

THE ACTION / REACTION CYCLE OF THE COLD WAR: 1945-1955

A Spiral of Escalating Tensions: AP US History

(reconfirms worst fears and preconceived notions)

BUT FIRST, WHAT DO WE ALREADY HAVE?

an international system based on competition and gaining something at somebody else's expense
a propensity to develop a "worst-case" analysis of global issues
a tradition of American disillusionment
historical/territorial hostilities
ideological hostilities
different conceptions of security based on different hist. experiences and geographic realities

Interwar period (1917-1939)

US intervention in the Russian Civil War
refusal to let Soviets sign Kellogg-Briand Pact 1927
US non-recognition of Soviet Union (1917-1933) and a refusal to see Nazi threat
Soviet disillusionment with West in 1920s and 1930s culminating in Munich "betrayal" 1938
Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact 1939

Actual issues/disagreements during World War II

2nd front (Russians fight 185 German divisions, US and GB fight 12 German divisions)
termination of Lend-Lease
US nuclear monopoly
what to do about Germany after war
Polish border and government
free elections for US v. "friendly" neighbors for Soviets
Soviet policy/entry into war against Japan
establishment of United Nations Organization
unconditional surrender v. separate peace treaties
US vision of "one world" v. Soviet vision of "spheres of influence"
US "open doors" for political and economic reasons v. Soviet "closed doors"

domestic pressures within each nation

*** **THUS: EACH NATION SEES THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY AND EXPECTS DIFFERENT THINGS WHEN THINGS DON'T GO THE WAY THEY ARE EXPECTED TO GO, BLAME IS PLACED ON THE OTHER SIDE- THIS IN TURN REQUIRES A "TOUGH" STANCE BY THE OTHER SIDE, WHICH IS IN TURN MISPERCEIVED. THIS THEN ADDS TO THE LEVEL OF TENSIONS.**

This leads to a series of assumptions by the US:

1. the USSR is expansionist- the Soviets plan to export communism
2. the Soviet/communist goal of world domination is permanent and irreversible
3. the US, as leader of the free world, is the only nation capable of stopping the "evil"
4. force and power are paramount
5. appeasement and backing down are counter-productive (Munich analogy)
6. the US is obliged to "fight for peace" and the fate of the world hangs in the balance

THUS, THE US MUST CONTAIN SOVIET INFLUENCE

Justifications and explanations for US assumptions contained in:

1. Etheridge Report 1945
2. "Long" Telegram Feb. 1946
3. the "Iron Curtain" Speech Mar. 1946
4. the Clifford Report Sept. 1946
5. the Truman Doctrine (Domino Theory) 1946
6. the "X" Article July 1947
7. NSC-7 Mar. 1948
8. NSC-68 April 1950

American Actions/Responses

security based on democratic principles

recognition of Polish gov. in exile

Potsdam Conference (July 1945)
Truman terminates Lend-Lease
desire to rebuild Germany
implicit threat about A-Bomb

Truman decides to "get tough" with Russia
describes a "barbarian" invasion of E. Europe

Etheridge Report (1945) Soviets are intervening
in the internal affairs of Rum. and Bulgaria

(Greek Civil War between Greek republicans and Greek communists: 1945-1946)

Long Telegram (Feb. 1946) Kennan says that Soviets
are more concerned with internal security than they are
with peaceful relations; says conciliation wont work with them

Iron Curtain Speech (Mar. 1946)

Baruch Plan (June 1946) for international
control of Atomic power and technology

Clifford Report (Sept. 1946) says that Soviets
are on course for world domination

Truman Doctrine (Mar. 1947) and Marshall Plan (June 1947)
DOMINO THEORY

Loyalty Oaths administered in US (Mar-June 1947)

"X" Article (July 1947) Kennan says that sources of Soviet
conduct are historical and traditional- sets intellectual foundations
for containment policies of Truman Doctrine

NSC-7 (Mar. 1948) says that ultimate
Soviet objective is world domination

Berlin Airlift (June 1948)

NATO formed-German rearmament (April 1949)

NSC-68 (April 1950) says the Soviets are
animated by a fanatical faith which aims to
impose absolute authority over the rest of
the world and to destroy the US

US develops H-Bomb (1952)

Germany admitted to NATO (May 9, 1955)

Soviet Actions/Responses

security based on power and land

recognition of communist Polish gov.

Potsdam Conference (July 1945)
Sov. threaten to sign separate peace
desire to plow Germany under
shows no concern about A-Bomb

Soviet troops remain in Iran, Manchuria
and Eastern Europe

Stalin's Speech (Feb. 1946) talks of a
conflict between distinct ways of life

Soviets reject Baruch Plan

COMINFORM (Sept. 1947)

Czechoslovakia communist (Feb. 1948)

Berlin Blockade (June 1948)

China communist (1949)

Soviet nuclear bomb (1949)

(Korean War -June 1950)

Soviets develop H-Bomb (1953)

Warsaw Pact (May 14, 1955)