The Cold War: Origins and Outbreak

PS 142A.08
Summary

- Why did FDR’s grand vision collapse into competition between the US and USSR and exclusive spheres-of-influence in Western and Eastern Europe?
- In Eastern Europe, highly divergent interests between USSR and satellites required empire.
- In Western Europe, site-specific military assets required a degree of hierarchy via indirect rule.
Who (or What) Caused the Cold War?

- **Realists:** The inherent expansionism of Russia and especially Stalin had to be contained.
- **Revisionists:** U.S. drive for foreign markets threatened Soviet Union.
- **Post-Revisionists:** Bipolarity produced inevitable competition.
- **Post-Post-Revisionists:** No, it really was Stalin.
Yalta (Feb. 1945)

- Two competing visions in U.S.
  - FDR — the four horsemen
  - Churchill and Stalin: spheres of influence

- Meeting of FDR, Churchill, and Stalin at Yalta left this unclear
  - Stalin preferred spheres of influence and subsequently chose to interpret agreements to this effect
  - U.S. agreed to ambiguity to get Stalin to agree to fight Japan

- Race not only to defeat Germany but also to occupy territory that would be integrated into spheres
Disposition of Forces, V-E Day
Zones of Allied Control
Soviet Expansionism

- Often under a patina of democracy, Soviet Union imposed communist regimes on all countries in its sphere
  - Countries “naturally” oriented towards the West
  - Communist parties small
  - Indirect rule both necessary and possible due to Soviet troops
- Berlin Blockade, June 1948 to May 1949
- Czech coup of 1948
- German Democratic Republic declared in Oct. 1949
- Korean War, 1950-1953
Western Expansionism

- Marshall Plan (Speech June 1947, Enacted April 1948)
  - Soviet Union and Eastern Europe invited, but assumed would not participate
- Introduction of the Deutsche Mark (June 20, 1948)
  - Berlin Blockade (June 24, 1948)
North Atlantic Treaty Organization

- March 1947: Treaty of Dunkirk (UK and France)
- Sept. 1948: Western Union (UK, FR, Benelux)
- April 1949: North Atlantic Treaty signed (Western Union plus U.S., Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland)
  - Ratified July 1949
  - Germany rearmed and admitted in 1955
  - Soviet Union responds with Warsaw Pact
NAT Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.
Spheres of Influence

- **Soviet Union (USSR)**
- **USSR-aligned countries** (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania)
- **Former USSR-aligned country** (Albania, aligned until 1960)
- **Non-aligned country** (Yugoslavia)
- **Neutral countries** (Finland, Switzerland)
- **Neutral countries, Western-aligned** (Austria, Ireland, Sweden)
- **Western-aligned countries** (Greece, Norway, Iceland, United Kingdom, France, Denmark, West Germany, Italy, Turkey, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg).
The Intellectual Turn: George F. Kennen

- Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow, asked to explain Soviet behavior
- Advocated spheres-of-influence in Europe, rather than FDR’s postwar vision
- Outlined strategy of “containment”
Stalin needed a hostile world to justify his autocratic rule

“At the bottom of the Kremlin’s neurotic view of world affairs is the traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity”

After the Russian revolution, this insecurity became mixed with communist ideology and “Oriental secretiveness and conspiracy”

Soviet Union would have to “be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points”
Truman Doctrine (March 1947)

“I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.”
NSC-68 (April 1950)

- Militarization of competition with the Soviet Union
- Soviet Union seeking “absolute power”
- Conflict between the superpowers was “endemic”
- “Inescapably militant” dictatorship could be checked only by military power
- If sufficiently committed, U.S. could “foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system”
- Required vast new military spending
The Great Debate (Dec. 1950-April 1951)

- **Unilateralists (sort of Jacksonian/Jeffersonian)**
  - Senator Robert Taft (R-OH) advocated Off-Shore Balancing
  - Reliance on nuclear deterrence and naval forces
  - Feared European entrapment

- **Internationalists (sort of Wilsonian/Hamiltonian)**
  - Defense of U.S. interests required forward-deployed forces in Europe and Asia
  - Additional forces to NATO and Eisenhower as SACEUR approved April 1951
Sphere-of-Influence to Protectorates

- Rule over European “allies” varied, more extensive in Germany than elsewhere
- Rule necessitated by expected costs of opportunism
  - Though unlikely, still needed to be controlled
- Rule made possible by
  - Increasingly common interests in countering Soviet Union and developing free trade
  - Indirect rule via sympathetic, pro-Western parties
  - Multilateralism
Multilateralism by Design: NATO Command Structure
So, Who Caused the Cold War?

- Mutual distrust (and perhaps innate expansionism) fueled desire for spheres-of-influence
- Forward defense strategy required at least some degree of hierarchy
- Pursuit of hierarchy exacerbated mutual distrust
- Mutual distrust led to militarization and investment in specific military assets, which required more extensive hierarchy
- And so on, and so on…