

The Cold War: A Simple Overview

Definition: The state of political hostility, military tension, and ideological conflict between the Soviet Union (and Soviet bloc allies) and the United States (and their allies in western nations), that existed from 1945 until 1991. This struggle was characterized by threats, propaganda, and other measures, short of open warfare. While the U.S.S.R. and the United States did not directly square off against each other in military battle, the Cold War saw numerous proxy wars and moments of heightened tension involving both global super powers.

I. ALLIES TO ENEMIES – What conditions and issues led to mistrust between the U.S. and U.S.S.R.?

A. Ideological Differences

- **Economic Systems:**

- United States = _____

- Soviet Union = _____

- **Political Systems:**

- United States = _____

- Soviet Union = _____

B. WW II Experiences and Conferences

- _____ = Big Three (U.S., Soviet Union, and GB) agree to create United Nations and divide up Germany into zone of occupation

- _____ = reaffirm German partition, prosecute war criminals, and U.S. knowledge (not shared) of Atomic bomb not shared with Soviets

C. Aggression and Expansion

- _____ = Soviet controlled “satellite nations” in much of central and eastern Europe

- _____ = symbolic term, popularized by Churchill, to describe the divide between Western Europe and the Soviet Bloc

II. AMERICAN RESPONSES TO SOVIET THREATS – How did American foreign policy hope to limit Soviet global power?

A. _____ = American foreign policy with the goal of stopping the spread of communism and “containing” communism within its present borders

B. _____ = an example of containment policy in which the U.S. gave military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, and would support non-communist governments around the world

- C. _____ = another example of containment in which the U.S. gave economic aid to European nations to rebuild after WW II

III. COLD WAR TURNS HOT – What events brought the Cold War to its peak in the 1950s and 1960s?

- A. _____ = When the Soviet Union blockaded the capital of Germany, U.S. and British pilots flew thousands of missions to supply Berlin
- B. Cold War Alliances
- _____ = North Atlantic Treaty Organization, mutual defense alliance
 - _____ = Soviet response to NATO, allied the Soviets with Eastern European Nations
- C. _____ = from 1950 to 1953, following the invasion of South Korea by Communist North Korea, the United Nations intervened to support the South with help from the United States
- D. Cold War Arms and Space Race
- _____ = U.S. successful test in 1952, followed up the Soviet's in 1955
 - _____ = first man-made satellite launched by Soviets in 1957 was seen as a major blow to American scientific advances
- E. JFK and the Cold War (More to Come later)
- Bay of Pigs Invasion
 - The Cuban Missile Crisis
- F. Vietnam War (More to Come Later)

IV. THAWING OF THE COLD WAR – How did the Cold War come to an end by 1991?

- A. Nixon and Kissinger: Détente (1968-1973)
- B. Reagan: Star Wars and the Evil Empire (1980-1988)
- C. Gorbachev: Glasnost and Perestroika (1985-1991)
- D. Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989)