

Cold War; 1945-1990: A Retrospect

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Abstract— This article examines the intrigues in power relations between the superpowers. It delivered to fore the evolution of the Cold War and its influence on World Politics and the extent of reach around the world. In sight of the topic matter of study, which touches on diplomacy, gunboat diplomacy, politics, and therefore the economy, the historical approach is used in this study. It involves the collection and interpretation of data from secondary sources such as books, Journals, and newspaper articles. The paper has contributed to knowledge within the aspects of politics, warfare and International Studies.

Keywords— International Studies, Nuclear Bomb, Strategy, Conflict.

I. INTRODUCTION

Any discussion of the stages of the cold war will do well to begin recalling the famous indictment of the US military-industrial complex by no other than President Ike Eisenhower, himself a former field general within the US Army who said just before leaving office in 1945 that

“..... the conjunction of an immense military establishment and an outsized arms industry was something new in the American experience....”(Snoke, 2016)

He urged that the US should

“guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the vested interest. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and can persist...(Levy, 2016)

We should always take nothing for granted”

In this bird’s eye view of the global status of the conflict of ideas and policies between the socialist and the capitalist economic divide, one can begin to work out American contribution to sustaining the phenomenon of the cold war which lasted from 1945 to the 1990’s. The origins of the epoch must be attributed to the unwonted zeal of WWII Soviet leaders in concerted or disparate league with the People’s Republic of China in their zeal to hunt a realization of the Marxist-Leninist ideals of exporting communism to foreign lands.(Economy, 2020) An initial space shall be made during this essay to dwell somewhat briefly on this origin.

In the rest parts of the analysis this writer shall endeavour to highlight the visible currents or stages during its prevalence and also endeavour to articulate the preoccupation of leaders and the societies of the major divide during the era. Suffice it to mention that a vivid delineation of the cold war continuum can be categorized under immediate post war Treaties/Settlement, the division of Germany, Marshal Plan, Containment Treaty-making, Deterrence/Détente, Constructive Engagement, etc. this analytical delineation is by no means the sole one as the

broad spectrum of international relations scholars continue to exercise free license in their works on the era.

II. NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND WORLD DOMINION

When the USA used the atom bomb to erase Hiroshima on 6th August 1945 and the second Japanese’s city Nagasaki three days later, the efficiency of its use dawned on the main world powers as the weapon of the future. More importantly, Jack Watson notes that USA refused to share the nuclear expertise with Russia, intending by this to send a warning to Russia of America’s new found resolve to curb future aggressors (The Carter, Presidential Library and Museum, 2017). But knowing USSR’s antecedents as a military power of no mean proportion, inevitable co-operation with the Allies to defeat a standard enemy notwithstanding, there appeared to be no time lost in their (USSR) realization that they have not fought off Hitler only to come under Western domination (Roberts, 2007). And with this realization, the USSR lost no time in looking for equality in nuclear weapons possession and capacity. Thus, she developed the atom bomb in 1949, by which era the USA had gone on to higher things by producing the hydrogen bomb (Krieger, Nelli, & Jantzen, 1994). The Soviets matched this capacity also by 1953, and by this point the rest of the world powers Britain, France and China excluding the Axis powers (which were under sanctions) had joined within the arms race in an undeclared war of supremacy in arms and ammunition dubbed the cold war.

Added to the military factor, the heavy US influence within the Breton Woods financial institutions formed in 1944 and the GATT instrument of 1947 was said to have sharpened Soviet fears and resentment about US dominance (Pechatov, 2017).

III. STAGES OF THE CONFLICT

There’s no doubt of the huge energy and enthusiasm among military leaders of the East and West in the pursuit of mastery in the Cold War but because of the more openness of Western societies, typified by America, the weather and stages of the cold war in the West are more discernible than the Eastern bloc countries, typified by the USSR, where secrecy surrounded much of life. Statements of top officialdom capture the groundswell of reaction to the cold war phenomenon in the USA. The US Secretary of State within the ‘50’s, John Foster Dulles saw the conflict as “not only an exercise in social belief but a test of religious ardor and moral stamina: By this, Mr. Dulles must be pertaining to the communist ideology of the Soviet Union and their official aversion to religion and spiritual life (Challener, 2020). And American leaders appeared united during this notion as advocacy for any other opinion but the

successful prosecution of the cold war in America's favour was seen as treason (Challener, 2020). In fact, one US Senator, Joseph Mac Cathy spearheaded massive hunts for communists within America's work force; most of the culprits were made to face various sanctions including loss of job (Ladenberg, 1974). A Commission of Employee Loyalty made a diligent search to get communist sympathizers showing the cold war as heavily coloured by ideology. Along this line also, Russian spies were discovered. In 1953, the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg was uncovered who, allegedly, were passing atom bomb secrets to the USSR (Ladenberg, 1974). They were executed. Espionage therefore was a serious feature of the cold war, which ran through the course or the age. To manage the things, there was a blossoming of United States Secret Service agents and intelligence organization of the two "superpowers", because the USA and the USSR came to be called. While the KGB was the foremost prominent in the USSR, FBI, CIA, the Pentagon intelligence and a coterie of other shadowy formations served the USA.

The Truman Doctrine/Containment (1947).

It was President Harry Truman who ordered the first use of atomic bomb in the history of warfare. This was within the 1945 and by its use, the worldwide arms race began and it fell on the USA to strive to maintain the dominance of power. The Truman doctrine was an American foreign policy based on the goal to contain communism and inhibit its spread around the world. This policy was therefore the direct reply to the communist game decide to export revolution overseas. Jack Watson cites the Greek crisis of 1946 as another major containment issue. Monarchists who were fighting the communists during a civil war in Greece had beckoned on Britain for help and Britain further appealed to the US, which sent huge aid. It had been on this occasion that President Truman openly declared to "support free peoples (against) attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures" (Levy, 2016).

The policy of containment had actually been operational in US political and socio-economical presence in the conquered territories of the Axis powers, beginning in Germany. When the four –power Allied Control Council, which governed German affairs in post-WWII Germany, divided the state into four zones, the USA encouraged her British and French counterparts to foster the laissez-faire approach in their zones. This led to much suspicion by the Soviet Union, especially when USA and Britain merged their zones in 1946 to make one economic unit called the BI-zone (Economy, 2020). Despite Soviet protests of this merger, the USA and Britain encouraged local German participation in administering the Bi-zone and by 1948; the Bi-zone adopted a replacement currency, the West German Mark. Thus, although the containment policy was officially declared in 1947, the simmering suspicion between mainly the USA and USSR reinforced it and led to a domino consequence in the introduction of communism-capitalism ideological into German way of life (Chilaka, 2002).

THE Berlin Wall

Subsequently, East Germany, the zone that fell to Soviet ruler ship was eventually demarcated using what British Premier Churchill called an ideological barrier, and a check-

point mounted by the Soviet occupation forces; an East mark was introduced in the zone and Soviet-style socialist society was enforced not just for East Germany alone but also for all neighbouring European countries east of this zone like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romanian, etc. the US, on her part, ensured that other European countries to the west of West Germany remained in liberal politico-economic mode. And to encourage West Germany and subsequently Western Europe, the Marshall Plan of US economic assistance for reconstruction of their battered economy was provided by the USA (Chilaka, 2002).

The other features of US containment: Treaty-making

The other feature of US containment policy included the making of treaties with various regions of the world, mainly to encourage the rejection of socialist-style political, economic and military developmental models. For Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed to which the Soviets replied with Warsaw Pact. The Australia / New Zealand / US Pact, ANZUS took care of US entente in that region while the South East Asian Treaty Organization, SEATO, sought to secure Free World association with nations like Thailand, Pakistan, Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. The USSR rallied to individual nations like Mongolia, China Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, Chile and therefore the encouragement of communist rebel groups in developing countries. Moreover, the USSR reinforced Marxist indoctrination using the Comintern, the Communist International as a rallying organization for communist inclined association worldwide (Roberts, 2007).

Another aspect of treaty making was the inner-linkages of association. For instance, Britain made a joint security and defense pact with Turkey, Persia (Iran), and Pakistan called the Central Treaty Organization, CENTO. Although the USA wasn't directly involved, it had been seen as supportive of the spirit of NATO. US Military bases were established in Okinawa Taiwan and South Vietnam.

Wars In Satellite States: A serious stage of the Cold War

Although there have been no more wars of invasion of the major powers' national territories, some confrontations in their satellite states arose in the course of the cold war. Thus, it marked the dynamism of the conflict that the USA and USSR tried to gain or preserve territory in such wars as the Korean War of 1950-3, Vietnam (1962 – 67), and therefore the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. In Korea, when the Japanese quit in 1945, the country was divided into two: Communists controlled the North while non-communists ruled the South. Both USA and USSR left North and South Korea in 1948, leaving the separate governments supposedly to hold on their own. Their common border was the 38th parallel. Arising from border wrangling, North Korea invaded the South in 1950. The USA exploited a short lived protest-absence of the USSR to get the UN to condemn North Korea as aggressor and agreed the use of force to counter the invasion. Most of the UN intervention forces were US soldiers commanded by the American Field Marshall, General MacArthur. The invasion was promptly reversed and South Korea retained her non-communist status quo ante with the border made a demilitarized zone in 1953.

In Vietnam, the North was communist while the South was not; their border was the 17th parallel. In 1955, the US

undertook the protection of South Vietnam, making her a refuge for all who were fleeing communism. When civil unrest overtook South Vietnam in 1964, President Kennedy committed “advisers” and military hardware to support the government in fighting the rebel group, the Viet Cong. But despite heavy American opposition, including bombings of North Vietnam to dislodge Viet Cong bases and the little Russian, Chinese and Communist countries’ assistance to the Viet Cong, the rebel group held out against both the official government in Hanoi and therefore American military presence. The campaign became so protracted that the succeeding American President, Nixon introduced the policy of Vietnamization by which he withdrew American troops in 1970.

It’s remarkable that succeeding presidents in both the USA and USSR consistently pursued the cold war; in the case of Vietnam, three US Presidents addressed with the matter before it was rested in 1973. Vietnam also demonstrated how the conflict could push the USA into drawing in a neutral neighbour, Cambodia, into the desperate project of routing the Viet Cong. Peace talks convened in Paris eventually arranged a ceasefire in January 1973, this was after US constant bombardment of North Vietnam and all-out US involvement failed to stop the Viet Cong and amidst scandals of US troops meddling with local women, the murder of civilians and other embarrassment of a little developing nation successfully withstanding a superpower. The American failure in Vietnam and Cambodia yielded both nations along with Laos over to the Eastern block where China and USSR jostled for influence in their affairs.

It was ironic that the USA, which exerted such a lot pressure around the Soviet backyard in IndoChina, lost a prime location like neighbouring Cuba to Soviet influence. When Fidel Castro overthrew the Batista dictatorship in Cuba in 1956, he publicly declared allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, and made association with communist states. In 1962, an American spy-plane spotted Russian missiles being moved into position on the Island, which has contiguous waters with the USA. Kennedy demanded their removal and imposed a blockade of Cuba to prevent further landings. Soviet President Khrushchev successively demanded the withdrawal of American missiles from Turkey to seal a bargain. After days of tension the Soviet Union withdrew the missiles. The Cuban missile crisis was the tensest moment of the cold war when the two superpowers came closest to open military confrontation. But after its resolution, the superpowers installed a replacement telephone link called the “Hot Line” to forestall future emergencies as both superpowers then realized the imperative of mutual deterrence from war.

Many scholars point to the 1955 visit of Russian leaders, Khrushchev and Bulganin to Geneva for a summit conference with President Ike Eisenhower, Prime Minister Eden of Britain and French Premier Faure to talk disarmament as the beginning of the thaw in the cold war. The Americans called this stage of the cold war *détente* while USSR called it “peaceful co-existence”. Overall, friendship was being cultivated. Despite more frequent visits of Soviet leaders to the West, (Britain in 1956 and America in 1956), diplomatic

bickering continued between the Superpowers, especially when Russia resented the fly-over of American U-2 spy- planes over Soviet territory and American agitation over the Cuban Missile crisis.

But otherwise, the 1960’s witnessed progress in disarmament talks, superpowers assistance to developing nations to woo them. China forged links with Pakistan, and helped Zambia and Tanzania with interest-free loan and skilled assistance to create the Zam Tan Railway in 1970. China also gave Tanzania the Friendship factory, all in the face of white racist supremacy. Russia helped Egypt to finance the Aswan Dam. The West seemed content to only consolidate their relations with developing nations using mainly post-colonial diplomatic instruments. Yakubu Gowon, former Nigeria’s President, in 1971 expressed that “Africa must be free from ideological influences which haven’t any cultural basis in the content itself” (Duyile& Aremu, 2018). Olusegun Obasanjo (another Nigerian leader) on the 12th of September, 1977 opined that the slow, unsteady and rather tortuous so called ideological path of remodeling a nation into the theoretical and utopian society is clearly not the most expedient for Nigeria... (Duyile& Aremu, 2018) Nigeria’s case is painful its sea has no foliage for canopy (Duyile, The Sea Factor in Nigeria's National Security, 2015). Within the Nigerian Civil War, foreign technical expertise was readily provided by the British before the Nigerian Civil War, and therefore the Russians during the war, supported the Nigerian Navy in planning and execution of maintenance activities (Duyile, From the Biafra War to the Liberian Crisis: Historicizing the Contribution of the Nigerian Navy, 2020). The issues of Biafra further increased when the Nigerian Navy acquired ships from the Soviet Union during the war (Duyile, Nature and Impact of Involvement of the Navy in the Nigerian Civil War, 1967 -70, 2016). Alexei Kosygin assured Nigeria of Russia’s support (Duyile, Nature and Impact of Involvement of the Navy in the Nigerian Civil War, 1967 -70, 2016). It must be added that after the war Nigeria was the 50th exporter of products to the United States (Duyile, Infrastructural Development in Nigeria, 1960-2015, 2020).

Although the United Nations began with the crucial goal of securing world peace, much of the tempo of the cold war left it as a bystander. But the Security Council arm of the UN targeted the halting of the nuclear arms race *ab initio*. Most of the proposals made by superpowers to realize disarmament were drowned in mutual suspicions. But in 1946, the Security Council set up an Atomic Energy Commission and in 1947, a Conventional Armaments Commission, following up their failures in 1952 with a Disarmament Commission. The primary agreement was the Test Ban Treaty of 1963, which sought to prohibit nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere or under water. Almost all UN member states signed this Treaty except France and China that refused to sign it. But considering the large costs of producing nuclear weapons and their potential for destruction, new talks called Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) began to require place in Vienna and Helsinki in the late ‘60s’.

The march towards *détente* was facilitated further when Willy Brandt became West German Chancellor in 1969 and began to pursue a policy of “*Ostpolitik*” towards East Germany.

The goal of Ostpolitik was to establish a more normal relation across the Iron Curtain countries. He agreed with Poland that the Oder-Neisse Line was the permanent border and signed non-aggression treaties with Poland and USSR. He also accepted the existence of East Germany in 1972. In 1971, a Four-Power Pact on Berlin eased communication within the city, thereby easing conflict calculations.

Communist China was admitted to the UN in 1971, with President Nixon visiting Peking and Moscow in 1972 and 1973. Agreements on various areas like space research, trade, pollution and therefore the diversion of money from weaponry production to consumer goods were reached in these visits. Negotiation continued including an agreement on ways to scale back the risks of accidental conflict in Europe, which was produced by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975. However, progress towards ending the conflict was adversely affected by continued Sino Soviet wrangling and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, which the USSR justified by pointing to the danger of her Moslem citizens being drawn by Iranian Islamic militancy at the time. Therefore, the 1980s produced uncertainty of direction within the cold war and in the rest of East-West relations but generally, the disarmament talks and treaties and therefore softening of the German post WWII diplomatic situation signposted the imminence of the close of the cold war.

IV. MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, GLASNOST AND REFORMS

With the approaching to power of Mikhail S. Gorbachev in USSR in 1986, and his avowed pursuit of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), the death knell of the cold war was sounded. Although the economy was in shambles, it had been only Mr. Gorbachev who proved ready to stand against the Kremlin Generals and order an end to the communist drift. In fact, in August 1991, hard-line Generals of the Soviet Army executed a coup d'état against the Gorbachev regime, shelling the Parliament building when the lawmakers were in session but the putsch failed. The military hurdle cleared permanently, the presidents of 11 former Soviet republics signed documents formally creating a Commonwealth of Independent States, to succeed the USSR; Russia was reposed with keeping the nuclear stockpile that made the USSR a superpower. Eighty ministries and departments of the previous communist giant were liquidated in November 1991, then the former component states began self-determination mostly along the free world path. A Herald Tribune report in 1992 sums up the last stage of the cold war champion, USSR. Writing under the headline; "The Russian Deal; Warheads for Dollars", Thomas L. Friedman stated, "... the arms control accord (reached between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and American President George Bush), radically reducing nuclear arsenals by the year 2003, will fundamentally reshape the nuclear balance ... the fear Americans and Russians have lived under for decades will be drastically diminished.. after these cuts are completed in 10 years, the cold war balance of terror are going to be replaced by a new imbalance. Consistent with the proposed treaty, (scrapping all land-based multiple warhead missiles, the SS-18s), the United States, as the world's biggest superpower and de facto policeman, are going to be allowed to maintain an edge

in its advanced, mostly defensive, submarine-launched weapons, while the Russians, who cannot afford the arms race, will accept a secondary status'

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our analysis will be highly benefited in this section if we note the conventional diplomatic intelligence among the superpowers at the peak of the cold war that it was more feasible to pursue and maintain the arms race than to embark on attempts at disarmament. Thus, with the collapse and splintering of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the frantic search by the leaders of the Eastern block for re-structuring and revamping of their economies, the cold war effectively fizzled to an end. Communist China has also reformed her economy; leaving nation-states like Cuba and North Korea whose re-joining of free-market models of socio political and economic life is slow but minute in significance.

The difficulty of mutually proving to all concerned that both sides were sincerely reducing their stockpiles amidst the groundswell of suspicion of a chancy first-strike during the rigour of any real disarmament process. This notion helped to fuel the continuance of the cold war. We shall endeavour in this section of the essay to present the conceptual basis on which the cold war phenomenon revolved as well as the practical application of the identified policies of the two opposing blocs, which lead to the triumph of the West and the fall of the Eastern Bloc. Although it shall be said that the war between the communist bloc and the Capitalist bloc was originally a battle of ideology; and to some writers the triumph of the western nations can simply be seen as a victory of capitalism over communism- one thing that remains indelible in our minds is that despite the fact that communism failed in the USSR, it continued to develop in states as China, Cuba, and North Korea (Chilaka, 2002).

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