

Mark: 96%

Comments: Christiaan – this is really good. There's not much more to say. Thorough, insightful, excellent use of sources, extensive reading, well written – can't ask for much more! About the only things extra you might have mentioned are the United Nations, and it is worth considering the effect of only the US having the atom bomb until 1949 might've had things up until then.

Do away with the headings, and there's scope just to tidy up your referencing (which in the main is also excellent) a little bit. Proof reading too, mainly with regard to consistency, can also be tightened a bit. A very impressive effort.

Essay Question

What factors caused the Cold War? (There is no need to go beyond 1949 in your answer.)

Synopsis

The Cold War was caused by the inability of World War Two allies to cooperate over post war Europe. Conflicting ideologies, spheres of influence and differing economic goals drove the Soviet and American allies apart and polarized Europe.

Essay Response

Introduction

The Cold War between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States (US) had its origins in the inability of these nations to collaborate over the future of Europe after World War Two (WW2). The need to unite against Hitler's Fascists saw an alliance form between Josef Stalin from the Soviet Union, Winston Churchill from Britain and Franklin Roosevelt from the US. With Hitler's demise in 1945, a power vacuum developed in Central Europe. With Britain suffering the effects of war the Soviets and Americans attempted to fill this void. While working to rebuild Europe, the allies' conflicting agendas ultimately resulted in a polarised Europe in what Bernard Baruch in 1947 coined the 'Cold War'.¹ This essay will examine events up to the 1948 Berlin Blockade and asserts that agendas were shaped by the allies' differing ideologies, their spheres of influence, and economic goals. American and Soviet domestic influences and atomic weaponry also played an important role, however these are beyond the scope of this essay. It will be shown that efforts to prevent opposition hegemony led to a polarised rather than unified Europe.

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Comment [d1]: And other countries?

Comment [d2]: Good intro

¹ Alan Axelrod, *The Real History of the Cold War*, New York, 2009, p. 89.

The core of Cold War differences between the USSR and US were ideological in nature. Marxism-Leninism shaped the Soviet thinking during the Cold War. The Soviet Union was the fulfilment of the writings of Karl Marx, which stated that a revolution by the working class exploited by the profit hungry bourgeoisie ruling class, would establish a worker-run single party communist state.² Vladimir Lenin, founder of the Soviet Union, believed that as 'monopoly capitalism' spread across the globe inevitable revolution would spread communism internationally.³ In contrast, the US believed in democratic capitalism promoting liberal values. Advocated after World War One (WW1) by Woodrow Wilson in his Fourteen Points, 'Wilsonianism' promoted abroad the people's right to choose their own government, global open markets and international institutions to regulate conflict.⁴ The Soviet Union was the realization of Marxism-Leninism while the US exemplified Wilsonianism.

One reason these two ideologies clashed relates to their similarities. Firstly, as Engermann states, both communism and liberalism were universalistic and should be applied globally to all peoples.⁵ The spread of democratic capitalism outside the US began after WW1 with the formation of numerous democracies in Europe watched over by the League of Nations.⁶ However, a decade after WW1 capitalism led to the Great Depression and threatened to allow communism to take root. Democratic capitalists saw communism as a descent into mob-rule and in preventing communist revolution, Fascism arose.⁷ Secondly, both ideologies had the progressive belief that history was an irreversible advance towards improvement as a result of its influence and success.⁸ Stalin could be forgiven for thinking history was on his side. Having outlasted Fascism, the Soviet Union need only consolidate its position while awaiting Marxism-Leninism's prediction that the Western allies would eventually clash over the drive

² Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and Soviet Union in World Politics 1941-1991*, London, 1995, p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴ Woodrow Wilson, *Transcript of President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918)*, 1918, http://www.ourdocuments.gov/print_friendly.php?flash=true&page=transcript&doc=62&title=Transcript+of+President+Woodrow+Wilson%27s+14+Points+%281918%29, accessed March 15, 2013; Tony Smith, *America's mission: the United States and the world-wide struggle for democracy in the twentieth century*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 84, 327 reproduced in John A. Thompson, 'Wilsonianism: the dynamics of a conflicted concept', *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1, January 2010, p. 29.

⁵ David C. Engerman, 'Ideology and the origins of the Cold War, 1917-1962' in *The Cambridge history of the Cold War*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, Vol. I, *Origins*, Cambridge, 2010, p. 23.

⁶ Richard Bessel, 'Germany from war to dictatorship' in *Twentieth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990*, ed. Mary Fulbrook, London, 2001, p. 14; Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, London, 1999, p. 64.

⁷ Thomas Borstelmann, 'The United States, the Cold War, and the Color Line' in *Origins of the Cold War*, 2nd Edition, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and David S. Painter, New York, 2005, p. 318.

⁸ Engermann, 'Ideology and the origins', p. 23. – capital 'O' here but not in the original reference – consistency!

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for profit.⁹ The Cold War would be the realisation of the ideological conflict threatened by their progressive and universalistic natures.

Soviet suspicion of Western aggression caused it to secure itself by creating a Soviet buffer zone. These suspicions harked back to the Russian Civil War between 1918 and 1920 when democratic forces including the US and Britain attempted to overthrow the communist Bolsheviks.¹⁰ Attacks on the Soviet Union continued when Hitler invaded in 1941 costing over 20 millions of Soviet lives.¹¹ Stalin desired security through a buffer zone of pro-soviet states in Eastern Europe. He sought to restore the pre-WWI Russian boundaries as well as concessions granted under the Soviet-Nazi Non Aggression pact of 1939.¹² Roosevelt strongly advocated democratic self-determination for the newly liberated nations of Eastern Europe as agreed in the Atlantic Charter.¹³ The political reality, however, was defined by Soviet armed forces occupying most of Eastern Europe.¹⁴ According to Stalin, 'whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system'.¹⁵ At Yalta in February 1945, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill met to discuss this issue and Poland was the prime talking point. Stalin pointed out that 'Poland [had] served as a corridor for enemies coming to attack Russia' and had appointed his own pro-soviet government there in 1944.¹⁶ Roosevelt and Churchill insisted that Stalin include members of the Polish government in exile in London and that free elections be held.¹⁷ As a compromise Stalin agreed to future free elections, temporarily placating the West. However, he had other plans telling his foreign minister Molotov, 'we can implement it our own way later.'¹⁸ Despite promises to the contrary, Stalin moved to create a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe to protect Soviet Russia.

Comment [d3]: Probably should've been included in the previous paragraph

⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, London, 2005, p. 14.

¹⁰ Martin McCauley, *Russia, America & the Cold War 1949-1991*, London, 1998, p. 88.

¹¹ Walter Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time: A History 1945-1992*, New York, 1993, p. 56.

¹² Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 11.

¹³ Roosevelt unhappy with Churchill/stalin [???? Did you forget something here?](#)

¹⁴ Martin Walker, *The Cold War*, London, 1994, p. 12.

¹⁵ Extract from Milovan Djilas' recording of Stalin's attitude to occupied territories, 1944 reproduced in Lightbody, *The Cold War*, p. 30.

¹⁶ Extract from Stalin's statement on Poland at Yalta, February 1945 reproduced in Lightbody, *The Cold War*, p. 16.

¹⁷ Sibley, *The Cold War*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Lightbody, *The Cold War*, p. 11; Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 21.

Throughout the rest of Eastern Europe Stalin followed a policy of 'People's Democracy'. Governments such as those in Bulgaria and Hungary were coalitions of pro-Soviet and non-Soviets alike, however, Stalin ensured that pro-soviet officials were appointed to key government positions.¹⁹ Eventually non-communists would be marginalized before outright repression of opposition officials.²⁰ In this way democracy appeared valid while Soviets worked their way to a position of dominance. Through armed occupation and People's Democracy the Soviets established an Eastern European buffer of 'friendly' nations separating Western-Central Europe from Russia.

Comment [d4]: These should all be Capital "S"

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The US believed that Stalin was expanding rather than securing the Soviet Union. Roosevelt firmly believed in the partnership with Stalin particularly in the interests of obtaining Soviet help in ending the ongoing war with Japan.²¹ However, shortly before his death in April 1945 he began to question Soviet actions over the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe.²² His suspicions were raised in February 1945 when Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vyshinsky forced Romanian King Michael to install a pro-Communist government, while in Poland, exiled government members still had not been included in the government.²³ US attitudes became less conciliatory with the inauguration of President Truman. Truman's uncompromising attitude was demonstrated by his demand to Molotov that the Soviet Union 'carry out your [Yalta] agreements...' before temporarily cancelling Lend-Lease economic aid which the US had been sending the Soviets since 1941.²⁴ After Stalin's speech in February 1946 stating that capitalism was to blame for 'universal crises and military conflicts', Truman sought answers to explain Soviet policy.²⁵ He found them with George Kennan, American analyst in Moscow. In his 'Long Telegram' Kennan asserted that 'Soviet efforts... must be directed toward deepening and exploiting of differences... between capitalist powers', which must be 'turned into revolutionary upheavals'.²⁶ Kennan also insisted that the Soviets were

Comment [d5]: Do some historians cite this as a contributing factor?

¹⁹ Mazower, *Dark Continent*, p. 262.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

²¹ Henry Heller, *The Cold War and the New Imperialism: A Global History, 1945-2005*, New York, 2006, p. 28.

²² Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men*, London, 1986, p. 249.

²³ Walker, *The Cold War*, p. 16; Melvyn P Leffler, 'The Emergence of an American Grand Strategy, 1945-1952' in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, eds. Melvyn P Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, Vol. I, *Origins*, Cambridge, 2010, p. 69.

²⁴ Walker, *The Cold War*, p. 20; Heller, *The New Imperialism*, p. 30.

²⁵ Josef Stalin, *Speech at an Election Meeting, Moscow*, 9th February 1946, <http://revolutionarydemocracy.org/stalin/speech020946.htm>, accessed March 20th 2013.

²⁶ George Kennan, *Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall*, 22nd February 1946, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf, accessed March 2nd 2013, p. 3.

‘Impervious to logic of reason, and... highly sensitive to logic of force.’²⁷ In March 1946 Churchill delivered a speech at Fulton University in the US stating that an ‘Iron Curtain [had] descended across the continent’ and chastised Soviet totalitarian control of Eastern Europe.²⁸ The West decided on a policy of prevention of Soviet expansion later labelled ‘containment’.²⁹

Comment [d6]: What was the reaction to this? Remember to clearly link every point back to the question you are addressing – explicitly show how it is contributing to your overall argument.

Containment was tested over Soviet actions in Iran and Turkey. Soviet troops occupied Iran with British forces to safeguard allied oil during the war. Despite agreements to leave Iran by 2nd March 1946 Soviet forces remained seeking to establish their own influence there.³⁰ Pressure applied by the US in the United Nations Security Council led to a Soviet back down in May.³¹ A further test of containment was over Turkey. In March 1945 the Soviets demanded the return of previously held regions of Kars and Ardahan and joint defence with Turkey of the Dardanelles straits.³² The Turks refused and during 1946 Soviet forces threatened to cross the Turkish border. In response the US sent its Sixth Fleet to the Mediterranean and by the end of 1946 Soviet forces again backed down.³³ The US policy of containment appeared to be a successful deterrent to Soviet expansion; it was clear that the wartime alliance was breaking.

Differing economic goals after the war pushed the US and Soviets apart. The Soviet Union was devastated after WW2 having lost a quarter of its reproducible wealth including 31,000 industrial enterprises and 1,700 cities and towns.³⁴ The Soviets aimed to rebuild their economies through German reparations and US loans. In contrast, the US had the world’s most powerful economy with a Gross National Product three times that of the Soviet Union.³⁵ Despite this, the US feared a looming economic crisis like that seen after the WW1. Its goal therefore was free trade through ‘markets – big markets – around the world in which to buy

²⁷ Kennan, *Telegram*, p. 15

²⁸ Winston Churchill, *Winston Churchill’s ‘The Sinews of Peace’*, 5 March 1946, <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/Deterrence/Ironcurtain.shtml>, accessed March 1st 2013.

²⁹ George Kennan, ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 25, July 1947, p. 575.

³⁰ Martin McCauley, *The Origins of the Cold War 1941-1949*, 2nd Edition, London, 1995, p. 76.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³² Mark Eduard, ‘The Turkish War Scare of 1946’ in *Origins of the Cold War*, 2nd Edition, eds. Melvyn P Leffler and David S Painter, New York, 2005, p. 115.

³³ Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Downing, *Cold War*, London, 2008, p. 42.

³⁴ Vladimir O Pechatnov, *The Soviet Union and the World, 1944-1953*, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, eds. Melvyn P Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, Vol. I, *Origins*, Cambridge, 2010, p. 90.

³⁵ Leffler, *American Grand Strategy*, p. 67; McCauley, *Russia, America*, pp. 90-91.

and sell'.³⁶ January 1945 then saw the Soviets request a US loan of \$6 billion. The US Congress would only permit \$1 billion which came with a list of 'liberal' concessions such as freedom of the press and accepting US books and films.³⁷ Before any agreements could be made the loan was conveniently 'misaid' and the US ended all Lend-Lease aid in August.³⁸ The US appeared to be using economic aid as leverage against Soviet spheres of influence. The Soviets were surprised. Stalin also believed a global crash was imminent and expected the US to lend the Soviets money for construction; 'the Americans would otherwise be unable to find markets for its products'.³⁹ Amid fears of global economic strife, the US used economic aid as a bargaining tool with the Soviets.

The Soviets were forced to rely on \$10 billion in German reparations.⁴⁰ Germany had been split into Soviet, American, British and French zones. Within the Soviet Zone, Berlin too had been similarly divided. Each of these powers extracted their own reparations directly from their zones. Though the Soviet zone lacked the industrial strength of the others, in a demonstration of allied unity, the Western zones agreed to send extra reparations to them.⁴¹ To the US, however, European economic revival was more important than reparations. A thriving Europe would provide a market for future exports and uniting and rebuilding Germany was the key.⁴² This did not appeal to the Soviets who, above all else, wanted a weak Germany.⁴³ With ongoing disagreements over the unification of the German economy and reparations, US General Clay suspended reparations to the Soviets in May 1946. Furthermore in December the US and Britain merged their two German zones into Bizonia.⁴⁴ US capitalism drove a wedge between its allies by seeking to revive the German economy.

During 1946 and 1947 a poor harvest and harsh winter caused a European economic crisis. The British, maintaining a presence in Turkey and Greece were unable to sustain the financial cost of occupation.⁴⁵ With a genuine fear of communist takeover, in March 1947, the US took

³⁶ US Secretary of State for Economic Affairs William Clayton in Heller, *the New Imperialism*, p. 40.

³⁷ Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time*, p. 101; McCauley, *Origins*, pp. 64-65.

³⁸ Pechatnov, *Soviet Union*, p. 101; John W Young, *The Longman Companion to America, Russia & the Cold War 1941-1998*, 2nd Edition, London, 1999, p. 7.

³⁹ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁰ Crockatt, *Fifty Years War*, p. 54.

⁴¹ Heller, *the New Imperialism*, p. 30.

⁴² Isaacs and Downing, *Cold War*, p. 38.

⁴³ Walker, *The Cold War*, p. 49.

⁴⁴ Young, *Companion to America*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Peter Bastion, 'Truman & the Spread of the Cold War, 1945-1952' in *Bearing Any Burden: The Cold War Years 1945-1991*, Waremba, 2003, p. 30.

up the slack. The Truman Doctrine offered \$400 million in economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey but more importantly, Truman's rhetoric, though not mentioning the Soviet Union specifically, implied that the communists ruled with 'terror and oppression... fixed elections and suppression of personal freedoms'.⁴⁶ The wartime alliance had been split into two 'alternative ways of life'.⁴⁷ Starvation and poverty lead to fears of communist revolution in Western Europe as well. The November 1946 French elections saw the communists as the largest party and the French Premier warned Washington that revolution was imminent.⁴⁸ Facing a similar crisis across Western Europe, in June US Secretary of State George Marshall, launched the European Recovery Program. The 'Marshall Plan' would dispense over \$13 billion in aid between 1948 and 1953 and all nations including pro-Soviet nations were invited to participate. Though the Soviets did consider the offer only Czechoslovakia and Poland accepted.⁴⁹ By pouring economic aid into Europe the US forced nations to side with the US or face economic disaster and communism.

Comment [d7]: Good!

The Soviets saw Marshall aid as disguised US imperialism. The Soviet Ambassador to the US, Novikov, claimed it was the basis of a US-West European anti-Soviet bloc.⁵⁰ In response to the US attempt of economic hegemony Stalin formed the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) in September 1947, declaring that the world was divided into two camps.⁵¹ Stalin abandoned his 'People's Democracy' policy in favour of overt Sovietisation. Cominform instructed French and Italian communists to demonstrate against the Marshall Plan in 1947 and Stalin forced the Polish and Czech leaders to refuse Marshall aid. In February 1948 the communists staged a coup in Czechoslovakia.⁵² In turn, the French merged their German zone with Bizonia and West Germany was officially declared in June.⁵³ When a new currency, the Deutschmark, was established in West Germany Stalin moved to force the West out of Berlin. On 24 June the Berlin blockade began.⁵⁴ The final breakdown in Western-

Comment [d8]: Do some historians cite this as the "real" start of the Cold War?

⁴⁶ Katherine A S Sibley, *The Cold War*, London, 1998, p. 31; Extract from Harry S Truman, *Truman Doctrine*, 12th March 1947 reproduced in Lightbody, *The Cold War*, p. 30.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁸ Young, *Companion to America*, p. 10.

⁴⁹ Robert E Wood, 'From the Marshall Plan to the Third World' in *Origins of the Cold War*, 2nd Edition, eds. Melvyn P Leffler and David S Painter, New York, 2005, p. 240.

⁵⁰ David Holloway, 'Stalin and the Bomb' in *Origins of the Cold War*, 2nd Edition, eds. Melvyn P Leffler and David S Painter, New York, 2005, pp. 75.

⁵¹ Young, *Companion to America*, p. 11.

⁵² Holloway, 'Stalin and the Bomb', pp. 75-76.

⁵³ Walker, *The Cold War*, p. 57.

⁵⁴ Bastion, 'Truman & the Spread of the Cold War', p. 36.

Soviet relations occurred with Stalin explicitly adopting anti-Western policies in the face of perceived US imperialism.

Conclusion

According to Walker, the Cold War started after the US and Soviets met ‘over the corpse of Nazi Germany and discovered that their concepts of Europe’s post-war future were dangerously incompatible.’⁵⁵ The Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe served as a buffer zone to protect Soviet Russia. Stalin held the Marxist-Leninist belief that the end of capitalism was coming and, in order to placate the West, his policy of People’s Democracy gave the appearance of democratic style governments. In reality, it meant the Sovietisation of nations occupied by Soviet armies forcing the US to change its foreign policy to one of containment of Soviet expansion. The US’s main priority was to ensure a strong European economy which could serve its own desire for global export markets. Holding to its Wilsonian ideology, the US acted as an international arbiter of self-determination and capitalism through the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. These worked to prevent economic conditions that could lead to communist revolution. The Soviets, however, perceived it as US imperialism and abandoned People’s Democracy in favour of outright Sovietisation. The inevitable ‘Cold War’ between the two progressive ideologies had begun and would last for over forty years.

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Comment [d9]: Be careful; is this is new information in the conclusion? Sum up the points you have already made.

⁵⁵ Walker, *The Cold War*, p. 59.

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Comment [d10]: Very Impressive!