

CHAIR REPORT



Committee: Historical Council

Question of: The Cold War

Students Officer:

Introduction:

After the end of World War II there was a period of geopolitical tension between the world's two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, known as the Cold War. The conflict began in 1946 and ended in 1991. The term "cold" is used due to there not being large-scale fighting directly between the two sides, even though both of them had profound economic and political differences and supported major regional conflicts.

The west side, led by the United States, was a capitalist federal republic, who fought to keep the soviet ideology away from their colonies by throwing out all the communists from the coalition governments, the proposition of the Marshall Plan and the creation of NATO. The east side, on the other hand, had a totalitarian communist regime led by the USSR, who just like the States, kept the capitalists away by the imposition of popular democracies, the formation of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and establishment of the Warsaw Pact.

The Issue:

The first phase of the Cold War began just two years after the end of World War II, when the western allies decided to unite its territories and manifest their intention of creating the Federal Republic of Germany, even though it was said that Germany should recover under a democratic regime. As a response to this, the USSR consolidated its control over the states of the Eastern Bloc by shutting all of Berlin's borders and isolating the west side of the city, known as the Berlin Blockade. The Soviet Union also created a new staten, known as the German Democratic Republic. A second conflict was the Korean War (1950-1953), as at the end of WWII the north of Korea had been occupied by the soviets and the south by the americans. In 1950, Stalin encouraged his north korean allies to invade the south, and as a response to this, american troops were sent to help. Finally in 1953, Panmunjom Declaration on Peace consolidated the division between both Koreas.

The Vietnam War (1957-1975), was one of the toughest conflicts of the Cold War. Once the French Indochina gained its independence, the communist leader of North Vietnam announced his wish of sending troops to invade South Vietnam. Like on the other conflicts, USA helped the south and the USSR helped the north. However, the problem this time were the communist sympathizers in the south, whom were derisively called Viet Cong. By 1957, the Viet Cong and other opponents of the south's repressive regime began fighting back with attacks on government officials and other targets, and by 1959 they had begun engaging the South Vietnamese army in firefights. In October 1967, some 35,000 demonstrators staged a massive Vietnam War protest outside the Pentagon. Opponents of the war argued that civilians, not enemy combatants, were the primary victims and that the United States was supporting a corrupt dictatorship in Saigon. An agreement negotiated in January 1973 by the United States and North Vietnam at Paris called for a cease-fire in each of the countries.

A fourth conflict, Suez Crisis, put once again face to face the two superpowers. The Suez Crisis began on October 29, 1956, when the monarchy, that had been at the service of Britain, was defeated and a new republic was established with Abdel Nasser as the leader. The Suez Canal was built in Egypt under the supervision of a French diplomat. The crisis began when Nasser decided to nationalise the Suez Canal. In response, british and french troops were sent to block the waterway. In the end, Egypt emerged victorious, and the British, French and Israeli governments withdrew their troops in late 1956 and early 1957.

The final conflict was the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). This encounter was the most important one as it broke with American influence in the rest of the continent. During the Crisis, leaders of the U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged in a tense, 13-day political and military standoff in October 1962 over the installation of nuclear-armed Soviet missiles on Cuba, just 90 miles from U.S. shores. When President John Kennedy discovered the presence of the missiles, he explained his decision to enact a naval blockade around Cuba and made it clear that the U.S. was prepared to use military force if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security. However, disaster was avoided when the U.S. agreed to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's offer to remove the Cuban missiles in exchange for the U.S. promising not to invade Cuba.

The second phase began after Stalin's death in 1956 and the new USSR leader, Khrushchev, publicly announced the errors and crimes that Stalin had committed. Furthermore, he made some changes that led to the peaceful coexistence between the two superpowers. Although, there were still some conflicts like the Cuban Missile Crisis during this period of time, there was a new way of solving them that involved peaceful dialogue.

The Third phase began with the return of the tension. In some communist countries of Europe there were protests in order to build their own model communism. In Hungary in 1956 the leader Imre Nagy started a process where he announced Hungary's neutrality and their wish to abandon the Warsaw Pact. Czechoslovakia lived a similar process to the Hungarian, when Alexander Dubcek began a movement known as the Prague Spring, in which he proposed a new socialism that gave big importance to freedom. However, the USSR and some other communists were against this process, so they decided to invade Prague in August 1968.

Key events:

Event/Date	Explanation
Berlin Blockade (1948-1949)	The Berlin Blockade was an attempt in 1948 by the Soviet Union to limit the ability of France, Great Britain and the United States to travel to their sectors of Berlin, which lay within Russian-occupied East Germany. Eventually, the western powers instituted an airlift that lasted nearly a year and delivered much-needed supplies and relief to West Berlin.
Korean War (1950-1953)	The war began on June 25, 1950, between North Korea, aided by Communist China, and South Korea, aided by the United States and other United Nations members forming a United Nations armed force: truce signed July 27, 1953.
Vietnam War (1957-1975)	The war between North Vietnam and South Vietnam: the U.S. participated on the side of South Vietnam, with its greatest military involvement
Suez Crisis (October 1956)	A major international incident that arose in 1956 from the decision by Gamal A. Nasser of Egypt to nationalize the Suez Canal.

Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)	A confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1962 over the presence of missile sites in Cuba; one of the “hottest” periods of the cold war.
Peaceful Coexistence (1955-1964)	The idea that nation-states should not interfere with the domestic affairs of other countries in order to avoid conflict.
Prague Spring (1968)	The Prague Spring was a period of political liberalization and mass protest in Czechoslovakia as a Communist state after World War II.

Previous solutions :

In the history of the Cold War there have been many bilateral agreements between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R that were meant to hinder an outbreak of armed conflict. Even though these international declarations and peace agreements did not alleviate the constant threat of a nuclear World War 3 and there were still many dramatic crises in which war seemed inevitable, in the end an outbreak of a world war was prevented. Most of the agreements were focused on restricting nuclear arms and their development, since a nuclear attack was always going to result in Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), which would have made the earth an uninhabitable place for the human species.

SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks/ Treaty)

It was a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. signed on May 26th 1972 that was in compliance with Nixon’s and Kissinger’s strategy of détente. The limitation of both offensive and defensive strategic systems was meant to stabilize U.S.-Soviet relations. The result was agreements on two documents: The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) and the Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

The Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) was focused on ending an emerging competition in defensive systems that threatened to enhance the competition in developing offensive nuclear weapons further. In the Interim Agreement on Certain Measures With Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, the two opposing nations took the first steps to limit the competition in their possession and development of land- and submarine-based offensive nuclear weapons, by freezing the number of certain nuclear arms to existing levels. However, there was no definite limitation on newly-developing technologies and the interim agreement was due to expire in 1977.

SALT II

Since SALT I only focused on certain offensive nuclear arms and defense systems, the negotiations for a second round of SALT began in 1972. SALT I had not completely prevented the enlarging of the individual forces with other technologies, such as deploying the Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs) onto their Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and their Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs). The negotiations also sought to prevent other qualitative breakthroughs that would destabilize the U.S.-Soviet relations. The new framework for an agreement included a limit on ICBMs, SLBMs and other bombers as well as limits on MIRV systems and on new ICBM launchers and newly-developed strategic offensive arms. Due to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, SALT II was never ratified. Both Washington and Moscow subsequently pledged to

adhere to the agreement's terms despite its failure to enter into force. Under the administration of Reagan, the SALT II was abided to until its expiration but afterwards he pursued the Strategic Reduction Treaty (START) and resumed the research into Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

Helsinki Agreement:

The Warsaw Pact countries proposed a conference with the NATO to discuss European Security and in 1975 the 33 countries had reached an agreement. The agreement stated that all borders of European countries were 'inviolable' and could not be altered by force. It also promoted increased exchange across the borders of the iron curtain in the area of trade and technology. Lastly, human rights were to be respected according to the agreement. In reality, this was not always enforced but was an important step towards increased cooperation.

Glasnost and Perestroika:

Even though these terms describe a system of reforms in the Soviet Union and cannot be described as a direct solution to the conflict between the two countries, they had implications for Soviet foreign policy and promoted the policy of détente and thus the disarmament of both countries. There were many summit meetings between Gorbachev and Reagan to discuss cultural exchanges, the proxy wars, human rights and more. Gorbachev then surprised Reagan with a proposal for massive cuts in the nuclear forces of each country since this arms race had negative economic implications for the struggling Soviet Union, it was preventing needed domestic reforms.

INF Treaty of 1987

The final treaty proceeded to eliminate certain types of nuclear weapons and their deployment worldwide. It also called for the first time for extensive verification measures including intrusive inspections. It was the first treaty that required the destruction of existing weapons.

Possible Solutions:

Conflicts of such a large scale, with conflicting interests and beliefs can only be solved with communication. Diplomacy is crucial in finding solutions to the existing struggles for power. If the people in power collaborate, treaties can be made and war can be prevented.

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