**Year 11/12 Bridging Work History Modern World**

**The origins of the Cold War 1945-49**

The USA and Britain were the leading democracies. America believed in democracy and free market economies. This meant that freedom of the individual was more important than state control and relied on supply and demand of goods and competition. The USSR was communist and believed that capitalism exploited the proletarian and that a socialist society was the better system. Stalin established himself as the leader and developed a ‘cult of personality’. Ultimately, there was a conflict of ideology and a belief that both ideologies should dominate as many other countries as possible. Each viewed expansion of the other as a threat. Both were influenced by a desire for national security and global influence.

The Yalta Conference February 1945

By 1944 the Western powers had opened a ‘second front’ and invaded the Nazi occupied France. Soviet forces swept into Poland and the Baltic. The American president was committed to post war reconstruction whereas Stalin wanted security through Eastern allies. During the conference this became apparent. Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Crimea and to some this showed that the Grand Alliance was still working together but they wanted different things.

They agreed to divide Germany into four zones governed by USA, USSR, UK and France. They agreed to do the same in Berlin. They created the United Nations and agreed that the USSR would gain land from Poland. There would also be a declaration on Liberated Europe. There appeared to be clear agreements and a sense of optimism. However, the relationship between the three leaders was not good. Stalin wanted security after the destruction of WWII in which 25 million Soviet people were killed. Roosevelt wanted a peace settlement that would keep peace and that was based on democracy and Churchill wanted to protect the interests of Britain. Britain had been hit hard by the war and had agreed the ‘percentages agreement’ with Stalin in 1944. This meant that both sides would have a percentage of predominance in Eastern Europe. For example Britain would have 90% in Greece. A Polish government called the Lublin Government was also in exile in Britain.

Potsdam Conference August 1945

Roosevelt died in April and now Truman had replaced him. Churchill had also been replaced by Attlee. Truman tested the Atomic bomb at this time and hoped this would give him supremacy and power in the discussions. But Stalin was suspicious of this. There were no significant agreements made on the future of Germany at the meeting. The suspicion between the two sides remained and the countries felt unhappy with each other. But they did agree to disarm and demilitarise Germany, Nazi leaders were removed from office, freedoms of speech were restored and a currency was established. The USSR was to receive reparations from its zone and an additional 25% from the Western Zones.

Truman was tougher on communism and did not want the USA to return to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Therefore, he wanted to ensure free trade and ensure the USA’s interests by limiting the influence of the USSR. He was confrontational rather than wanting to cooperate and hoped that the nuclear superiority of the West placed them in a superior position. He did not think that Stalin was open to negotiation. Stalin on the other hand wanted to protect his own country and felt that America was a rival for Europe. He wanted Eastern European states for security purposes. The Red Army remained in Eastern Europe. Attlee wanted America to be the main defender of the Western Zones and therefore was anti-communist.

Problems from 1945-48

Stalin wanted to create a buffer zone. Communist regimes were established in Eastern Europe, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Czechoslovakia.

The following key events happened during this time:

The Long Telegram 1946

Truman received worrying news about the ‘Long Telegram’ a secret report from Kennan, America’s ambassador in Moscow. The telegram said that Stalin had given a speech wanting to call for the destruction of capitalism, there could be no peace with the USSR while it was opposed to capitalism and the USSR were building up military power. Kennan believed that Stalin wanted the people of the USSR to be fearful of the USA. He thought that a collapse of East-West relations was inevitable. Kennan emphasised that the USSR viewed the West as hostile.

Novikov’s Telegram 1946

Novikov was the Soviet ambassador to America and he sent a telegram to Stalin which said America desired to dominate the world, the American government were no longer interested in co-operation and the American public were prepared for war against the USSR.

Following these telegrams both governments believed that they were facing a potential war.

Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech 6th March 1946

This speech was delivered in Missouri and it convinced Stalin that the USA was plotting with Britain to carry out an ideological assault on the USSR. Stalin responded to the speech and Molotov (The foreign minister for the USSR) accused the USA or abandoning the Declaration on Liberated Europe that was agreed at the Yalta Conference.

The Greek Civil War

Stalin had agreed that Greece should remain in the Western Sphere of influence. A civil war had broken out here after 1945 between Monarchists and communists. Britain had aided the anti-communists but was no longer able to fund this after 1947. They appealed to the USA for financial help. The Truman Doctrine was therefore very important. This doctrine institutionalised the East-West working relationship for the next 25 years. Truman did not turn to the UN for help. Truman introduced his doctrine for several reasons including:

* Keeping the USSR out of being able to aid the Greek Communist movement.
* Primarily protecting democracy and freedom. It was a response to Soviet aggression.
* Provoke the USSR – make them feel threatened
* A way to develop their global economy
* The first step towards creating containment in action. (The next step was the Marshall Plan)

Cominform

In September 1947 Stalin responded to the US economic strategies with the creation of the Communist Information Bureau. This would consolidate Eastern Europe.

**Practice Exam Questions**

‘The actions of the USSR were the cause of the Cold War.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The ‘Iron Curtain Speech’ was very important in the start of the Cold War.’

Assess the validity of this view.

‘The Truman Doctrine was influenced by the Iron Curtain Speech of 1947.’

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**Here is a glossary of some of the key words that would be useful to learn before the course starts.**

**The Cold War - Glossary**

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| 38th Parallel | The border between North and South Korea agreed in 1945 | Nuclear disarmament | The efforts to abandon nuclear weapons. |
| Apartheid | A policy of segregation or discrimination on the grounds of race. This was introduced by the nationalist government of South Africa in 1948. | Rapprochement | To establish or seek more cordial relations. |
| Appeasement | Maintaining peace by offering concessions or agreeing with demands. | Roll Back | Advocated by the Eisenhower administration although not used in practice. This strategy ought to remove communism rather than simply enclose it. |
| Containment | A policy aimed at controlling or halting the spread of communism around the world. | Solidarity | A Polish independent trade union movement established in 1980.It played a significant role in ending communist rule in Poland. |
| Détente | The relaxation of hostilities between countries, in this case the USSR and USA. | Spheres of influence | An area in which a country has a dominant power or influence even though it has no formal authority. |
| Domino Theory | The belief held by President Eisenhower and others that if the United States let one country fall to communism, then many others would follow suit. | War of attrition | Gradually wearing down the opponent with a series of small scale actions. |
| Mutually Assured Destruction | A military strategy in which full scale use of nuclear weapons by two opposing sides would cause the complete annihilation of both participants. | Viet Cong | The communist guerrilla fighters that fought the South Vietnamese army and the Americans during the Vietnam War. |
| NATO | The North Atlantic Treaty Organization | United Nations | A peacekeeping organisation. |