

The Cold War

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Introduction

Through its height, the Cold War became an event that directly impacted the individual experience, politics, and political and social ideologies of varying nations such as but not limited to, the United States, Germany, Berlin, Cuba, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union. (“The Cold War”, n.d). As one educates oneself on the history and facts that surround the conflict play that occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union, one is exposed to how the actions affected the social realities of these nations and the day-to-day lives of their citizens during this time. Educating oneself on the relationship that exists between the Cold War and various events that occurred during and after its height such as the Berlin Airlift, the Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile and more, allows one today to understand how certain events act as a catalyst towards further events which affects and changes the world in terms of politics, society, and growth overall.

The Cold War

The Cold War was an era that illustrated the tensions that existed between the United States and the Soviet Union during the late 1940s up till the early 1990s alongside nations that assisted either side during the war. (“The Cold War”, n.d). Despite being regarded as a war, this time in history instead illustrated a nonphysical fight as there was no large-scale war that portrayed this war but rather other smaller wars where nations sought to help assist their ally in their fights. This can be understood as one educates oneself about the two sides' previous alliance with one another in their fight against Nazi Germany before. (“The Cold War”, n.d). Here, the idea that each side simply wanted to be recognized as the one with the highest power can be understood as the factor towards the rise of a conflict based on ideological and geopolitical struggles for global influence during this time right after the previous war won. (“The Cold

War”, n.d). Alas, the end of one war won constituted towards the beginning of this Cold War, leading towards a reality that introduced pacts between allying nations, the result of various wars over the world, and as well as directly affecting individual experiences of those living in these parts of the world.

The NATO and Warsaw Pacts

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, is an intergovernmental military alliance between European and North American powers to be. (Allen, 2003). Created during the same time as the introduction of the Cold War, many can conclude that the treaty to be one created because of the war itself. (Allen, 2003). NATO was used as a method to keep the Soviet Union's powers and actions toward the United States and its allies at a standstill. (Allen, 2003). As the United States and their allies had a pact that benefited their nation's overall goals, the Soviet Union and co also sought out the formation of a pact of their own soon after. The Warsaw Pact was another collective defense treaty signed during the Cold War which established a counterweight balance of power to that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (Allen, 2003). These pacts allowed society during this time and today to note the stress placed on the ideological beliefs each side had and believed was right for their nation—not just on fighting physical wars. (Allen, 2003). While there might not have been any military confrontations between the two organizations overall, these pacts led towards the expansion and integration of military forces and political ideals overall into these nations leading towards many proxy wars and sneaky acts to be executed by each side of the cold war.

The Berlin Airlift

One may look to the Berlin Airlift crisis as the United States' defining factor in joining NATO overall. The crisis which began during the year 1948, consisted of the Soviet Union

creating and implementing a blockade that would be used to prevent the United States powers to be from assisting those seeking help from the communist hegemony. (“The End of the Cold War”, 2008-2022). As a result of the blockade, the United States and the United Kingdom took it upon themselves to respond by airlifting food and supplies still needed in these German regions now road blocked. (“The End of the Cold War”, 2008-2022). As a result, the success of the blockade overall proved ineffective towards the Soviet Union as many of the people now feared the Soviet’s acts towards them and showed support for the United States instead. (“The End of the Cold War”, 2008-2022). The United States used this event and its powers to be seen as the beacon and savior of the various foreign nations around them, asserting their ideological and political dominance concerning the concept of democracy overall, while the Soviet Union continued to provoke fear in the West asserting their ideals of dominance as well. (“The End of the Cold War”, 2008-2022). During this time, Germany was not the only nation directly affected by the power struggle that existed between the two sides.

Other Nations

China

Around 1949, the Communists won the Chinese civil war and alas, Communist China joined forces with the Soviet Union during the Cold War which occurred soon after. (“KEY POINTS across East Asia—by Era 20th CENTURY 1950-2000”, 2003). Here, China helped aid the Soviet Union as an ally in the fight for ideological dominance on a foreign scale as military forces were used to help North Korea against South Korea, which in turn was supported by NATO powers. (“KEY POINTS across East Asia—by Era 20th CENTURY 1950-2000”, 2003). Here, Chairman Mao, the revolutionary leader who allowed China to have its political and foreign reign as an ally through previous hurdles in domestic change, allowed China to lead as an

influential power in this cold war overall. (“KEY POINTS across East Asia—by Era 20th CENTURY 1950-2000”, 2003). Just a few years after the start of the war between South Korea and North Korea, the war had ended as China no longer aligned itself with the Soviet Union, further leading towards the joint force of the United States and China working together as well. (“KEY POINTS across East Asia—by Era 20th CENTURY 1950-2000”, 2003). However, just soon after as some nations won peace, another war began elsewhere.

Vietnam

As the French began to head into war concerning French colonial power over Vietnam decreasing, the United States sought to align themselves and help assist in the war. Billions of dollars have been recorded to be spent concerning the United States' involvement in the war and even after the French had withdrawn from Vietnam completely—the United States had not. (“Ending the Vietnam War, 1969–1973”, 2023). The Vietnam War resulted in the loss of millions of lives and is noted as one of the United States' major losses. (“Ending the Vietnam War, 1969–1973”, 2023). Working towards preventing free elections that would have united the entire country of Vietnam under the control of communist North Vietnam, the Soviet Union saw as the United States continued to spread their foreign influence and powers across borders and thus, continued to do so themselves as well.

Cuba

Towards the end of the height of the Cold War, society experienced heightened fear as the confrontations between the Soviet Union and the United States became more direct and aware. (Scott & Hughes, 2015). (Gott, 2003). The Cuban Missile Crisis during the Cold War presented one of these confrontations as the two powers came close to engaging in nuclear war as a result. (Scott & Hughes, 2015). The crisis consisted of American powers deciding to deploy

missiles into Italy and Turkey and thus, the Soviet Union returned with its call for missile deployment in Cuba as well. (Scott & Hughes, 2015). As one notes and educates themselves on the way the United States presented itself to be the savior power for all foreign nations aligned, one can conclude how the United States during this time regarded its South American region. The fact that the Soviet Union's hegemony powers were able to not only target the region but also communicate with its leader and governance, was sure enough to frighten America's ideology as the savior nation for all. (Gott, 2003). This then led the CIA to attempt in invading Cuba to prevent the overall idea of communism from forming and staying place in a nation so geographically close to America itself. (Gott, 2003). These events led many nations and people around the world to recognize how the American governance recognized itself, placing itself in high importance in its mission towards being a liberator of all others. As one studies these events, one is exposed to not only these facts but the significance these events and ideologies have had as a result overall.

Significance

As various foreign nations such as Korea and Vietnam fought their local wars, America, and the Soviet Union each sought to back one side and further illustrate their political notion and claims. As briefly stated, this led to billions of dollars being spent on supplies for guns and more than that allowed for millions of lives to be lost during wars which were only prolonged due to the overall Cold War. On a less foreign scale, the Cold War sought to have a positive impact on the Civil Rights Movement that existed in America towards its final years. ("The Cold War", n.d). ("Cultural Life", n.d). As America fought to proclaim itself as the savior foreign power to be towards freedom and safety of all, many nations began to look at the height of racism and segregation that existed right in America as hypothetical. ("Cultural Life", n.d). The idea that

America sought to 'fix' every other nation's ideal and civil wars while engaging in their own for decades, allowed for American governance to pay more focus on the Civil Rights Movement during this time, leading towards positive changes judicially and thus socially as well. ("The Cold War", n.d). ("Cultural Life", n.d). America continued to assist other foreign movements looking for democracy in nations such as India, Israel, and parts of Africa as well, no longer having to fear ridicule concerning their own freedom and civil wars.

Conclusion

The Cold War consisted of a world-historic event in which the nations of the United States and the Soviet Union sought to proclaim their foreign political ideals upon the masses. ("The Cold War", n.d). This paper focuses and educates one on the American political ideology that arose and shaped the way others viewed the United States' powers and mission as a foreign nation overall. From foreign and domestic policies created to the unification of Germany and the conclusion of the Soviet Union, one understands how the events that occurred during the Cold War have allowed for both beneficial and damaging impacts overall. ("The Cold War", n.d). While never leading towards a physical war, the ideological ideals each side fought over concerning communist and democratic principles, allowed for each to, oftentimes unnecessarily, assist another nation with materials and finances to support their civil wars. ("The Cold War", n.d). Thus, while the Cold War did not directly lead to the loss of lives in a physical war, the same result occurred as these powers sought to convince the world of the capabilities their foreign and political governance can have for others.

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