

To what extent was the origin and development of the Cold War influenced by the ideologies of the Soviet Union and America? (to 1963)

The origin and development of the Cold War was **significantly** based on ideological conflict between capitalism and communism espoused by the USA and USSR respectively. The opposing values of democratic and capitalist systems which supported individual rights of the USA and the USSR's advancement of communism were **central** in generating tensions between the two powers, but the Cold War was also driven by rivalry for military and political supremacy.

The Cold War developed largely due to the tensions between communism and capitalism, where defensive paranoia regarding ideological expansion eroded chances of coexistence. With the USSR emerging from WWII (1939-45) second to the US as the world's superpower, rivalry was high, with the threat to Soviet security stemming from US atomic bomb development perceived as especially hostile due to tensions between capitalism and communism. This was exacerbated by **Churchill's 1946 'Iron Curtain' speech**, decrying the separation of Europe's capitalist West and communist East, making it clear that Soviet ideological aggression would detriment peace. This heightened Cold War tensions, Stalin interpreting it as a call to war, spurring efforts to eliminate Western capitalist influence and perpetuating the hostile ideological climate. Furthering this, the USA saw Soviet attempts to create a European buffer as aggressive communist expansionism, responding to this threat to capitalism with the **1947 Clifford Memorandum** and the **1946 Long Telegram** which quashed hopes for accord with the Soviet Union by highlighting the USSR's repressive ideology. Thus paranoid assumptions stemming from ideological fears allowed the Cold War to originate.

However, though ideology was important, the Cold War also originated to a smaller extent from both sides' military needs. For example, at the **Yalta Conference 1945**, Roosevelt conceded to Soviet gain of Far East territory despite ideological differences, with **Painter** suggesting the US depended on the Red Army against Germany and Japan, thus signifying precedence of national security over ideology in developing the Cold War. However, Stalin's renegeing on the conference when he set up pro-communist Eastern European governments brought ideological tensions back to the forefront in the Cold War. Furthermore, while the **Potsdam Conference 1945** conceded to further Russian reparations of **25%** of western Germany's confiscated industrial plant, it also marked the start of the Cold War's nuclear age, Truman's informing of Stalin to their successful atomic bomb testing, fuelling superpower rivalry for military superiority. In this way, military interests rather than ideology dominated the conferences in the Cold War's development.

Ideological conflict significantly instigated wider political competition which contributed to the Cold War's development. Becoming known as 'pactomania', the USSR and USA forged opposing political and military alliances of the **Warsaw Pact (1955)** and **NATO (1949)** respectively, grounded in ideological consensus within them and ideological opposition to each other, polarising the war. Cold War tensions were reinforced by the US **Marshall Plan (1947)** which provided **\$13 billion** in economic aid to Western Europe to tie together the capitalist world, which the USSR saw as US 'economic imperialism', spurring them to consolidate their own economic and political dominance in Eastern Europe through the **COMECON (1949)** and **COMINFORM (1947)**, increasing superpower tensions, where neither conceded their ideology. In this way, desire for ideological and political dominance over their rival greatly contributed to the creation of tensions.

Ideological opposition thus manifested in hardline approaches that significantly developed the Cold War by exacerbating tensions. Exemplifying this was the **Truman Doctrine (1947)** which adopted aggressive Soviet containment, which **Horowitz** suggests created binary oppositions that eliminated potential for consensus, further polarising the US and USSR's ideological conflict. Indeed, the USSR's responding **Brezhnev Doctrine (1968)**, which justified Soviet interference in other countries to preserve communism, highlighted the ideological basis of Cold War tensions. With Eisenhower's **1950's Domino Theory**, even countries aside from the superpowers became involved, with fears of countries falling to communism in a domino effect vindicating US intervention, further heightening tensions. This was seen with US and USSR support for the capitalist South and communist North Korea respectively as their ideological proxies in the **Korean War (1950-53)**, with Eisenhower's application of brinkmanship developing the Cold War by risking mass retaliation, though never following through. Thus creation of spheres of ideological influence, and the need to guard them, contributed to Cold War development.

Following **Stalin's death (1953)**, ideology's significance lessened with developments to de-escalate tensions in the Cold War to avoid nuclear annihilation. Though beginning as an ideologically based conflict, superpower's reaching of nuclear parity with the USSR's first **hydrogen bomb (1955)** and the US's **300%** increase in their defence budget, meant the Cold War developed to the stage where inter-continental nuclear war seemed inevitable. Given the prospect of mutually assured destruction, both countries pursued peaceful coexistence by tolerating ideological differences, with **1950s** developments involving abating Cold War tensions. However, the discovery of a **U2 spy plane** in Soviet territory (**1960**) brought back ideology's significance, with Khrushchev bowing to ideological pressures to reassert the USSR's communist dominance, collapsing the **Paris Summit (1960)** with the US. This revealed the ever-present, ideological origins of the

Cold War that were never addressed, thus ultimately further deteriorating Cold War relations.

Thus the origins and development of the Cold War lay predominantly with the ideological differences between the US and the USSR, though also escalated by factors such as political and military desires of both nations, demonstrating the significant influence of communism and capitalism to the conflict.