

Directions: Annotate how events of the Cold War increased tensions between the US and the USSR. For each event, explain how each nation, the US and USSR, would have reacted to what happened.

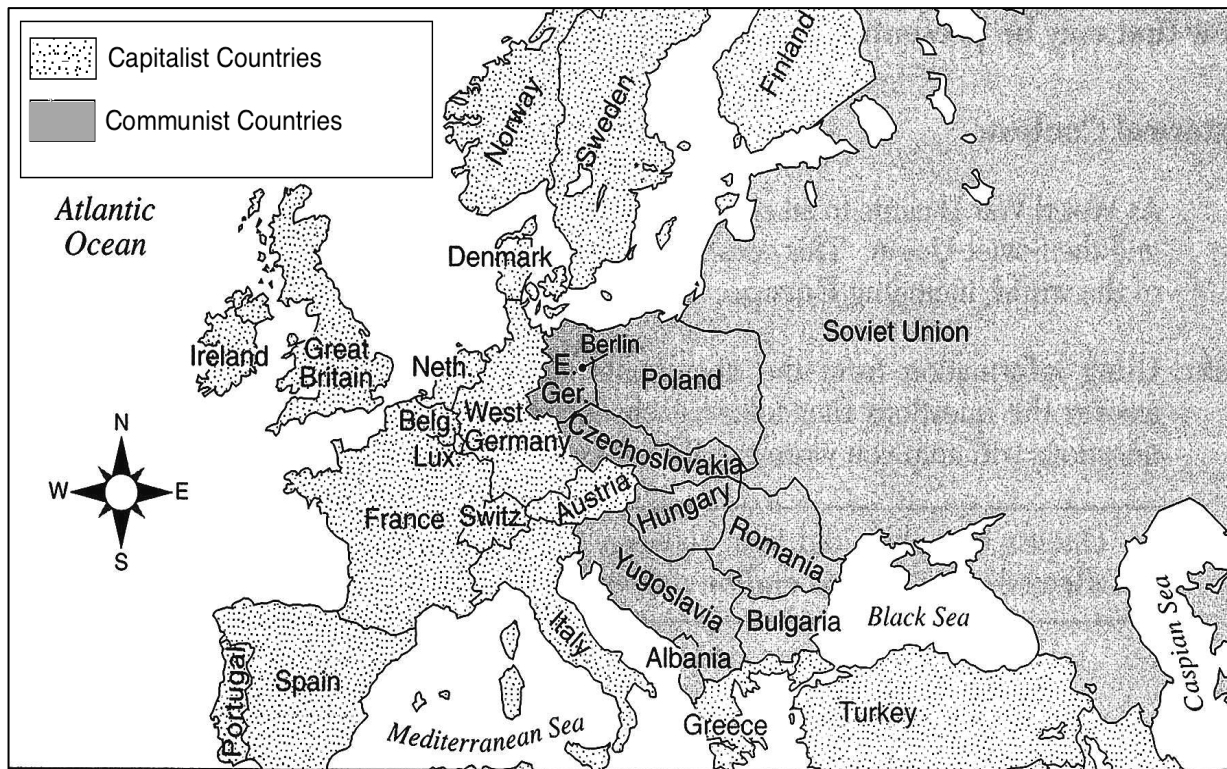
What Was the Cold War?

The Cold War was not a war with weapons and soldiers. It's better to think of the Cold War as time period from 1945-1989. It's called a "war" because two nations – the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) – were enemies. The reason we call it "cold" is because instead of direct fighting, there was a lot of tension between them.

But why do we care about these two nations? Because the US and USSR were the **only powerful nations** after WWII - other powers like the United Kingdom (Great Britain), France, Japan, Germany, and Italy were badly damaged during WWII and had to decolonize their empires, while the US and USSR (called **superpowers**) gained power by forming **alliances** with other nations and **convincing** them to do what the US or USSR wanted. The superpowers competed for allies using bribes, force, and diplomacy.

Event 1: Soviet Satellite Nations

During WWII, the Soviet Union battled Germany in Eastern European nations like Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria, and kept the Soviet Army there to make sure the Germans could not return. After WWII, Joseph Stalin (the leader of the USSR) wanted to use Eastern Europe to protect the USSR from being attacked¹ by controlling their governments. The USSR supported Communist parties in Eastern Europe so that the people could only elect pro-Soviet governments. He also threatened and killed people who opposed Communism. Thus, Stalin created an **Eastern bloc** of nations that would always obey the Soviet Union.

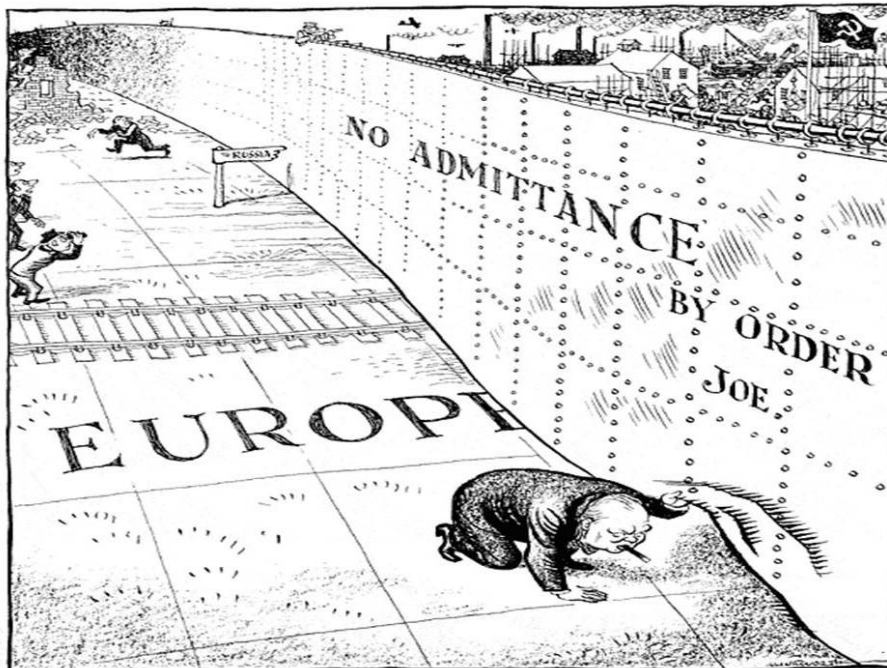


¹ Remember, Russia was invaded by Napoleon in 1812, and Germany in 1914 and 1941, which is why Stalin was nervous about an attack from Western Europe.

Event 2: The Iron Curtain Speech

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Great Britain) during WWII was Winston Churchill. He inspired British people and the rest of Europe as Britain's army invaded France to fight Germany. But after the war, he noticed how the Soviet Union was influencing Eastern European nations, so he gave the “**Iron Curtain**” speech. He said that the Soviet Union's control was like an “iron curtain” descending over Eastern Europe, because, like iron, nothing would be able to get in or out of Eastern Europe if Communist governments controlled them. Here is an excerpt from the speech:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an [iron curtain](#) has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.



Event 3: The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

Because Europe was destroyed by World War II, the United States wanted to help rebuild Europe and also get Europeans to buy American products so the US economy could grow. US President Harry Truman also wanted to prevent nations in Europe from becoming Communist, and he thought that US products and US aid would convince them to stay allies with the US. A “doctrine” means a set of ideas, and the **Truman Doctrine** was that the US would support any nation's government and army if they were trying to resist Communism. Truman's Secretary of State George Marshall came up with the **Marshall Plan** to both give and lend money to any European nation who needed help rebuilding their infrastructure after World War II. Truman was hoping that Stalin would refuse the money for the USSR and also order Eastern European nations to refuse the money too (because if they took the money, it would seem like the US was more helpful than the USSR). Truman was right – Stalin refused to accept any Marshall Plan money. The Marshall Plan was what helped Turkey and Greece resist Communism and become allies with the USA.

Event 4: Berlin Blockade and Berlin Airlift

Because of World War II, Berlin, the capital of Germany, was destroyed. The Soviet army took control of the city in 1945, but wouldn't let the other Allied armies in for 2 months. During that time, they stripped Berlin of anything useful – factory parts, tools, weapons, copper wires and pipes – as a form of reparations for the damage caused to the Soviet Union when Germany invaded in 1941. When the Soviets finally let the British, US, and French armies in, those four nations divided Berlin into 4 sectors. Germany was also divided into 4 sectors:

Germany divided



Berlin Divided



In 1948, the British, French, and Americans united their sections of Germany to become West Germany, and also united their sections of Berlin to become West Berlin. West Berlin and West Germany started to receive **Marshall Plan** aid, and many people from East Berlin started moving to West Berlin. Stalin was frustrated by this, and wanted all of Berlin to be controlled by the Soviets. So he formed a **blockade of Berlin**. A blockade is when you stop all transportation in or out of a place. If you look at the map on the left, those 3 white lines leading to Berlin were highways leading to Berlin, and Joseph Stalin blocked them, and all the railroads as well, so the US could not get any food, fuel, or supplies to West Berlin. He wanted to show the West Berliners that the US was weak.

But the US had an idea: what if we fly airplanes filled with supplies **over** the blockade? Would Stalin's army shoot down the planes? US President Truman gave it a try – for nine months, the US airlifted supplies into West Berlin in the **Berlin Airlift**. And it worked! Stalin didn't shoot down the planes, and West Berlin got the supplies they needed, until Stalin admitted defeat and lifted the blockade in 1949.

Event 5: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

After the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, Western European nations were more afraid of Stalin or any future Soviet leader trying to intimidate them, so they formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which meant that if any nation in the group got attacked, all the rest of them would have to come to their aid. The original members of

NATO were The United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Canada, and the United States. Greece and Turkey joined in 1952.

Event 6: The Soviet Nuclear Bomb

In 1945, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. This showed the rest of the world that the United States had weapons beyond any other nation in the world, and they were not afraid to use them. However, spies for the Soviet Union had learned about how the US developed the nuclear bomb, and in 1949, the Soviet Union successfully tested their own nuclear weapon. They now had the same weapons technology as the United States.



Event 7: The Chinese Communist Revolution

Also in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao ZeDong, overthrew the nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek in what is known as the **Chinese Communist Revolution**. The US thought that Mao would be more friendly to the US, since the US defeated Japan in WWII and helped China become independent again, but actually, Mao and Stalin formed an alliance called the Sino-Soviet Pact. Mao admired Stalin and thought that China should follow a similar form of Communism as the Soviet Union. By this time, Mongolia had also become a Communist nation.

