

THE START OF THE COLD WAR

- Chairman OK, then – who was to blame for the Cold War?
- Russian Historian Well, Stalin always blamed Churchill’s Fulton Speech. He regarded it a declaration of war.
I agree in part. The speech was a plot with Truman to confront the Soviets. Within the year, the British government said it could not afford to stay in Greece, and Truman declared his ‘Doctrine’, and the US steps in to ‘defend democracy’.
Arguably that was when the Cold War started.
- American Historian I find that a gross misrepresentation. If you need for a cause of the Cold War, look at what Stalin had been doing. In 1945 his red armies swept into eastern Europe and they just never went home. Instead, the Communists murdered and terrorised themselves into power throughout eastern Europe. Stalin invited the Polish non-Communist leaders to Moscow and arrested them. In Hungary, Rakosi used his brutal secret police, the AVO. In Czechoslovakia, the non-communist minister Masaryk was thrown out of a window...
- Russian Historian ... at the time it was said that he committed suicide ...
- American Historian [sarcastically]... oh yeah, suicide !
My point is that the blame clearly lies with Stalin’s expansionism. The Truman Doctrine was about ‘containment’ – stopping the Soviets. Surely even a Russian can see it was OK to stop Stalinism taking over the world?
- British Historian To be fair, it is a myth that the Truman Doctrine advocated ‘containment’. Truman didn’t mention the word at all in his speech to Congress in 1947, and US government documents like NSC68 actually talked about ‘rolling back’ Communism – it was more aggressive than just *stopping* Communism. And on the other side, since Communism collapsed in Russia in 1989, we’ve been able to get to see Stalin’s papers – and they prove, actually, that while he WAS paranoid and fanatically Communist, he genuinely wanted to avoid confrontation with the USA. Soviet ‘salami tactics’ were genuinely an attempt to set up a ‘buffer’ against a perceived threat from the West. Similarly, Cominform in 1947 was a REACTION to defend Communism against the Marshall Plan, not an aggression against the West.
- American Historian I find what you are saying downright ungrateful. We saved your butts in 1947. [Heavy with irony] The wicked ol’ USA, those warmongers, poured BILLIONS of American dollars into Europe to get YOUR economies going, to preserve YOUR freedom – to make sure that YOU had the right to talk the rubbish you’re talking now.
What about Berlin in 1947; that was *dreadful* of us wasn’t it? Stalin was trying to conquer Berlin, so we FLEW in the supplies to keep Berlin free.
- British Historian Actually, there’s an argument that America used its economic power as a weapon in those years – that the ‘Cold War’ was in fact an American trade war. The Marshall Plan *purported* to be philanthropic, but it could be

considered as pump-priming the European economy to buy American goods. And I'm aware that the US saw the Berlin Blockade as Stalin's attempt to conquer Berlin, but the Americans knew jolly well that their new currency was wrecking the East German economy...

Russian Historian

... but more: he asks us believe that Stalin – who he calls aggressive war-monger – tries to conquer Berlin ... by a Blockade??? Closing borders and offering to supply food is not an attack! The Iron Curtain too. These are DEFENSIVE, not aggressive, measures! You cannot accuse Russians of making war when they clearly trying only to defend ... to cut themselves off – from YOU!!!

American Historian

Stalin *would* have used force if he hadn't seen what the atomic bomb did to Hiroshima. Nobody's pretending that the Cold War wasn't a WAR – we HAD to stop Communism. But WE didn't use force, we used a deterrent. That's why it stayed a 'Cold War', a war without fighting. OUR armies weren't stationed in other countries keeping them under our thumb.

Russian Historian

Is that so? Remind me the proportion of Marshall Aid earmarked to buy weapons. How many NATO troops in West Germany? And YOU invaded Korea in 1950 – did not 10 million people die in that war? All military action, in fact, was on your side clearly. And you were correct to mention Hiroshima! I believe Truman dropped the atomic bomb to stop the Soviet Union invading Japan. In fact, *that's* when Cold War began, on 6th August 1945, and YOU started it.

American Historian

[angrily] Truman dropped the bomb to END a war, not start one!!!!
Aaaww! Why don't you just award Stalin the Nobel Peace Prize? I ...

Chairman

Whoah, whoah. Perhaps we better stop there ... and I think that I need to go back to look at the facts ... and decide for myself what I think.