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CAUSES, TERMINATION AND LESSONS DERIVABLE FROM THE COLD WAR POLITICS

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ABSTRACT: The Cold War started in 1945 shortly after the Second World War. It was a period of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies, the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc. At this point, the two blocs were polarized at opposite ends of the spectrum and every other country drifted to one side or the other. Hence, they were periodically caught up in major political crises that had the potential to become open warfare. Therefore, the study seeks to critically analyze the causes, termination and lessons derivable from the Cold War politics. The study highlighted that tensions between superpowers, such as Nuclear Arms Race, Ideological Conflict (Capitalism - Communism), and the Spread of Communism were major causes of the Cold War. Cold War politics between the two super powers manifested in the form of Cuban Missile Crises, The Berlin Blockade (1948), and Korea War (1950-1952). Korea crisis illustrated the USA policies of "containment" and "roll-back" and announced China as a new player in the Cold War. The Cold War came to an end on 26th December, 1991, following the disintegration of Soviet Union as a result of the two policies introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev; Glasnost and Perestroika. The study noted four major lessons from this political activities which are; ideas, allies, leadership and statecraft matters. The end of Cold War led to the emergence of capitalism as the major ideology in the world.

KEYWORDS: Cold War Politics, Soviet Union, Geopolitical, Political Activities, Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies, the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc, after World War II. At this point, the two blocs were poloraised at opposite ends of the spectrum and every other country drifted to none side or the other. Hence, they were periodically caught up in major political crises that had the potential to become open warfare, such as the Cuban missile, the Korean War and the Berlin blockade. Historians do not fully agree on the dates, but the period is generally considered to span the 1947 Truman doctrine to the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union. The term "cold" is used because there was no large-scale fighting directly between the two superpowers, but they each supported major regional conflicts known as proxy wars (Rottman, 2002). The conflict was based around the ideological and geopolitical struggle for global influence by the two powers, following the temporary alliance and victory against Nazi Germany in 1945. The doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD) discouraged a pre-emptive attack by either side. Aside from the nuclear arsenal development and conventional military deployment, the struggle for dominance was expressed through direct means such as psychological warfare, propaganda campaigns, espionage, far-reaching embargoes, rivalry at sport events and technological competitions such as the space race.

The West was led by the United States as well as the other first world nations of the Western Bloc that were generally liberal democratic but tied to a network of authoritarian states, most of which were their former colonies. The East was led by the Soviet Union and its communist party, which had an influence across the second world (Barnett, 2017). The US government supported right-wing governments and uprisings across the world, while the soviet government supported the left-wing and funded communist parties and revolutions around the world. As nearly all the colonial states achieved independence in the period 1945-1960, they became Third World battle fields in the Cold War. The United States created the NATO military alliance in 1949 in the apprehension of soviet attack and termed their global policy against soviet influence of containment. The Soviet Union formed the Warsaw pact in 1955 in response to NATO (Gilbert, 2004). Major crises of this phase included the 1948-49 Berlin-Blockade, the 1927-50 Chinese civil war, the 1950-53 Korean war, the 1956 Suez crisis, the Berlin crisis in 1961 and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. The USSR and the US competed for influence in Latin America, the Middle East, and the decolonizing states of Africa and Asia. Following the Cuban Missile crisis, a new phase began that saw the Sino-Soviet split between China and Soviet Union complicate relations within the communist sphere, while US ally France began to demand greater autonomy of action (Charles, 2011). The USSR invaded Czechoslovakia to suppress the 1968 prague spring while the US experienced internal turmoil from the civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam war. The objective of this study is to critically analysis the causes, termination and lessons derived from the Cold War.

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Literature Review

What is Cold War?

A Cold War is a state of political hostility and military tension between two countries or power blocs, involving propaganda, subversion, threats, economic sanctions, and other measures short of open warfare, especially that between the American and Soviet blocs after World War II (William, 1976). It is a state of rivalry and tension between two factions, groups or individual that stops short of open violent confrontation. This period is comprised of actions and reactions between the two power blocs. 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 of actual war (Hartman, 2017).

Origin of Cold War

Shortly after the World War II, George Orwell (1945) used the term in the essay "You and the Atomic Bomb", published October, 1945 in the British newspaper "Tribune', contemplating a world living in the shadow of the threat of Nuclear war, he warned "that there is no peace in the world", which he called a permanent "Cold War" Orwell directly referred to war as the ideological confrontation between the Soviet and Western powers (USA).

Following the surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945 near the close of the World War II, the uneasy wartime alliance between the United States and Great Britain on one hand and the Soviet Union on the other began to unravel. By 1948, the Soviets had installed left-wing governments in the countries of Eastern Europe that had been liberated by Red Army. The Americans and the British feared the permanent Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and the threat of Soviet-influenced communist coming into power in the democracies of Western Europe. The Soviets, on the other hand, were determined to maintain control of Eastern Europe in order to safeguard against any possible renewed threat on spreading communism worldwide, largely for ideological reasons. The Cold War had solidified by 1947-1948 when U.S. aid provided under the Marshall Plan to western Europe had brought those countries under American influence and Soviets had installed openly communist regimes in eastern Europe (Iain, and Alistair, 2009),

Causes

(i). Tensions between superpowers: The first major cause of the Cold War was the increased reasons between the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. The Potsdam conference which occurred from July 17th to august 2nd in 1945 and was a wartime meeting of the Allied leaders including; Harry S. Truman, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. The meeting took place in Potsdam; which at the time was in the Allied controlled area of Germany. The purpose of the conference was for the three Allied powers to begin discussing on how to handle the defeat of Nazi Germany, which had occurred just recently. The hope was the three leaders could agree on how to handle world issues after the war was over, including; peace treaty issues and the effects of the war. However, the Potsdam conference is now viewed as a major event in the Cold War as well, because it highlighted the divide between Stalin and the other two leaders similar to the earlier Yalta conference. As well, it is at the Potsdam conference that Truman made Stalin aware of the American atomic weapons program (Manhattan Project) and that the Americans had developed the World's first atomic bomb. It was also at the conference that a deep divide was created between the United States and the Soviet Union specifically. Truman was incredibly suspicious of Stalin and his intentions and Stalin felt a similar way towards Truman. In general terms, the seeds of the Cold War were planted at the Potsdam conference. The United States would bomb Hiroshima just days after the conference ended and World War II would be over in just a few weeks, while the Cold War was just beginning. As such, many historians view the Yalta and Potsdam conferences as the start of the Cold War since they highlighted the growing mistrust and tensions between Truman of the United States and Stalin of the Soviet Union (Joshua and John, 2009).

(ii) Nuclear Arms Race: The next major cause of the Cold War was the emergence of nuclear weapons at the end of World War II. As stated previously, World War II ended in Europe by May 1945 with the defeat of Nazi Germany by the Allied powers, but the war did not officially end in the pacific theater until the atomic bombing of Japan in august 1945. The United States had developed its atomic weapon during the final years of the war through its secretive program called the Manhattan Project. With the atomic bombing of Japan, the United States had begun the era of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race. At the outset of the Cold War, the United States was the only nation in the world to contain atomic weapons, such as those used against Japan in 1945 as such, the Soviet Union was not able to militaristically challenge the United States and worked to develop their own atomic weapons. However, on august 29th 1949, the Soviet Union performed a test of their first atomic bomb codenamed 'first Lighting'. These early years were important to the growing tensions and anger between the two superpowers. Because of the development of nuclear weapons, the two nations did not trust each other. As a result, they each spent the first few decades of the Cold War developing large arsenals of nuclear weapons. By the 1950s each country had developed enough nuclear weapons acted as a means of defense.

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Essentially, each nation was deterred from going to war with other, or from escalating tensions, due to the fear of nuclear war. Historians refer to this idea as Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) since any escalation to war could result in the total destruction of both countries. Regardless, the nuclear arms race between the two nations showed the growing divide between the two nations. As such, the initial development of nuclear weapons in the 1940s and 1950s is considered to be a cause of the Cold War because it increase the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union and caused them to enter into a dangerous nuclear arms race.

(iii) Ideological Conflict (Capitalism - Communism)

The ideological conflict existed between the United States and Soviet Union. At the time, the Soviet Union was based on the principles of collectivism or socialism, while the United States was a modern liberal democracy nation based primarily on the principles of individualism. This means that the Soviet Union was positioned on the far-left side of the economic spectrum, while the United States was position on the right side. This difference in ideology was a major source of the conflict between the two nations because throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union sought to expand communism to other regions and the United States sought to stop it with its policy of containment. At its heart, capitalism is an economic system based upon the values of individualism and promotes individualism and promotes individual liberty over government regulation and control. For example, laissez-faire capitalism is a form of the ideology that translates to "leave us alone" meaning that the government should remain out of the economy and instead allow individuals to freely carry out their own economic affairs. The development of capitalism as an economic system, sought to reject the idea of government control of the economy and instead put the focus on individual. On the economic spectrum, capitalism is a right-wing ideology that is fundamentally based on: private ownership, competition, free trade, self-relevance, self-interest and the principles of supply and demand.

Communism is an economic system that is based on the principles of socialism especially the earlier development of Marxism and the ideas of Karl Marx as expressed in the communist manifesto. Communism is centered on the idea of establishing a society based upon public ownership of the means of production and the removal of any form of social classes. For example. Communism generally focuses on the conditions of the working-class, and the wide income gap that existed in laissez-faire capitalist societies. Communist countries such as the Soviet Union are also often dictatorships. Communism differs from capitalism because it focuses on the government having much control over the economy, and is often referred to as a command economy (Joshua and John, 2009).

A dictatorship is a form of government in which most or all authority of the country is in the hands of a single individual; the leader. While the term has been used several times throughout history, most common usage of the term is in relation to different types of dictatorship that existed in the 20th and 21st centuries. For example famous dictators include: Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany, Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union, Benito Mussolini in Italy, Kin Jung-un in North Korea and Fidel Castro in Cuba.

As such, the United States and the Soviet Union differed greatly in their views of how the world should be organized following major events of World War II.

iv. Spread of Communism

As such, the final cause of the Cold War was an American fear of the spread of communism around the world. The United States, led by Harry S. Truman feared that communism as an ideology could spread throughout Europe and the rest of the world. For example, after World War II both Greece and Turkey were facing financial crisis. Due to their proximity of soviet territory and the rise of communism in recent decades. It was feared that the two countries might fall into the soviet sphere of influence and become communist. In a speech in 1947 on the crisis facing both countries Harry S. Truman stated:

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid, which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes (Hartman, 2017, p.12).

In this passage, Truman is promoting the idea that United States should financially support the two nation to avoid them turning to communism. This approach by Truman formed the basis of American foreign policy throughout the remainder of the Cold War in the form containment; which historians refer to as the Truman Doctrine. Essentially, the Truman doctrine was the idea that the United States should attempt to contain the Soviet sphere of license and the spread of communism. This foreign policy caused the United State to enter into conflict with the Soviet Union as it attempted to thwart Soviet expansionism in event such as; Berlin Blockade, Korean War, Vietnam War, etc.

The Practices of Cold War Politics

Cold War politics between the two super powers manifested in the following ways:

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The Cuban Missile Crises:

The Cuban missiles crises of October 1962 is generally regarded as the most dangerous moment of the cold war, one in which the world moved perceptibly close to nuclear conflict between the superpowers.

In the period after the Fidel Castro's successfully socialist revolution in Cuba 1959, the Americans considered various plan to restore an anti-communist government. In April 1961, these plans gave birth to unsuccessful invasion of Cuba by American forces. Hence, this was followed by a build-up of Soviet forces in Cuba throughout this year, (1962). The issue of Cuba caused difficult relations among the super-powers. In that same year, American government publicly declared Soviet building of missile in Cuba as an unacceptable. However, the blockade to prevent further missile reaching Cuba, emerged as the preferred solution to Americans. In the long run, the crises ended with a bipartite social contract between USA and Soviet Union, stated that "Americans should remove blockade and agreeing not to invade Cuba, and also the removal of missile from Turkey in return for removal of the missile from Cuba. The missile crises ended on these terms (Iain and Alistair, 2009, pp. 128-129).

The Berlin Blockade (1948)

The city of Berlin epitomized the cold war politics. The city was not only of strategic importance in the center of Europe but an ideological symbol of power that neither superpower was willing to relinquish. Soon after the WW II it became apparent that the end of the war would not usher in a prolonged period of peace. Both USSR and USA and its allies, rushed to control the power vacuum that was once the Nazi empire. The superpowers divided Germany among themselves, Berlin too was also subdivided. As the balkanization of Germany became apparent, the USA wanted to install a system of open markets and democracy into the defeated nation while USSR wanted to spread the communist revolution into central Europe. On May, 1949, after the Berlin blockade cleared the way for the western powers' creation of West Germany, the USSR countered by establishing the German Democratic Republic in their sector, thus creating what Winston Churchill called an "iron curtain" between free and unfree Germany and the free and unfree worlds (Barnett, 2017).

Conflict

The first major crisis arrived on the 1st April 1948 when the USSR placed a blockade of all road and rail into allied controlled West Berlin. The reasons for the blockades were:

- > The USSR wanted to incorporate the small refuge of capitalism within its communist empire.
- > There was a great disparity between East and West Berlin
- > The Soviet was losing people, capital and face

By cutting of vital infrastructure, the USSR felt they could starve the Allies out of Germany. Hence, it seemed that confrontation might be inevitable, but neither side wanted to appear as the aggressor to the rest of the world. The Allies solution was to fly supplies into the fortified region, and impose a "counter-blockade" on Eastern Berlin codenamed operation "vittles".

Resolution

On the 12 may 1949, the USSR lifted the blockade, they realized that East Berlin was suffering more, as a result of the USA blockade, than the West was.

Effect of the blockade

The USA maintained a stronghold in communist East Germany.

The West received a psychological boost while the East were humiliated.

The Berlin Wall (1961)

With USA backing, the capitalist West Berlin began to prosper while the communist East floundered increasing, people from East Germany and other Soviets satellites were flaying into West Berlin and then to the West. These people were often skilled workers which East Germany could least afford to lose, in an effort to stop this migration, the Soviet erected a barbed wire fence through the city. A few months later a more permanent wall was built and the city of Berlin was physically divided.

Resolution

The wall stood until 1989, when it was finally torn down in what is generally regarded as the symbolic fall of communism.

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Korea War (1950-1952)

Korea illustrated the USA policies of "containment" and "roll-back" and announced China as a new player in the cold war.

Background

After the WW2, Korea like Germany, was divided between USA and USSR control. Korea which had been under the control of Japan during the war split along the 35th Parallel; communist controlled North Korea(with the support of China) and USA controlled South Korea(with the support of United Nations).

Conflict

In June 1950 the communist North Korea attacked the South. The USA responded by encouraging the United Nations to become involved. With USSR boycotting of the UN due to its prohibition of China membership, a bill was passed to involve the UN in the conflict. On the 15th September UN troops landed in South Korea and quickly pushed North Korea back over it borders. The UN continued to push into North Korea until china entered the war and stopped the advance.

Resolution

By July 1951 the front line was once again near the 38th parallel and a cease fire was called. The war showed:

The USA was prepared to go beyond their policy of "containment" of communism and initiated a policy of "rollback" ad they tried to push into North Korea.

The conflict also illustrated military strength of china as they stopped the rollback operation (Rottman, 2002).

VIETNAM WAR (1954-1975)

Plans in Vietnam crises illustrated the extent to which the USA was prepared to go to stop the perceived spread of communism.

Background

Vietnam had been a French colony until their withdrawal in 1954. In their absence, Vietnam was divided by the subsequent peace conference held in Geneva into North and South regions. North Vietnam came under the patronage of communist USSR while USA backed South Vietnam, was anticommunist. Despite plans in the peace conference, the country failed to unify. However, nationalist forces that aimed to unify the country began to encroach into the South. The USA concerned this, was a communist threat felt obliged to follow their policy of containment and began to support the South with advisors, weapons and ultimately troops.

Conflict

The conflict intensified and US involvement escalated. Their effort to eradicate the military Vietcong were largely hampered by guerilla warfare in the dense jungles of Vietnam did not allow US to fully utilize it technological superiority. The war dragged on for years and causalities grew rapidly on both side.

Resolution

The US finally due to mounting pressure at home and a new era of détente between the superpowers, were compelled to withdraw in 1973. The war illustrated that the US policy of containment was not infallible (State of New South Wales, Depart of education, 2011).

TERMINATION OF THE COLD WAR

The Cold War came to an end on 26th December, 1991 following the disintegration of Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev took over power from Konstantin Chernenko in March 10, 1985.When Gorbachev assumed the reins of power in the Soviet Union, no one predicted the policies he would bring. He introduced two 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 in the USSR (Norwich, 2017).

PERESTROIKA was an initiative that allowed limited market incentives to Soviet citizens. That is, to reform or restructure the political and economy system within the Soviet Union so that it could be more effective and provide for the needs of the Soviet Citizens. Gorbachev hoped these changes if successfully implemented would be enough to spark the sluggish Soviet economy. Ironically, these policy's led to the disintegration of Soviet Union. Gorbachev loss of governmental power created a domino effect in which Eastern European alliance began to crumble, inspiring

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countries such as Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to declare their independence. The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, leading East and West Germany to officially reunite within a year, ending the Cold War (Norwich, 2017). Once the Berlin Wall fell, citizens in Eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania staged protests against their pro-soviet governments, hastening the collapse of communist regimes across the former soviet bloc. Other countries such as the Republic of Belarus, the Russian federation and Ukraine-followed suit, creating the commonwealth of independent states. By the end of 1989, eight of the nine remaining republics had declared independence from Moscow, and the powerful Soviet Union was finally undone. By the summer of 1990, all the formerly communist Eastern European officials had been replaced by democratically elected government, setting the stage for the regions reintegration into Western economic and political spheres (Gilbert and Thom-Otuya, 2005).

The dismantling of the Soviet Union had many long-lasting effects on the global economic and the regions foreign trade. Its downfall increased the United States' influence as a global power and created an opportunity for corruption and crime in Russia (Norwich, 2017).

DERIVABLE LESSONS FROM THE COLD WAR POLITICS

The Cold War ended on December 26, 1991 with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. (Iain & Alistair, 2009) asserted that assuming the Soviet Union's ambitions had not been contained, much of Western Europe as well as Eastern Europe might have become communist or at least friendly to communism, isolating the U.S. for years and perhaps decades to come.

From 1945 to 1991, under nine administrations, Democratic as well as Republican, the United States pursued first a policy of containing the Soviet Union and communism, then a policy of détente and accommodation, and finally a policy of undermining and bringing down what President Ronald Reagan called an "evil empire." The world has changed significantly since 1945, but certain lessons are significant:

Ideas matter: The philosophical ideas undergirding a regime matter, because they guide governments and help us to understand their conduct.

The United States has been shaped by its founding principles of freedom, justice, and equality. They have sustained the nation through wars, depressions, impeachments, and cultural revolutions. The Soviet regime was shaped by the totalitarian principles of Marxism-Leninism. When leaders of the Soviet states admitted they no longer believed in communism, they undermined the ideological foundations of their power and authority. After the Soviet Union collapsed, Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev admitted that it had been built on sand. Russian president Boris Yeltsin was more to the point: "The idol of communism, which spread everywhere social strife, animosity, and unparalleled brutality has collapsed" (Iain & Alistair, 2009, p.23).

Similarly, the mullahs who govern Iran like the radicals behind ISIS are guided by their commitment to a militant Islamic caliphate, a commitment that shapes their worldview and their conduct on the world stage. In China, the communist government struggles to rationalize the contrary demands of economic liberalization and political control. The Hong Kong demonstrations drive home the difficulty of sustaining this strategy.

Friends and allies matter: The United States called upon and led a grand alliance against the Soviet Union through such instruments as the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Korean "police action," Euromissiles, the special relationship with Great Britain, and the multifaceted Reagan Doctrine (Iain & Alistair, 2009).

In contrast, the Soviet Union was never able to command true loyalty from the Warsaw Pact nations or the peoples within the Soviet Union. Marxism-Leninism was an alien doctrine imposed on the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union by an imperial power. Moscow bought the allegiance of Cuba in Latin America and Angola in Africa.

Leadership matters: The history of the Cold War can be written through the biographies of leaders on both sides of the Iron Curtain. It began with Harry Truman and Josef Stalin and ended with Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, who helped end the Cold War by abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine. That doctrine, which held that Moscow would allow no communist state to become non-communist, had propped up the Soviet regimes for decades.

The United States was successful when led by clear-eyed statesmen like Truman and Reagan, who crafted principled actions suitable to the circumstances they faced. Truman approved the historic Berlin Airlift of 1948, which supplied the people of Berlin with food, medicine and supplies by airplane for more than a year, ultimately forcing the Soviets to lift their blockade. Standing in front of the Brandenburg Gate, Reagan challenged Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall and help end the Cold War. The State Department objected that Reagan's challenge was provocative, but within six months Reagan and Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty, eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons for the first time (Edwards, & Edwards, 2019).

Statecraft matters: A successful U.S. foreign policy depends on knowing when to apply force, as in Korea, and when to utilize diplomacy, as with the U.S.-Soviet negotiations to eliminate intermediate range nuclear missiles. A grand

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strategy for U.S. foreign policy begins with the thesis that the U.S. should clearly express its general principles of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law; be politically, economically and diplomatically active around the world; and engage militarily when it is necessary to defend its vital interests (Edwards, & Edwards, 2019).

Whether it is clashes with Islamic terrorists or long-term challenges from autocratic Russia or Communist China's attempts to expand its sphere of influence, a prudent foreign policy guided by our founding principles and backed by our capabilities offers the best path for the Unites States. That is a strategy for today, tomorrow, and the ages.

Conclusion

The Cold War was the most unconventional conflict of the 20th century. It was a period of hostility and tension short of open war between the two super powers. World War I and II shaped our history and our world, but they did not match the length or the complexity of the struggle that occupied superpowers and lesser powers on every continent for more than four decades. At stake was whether the post-war world would be dominated by the Soviet-led forces of totalitarianism or inspired by the principles of political and economic freedom embodied in the United States. The tensions were based on the ideological differences and struggle for supremacy. In most cases the two super powers fought each other through the third countries, as it was in Vietnam and Korean wars. The Cold War started in 1945 shortly after the Second World War and ended in 1991, following the disintegration of Soviet Union; due to the two economic policies of Glasnost and Perestroika introduced by Gorbachev in 1986. This led to reconfiguration of the world political map. The end of Cold War led to the emergence of capitalism as the major ideology in the world. The Cold War politics emphasizes the importance of ideas in ruling the world. The two super powers were able to galvanize their available resources to project their ideas and influence to other countries of the world without resorting to physical confrontations.

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