

Cold War: Definition, Origin, Causes, Phases & End.

After the Second World War, the USA and USSR became two Super Powers. One nation tried to reduce the power of other. Indirectly the competition between the Super Powers led to the Cold War.

Then America took the leadership of all the Capitalist Countries.

Soviet Russia took the leadership of all the Communist Countries. As a result of which both stood as rivals to each other.

Definition of the Cold War:

In the graphic language of Hartman, “Cold War is a state of tension between countries in which each side adopts policies designed to strengthen it and weaken the other by falling short by actual war”.

In fact, Cold War is a kind of verbal war which is fought through newspapers, magazines, radio and other propaganda methods. It is a propaganda to which a great power resorts against the other power. It is a sort of diplomatic war.

Origin of Cold War:

There is no unanimity amongst scholars regarding the origin of the Cold War In 1941 when Hitler invaded Russia, Roosevelt the President of USA sent armaments to Russia. It is only because the relationship between Roosevelt and Stalin was very good. But after the defeat of Germany, when Stalin wanted to implement Communist ideology in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania, at that time England and America suspected Stalin.

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of England in his ‘Fulton Speech’ on 5 March 1946 said that Soviet Russia was covered by an Iron Curtain. It led Stalin to think deeply. As a result of which suspicion became wider between Soviet Russia and western countries and thus the Cold War took birth.

Causes of the Cold War:

Various causes are responsible for the outbreak of the Cold War. At first, the difference between Soviet Russia and USA led to the Cold War. The United States of America could not tolerate the Communist ideology of Soviet Russia. On the other hand, Russia could not accept the dominance of United States of America upon the other European Countries.

Secondly, the Race of Armament between the two super powers served another cause for the Cold War. After the Second World War, Soviet Russia had increased its military strength which was a threat to the Western Countries. So America started to manufacture the Atom bomb, Hydrogen bomb and other deadly weapons. The other European Countries also participated in this race. So, the whole world was divided into two power blocs and paved the way for the Cold War.

Thirdly, the Ideological Difference was another cause for the Cold War. When Soviet Russia spread Communism, at that time America propagated Capitalism. This propaganda ultimately accelerated the Cold War.

Fourthly, Russian Declaration made another cause for the Cold War. Soviet Russia highlighted Communism in mass-media and encouraged the labour revolution. On the other hand, America helped the Capitalists against the Communism. So it helped to the growth of Cold War.

Fifthly, the Nuclear Programme of America was responsible for another cause for the Cold War. After the bombardment of America on Hiroshima and Nagasaki Soviet Russia got afraid for her existence. So, it also followed the same path to combat America. This led to the growth of Cold War.

Lastly, the Enforcement of Veto by Soviet Russia against the western countries made them to hate Russia. When the western countries put forth any view in the Security Council of the UNO, Soviet Russia immediately opposed it through veto. So western countries became annoyed in Soviet Russia which gave birth to the Cold War.

Various Phases of the Cold War:

The Cold War did not occur in a day. It passed through several phases.

First Phase (1946-1949):

In this phase America and Soviet Russia disbelieved each other. America always tried to control the Red Regime in Russia. Without any hesitation Soviet Russia established Communism by destroying democracy in the Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungery, Yugoslavia and other Eastern European Countries.

In order to reduce Russia's hegemony, America helped Greece and Turkey by following Truman Doctrine which came into force on 12 March 1947. According to Marshall Plan which was declared on 5 June, 1947 America gave financial assistance to Western European Countries.

In this phase, non withdrawal of army from Iran by Soviet Russia, Berlin blockade etc. made the cold war more furious. After the formation of NATO in 1949, the Cold War took a halt.

Second Phase (1949-1953):

In this phase a treaty was signed between Australia, New Zealand and America in September, 1951 which was known as ANZUS. America also signed a treaty with Japan on 8 September, 1951. At that time by taking armaments from Russia and army from China, North Korea declared war against South Korea.

Then with the help of UNO, America sent military aid to South Korea. However, both North Korea and South Korea signed peace treaty in 1953 and ended the war. In order to reduce the impact of Soviet Communism, America spent a huge amount of dollar in propaganda against Communism. On the other hand, Soviet Russia tried to be equal with America by testing atom bomb.

Third Phase (1953-1957):

Now United States of America formed SEATO in 1954 in order to reduce Soviet Russia's influence. In 1955 America formed MEDO in Middle East. Within a short span of time, America gave military assistance to 43 countries and formed 3300 military bases around Soviet Russia. At that time, the Vietnamese War started on 1955.

To reduce the American Power, Russia signed WARSAW PACT in 1955. Russia also signed a defence pact with 12 Countries. Germany was divided into Federal Republic of Germany which was under the American control whereas German Democratic Republic was under Soviet Russia. In 1957 Soviet Russia included Sputnik in her defence programme.

In 1953 Stalin died and Khrushchev became the President of Russia. In 1956 an agreement was signed between America and Russia regarding the Suez Crisis. America agreed not to help her allies like England and France. In fact, West Asia was saved from a great danger.

Fourth Phase (1957-1962):

In 1959 the Russian President Khrushchev went on a historical tour to America. Both the countries were annoyed for U-2 accident and for Berlin Crisis. In 13 August 1961, Soviet Russia made a Berlin Wall of 25 Kilometres in order to check the immigration from eastern Berlin to Western Berlin. In 1962, Cuba's Missile Crisis contributed a lot to the cold war.

This incident created an atmosphere of conversation between American President Kennedy and Russian President Khrushchev. America assured Russia that she would not attack Cuba and Russia also withdrew missile station from Cuba.

Fifth Phase (1962-1969):

The Fifth Phase which began from 1962 also marked a mutual suspicion between USA and USSR. There was a worldwide concern demanding ban on nuclear weapons. In this period Hot Line was established between the White House and Kremlin. This compelled both the parties to refrain from nuclear war. In spite of that the Vietnam problem and the Problem in Germany kept Cold War between USA and USSR in fact.

Sixth Phase (1969-1978):

This phase commencing from 1969 was marked by DETENTE between USA and USSR- the American President Nixon and Russian President Brezhnev played a vital role for putting an end to the Cold War. The SALT of 1972, the summit Conference on Security of 1975 in Helsinki and Belgrade Conference of 1978 brought America and Russia closer.

In 1971, American Foreign Secretary Henry Kissinger paid a secret visit to China to explore the possibilities of reapproachment with China. The American move to convert Diego Garcia into a military base was primarily designed to check the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean. During the Bangladesh crisis of 1971 and the Egypt-Israel War of 1973 the two super powers extended support to the opposite sides.

Last Phase (1979-1987):

In this phase certain changes were noticed in the Cold War. That is why historians call this phase as New Cold War. In 1979, the American President Carter and Russian President Brezhnev signed SALT II. But in 1979 the prospects of mitigating Cold War were marred by sudden development in Afghanistan.

Vietnam (1975), Angola (1976), Ethiopia (1972) and Afghanistan (1979) issues brought success to Russia which was unbearable for America. American President Carter's Human Rights and Open Diplomacy were criticised by Russia. The SALT II was not ratified by the US Senate. In 1980 America boycotted the Olympic held at Moscow.

In 1983, Russia withdrew from a talk on missile with America. In 1984 Russia boycotted the Olympic game held at Los-Angeles. The Star War of the American President Ronald Regan annoyed Russia. In this way the 'New Cold War' between America and Russia continued till 1987.

Result of the Cold War:

The Cold War had far-reaching implications in the international affairs. At first, it gave rise to a fear psychosis which resulted in a mad race for the manufacture of more

sophisticated armaments. Various alliances like NATO, SEATO, WARSAW PACT, CENTO, ANZUS etc. were formed only to increase world tension.

Secondly, Cold War rendered the UNO ineffective because both super powers tried to oppose the actions proposed by the opponent. The Korean Crisis, Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam War etc. were the bright examples in this direction.

Thirdly, due to the Cold War, a Third World was created. A large number of nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America decided to keep away from the military alliances of the two super powers. They liked to remain neutral. So, Non-Alignments Movement became the direct outcome of the Cold War.

Fourthly, Cold War was designed against mankind. The unnecessary expenditure in the armament production created a barrier against the progress of the world and adversely affected a country and prevented improvement in the living standards of the people.

Fifthly, the principle 'Whole World as a Family', was shattered on the rock of frustration due to the Cold War. It divided the world into two groups which was not a healthy sign for mankind.

Sixthly, The Cold War created an atmosphere of disbelief among the countries. They questioned among themselves how unsafe were they under Russia or America.

Finally, The Cold War disturbed the World Peace. The alliances and counter-alliances created a disturbing atmosphere. It was a curse for the world. Though Russia and America, being super powers, came forward to solve the international crisis, yet they could not be able to establish a perpetual peace in the world.

End of the Cold War:

The fall of the Berlin Wall. The shredding of the Iron Curtain. The end of the Cold War.

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the reins of power in the Soviet Union in 1985, no one predicted the revolution he would bring. A dedicated reformer, Gorbachev introduced the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* to the USSR.

GLASNOST, or openness, meant a greater willingness on the part of Soviet officials to allow western ideas and goods into the USSR. **PERESTROIKA** was an initiative that allowed limited market incentives to Soviet citizens.

Gorbachev hoped these changes would be enough to spark the sluggish Soviet economy. Freedom, however, is addictive.

The unraveling of the **SOVIET BLOC** began in Poland in June 1989. Despite previous Soviet military interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland itself, Polish voters elected a noncommunist opposition government to their legislature. The world watched with anxious eyes, expecting Soviet tanks to roll into Poland preventing the new government from taking power.

Gorbachev, however, refused to act.

Like dominoes, Eastern European communist dictatorships fell one by one. By the fall of 1989, East and West Germans were tearing down the **BERLIN WALL** with pickaxes. Communist regimes were ousted in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. On Christmas Day, the brutal Romanian dictator **NICOLAE CEAUSESCU** and his wife were summarily executed on live television. Yugoslavia threw off the yoke of communism only to dissolve quickly into a violent civil war.

Demands for freedom soon spread to the Soviet Union. The **BALTIC STATES** of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania declared independence. Talks of similar sentiments were heard in **UKRAINE**, the **CAUCASUS**, and the **CENTRAL ASIAN** states. Here Gorbachev wished to draw the line. Self-determination for Eastern Europe was one thing, but he intended to maintain the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union. In 1991, he proposed a Union Treaty, giving greater autonomy to the Soviet republics, while keeping them under central control.

That summer, a coup by conservative hardliners took place. Gorbachev was placed under house arrest. Meanwhile, **BORIS YELTSIN**, the leader of the **RUSSIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC**, demanded the arrest of the hardliners. The army and the public sided with Yeltsin, and the coup failed. Though Gorbachev was freed, he was left with little legitimacy.

Nationalist leaders like Yeltsin were far more popular than he could hope to become. In December 1991, Ukraine, **BYELORUSSIA**, and **RUSSIA** itself declared independence and the Soviet Union was dissolved. Gorbachev was a president without a country.

Americans were pleasantly shocked, but shocked nonetheless at the turn of events in the Soviet bloc. No serious discourse on any diplomatic levels in the USSR addressed the likelihood of a Soviet collapse. Republicans were quick to claim credit for winning the Cold War. They believed the military spending policies of the Reagan-Bush years forced the Soviets to the brink of economic collapse. Democrats argued that containment of communism was a bipartisan policy for 45 years begun by the Democrat Harry Truman.

Others pointed out that no one really *won* the Cold War. The United States spent trillions of dollars arming themselves for a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union that fortunately never came. Regardless, thousands of American lives were lost waging proxy wars in Korea and Vietnam.

Most Americans found it difficult to get used to the idea of no Cold War. Since 1945, Americans were born into a Cold War culture that featured McCarthyist witchhunts,

backyard bomb shelters, a space race, a missile crisis, détente, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Star Wars defence proposal. Now the enemy was beaten, but the world remained unsafe. In many ways, facing one superpower was simpler than challenging dozens of rogue states and renegade groups sponsoring global terrorism.

Americans hoped against hope that the new world order of the 1990s would be marked with the security and prosperity to which they had become accustomed.