



STUDY GUIDE

WHAT WAS THE COLD WAR?

KEY TERMS: Soviet Union
freedom Communist
totalitarianism Capitalist
proxies

NOTE-TAKING COLUMN: Complete this section during the video. Include definitions and key terms.

CUE COLUMN: Complete this section after the video.

Why can the Cold War be described as the Third World War?

What was being fought over in the Cold War?

Who instigated the Cold War?

Why was the outcome of the Cold War so important, in terms of shaping the future of the world?

What was the Truman Doctrine?

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Professor Roberts states that, “There were, to be sure, many morally complex moments during this long struggle, but the Cold War was, at its core, as clear a conflict of good versus evil as World War II had been. Just like that war, the Cold War was a death match between the forces representing freedom and the forces representing totalitarianism.” What do you think Professor Roberts means by ‘morally complex moments,’ and what might some of those moments have been? In what ways is totalitarianism ‘evil?’ Explain.
- Professor Roberts goes on to explain that, “The instigator of this war was Josef Stalin, the mass-murdering dictator of Russia... Stalin knew that his Soviet armed forces could not take on the might of the Free West. Instead, he decided to wage this fight through the use of proxies, and by a massive use of disinformation and misinformation.” What do you think motivated Stalin to begin and to prosecute the Cold War? Do you think that Stalin was smart to use such subversive tactics? Why or why not?
- Later in the video, Professor Roberts reminds us that, “When Stalin threatened both Greece and Turkey, President Harry Truman finally had enough. The so-called Truman Doctrine was born. The United States and its allies would not permit any further expansion of the communist empire.” Why do you think that President Truman ‘drew a line in the sand’ with this incident rather than before or after? Do you think that the Truman Doctrine, despite some difficult conditions and consequences, was justified? Why or why not?
- After sharing with us how rigid and aggressive the Soviet Union’s stance was, Professor Roberts notes, “Nor would any amount of negotiation – Detente, as it was called then – have led to a just conclusion of the war. The American diplomat George Kennan rightly warned that short of becoming a Communist country, there was nothing the United States could do to gain the Kremlin’s trust. The Soviets could not be appeased, only contained.” What do you think Professor Roberts means by, and would define as, a ‘just’ conclusion of the war? Explain. Why do you think it was the case that the Soviets could not be appeased?
- Towards the end of the video, Professor Roberts concludes that, “...the Soviet Union could not have beaten the US in a head to head confrontation, but it didn’t have to. Victory in the Cold War would have allowed it – through intimidation and subversion – to dominate the globe, making Communism, rather than democracy and capitalism, the preeminent ideology.” What, specifically, do you think might have been some of the worst consequences of the Soviets winning the Cold War, had that happened? Do you agree with Professor Roberts’ analysis here? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: The Reagan Doctrine

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Ronald Reagan and The Cold War: a summary,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What was ‘détente?’ What type of platform did Ronald Reagan run on for his first term? What did President Reagan refer to the Soviet Union as? What was President Reagan’s prediction about communism when speaking to the UK parliament? What was the ‘Reagan Doctrine’ and how was it implemented? How did President Gorbachev change the Soviet Union and change President Reagan’s views of the Soviet Union? What did President Reagan state in his Farewell Address, in terms of government and freedom?
- Do you think that President Reagan took the right approach to the Soviet Union, in terms of foreign policy? Why or why not? What steps did President Reagan take to help end the Cold War?
- What do you think contributed overall to the ‘good’ side winning the Cold War? Explain. Given current conditions in international relations, do you think that the Cold War is truly over? Why or why not?



QUIZ

WHAT WAS THE COLD WAR?

1. Who instigated the Cold War?

- a. Boris Yeltsin
- b. Mao Zedong
- c. Vladimir Putin
- d. Joseph Stalin

2. In March 1946, Winston Churchill famously declared that “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, _____ has descended across the continent.”

- a. an inescapable darkness
- b. a cold front
- c. an iron curtain
- d. a beacon of light

3. The Soviet Union could have beaten the US in a head-to-head confrontation, but it chose not to.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Because Stalin knew that his Soviet armed forces could not take on the might of the free West, he decided to wage this fight through the use of _____.

- a. space technology
- b. undercover agents
- c. proxies
- d. nuclear missiles

5. Thanks primarily to the strong leadership shown by _____ the Cold War ended.

- a. Ronald Reagan
- b. Margaret Thatcher
- c. Pope John Paul II
- d. All of the above.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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Ronald Reagan and The Cold War: a summary

Posted on February 6, 2011 by admin

Born 6 February 1911, Ronald Reagan was only a few days short of his seventieth birthday when, on 20 January 1981, he became the fortieth and oldest president in US history.

The period of détente, the easing of East-West relations, particularly between the US and the Soviet Union, was drawing to a close amid increasing Cold War tension. Soviet forces had just invaded Afghanistan, resulting in the US, under President Jimmy Carter, boycotting the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow.



The End of Detente

Reagan, a fervent anti-communist, had campaigned on an anti-detente ticket. What was détente, asked Reagan rhetorically in 1978: “Isn’t that what a turkey has with his farmer until Thanksgiving Day?”

On coming to office, having easily beaten Carter in the 1980 presidential elections, Reagan went straight onto the offensive, increasing military spending, and calling the Soviet Union an “evil empire.” Of course,

such language did nothing to improve the already deteriorating situation. The Soviet Union accused the new US president of thinking “only in terms of confrontation”.

The ash-heap of history

Speaking to the UK Parliament in June 1982, the first US president to do so, Reagan spoke of the “forward march of freedom and democracy [which] will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history.” He considered negotiations with the Russians a sign of feebleness, and criticized the lack of free elections in Eastern Europe: “Regimes planted by bayonets do not take root.”

In 1983 Reagan predicted “communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written”.

Reagan initiated a defensive anti-missile system in space, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI or, as nicknamed, ‘Star Wars’), aimed at neutralizing incoming Soviet missiles. The technology needed for such an ambitious project had not yet been developed.

Although incredibly expensive and ultimately futile, Reagan’s SDI program and his aggressiveness shocked the Soviet Union who were unable, economically, to match the US in Reagan’s rapid escalation of the arms race. The cost of being a superpower was crippling for the Soviet Union – commitment to conventional and nuclear arms, the funding of communist regimes elsewhere in the world, and the costly and unpopular war in Afghanistan were all taking its toll on the economy and the everyday lives of the Soviet citizen.

The ‘Reagan Doctrine’

Ronald Reagan won a second term as president, winning the November 1984 presidential election with 525 of 538 electoral votes, the largest number ever won by a US presidential candidate, and carrying 49 of the 50 US states, only the second US president to do so. (Richard Nixon being the first in 1972).

Unlike his predecessors, containment of communism wasn’t enough for Reagan – he wanted to destroy it wherever possible. The ‘Reagan Doctrine’ provided support, financially and militarily, for anti-communist fighters throughout Africa, Asia and particularly in Latin America, in an attempt to “roll back” communism.

With the Soviet Union embroiled in Afghanistan since 1979, its ‘Soviet Vietnam’, Reagan provided the Mujahedeen, fighting the Soviets, cash, arms and training.

Reagan and Gorbachev

Following the deaths of three aging Soviet leaders in quick succession (Leonid Brezhnev in 1982, Yuri Andropov in 1984 and Konstantin Chernenko in 1985), Reagan quipped how could he meet with the Russians if “they keep dying on me?” But with the appointment in March 1985 of 54-year-old Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan saw the possibility of a rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

As Gorbachev introduced domestic reform and greater openness, Reagan’s bullish stance softened. He began to see the Cold War in terms of the ordinary citizen, “the Ivan and Anya and the Jim and Sally” who, through their ordinary lives, had more in common within their domestic lives than to worry about their respective governments and their differing ideologies.



Reagan and Gorbachev first met in Geneva in November 1985 to discuss reducing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Over the next three years, despite their ideological differences, the two men found a diplomatic and personal meeting of the minds. Further summits took place and finally, in December 1987, agreed the INF Treaty (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces), the first agreement on actually reducing nuclear weapons. (Pictured: Reagan and Gorbachev signing the INF Treaty, 8 December 1987).

Tear down this wall

Visiting Berlin in June 1987, Reagan delivered a speech at the Berlin Wall in which he urged the Soviet leader, “Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall.” Twenty-nine months later, the wall came down.

Visiting Moscow in 1988, Reagan was asked by a Russian journalist whether if he still viewed the Soviet Union as an ‘evil empire’. “No”, Reagan replied. “I was talking about another time, another era.”

After two terms as president, Reagan retired, replaced by his vice president, George Bush, Snr. In his Farewell Address, he said, “*Man is not free unless government is limited. There’s a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics: As government expands, liberty contracts.*”

Ronald Reagan died, aged 93, on 5 June 2004.