

Political Science (Honours), 4th Semester

CC-10 titled 'Global Politics & Issues Since 1945'

Unit 4- Cold War

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Different Stages/Phases of Cold War

The Cold War lasted for almost five decades and it went through several stages. Each stage accounts for its own significance. The stages are as following:

First Phase (1946-1949)

In this stage the seeds of mistrust and disbelief began to grow between USSR and USA. By 1946 Second World War was already over, the Axis powers were defeated. The places occupied by Germany was taken over by USSR and communist governments were installed in large parts of Eastern and Central Europe such as Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia. As a result of which, the Trueman Doctrine and Marshall Plan came into effect in 1947. The Trueman Doctrine was meant to contain the Soviet influence from spreading further. American help to Turkey and Greece has to be understood in this context. The Marshall Plan was designed to revive the economy of Western European countries destroyed following the Second World War. In this phase the most noticeable thing was the blockade of Berlin and the establishment of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

Second Phase (1949-1953)

The single most defining aspect of this phase was the Korean War (1950-1953) in which the North Korea was supported by the USSR and the South Korea was supported by the USA. This phase also saw the signing of the ANZUS pact by Australia, New Zealand and United States in 1951. The United States also signed a treaty with Japan in 1951. The Korean War ended after a peace treaty in 1953. But the animosity of the two Koreas continues to this day. It is in this phase America and USSR began to spend millions of dollars to reduce each other's influence and to run propaganda campaign against each other.

Third Phase (1953-1957)

This phase is quite eventful in the sense many of the significant developments of Cold War took place in this period. It began with the formation of SEATO (South East Asia Treaty

Organisation) in 1954 to contain the communist influence in the South East Asia. In 1955 the US also formed the MEDO (Middle East Defense Organization) to counter the spread of Soviet influence in the West Asian region. As a response to all these military alliance of the West, the Soviet Union too formed the WARSAW pact in 1955. The Vietnam War also started during this phase.

Germany was divided on two part. One was Federal Republic of Germany which remained under American control and the other part was German Democratic Republic which was Soviet control. In 1957 USSR included Sputnik in its defense program. This phase also witnessed the death of Stalin in 1953 and Nikita Khrushchev became the President of USSR. In 1956, both sides made an agreement on the Suez Crisis in which US agreed not to help her allies like Britain and France.

Fourth Phase (1957-1962)

After Khrushchev became the President of USSR an attempt was made to bridge the gap with the West which came to be known as Peaceful Coexistence. Khrushchev went for his first tour of America in 1959. The Berlin Wall created in 1961 to prevent the immigration from East to the West Berlin. The revolution in Cuba happened under Fidel Castro. The Cuban Missile crisis in 1962 brought the USSR and USA into a situation of war which was somewhat diverted through prompt diplomacy. The American President Kennedy promised that he would not attack Cuba and USSR promised to withdraw missiles from Cuba. That is how the Cuban missile crisis was resolved.

Fifth Phase (1962-1969)

The Nuclear question dominated this phases which witnessed many treaties on Nuclear weapons being signed by both sides. Some of the notable treaties on the issue of Nuclear question were PTBT (Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty) in 1963 and the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) in 1968 etc. Although, there was an atmosphere of relative peace in this phase, however, the German and the Vietnam problem kept the Cold War moving.

Sixth Phase (1969-1978)

This phase was marked by Détente between USA and USSR. The American President Nixon and his Soviet counterpart Breznev played an important role in easing the tension between the two sides. The SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) treaty of 1972, the Summit Conference on Security of 1975 in Helsinki and Belgrade Conference of 1978 brought both the powers

closer to each other. In 1971, American Foreign Secretary Henry Kissinger paid a historic visit to China to take advantage of the USSR-China rift and to have China of American side. During the Indo-Pak war of 1971 and the Israeli-Egypt war of 1973 both sides extended support to the rival sides.

Final Phase (1979-1987)

Many historians described this phase as New Cold War because of the certain distinctive features. The SALT 2 agreement was signed between American president Carter and Russian president Breznev in 1979. The Soviet intervention of Afghanistan in 1979 marked everything upside down and further contributed to the tension between the two sides.

In 1983, Russia withdrew from a talk on missile with America. The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games was boycotted by Russia. The Star War of the President Ronald Reagan greatly angered Russia. Lastly, the internal changes brought about by last Soviet president Gorbachev upon assuming office in 1985 created a havoc which not only ended the Cold War but also led to the disintegration of USSR itself in 1991.