elected President in 1952 on the platform that he would end the Korean War. He did so by threatening to use nuclear weapons.
- His policies of nuclear deterrence and massive retaliation gave priority to stockpiling less expensive nuclear weapons while reducing the funding for conventional military forces (ships, tanks, artillery, troops). The goal was to keep pressure on the Soviet Union while reducing federal deficits.
- In 1954, Eisenhower first articulated the “domino theory” in his description of the threat presented by the spread of communism.
The term Eisenhower Doctrine refers to a speech by President Eisenhower on January 5, 1957, within a "Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East" (Just after the Suez Crisis of 1956/57). Under the Eisenhower Doctrine, a country could request American economic assistance and/or aid from U.S. military forces if it was being threatened by armed aggression from another state. Eisenhower singled out the Soviet threat in his doctrine by authorizing the commitment of U.S. forces "to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid against covert armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism.” How does this differ from the Truman Doctrine?
Use of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to Resist Communism

- Eisenhower approved covert CIA missions to replace existing leftist governments with governments sympathetic to American interests.
- Ex. 1953 - Iran
- Ex. 1954 - Guatemala
Meanwhile, The Nuclear Arms Race Was in Full Swing

- Atomic bomb successfully tested in Sept., 1949 by Soviet Union, and the Arms race was underway...
- Truman ordered the development of a hydrogen bomb (similar to the atomic bomb, but much more powerful/destructive).
- 1952 successful testing by US of the H-Bomb; 1953 Soviets tested one of their own.
- This type of one-up-manship continued for four decades, with both sides stockpiling nuclear–armed subs, missiles, and planes (see Eisenhower’s nuclear deterrence policy).
- Both sides hoped that this program of mutually assured destruction would prevent either country from actually using a nuclear device against the other.
1955 - Nikita Khrushchev to Power in the Soviet Union

- Stalin died in 1953
- Khrushchev came to power by 1955
- Not as bad (i.e. not as excessively paranoid and cruel) as Stalin
- Condemned the excesses of Stalin and seemed willing to negotiate with the United States, thus a slight easing of tensions.
- However, in 1956, when people in the Eastern European states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary read this as an opportunity to gain some independence from the Soviet Union, Khrushchev violently crushed most of the revolts.
Cuban Revolution

- A 1959 revolution led by Fidel Castro to overthrow the Cuban dictatorship (Batista Regime).
- After gaining power, Castro quickly proved himself to be a communist and allied himself with the Soviet Union.
- This TERRIFIED the United States. Why?
- Eisenhower authorized the CIA to train anti-communist Cuban exiles to retake their island, but the execution of this plan would be left for Kennedy (the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, 1961, another story, for another day)
The U-2 incident 1960

- An American Spy Plane was shot down over the Soviet Union
- Eisenhower/US originally stated that it was a weather observing plane.
- Turns out that the pilot (Francis Gary Powers) was still alive (his training was to kill himself, rather than be captured- he hadn’t) and the plane was mostly undamaged, so the Russians got the plane’s camera and film and learned of the regular US tactic of spying from the air to learn of the Soviet missile program.
- Tensions between the two countries arose anew.