



THE COLD WAR: STRATEGIES OF CONTAINMENT

CONTAINMENT CHALLENGED: KHRUSHCHEV AND CUBA

Our Class Session Topics

1. Prelude to Containment: A Tense Partnership
2. Containment Begins: The Truman Administration and the late 1940s
3. Containment Implemented: Korea
4. Containment Modified: Eisenhower and Nuclear Strategy
5. **Containment Challenged: Khrushchev and Cuba**
6. Containment Punctured: Vietnam
7. Containment Revised and Victorious: Détente and Dissolution





Khrushchev's Detente

Stalin dies in March 1953

Khrushchev and three other Politburo members come to power to replace Stalin; Khrushchev sole premier by 1957 (unsteady succession)

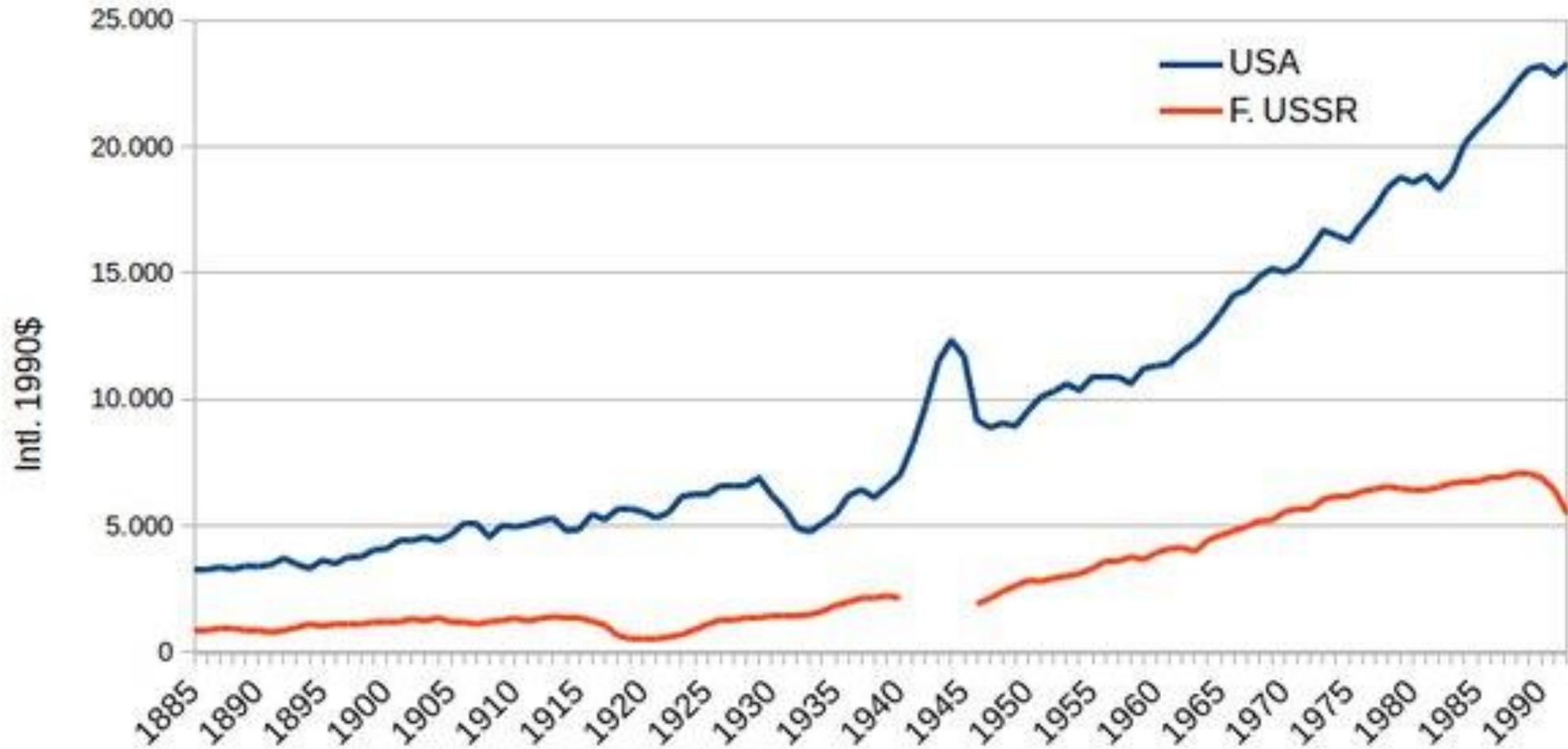
Korea War armistice signed July 1953

Khrushchev realizes USSR cannot compete with West economically or militarily and seeks "détente" (for him, negotiated spheres of influence and arms control) and "peaceful co-existence"

Khrushchev though will take contradictory actions, including in Cuba

GDPpc growth

Madison Project data



Khrushchev's Cold War

Khrushchev and the Weakness of Stalin's approach

West had been immensely successful in Europe

- In 1949 twelve countries headed by the United States formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an anti-German & anti-Soviet defensive alliance that continued to grow.
- By 1952 Greece and Turkey had joined NATO.
- 1948-49 Berlin blockade had failed; Germany still divided
- US has defense treaty with Japan
- No agreement on recognition of Eastern European countries or on Berlin and Germany
- US expanding conventional and nuclear capability



Post Stalin

Stalin dies March 1953; succeeded by four Politburo members, eventually Khrushchev comes to dominate through execution and retiring others

- Khrushchev desirous of a lasting agreement with US addressing arms race, Eastern Europe and Germany and Berlin. Wants “peaceful co-existence,” a détente.
- US reluctant, skeptical re Soviet partnership and perceived Soviet military strength



Why the change in approach from Stalin to Khrushchev?

Khrushchev, a WW II veteran, abhorred idea of nuclear war

Khrushchev perceived the Soviets were weaker than US militarily and economically

Kremlin had renounced territorial claims that Stalin had made on Soviet neighbors Finland and Turkey, and ended the USSR's colonial control of the Chinese ice-free port of Port Arthur under CC treaty

USSR needed to improve lives of Soviet citizens by allocating money away from military and into consumer good production

- After Stalin's death, Soviets had applied pressure to China to end Korean war as beginning of the change
- Open city Berlin is an embarrassing sieve and Khrushchev's threats against Eisenhower and Kennedy were without affect
- Khrushchev openly critical of Stalin in January 1956 Party Congress speech, beginning of divide of communist world (leading to 1961 Soviet-China split)

Cuban Missile Crisis

Beginning in summer 1962 Soviets started delivering 50,000 soldiers, military equipment and medium and intermediate range tactical and strategic nuclear missile components to Cuba.

- Medium range could reach southern US states and Washington DC; intermediate almost entire US

- US discovered nuclear missiles in October 1962 through ariel reconnaissance. Knew since summer of build up of defensive weapons though

- Kennedy announced discovery in public speech, implementing a blockade and demanding missiles be removed



Questions so far?



Many reasons cited for Soviet missile deployment

- Khrushchev's impulsive personality
- Khrushchev's increasingly desperate search for dramatic gesture to rescue failing Soviet foreign and domestic policies, including failures in Berlin
- Protect Cuba against possible additional American aggression
 - Ignored US history in South America
 - Sincere belief by Khrushchev that United States would eventually invade Cuba; Bay of Pigs was only the first try. He was right.
 - Bay of Pigs invasion was extremely bold and foolish for Kennedy
 - Kennedy had compared Cuba to Soviet concerns about Hungary, ignoring Turkey
- Support communist growth in Latin and South America
- Appease criticism of China for Soviet Union not doing more to support worldwide communism

- Underestimated Kennedy's resolve after Vienna confrontation and retreat by Kennedy
- Attempt to restrain Western imperialism, facilitate decolonization, and promote global spread of communism to third world countries
- Khrushchev empathized with Castro and supported him
- US had Saturn missiles in Turkey, natural for Soviets to have missiles in Cuba
- Fear that if Soviets did not advance communism in the Third World, US would force Soviet Union and its allies to retreat geographically
- Soviet military advised Khrushchev it would be easy to conceal missiles in jungles of Cuba

- Khrushchev's wanted to rectify perceived imbalance of power in September 1962
 - Khrushchev had bragged about Soviet nuclear superiority since 1956
 - Sputnik in 1957 and first ICBM test in 1958 reinforced bragging
 - US analysts estimated Soviets had more missiles than US based on productive capacity
 - Kennedy campaigned against Nixon in 1960 on missile gap
 - Weren't none though

- Soviets also planned to station service ships from the Baltic fleet, and a squadron of submarines in Cuba.
- Khrushchev may have felt risk of discovered weapons could be managed over time due to hesitancy of US to respond
- Khrushchev failed to drive Western allies from West Berlin in 1958 and 1961; were Cuban missiles to be a source of leverage here?
- Missile gap found wanting in summer 1961 from U-2 and satellite photos

- US estimated Soviets had 75 ICBMs to its 172

- In reality USSR had only 20 ICBMs in April 1962 and Cuba seen as place to correct imbalance

- US expectations were Soviets would never deploy missiles outside of Soviet Union
- Kennedy's Excom grouped debated whether missiles were offensive or defensive (!!!)

Kennedy did not approach Soviets first (which they hoped). Instead, he announced publicly the missiles, changing dynamics of negotiation.

- Soviets hoped Kennedy would offer to withdraw Jupiter missiles in Turkey
- Longer-range Soviet missiles had not yet arrived in Cuba at this time

Anticipating immediate invasion of Cuba, Soviet military wanted to use tactical nuclear missiles against invasion.

- Khrushchev's seem to initially to agree but then counter-ordered

Soviets nuclear armed submarines approached Cuba but these were detected by US destroyers and forced to surface.

Khrushchev internally acknowledged strategic missiles must leave Cuba before situation reaches boiling point.

Khrushchev offers two sets of terms to Kennedy.

- By letter, Soviets would remove missiles and military hardware, etc. from Cuba if US pledges not to invade Cuba
- By public speech, Soviets would remove missiles and military hardware, etc. from Cuba if US pledges not to invade Cuba and remove missiles from Turkey

Kennedy accepts first (Trollope Offer)

October 27, Khrushchev directs Soviet military in Cuba under no circumstances it should launch nuclear weapons.

On October 28 Khrushchev learns Kennedy is going to make a public speech about Cuba and is fearful of its contents.

- Speech turned out to be a repetition of Kennedy's quarantine speech but Khrushchev thinking it was an announcement of war
- Khrushchev announces acceptance of American terms two hours before Kennedy speech (USSR would withdraw unilaterally nuclear missiles and other military equipment from Cuba)
- Announcement made no mention of withdrawal of American missiles from Turkey

Khrushchev's characterizes

- missiles as intended to as leverage for US pledge not to invade Cuba and it worked
- missiles had little military importance.
- did though acknowledge the danger of nuclear weapons and that a first strike would be ineffective in light of a retaliatory strike.

Both Kennedy and Khrushchev claimed victory but both are also chastened by the experience. Both:

- discovered carefully calculated schemes of nuclear brinkmanship could lead to catastrophe
- realized how many things can go wrong in a crisis such as this
- realized that nuclear annihilation was a real possibility and that brinkmanship had to be ruled out

Khrushchev revised his opinion of Kennedy; considered him thereafter as good negotiating partner and not a pushover. This was the start of a mutual move toward US-Soviet détente they thought.

Kennedy's policy of "flexible response" with more conventional forces reinforced and used in Vietnam eventually

Kissinger thought the crisis showed the Soviets' weakness: they sought to redress the balance of power where they were weak in long range missiles and needed the proximity of Cuba,

Khrushchev's became less aggressive with regard to West Berlin.

- By agreement, he could not announce withdrawal of missiles from Turkey and his reputation suffered.
- Khrushchev's also lost confidence of Soviet military
- To Cuba and China, Khrushchev also looked bad.
- When Khrushchev accidentally revealed missile trade off with Kennedy in spring 1963, Castro was livid.
- Khrushchev replaced by bloodless coup in 1964

Questions?



Containment Punctured: Vietnam

