THE COLD WAR: STRATEGIES OF CONTAINMENT

PRELUDE TO CONTAINMENT: A TENSE PARTNERSHIP
The goals of “The Cold War: Strategies of Containment”

Understand the Cold War “events” and their causes

Understand international relations in an increasingly globalized world

Understand the dynamics of international conflicts

Understand the cognitive successes and failures of Cold War thinking

Ukraine War will provide some examples
Our Class Session Topics

1. Prelude to Containment: A Tense Partnership
2. Containment Begins: The Truman Administration
3. Containment Implemented: Korea
4. Containment Tactics: Eisenhower and Nuclear Strategy
5. Containment Challenged: Khrushchev and Cuba
6. Containment Punctured: Vietnam
7. Containment Revised and Victorious: Détente and Dissolution
Prelude to Containment: A Tense Partnership

Cold War: a state of political hostility between countries characterized by threats, propaganda, and other measures short of (direct) open warfare.

- the state of political hostility that existed between the Soviet bloc countries and the US-led Western powers from 1946 to 1991.
- Causes? – mistrust; misperception, asystematic aggression; ignorance; cognitive failures
Prelude to Containment: A Tense Partnership
The Russian Revolution of 1917
- America historic animosity to communism
  o 19th century communism/socialism rejected and taboo
  o US sends troops to support the counterrevolutionary White Russians in 1920
  o Russia withdraws from WWI allied powers in late 1917
  o American animosity continues through 1920s and 1930s
  o US does not “recognize” Soviet Union until 1933 (for political reasons)
World War II – “Crossing over the bridge with the Devil”

- Germany and USSR enter into treaty in August 1939 to divide Poland and Baltic States before Germany’s invasion of Poland in September; provide USSR with a buffer zone

- Germany attacks USSR in June 1941 – the enemy of my enemy

- US begins lend lease with USSR in 1941 (already with Britain)

- US enters war after Pearl Harbor with USSR now as an ally

- Overall: a common enemy concentrates the mind
 Allies: Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill
- Russia bears the brunt – 27 mm dead
- Russia asking “a little help here?”:
  opening a Western Front
- Answers make Stalin’s suspicions grow
  o “Not yet but later”
  o North Africa is a start
  o But not until Normandy is Stalin satisfied and not as thrilled as you would expect
- Churchill and Stalin in Moscow — spheres of influence are divisible (!?)
- Roosevelt and Stalin in Yalta — spheres of influence are understandable
  o Roosevelt and Uncle Joe — the power of personality?
  o Keeping the Russians in the war
  o Reality - The Russians have taken Eastern Europe and are heading to East Germany
    o Voting in Eastern Europe agreement
Churchill – post war planning: nothing like the present

- The problem with Roosevelt’s mortality – USSR and the Atomic bomb

The American Decision Makers’ Experiences (and Analogy generators)

- Pearl Harbor and surprise attack

- Overwhelming war v limited wars
- Overwhelming technology
- Munich and appeasement
- The Atomic Bomb monopoly and Japan
- A World War
- Experiences during the Cold War
- Korean War
- French in Vietnam
Roosevelt’s changing strategy for “integrating Stalin”
- The strategy of integration
  - Four policemen
- The strategy of quid pro quo – what can I give you?
The Truman Administration – April 1945 to January 1953

- Initially with Roosevelt’s staff and Roosevelt’s approach to the Soviets – “we can work with the Ruskies”
- Stalin – we can work with the Americans (and their money)
- The spell though is broken (next week)
A Conflict in Ways and Visions

The American approach to foreign policy

- **Principle based approach** (those who are not principled should be approached warily)
  
  - Self determination
    
    ▪ Spheres of influence are bad (to the public too).
    
    ▪ Ultimate SOI is hegemony, e.g., the Monroe Doctrine
    
    ▪ What the public demands and needs
- Liberal values
  - Freedom,
  - democracy,
  - capitalism with free trade

  All communists are the same (bad) and #1 is USSR (a simplistic world view)

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**Basic Liberal Values**

- Liberals focus on values of order, liberty, justice, and toleration into international relations. All individuals are juridically equal and possess basic rights to education, access to a free press, and religious toleration. Domestic and international institutions are required to protect these values.
- State possesses only the authority given to it by the people
- All individuals have the right to own property
- Most effective economic exchange system is market economy. Economy should not be subordinated to bureaucratic control
The Soviet Approach to foreign policy

- A history of being invaded: 1812, 1914, 1941 – the tyranny of distance ain’t all bad

- Spheres of influence are good (traditional)
  - Russia’s long history of expansion
  - 1939 treaty with Germany about this
  - Soviets wanted this sphere then and still want it
  - The coin of blood to be spent
  - Roosevelt acknowledged these
- Stalin’s *realpolitik* and the nature of “interests”
- Communist “scientific” ideology re world wide dominance and withering away of countries
**Realpolitik** (from German *real* 'realistic, practical, actual', and *Politik* 'politics')

- politics or diplomacy based primarily on considerations of given circumstances and factors, rather than explicit ideological notions or moral and ethical premises.

- What is a country’s *real* major interests and why? These are held or attained with power.

- Stalin did not understand a principle based foreign policy – why does the US care about Eastern Europe?
Circumstances in September 1945

Universal concern of the wartime allies in 1945 was to prevent the resurgence of Japan and Germany. See World War I and 1918 to 1938.

By spring of 1946, agreement in America and Britain that more urgent threat was Soviet military domination of Europe.

Political vacuums in decolonized countries
For US, Cold War attitude/approach caused by:
- Non-adherence by Soviets to Yalta agreement voting provisions in Eastern Europe (principle of self determination)
- Soviet army still over 2 million – Pentagon est. Soviets could overrun most of Europe, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Manchuria, Korea and North China
- US armed forces reduced from 12 mm to 1.5 mm by 1947
- Soviet troops still in Iran and near Turkey
- Soviet support of communist parties in France and Italy
- Communist ideology of expansion
West saw in 1946 Soviet military capability exceeded its needs and posed a threat to Central and Western Europe.

(We now know Soviets lacked the capability to take over Western Europe.)
Next Week: Containment Begins: The Truman Administration

CONTAINMENT THEORY

1947
George F. Kennan

“The main element of any United States policy toward Soviet Union must be a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansionist tendencies.”