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FSS

# History of International Relations and World Politics IRE102 & IREb1002

The Cold War system and the Cold War.  
*November 23, 2021*

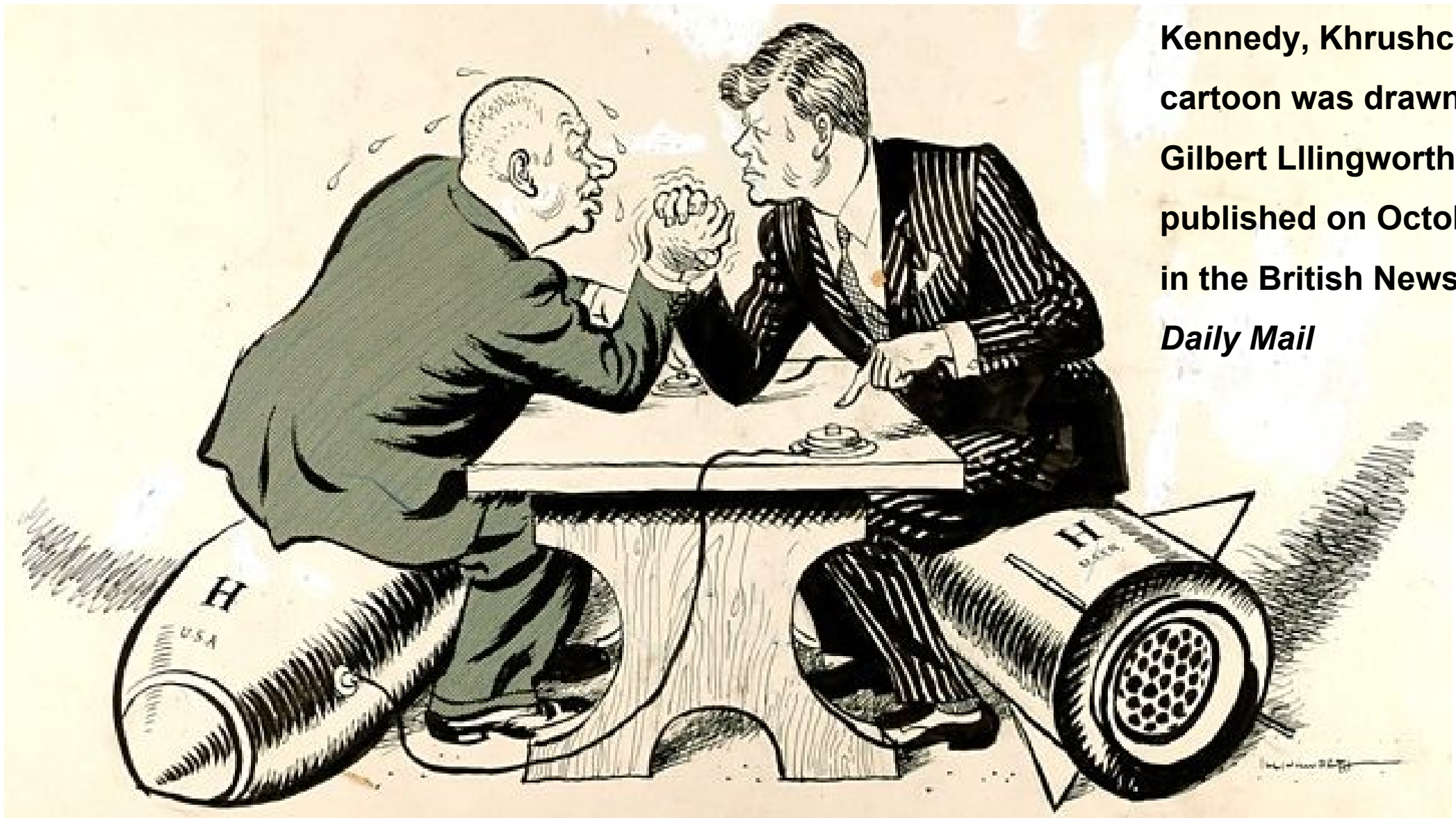
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# Outline

- Origins of the Cold War
- Iron curtain
- Distribution of power (USA x USSR)
- NATO vs. Warsaw Pact
- Rendez-vous in Iceland
- Q & A

# Cold War system 1945-1989/1990

(Hocking and Smith, p .55, changes by ZK)	Cold War system 1945-1990/91
<b>Actors</b>	Emergence of a global international system. Rapid expansion of both state and non-state actors. Ideological division decreases level of homogeneity in international system.
<b>Stratification and structure</b>	Emergence of two superpowers. Emerging tripolar system in economic relations in late 1960s (USA, Western Europe, Japan) Military stratification increases with development of nuclear weapons. North-South divide.
<b>Patterns of interaction</b>	No major war between superpowers. Nuclear weapons increase the cost of war. Division into block in international trade and commerce. Growth of summit and multilateral diplomacy. Diplomacy is challenged by ideological division. Rigid alliance systems based on ideology.
<b>Rules and practices</b>	A managed superpower system based on self-restraint. Balance of power replaced by balance of terror due to nuclear weapons. Use of superpower conferences and summits to resolve disputes.



**Kennedy, Khrushchev: The cartoon was drawn by Leslie Gilbert Llingworth and published on October 29, 1962 in the British Newspaper *The Daily Mail***

# Origins of the Cold War

- Developed after Allies met in Germany after WW2
- No direct armed conflicts **BUT** Proxy wars:
  1. Greek Civil War
  2. Korean War
  3. Vietnam War
  4. Soviet War in Afghanistan

# Iron curtain

Boundary between NATO  
and Warsaw Pact countries  
(1945-1991)



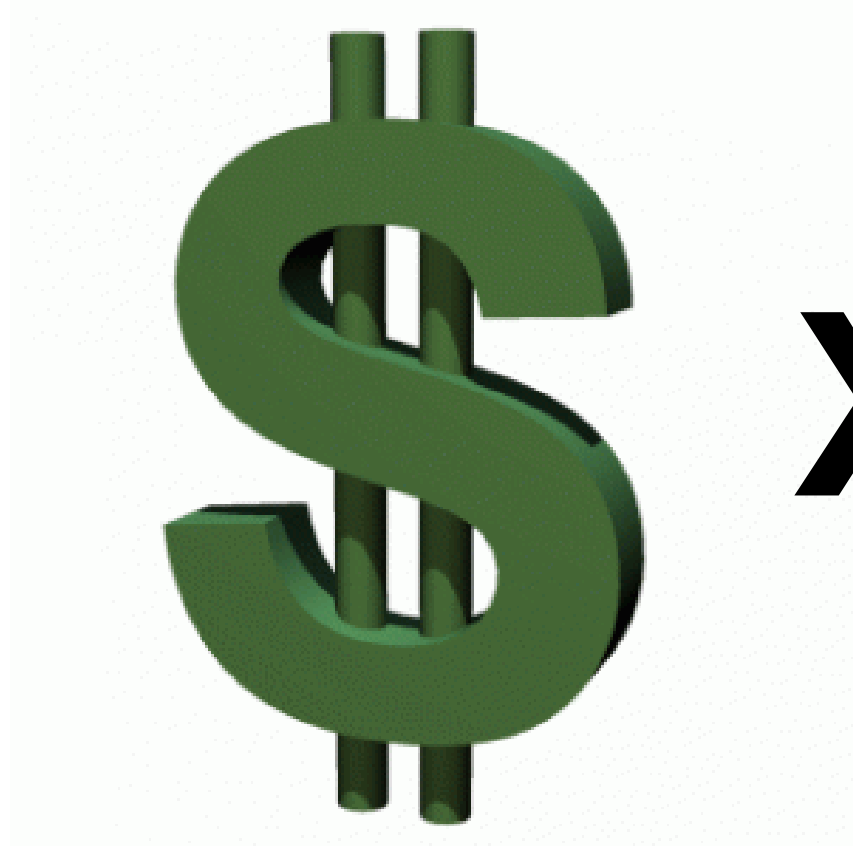


# Iron curtain border zones and fences

- In Czechoslovakia and elsewhere the border zones was highly secured and protected
- 2 km away from the actual border, there were three different barbed-wired fences
  - First fence was 2m high
  - Second fence was 2.5m high
    - > since 1953 the second fence was loaded with high voltage 3,000-6,000 volts
  - Third fence made the border almost impenetrable
- In 1970 a sensor strip was built in front of the fences which would automatically alarm the border guards as soon as you touched the ground there
- This should prevent people from escape to the democratic West > they were either shot dead or killed by the high voltage, thousands were arrested and many sentenced to death (e.g. Milada Horáková)



# Capitalism vs. Communism



**X**



# Two blocks

## CAPITALISM

- Spread democracy (stop the spread of communism)
- Based on independent market forces
- Gain access to Markets & Resources (fuel the huge industry created by WWII)
- Rebuild European Governments (new markets for US goods)
- Reunite Germany (Stabilize Europe/Increase security)
- Greater disparity between rich and poor
- Focus = The People

## COMMUNISM

- Spread Communism (part of a world wide workers revolution)
- Rebuild Soviet Union (by stripping equipment and resources from Eastern Europe)
- Centrally planned economy
- Redistributed to remove socioeconomic gaps
- Dominate Eastern Europe (create a buffer for invasion)
- Keep Germany Weak (preventive action)
- Focus = The Government

# The US Postwar Economy: 1945-1960

- As the Cold War unfolded in the decade and a half after World War II, the United States experienced phenomenal economic growth. The war brought the return of prosperity, and in the postwar period the United States consolidated its position as the world's richest country. Gross national product, a measure of all goods and services produced in the United States, jumped from about \$200 thousand-million in 1940 to \$300 thousand-million in 1950 to more than \$500 thousand-million in 1960. More and more Americans now considered themselves part of the middle class.
- The growth had different sources. The automobile industry was partially responsible, as the number of automobiles produced annually quadrupled between 1946 and 1955. A housing boom, stimulated in part by easily affordable mortgages for returning servicemen, fueled the expansion. The rise in defense spending as the Cold War escalated also played a part.
- After 1945 the major corporations in America grew even larger. There had been earlier waves of mergers in the 1890s and in the 1920s;
- New conglomerates (International Telephone and Telegraph, Sheraton Hotels, Continental Baking, Hartford Fire Insurance, and Avis Rent-a-Car, McDonald's)
- Farmers, on the other hand, faced tough times. Gains in productivity led to agricultural consolidation, as farming became a big business. Family farms, in turn, found it difficult to compete, and more and more farmers left the land.

# Distribution of power – USA

- In 1945 the United States was in a uniquely situation. During WWII the USA had doubled US economic power.
- The WWII had launched a new industrial revolution in the United States that had given Americans a major lead in nearly all of the key technologies.
- The United States possessed enormous military power.
- The United States alone controlled the atomic bomb.
- The two former powers that had previously threatened US interests - Germany and Japan - had been defeated and were now under US military.
- On the one hand, the USA did not want to retreat completely from Europe and apply isolationist strategy. On the other hand, they did not want to play so significant role as they finally did.
- Western Europe was economically exhausted and militarily weak.
- The Soviet Union had become the dominant continental power.

# Distribution of power – USSR

- By the 1950s the Soviet Union's economy was so inferior and overstretched.
- USSR lost more than 28 mil people and the most developed parts of the country were destroyed due to the German invasion.
- In terms of land forces deployed in Europe the Soviet Union was much stronger than West because new conscripts were taken into the military.
- The Soviet Union did not have the military strength needed to fight and win a global war against the United States.
- However, Soviet military was superior in Europe and was able to start a large scale invasion and take control over Europe.
- Stalin, clearly, must have viewed the general postwar situation with great fear and acted with decided caution.

# NATO (1949)

- Signing the Washington Treaty in April 1949
  
- Policy of containment (Truman) – how to stop the spread of the Soviet influence
  
- 3 main purposes:
  - deterring Soviet expansionism
  - forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong U.S. presence on the continent
  - encouraging European political integration
  
- Collective defence organization vs. UN (collective security)

# Eastern Block/ Warsaw Pact (1955)

- The Warsaw Pact, formally known as the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance
- a collective defence treaty signed in Warsaw, Poland between the Soviet Union and seven other Eastern Bloc socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe **in May 1955**
- The Warsaw Pact was the military complement to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CoMEcon), the regional economic organization for the socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe.
- The Warsaw Pact was created in reaction to the integration of West Germany into NATO in 1955
- Also motivated by Soviet desires to maintain control over military forces in Central and Eastern Europe

# Brezhnev doctrine

Intervention to  
Czechoslovakia in 1968



Photo credit: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/historical-collection-publications/index.html>



# Brezhnev doctrine

- The Brezhnev Doctrine was a Soviet foreign policy that proclaimed any threat to socialist rule in any state of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe was a threat to them all, and therefore justifies the intervention of fellow socialist states. It was proclaimed in order to justify the Soviet-led occupation of Czechoslovakia earlier in 1968, with the overthrow of the reform government there. Mikhail Gorbachev repudiated the doctrine in the late 1980s, as the Kremlin accepted the peaceful overthrow of communist rule in all its satellite countries in Eastern Europe.
- This doctrine was announced to retroactively justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 that ended the Prague Spring, along with earlier Soviet military interventions, such as the invasion of Hungary in 1956. These interventions were meant to put an end to liberalization efforts and uprisings that had the potential to compromise Soviet hegemony inside the Eastern Bloc, which was considered by the Soviet Union to be an essential defensive and strategic buffer in case hostilities with NATO were to break out.

**“The Socialist Fraternal Kiss”** = 30th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic of East Germany, 1979;  
Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker



# Rendez-vous in Iceland



- Höfði is a house in Reykjavík, Iceland
- 1986 Reykjavík Summit meeting of presidents Ronald Reagan of the United States and Mikhail Gorbachev of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
- That effectively was a step to the end of the Cold War. Within the building, the flags of the United States and the Soviet Union are cross-hung to commemorate the meeting.
- In the 1940s and 1950s, it was home to the British Embassy in Reykjavík.
- The city of Reykjavík purchased the house in 1958, restored it to its former glory. From then on it has been used for formal receptions and festive occasions.



# USSR Falling apart

- When Gorbachev began his term, he like Khrushchev, Kosygin, Brezhnev, and Andropov before him, expected to produce a quick economic revival (“acceleration”). His illusions were based on his poor knowledge of Soviet economy beyond the agricultural sector for which he had been responsible, as on his ideological belief in “the great potential of socialism”
- The blatant inferiority in economic and financial resources, the global outreach of the Soviet empire, the fragility of its allies, and the costs to the quality of life inside eventually led to the erosion of the will to wage the Cold War (Zubok 2000)



# Final end of the Cold War

- What finally ended the Cold War was the process of liberalization inside the Soviet Union that was unleashed and over which the Soviet leaders lost control.
- Lack of guidelines and orientations also contributed to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe
- During 1989 and 1990, the Berlin Wall came down, borders opened, and free elections ousted Communist regimes everywhere in eastern Europe.
- In late 1991 the Soviet Union itself dissolved into its component republics. With stunning speed, the Iron Curtain was lifted and the Cold War came to an end.

# Q & A

