

‘What was the impact of one or more of the following on American foreign policy during the Cold War: The Berlin Blockade; Korean War; Cuban Missile Crisis?’ (2019 Mock)

Korea

In 1945, Japan had collapsed after World War Two and so the USSR decided to take advantage of their weakness and dismantled all of their control of Korea by invading it, starting from the North. Truman became worried that they would lose the entirety of Korea to communism and so he requested that the USSR stop upon reaching the 38th parallel which Stalin agreed to. There was a communist party established in North Korea under Kim il Sung. Truman, under the Truman Doctrine, ensured that communism wouldn't spread any further. Protecting other countries showed the USSR the US's determination.

In 1947, the UN gave Korea official independence and organised a commission to oversee elections for a ruler but Stalin refused to allow the commission into North Korea so the election was only held in the South. In 1948, the US began to withdraw from South Korea and the USSR began to do the same in North Korea. But then the elections took place in the middle of widespread violent outbreaks. Syngman Rhee gained the majority for South Korea and was recognised the leader in the UN's eyes but they did not recognise North Korea's equivalent, Kim il Sung, who was also known as the premier.

Then in 1949 China became Communist which was a huge victory for the USSR but a failure for Truman's policy of containment. However the USSR still wouldn't give Kim il Sung the support to invade South Korea despite the violence which took place at the border in which 400 soldiers were killed in May of 1949. In 1950 the US soldiers began to adopt a more ruthless policy than containment, they wanted to reclaim areas that had fallen to communism. But they made a mistake of omitting Korea from their conversation in the field of strategic defence, which led the USSR to believe that they wouldn't take action in Korea if they did invade.

On the 25th of June they did exactly that. North Korea invaded South Korea. Propaganda from the North suggested that they were merely retaliating to an attack from the South but there was no proof of this. Truman refused to appease Stalin like they once did with Hitler in the 1930s and so under the UN, he intervened. This permission was only granted because the USSR refused to attend the meeting because they were protesting at the fact that the UN wouldn't allow China into the UN. The North Korean army pushed into the South and captured the capital of Seoul in three days. By early September, South Korea had been forced into the very corner of the country at Pusan and were losing the war before the US stepped in.

General MacArthur stepped in and led the Inchon Landings. He decided that the best option would be to sever communications with the North Korean army and cut them in two. He forced the North to retreat from Pusan which led the South to re-establishing democratic government in South Korea and recapture Seoul. The North Korean army retreated and by the 1st of October, the US and UN troops were back at the 38th Parallel. At this stage they had two options. Either stick to just containing the areas that had not yet fallen to communism, or choose to roll-back and try to invade the rest of North Korea.

They chose rollback and invaded North Korea. Truman stated that he would not invade China for rollback but they didn't believe him because they dispatched troops to the North Korean border in protest at how close the US were. On the 14th of October, 200,000 Chinese communistic party volunteers crossed the Yalu River and attacked the US and UN forces. The US was now in a state of emergency, they didn't want to declare war with China but they couldn't abandon South Korea either. MacArthur suggested the use of an atomic bomb but Truman refused. However, MacArthur didn't listen and sent a letter to Beijing threatening to use the bomb. Truman knew this would have led to world war three and so he fired MacArthur immediately.

The War soon became stalemate and peace talks opened up. They were delayed twice due to riots and violence and questions about what to do with the prisoners of war and where the division would be. Also throughout this, the US managed to gain most of the control of the air in 1952 and he bombed hydroelectric plants and military targets in the Northern capital Pyongyang. Kim il Sung announced that 6000 civilians had died which made Americans look harsh. Truman stepped down for re-election, only for Eisenhower to take over and also Stalin died.

So then on the 16th of June in 1953, an armistice was agreed and on the 27th of July it was signed by China, America and North Korea. South Korea wouldn't sign the armistice but they had to accept it regardless. There were many impacts of the Korean War on American foreign policy. While US military spending was high prior to the war due to the ongoing Cold War, it further increased with the Korean War, costing \$30 billion in 1953 which is the equivalent to \$341 billion today.

Cuba

Cuba was a small island approximately 90 miles off the coast of Florida. It had always been a US ally and had US military bases located there. Many US corporations were there and the US supported the dictator leader Batista. This was until 1959 when a revolution led by Fidel Castro took place. He overthrew the government and established his own communist government and took over all the US co-operations. The US were not happy!

The US sought to fight back. They cut diplomatic relations with Cuba in January of 1961 and they invaded Cuba that April under the name the 'Bay of Pigs'. This was a massive failure as 1400 anti-Cuban exiles attempted to overthrow Castro but the Cuban public were more supportive of Castro than they US had expected. This was mainly because Castro was meeting the primary needs of the Cubans. Also many Cubans were anti-US.

Then in Autumn 1962, Cuba began receiving 1000s of planes and missiles from the USSR. They liked supporting Cuba because it was a new, thriving Communist state and it was also very close to US which was necessary for the USSR to plant a launch base for Russian missiles similar to how the US had planted their missiles in Turkey. In October 1962, a US U2 spy plane snapped photos of a USSR missile base in Cuba and also more ships carrying more weapons sent from the USSR. Cuba would produce these missiles in less than a week and so the US knew they had to act fast.

On the 20th of October 1962, John F. Kennedy decided that blockading Cuba would be the best response. While doing so he asked Khrushchev to remove the missiles and call off the delivery of even more weapons but Khrushchev refused to acknowledge their existence. As underwater ships approached the Cuban zone, it seemed that US was minutes away from war, the

doomsday clock was at two minutes to midnight. But then Khrushchev ordered the ships to turn back.

However, the work continued on the missile bases in Cuba. Khrushchev ordered to stop work on the missile if the US removed their blockade and stopped threatening to invade Cuba. He later added that he also wanted the US to remove their missile base in Turkey. JFK agreed to the first two terms after a U2 spy plane was shot down over Cuba. He would take a longer time to remove the US missile in Cuba.

While Cuba remained communist and heavily armed, there were many impacts of the Cuban War on American foreign policy. The first being that the US and USSR established a test ban treaty between them. Cuba no longer had nuclear weapons. There was a permanent hotline set up between the White House and the Kremlin in case of further disputes. The war also showed that the alternative of co-operation worked.