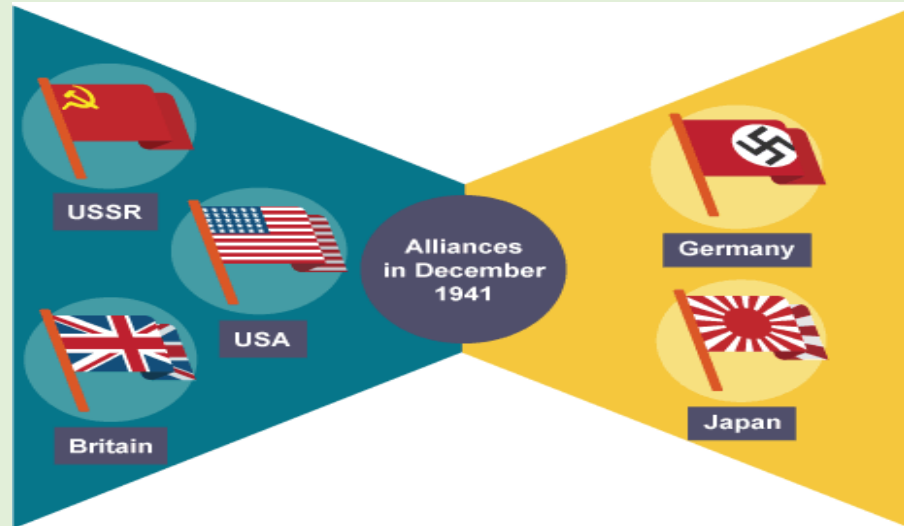


The Cold War

Early tension between East and West

The USA entered World War Two against Germany and Japan in 1941, creating a Grand Alliance of the USA, Britain and the USSR. This uneasy alliance would ultimately break down into the Cold War.

The alliance of the USA and the USSR brought together two sides that were divided by their political ideologies. The political and economic systems of the USA and Britain were based on capitalism, while since its foundation after the 1917 Russian Revolution the USSR had based its economy on communism.



However, the actions of Nazi Germany and its ally, Japan, in World War Two had driven these two political enemies together.

Britain had been at war with Germany since Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939.

Despite the fact that Stalin had carved up and invaded Poland in 1939 alongside Hitler, the USSR allied itself with Britain in 1941 when Germany began to invade its territories.

In December 1941, Germany's ally, Japan, launched a surprise attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbour on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. This action brought the USA into World War Two on the same side as Britain and the USSR

Understanding the differences between capitalism and communism:

Capitalism	Communism
Several political parties representing different sectors of society	One-party state
Governments are chosen by democratic elections	No democratic elections and no opportunity to change the government by election
People are free to set up private businesses and make money for themselves	All businesses and factories are owned by the state
Individual rights and freedoms are important	Individual rights and freedoms are less important than obedience to the state
Freedom of speech and freedom of the press	Censorship and state controlled media

The Tehran Conference
November 1943

Tehran, Persia (modern day Iran)

Main objective:
To plan the liberation of Nazi-occupied France

Britain
Prime Minister Winston Churchill

USA
President Franklin D. Roosevelt

USSR
Premier Joseph Stalin

Despite the promises made by Stalin at the end of the Second World War to allow free elections, he had in fact started turning Eastern Europe into a buffer zone between the Soviet Union and Western Europe. Stalin feared that Eastern Europe could be the doorway for an attack on the Soviet Union by the West.

Iron Curtain

Reactions to Soviet Expansion

For the Western Allies the setting up of communist governments in Eastern Europe was a major concern. World War Two had been fought in the name of freedom. Now it seemed that in many countries the hard-won freedom from Nazi dictatorship was being replaced by communist dictatorships.

An Exchange of Telegrams

The Long Telegram (February 1946) - In 1946, George Kennan, an official at the US Embassy in Moscow, was asked to provide a summary of what the Soviets were up to. His response became known as The Long Telegram because at 8,000 words, it was indeed long!

In much fewer than 8,000 words, what Kennan's telegram said was that the USSR was heavily armed and feared the outside world. It was determined to spread communism and therefore there could be no peaceful co-existence between the USSR and the USA. However, the USA was stronger than the USSR and so communism could be 'contained'.

The Novikov Telegram - The Soviet response to The Long Telegram was The Novikov Telegram, in which the Soviet ambassador to the USA, Nikolai Novikov, warned that the USA had emerged from World War Two economically strong and bent on world domination. As a result, the USSR needed to secure its buffer zone in Eastern Europe.

These two telegrams set the scene for the Cold War in Europe. The USSR would attempt to dominate Eastern Europe and spread communism where possible. The USA would commit to a policy of 'containment'.



On 5 March 1946, the by-now former British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, condemned the Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe in his famous Iron Curtain speech. In that speech he famously noted that from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. In a nutshell, what Churchill meant by this was that the Allies had spent six years fighting for the freedom from Fascism in Europe, only to have half the continent now under Soviet Dictatorship

The problem in Korea

In 1945, Korea was split along the 38th parallel between a **communist north** led by Kim IL Sung, and a **non-communist south** led by Syngman Rhee.

But communism was **growing** in the Far East. In 1949, the Communists had taken power in China. The US developed the '**domino theory**' - the idea that, if one country fell to communism, others would follow like a row of dominoes. Then, in 1950, a report by the American National Security Council ('**NSC68**') recommended that the US stop containment and start to roll back communism.

The war

In 1950, after getting the support of Russia and China, Kim IL Sung invaded South Korea.

The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) easily defeated the Republic of Korea's army (the ROKs).

By September, the NKPA had conquered almost the whole of South Korea. The USA went to the United Nations and got them to send troops to defend South Korea.

The Russians couldn't veto the idea because they were boycotting the UN at the time.

In September, UN troops, led by the US General MacArthur, landed in Korea and drove the NKPA back.

By October, the UN forces had almost conquered all of North Korea.

In November 1950, Chinese People's Volunteers attacked and drove the Americans back.

They recaptured North Korea, and advanced into South Korea.

The Americans landed more troops and drove the Chinese back to the 38th parallel, where Truman ordered General MacArthur to stop and sacked him when he disagreed.

The war went on as border clashes until 1953 when America's new president, Eisenhower, offered peace, but threatened to use the atomic bomb if China did not accept the offer.