
UNIT 7 COLD WAR : MEANING, PATTERNS AND DIMENSIONS

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit discusses the Cold War, its meaning and dimensions. After going through the Unit you will be able to:

- define the concept of the Cold War;
- trace the origin of this non-military conflict;
- understand the pattern and dimensions of the Cold War;
- identify the causes for the demise of the Cold War; and
- assess the impact and aftermath of the Cold War.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The First World War (1914-18) ended with the birth of a new system, the socialist system in the world. The war also sowed the seeds of another world war. These two developments have conditioned the subsequent decades in a big way. In 1939 the Second World War broke out. The Second World War was fought between the two blocs—the Allied powers and the Axis powers. The socialist bloc joined the Allies. The Allies won the war. The war ended with the destruction of the old capitalist imperialist dominated world. The world now was divided into two blocs—Western or capitalist bloc, headed by the neo-colonialist power, the United States of America (USA) and the Socialist bloc headed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The USA and the USSR emerged as the two super powers. Two blocs represented two contradictory systems. Conflict between them was inevitable. The conflict was turned into Cold War because the world meanwhile experienced a qualitative change.

At the end of the Second World War, a world body named United Organisation (UN) was founded to make the world safe for peace. The two superpowers acquired highly sophisticated destructive weapons. Europe became dependent upon the USA. Decolonialization became the reality. Above all world public opinion disfavoured any world wide holocaust. But these developments failed to stop the local or civil wars in different countries and to refrain the two superpowers from tension ridden competition for establishing supremacy over the world. The hostile competition turned into Cold War.

7.2 MEANING

The term "Cold War" is of recent origin. It has been in use since the Second World War for denoting the non-military hostility between the United States of America (USA) and the former Soviet Union. In course of time it has been used as a concept in international relations. The term Cold War means a state of hostility between nations without actual fighting (i.e. non-military hostility). The concept stands for struggle for supremacy waged by the nations or states through propaganda, economic measures, political manoeuvres, etc. Nations or states, engaged in Cold War do not go for actual war (military action). It is a state of cut-throat competition, but the competing parties remain far away from armed conflict between them. It was a conflict between two ideologies : Capitalism vs. Socialism.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) What do you mean by the term of Cold War?

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7.3 ORIGIN

The origin of the Cold War may be traced back to the 1917 Russian Revolution, which gave birth to a new system. The system came to be known as socialist system, opposed to exploitative capitalist system. Whole of the capitalist world got terror stricken and rallied to crush the new state of the USSR, failing to destroy it they encouraged the emergence of the Nazi power in Germany, so that it might be used against the USSR. The USSR made serious efforts to get the Western powers involved in checking the rapid rise of Nazi Germany. But the Western powers did not respond to the USSR's call. Meanwhile the Second World War broke out in 1939. Germany attacked the USSR violating the non-aggression pact between them. The USSR joined the Allied powers and made great contribution to defeat the Axis powers. Despite its sincere efforts to crush the Axis powers, the West always looked at the USSR with deep suspicion. The West is alleged to have desired the end of the USSR in the process of fighting against the Nazi led Axis powers. That is why perhaps the Allies did not respond to the USSR's repeated appeal for opening second front in the Eastern Europe against Germany. After the war the Allies did not hide their fear and hatred towards the USSR which now emerged as one of the superpowers in the world. The USA emerged as another superpower at the end of the Second World War. the Wartime Allies including the USSR founded the world body the United Nations (UN) to make the planet safe for peace. But they failed to forestall the local wars because the UN does not have the necessary powers to compell the super or major powers to keep away from encouraging conflicts. As a result they went on their own ways. They have organised their rival defense organisations, and have gone on reacting to each crisis as per their respective interests. They either have used the world body or have ignored it. The world thus drifted towards the Cold War in the wake of the Second World War.

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Critically discuss the circumstances leading to the beginning of the Cold War.

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7.4 SPREAD OF THE COLD WAR

Russia (USSR) assumed a sum of \$ 10 billion indemnity from Germany following the Second World War. The USA and Britain violating the decision of the July 1945 Potsdam Conference stopped the delivery of the reparations to Russia. It created a crisis which has come to be known as German Crisis. In order to overcome the crisis the big four powers, Russia, France, Britain and the USA met in a Conference in early 1947. The USA and Britain insisted the economic Unification of Germany. France and Russia opposed the proposal. The Conference ended without resolving the crisis. Meanwhile the USA violating all norms intervened the Greek Civil War in March 1947. President Truman of the USA delivered a speech to the US Congress on 12th March, 1947 to justify the intervention in Greece and asked the Congress to provide authority for financial assistance to Greece and Turkey for suppressing the Communist led Civil War in those countries. The principles which Truman elaborated in the Congress have come to be known as Truman Doctrine, the essence of which is that the USA has the right to intervene anywhere to check the spread of the Communism. The Truman Doctrine is the naked manifestation of Cold War. The Cold War further was deepened in early 1950s. In December 1951 the USA came forward with European recovery programme, which is commonly known as the Marshall plan and is often interpreted as the economic counterpart of the Truman Doctrine which was basically political. Though, the USA declared that the plan aimed at reconstructing the War-torn Europe, it was generally called an attempt to protect Europe from being taken over by the Communists. Because throughout Europe there was a surge of Communist movements immediately after the Second World War. All West European states readily accepted the US assistance under Marshall Plan. The East European nations are alleged to have refused to accept the assistance because of the USSR machinations. The USSR immediately founded the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), commonly known as Molotov Plan. Thus Europe got divided into two blocs which were further formalised when the defensive treaties were signed.

The surge of Communist movements throughout Europe, coupled with the growing tension between the USA and the USSR led the USA to propose a defensive alliance with the Western powers. Thus, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in April, 1949 to found North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The signatories of the Treaty were the USA, Canada, France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Iceland and Norway. Subsequently Greece, Turkey and West Germany joined the treaty which provided that an armed attack against one or more of the signatories in Europe, and North America would be considered an attack against the all signatories. In response to the NATO, USSR got together the former East European socialist states into Warsaw Pact. Its terms and conditions were similar to that of the NATO. These developments (i.e. division of Europe into two economic and military blocs) deepened the Cold War.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Write short notes on :

- a) German Crisis
- b) Truman Doctrine
- c) The Marshall Plan
- d) NATO

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7.5 COLD WAR IN THE FAR EAST

The Cold War, although originated in Europe, did not remain confined there. Cold War spread over the Far East immediately after Europe. In China Communist Revolution became successful in 1949. Chiang Kai Shek though got full support from the USA, failed to withstand the Communist attack. The Communists inflicted a crushing defeat to Chiang's unpopular nationalist forces and drove them away from the mainland China. The success of the Communists in China was a great set back for the USA which had been following the policy of containment of communism world over. The USA along with its Western allies signed the peace treaty with Japan, much to the chargin of the USSR. The treaty reduced Japan to almost a dependent of the USA, and made Japan the main US base in the Far East. The US military base in Japan is maintained by a massive financial support provided by the Japanese government: Japan meets almost 70% of the expenses incurred in the maintenance of the U.S. military bases and Korea was liberated by the Allies from Japan's occupation. The communist led army consolidated its position in North Korea and the anti-communist, pro-west forces, captured South Korea. In 1950, a civil war between North Korea (supported by China) and South Korea (supported by the U.S.) broke out. The country was divided along the 38th parallel and reached to the Yalu river which separates China from Korea. Now China backed by the USSR joined the fray in support of the communists. Immediately the North Korean army drove away the invaders. The war, however, continued for another two years. In July 1953 an armistice agreement was signed and the war ended but the tension over the Korean issue between the two superpowers continues even now.

Check Your Progress 4

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Critically discuss how the Cold War spread over the Far East.

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7.6 RELAXATION OF THE COLD WAR

In 1952 Dwight Eisenhower was installed in power replacing Harry S. Truman in the USA. Disregarding the Truman Doctrine, he adopted necessary effective steps to end the Korean war. In April 1953 Joseph Stalin died. He was succeeded by more liberal and young leaders in the USSR. To some extent they liberalised both domestic and foreign policies of the USSR. Meanwhile the USSR gained the capability of making the hydrogen bomb which was nearly 800 times more powerful than the atomic bomb used on Hiroshima. With the gaining of the capability of H-bomb, the USSR obtained parity with the USA. Now the world leaders got frightened and started feeling more comfortable in peace than in war.

Many analysts feel that had there been no H-bomb with the two superpowers, some of the explosive situations that arose in subsequent years, would have exploded into actual wars between the superpowers. They cite the Cuban crisis as an example. In early 1960s a crisis situation developed in Cuba after the installation of the communists in power. A communist Cuba was considered to be the sword of Damocles pointed at the heart of the USA. The US wanted to crush the infant communist state at its door step. But the prompt action, taken by the USSR by sending missiles for the protection of Cuba, softened the aggressive mood of the USA. The crisis brought the two powers on the brink of war but the war, however, did not break out. The US relaxed its attitude towards Cuba, the USSR withdrew the missiles. Thus the Cuban crisis ended in peace.

Following the end of the Cuban crisis both superpowers entered into several pacts for limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1963 an agreement was signed for controlling the tests of nuclear weapons known as Parsial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT). In 1967 test of nuclear weapons in the space was prohibited, and also Latin America was declared a nuclear weapons beyond the nations already possessing them was signed in 1968. One agreement of prohibiting emplacement of nuclear weapons on the seabed and another, prohibiting the use of biological weapons were signed in 1971. In 1972, SALT-I was signed between the U.S. and USSR. It was followed by an interim arms control agreement signed in between the two Moscow in 1974, which subsequently was converted into SALT-II in 1978. These agreements collectively decreased the tension of the Cold War.

Meanwhile Europe has restored itself from the Wartime destruction. The resurgent Europe began to compete with the US economy. France under Charles De-Gaulle declined to remain dependent upon the USA. Germany also recovered quickly. The monolithic international communist movement faced split. China and the USSR plunged into a kind of Cold War. these developments also greatly aided to relax the Cold War.

Check Your Progress 5

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Mention the factors responsible for the relaxation of the Cold War.

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7.7 THE REBIRTH OF THE COLD WAR

In late 1970s Afghanistan experienced a sort of revolution. A communist government was installed in power. But anti-communist force in collaboration with the religious fundamentalist forces opposed the new government. As a result Afghanistan soon plunged into an ending civil War. In this civil war the USA supported the anti-communists and the fundamentalists via Pakistan. The communist government in order to stem the tide of the civil war sought military and economic aid from the USSR who promptly sent a large contingent of armed forces and other military and economic aid in December 1979. The USA termed the presence of USSR army in Afghanistan as an invasion. The US attitude thus sensitized the already strained USA-USSR relations. The new conflict between the two super powers has been termed as the rebirth or the beginning of the new Cold War. The Cold War further deepened when in Poland martial law was imposed in 1981 to quell the pro-democracy unrest. The USA termed the action as the USSR intervention in Poland. The relation between the USA and the USSR reached already a breaking point in 1983 when the USSR shot down a South Korean civilian airliner which was alleged to be on the spy mission. The US condemned the shooting down of the airliner and immediately deployed new intermediate-range missiles in Europe, in retaliation the USSR broke off arms talks with the USA. The USA meanwhile invaded Grenada in 1983, launched invisible was against the popular Sandista government in Nicaragua and pushed ahead the development of the Strategic Defensive Initiatives (SDI) or star wars. Thus spread the new Cold War through out the world. President Ronald Reagan of the USA adopted a strategy of rolling back of the expanding 'evil empire' of the Soviet Union.

Check Your Progress 6

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) What are the incidents responsible for the beginning of the new or second Cold War?

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7.8 PATTERNS AND DIMENSIONS

World was divided into two blocs during the Cold War period, basically on ideological grounds. Since the Russian Revolution in 1917 which had given birth to a new system in the world, the capitalist and imperialist forces declared invisible war against the new state of the USSR. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, the Cold War took birth on the issue of expansion of the communist powers in Europe and other parts of the world. The Communist movement and the national liberation struggle against the age old imperialist rule in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America joined together in many areas. The USA and other imperialist states found it difficult to stem the tide of the emerging liberation struggle duly supported by the international communist movement. They, therefore, developed alliances, encircling the communist world with the aim of containing communism world over.

However, communism was not the lone issue. National interests of the warring states also played significant role in the spreading of Cold War. In the case of China-USSR conflict national interest played significant role. Religion also was an issue. Shina-Sunny issues, Hindu-Muslim issues contributed to develop tension and cold war between Iran-Iraq and India-Pakistan respectively. The Cold War that spread in South Asia between India and Pakistan, has been due to the issues of secularism, democracy and

nationalism. There has almost been an unending conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir Issue. India claims to be a secular democratic state where followers of different religions can live together. Kashmir is considered to be the test ground of Indian secularism.

The Cold War did not remain confined to the superpowers alone. There are several dimensions of the Cold War. In the international arena it was between the two superpowers. In the regional areas, there were also Cold Wars between the regional powers. There was Cold War in 1970s between Iran and Iraq, Cold War burst out between the USSR and China over the border issues. There has been Cold War between India and Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir. Pakistan tried military solution of the problem but failed. Then the Cold War has engulfed the region.

Though the period from the end of the Second World War to the disintegration of the USSR is termed as the Cold War era, it was not a continuous phenomenon and the issues were not the same. Cold War disturbed the peace in phases and periodically. The issues were also not the same. First the German crisis was the issue, then the Korean war, the Afghan crisis, US decision to go ahead with the star war programme etc. augmented the process of Cold War.

Thus the pattern and dimensions of the Cold War are varied and multiple.

Check Your Progress 7

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss the pattern and dimensions of the Cold War.

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7.8 END OF THE COLD WAR

The depth of the Cold War started to decline in late 1980s. Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of '*Perestroika*' and '*glasnost*' were primarily responsible for the end of the Cold War. The USA and the USSR agreed to dismantle a whole category of nuclear weapons. An agreement known as the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was signed to that effect. Though the treaty was not fully implemented, it reduced strategic weapons by about 30 per cent. Meanwhile the world began to the less tense. Decade old Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988. The USSR under Gorbachev reversed the old Breznev system. It pulled the troops out from Afghanistan. Vietnam, which had been helping Cambodian government to quell the civil war since late 1970s, withdrew its soldiers from Cambodia. Cuba which had sent army to Angola, brought back the forces. South Africa was forced to accord independence to Namibia. All these developments were positive signs for establishing peace in the world.

But situation started changing with the turn of 1980s and beginning of 1990s. In Central America the popular Sandinista government fell. The economic crisis that had engulfed the Eastern Europe and the USSR in mid 1980s was sought to be overcome by adopting the policies of political liberalization and market economy. The USSR put into effect Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. Both domestic and foreign policies of the USSR were drastically changed. Consequently communist regimes in Eastern Europe fell one by one. The State of East Germany was eliminated and whole of Germany was united. The infamous Berlin Wall was demolished. And the USSR got disintegrated. The Cold War thus ended with the demise of a superpower. With the disintegration of the USSR, Russia came out losing the status and position of a superpower.

At the ruins of the Cold War the unbridled supremacy of the USA has been established. The world now has become a unipolar one. The Cold War which had continued for more than four decades in one or another form, though kept the world free from any world wide conflict directly involving the two superpowers, failed to stop protracted civil wars or regional wars. During the period of Cold War most of the local or civil wars were the national liberations struggles. The Cold War period saw the decolonization of the world. Afro-Asian and Latin American nations who had so long been suffering from the European colonial rule, achieved independence during the period of Cold War. The end of Cold War has not eliminated the civil or local wars. But now the civil or local wars are no longer national liberation movements. They are mostly fratricidal battles which are being fought for parochial gains.

Check Your Progress 8

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Account for the causes of the Cold War.

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2) What are the characteristics of the post Cold War world?

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7.10 LET US SUM UP

Cold War means the non-military conflict. Though it had originated in the wake of the first World War (with the emergence of the socialist system) the fury of the Cold War was being experienced in the post Second World War period. The Cold War having originated in Europe in the late 1940s, spread over other parts of the world in the subsequent decades. Although the ideology remained the basic issue, the non-ideological issues crept over periodically. The Cold War had begun with the foundation of the USSR and declined with the disintegration of the USSR. The Cold War period experienced the decolonization process in the world. The Cold War has now been replaced by a single power domination over the world and rise of certain regions into province. The post Cold War period has been experiencing the civil or local wars over the parochial and ethnic issues where as such wars in Cold War period were over the questions of decolonisation and liberation of the depressed people.

7.11 KEY WORDS

Allied Powers : The states who came together to fight the Fascist Axis powers. The major allied powers were the USA, USSR, Britain, France and China. There were fifty states in this groups.

Axis powers : The fascist powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—constituted the Bloc in which a very few smaller states joined.

- Glasnost** : Open politics and multi-party democracy. It is a Russian word.
- Perestroika** : It is the Russian term which denotes market economy. It has given greater role to market forces in the Russian economy which had hitherto been planned or controlled economy.
- Star wars** : It is a system to prevent nuclear war by providing the technological inputs and means to knock incoming missiles out of the air before they hit their targets.

7.12 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

- L.S. Stavrianous, 1983, **A Global History, The Human Heritage**, New Jersey.
- James Lee Ray, 1992, **Global Politics**, New Jersey.
- D.F. Fleming, 1961, **The Cold War and Its Origin, 1917-1960**, 2 Vols, Doubleday.
- W. La Feber, 1968, **America, Russia and the Cold War**, John Wiley.

7.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

(Here points have been identified. For details the student should consult the lesson and the suggested books.)

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Cold War means non-military conflict. Aggressive competition for supremacy.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) 1917 Russian Revolution.
Second World War
German Crisis
Greek Civil War
Emergence of USSR-led Socialist Bloc
Emergence of neo-colonialism led by the USA.

Check Your Progress 3

- a) Struggle for the control of Germany by the Superpowers.
b) US pledge to support anti-communist movements.
c) Economic aid to keep away the countries from falling to communist rule
d) Aggressive defensive organisation to contain the forces of communism.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Take over of China by the Communists.
US base in Japan
Korean War

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) New leaderships in the USA and USSR. USSR's success in H-bomb. Resurrection of Europe. Split in the monolithic communist market.

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) Afghan crisis, shooting down of the Korean civil airliner
US invisible war in Nicaragua.
Star war programme of the USA.

Check Your Progress 7

- 1) Ideology, periodical Cold Wars, International Cold War.
Regional Cold War.

Check Your Progress 8

- 1) Economic crisis in the Socialist Bloc—liberalization in the USSR—Distintegration of the USSR.
- 2) Single Power (USA) supremacy, civil and local wars over the parochial and ethnic issues.